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- Frontline vigilance must be backed by technology: Home Minister Shah
- Chaos erupts in Bengal assembly over BJP MLA Agnimitra Paul's comments

7 NORTHEAST

- FNTA MoA reflects commitment to inclusive development: Rio
- ED seizes ₹2.2-cr during raids in Trans-Arunachal highway compensation 'scam' case

M'laya coal mine tragedy: 12 bodies identified: Meghalaya DGP • Two mine owners arrested

7 more bodies recovered, toll touches 25

HT Bureau

SHILLONG, Feb 6: The death toll in the explosion at an illegal coal mine in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills district rose to 25 on Friday with the recovery of seven more bodies, as search and rescue operations continued and the state government warned of stringent action against those responsible.

Director General of Police 1 Nongrang said the blast occurred on Thursday at a mine in the remote Thangsku area of Umsngat village. Eighteen bodies were recovered on Thursday, and seven more were found on Friday, taking the total number of deaths to 25, of which 12 have so far been identified.

Teams of the State Disaster Response Force, Special Rescue Team and the National Disaster Response Force are engaged in the



operation, with medical teams and ambulances deployed at the site.

The Army and the Air Force remain on standby as the district administration and the State Disaster Management Authority closely monitor the situation.

Chief minister Conrad K Sangma said the government

would take strict action against those involved in illegal mining and deputed two cabinet ministers to assess the situation on the ground.

The ministers have been asked to visit the spot, meet officials and take stock of rescue, relief and law and order arrangements. Senior po-

lice officers, including the Inspector General of Police of the range, and officials of the mining department are already present at the site.

Sangma said illegal mining activities would not be tolerated, noting that with the start of scientific mining, miners are expected to apply for legal licences as the option is now available.

He announced an ex gratia of ₹ 3 lakh each from the state government to the next of kin of those who lost their lives in the incident.

President Droupadi Murmu expressed grief over the loss of lives and conveyed condolences to the bereaved families, while Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was pained by the mishap and announced an ex gratia of ₹ 2 lakh from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund for the next of kin of each deceased and ₹ 50,000 for the

injured. Union Home Minister Amit Shah spoke to the chief minister and assured all possible support from the Centre for the ongoing rescue operations.

The Meghalaya High Court has taken suo motu cognisance of media reports on the incident and directed the deputy commissioner and superintendent of police of East Jaintia Hills to identify and arrest mine owners and operators involved in illegal mining, summoning both officers to appear in person with details of action taken.

The incident has once again brought focus on illegal coal mining in the state.

The National Green Tribunal had banned rat-hole coal mining and other unscientific practices in Meghalaya in 2014, citing environmental (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Cong must make clear stand on illegal immigrants: CM



STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, Feb 6: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday stepped up his attack on the Congress, asserting that the party must clearly state whether it stands with the indigenous Assamese people or with illegal migrants, whom he described as "Miya", a term he said referred to Muslim population who have crossed over from Bangladesh.

Speaking to reporters after attending a programme in Dergaon, Sarma said the debate over illegal migration and identity in Assam could no longer be brushed aside and warned that political ambiguity on the issue could fuel unrest.

"The Congress must make its position unambiguous. They should say clearly whether they stand with Assamese (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

NPF welcomes Centre talks, hails FNTA agreement as historic milestone

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Feb 6: The Naga People's Front on Friday welcomed recent engagements between the Nagaland leadership and the Government of India, expressing appreciation for efforts to address key political and financial issues affecting the state.

In a press communique issued at Kohima, the party lauded its president and Nagaland chief minister Neiphiu Rio, along with the Political Affairs Committee (PAC) delegation, for what it described as productive discussions with the Government of India.

The NPF welcomed Rio's call for reviving the Indo-Naga peace talks at the highest political level and noted positively the Union Home Minister's indication of renewed political-level engagement.

The party also appreciated the chief minister's efforts in raising Nagaland's financial concerns, including the demand for restoration of the earlier financial arrangement under the 16-Point Agreement.

The communique further highlighted the party's support for seeking relaxation of the Protected Area Permit (PAP) regime and a review of the revised Free Movement Regime (FMR) guidelines.

According to the NPF, these initiatives reflect responsible leadership and are vital for safeguarding Naga rights and identity.

The party expressed hope that assurances given by the Centre would translate into concrete action, easing the state's financial challenges and promoting the welfare of the Naga people.

The NPF also described February 5, 2026, as a "red-letter day" in Nagaland's history, marking the signing of the Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority (FNTA) agreement by (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

ED attaches ₹ 3.07 cr assets of former Assam PWD engineer

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, Feb 6: The Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Guwahati Zonal Office, has provisionally attached immovable and movable properties worth approximately ₹ 3.07 crore belonging to Md Chamed Ali, former Executive Engineer of the Public Works Department (Roads), Government of Assam, and his family members, under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, in a case related to disproportionate assets, officials said on Friday.

According to an official release, the attached assets include five immovable properties valued at ₹ 2.42 crore, while the movable assets comprise LIC policies worth ₹ 65 lakh, taking the total attached value to ₹ 3.07 crore.

The ED initiated the money laundering investigation on the basis of an FIR registered by the CM Special Vigilance Cell, Assam Police, bearing Vigilance PS Case No. 09/2023 dated December 8, 2023.

The state Congress, as part of its 'Samay Paribortonor' (time for change) yatra, reached Batadrava on the second-day of its statewide rally with its top leaders, including state president Gaurav Gogoi, national general secretary and state in-charge Jitendra Singh and others.

The FIR was registered against Md. Chamed Ali under Sections 13(1)(b) and 13(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, as amended in 2018.

Subsequently, the CM Special Vigilance Cell filed Charge Sheet No. 4 of 2024 on March 6, 2024 before the Court of the Special Judge, Assam, Guwahati-1.

Investigations revealed that during his service tenure from January 1, 2000 to February 28, 2021, while serving as Assistant Engineer, Assistant Executive Engineer and Executive Engineer in various divisions of the PWD (Roads), Md Chamed Ali amassed disproportionate assets amounting to ₹ 3.07 crore, which constituted 152.96 per cent of his known sources of income.

The accused had a total known income of ₹ 2.01 crore during the check period, while his expenditure stood at ₹ 4.27 crore, resulting in negative savings of ₹ 2.26 crore. He (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Cong rally faces BJP resistance in Batadrava

NAGAON, Feb 6: Congress and BJP members on Friday were involved in a confrontation in Assam's Nagaon district as saffron party supporters reportedly tried to prevent opposition leaders from proceeding towards Batadrava Than, the birthplace of Vaishnavite saint Srimanta Sankardeva.

The state Congress, as part of its 'Samay Paribortonor' (time for change) yatra, reached Batadrava on the second-day of its statewide rally with its top leaders, including state president Gaurav Gogoi, national general secretary and state in-charge Jitendra Singh and others.

However, they were stopped by BJP supporters in front of the road leading to the Than, as both sides engaged in arguments but they did not engage in any physical assault.

The Congress leaders later managed to visit the Than and offered prayers, before resuming the Yatra for the rest of the day.

Speaking to reporters, Singh said, "It pains me that we were prevented from coming to such a holy place. BJP and the 'chamchas' of Himanta Biswa Sarma tried to stop us."

The AICC general secretary maintained that people of Assam are not (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)



Students of Handique Girls College take part in a Cultural rally during the 'College Week 2026', in Guwahati, on Friday. -HT Photos

Drugs worth ₹ 14 crore seized, 1 arrested

GUWAHATI, Feb 6: One person has been arrested and drugs worth ₹ 14 crore have been seized from his possession in Assam's Cachar district, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said. He said the operation was carried out by a joint team of Cachar Police and Assam Rifles in Tolengram area.

"Big blow to the drug peddlers in Cachar. ₹ 14 cr of drugs recovered," Sarma said in a post on X. "Kudos to @cacharpolice & @official_dgar for a joint anti-narcotics operation at Tolengram," he said. The chief minister added that "154 soap cases of heroin and 10,000 Yaba tablets" were seized in the operation. Yaba tablets are illegal in India as (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Assam announces ex gratia of ₹ 5 lakh each for 3 victims' families

GUWAHATI, Feb 6: The Assam government has announced an ex gratia of ₹ 5 lakh each for the next of kin of three labourers from the state who were among those killed in a coal mine blast in adjoining Meghalaya.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday said he has also instructed a cabinet minister and the MLA of Katigorah assembly constituency, from where the victims hailed, to visit the bereaved families.

At least 18 labourers were killed, and several others were feared trapped following an explo-

sion in an "illegal" coal mine in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills district on Thursday.

Sarma said three of the victims have been identified as hailing from Katigorah area in Barak Valley.

"We have sought details of the victims who are from Assam. Our chief secretary is in touch with his Meghalaya counterpart," he said.

The chief minister announced the ex gratia of ₹ 5 lakh for the next of kin of the deceased.

"I have requested Katigorah MLA Kamalakhya Dey (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

'PARIKSHA PE CHARCHA 2026 WITH PM'

Focus not only on marks but on improving life: PM mantra to students

NEW DELHI, Feb 6: Listen to everyone's advice but change your lifestyle pattern only when you want to, education should not feel like a burden, focus not only on marks but also on improving life - these are some of the mantras shared by Prime Minister Narendra Modi with school students to de-stress themselves ahead of board exams.

Modi also noted that exams are like festivals and should be celebrated.

In his interaction with the students during the ninth edition of 'Pariksha Pe Charcha 2026 with PM', he asserted that comfort zones don't shape life - your way of living does.

"Education should not feel like a burden. It needs our total involvement. Education in bits and pieces does not ensure success. Instead of focusing on marks, everyone should focus on where they have made it in life. No matter what your parents, or teachers, or peers say, have faith in and follow your pattern, keeping in mind all the suggestions that come your way..." he said.



"Our goal should be such that it is within reach, but not easily attainable. Tame the mind, then connect the mind, and then keep the subjects you need to study. Then you will always find the student successful," Modi told the group of students who had come from various parts of the country at his resi-

dence here. He cautioned against the obsession with marks, asking whether anyone remembers the name of a student who scored highest marks last year in boards.

When the students replied no, Modi underscored that even if such achieve-

ments are praised briefly, they are soon forgotten, showing how little importance marks hold.

A student from Gujarat asked that while parents worry for them and teachers support them, the issue arises when teachers suggest one study pattern, parents insist on another and students follow a different trend, leaving them confused about which pattern is correct.

Modi remarked that this continues throughout life, noting that even as prime minister people advise him differently.

"Just as siblings at home have different eating patterns - some starting with vegetables, some with dal, some mixing everything together - everyone has their own way. Enjoyment comes from following one's own pattern...some prefer studying at night, others early in the morning, and each has their own rhythm," he said.

"Students must trust their own pattern, listen (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

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RBI keeps interest rates unchanged after US trade deal boosts outlook

MUMBAI, Feb 6: The Reserve Bank of India kept its benchmark interest rate unchanged on Friday, as expected, as inflation remained at manageable levels, and growth concerns eased following trade agreements with the US and the European Union.

The central bank's six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted unanimously to keep the repurchase, or repo rate, at 5.25 per cent. The RBI retained its neutral policy stance, signalling rates will stay low for some time.

US President Donald Trump earlier this week announced a cut in tariffs on Indian goods to 18 per cent from 50 per cent, easing a key pressure point on India's economy and markets. The first tranche of the pact is likely to be finalised by next month, which includes a reduction in US tariffs.

Announcing the decisions of the MPC, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said external headwinds have intensified, but the successful completion of the trade deal with the United States bodes well for the economy.

The RBI has cut rates by a total of 125 basis points since February 2025, marking its most aggressive easing cycle since 2019. It reduced rates by 25 basis points at its previous meeting in December.

While the inflation remains benign, economic activity remains resilient.

"Amidst heightened geopolitical tensions and elevated uncertainty, the Indian economy is in a good spot with strong growth and low inflation. Inflation remains below the tolerance band, and its outlook continues to be benign," Malhotra said.

"With the signing of a landmark trade deal with the European Union and the US trade agreement in

sight, growth momentum is likely to be sustained for a longer period."

The current policy rate is appropriate, the governor said, adding that inflation was benign and future rate moves will depend on growth outlook and inflation.

"Inflation, especially underlying inflation, is low. It's much lower than even our forecast... underlying inflation is very, very benign. So, I expect policy rates should remain at low levels for a long time," he told reporters post MPC announcement.

"Whether they will go down even further, I will leave it for the MPC to decide going forward."

As to policy transmission on the deposit side, he said transmission happens at a slower pace.

"It has improved. It is improving after every policy statement. We are hopeful that they will further continue to improve," he said.

"The real rate of interest today is very low. Going forward, we are in an accommodative phase."

Malhotra said no assessment has been done on how much the trade deal will contribute to the GDP growth because details are not available.

"We have added 20 basis points to GDP growth because of various reasons, including the US trade deal."

Consumer price inflation is projected at 2.1 per cent for the current financial year, marginally higher than the earlier estimate of 2 per cent, but below RBI's target of 4 per cent. Inflation in Q4 FY26 is expected to remain above 3 per cent, while CPI in H1 FY27 is estimated to stay above the 4 per cent mark.

The central bank revised its GDP growth estimate for the current FY26 upward to 7.4 per cent from the earlier projection of 7.3 per cent.

For the first half of FY27 (April



2026 to March 2027 fiscal), growth is now projected at 6.95 per cent, higher than the previous estimate of 6.75 per cent. However, the RBI refrained from providing a full-year FY27 projection, stating that it would await the release of the revised GDP base series before making comprehensive growth assessments.

Announcing additional measures, Malhotra said the RBI will issue three draft guidelines relating to mis-selling, recovery of loans and engagement of recovery agents, and on limiting the liability of customers in unauthorised electronic banking transactions.

"It is also proposed to introduce a framework to compensate customers up to an amount of ₹ 25,000 for loss incurred in small-value fraudulent transactions," he said.

It will also publish a discussion paper on possible measures to enhance the safety of digital payments. Such measures may include lagged credits and additional authentication for specific classes of users, like senior citizens.

He also proposed doubling the limit for collateral-free loans to MSMEs to ₹ 20 lakh and allowing banks to lend to REITs to promote financing to the real estate sector.

Also, NBFCs having no public funds and customer interface, with asset size not exceeding ₹ 1,000 crore, are proposed to be exempted from the requirement of registra-

tion.

The requirement for certain NBFCs to obtain prior approval to open more than 1,000 branches is also to be dispensed with.

For financial markets, Malhotra said the RBI proposes to remove the limit of ₹ 2.5 lakh crore for investments under the Voluntary Retention Route (VRR). Investment through the VRR in each category of securities will be subject to the investment ceiling for the respective category under the general route.

"The Indian economy continues to register high growth despite a challenging external environment clouded by geopolitical uncertainties. Benign inflation provides the leeway to remain growth-supportive while preserving financial stability. We remain committed to meeting the productive requirements of the economy and sustaining the growth momentum," he added.

