

**7 REGION**

- Financial aid distributed under Orunodoi 3.0
- Veteran leader Biren Singh Engti passes away at 81

**8 NATION**

- Resolution against LS Speaker to save Constitution: Gogoi
- 'No genuine voter to be axed; zero tolerance for violence, intimidation'



**Chief Guest**  
**Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma**  
 Chief Minister, Assam

**August Presence**

- Dr Tuliram Ronghang**  
Chief Executive Member, KAAC
- Dr Numal Momin**  
Deputy Speaker, Assam Legislative Assembly
- Smti Nandita Gorlosa**  
Guardian Minister, Karbi Anglong District
- Shri Amarsing Tisso**  
MP, Diphu HPC
- Shri Bidya Sing Engleng**  
MLA, Diphu LAC
- Shri Darsing Ronghang**  
MLA, Howraghat LAC
- Shri Rupsing Teron**  
MLA, Baithalangso LAC

11 March 2026 1 PM

Launch of  
**100+**  
 Development Projects

**Rangsina Sarpo Ahongjai, Taralangso**

<p><b>54</b> Inaugurations</p> <p><b>₹816 crore</b></p>	<p><b>53</b> Foundation Stones</p> <p><b>₹1,293 crore</b></p>
<b>Key Projects</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Diphu Cancer Centre <b>₹270 crore</b></li> <li>▶ 4-Lane Khorsing Terang Ingjarkap Flyover, Diphu <b>₹228 crore</b></li> <li>▶ Upgraded/Widened Road                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 4-Laning – Mahatma Gandhi Park Road to Lumding Road University Campus <b>₹105 crore</b></li> <li>■ Kheroni-Rongpangbong (Kheronighat-Zirikinding) <b>₹75 crore</b></li> <li>■ DLHS Road-Intermediate Lane (Dhansiri-Diphu) <b>₹51 crore</b></li> <li>■ NH-36 Manja-Sarmen Hansegaon via Dikoi Terangaon <b>₹15 crore</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Government Model Degree College, West Karbi Anglong <b>₹35 crore</b></li> <li>▶ Diphu Town Lake <b>₹16 crore</b></li> <li>▶ KASA Bilangvek Swimming Pool, Diphu <b>₹21 crore</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Sainik School, Langvoku <b>₹365 crore</b></li> <li>▶ 42 MW Solar Power Plant, Bonglong Terang <b>₹202 crore</b></li> <li>▶ Four-Laning (East Division Forest Office – St Anthony English School) Birla, Diphu <b>₹152 crore</b></li> <li>▶ Upgrading Roads                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Kuthuri-Anjokpani-Dokmoka <b>₹299 crore</b></li> <li>■ Chowkihola-Panjan Deithor-Malasi-Dirring-Kohora <b>₹95 crore</b></li> <li>■ Tahpat-Mukroh <b>₹61 crore</b></li> <li>■ 5 Kilo, DLHS Road-Lankaijan <b>₹47 crore</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Hotel &amp; Tourism Management Institute, Diphu <b>₹63 crore</b></li> <li>▶ Bridges                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Parakhowa Panjuri Road via Haza Rongpi Gaon <b>₹9 crore</b></li> <li>■ Dupor Timung Gaon-Dengaon</li> <li>■ Howraghat-Pub Gojalipara</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Total Project Cost: ₹2,109 crore**

# Govt rejigs gas allocation

## LPG, CNG, piped cooking gas get top priority

**NEW DELHI, March 10:** LPG production, CNG, and piped cooking gas will take precedence over all other sectors using natural gas as the government rejigged allocation to ensure uninterrupted supply for households and transport sectors.

As the widening West Asia conflict disrupted 30 per cent of India's gas supply, the oil ministry, in a gazette notification, ordered available gas to be diverted from non-priority sectors to key users.

India meets half of its 191 million standard cubic metres per day (mmscmd) of gas consumption through imports. With the stalling of tanker movement through the Strait of Hormuz, about 60 mmscmd gas from the Middle East has been disrupted.

The remaining liquefied natural gas (LNG) has been reprioritised to meet 100 per cent of demand of LPG production, CNG, and piped cooking gas (PNG), 80 per cent of commercial users of the fuel and 70 per cent of fertiliser unit needs.

"We are monitoring the situation on a minute-to-minute basis and are alive to the evolving needs. We have just now reprioritised gas allocation to help meet the full demand of key sectors," a top ministry official said.

The re-allocation has been done to primarily augment LPG supplies that had been strained after the war in the Middle East disrupted half of the cooking gas supplies.

Later, Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri in a post on X said, "We have taken steps to ensure that 100% supply of CNG & PNG to domestic consumers is ensured and other industries continue to get 70-80% of their supplies, despite the war situation."

"We are committed to ensure uninterrupted supply of affordable energy to our domestic consumers. There is no shortage for domestic consumers and no reason to panic," he said.

Liquefied petroleum gas, or LPG, is primarily produced from the processing of natural gas and is



also a byproduct of crude oil refining. It is made by separating and purifying propane and butane gases, which are then pressurised into a liquid state for easy transport and storage in steel cylinders typically seen in homes and restaurants for cooking.

According to the gazette notification issued late on Monday, the latest order issued under Essential Commodities Act of 1955 will override all outstanding contracts and other commercial arrangements for sale of LNG.

The freed gas will be allocated according to a priority list based on actual average usage over the past six months, the notification said.

With LPG production from traditional stream at saturation levels, the government has also previously ordered refineries to maximise output by diverting streams from petrochemicals.

"There has been a 10 per cent increase in production following these measures," the official said without giving more details.

He said original contracts will be restored once normalcy returns.

"We hope that happens soon," he said. "In the meanwhile we have been out in the market sourcing as much supplies as we can. We have had some success and will continue to tap all available opportunities."

Until now, compressed natural gas (CNG) and piped cooking gas were the two priority sectors to receive domestic natural gas as their raw material. Under the revised al-

location, requirements of LPG, CNG, and piped gas manufacturers will be fully met first before natural gas is supplied to other sectors.

The supply of natural gas to domestic piped natural gas grid, CNG for transport, and LPG production shall be treated as priority allocation. They would be supplied 100 per cent of their average past six months' gas consumption, the notification said.

Behind these is the fertiliser sector at second place, with at least 70 per cent of its past six months demand being met.

At No. 3, gas supply to tea industries, manufacturing and other industrial consumers will be maintained at 80 per cent of their past six-month average gas consumption, subject to operational availability, the notification said.

All city gas distribution (CGD) entities supplying gas to industrial and commercial consumers have been placed at No. 4 on the priority list. They must ensure their customers receive 80 per cent of their past six months' average gas consumption subject to operational availability.

Domestic gas production, which meets about half the country's consumption of 191 million standard cubic metres per day, will be diverted to the priority sectors by curtailing supplies to petrochemical plants, power units and high-priced gas consumers.

Following US-Israeli strikes inside Iran and Tehran's sweeping re-

tialiation across the region, maritime traffic through the Strait of Hormuz has sharply declined, insurance premiums have surged, and energy markets have responded with immediate volatility. Roughly one-fifth of the world's seaborne oil and nearly a third of global LNG shipments pass through this narrow channel linking the Gulf to global markets.

The artery is the conduit for supply of most of India's import of gas, in the form of LNG, as well as LPG. With tanker movement being stalled, the government has reworked domestically available gas to keep priority segments such as cooking needs of households and vehicular transport going.

Natural gas pumped out of ground or below sea bed is used to generate electricity, produce fertiliser, and is turned into CNG or LPG and piped to households kitchens for cooking.

"The Central Government has assessed that the ongoing conflict in the Middle East has resulted in the disruption of liquefied natural gas (LNG) shipments through the Strait of Hormuz and suppliers have invoked force majeure clause," the notification said, adding that the supply cuts would entail diversion of natural gas to the priority sectors.

The allocation rejig has been done to maintain supplies and secure equitable distribution and availability of natural gas for priority sector.

Pipeline compressor fuel and other essential pipeline operational requirements, too, have been put in this priority as without gas the pipelines cannot function.

Oil refining companies shall absorb the impact of LNG supply disruption to the extent feasible by reducing gas allocation to refineries to approximately 65 per cent of the past six month gas consumption, it said.

State-owned gas utility GAIL has been tasked to manage the supplies of natural gas to implement priority order. (PTI)

# Indian Potash inks pact with Odisha govt to revive Badamba Sugar mill

**NEW DELHI, March 10:** Indian Potash Ltd (IPL) on Tuesday said it has signed an agreement with the Odisha government for the modernisation and expansion of Badamba Sugar Mill with an estimated investment of ₹ 360 crore.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by IPL managing director P S Gahlaut and state cooperation department commissioner-cum-secretary Rajesh Prabhakar Patil in the presence of Union Cooperation Minister Amit Shah on March 6, the company said in a statement.

As part of the MoU, the Odisha government will provide 112 acres of land on a long-term lease basis to IPL for the establishment of the mill and associated infrastructure.

Badamba Cooperative Sugar Mill -- which has remained shut for more than 15 years -- is expected to commence operation within one year and will have a capacity of 3,500 TCD (tonnes cane per day).

It will also consist of a 16 megawatt cogeneration power plant, a 10-tonne-per-day bio-CNG plant, and a state-of-the-art cold

storage facility.

The project is expected to directly benefit around 10,000 farmers of the Badamba block of the Cuttack district by reviving sugarcane cultivation in the state, enhancing farmer income and generating employment in the region.

Based on the successful turnaround of three sick sugar mills in Gujarat, IPL, now under the guidance of the Union Cooperation Ministry, took up the project for the revival of Badamba Cooperative Sugar Mill. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 6...

## It is not 'election

women-led households in Assam".

"Reiterating the same, Hon'ble Chief Minister Dr. @himantabiswa transferred Rs 9,000 each to 40 lakh Orunodoi beneficiary families through Direct Benefit Transfer, further reinforcing financial security and dignity for women across the state," it added.

The CMO said that beneficiary women from across the state joined the central event virtually through over 3,800 public programmes organised at Gaon Panchayats, Autonomous Council constituencies, Village Development Committees and Urban Ward Committees. (PTI)

## Assamese Muslims politically

making repeated statements in recent days attacking the Miyas, saying that the people from the community will continue to face problems till he is in power.

A bunch of PILs accusing Sarma of making "hate speech" and "communal comments" against the 'Miya' community were filed before the Gauhati High Court, with the court issuing a notice to the CM and seeking response before the next date of hearing on April 21. (PTI)

## Hike in Assam tea

paid ₹ 258 daily against the current ₹ 228 from April one.

The increase in the interim wages will also be applicable for workers engaged in small tea gardens both in Brahmaputra and Barak valley, the notification added.

The minimum daily wage of tea garden workers was last hiked in the state by ₹ 18 in October 2023.

The State Cabinet had approved the hike in the daily wages by ₹ 30 on February 26, following a tripartite meeting held earlier that day between the state government, tea garden labour unions and owners on the issue of increasing the wages.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had said after the Cabinet meeting that as new Labour Codes were being implemented by the Centre, wages will have to be hiked again and the stakeholders will "probably have to sit again in the next six months".

The final daily wages for the tea garden workers are likely to cross ₹ 300 after that, he had added. (PTI)

## CM hails record

announced that the flyover will be opened to vehicular traffic from the morning of March 14.

Before that, citizens will be allowed to walk along the flyover for three days to experience the new structure. He also said the State government plans to address artificial flooding in Guwahati and will move ahead with expansion plans for the city, including the proposed Guwahati Ring Road and metro rail connectivity.

Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Jayanta Mallabarua, MP Bijuli Kalita Medhi, MLA Siddhartha Bhatlacharya, and Guwahati Municipal Corporation Mayor Mrigen Sarania were among those present at the programme.

## Veteran Cong leader

during his childhood in Delhi with Engti's family. "May his departed soul rest in peace and deepest condolences to the bereaved family," he added. (PTI)

## Blueprint for multi

defence forces into a modern, integrated and technologically-advanced military capable of supporting India's aspiration to become 'Viksit Bharat' (developed India) by 2047.

"The vision document outlines the strategic reforms, capability enhancements and organisational changes required within the defence forces to effectively address the evolving geostrategic, technological and security environment," the ministry said.

"It envisages the transformation of the military into an integrated, multi-domain and agile force capable of deterring adversaries, responding across the full spectrum of conflict and protecting expanding strategic interests, amid the rapidly changing global and regional dynamics," it said.

The document also highlights the importance of innovation, advanced technologies and modern training framework to build a force that is adaptable to future warfare challenges.

Another key focus area is to promote self-reliance in defence to encourage the development and adoption of indigenous technologies and solutions tailored to the country's unique security requirements.

Strengthening domestic defence manufacturing and technological capabilities is expected to enhance operational readiness while contributing to national growth, the ministry said.