Commenting on the MPC decisions, Amar Ambani, Executive Director and Head of Institutional Equities, Yes Securities, said, "Given the cumulative easing of around 125 basis points already delivered in the current cycle, the RBI is widely expected to keep policy rates unchanged at least until the first half of FY27."

Upasna Bhardwaj, Chief Economist, Kotak Mahindra Bank, however, said, "While uncertainty remains on the growth-inflation figures as we await the new series, the uptick in commodity prices and weaker currency may pose upside risks to inflation. We therefore see limited room for additional easing on the repo rate front, with RBI's focus expected to be on ensuring stability on the liquidity front in the year ahead". (PTI)

Economy better than Goldilocks sweet spot, rates to be low for long: RBI

MUMBAI, Feb 6: Reserve Bank Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Friday said the economy is in a better place than the sweet spot it was in two months back, which was described by him as the "goldilocks period".

"We are certainly in the same sweet spot, maybe even better because growth is looking up, growth is looking better, and inflation is the same," Malhotra said, replying to a specific question on the state of the economy and how it compares with what it was in December.

The final decision on the policy rate will be taken by the six-member monetary policy committee, but it hinted that there is a possibility that the repo rate will stay low in such circumstances.

"I do expect that the policy rates should continue to be at low levels for a long period of time. Whether they will go down even further," Malhotra told reporters.

The governor, however, refrained from stating whether the 5.25 per cent level is the terminal rate below which it will not go.

It can be noted that the RBI has cut the key rates by 1.25 per cent over 2025 as it saw some space getting created by inflation, its core objective.

Malhotra said Ram Singh, one of the MPC members, pitched to shift the stance of the policy to "accommodative", while five others opined for it to remain "neutral".

On inflation, the headline CPI number may vary due to factors such as base effects, volatile food prices and also due to the over 0.60 per cent push from the rally in

precious metals, he said, stressing that the underlying trends in price-rise and also core inflation are not pointing to any pressures.

From a growth perspective, Malhotra said the trade deal to be signed with the US is among the factors that have led the RBI to up the GDP expansion estimates by 20 basis points over what it was earlier.

To a specific question on declining Indian bets in the US treasury, he said the RBI is not selling US treasury holdings, but added that aspects such as a decline in forex reserves may lead to some movements.

When asked about the government borrowing programme and the markets' concern with the budgeted ₹ 17.2 lakh gross borrowing number for FY27, he said that the number is higher because of higher maturities lined up in FY27 and asked everybody to look at the net increase of only ₹ 20,000 crore.

On the issue of the yields continuing to remain higher despite the 1.25 per cent cut in policy rates, he said the RBI will provide constant liquidity, which will transmit to all markets, including credit markets, money markets and bonds.

From an "overall" perspective, transmission of the past policy actions has been "excellent", he added.

Malhotra welcomed the government's proactive approach on both the current and capital accounts through its moves like opening up the insurance sector for foreign direct investment. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

7 more bodies recovered

damage and safety hazards, but the state has continued to witness fatal accidents in recent years. The government has reiterated that mining will now be permitted only under scientific and regulated procedures, urging miners to obtain proper licences and operate strictly within the legal framework. (With inputs from PTI)

Cong must make

society or with illegal settlers," the Chief Minister said. Raising alarm over what he described as rapid demographic shifts, Sarma claimed that illegal settlers, once largely concentrated in districts such as Barpeta and Dhubri, have now spread to Upper Assam, including areas like Duliyan and Margherita.

He alleged that nearly 10 lakh acres of land across the state have been encroached upon, posing a serious threat to the land rights and future of indigenous communities.

The Chief Minister also flagged concerns about encroachment in culturally sensitive regions, including Batadrava, calling it a direct challenge to Assam's heritage and social fabric.

"This is not just about politics. It is about land, identity and the survival of Assamese people," Sarma asserted.

With Assembly elections drawing closer, Sarma said the Congress would be forced to take a clear stand on the issue.

He alleged that senior Congress leader Gaurav Gogoi was being advised by activist Harsh Mander and advocate Aman Wadud, and accused them of shaping narratives that undermine Assamese identity.

Sarma further claimed that a book authored by Abdul Muhib Mazumder and allegedly edited by Aman Wadud propagated the view that Assamese people arrived in Assam later, while migrants settled earlier — a claim he said was historically misleading and politically dangerous.

He identified Wadud as the chairperson of the Congress's social media cell in Assam.

Reiterating his government's position, Sarma said the BJP-led administration would continue to speak openly on the issue and take firm steps to protect Assam's demographic balance.

"Our responsibility is to ensure peace, security and justice for all, but without compromising the rights of indigenous Assamese communities," he said.

The chief minister maintained that addressing illegal migration and land encroachment was essential to safeguarding Assam's long-term stability and social harmony.

ED attaches ₹ 3.07

allegedly failed to provide any satisfactory explanation for the excess assets.

The ED further stated that the accused systematically laundered the proceeds of crime through a three-stage money laundering process.

In the placement stage, cash proceeds totalling Rs 92.3 lakh were introduced into the banking system through a benami account operated in the name of an illiterate woman running a small grocery shop, besides unexplained cash deposits in the accounts of family members.

The said account also received deposits of Rs 41.3 lakh from PWD contractors linked to the accused.

During the layering stage, the proceeds were routed through family members to obscure the audit trail, while in the integration stage, the laundered money was converted into high-value real estate through a layered ownership structure to conceal beneficial ownership.

Further investigation in the case is under progress.

NPF welcomes Centre

the NPF-led PDA government. The party termed the agreement a major milestone with long-term significance for the state.

Cong rally faces

supportive of such 'narrow mindset' and said, "Such narrow politics is beneath the stature of a chief minister. We can fight our political duels outside."

Gogoi asserted that there should not be any hurdle for anyone in visiting Batadrava Than, no matter whether one is from ruling or opposition camp.

"There is no place for negativity here. We come with the message of unity, prosperity for all here," he added. (PTI)

Drugs worth ₹ 14 crore

they contain methamphetamine, a Schedule II substance under the Controlled Substances Act. (PTI)

Assam announces ex

Purkayastha and my colleague minister Kaushik Rai to visit the families of the victims," he added.

In an X post earlier, Sarma condoled the deaths in the blast.

"I am deeply saddened by the tragic loss of lives in the coal mine accident in East Jaintia Hills. My heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families during this moment of immense grief," Sarma said. (PTI)

Focus not only

carefully to suggestions and add improvements only through personal experience, not merely because someone says so. When I began Pariksha Pe Charcha there was one pattern, but over time I improved it, even conducting sessions in different states, changing the format while retaining the core," he said.

Modi urged students not to waste time dwelling on the past but to think of living what lies ahead.

"I don't look back at what has passed, I always look at what is to come... There are times when teachers only teach what is important and can help you score good marks, but a good teacher focuses on all-around development and teaches everything. Life is not just about exams. Education is just a medium of our development.

"I have become PM. Still, people tell me to work in different ways. But everyone has their own pattern. Some people study better in the morning, some at night. Whatever suits you, believe in that. But also take advice, and if that benefits you, then only add it to your life structure," he said.

Responding to a question about pursuing a future in gaming despite societal pressure to focus only on studies, the prime minister said gaming is not just a hobby, it is a skill. It involves speed as well, so it is good for development.

"Gaming is a skill requiring speed and alertness, which contributes to self-development. Focus on building expertise in high-quality games and build studies," he said.

Modi cautioned against gambling in gaming, noting that laws have been enacted to prevent such practices, and stressed that gaming should be pursued as a constructive skill.

He also said a teacher's effort should be to ensure that the student's speed is such that his own speed is one step ahead of theirs.

Modi asked the students to balance studies, rest, skills and hobbies, which is the key to growth.

"Even there are two skills: life skills and professional skills. I say both go hand in hand. So, skill starts with knowledge," he said.

"Our goal should always be within reach, but not easily achievable. There should be a balance in everything in life. If you bend more towards one side, you will fall... Life skills and professional skills are equally important and can be imbued only with education..." he said.

At the outset, he welcomed all the students at his residence with an Assamese 'gamosa'.

The 9th edition of Pariksha Pe Charcha was also screened at the Bal Yogi Auditorium in Parliament premises.

Launched in 2018, Pariksha Pe Charcha began as student interaction in townhall format before expanding into one of India's largest education engagement exercises. Registrations rose from about 38.8 lakh in 2023 to 2.26 crore in 2024, before touching 3.53 crore in 2025 — a milestone that earned the programme a Guinness World Record. The ninth edition broke the previous record with over 4.5 crore registrations. (PTI)

Union Budget balances growth and inclusion: Sunil Bharti Mittal

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Feb 6: Sunil Bharti Mittal, founder and chairman of Bharti Enterprises, on Friday described the Union Budget for FY 2026-27 as bold and well-balanced, combining economic growth with inclusion.

In a statement issued following the Budget announcement, Mittal said the strong emphasis on skilling, along with sustained investments in science, innovation and research, was timely and would help strengthen domestic capabilities.

He added that these measures would advance import substitution in critical sectors.

Mittal said the focus on infrastructure and logistics, coupled with measures to improve energy efficiency and provide impetus to the data centre ecosystem, would further reinforce confidence in India's expanding digital economy.

Axis Bank launches rooftop solar finance scheme for MSMEs



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Feb 6: Axis Bank on Friday announced the launch of Rooftop Solar Finance, a customised financing solution aimed at helping micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) adopt clean energy while optimising long-term energy costs.

Under the new programme, MSMEs can avail collateral-free loans ranging from ₹10 lakh to ₹2 crore, with flexible repayment tenures of four to seven years.

The scheme is designed to enable enterprises to invest in rooftop solar systems without straining their balance sheets or working capital cycles.

By supporting the installation of self-owned rooftop solar systems, the initiative seeks to help MSMEs reduce operating expenses, gain greater control over energy costs and

strengthen financial resilience, also contributing to India's clean energy transition.

The product will be available across the country through Axis Bank's extensive branch network.

To ensure quality execution and system reliability, the bank has partnered with leading original equipment manufacturers.

Axis Bank has also collaborated with a technology partner to provide MSMEs with greater transparency throughout the solar adoption process, including clarity on system costs, projected savings and execution timelines.

The bank said the new financing solution aligns with its broader commitment to supporting sustainable business practices and enabling MSMEs to transition towards energy self-reliance.

TCI reports 9.3% revenue growth in Q3 FY2026



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Feb 6: Transport Corporation of India Ltd (TCI) on Friday reported steady growth in revenue and profitability for the third quarter of FY2026, supported by festive-season demand and higher traction across key consumption-driven sectors.

For the quarter ended December 31, 2025, TCI posted a consolidated revenue of ₹12,609 million, registering a year-on-year growth of 9.3 per cent compared to ₹11,539 million in the corresponding period last year.

Consolidated EBITDA stood at ₹1,616 million, also up 9.3 per cent from ₹1,478 million, while profit after tax rose 13.4 per cent to ₹1,158 million from ₹1,021 million.

For the nine-month period ended December 31, 2025, consolidated revenue increased by 8.6 per cent to ₹36,289 million, compared to ₹33,413 million a year earlier.

EBITDA for the period grew 9.3 per cent to ₹4,760 million, while PAT rose 11.8 per cent to ₹3,365 million. On a standalone basis, the company reported Q3

FY2026 revenue of ₹11,132 million, up 6.8 per cent year-on-year, with EBITDA at ₹1,699 million, a growth of 7.2 per cent.

Standalone PAT increased 10.4 per cent to ₹1,305 million. For the nine-month period, standalone revenue grew 5.7 per cent to ₹32,122 million, while PAT rose 12.1 per cent to ₹3,425 million.

Commenting on the performance, Vineet Agarwal, managing director of TCI, said the third quarter reflected the inherent seasonality of the logistics business, aided by festive-led demand across automotive, FMCG and MSME-driven integrated logistics solutions.

In a statement, he said while the initial phase of GST 2.0 caused short-term disruptions, improved clarity later in the quarter led to a sharp pickup in movements, particularly in finished goods and inventory rebalancing.

Agarwal noted that automotive, consumer durables, pharmaceuticals and e-commerce emerged as key growth drivers during the quarter, supported by record road and rail volumes and improved warehousing utilisation.

He said the company's diversified operating model, dense branch network and execution capabilities helped it navigate volatility while maintaining margin discipline.

Looking ahead, Agarwal said near-term demand may moderate as festive-led momentum normalises, but improving MSME sentiment, rising consumption in tier-2 and tier-3 markets, sustained public infrastructure investment and expanding trade opportunities following multiple free trade agreements provide a constructive medium-term outlook.

He added that TCI will continue to focus on disciplined capital allocation, operational excellence and long-term value creation aligned with India's growth trajectory.

ENGINEERING WORKS

Tender Notice No. CON/2026/JAN/01; Dated: 01-01-2026. Open tender through e-tendering system is invited from experienced and reputed contractor (s)/firm(s) for the following works. **Tender No. CE/CON/B-S/MIS/2026/01. Name of work:** Execution of balance work of Sairang station building including extension of existing building, subway below lobby area, concourse, facade, passenger circulating area, PP shed, platform surfacing, horticulture/landscaping work, approach road to Sairang station building/circulation area, retaining wall, side drains, longitudinal drains, fencing, ETP/STP, Hydrant pipe along with yard drain, providing lifts, escalator, Provision for electrification of station building including station approach road and station circulating area and Shifting of S and T utilities and relocation in connection with upgradation of SAIRANG Station etc. in connection with construction of Bairabi-Sairang New BG Rail line Project (Mizoram). **Approximate Value:** ₹95,56,96,909.68; E-tender will be closed at 14:30 hrs. on 06-03-2026 and opened at 15:30 hrs. on 06-03-2026. For details of Tender and any Corrigendum, please visit www.treps.gov.in.

Chief Engineer/Con/Lumding Project/Maligaon

Northeast Frontier Railway

(Construction Organisation)

"Serving Customers with a smile"

NAME CORRECTION

I Ruplal Marchkala S/O- Barati Marchkala, Vill- Dighaljaruni, P.O- Parokhowa, P.S.- Doboka, Dist. Hojai, (Assam) That, my actual and correct name is Ruplal Marchkala which is recorded in my Aadhaar card Vide No- 7102 7940 9917. That, my bank account vide No. 33677556622, wherein my name has been recorded as Chandraram Maskala8 instead of Ruplal Marchkala. That, Ruplal Marchkala & Chandraram Maskala are the name of one and same person i.e my name.

Ruplal Marchkala
S/O- Barati Marchkala,
Dighaljaruni, Doboka, Hojai,
(Assam)

Party highlights development record and strategic outreach ahead of upcoming Assembly elections

BJP pushes poll preparations in Haflong (ST)



HT Correspondent

HAFLONG, Feb 6: With Assembly elections approaching, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has intensified its campaign preparations in Dima Hasao, expressing confidence of winning the Haflong (ST) constituency by a decisive margin. Party leaders credit their multi-sectoral development record at the Centre, State and Council levels for strengthening public support.