The vision document adopts a calibrated roadmap with clearly prioritised capability goals across short-term, mid-term and long-term timelines, it said.

"This structured approach will guide the development of critical military capabilities, institutional reforms and strategic partnerships required to build a world class defence force," the ministry noted.

It said recognising the complexity of future security challenges, the vision document underscores the need for a whole-of-nation approach, integrating military strength with diplomatic, technological and economic power to ensure national security.

"Through sustained reforms, innovation and national commitment, it aims to ensure that by the centenary of India's independence, the nation's military stand as a globally-respected, technologically-advanced and combat-ready military, contributing to a strong and resilient Viksit Bharat," the ministry said.

Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal A P Singh, Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh and Vice Chief of the Army Staff Lt Gen Pushpendra Singh were among senior officials present at the release of the vision document. (PTI)

## AIUFD releases first

constituencies, respectively. Presently, these three senior party leaders are the MLAs of Dhing, Jania and Gauripur seats, respectively.

The two women nominees of AIUFD in the first list are Minakshi Rahman for Paka Betbari and Sabana Akhtar for Bilasipara.

The other candidates named by AIUFD are Abu Taher Bepari (Parbatjhora), Rejaul Karim Sarkar (Srijangram), Matiur Rahman (Dhing) and Siddique Ahmed (Laharighat).

AIUFD is not part of any opposition alliance, although it had tried to join the Congress-led bloc.

Presently, the ruling BJP's strength in the 126-member Assam assembly is 64, while its allies AGP has nine MLAs, UPPL has seven and BPF has three members.

In the opposition camp, the Congress has 26 legislators, AIUFD has 15 members and CPI(M) has one MLA. There is an Independent legislator as well. (PTI)

## FSI stalls AI-based

Officials when contacted said the portal was being run as a pilot project and is currently being reviewed. They, however, did not comment on whether it will be resumed after the review.

The FSI sent 12,351 alerts from the portal during the 22-month period from January 2024 to October 2025. (PTI)

## Assam witnessing major

region to reduce level crossings. Additionally, the indigenous Kavach Automatic Train Protection System is being introduced across the Northeast.

Approval has been granted for implementation across 1,197 route kilometres, with work currently underway for 235 route kilometres.

Modern train services such as Vande Bharat Express, Vande Bharat Sleeper Express and Amrit Bharat Express have also been introduced to improve connectivity between the Northeast and the rest of the country.

As part of ongoing expansion efforts, the Prime Minister is scheduled to lay the foundation stone for the 194-km Furkating-Tinsukia doubling project in Upper Assam, which is expected to increase train capacity and facilitate smoother movement of passenger and freight trains.

The foundation stone will also be laid for a Periodical Overhaul (POH) workshop at Bashbari to support maintenance and repair of railway coaches and wagons.

In addition, electrification of the Rangiya-Murkongselek (558 km), Chaparmukh-Dibrugarh (571 km) and Badarpur-Silchar and Badarpur-Churaibari (315 km) railway sections will be dedicated to the nation.

Three new train services are also set to be flagged off: the Kamakhya-Charlapalli Amrit Bharat Express, the Guwahati-New Jalpaiguri Express and the Narangi-Agartala Express.

Officials said these services will further strengthen connectivity between Assam and other parts of the country while boosting trade, tourism and economic development.

Authorities said the rapid railway expansion in Assam and the Northeast reflects a broader effort to improve connectivity, strengthen regional development and enhance integration with the national transport network.

## Axis Bank and Tesla tie up to enable seamless EV financing

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, March 10:** Axis Bank, on Tuesday announced that it had become a preferred financier for Tesla, offering tailored financing solutions and a differentiated customer experience for Tesla customers.

This collaboration underscores Axis Bank's commitment to accelerating electric mobility in India by delivering innovative, customer-centric financing solutions that support the transition towards sustainable transportation.

The collaboration will be rolled out pan India, empowering customers across major metros and emerging EV hubs to access convenient, digitally enabled-financing options aligned with Tesla's global ownership experience.

The offering aims to simplify the Tesla purchase journey by reducing entry barriers and ensuring a smooth, convenient onboarding experience for customers.

In an official statement, Munish Sharda, Executive Director, Axis Bank, said, "As electric mobility gains momentum in India, Axis Bank is proud to collaborate with Tesla to help accelerate this transition." Commenting on the collaboration, Sharda said, "Through this collaboration, we are bringing together world-class electric vehicles with innovative, tailored financing solutions and seamless customer engagement. This makes it easier for customers to adopt sustainable mobility without compromising on convenience or flexibility. This initiative reflects our continued focus on responsible banking and future-ready solutions."

## Sensex, Nifty bounce back as retreating crude oil prices buoy global sentiment

**MUMBAI, March 10:** Stock market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended nearly 1 per cent higher on Tuesday after two days of massive decline, following a drop in crude oil prices and recovery in global peers amid indications that the West Asia crisis could end soon.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 639.82 points or 0.82 per cent to settle at 78,205.98. During the day, it surged 960.09 points or 1.23 per cent to 78,526.25.

The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 233.55 points or 0.97 per cent to end at 24,261.60.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, tumbled 9.03 per cent to USD 90.26 per barrel.

From the 30-Sensex firms, Mahindra & Mahindra, InterGlobe Aviation, Maruti, ICICI Bank, Asian Paints and UltraTech Cement were among the major gainers.

Eternal, Infosys, Reliance Industries and Bharti Airtel were among the laggards.

"Dalal Street mirrored the improvement in global sentiment after the sharp decline in crude oil prices, following comments from Trump hinting at a possible end to the war. Broader markets outperformed the benchmark indices, with most sectors trading in positive territory," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

The BSE smallcap select index jumped 1.91 per cent, and the midcap select index climbed 1.71 per cent.

The rebound came after signs of potential de-escalation in the Middle East conflict, as US President Donald Trump hinted at a possible early end to the Iran war. This development eased geopolitical concerns and triggered a sharp correction in global crude oil prices, helping risk sentiment stabilise," Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said.

Among BSE sectoral indices, auto surged 2.93 per cent, consumer durables rose 2.60 per cent, services 2.35 per cent, BSE PSU Bank 2.29 per cent, consumer discretionary 2.07 per cent, financial services 2.01 per cent, com-

modities 1.74 per cent, and Private Banks index 1.72 per cent. IT, energy, oil & gas and BSE Focused IT were the laggards. "Markets witnessed a strong rebound on Tuesday, recovering a part of the previous session's sharp losses amid improved global cues and easing concerns over crude oil prices. Investor sentiment improved slightly as global markets stabilised and crude oil prices cooled from their recent spike, which had earlier triggered concerns over inflation and economic growth."