KA administration enforces strict order to safeguard upcoming exams

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Feb 6: With the academic future of thousands at stake, the Karbi Anglong District Administration has strengthened security at examination centres across the district ahead of the High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) and Higher Secondary (HS) final exams. The HSLC exams are scheduled to begin on February 10, followed by the Higher Secondary finals on February 11.

A stringent Prohibitory Order has been enforced under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) to prevent public disturbance and unlawful interference. No unauthorised persons, including parents and guardians, are allowed within 100 metres of any exam centre. Mobile phones, electronic gadgets and any suspected objects are banned inside examination halls.

The order also warns authorised personnel against aiding students through unfair means, stressing that violations will invite strict legal action. The administration has called for full public cooperation to maintain peace and uphold the integrity of the examinations. The measures will remain in force for two months or until the exams conclude.

Three-day residential youth leadership training concludes

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Feb 6: A three-day residential youth leadership training programme successfully concluded at the District Youth Development Training Center in Nagaon on Thursday. The programme, organised by Mera Yuva Bharat, Nagaon, saw participation from 35 young individuals from across the district.

The training, which began on February 3, covered topics including personality development, youth leadership, digital literacy, financial literacy, communication skills, artificial intelligence, good governance, government schemes and youth parliament. Experienced trainers from the Heartfulness Meditation Center led the sessions. The programme was inaugurated by Mahit Rabha, District Youth Officer of Mera Yuva Bharat, Nagaon, while Dhananjay Talukdar, Account Officer of Mera Yuva Bharat, highlighted the rules and regulations of the training programme.

Prominent social worker Lakshmi Ranjan Kakoti attended as a Youth Icon, inspiring the participants. On the final day, yoga guru Prabhat Chandra Borah conducted a yoga session for the trainees.

During the valedictory function, noted social organiser Amitabh Bora was present as the chief guest and urged the youth to actively contribute to the development of India. Certificates were distributed to all participants, marking the successful conclusion of the programme.

At a meeting of the Dima Hasao BJP Election Management Committee at Atal Bihari Vajpayee Bhawan, Haflong, leaders outlined achievements in tourism, roads, healthcare, sports, youth engagement and women empowerment. They emphasised strategic booth-level planning and rural-urban outreach to convert the development narrative into electoral success.

The meeting was chaired by

MP Vivek "Bunty" Sahu and attended by Dima Hasao Autonomous Council CEM Debolal Gorlosa, district BJP president Dhriti Thawsen, senior leaders and party karyakartas. Party sources reiterated that focused investments in connectivity, livelihood generation and grassroots governance have strengthened voter confidence, placing BJP in a commanding position ahead of the polls.

CWC and Hojai Police rescue minor from child marriage

HT Correspondent

HOJAI, Feb 6: In a swift joint operation, the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) Hojai and Hojai Police thwarted a child marriage and rescued a 12-year-old girl from Karmakar Para in Telibasti on Thursday. The minor was recovered from the residence of Bidhan Das, where her mother, Bandhna Das (also known as Bandana Devi), was arranging the illegal ceremony.

Acting on a tip-off, CWC Chairperson Samir Sarkar mobilised a team along with police personnel, who apprehended the mother and others involved. The girl, whose actual date of birth is December 4, 2013, was medically examined and placed temporarily at the One Stop Centre for her safety. Her biological father, Prem Chouhan, submitted her original birth certificate to confirm her age.

CWC officials revealed that Bandhna Das, now living with Pabitra Das (not the girl's biological father), had produced a fake PAN card showing the child's birthdate as June 1, 2006, with falsified name and parent details. Sarkar condemned the forgery and stated that a written complaint will be filed with the District Commissioner, Hojai. Hojai Police will conduct a thorough investigation, after which the child will be produced before the CWC for further action.

The incident underscores local authorities' commitment to protecting vulnerable children and combating child marriage. Notably, on February 3, 2026, Hojai District Commissioner had launched the Child Marriage-Free Chariot Rally to raise awareness about the menace, yet some families continue to ignore the dangers of such practices.

Mosque committee condemns remarks by Yunis Tamuli

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Feb 6: The Greater Zenganiakia Mosque Committee and Cemetery Committee held a press conference in Sivasagar on Thursday and condemned one Yunis Tamuli for allegedly championing the cause of "Mias" and making provocative remarks on social media.

According to the committee, Yunis Tamuli, a self-styled leader of an organisation called Bagh Sena, had threatened on social media to bring 100 Mia workers to Zenganiakia in Sivasagar.

Clarifying their stand, the Zenganiakia Mosque Committee said that Yunis Tamuli does not represent the people of the greater Zenganiakia area. The committee stated that his comments were entirely personal and had no support from the local residents.

The president of the mosque committee said that the people of the area consider themselves part of the greater Assamese nation and have full faith in the Constitution of India.

Leaders of the committee further stated that the comments made by Yunis Tamuli had spread enmity among different communities and demanded that he be barred from making such remarks in the future.

Youth participation crucial for upcoming polls, says Prasanta Phukan

Dibrugarh MLA urges young voters to engage in electoral and developmental activities

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, Feb 6: Emphasising the decisive role of the younger generation in shaping both electoral outcomes and long-term development, Dibrugarh MLA Prasanta Phukan on Friday addressed a large youth convention of the 88 No Dibrugarh Legislative Assembly Constituency at the Purni Government School playground.

Phukan highlighted the growing political awareness and active engagement of youths, stressing that their thought process, discipline and constructive participation are vital for building a well-organised and progressive society. He underlined that a crucial election is expected within the next 50 days, in which youth participation is likely to play a decisive role.

According to Phukan, around 2,800 young students are already actively involved in preparatory activities linked to the electoral process. A structured plan has been put in place to mobilise young voters at the grassroots level, targeting at least 100 youths at each polling booth



to ensure active democratic participation in support of the Bharatiya Janata Party. The MLA noted that these youths are being oriented towards the party's policies and political vision through system-

Sampoornata Abhiyan 2.0 launched in Baksa district

Renewed mission-mode campaign targets health, education and agriculture

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Feb 6: Sampoornata Abhiyan 2.0 was launched on Friday at Adalbari Community Hall in Baksa district under the Aspirational District Programme of NITI Aayog. As one of the identified Aspirational Districts, Baksa has joined the renewed mission-mode campaign aimed at saturating critical Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) across priority sectors.

The programme began with a welcome address by Additional District Commissioner Mustafa Salim Ahmed, who reflected on Baksa's developmental journey over the past two years and highlighted the district's progress in last year's campaign. He urged all line departments to work collectively to ensure 100 percent saturation of identified indicators and effective delivery of benefits at the grassroots level.

District Commissioner Gautam Das emphasised the pivotal role of departments in implementing Sampoornata Abhiyan 2.0, stressing a mission-driven approach to sustain previous gains and accelerate de-



velopment. BTC Secretary Manas Das, ACS, also addressed the gathering.

The key focus areas include Health and Nutrition, Education and Agriculture and Allied sectors. Health initiatives aim to ensure regular supplementary nutrition for children aged six months to six years, proper measurement of children at Anganwadi Centres and functional toilets and safe drinking water at all centres. In Education,

the campaign prioritises adequate toilet facilities for girls, while the Agriculture sector focuses on full vaccination of bovine animals against Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) within two and a half months.

The launch was attended by MCLA Diganta Goyari, former MLA Thaneswar Basumatary, along with Heads of Departments and officials from concerned departments.

Artist Noni Borpujari receives lifetime achievement award



HT Correspondent

GUWAHATI, Feb 6: The third Rashtriya Chitra Pradarshini '26, held at the Artist Guild in Guwahati from February 1 to 3, culminated with noted artist Noni Borpujari being presented the inaugural Shashidhar Saikia Memorial Lifetime Achievement Award.

The award, recognising Borpujari's outstanding contributions to the field of art, was conferred during the exhibition's valedictory function. Distinguished guests at the event included Manoj Roy, Aminul Haque, Pranajita Bujarbaruah and Tikendrajit Saikia.

In his acceptance speech, Borpujari expressed gratitude, saying, "This award is a booster for me. I pay my respects to Shashidhar Saikia, who pursued his artistic training in Kolkata despite hailing from a remote corner of Nagaon." He also suggested that a compilation of Saikia's paintings and writings be published, similar to the works of Nilpaban Barua.

The exhibition featured works by 25 artists, including Vijay Bhuyan, Hemanta Kumar Sahu, Jyoti Saikia Kalita and Ranjit Sinha. The event was curated by Dr Joon Bora. The award included a cash prize of ₹ 10,000, a memento and a citation, which were presented to Borpujari.

AKADSU petitions DC to curb illegal coal mining, unauthorised brick kilns

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Feb 6: The All Karbi Anglong District Students' Union (AKADSU) formally submitted a memorandum to the District Commissioner on Friday, demanding an immediate halt to widespread illegal coal mining and unauthorised brick kiln operations on agricultural lands across the district.

The union alleged that a syndicate of traders is running illicit extraction sites and smuggling coal into Nagaland, causing significant revenue losses. Bokajan, Diphu and Bakalia were highlighted as hotspots where fertile farmland is being converted into unauthorised industrial zones. AKADSU claimed that outsiders are operating kilns on local fields, threatening farmers' livelihoods and the district's ecological balance.

Citing recent government data showing at least 15 illegal rat-hole mines detected in East and West Karbi Anglong in 2025, the students urged stricter enforcement of environmental clearances and mining permits. The memorandum, signed by AKADSU president Subhash Bora and general secretary Arindam Mahanta, was handed over to the DC in the presence of student leaders from AASU and AKADSU. The union warned that they would closely monitor the administration's response to protect the district's natural resources.



'Echoes of North East' festival inaugurated at Gauhati University

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Feb 6: A two-day literary and cultural festival, 'Echoes of North East', was inaugurated on Friday at Gauhati University. Organised by the Prabha Khaitan Foundation and Oil India Limited in collaboration with the University, the festival aims to celebrate and promote the literature and culture of North East India.

The inaugural session featured an address by Gauhati University Vice Chancellor Prof Nani Gopal

Mahanta, who highlighted how the region's literature and culture reflect folk life, history, beliefs and creativity that enrich India's broader cultural identity. Former president of Assam Sahitya Sabha and Sahitya Akademi Awardee Dr Dhruvajyoti Bora delivered a special address, emphasising the depth and diversity of North East India's literary heritage.

The first day included lecture sessions on topics such as "Women's Voices in North Eastern Indian Literature," "North East

Literature in English," "Necessity of Mother Tongue" and "Hills That Speak: Nature as Voice in North-East Poetry - Poets' Meet," moderated by Assistant Professor Dr Dhurjati Sarma. Eminent writers, academicians, research scholars, students and literature enthusiasts attended the sessions, which concluded with a cultural programme showcasing the region's artistic expressions. The festival will continue on Saturday with further discussions, readings and cultural interactions.

Obituary

Bogeswar Bhuyan, a resident of Na-telia, Nagsankar and a retired revenue department employee, passed away on his way to the hospital on Friday, due to age-related ailments. He was 82.

Bhuyan, a respected sculptor, bamboo and cane artist, was closely associated with Sankari culture and played a distinguished role in popularising bhaona traditions in the Nagsankar area. He had also served as a ward member of Dakhin Nagsankar Gaon Panchayat and was founder member of Nagsankar Adarsha Girls' School.

KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL
KAAC Secretariat :: Diphu

Invitation

Dear Sir/ Madam,

The authority of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu, request your kind presence at the 128th Birth Anniversary of Sarsing Teron (Langkung Habe) – 1st President of Karbi Adorbar on 7th February, 2026 to be held at Sarsing Teron (Langkung Habe) Town Memorial Hall, Diphu, Karbi Anglong as per programme overleaf.

Dr. Tuliram Ronghang, Hon'ble CEM, KAAC, Diphu has consented to grace the occasion as Chief Guest.

Date :- 7th February, 2026
Time :- 08:30 AM Onwards
Venue :- Sarsing Teron (Langkung Habe) Town Memorial Hall, Diphu, Karbi Anglong.

(Mukul Kr. Saikia, IAS)
Principal Secretary
Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council
DIPHU

QUOTE OF THE DAY

What sculpture is to a block of marble, education is to the soul -Joseph Addison

Indo-US trade deal and future

The announcement on India-US trade deal was expected, but the manner in which both President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi did the same in social media has led to big confusion. After a phone call with Narendra Modi, Trump claimed on Monday that the US had reached a trade arrangement with India to roll back the punishing tariffs he had imposed on Indian products from 25 percent to 18 percent, in return for India's dropping its tariffs on some American goods, buying more US products, and ceasing its purchases of Russian oil. In a post on social media, Modi wrote that he was "delighted" by the tariff reduction but was spare on details, including whether his country would stop buying Russian oil as Trump had claimed. He even did not mention that the trade deal had been finalised. There was a noticeable gap in tone between the statements issued by the US and Indian leaders following their phone call. There was much excitement in New Delhi among the BJP as also in the government circles. Everyone was expecting a follow up detailed from the Indian government side, but nothing came out. Even at his Party MP's meeting, Modi did not give more details, excepting saying that patience on behalf of India paid off. What is the exact situation? The government sources give nothing more excepting telling to wait for more details from Washington. It is clear that Trump has agreed to bring down the reciprocal trade rate to 18 per cent as against the current 50 per cent including 25 per cent penalty. It takes into immediate effect, according to Trump. If it is so, it is a big gain for India as against its competitors China at 37 per cent, Vietnam 20 per cent, Bangladesh 20 per cent and even Pakistan 19 per cent.

What concessions India gave to the US in agricultural commodities sector including soyabean, dairy and others. Has Modi agreed to stop all imports of oil from Russia even at a cheaper price? Earlier also Trump claimed that India has stopped imports from Russia, but the imports were coming based on the competitive pricing. In fact even now, as per the international oil trade sources, Russian crude is \$ 16 cheaper compared to the American crude oil. If India stops full imports of Russian oil, India has to incur this additional cost. Has Modi really agreed to this. If he has agreed, he should come out and tell it openly.

The question is whether India retained its strategic autonomy while agreeing to the terms of Trump. Prime Minister has a great responsibility in coming out with details about the deal if it is already done. Or, if it is still not final and 18 per cent tariff is just the framework, he should also say so. Trump will continue to say many more things in his Truth social. Those will remain unchallenged if Narendra Modi does not tell the real position.

POST BAG

Regular publication of career-oriented articles in magazines

Dear Editor,

Earning a livelihood is essential for everyone. However, in order to choose a suitable path of earning, it is extremely important for students to be aware of the various career options available well in advance. Since 2005, I have been providing free career counselling over the phone (09435188630) every Saturday from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM to students and parents from different parts of Assam. In addition, I have participated in more than 200 career-related workshops and discussion programmes, where I interacted directly with students on career-related issues. I have also had the opportunity to serve as a resource person in more than 150 career-oriented webinars.

Through this long experience, I have realized one important fact that there are a large number of students in different corners of Assam who are not adequately aware of the wide range of career options available to them. In this context, I strongly feel that all magazines published from Assam should make arrangements to regularly publish articles related to careers. Such an initiative will greatly benefit students.

At present, despite having educational qualifications and skills, many young men and women in our state are unable to secure employment in government or private institutions as per their expectations. As a result, the problem of unemployment in the state is becoming

increasingly serious. It is important to understand that unemployment cannot be completely solved through jobs alone. Apart from employment, people can become self-reliant by establishing small or large enterprises or through business and trade, thereby also creating employment opportunities for others.

Considering all these aspects, magazines should publish as many informative articles as possible on these issues. Detailed information should be provided about various schemes of the Central and State Governments, as well as financial institutions that offer different types of loans. Furthermore, if articles covering various aspects of self-employment are published regularly, the general public—especially the youth—will benefit immensely.

If some young men and women realize that a dignified and stable livelihood is possible even without a government job, and choose the path of self-employment by setting up enterprises or engaging in business, it can be hoped that the unemployment problem of the state will be reduced to some extent.

Dr. Buljit Buragohain
Career Counsellor and
Assistant Professor, Department
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(On the occasion of the 95th session of Srimanta Sankardeva Sangha at Jamugurihat)

Sankardeva's Socialism

To confine the multifaceted genius of Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardeva and his vast body of work solely within a religious framework would be an injustice to his epoch-making thought. The renaissance he initiated in the social, political, and cultural context of fifteenth-century Assam was, in truth, founded upon a profound socialist philosophy. Although it may not correspond exactly to what modern political science terms "socialism"—since his philosophy was not built upon any economic theory or class struggle—it was nonetheless an innovative social system grounded in spirituality, human love, and universal equality.

In that dark medieval period when society lay crippled under caste discrimination, high-low distinctions, religious fanaticism, and blind superstition, Sankardeva did not merely show the path to liberation through Ekasharana Namadharm; he initiated a radical transformation from the grassroots level of society. The central aim of his socialism was to construct a society free from exploitation, classness, and based on equality, where every individual could live with dignity. Through the medium of devotion, a vigorous effort was made to erase the social distances between king and subject, Brahmin and Chandal, rich and poor—an extremely rare and revolutionary phenomenon in the India of that time.

The strongest foundation of Sankardeva's social philosophy was the concept of equality among human beings, which delivered a powerful shock to the very structure of society. In the contemporary Indian social order, birth-based caste hierarchy determined a person's destiny and deprived people of lower castes of basic human rights. Yet Sankardeva stood firmly against this inhuman practice and declared that in the eyes of God all beings are equal, and that in the realm of devotion neither caste nor lineage has any place. The doors of his Namghar were open to everyone; there a Brahmin and a Chandal could sit together, sing the Name, and partake of prasad. This system did not merely grant religious rights; it bestowed upon the lower strata of society a new social dignity and self-confidence.

He placed greater importance on action and character than on inherited nobility, thereby creating an atmosphere of qualitative equality in society. By warmly welcoming people from diverse ethnic groups—Naga, Mising, Garo, Bhot, Yavana, and others—into his faith, he began the process of forming a "greater Assamese nation." This was truly the dream of an egalitarian society free from discrimination. In this manner, he employed religion as an instrument to build a society without divisions.

Democratic values and decentralization constituted another important feature of Sankardeva's socialism, which he introduced into society through the Namghar and Satra institutions. The Namghar was not merely a place of worship; it served as the focal point of the village, a social parliament, and a court of justice. Village problems, disputes, and development-related matters were discussed there, and decisions were taken with the consent of the people. Although "the people are the king" is considered the fundamental mantra of modern democracy, Sankardeva had already put this principle into practical application in rural Assamese society centuries earlier. Everyone was equal on the floor of the Namghar, and every individual's opinion received due consideration. To ensure that no injustice



was done to any person and that no one could misuse power, the system of community judgment (Rajior Mel) was established. This arrangement decentralized power and made ordinary people active participants in the governance of society. This democratic and participatory social system succeeded in binding Assamese society with strong threads of unity—an uncommon achievement in world history.

Respect for labour and economic self-reliance formed an indispensable part of Sankardeva's socialism, giving it a practical dimension. While saints of the Bhakti movement in other parts of India often advocated renunciation of worldly life, taking up asceticism and living by begging, Sankardeva strongly opposed this parasitic mentality. He emphasized the practice of household dharma and earning one's livelihood through personal labour. He himself engaged in agriculture, and he inspired his beloved disciples to take up various kinds of work. In the Satras, activities such as farming, weaving, carpentry, and bamboo-cane craftsmanship were regularly practised. Through this he demolished the prevailing notion that manual labour was meant only for lowly people. Instead, he regarded labour as an integral part of the service of God.

The Satras were economically self-sufficient, and the goods produced there met the needs of the devotees. This system helped prevent economic exploitation in society and taught people to be industrious and self-reliant. Sankardeva deeply realized that for a healthy society to be built, its economic foundation must also be strong; hence in his socialism, economic self-reliance received equal importance alongside spirituality.

In Sankardeva's social reform movement, the role of women and the family was also accorded considerable dignity. In medieval society, women were confined within the four walls of the home and had virtually no role in religious or social affairs. Yet Sankardeva regarded women as equally entitled to devotion and liberation as men. In his literature, female characters are portrayed as exceptionally strong and intelligent. Through figures such as Sita, Rukmini, and Damayanti, he celebrated women's sacrifice, love, and steadfastness. He imposed no rigid restrictions on women participating in Nam-prasanga or religious discussions. On the contrary, learned women such as Ai Kanaklata later took up

the responsibility of propagating the faith—an outcome of Sankardeva's liberal policy.

He understood that the progress of society as a whole is impossible if a large section remains in darkness. Therefore he endeavoured to awaken women with spiritual consciousness and bring them forward in the task of nation-building. Although complete women's emancipation as understood today was not possible due to the social limitations of the time, the mindset Sankardeva displayed was undoubtedly far more advanced and progressive compared to his era.

The revolution Sankardeva brought about in the field of language and culture was the most effective weapon of his socialism. At that time, knowledge was cultivated exclusively through Sanskrit, which remained the monopoly of the upper castes. Ordinary people could not understand the scriptures and remained dependent on the priestly class. Sankardeva broke this monopoly of knowledge and translated the profound principles of the scriptures into Brajvali and Assamese in a manner accessible to common people. This act democratized knowledge. Even an illiterate villager could now memorize verses from the Kiratan-Ghosha and understand the glory of God.

Furthermore, he employed cultural media such as Bhaona, Sattriya dance, and Borgeet as instruments for propagating religion. The stage of Bhaona became a space where people from all sections of society worked together. In the Akhara, no one inquired about anyone's caste or lineage. This cultural awakening removed narrow-mindedness from people's minds and fostered a shared cultural identity. His strategy of uniting people through art and spreading the message of equality across society was unparalleled.

Non-violence and tolerance occupied a very high place in Sankardeva's social philosophy, guiding the way toward a peaceful society. During his time, the influence of Shaktia practices in Assam had led to widespread animal sacrifice, and killing in the name of religion was considered a sacred act. Sankardeva raised his voice against this violent custom and propagated that God can be attained only through love and devotion. His principle of non-violence applied not only to animals but also to human relationships. Instead of conflict, hostility, and ha-

red, he advocated forgiveness and mutual understanding. He never attacked people of different opinions or beliefs; rather, he attracted them through his own conduct and ideals.

In a kingdom like Assam, with its diverse population, the policy of tolerance was essential for maintaining peace and harmony. In Sankardeva's socialism there was no room for coercion; it was a movement of inner transformation.

Sankardeva's perspective on nature and the environment also forms an important dimension of his socialism, one that remains highly relevant today. His writings contain vivid descriptions of nature's beauty and deep affection toward all living beings. He believed that God does not reside only in temples or Namghars but is present in every element of nature. Recognizing the divine presence in trees, vines, rivers, mountains, and every creature implies reverence for nature and its preservation. This thought taught humanity to live in harmony with nature. A society that oppresses nature can never be happy. Sankardeva taught that humans are not the owners but the protectors of nature. His eco-theology or environmental theology points toward a balanced society in which no conflict exists between humanity and nature. The integration of spirituality with environmental awareness is a unique feature of Sankarite philosophy.

In the matter of communal harmony and social integration, Sankardeva's contribution constitutes a golden chapter of history. In his day, frequent conflicts occurred among the many small kingdoms and ethnic groups in Assam. Sankardeva bound these divided communities together with a cultural thread. His disciple Narottam was a Naga, Gobinda a Garo, Jayahari a Kachari, and Chand Sai a Muslim. In this way he gave people of different ethnicities and religions a place on the same seat. This proved that his socialism was not meant for any particular community but for all humanity. The single line—"Even dogs, jackals, and donkeys possess the indwelling Self; knowing this, bow to all"—encapsulates the essence of his philosophy. When even animals are regarded as parts of God and treated with respect, divisions among human beings become impossible. Thus he laid the foundation of centuries-old unity in Assamese social life, which has continued to protect the Assamese nation in times of crisis.

In conclusion, Srimanta Sankardeva's socialism remains an everlasting charter of humanity. It did not teach people to remain absorbed merely in hopes of otherworldly happiness; rather, it provided practical guidance on how to construct a beautiful, healthy, and pure society in this world. His Namghars, Satras, and literary corpus continue to pulse as the life-breath of our society even today.

In an age when consumerism, individualism, and intolerance are making human life painful, Sankardeva's ideals of sacrifice, service, and equality can show us new light. His socialism teaches that true progress lies not merely in economic development but in the development of human values and social justice. If the present generation studies Sankardeva's social philosophy deeply—not merely worshipping him as a religious preceptor—and applies it in practical life, many of the burning problems of our society can find solutions. Sankardeva's socialism is a living ideal that can lead us along the path of universal brotherhood and human love.

Manipur at the crossroads

By: Satyabrata Borah

The announcement of Y. Khemchand Singh as the new Chief Minister of Manipur arrives at a moment when the State is yearning less for political novelty and more for emotional repair. For nearly two years, Manipur has lived through a cycle of violence, displacement, mistrust and silence that has seeped into everyday life. Markets reopen but conversations remain guarded. Schools function but children carry memories far older than their age. In such a climate, leadership is not merely about numbers in the Assembly or alliances within a party. It is about restoring the idea that the State belongs equally to all who live in it.

The Bharatiya Janata Party's decision to place Y. Khemchand Singh at the helm reflects a calculated attempt to manage its internal equations in Manipur. The party has faced intense strain, both from within and outside, following the prolonged ethnic conflict between the Meitei and Kuki Zo communities. Leadership changes were inevitable. The previous arrangement had exhausted its political capital and lost moral authority in the eyes of many citizens. By choosing Khemchand Singh, the BJP signals continuity without stagnation, and change without rupture. Yet, while the party may have found a way to steady itself, the State itself still waits for unity in any meaningful sense.

Y. Khemchand Singh is not an outsider to Manipur's complex political and social terrain. A seasoned politician with roots in the State's administrative culture, he is known for his relatively low profile and cautious approach. His elevation is less about charisma and

more about manageability. Within the BJP, he is seen as someone acceptable to multiple factions, a figure who can reduce infighting rather than inflame it. For a party that has been under pressure from central leadership, coalition partners, civil society and the public, internal cohesion was the first problem that needed solving. In that limited objective, the transition appears successful.

However, Manipur's crisis has never been only about party management. It has been about broken trust between communities, perceived injustice, fear of erasure and a deep sense of abandonment by institutions meant to protect citizens. Thousands remain displaced. Relief camps have become semi-permanent homes. Families are divided by invisible but rigid boundaries. Roads that once connected hills and valleys now carry the weight of suspicion. In such circumstances, a Chief Minister inherits not just a government, but a wound.

The BJP's handling of Manipur over the past year has drawn criticism across the political spectrum. Many believe that the response was slow, fragmented and overly securitised, focusing more on controlling headlines than addressing human suffering. For ordinary people, the question is not who occupies the Chief Minister's chair, but whether the person sitting there can speak to their pain without calculation. Khemchand Singh's challenge lies precisely here. He must move beyond being a compromise candidate and become a moral presence.

Leadership in a fractured society demands listening before announcing, healing before governing. The State does not need grand speeches or symbolic gestures alone. It needs

assurance that violence will not be normalised, that justice will not be selective, and that reconciliation will not be postponed indefinitely in the name of stability. For many in Manipur, stability without dignity feels hollow.

The BJP's internal unity, achieved through negotiation and central intervention, highlights a contrast that is hard to ignore. While the party has managed to close ranks, communities on the ground remain deeply divided. This contrast risks widening the gap between politics and lived reality. If governance becomes an exercise in managing perceptions rather than resolving grievances, cynicism will deepen. People who have already lost homes and loved ones may lose faith altogether.

Khemchand Singh's appointment also raises expectations about the role of the Centre. Manipur's crisis has long crossed the capacity of the State government alone. Central forces, central intelligence and central political will have all been involved. With a new Chief Minister in place, there is hope that coordination between Imphal and New Delhi will improve, not just in terms of security, but in rehabilitation, dialogue and policy clarity. The Centre cannot afford to treat Manipur as a peripheral problem. What happens here resonates across the Northeast, where questions of identity, autonomy and co-existence remain sensitive.

One of the most delicate tasks before the new government is initiating genuine dialogue between communities. This cannot be reduced to staged meetings or carefully worded statements. Dialogue requires acknowledging uncomfortable truths. It requires recognising that both fear and anger exist on

all sides, and that selective empathy only hardens divisions. The Chief Minister must be seen as someone who belongs to the entire State, not just to one region or one community. This is easier said than done, especially in a landscape where every word is scrutinised and every silence interpreted.

Rebuilding Manipur also means addressing economic paralysis. Small traders, farmers, daily wage earners and students have all paid a heavy price. The longer instability persists, the more irreversible the damage becomes. Young people, in particular, are growing up with a sense that violence is a constant backdrop to life. If governance does not restore opportunities and normalcy, resentment will find new forms of expression.

There is also the question of accountability. Many citizens want answers. They want to know how violence was allowed to spiral, why warnings were missed, and who bears responsibility. A new Chief Minister cannot simply turn the page without addressing the past. At the same time, an endless focus on blame can stall progress. The balance between truth and forward movement is fragile, but unavoidable. Ignoring it would be a mistake.

Y. Khemchand Singh's personal style may work in his favour if he chooses humility over assertion. In times of crisis, people respond less to authority and more to sincerity. Visible engagement with affected communities, transparent communication and a willingness to admit limitations can slowly rebuild trust. The State does not expect miracles, but it does expect honesty.