"Expectations of easing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and supportive cues from global equities also aided the recovery in domestic markets," Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi rebounded sharply by 5.35 per cent, while Japan's Nikkei 225 jumped 2.88 per cent. Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index also ended in positive territory. Markets in Europe were trading sharply higher.

The US market ended higher on Monday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹ 6,345.57 crore on Monday, according to exchange data. Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs), however, bought stocks worth ₹ 9,013.80 crore.

"Indian equity markets witnessed a strong rebound today as easing geopolitical concerns and a sharp reversal in crude oil prices helped restore investor confidence after recent volatility."

"The Nifty-50 advanced over 200 points, supported by improving global sentiment as markets reacted positively to signs that tensions surrounding the ongoing Middle East conflict may begin to ease," Hariprasad K, Research Analyst and Founder, Livelong Wealth, said.

On Monday, the Sensex tanked 1,352.74 points or 1.71 per cent to settle at 77,566.16, registering its second day of decline. On similar lines, the Nifty dropped 422.40 points or 1.73 per cent to end at 24,028.05. (PTI)

## Govt directs shipping operators to refrain from predatory pricing amid crisis



**MUMBAI/NEW DELHI, March 10:** Shipping sector regulator Directorate General of Shipping has advised shipping companies, vessel operators and agents to refrain from "predatory, non-transparent and opportunistic pricing" practices in the wake of disruptions due to the West Asia conflict, according to sources.

In an advisory issued on Monday, the DGS also asked them to ensure that all applicable charges are communicated clearly and upfront to exporters, importers and other stakeholders.

The DGS advisory came following the regulator receiving representations from various stakeholders in the

EXIM trade regarding the levy of multiple ancillary charges by shipping lines/carriers and their agents.

These charges are perceived to be "non-transparent and opportunistic in nature", resulting in an escalation in transaction costs in the logistics chain, DGS said.

Besides, it said, they appear to be taking undue advantage of the prevailing geopolitical tensions and war-like situation, it said.

"In the interest of promoting transparency, fairness and predictability in the EXIM logistics ecosystem, all shipping lines, carriers and their agents are hereby advised to refrain

from predatory, non-transparent and opportunistic pricing practices, including levy of exorbitant charges thereby taking undue advantage of prevailing geo-political issue," the advisory stated.

"They must should adhere to fair trade practices and avoid the levy of charges that may give rise to disputes within the EXIM trade and ensure that all applicable charges are communicated clearly and upfront to exporters, importers and other stakeholders," it added.

Freight rates have risen sharply in recent days as military tensions in the Middle East continue to escalate, with Iran, the United States and Israel attacking one another.

An executive of a global shipping company said the ongoing conflict in the Middle East is forcing companies to take longer routes to deliver shipments covering entire Africa. This is resulting in higher fuel consumption for cargo vessels and increased operational costs.

An analyst at BigMint Research said crude oil prices, which averaged around USD 70 per barrel before the conflict, is hovering around USD 90 per barrel. (PTI)

**ELECTRICAL WORKS**

Tender Notice No.: Sr. DEE/LMG/46 of 2025-26. Dated: 06-03-2026. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work:

Tender No.: EL/LM/25-26/43. SN:1. Name of Work : Electrical work against At Guwahati- Replacement of leaky roofing sheets at PF -1, 2 & 3, 4 & 5 and 6&7 and damaged kota stone flooring by industrial flooring at PF -1 both end, improvement of water vats for better drinking water facilities, Renovation of waiting halls at PF-1 and other miscellaneous works at Guwahati Railway Station under the jurisdiction of SSE/W/Guwahati.

Tender Value: ₹55,61,808.47/-.

Earnest Money: ₹1,11,200/-.

Date & time of closing of tender at 11:00 hrs. and opening at 11:30 hrs. on 30-03-2026.

Complete information along with the tender document, above e-tender will be available up to 11:00 hrs. on 30-03-2026 in the website www.ireps.gov.in

Sr. DEE (G&Chg), Lumding

**NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY**

Saving Customers With A Smile



सत्यमेव जयते  
Government of India



## EMPOWERING THE POOR IN ASSAM

**2.55+ crore** Jan Dhan accounts opened, expanding financial inclusion and transparency

**2.4+ crore** people receive free ration every month under PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, ensuring food security

Nearly **1.3 lakh** street vendors supported with loans under PM SVANidhi Yojana, boosting self-reliance and livelihoods

**59+ lakh** tap water connections and **51+ lakh** Ujjwala gas connections transforming everyday life with dignity, health and smoke-free kitchens

Nearly **31 lakh** pucca houses under PM Awas Yojana, turning dreams of home-ownership into reality

**100%** household electrification achieved under Saubhagya Yojana, lighting every home

Nearly **1.45 crore** people covered under PM Suraksha Bima Yojana and **58+ lakh** covered under Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, strengthening accidental protection and life insurance

**DEVELOPED ASSAM  
FOR DEVELOPED BHARAT  
PM MODI'S VISION**

“ A new phase of Assam's development has begun. Together, we are building a developed Assam, a developed India. ”

-Prime Minister Narendra Modi



## QUOTE OF THE DAY

Surprise is the greatest gift which life can grant us.  
-Boris Pasternak

## Nepal election results

The resounding victory of the Gen Z supported Rashtriya Swatantra Party (RSP) in the March 5 general elections in Nepal is a game changer not only in the political history of this tiny Himalayan nation but also in the evolving polity of South Asia. Nepal is now the second country in South Asia which is witnessing the installation of a government backed by the youth movement that ousted the government run by a traditional political party through revolt in the second week of September 2025. Only in another country of South Asia, in Sri Lanka, more or less the same scenario was witnessed in September 2024, when the leader of the National People's Power (PPP) won the presidential elections by defeating the traditional political parties of Sri Lanka which ruled the island nation for decades. The 2023 Sri Lanka elections were held following the ouster of the ruling government in the students and people's revolt in 2022 against price rise and unemployment. In another country of South Asia, Bangladesh, the students revolt led to the ouster of the Sheikh Hasina government in August 2024 but the national elections on February 12 this year did not lead to any youth led government.

The RSP is the youngest of the political parties in Nepal which are in the fray in 2026 elections. RSP was founded in 2022 before the elections. The party contested in 131 constituencies and got 10.7 per cent of the votes winning 7 seats in direct elections and 13 seats under proportional representation. The party is led by Baba Lamchane a media owner. Former Kathmandu Mayor Balendra Shah joined RSP later and won the elections in 2026 by defeating former PM K P S Oli. He is so popular that he is being tipped to become the next PM of RSP government. In Nepal, the movement was started by the Gen Z including the school students in protest against the government order to ban social media platforms.

The movement then turned into a total opposition to the ruling K P S Oli government and all the established political parties. 35 year old Balendra Shah is an engineer and a rapper. He earned immense good will during his tenure as Mayor of Kathmandu. He is known as a fighter against corrupt practices. He has collected around RSP some civil rights activists who may be his advisers if he takes over as PM. Balendra is known for some anti-Indian comments but he is a rational person and is not Xenophobic.

## POST BAG

## Safeguard Electoral institutions

Recent discussions about a possible no-confidence motion against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar highlight growing tensions between the opposition and constitutional institutions. While scrutiny of electoral authorities is a legitimate democratic practice, such actions must be guided by strong evidence and institutional respect. The Election Commission plays a crucial role in safeguarding the integrity of India's democratic process, and repeated political confrontations risk eroding public trust. At the same time, concerns raised by opposition parties regarding voter roll revisions deserve transparent explanation and open debate. Democracy thrives when accountability and institutional independence coexist. Rather than escalating confrontations, Parliament should prioritize constructive dialogue, clarity in electoral procedures, and reforms that strengthen confidence in voting system for all citizens.

Dr Vijaykumar H K

## Generations in Power: The story of Family based politics in Assam

Politics in Assam has always been closely linked with society, history and the personal journeys of its leaders. Elections in the state are not only contests of ideology and governance but also stories of personalities who have shaped public life over decades. Among the many features that appear repeatedly in the political landscape of Assam, the presence of family members of established leaders entering politics has become a familiar pattern. As the state moves toward another election season, conversations about family based politics have once again gathered attention across political circles and among ordinary citizens.

Democracy in principle allows every citizen the right to participate in politics. Anyone with the will to serve society can step into public life, contest elections and represent people. Yet politics often carries its own momentum. A leader who has spent many years building a strong relationship with voters and party workers creates a network of trust and influence. When such a leader's son, daughter, spouse or close relative decides to join politics, that person usually begins the journey with a certain level of public recognition. This reality has shaped political cultures across many regions of India and Assam is no exception.

The history of politics in Assam offers many examples where members of political families have continued the public role of their parents or relatives. For some observers this pattern reflects continuity. A younger generation grows up watching the responsibilities and struggles of political life and gradually develops an interest in public service. For others the same pattern raises questions about whether politics sometimes becomes concentrated within a limited circle of families.

Looking back at the political history of the state, one finds several well known leaders whose family members later entered politics. Former Chief Minister Hiteswar Saikia played a major role in shaping Assam's political direction during a complex period. Years later his son Debabrata Saikia emerged as an important figure in state politics and served as a legislator while also holding significant responsibilities within his party. His presence in the political arena reflected the continuation of a public life that had been deeply connected with the people of Assam for many years.

Another prominent example comes from the family of former Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi. Tarun Gogoi served as Chief Minister for three consecutive terms and remained one of the most influential leaders in the state's modern political history. His son Gaurav Gogoi entered politics and gradually established himself as a national level political figure.

Representing Assam in Parliament, he became part of a younger generation of leaders trying to shape public debate and policy in contemporary India. His political journey often reminds people how leadership sometimes passes through generations while adapting to new circumstances.

There are also examples from other political parties. Former Member of Parliament Badruddin Ajmal, who built a strong political base particularly in parts of lower Assam and Barak Valley, has family members who have taken part in political activities. Members of his extended family have contested elections and played roles within political organisations. Such developments illustrate how a political network built over many years may influence the next generation. Barak Valley itself has witnessed the involvement of several political families. Former minister Gautam Roy and his family became widely known in the region. Both his wife and his son became associated with political life and electoral contests. Their participation highlighted how public service often becomes part of a family's identity when politics forms a central part of daily life for many years.

Another example comes from the family of Pawan Singh Ghatowar, a senior political leader who served both the state and the country in various capacities. His wife Jibontara Ghatowar also entered politics and represented people in public office. Similarly the wife of veteran leader Bharat Narah, Rani Narah, became an active participant in the political field. These examples reveal that in many cases spouses step into politics after witnessing the public life of their partners for decades.

Assam's political field has also seen participation from families connected with labour and tea garden communities. Rupjyoti Kurmi, son of former leader Rupam Kurmi, became a known figure in state politics and represented a strong voice from the tea tribe community. His career showed how political involvement within a family may also carry the hopes of a larger social group that sees familiar leadership continuing its representation.

Another widely discussed example relates to former Chief Minister Prafulla Kumar Mahanta. His wife Jayashree Goswami Mahanta also entered the political space and contested elections. Her participation brought attention to the presence of political families within different parties and ideological traditions in the state.

Such examples demonstrate that family presence in politics has existed for many years in Assam. For some voters it represents a sense of continuity and familiarity. People who have trusted a leader for a long time may also feel comfortable supporting someone from the

same family. That trust often grows from years of interaction through social work, development initiatives and public engagement.

Yet this phenomenon also invites debate. Many political observers argue that democracy functions best when opportunities remain open for new faces who may not come from established political families. When young individuals from ordinary backgrounds enter politics through dedication and grassroots work, the system gains fresh energy. A healthy democratic culture usually balances both continuity and new leadership. As Assam prepares for another legislative assembly election, the conversation around family based politics has become visible once again. Several political parties are in the process of selecting candidates. During this period many young men and women who are sons or daughters of senior leaders have expressed interest in contesting elections. Their entry reflects a mixture of personal aspiration and the political environment created by their families.

Both the Congress and the

## DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Satyabrata Borah

Bharatiya Janata Party have seen such developments. Senior leaders from these parties have children who are now stepping forward to seek party nominations. Political discussions in tea stalls, university campuses and social media often revolve around whether these candidates will bring new ideas or simply inherit established networks. One example that has recently drawn attention involves Ayusmita Deka, daughter of senior BJP leader and Chhattisgarh Governor Ramen Deka. Ayusmita Deka, who is known to be well educated and active in social engagement, has joined the Bharatiya Janata Party and expressed her intention to contest the upcoming election. Inspired by her father's long political journey, she has shown interest in representing the Palasbari constituency if the party grants her a ticket.