For the BJP, Manipur is a test case. It reflects how the party han-

dles governance in diverse and sensitive regions. Internal unity may secure power, but it does not automatically confer legitimacy. Legitimacy comes from the consent and confidence of the governed. If the party treats Khemchand Singh's appointment as the end of a problem rather than the beginning of responsibility, it risks repeating past mistakes.

Manipur's history is marked by resilience. Despite decades of insurgency, political instability and economic neglect, its people have preserved a rich cultural life and a strong sense of identity. What they seek now is not dominance of one narrative over another, but a shared future where differences do not translate into fear. The new Chief Minister stands at a crossroads where political survival and moral leadership intersect.

In the coming months, every decision, every appointment and every statement will matter. Silence will be interpreted as indifference, and haste as insensitivity. The State's wounds will not heal overnight, but they can deepen quickly if mishandled. Joining hands, as the headline suggests, must go beyond party lines and symbolic unity. It must involve genuine efforts to bring communities back into conversation, to replace suspicion with safeguards, and to ensure that the promise of peace is not just postponed again.

Manipur still waits, not for a perfect leader, but for one who understands that power is secondary to purpose. Y. Khemchand Singh's tenure will be judged not by how effectively he manages his party, but by whether he can help his State rediscover a sense of togetherness that has been painfully lost.

Exploring wetlands as career pick

By: Ranjan K Baruah

Whether we believe it or not there is still a challenge for clean drinking water in many parts of the world. Our planet has more water than land but still fresh water is an issue in many places. One of the water bodies that is found all over the world and also in India are the wetlands. These are home to some of the richest biodiversity on the planet and the ecosystem services they provide play an essential role in sustainable development impacting directly the lives of millions of people worldwide, most especially the poor, who depend on the essential ecosystem services they provide.

We should also know that about 1 in 8 people make their livelihoods from wetlands in ways that also de-

liver food, water supplies, transport and leisure wetland landscapes positively impact mental wellbeing and safeguard the 60% of humanity along coastlines against storm surges, hurricanes and tsunamis.

There are currently over 2,500 wetlands of international importance around the world. They cover over 2.5 million square kilometers, an area larger than Mexico. The Convention on Wetlands, that celebrates its 50th Anniversary in 2026, is a treaty that works to reverse wetland loss and degradation worldwide. Discover these fascinating places that need to be protected. Some of the important wetlands in the North East include Loktak Lake in Manipur, Deepor Beel in Assam and Rudrasagar Lake in Tripura.

On 30 August 2021, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2nd February as World

Wetlands Day to raise awareness of the urgency of reversing the accelerating loss of wetlands and to promote their conservation and restoration. The day marks the date of the adoption of the "Convention on Wetlands of International Importance" held in 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea.

Although wetlands cover only around 6 per cent of the Earth's land surface, 40 percent of all plant and animal species live or breed in wetlands. Wetland biodiversity matters for our health, our food supply, for tourism and for jobs. Wetlands are vital for humans, for other ecosystems and for our climate, providing essential ecosystem services, such as water regulation, including flood control and water purification.

Wetlands are disappearing three times faster than forests and are

Earth's most threatened ecosystems. In just 50 years — since 1970 — 35% of the world's wetlands have been lost. This is alarming which means actions are needed. We can think of wetlands as a career option. Wetland careers involve the study, management, protection, and restoration of aquatic ecosystems, focusing on hydrology, biodiversity, and environmental sustainability.

One may choose subjects like life sciences, geography, engineering, architecture, environmental sciences, etc. This is a more multidisciplinary area and aspirants must be multi-disciplined and skilled. Some of the job roles in the area include wetland scientists, hydrologists, ecologists, planners, designers, educators, etc. One may work in the educational institutions or government departments or nonprofit and



nongovernmental organisations. The job position for wetland experts is strong due to the increasing spotlight on environmental protection, climate change mitigation, and the role of wetlands in carbon sequestration.

International Scholarships: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam is inviting ap-

plications from eligible Indian students for the Government of Brunei Darussalam Scholarship for Foreign Students for the Academic Session 2026-2027. The scholarship is offered for pursuing Diploma, Undergraduate Degree and Postgraduate Master's Degree programmes in selected institutions. Interested and eligible students are

required to apply online directly through the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam. Aspirants may apply on or before 15th February. (**The writer is a Career Mentor and Skill Trainer and can be reached at 8473943734 or bkranjan@gmail.com for any career related queries**)

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

SBI CBO Recruitment 2026 – 2273 Circle Based Officer Posts, Online Apply

Last Date: 18/02/2026.

State bank of India (SBI) has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 2273 Circle Based Officer (CBO) vacancy on regular basis for its various circles across the country. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here.

Name of post: Circle Based Officer

No of posts: 2273 posts

No of posts @ North Eastern Circle: 79 posts

Pay: Presently, the starting basic pay is Rs. 48,480/- in the scale of Rs. 48480-20007-62480-23402-67160-26807-85920 applicable to Junior Management Grade Scale-I plus 2 advance increments.

Advertisement No: CRPD/CBO/2025-26/18

Helpdesk: In case of any problem in filling up the form, payment of fee/intimation charges or receipt of Admission/ call letter, queries may be made at telephone no. 022-22820427 (between 11:00 AM to 05:00 PM on working days) or lodge their query on <http://cgrs.ibps.in>.

Eligibility Criteria of SBI CBO Recruitment

Age Limit: Candidate age should not be below 21 years and Not above 30 years as of 31.12.2025 i.e. candidates must have been born not later than 31.12.2004 and not earlier than

01.01.1996 (both days inclusive).

Age Relaxation: The category wise age relaxation is as mentioned below.

SC: 5 years

ST: 5 years

OBC: 3 years

PwBD/ UR-EWS: 10 years

PwBD/ OBC: 13 years

PwBD/ SC-ST: 15 years

Educational Qualification: Graduation in any discipline from a recognised University or any equivalent qualification recognised as such by the Central Government including Integrated Dual Degree (IDD). Candidates possessing qualifications such as Medical, Engineering, Chartered Accountant, Cost Accountant would also be eligible.

Experience: Minimum 2 years' experience (Post Essential Academic Qualification Experience) as on 31.12.2025 as an officer in any Scheduled Commercial Bank or any Regional Rural Bank as listed in Second Schedule of Reserve Bank of India.

Local Language: The candidates applying for vacancies of a particular Circle, should be proficient (reading, writing and understanding) in any one of the specified opted local language of that Circle (mentioned against each Circle). The test of knowledge of specified opted local language of the applied circle will be conducted as a part of selection process. It will be conducted for provisionally selected candidates (based on performance in online test, Screening and interview) before joining the Bank. Candidate who fails to qualify this test will not be offered appointment. Candidates who produce 10th or 12th standard mark sheet/ certificate evidencing having studied the specified opted local language of the applied circle as one of the subjects will not be required to undergo the language test.

Application Fee:

Category	Fee
UR/OBC/EWS	Rs 750/-
SC/ST/PwBD	Nil

How to Apply for SBI Recruitment ?

Interested and eligible candidates can apply online through the SBI Career website <https://bank.sbi/careers> or <https://www.sbi.co.in/careers> starting from 29th January 2026 onwards. To apply online they may follow below mentioned steps.

Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .

Click on Online Application Form link .

A new webpage will be opened.

Enter all your personal and educational details as required .

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

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

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

TRTC Guwahati Recruitment 2026 – Trainer, Instructor & Other Posts

Last Date: Walk in interview

Tool Room & Training Centre (TRTC), Guwahati has released three employment notifications for the recruitment of Trainer, Instructor & Other Posts. Interested and eligible candidates may apply here.

1. Computer Operator and Programming Assistant (COPA) – Trainer

No of posts: 1

Educational Qualification: B.E./B. Tech./Degree in Computer Science/Computer Science & Engineering/ Information Technology/MCA/BCA from a recognized university. Preference will be given to candidates having relevant experience in computer operation and training.

Experience: Minimum one year of relevant work experience in Engineering College, ITI or any other Technical Institute.

Age limit: 28 Years as on date of advertisement

Interview schedule:

Educational Qualification: Degree/Diploma in Soft Skills, Personality Development or Any Graduate. The candidate must have experience in Soft Skills Training, Communication Skills and Employability Skill Development, preferably in an ITI or similar Technical Training Institute.

Preferred Experience: Minimum of one year of relevant work experience.

Age Limit: 28 Years as on date of advertisement.

Interview schedule:

Date: 14/02/2026

Time: 09:30 AM

2. Administrative Assistant

No of posts: 1

Educational Qualification: B.E./B. Tech in Engineering from a recognized institution. The candidate should have expertise on MS Office, Email communication, English Drafting and Noting.

Experience: Minimum two year of relevant work experience.

Age limit: 35 Years as on date of advertisement.

Interview schedule:

Date: 13/02/2026

Time: 09:30 AM

3. Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Machine Learning (ML) (Trainer)

No of posts: 1

Educational Qualification: B.E./B. Tech/MCA/ M.Sc in Computer Science/Information Technology or related fields from a recognized university. With hands on experience in Python, JAVA, JAVA Script, C++, C, MATLAB, NLP, SQL, Algorithm, Neural Network & Generative AI.

Experience: Minimum one year of relevant work experience.

Age limit: 30 Years as on date of advertisement.

Interview schedule:

Date: 14/02/2026

Time: 09:30 AM

4. Electronics (Trainer)

No of posts: 1

Educational Qualification: B.E./B. Tech in Electronics/Electronics & Communication/ from a recognized university. The candidate should have expertise on Embedded System, VLSI Design, Analog & Digital Electronics, Microcontroller, IoT, MATLAB & Industry 4.0.

Age limit: 28 Years as on date of advertisement.

Interview schedule:

Date: 14/02/2026

Time: 09:30 AM

5. Principal

No of posts: 1

Educational Qualification: B.E./B. Tech./Diploma in any relevant discipline. The candidate must have experience in Administration, Teaching, Training, and Skill Development in an Industrial Training Institute (ITI) or a similar Technical Education Setup.

Preferred Experience: Minimum of two year of relevant work experience.

Age Limit: 35 Years as on date of advertisement

Interview schedule:

Date: 11/02/2026

Time: 09:30 AM

6. Electrical Instructor

No of posts: 1

Educational Qualification: Diploma or Degree in Electrical Engineering from a recognized institution/university. The candidate should have thorough knowledge of ITI Curriculum, Practical Training, Workshop Management and Electrical Safety norms.

Preferred Experience: Minimum of one year of relevant work experience.

Age limit: 28 Years as on date of advertisement.

Interview schedule:

Date: 11/02/2026

Time: 09:30 AM

7. Drawing Instructor

No of posts: 1

Educational Qualification: Diploma in Mechanical Engineering/ ITI in Draughtsman Mechanical. The candidate must have sound knowledge of Engineering Drawing, Trade Theory, Workshop Practices and familiarity with ITI syllabus.

Preferred Experience: Minimum of one year of relevant work experience.

Age limit: 28 Years as on date of advertisement

Interview schedule:

Date: 12/02/2026

Time: 09:30 AM

8. Soft Skill Trainer

No of posts: 1

Educational Qualification: Degree/Diploma in Soft Skills, Personality Development or Any Graduate. The candidate must have experience in Soft Skills Training, Communication Skills and Employability Skill Development, preferably in an ITI or sim-

ilar Technical Training Institute.

Preferred Experience: Minimum of one year of relevant work experience.

Age Limit: 28 Years as on date of advertisement.

Interview schedule:

Date: 12/02/2026

Time: 09:30 AM

How to Apply for TRTC Guwahati Recruitment ?

Interested and eligible candidates may appear in the walk in interviews as per the schedule mentioned above.

Eligible and interested candidates may submit their applications online by scanning the QR code and filling out the Google Form. Candidates should bring their CV/ Resume at the time of reporting.

Walk-in Schedule:

Date & Time: As above

Venue: Tool Room & Training Centre, Guwahati, Near EPIP, Amingaon, Industrial Area, North Guwahati Road, Amingaon, Guwahati - 31.

UPSC Civil Services (Pre) Examination 2026 – 933 Posts, Online Apply

Last Date: 24/02/2026.

Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has released the official notification for the recruitment of 933 vacancy through Civil Service (Prelims) Examination 2026. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here .

Name of examination: Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination 2026

No of vacancy: 933 posts

Name of services:

- (i) Indian Administrative Service
 - (ii) Indian Foreign Service
 - (iii) Indian Police Service
 - (iv) Indian Audit and Accounts Service, Group 'A'
 - (v) Indian Civil Accounts Service, Group 'A'
 - (vi) Indian Corporate Law Service, Group 'A'
 - (vii) Indian Defence Accounts Service, Group 'A'
 - (viii) Indian Defence Estates Service, Group 'A'
 - (ix) Indian Information Service, Group 'A'
 - (x) Indian Postal Service, Group 'A'
 - (xi) Indian Post & Telecommunication Accounts and Finance Service, Group 'A'
 - (xii) Indian Railway Management Service (Traffic), Group 'A'
 - (xiii) Indian Railway Management Service (Personnel), Group 'A'
 - (xiv) Indian Railway Management Service (Accounts), Group 'A'
 - (xv) Indian Railway Protection Force Service, Group 'A'
 - (xvi) Indian Revenue Service (Customs & Indirect Taxes) Group 'A'
 - (xvii) Indian Revenue Service (Income Tax) Group 'A'
 - (xviii) Indian Trade Service, Group 'A' (Grade III)
 - (xix) Armed Forces Headquarters Civil Service, Group 'B' (Section Officer's Grade)
 - (xx) Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli Civil Service (DANICS), Group 'B'
 - (xxi) Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli Police Service (DANIPS), Group 'B'
 - (xxii) Pondicherry Civil Service (PONDICS), Group 'B'
 - (xxiii) Pondicherry Police Service (PONDIPS), Group 'B'
- Exam Notice No: 05/2026-CSE Dated 04.02.2026
Helpline No: 11-24041001 or email ID – upscsoap@nic.in
Eligibility Criteria of UPSC Civil Services (Pre) Examination
Age Limit: A candidate must have attained the age of 21 years and must not have attained the age of 32 years on the 1st of August, 2026 i.e., the candidate must have been born not earlier than 2nd August, 1994 and not later than 1st August, 2005.

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 must hold a degree of any of the Universities incorporated by an Act of the central or State Legislature in India or other educational institutions established by an Act of Parliament or declared to be deemed as a University under Section 3 of the University Grants Commission Act, 1956 or possess an equivalent qualification.

Appearing Candidates: Candidates who have appeared at a qualifying examination the passing of which would render them educationally qualified for the Commission's Examination but have not been informed of the result as also the candidates who intend to appear at such a qualifying examination will also be eligible for admission to the written part of Civil Services Examination, 2026. However, all such candidates, who are declared qualified by the Commission for Interview/Personality Test, will be required to produce proof of passing of the requisite qualifying examination within the time limit prescribed in Rule 13 of CSE, 2026.