Her entry has become a topic of discussion in political circles. Supporters see her as part of a new generation of leaders who combine education, administrative understanding and a modern outlook. They believe such individuals may connect well with younger voters and bring fresh perspectives to governance. Critics on the other hand question whether established family names receive advantages that are not easily available to ordinary party workers who have spent many years building the party at the grassroots level.

These conversations reflect a larger question about how democracy evolves. Political parties often face the challenge of choos-

ing candidates who are both popular and capable of winning elections. A candidate from a known political family may already possess visibility among voters. Party leaders sometimes believe that this visibility increases the chance of electoral success. At the same time parties must maintain the confidence of dedicated workers who have invested their time and energy in building the organisation.

Grassroots party workers play a critical role in political movements. They organise meetings, connect with local communities and communicate party ideas to voters. Many of them hope that their years of effort will eventually allow them to contest elections or hold leadership positions. When tickets are given to newcomers from political families, some workers feel overlooked. Managing this balance remains a delicate task for party leadership.

The presence of political families also raises questions about how young leaders develop their own identity. Many children of established politicians grow up observing political meetings, election campaigns and public service activities. Politics becomes a familiar environment from an early age. When they enter public life they carry both the advantage of experience and the challenge of proving their individuality. Voters often expect them to demonstrate competence rather than relying only on their family background.

For voters in Assam, elections usually revolve around practical concerns such as development, employment opportunities, infrastructure, education and healthcare. People evaluate candidates according to their ability to address local issues. Whether a candidate comes from a political family or an ordinary background becomes less important if the individual fails to respond to these expectations. In many constituencies voters have shown that they are willing to support newcomers who work sincerely for the community. Assam today stands at an important stage in its political journey.

The state has a vibrant young population, increasing access to education and expanding communication through digital platforms. Political awareness has grown rapidly. Citizens discuss policy issues with greater interest and often question leaders about governance. This environment encourages greater accountability from elected representatives.

Young leaders entering politics today face a society that expects transparency and results. Voters pay attention to how leaders engage with communities, respond to crises and plan long term development. A candidate's family name may create initial curiosity yet sustained support usually depends on performance and in-

tegrity.

The emergence of new political voices is also shaped by social movements, student organisations and community initiatives. Assam has a long tradition of student activism which has influenced political leadership across generations. Many leaders began their careers through student unions or grassroots movements before entering mainstream politics. This tradition continues to inspire many young people who wish to serve society.

Family based politics therefore exists alongside other pathways into public life. Some individuals inherit political connections through family history while others build their reputation through activism, professional achievements or social work. Both routes contribute to the evolving political landscape of the state.

As the upcoming election approaches, debates about candidate selection will continue across party offices and public forums. Some voters will support familiar political families while others may prefer entirely new faces. The democratic process allows these different preferences to coexist. Ultimately the decision rests with the electorate.

Assam's political story has always been shaped by its people. Leaders rise through the trust and expectations of voters. Families may pass on political interest from one generation to another yet each individual must earn the confidence of the public through action and commitment.

The discussion around family based politics often reflects broader concerns about fairness and opportunity in democratic life. Citizens want a system where dedication and talent are recognised regardless of background. At the same time they acknowledge that individuals who grow up in political environments may also possess valuable experience.

For Assam, the coming years may witness a blend of continuity and renewal. Some constituencies may continue to see leaders from established families while others may elect completely new representatives. Such diversity forms part of a living democracy.

The strength of democracy lies in the freedom of citizens to evaluate their leaders and choose who represents them. Elections in Assam are moments when this collective judgment becomes visible. Every candidate must face the same test of public trust.

Family names may open doors to political life but the journey ahead depends on the ability to serve people with sincerity. Assam's voters have repeatedly shown that they value leaders who listen to their concerns and work for the welfare of society. As the political landscape continues to evolve, that expectation will remain the guiding force shaping the future of leadership in the state.

## Political values and the contemporary context

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

Politics is generally understood as an organized process of governing a country efficiently, establishing equality and justice among all sections of society, and improving the standard of living of the people. However, in the present context, this definition has assumed a completely different and practical form. In recent times, the influence of politics has become so deep at every level of our society that it is directly reflected in everything—from the daily lives of ordinary people to the economic and foreign policies of the nation. In earlier times, political leaders pledged to serve the people based on certain ideals and philosophies, and for them politics was a medium of sacrifice. But with the passage of time, the rapid expansion of globalization and capitalist economic systems has brought about a fundamental and commercial transformation in political values. In the present political environment, opportunism has completely taken the place of ideals. Winning elections by any means and consolidating the reins of power in one's own hands has become the only real objective of politics today. As a result, the ideological differences that once existed among various political parties have gradually faded, and the public now faces an acute shortage of healthy and honest alternatives. This stagnation in political values has encouraged corruption, nepotism, and institutional irregularities within society, which have internally weakened the very foundation of democracy in a country. In such a situation, it is only natural that the public begins to lose faith in the political system. The decline of political values does not merely indicate the moral deterioration of leaders; it exposes the structural weaknesses of the entire system of governance. When politics is treated merely as a profession or an investment, personal and party gains always take precedence over public welfare. The fundamental problems that ordinary people struggle with day and night rarely become the central focus of political discussions; instead, deliberately created controversial issues dominate the news media. In the absence of realistic and rational debates, the political environment gradually becomes polluted and meaningless. Moreover, in the present context, the influence of money power and muscle power has pushed political values completely to the margins, making it almost impossible for an ordinary, honest,

and dedicated individual to contest elections.

In the present time, one of the most powerful factors behind the rapid transformation of political values is the growing influence of modern communication media and populism. In today's age, due to the rapid spread of information technology, global news has become accessible at the fingertips of people; however, along with this, misinformation and political propaganda have also expanded widely in a systematic manner. Political parties have begun to use modern technology, especially social media, as a sharp weapon to fulfill their interests. The undeclared competition to psychologically influence people by blurring the line between truth and falsehood has undoubtedly dragged political values down to a very low level. Populism has taken politics to such a stage where long-term developmental plans have less value compared to short-term sensational promises. By capitalizing on the anger, frustration, and emotions of the masses, political leaders attempt to secure their vote banks. The real and burning issues of society—such as rising unemployment, the deteriorating conditions of education and healthcare, and increasing prices—are often deliberately ignored, while religion, caste, or other divisive issues are highlighted to divert public attention. The most unfortunate aspect is that ordinary people themselves often become conscious or unconscious participants in this entire process. Instead of becoming aware of their rights and responsibilities, people are easily influenced by baseless promises and emotional slogans. In a democratic country, ultimate power lies in the hands of the people; but when citizens exercise their voting rights based on emotion rather than reason, the very structure of democracy becomes ineffective. Political leaders themselves are an inseparable part of society, and therefore their actions naturally reflect the overall mindset of that society. Until ordinary citizens learn to question and analyze every decision of the government rationally, political parties will continue to evade their real responsibilities without difficulty. It is the primary duty of every citizen to examine carefully whether the promises made during elections are economically realistic and whether the government actually possesses any concrete policy plans to implement them. However, in the present context, the absence of such rational evaluation is visible at every level. Instead, the statistical arithmetic of victory and defeat and the personal attacks on opponents

have become the highest priorities in politics, causing political values to gradually turn into an empty and meaningless expression.