UPSC Civil Services (Pre) Examination Scheme

The Civil Services Examination will consist of two successive stages :

- (i) Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination (Objective type) for the selection of candidates for the Main Examination; and
- (ii) Civil Services (Main) Examination (Written and Interview) for the selection of candidates for the various Services and posts noted above.

Examination Centres @ Assam: Jorhat and Dispur .

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

Category	Fee
SC/ST/Women/PwBD category	Nil
Other category	Rs. 100

How to Apply for UPSC Civil Services Examination ?

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for these vacancy through online mode by visiting official UPSC Recruitment Portal. Candidates may follow below mentioned steps to apply for UPSC Civil Services Recruitment.

Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .

Click on the "Online Application Form" and register yourself.

Next again click on "Online Application Form" and Log in.

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

Make payment of application fee as per your category and submit the form.

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

Important Dates of UPSC Civil Services (Pre) Examination 2026

Starting date of submission of online application: 4th February 2026

Last date of submission of online application: 24th February 2026, 6 PM

Date of Preliminary Exam: 24th May 2026

'Government ready to spend funds required to modernise border security on basis of technology'

Frontline vigilance must be backed by technology: Home Minister Shah

JAMMU, Feb 6: Emphasising the need to strengthen border security through modern tools, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said that while the constant vigilance of personnel deployed on the frontlines remains crucial, emerging challenges driven by advanced technology must be countered with equally advanced technological solutions.

Shah was addressing the troops of the Border Security Force (BSF) during his visit to the forward posts along the International Border in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua. He also lauded the role of the armed forces during Operation Sindoor when the Jammu frontier destroyed 118 enemy posts and three terror launch pads across the border.

He said the government and the BSF both share the common objective to keep the borders of the country secure, adding that the challenges faced some years ago are completely different from those faced today.

"The challenges we faced at the borders some years ago are completely different from the challenges we face today. Your dedication to remaining constantly vigilant on the frontlines is extremely important. However, as challenges are emerging through advanced technology, we must also find technological solutions to counter them," the home minister said.

He was accompanied by Lt Governor Manoj Sinha, Home Secretary Govind Mohan, Director Intelligence Bureau Tapan Kumar Deka and Director General of BSF Praveen Kumar during his visit to the border outposts of Gurnam and Bobiyian in the Hiranagar sector.

His visit comes amid heightened

focus on border management to scuttle infiltration of terrorists and smuggling of weapons and narcotics, and stepped-up anti-terror operations that left four hardcore Pakistani terrorists of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) dead in nearly a dozen encounters in Kathua, Udhampur and Kishtwar districts over the past two weeks.

Shah reached here late Thursday night on a two-day visit to J-K and was received by Lt Governor Sinha, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and senior BJP leaders, including Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Sunil Sharma.

In Kathua, the home minister virtually inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of six welfare schemes for border guards at Bobiyian, the officials said.

Addressing the BSF troops at Bobiyian, the home minister said he had come to oversee the border surveillance and directly engage with the force personnel.

"I have made a promise that the 60th year of the BSF would be observed as the year of BSF modernisation, and of the welfare of BSF personnel and their families. A team in the Ministry of Home Affairs is working on both these aspects," he said.

For the welfare of BSF personnel, he said the government will also bring a special scheme.

"Additionally, the government is ready to spend funds required to modernise border security on the basis of technology. I believe that improved border infrastructure and modern equipment will greatly help you in performing your duties. Through this, we will also try to reduce your difficulties to some extent, so that you can discharge your responsibilities in a better



manner," he said.

Extending his best wishes to BSF personnel, the home minister said it is because of their sense of duty and dedication that the entire nation sleeps peacefully and feels secure.

"Whenever I visit a BSF post -- whether it is the desert of Kutch, Rajasthan, or the region of Jammu and Kashmir -- I always return after learning from the true spirit of duty, consciousness and the highest standards which you demonstrate while carrying out your duties with dedication and commitment," the home minister said.

He said if there is the finest example of dedication and duty-bound service among all forces, it is the BSF jawans who remain deployed on the borders day and night.

"This spirit is rooted in your 60 years of valour-filled history, which has earned you respect and admiration across the entire nation," he said.

He said whenever there has been a threat of intrusion or infiltration, the BSF has stood firm like an impregnable wall -- unyielding and resolute -- and has continuously worked to keep the nation secure.

Referring to Operation Sindoor in May last year, Shah said the exemplary courage displayed by the BSF has become a golden chapter in its six-decade-long history.

"Even in that difficult moment, all of you kept alive and elevated the spirit that we are the guardians of the border, ensuring that it remained radiant and unshaken. Under the Jammu and Kashmir frontier, 118 posts and three terror launch pads were destroyed by the BSF," he said.

Shah paid tributes to Sub-inspector Mohammad Imtiyaz and Constable Deepak Chingtham, who made the supreme sacrifice in the Jammu sector and were honoured with Vir Chakra for their exceptional bravery.

Not only on the borders, the home minister said, even in the interior regions of the country -- whether it is the difficult terrain of Manipur, the north-eastern states, or particularly the Maoist-affected areas suffering from left-wing extremism in Odisha and Chhattisgarh -- the BSF has demonstrated courage, commitment and valour.

"During the natural calamity in Punjab (in August-September last year), you displayed humanity and showed deep compassion towards the people. When the Chief Minister of Punjab (Bhagwant Mann) came to meet me, he himself said that had the BSF not been there, the difficulties faced by everyone during the floods would have increased manifold," he said. (PTI)

Chaos erupts in Bengal assembly over BJP MLA Agnimitra Paul's comments on minorities in state

KOLKATA, Feb 6: The third day of the West Bengal assembly's budget session witnessed chaotic scenes on Friday after TMC MLAs protested their BJP counterpart Agnimitra Paul's alleged comment that budgetary allocations for madrasas might foster the growth of anti-national elements.

Trinamool legislators raised slogans and came down from their seats to rush to the well of the floor of the House to protest Paul's comments while lawmakers from the opposition saffron camp shouted counter slogans in support of their MLA from Asansol Dakshin seat.

Paul, while speaking at the debate on the interim state budget tabled on Thursday, said that funds allocated for madrasas may not help in uplifting the minorities and instead boost the growth of elements who end up becoming criminals instead of doctors, engineers and teachers.

The BJP leader's statement immediately triggered a row within the House with senior TMC ministers Firdad Hakim and Sobhan Chatterjee condemning her comments and later submitting a letter of protest to Speaker Biman Banerjee.

"You are spreading false statements and you should seek apology for what you said," Hakim was heard saying in protest against Paul's statement.

"Many Muslims had shed blood and given their lives for our country during the freedom struggle. Not all minorities are criminals," he added. Finance Minister Chandrima Bhattacharya also deplored Paul's statement, describing it as a "blot on the secular character of the West Bengal assembly".

Later, during Paul's absence from the house, the Speaker said that the assembly unequivocally condemned the statement of the BJP leader and added that her comments will be expunged from the records.

"We must remind the honourable members who have taken oath under the Constitution to not make any statement which will hurt the sentiments of the people. The assembly represents pluralistic values and principles and is not toxic, divisive and prejudiced to any religion," Banerjee said amid persistent demands by the treasury bench to take strong action against the MLA. (PTI)

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (PHE) DIPHU RURAL WATER SUPPLY DIVISION, DIPHU

NO. EE/PHE/DIP/RWS/SBMG-35/2025-26/ Date:

SHORT TENDER NOTICE NO-4 of 2025-26 UNDER SBM(G)

Sealed tender affixing KAAC receipt worth ₹ 10.00 (Rupees ten) only are invited from registered contractors/ firms of PHE Department, Karbi Anglong district for the below mentioned work of **CONSTRUCTION OF PLASTIC WASTE MANAGEMENT UNIT (PWMU)** duly approved and accorded by the Chief Engineer (PHE) Sanitation, Hengrabari, Guwahati-36 the vide **No. RGRWSM-121/Pt-II/2017-18/3527 Dated 05/02/2026** under Diphu Rural Water supply division, Diphu will be received up to **20-02-2026** up to **4:00 P.M.** and tender so received will be opened on the same date at **3:00 PM** in presence of intending tenderer or their authorized representative who likes to be present.

Detail tender papers, specification, terms and condition etc. may be obtained from the office of the undersigned on all working days **from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM** from **10-02-2026 and up to 12.00 noon of 20-02-2026** on payment of **₹100.00 (Rupees one hundred)** only in demand draft which should be pledge in favour of **"Executive Engineer (PHE), Diphu Rural Water Supply Division, Diphu"**. The undersigned have reserved the right to accept or reject or cancel the same without any reason and claim thereof. In case of any unavoidable circumstances if tender could not be received or open on the pre-determined time and date the same shall be received and opened in the next working day at the same time, for which no separate communication will be made.

Name of Work: Construction of Plastic Waste Management Unit (PWMU) (4 Nos)

Place of Work: a) Samelangso Block b) Langsomepi Block c) Nillip Block d) Rongmongway Block

Estimated Amount: 7,88,000/- (Seven Lakh Eighty-Eight Thousand) only

Terms and Condition: -

- Bidder should quote their rates distinctly both in figures and in words on percentage basis as per below /above / and the estimated rates/departmental approved rates.
- The Bidder should furnish their full name and address distinctly in the tender papers.
- Earnest money should invariable be enclosed to the tender papers.
- Income tax, Professional tax and GST clearance certificate should be enclosed with the tender papers.
- The work must be completed within stipulated time.
- The work should be started after signing necessary agreement and in consultation with AEE (PHE) /SO (PHE) i/c.
- Payment will be made subject to availability of fund.
- No advance payment will be made for the work.
- Non-tribal tenderer must produce up to date KAAC trading license along with the tender documents.
- All other terms and condition will be followed as per APWD-2 form of tender.
- The undersigned reserved the right to accept / reject any or all tender in part of in full without assigning any reason thereof and he does not bind himself to accept the lowest tender rate.

Sd/-

Member Secretary, DWSC
Cum Executive Engineer(PHE)
Diphu Rural W/S Division

Memo No.EE/PHE/DIP/RWS/SBMG-35/2025-26/6840-48 Date: 06/02/26

719 voters deleted from rolls during SIR in Chhattisgarh, claims Congress

RAIPUR, Feb 6: The Congress on Friday alleged that the names of 719 voters from an assembly constituency in Chhattisgarh's Raipur district have been deliberately deleted from the electoral rolls during the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR), calling it a "political conspiracy".

Speaking to reporters at Rajiv Bhavan, the party's state headquarters, senior Congress leader Dharendra Sahu, a former MLA from Abhanpur, claimed that 719 voters from the constituency, whose names were removed, are alive and have been residing in the same villages and wards for years.

The Congress has lodged a complaint with local election officials and submitted a complaint to the state's Chief Electoral Officer seeking a high-level, impartial inquiry, he said.

Sahu said the issue was "extremely serious and alarming", and alleged that under the pretext of SIR, a large-scale attempt was being made to delete names of voters across the state.

He claimed the revision process has been deliberately made com-



plex and technical, making it difficult for ordinary citizens, particularly the poor, minorities, rural residents, senior citizens, and weaker sections, to understand, resulting in the deletion of names from the voters' list.

Voters belonging to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and minority communities were being selectively targeted, the Congress leader alleged.

In Abhanpur, Sahu stated that a preliminary verification by Congress workers revealed that the deleted voters continue to live in the same area, and their names were removed based on false complaints.

"This is not an administrative error but a well-planned political conspiracy," he alleged.

Surveys were conducted in concerned villages and localities to identify Congress supporters, and the names of such identified voters, mostly from minority, poor and backward sections, were deleted under the SIR process, he claimed.

Sahu alleged that the pattern may not be confined to Abhanpur alone, and could be prevalent across Chhattisgarh.

He demanded the immediate restoration of the names of all eligible voters deleted from the rolls, saying that Congress would continue to oppose the alleged conspiracy at every level, from the streets to the legislature and before the Election Commission of India.

District Congress president (Raipur urban) Shrikumar Shankar Menon and Kawardha district Congress president Naveen Jaiswal also alleged irregularities in the SIR process in their respective districts, claiming that names of voters were being selectively removed. (PTI)

SC refuses to entertain PIL related to collegiums

NEW DELHI, Feb 6: The Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain a plea challenging a recommendation apparently made by the Madras High Court collegium, saying that such issues are not "justiciable" and should be left to the competent authority to deal on the administrative side.

"The issue sought to be raised is not justiciable. Such issues are required to be considered by the competent authority on the administrative side. We do not deem it necessary to entertain the writ petition," a bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Jyomalya Bagchi said.

It was hearing the plea which alleged that the collegium recommendation of the high court was void as one of the senior judges, Justice Nisha Banu, was not part of the deliberations.

The Centre, on October 14 last year, notified the transfer of Justice Banu from the Madras High Court to the Kerala High Court. However, she joined the Kerala High Court only in December 2025 after a reminder from President Droupadi Murmu.

The PIL, filed by A Prem Kumar through lawyer Rangoli Seth, said that the collegium recommendation by the Madras High Court was made without Justice Banu being part of the deliberations.

Senior advocate Rachna Srivastava, appearing for the petitioner, said the collegium composition was wrong, as Justice Banu was then a judge of the Madras High Court. (PTI)

11-yr-old girl with advanced bone cancer which spread to both lungs gets new life after surgery

NEW DELHI, Feb 6: In a story that reflects not only medical excellence but also the quiet courage of a child and a mother who refused to give up, doctors at Fortis Escorts Hospital, Okhla have successfully treated an 11-year-old girl diagnosed with stage IV bone cancer of the left leg which spread to both lungs.

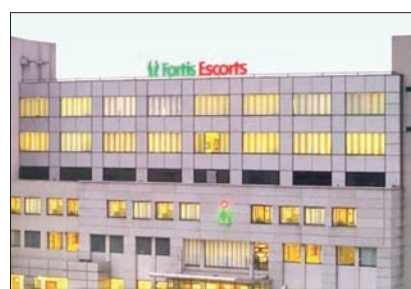
The complex and emotionally challenging case was managed by a dedicated multidisciplinary team led by Dr Archit Pandit, director and head of department (HoD), surgical oncology, along with Dr Vineet Goel, consultant, surgical oncology, the hospital said in a statement.

When the young patient first arrived at the hospital, she was unable to walk, her childhood abruptly interrupted by pain, repeated hospital visits and fear. Dependent on a wheelchair and crutches due to an aggressive malignant bone tumour in her leg, she had withdrawn and was exhausted by the ordeal. The family had earlier been told that amputation was the only possible solution, news that left both the child and her mother devastated, the statement said.

Refusing to see amputation as the only path forward, the oncology team at Fortis chose

a more advanced limb-preserving approach -- one that focused not only on saving her life but also on protecting her dignity, mobility and future.