In a democratic system, the independence, neutrality, and efficiency of government institutions are considered absolutely essential for maintaining political values. However, in the current political climate, these institutions are increasingly and systematically falling under political influence. Whether it is the judiciary, the election commission, or other investigative and regulatory agencies, the trust of the public in these institutions is vital for a healthy democracy. When the party or individuals in power begin to use these independent institutions to control their political opponents or to serve their own interests, it clearly indicates the ultimate collapse of political values. In recent times, a vast and unusual gap has been observed between policy formulation and its implementation. Government documents often present schemes and projects in an extremely attractive manner, yet whether their benefits actually reach ordinary people remains a serious question. Due to systemic corruption and bureaucratic complications, welfare schemes frequently remain incomplete or confined only to paper. In such circumstances, political leaders often prefer to blame others or previous governments instead of accepting their policy failures. Consequently, the entire political system has gradually turned into an environment devoid of accountability and responsibility. Although the constitution advocates decentralization of power, in reality power often remains concentrated in the hands of a few individuals or business groups. As economic inequality continues to grow, a large section of society is becoming completely disconnected from the process of political decision-making. Those who possess enormous wealth and influence are able to control government policies either directly or indirectly. In such an unequal and capitalist-centered system, the voices of ordinary workers and farmers are gradually being silenced. Moreover, politics has now become an extremely expensive contest, where the enormous financial resources required to fight elections compel political parties to depend heavily on the corporate sector. This economic dependence has a direct impact on the laws and decisions of the government, resulting in the protection of corporate interests rather than the welfare of the people. Politics has now become a perfect business where calculations of investment and profit

are made with extreme precision.

This analysis of political values is not limited to a particular country or state; it has emerged as a universal and stark reality of the contemporary global political environment. Across the world, the old ideological conflicts between right-wing and left-wing politics are gradually losing their relevance. In their place, a kind of pragmatic politics has emerged, where statistics and economic indicators are given more importance than ideological principles. However, the extent to which these models of economic development actually benefit the lower sections of society remains a subject of intense debate. From an international perspective, the undeclared competition among major powers for economic and military dominance has directly influenced the political values and policies of smaller nations. In matters of foreign policy, discussions of human rights and democratic values have largely become part of diplomatic speeches. In reality, trade agreements, control over natural resources, and military security have become the main determinants of international alliances. When we return to domestic politics, it becomes clear that the waves of these global transformations have deeply affected our own social system. Contemporary political leaders, in their attempt to protect the interests of global capital, often show little hesitation in weakening the rights of ordinary people over land, forests, and water. The artificial debate created between environmental protection and development has, in reality, become a legal mechanism for transferring natural resources safely into the hands of powerful corporate groups. To keep this entire system functioning smoothly, political forces require an environment in which the public remains constantly divided by emotional issues and has little opportunity to question deeper economic irregularities. If society remains fragmented along the lines of religion, language, or regional identity, it becomes easier to derive political advantage. Therefore, the decline of political values in the present time is not an accidental phenomenon; it is part of a well-planned and systematically managed process. In such circumstances, the role of the intellectual class and the news media should have been decisive, but unfortunately both have themselves become victims of political polarization and commercialization, resulting in the absence of any neutral voice within society.

This transformed and deteriorating condition

of political values carries a serious warning for the future of society. History shows that when the political system of a society completely loses the trust and confidence of the people, instability and chaos inevitably follow. Therefore, in the present critical time, there is an urgent need to take thoughtful and practical steps for the restoration of political values. First, the public must transform its own mindset and learn to evaluate the actions of political leaders rationally instead of following them blindly. People must develop the courage to question emotional slogans and unrealistic promises, and demand scientific solutions to the real problems of society. Secondly, it is equally necessary to create a vibrant democratic environment within political parties themselves, because without healthy debates and internal criticism, competent and honest leadership can never emerge. Furthermore, to make the electoral process more transparent and clean, reforms must be introduced in election financing along with the strict implementation of appropriate laws. Unless the influence of money and muscle power in politics is reduced, a truly representative democracy cannot be established. The active participation of the conscious youth in politics has become one of the greatest demands of the present time, because mere expressions of frustration on social media cannot bring about real change; meaningful transformation requires direct involvement in the political process. At the same time, it must also be acknowledged that entering the present polluted political environment while maintaining one's moral values is extremely difficult. Yet, instead of criticizing the system from outside, attempting to reform it gradually from within may prove more effective for society. Political values are not an abstract concept; they represent the collective human actions and thoughts of a society. Therefore, only when every individual becomes fully aware of their constitutional responsibilities and duties can the political environment gradually return to a healthier state. In conclusion, although the present political context appears deeply disappointing, it is not entirely devoid of hope. A rational, emotion-free, and impartial analysis can always help us identify the roots of the problems, and on that foundation it will be possible to build the basis of a strong, clean, and accountable political system for the future. (The author is the recipient of the 'Yuba Lekhak Samman - 2025' from the Government of Assam)

# Forging the Future of Global Agriculture

By: Dipak Kurmi

Agriculture has served as the foundational bedrock of human civilization since the dawn of sedentary life, evolving from the rudimentary tilling of the earth into a sophisticated, high-tech engine of survival. From the earliest Neolithic settlements to the burgeoning precision-driven farms of 2026, the sector has demonstrated a unique capacity for adaptation and growth. Despite the relentless pace of global industrialization, sprawling urbanization, and the rise of digital economies, the scope of agriculture remains not only unaltered but fundamentally expanding. Today, it stands as a multifaceted discipline playing an indispensable role in ensuring food security, driving economic development, safeguarding environmental sustainability, and anchoring rural livelihoods across the globe. As we navigate the complexities of the mid-21st century, agriculture is reaffirming its status as the most essential and promising sector for the continued progress of the human race.