Under the care of a highly skilled multidisciplinary team, including orthopaedic oncology specialists, the child underwent limb conservation surgery, successfully avoiding amputation.



The surgery involved removal of the cancer-affected bone followed by reconstruction, giving her a chance to stand and slowly believe again, the statement said.

However, the journey was far from over. The cancer had already spread silently from the bone to both lungs, demanding further aggressive treatment.

The young patient went on to receive systematic chemotherapy and staged lung surgeries as part of a carefully planned treatment

strategy, the statement said.

A left lung metastasectomy was performed a few months after the bone surgery, followed by a right lung metastasectomy, during which multiple tumour deposits were removed, it said.

These procedures were carried out using minimally invasive robotic and VATS (Video-Assisted Thoracoscopic Surgery) techniques, helping reduce physical trauma and allowing faster recovery.

Between hospital stays, chemotherapy cycles and three major surgeries, the 11-year-old fought her battle independently, often exhausted, sometimes fearful, but always supported by her mother, who remained by her side through every setback and small victory.

Giving details of the case, Dr Archit Pandit, director and HoD, surgical oncology, said, "Advances in surgical oncology, precision chemotherapy and minimally invasive lung surgery are transforming outcomes for children with advanced cancers, provided treatment is timely and comprehensive. Post-treatment, today, the girl is walking in-

dependently without support, cancer-free, and on the path to recovery -- an outcome that underscores a powerful message: even Stage IV bone cancers with lung metastasis can be treated and cured when managed with the right combination of surgery and chemotherapy."

Dr Vineet Goel, consultant, surgical oncology at the hospital, said, "When this child first came to us, she was frightened, in pain and unable to walk. Beyond treating the cancer, our responsibility was to protect her childhood and her future."

"Choosing limb preservation over amputation meant giving her a chance to walk, run and live without lifelong disability. Seeing her walk independently today is deeply rewarding, not only for the doctors but also for everyone who believed that courage, science and compassion could change her story," he said.

He said an important and deeply moving aspect of the patient's journey was that she comes from a humble socioeconomic background. "Aman Trehan and Abhishek Trehan of Trehan Builders extended financial support to her family, which enabled them to afford the costly treatment," he added. (PTI)

Nagaland CM hails agreement with Centre, ENPO as historic milestone for eastern Nagaland FNTA MoA reflects commitment to inclusive development: Rio



HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, Feb 6: Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio on Thursday described the signing of the historic memorandum of agreement (MoA) for the formation of the Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority (FNTA) as a testament to the state government's commitment to ensuring equitable and inclusive development across all regions of Nagaland.

The MoA was signed in New Delhi between the Government of Nagaland, the Government of India and the Eastern Nagaland Peoples' Organisation (ENPO) in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Chief Minister Rio and senior leaders of the ENPO.

Addressing the signing ceremony held at the Ministry of Home Affairs, Rio expressed hope that

the agreement would reflect mutual trust among all stakeholders and address the long-standing aspirations of the people of eastern Nagaland. He said the pact would help take development directly to the doorsteps of citizens, benefiting not only the eastern region but the state as a whole.

The Chief Minister congratulated the people of eastern Nagaland on achieving what he termed

a significant milestone and commended them for the sustained journey and efforts that led to this landmark agreement. He assured the government's full cooperation and support in the collective pursuit of progress and development for every section of Naga society.

"All the Naga tribes join you in celebration, as this is not just an achievement of the eastern people, but a victory for the entire Naga society," Rio said.

Rio also expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah for their statesmanship and consistent support, which he said played a key role in the culmination of the agreement. He further acknowledged the efforts of the Union Home Secretary, state government officials and the ENPO leadership, led by its president, for their cooperation in finalising and signing the MoA.

The agreement marks a significant step toward addressing regional aspirations within Nagaland while strengthening unity and development within the state.

Thousands rally to protest participation of Kuki-Zo-Hmar MLAs in Manipur govt formation

IMPHAL, Feb 6: Thousands of protesters in Manipur's three hill districts staged a rally against the participation of three Kuki-Zo-Hmar MLAs in the formation of a popular government in the state, alleging that the legislators betrayed the community.

Effigies of Kuki MLA Nemcha Kipgen who is a deputy chief minister in the newly sworn-in government and two other legislators, LM Khaute and N Sanate, who belong to Zo and Hmar communities, were also burnt in Churachandpur district. All three are ruling BJP MLAs. Protest rallies were also held in Kangpokpi and Tengnoupal districts.

In Churachandpur, agitators took out a rally jointly organised by Kuki Women Organisation for Human Rights (KWOHR) and Women Wing of Indigenous Tribal Leaders Forum (ITLF) to protest the participation of Kipgen in government formation.

The rallyists marched from Koite Playground to the Wall of Remembrance, covering a distance of nearly 3 km, in Churachandpur town. The protesters raised slogans seeking the resignation of Kipgen and reiterated their demand for separate administration for the community.

The Kuki Zo Council (KZC) had on Thursday asserted that these MLAs violated the January 13 Lungthu Resolution, in which it was decided that the community members would take part in government formation only if there was a written assurance from the central and state authorities that there would be a separate administration in the form of a Union Territory with a legislature.

Earlier, the 24-hour "total shutdown" which was imposed in the Kuki-majority district was relaxed

to allow the rally.

One protester said, "The MLAs betrayed the expectations of the people by joining the government of Manipur and Nemcha Kipgen was made a deputy chief minister."

Similar rallies condemning the act of the three BJP MLAs were also organised at Saikul in Kangpokpi district and the border town of Moreh in Tengnoupal district.

In the wake of the outbreak of protests, security was tightened at the residences of the three legislators in Churachandpur, Kangpokpi and Pherzawl districts.

Meanwhile, Govindas Konthoujam, who was sworn in as a minister on Wednesday, said that there are some disturbances in Churachandpur, but the situation is under control.

"They (protesters) are expressing their anger and discontent. Nothing will happen. Security arrangements are there, but no action can be taken immediately. Many of them are peace-loving people who want normalcy to return in the state. Things will improve gradually," Govindas said.

Manipur witnessed the outbreak of ethnic violence between the Meitei and Kuki communities in May 2023, leading to the imposition of President's Rule in February last year.

Amid a demand by the Kuki-Zo leaders for a separate administrative unit for the community, BJP MLA Yunnam Khemchand Singh on Wednesday was sworn in as the 13th Chief Minister of Manipur, after the Centre revoked the President's Rule.

Nemcha Kipgen, a BJP MLA who belongs to the Kuki community and Naga People's Front legislator L. Dikho, took oath as deputy chief ministers of Manipur. (PTI)

Nagaland signs MoU with IIFT Kolkata to set up export facilitation cell

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, Feb 6: Nagaland's Industries and Commerce Department on Thursday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), Kolkata, to establish an Export Facilitation Cell (EFC) in the state through a partnership model.

The MoU was signed at the Directorate of Industries and Commerce in Kohima by Director P. Tokugha Sema and Dr K. Rangarajan, Professor and Centre Head, IIFT Kolkata.

As per the agreement, the EFC will function as a dedicated institutional mechanism to provide handholding support and counselling to existing and prospective exporters, facilitate market access and enhance the overall export readiness of entrepreneurs across Nagaland.

Under the MoU, the EFC will assist entrepreneurs in identifying international markets, developing export plans, participating in trade fairs, navigating customs and tariff procedures, meeting certification and standards requirements and ensuring compliance with non-tariff barriers.

The Export Facilitation Cell will also support the state government in policy formulation, strategic planning and the implementation of trade promotion schemes.

In addition, IIFT Kolkata will provide expert consultancy through its faculty members and export specialists, develop a web-based information dissemination platform with a query-builder system and conduct research and knowledge-based studies on international trade and business relevant to Nagaland.

Mizoram team consults Nagaland stakeholders on impact of rail connectivity



HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, Feb 6: A team from Mizoram's Planning and Programme Implementation Department on Thursday held a consultative meeting with stakeholders from Nagaland at the Dimapur Deputy Commissioner's conference hall to study the impact of railway connectivity on social structures, cultural practices and economic transformation in the state.

The Mizoram delegation was led by MLA and chairman of the Study Committee on the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project (KMMTTP) and Railway Line Services, Pu T. Lalhlimpula. The team sought insights into how Nagaland has navigated both the opportunities and challenges arising from improved railway connectivity.

Speaking at the meeting, Lalhlimpula said the discussions focused on two major infrastructure initiatives expected to significantly

influence the region's future — the proposed railway line from Bairabi to Sairang in Mizoram and the KMMTTP.

He explained that the KMMTTP aims to connect Kolkata to Myanmar's Sittwe port by sea, further extending through inland waterways to Paletwa and then by road to Mizoram. Funded by the Government of India and targeted for completion by 2027, the project is expected to provide an alternative connectivity route to the northeastern states by bypassing the Siliguri Corridor and reducing travel distance by more than 700 kilometres.

Referring to Dimapur as a city deeply shaped by railway connectivity, Lalhlimpula said the visit was not meant for abstract discussions but to draw practical lessons from Nagaland's long experience with rail infrastructure to guide future projects in Mizoram.

He noted that Nagaland's railway history dates back over a century to 1903, offering valuable

insights for Mizoram, where Bairabi was connected by broad gauge rail only in 2016 and Aizawl was linked by rail in September 2025.

Lalhlimpula also highlighted the socio-cultural and religious similarities between the two states, particularly the central role of Christianity in social, cultural and community life.

Emphasising that improved connectivity brings both development opportunities and concerns related to culture, identity and livelihoods, the Mizoram delegation expressed its eagerness to learn from Nagaland's experiences — both positive and negative — to maximise benefits while minimising adverse impacts.

He expressed hope that the interaction would strengthen cooperation and mutual understanding between the two states and contribute to informed and balanced planning for future infrastructure development in Mizoram.

ITANAGAR, Feb 6: The Enforcement Directorate on Friday conducted searches at multiple locations in Arunachal Pradesh and seized about ₹ 2.2 crore in cash as part of a money laundering probe linked to an alleged Trans-Arunachal Highway compensation scam, officials said.

Six premises in Itanagar and one each at Likabali (Lower Siang district) and Aalo (West Siang district) were raided under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). These include the locations of Deputy Commissioner, DLRSO (District Land Revenue and Settlement), assessment officials apart from private beneficiaries.

The project covered a stretch of 157.70 km spread across Yachuli, Ziro and Raga sectors.

Probe found that the Deputy Commissioner, Ziro initially prepared a compensation estimate of ₹ 289.40 crore for the Potin-Bopi



stretch.

However, in a state-level meeting the compensation package was frozen and restricted to ₹ 198.56 crore, the ED officials said.

During the disbursement of the compensation amount, funds were "diverted" to saving accounts and many cheques were issued to "fake" beneficiaries which resulted in loss of ₹ 44 crore to the exchequer, they said.

This was done by preparing and certifying inflated and fictitious assessments of structures in the Yazali sector of the Trans-Arunachal Highway (Potin-Bopi) project. Non-existent structures and ineligible beneficiaries were included, the ED.

A cash amount of ₹ 2.2 crore has been found at one of the premises belonging to a "fake" beneficiary, the officials said. (PTI)

CBI books 3 customs officials for taking ₹ 35 lakh bribe

AIZAWL, Feb 6: The CBI has filed an FIR against three customs officials previously stationed in Mizoram for allegedly taking bribes amounting to more than ₹ 35 lakh from smugglers, the agency said in a statement.

The accused, including a retired superintendent and two inspectors, allegedly released smuggled goods after receiving illegal gratification, it said.

The case, officially registered on February 3, follows a formal complaint from the additional commissioner of CGST, Guwahati.

The officials are accused of abusing their official positions while serving at the Customs Preventive Force (CPF) in east Mizoram's Champai town, a critical transit point on the India-Myanmar border, during 2022-2023.

The officials allegedly intercepted consignments of areca nuts (betel nuts) and foreign cigarettes without filing any legal documentation, the statement said.

They allegedly demanded and accepted bribes exceeding ₹ 35 lakh across multiple instances to release the confiscated smuggled goods, it said.

A subsequent inspection at godowns revealed that seized goods worth over ₹ 1.42 crore, confiscated between December 2022 and April 2023, were found to be missing from the available stock, it added.

In a coordinated effort to unearth the money trail and recover incriminating evidence, the CBI launched simultaneous searches across five states and raided residential and premises of the accused in Guwahati (Assam), Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh), Sikar (Rajasthan), Patna (Bihar) and Churachandpur (Manipur). (PTI)

Issues of displaced people top priority of new govt: Manipur CM



IMPHAL, Feb 6: Manipur Chief Minister Y. Khemchand Singh said the top priority of his government was to look into the problems of the people displaced by the ethnic violence in both hill and valley districts.

Speaking to reporters on Thursday, he said the government will soon formulate a roadmap for the return of these people to their homes.

"Our first priority will be to look after the problems of IDPs (internally displaced persons) in both hills and the valley. The biggest issue is that they are not able to return to their home. The government will formulate a roadmap very soon," he said.

Singh took the oath as the chief minister of the restive state on Wednesday. (PTI)

Arunachal guv calls for stronger monitoring, better education facilities in state

Parnaik stresses foundational learning, skilled teachers and expansion of higher education



ITANAGAR, Feb 6: Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lt Gen (Retd) K T Parnaik on Friday called for robust ground-level monitoring to drive systemic reforms in school education, with special focus on strengthening foundational literacy and numeracy.

He underscored the importance of well-trained and motivated teachers, expansion of residential schooling facilities where necessary and promotion of digital-enabled classrooms to address geographical challenges in the state.

The governor stressed the need to expand higher education institutions, strengthen scholarship support and introduce more skill-based professional courses within the state to reduce student migration and unlock the full potential of the youth.

He said such initiatives would help transform education into a powerful engine of inclusive growth, cultural confidence and a 'Viksit Arunachal Pradesh'. (PTI)

He emphasised that the department must align its efforts to meet the aspirations of young people and the evolving needs of the state, an official statement informed.

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

No.ACEH/CS/AAP/92/2025-26/3,

Date.06.02.2026

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 (C) category for the work "Construction of Road from Rongmandu to Lank-Ikso village by providing E/W, GSB etc. for the year 2025-26 under Umpanai Road Division, Ulukunchi. Details may be seen at e-procurement portal website www.assamtenders.gov.in and also in the office of the undersigned during office hours from 09/02/2026 to 24/02/2026. 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/92/2025-26/3-(A),

Date 06/02/2026.

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India runaway favourites in most politicised global cricket meet

NEW DELHI, Feb 6: It's the largest ever but also perhaps the most politically charged, with off-field drama hogging the limelight in a turbulent buildup.

The T20 World Cup gets underway across three different venues in India and Sri Lanka on Saturday. And though the title favourites tag is firmly attached to the Suryakumar Yadav-led defending champion India, potential winners or players to look forward to have hardly been the talking point so far. It's been an unprecedented mixing of politics with sport in the run up to the event, which has expanded from 16 to 20 teams this time.

Bangladesh have been ousted after refusing to play in India because of their security concerns and Pakistan have announced a boycott of their game against India as a gesture of support to them.

Both countries have held India responsible for the turmoil, which began after Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman was released from an IPL contract on BCCI instructions.

Bangladesh's refusal to be in India was also down to Rahman's exit, which hurt

their "national pride". As a result, it would be Scotland padding up against the West Indies in Kolkata on Saturday.

The entire drama got doubly intriguing after Pakistan decided to go on a proverbial fishing expedition in muddied waters by showing their solidarity looking at the bigger political picture.

Pakistan had their Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif, diving in to justify the decision, calling it appropriate.

Even before a delivery has been bowled, ICC and its broadcasters are staring at potential losses while Pakistan is preparing for some severe sanctions that can have far-reaching consequences.

While the recent Indo-Pak contests at global events have more often than not been lopsided, there is no denying the fact that the game still remains a cash-cow for the global cricket economy.

Aside from the drama, the cricket looks set to be dominated by India.

Despite the hype associated with this edition's scale of participation, one isn't



ICC Men's T20 World Cup

really sure that there are enough teams to challenge India's hegemony at least in this format.

If the game against Pakistan eventually happens at Premadasa, it would test the

young Indian batters on a slightly tricky surface where Mohammed Nawaz, Abrar Ahmed and surprise package -- side-armner Usman Tariq -- have the best chance of asking a few questions. More than India,

it would be Pakistan's loss.

Pakistan open against the Netherlands in Colombo on Saturday, a match they are expected to win.

Overall, no team matches up to the Suryakumar Yadav-led India in terms of quality and performance.

While T20 remains a format of bare minimum margins, it seems India would be vulnerable only to a self-inflicted implosion, rather than opposition brilliance.

If India wins this edition of the T20 World Cup, it would be considered business as usual. If they lose, it would be an upset of huge magnitude because of the kind of form each player is in.

At the other end, there is Australia, always formidable across conditions but with no Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood to start with, the bowling attack comprising Ben Dwarshuis, Xavier Bartlett and Nathan Ellis looks slightly thin on paper. But the batting line-up with Travis Head, Josh Inglis, skipper Mitchell Marsh, Marcus Stoinis, Glenn Maxwell and Tim David does bear a formidable look.

A lot would also depend on how the two

spinners -- Matt Kuhnemann and Adam Zampa -- perform on big days.

As far as England is concerned, they also have a slightly batting-heavy line-up with skipper Harry Brook, Jos Buttler, Ben Duckett and Phil Salt capable of giving any bowling line-up a run for its money.

But how they would fare against a Varun Chakravarthy, Kuldeep Yadav and Axar Patel will decide which direction the team's campaign would take.

South Africa are also one of the strongest candidates for making the semifinal and boast of the second-best bowling attack after India with Kagiso Rabada, Anrich Nortje, Marco Jansen, Keshav Maharaj capable of challenging any big team.

In batting, Quinton de Kock's flair, Aiden Markram's unpredictability, experience of David Miller and brashness of Ryan Rickleton and Tristan Stubbs will certainly come in handy.

New Zealand are always a team that comes up with decent performances and with already a month in the country, they would have acclimatised quicker compared to other teams. (PTI)

Faster courts favour Dhakshineswar as India brace for Netherlands in Davis Cup Qualifier

BENGALURU, Feb 6: The faster playing conditions in Bengaluru are expected to suit Dhakshineswar Suresh more than India's top singles player Sumit Nagal as the hosts take on the Netherlands in the Davis Cup Qualifier round one tie, starting Saturday.

With Nagal returning from a minor hip injury, India are likely to lean heavily on Dhakshineswar's ability to exploit the quicker surface.

The conditions reward first-strike tennis and aggressive shot-making, an area where Dhakshineswar has shown he can thrive under pressure.

Nagal has been recovering well and has looked increasingly comfortable in practice, but questions remain over how his body will respond once the tie moves into high-intensity match play.

The physical demands of singles at altitude, coupled with the speed of the court, could test Nagal's movement and endurance, especially if matches stretch into long rallies. He is, though, used to the conditions having recently played during the Bengaluru Open and WTL.

Dhakshineswar's role could therefore be pivotal once again, much like in Switzerland last year when he rose to the occasion to win crucial singles matches in India's historic away victory. He had set the tone by winning the



opening rubber, allowing Nagal to settle into the tie, where the latter went on to win both his singles.

The Netherlands, too, are expected to find the faster conditions to their liking, with their players more accustomed to such surfaces.

However, the visitors have been weakened by the absence of their top two singles players -- Tallon Griekspoor (world No. 29) and Botic van de Zandschulp (world No. 67) -- which has somewhat evened out the contest.

Even the Indian camp believes that the withdrawal of top Dutch players has turned it into an interesting battle where the home team will believe it has chances for a second consecutive upset win in Davis Cup.

The Dutch will be led by world No. 88 Jesper de Jong, who has been steadily climbing the rankings. De Jong has already recorded significant wins over top-30 players, including Jakob Mensik (world No. 16), compatriot Griekspoor and Alejandro Davidovich Fokina (world No. 26), and will pose the biggest singles challenge for India.

India will have to target Guy Den Ouden, ranked 162, who will be making his Davis Cup debut. Den Ouden has largely competed on the ITF and ATP Challenger circuits during the 2025 season and lacks experience at the highest level of international team competition.

For India, controlling the early momentum in singles will be crucial, particularly given Nagal's fitness concerns. How effectively Dhakshineswar can capitalise on conditions in his favour may well determine the course of the tie.

India's doubles strength has been bolstered by the return of Yuki Bhambri, currently enjoying a career-best ranking of 20. Bhambri's presence adds depth and experience to the doubles combination, offering India a strong chance to secure the crucial third rubber.

Bhambri will team up with N Sriram Balaji, who was not even picked in the squad initially. He replaces Rithvik Bollipalli. They

will be up against Sandre Arends and David Pel.

"We just felt that Balaji has been playing back-to-back tournaments, he just played in Bahrain, had a very good result and came here. And Rithvik for that matter, he's playing very well. It was a difficult decision, but I think that he's not played actively in tournaments for the last month-and-a-half, or two months," Rajpal said, explaining the decision.

"Balaji has been very sharp. We thought it would be better that instead of getting Rithvik into a tough pressure Davis Cup match, give him more time to gradually come back in," he added.

With surface conditions, player fitness and selection dynamics all in play, the two-day contest is expected to be closely fought as India look to make home advantage count against a depleted yet competitive Dutch side.

The defeated team will return to World Group I tie in September, while the winners will advance to the Qualifiers second Round and a step closer to the eight-team Finals.

Match Schedule:
Saturday: Sumit Nagal vs Guy Den Ouden; Dhakshineswar Suresh vs Jesper de Jong
Sunday: Yuki Bhambri/N Sriram Balaji vs Sandre Arends/David Pel; Sumit Nagal vs Jesper de Jong; Dhakshineswar Suresh vs Guy Den Ouden. (PTI)

India pacer Harshit Rana ruled out of T20 World Cup; Siraj to come in: BCCI sources

MUMBAI, Feb 6: Young India speedster Harshit Rana was on Friday ruled out of the T20 World Cup because of a knee injury sustained in a warm-up game here with skipper Suryakumar Yadav admitting that he was "not looking good".

Fellow pacer Mohammed Siraj has been drafted in to replace Rana in the squad, according to reliable BCCI sources.

Earlier, Suryakumar's admission was indication enough that head coach Gautam Gambhir's 24-year-old protege was unlikely to recover in time to play any of the matches, starting with the lung-opener against the USA on Saturday.

"Harshit Rana has not been ruled out yet, the physios are assessing him but he does not look good," Suryakumar said at the pre-match press conference here on Friday.

The Indian captain, however, tried to make light of the setback.

"Don't worry, we have 11 players for tomorrow. But it obviously would be a big blow because you make a squad of 15 after a lot of thought and he was included after some thought process," said Suryakumar.

"But if he is not available going forward, we will then set different combinations. We have enough players and combinations against all teams that we can have for this tournament but if we miss him (for not being available), we will definitely miss him," he added.

Rana could bowl only one over in the warm-up game against South Africa in which he conceded 16 runs and then hobbled off the field with a knee injury.

Although Rana is not a first eleven certainty with an economy rate of 10.60 in nine T20Is, he certainly would have been a handy inclusion in specific conditions. He is also a useful lower-order hitter.

In place of Rana, the pacers who could be in contention are Prasidh Krishna, and Mohammed Siraj among the experienced ones.

All-rounder Washington Sundar is already looking doubtful with a side strain and rib muscle tear. "We will see which (other) fast bowlers have done really well for the last one or two years or if there is any bowler who can bat as well," Suryakumar said of available options.

"But there is no hard and fast rule that he can bat, because if you are expecting someone at No.9 or No.10 to come out and hit a six, then what are the other eight (players) doing before him? We will see, we do have a few options but we will pick the best one," he added. (PTI)



FIFA reports a record of 5,973 int'l transfers in January window

ZURICH, Feb 6: A record number of 5,973 international transfers were recorded in the January trading window for men's soccer, according to a FIFA report released. That marks a 3% increase from the previous year in cross-border deals between clubs in different countries, where the transactions are processed by FIFA.

However, the total spending was down about 18% from last year's record, to \$1.95 billion. That's still some 20% more than the previous record from January 2023, FIFA said. In women's soccer, clubs spent more than \$10 million on international transfers, up 85% from the previous record a year ago, while the number of international transfers was down by 6% to 420.

The FIFA research does not include domestic transfers of players between two clubs in the same country.

England tops spending

English clubs were again the biggest spenders with a \$363 million outlay on transfer fees and re-coupled just \$150 million by selling players to clubs in other countries. Italy followed in second with \$283 million, with Brazil, Germany, and France also making the top five.

French clubs benefited most, earning \$218 million in transfer sales, followed by Italy, Brazil, England and Spain. In the United States, clubs spent \$99 million and took in \$48 million in transfer fees, according to the FIFA research. English women's clubs also topped the spending with over \$5 million, and also were the biggest earners. (AP)

India women knocked out of Badminton Asia Team C'ship

QINGDAO (CHINA), Feb 6: India's title defence in the women's team event came to a disappointing end after a 0-3 loss to a second-string China in the quarterfinals of the Badminton Asia Team Championships here on Friday.

India had won a historic gold medal in the previous edition in 2024, but the absence of the talismanic PV Sindhu due to a niggle made the task of defending the title a tough one.

World No. 42 Tanvi, who had been leading the charge in the first singles with two wins earlier in the tournament, failed to provide a positive start, losing 9-21 9-21 to World No. 10 Gao Fang Jie in a lop-sided opener.

The doubles pair of Gayatri Gopichand and Treasa Jolly then put up a spirited fight before going down 22-24 18-21 to the world No.4 combination of Jia Yi Fan and Zhang Shu Xian, as China took a decisive 2-0 lead.

Facing a do-or-die situation, Rakshita Ramraj battled hard against Xu Wen Jing in the second singles but eventually lost 14-21 21-15 17-21 in a 69-minute contest.

India had begun their campaign with a 5-0 sweep of Myanmar before suffering a narrow 2-3 defeat to Thailand in their final group tie on Thursday. (PTI)

Three titles in three years is amazing: Smriti Mandhana

VADODARA, Feb 6: Royal Challengers Bengaluru captain Smriti Mandhana on Thursday said three titles in three years was an amazing result for the franchise following the win in the Women's Premier League final here.

RCB women ended the title drought for the franchise with a groundbreaking triumph in 2024 before the men finally found a way to win the IPL last year. Now, RCB women beat Delhi Capitals by six wickets to be crowned WPL champions for the second time.

"Very pleased. RCB fans are the best in the world. We get support wherever we play. Three titles in three years for the franchise, it is amazing," said Mandhana who overcame recent off-field setbacks to excel in the tournament.

On chasing 204 in the title clash, she said: "We did think it was a good surface to bat on. 203 is a good score in the final. It was a match winning spell from Lauren Bell. 400 in the match and she goes for just 20 (19 in four overs)."

"One thing has stood out this season the support staff the way we have supported us. Roles were clear for all of us. That makes our job easier on the field."



"The girls are working extremely hard and that shoots up your belief. They are working hard in the gym and that gives confidence to chase down any score. But what Volly (Georgia with the bat) did was special. Everyone going back to their home will say this is what we have contributed."

Delhi Capitals lost their fourth final in as many attempts but cap-

tain Jemimah Rodrigues could not be more proud of her team which started slowly before finding a way to reach the final.

"Could not be more proud of this group. It was not easy for us, the character the girls showed, proud of that. 204 in a final is always a great score. Everyone fought hard, gave their best, and that is what is important," said Rodrigues. (PTI)

Ministry approves skier Stanzin Lundup's Winter Olympics participation at no cost to govt

NEW DELHI, Feb 6: The Sports Ministry on Friday approved cross country skier Stanzin Lundup's participation at the Winter Olympics in Italy at no cost to government after the IOA stated that it was not possible to replace him with Manjeet despite a Delhi High Court order to that effect. The Delhi High Court had held that the Indian Olympic Association's decision to exclude Manjeet from the two-member Indian team was "manifestly arbitrary and unfair".

It asked the IOA to take immediate steps to facilitate Manjeet's participation in the Winter Olympics. However, in a later order, the HC said it "has not commented on participation of Lundup or interdicted the same."

This was after the IOA stated that it was no longer possible to make any changes to the contingent as the deadline to send entries for the Games, that got underway on Friday in Milan and Cortina, had long expired.

"It has been noted, as conveyed by the Indian Olympic Association, that expansion or substitution of the contingent has not been acceded to by the competent international authorities; and non-utilisation of the accepted quota would result in India having no representation in the concerned event," stated a letter from the Ministry to the IOA.

"...the approval of competent authority hereby is conveyed for participation of the following members of the Indian contingent -- Stanzin Lundup and Rauf Ahmad (official) in the Olympic Winter Games Milano-Cortina 2026, scheduled to be held in Italy from 6th February to 22nd February, 2026, at no cost to the Government," it added. Lundup's event is scheduled for February 13 at the Tesero Cross-Country Skiing Stadium.



The ministry, however, asserted that the approval is not an endorsement of IOA's selection process.

"This approval is issued purely as a facilitative administrative measure, in view of the position placed on record by the Indian Olympic Association and the applicable Olympic regulations, and does not amount to endorsement or validation of any selection process, which remains subject to judicial scrutiny."

"The participation shall be subject to compliance with all applicable international regulations, accreditation requirements, and directions of the Indian Olympic Association and the Organising Committee," it added.

As is the established norm, the Ministry has also sought a detailed report on the team's performance within 30 days of return of the team to India.

Manjeet had argued that he was overlooked despite being number one in the International Ski and Snowboard Federation (FIS) rankings. (PTI)