The most immediate and critical function of agriculture remains its central role in global food production. According to recent United Nations projections, the human population is expected to reach 8.2 billion by mid-2026 and continue its ascent toward nearly 10 billion by 2050. This demographic explosion creates an unprecedented demand for food grains, nutrient-dense fruits, vegetables, and livestock products. Agriculture is the solitary sector equipped to shoulder the burden of this requirement. To meet these needs, the industry has embraced cutting-edge advances in crop breeding, sophisticated irrigation technologies, and climate-resilient farming techniques. Modern paradigms such as precision farming, protected cultivation in greenhouses, and integrated nutrient management have revolutionized the field, allowing for higher yields with fewer resources. This constant innovation ensures that the need for agricultural production will forever remain a permanent

fixture of our global priorities.

Beyond the dinner table, agriculture serves as a titanic engine for employment and economic stability, particularly in developing nations like India. A vast portion of the global workforce remains tethered to the agricultural value chain, which encompasses farmers, input suppliers, logistics providers, and food processors. However, the sector is no longer just a haven for traditional labor; it has become a fertile ground for educated youth and tech-savvy entrepreneurs. The rise of agri-tech startups and digital agriculture services has birthed entirely new career pathways, ranging from farm data analysts and drone operators to agricultural consultants and biotechnology researchers. By merging traditional wisdom with modern informatics, the sector is transforming the rural landscape into a hub of innovation, ensuring that agriculture remains a dynamic source of livelihood for millions of people worldwide.

The influence of agriculture extends far beyond the farm gate, acting as the primary feeder for a multitude of allied industrial sectors. Global industries such as food processing, textile manufacturing, and biofuel production are entirely dependent on a steady stream of agricultural raw materials. For instance, the global textile market relies on cotton production, while the energy sector increasingly looks toward sugarcane and oilseeds for sustainable ethanol and biodiesel alternatives. As consumer demand for processed and value-added goods skyrockets, the symbiotic link between agriculture and industry strengthens further. This interconnectedness ensures that agricultural health is synonymous with national economic health, as a robust harvest directly correlates with the success of manufacturing hubs and the stability of urban supply chains.

In an era increasingly defined by the climate crisis, agriculture has transitioned from a sector merely affected by environmental changes to a primary solution provider for sustainability. Modern farming practices—such as



organic cultivation, agroforestry, and integrated farming systems—are designed to maintain ecological equilibrium while enhancing productivity. Agriculture now plays a pivotal role in carbon sequestration, where healthy soil and diverse plant life act as carbon sinks to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. Strategic initiatives like BASF's carbon farming trials have demonstrated that climate-smart practices can reduce carbon intensity by up to 30 percent while maintaining yields. By integrating natural resource management with food production, agriculture is proving that it can feed the world without destroying the planet, thereby cementing its role as a guardian of our environmental future.

The technological transformation of the field is perhaps its most visible modern attribute. Innovations such as remote sens-

ing, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and Artificial Intelligence are rapidly replacing guesswork with data-driven precision. Drones equipped with multispectral cameras now monitor crop health from the skies, while IoT sensors embedded in the soil provide real-time updates on moisture and nutrient levels. This allows for the targeted application of water, fertilizers, and pesticides, which drastically reduces chemical runoff and waste. Furthermore, advancements in biotechnology and genetic engineering have yielded high-yield, pest-resistant, and drought-tolerant varieties that can thrive in increasingly harsh environments. These scientific breakthroughs confirm that agriculture is a forward-looking, progressive discipline that evolves in lockstep with the frontiers of human knowledge.

Agriculture is also increasingly recognized as the cornerstone of nutritional security and public health. Modern societies have shifted their focus from merely avoiding hunger to ensuring a balanced, nutrient-rich diet. This has led to the diversification of agriculture toward horticulture, medicinal plants, and ancient grains like millets, which offer superior health benefits. The burgeoning consumer interest in organic food and farm-to-table concepts highlights a deeper connection between the soil and the human body. As people become more health-conscious, the demand for safe, fresh, and functional agricultural products continues to rise. This shift not only improves public health outcomes but also provides farmers with high-value niche markets, further expanding the economic scope of the entire sector.

Furthermore, the impact of agriculture on rural development and global trade cannot be overstated. Rural communities remain the heart of agricultural activity, and improvements in farm productivity directly translate into better infrastructure, higher incomes, and a superior quality of life for these populations. On the international stage, agricultural exports like rice, spices, tea, and coffee are vital sources of foreign exchange, contributing to global economic stability and fostering trade relations between nations. The global agricultural commodity market, projected to exceed US\$ 6 trillion in 2025, underscores the sheer scale of this industry. As international demand for diverse food products continues to grow due to globalization, the sector's role in global commerce remains a permanent and expanding force.

The scope of agriculture is inexorable because it is fundamentally intertwined with every facet of human existence. It is a sector that refuses to be stagnant, continuously adapting to new technologies, societal shifts, and global environmental challenges. From the laboratory to the field, agriculture offers a boundless array of opportunities for innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable growth. As the world faces the daunting tasks of resource scarcity and climate change, the importance of this sector will only continue to amplify. Far from being a relic of the past, agriculture is the definitive industry of the future, serving as the essential pillar upon which a prosperous, healthy, and sustainable human civilization will be built. *(The writer can be reached at dipakkurmigmail@gmail.com)*

## Agriculture: From traditional farming to global opportunities

By: Himanshu Verma

Agriculture has been the backbone of human civilisation since the earliest settlements. From ancient subsistence farming to modern precision agriculture, the sector has continuously evolved to meet the changing needs of society. Despite rapid industrialisation, urbanisation, and technological advancement, the scope of agriculture cannot be halted or diminished. Instead, it continues to expand and diversify, playing a vital role in ensuring food security, economic development, environmental sustainability, and rural livelihood across the globe. In the coming decades, agriculture will remain one of the most essential and promising sectors for human survival and progress.

The primary and most fundamental importance of agriculture lies in its role in food production. With the global population projected to exceed 9 billion by 2050, the demand for food grains, fruits, vegetables, and livestock products will increase significantly. Agriculture remains the only sector capable of meeting this growing demand. Advances in crop breeding, improved irrigation methods, and climate-resilient farming practices are continuously enhancing productivity. Modern techniques such as precision farming, protected cultivation, and integrated nutrient management have further strengthened the capacity of agriculture to supply food to an ever-growing population.

Therefore, the need for agricultural production will always exist, ensuring that the scope of agriculture remains permanent and indispensable. Apart from food production, agriculture is a major contributor to employment generation. In many developing countries, including India, a significant portion of the population depends directly or indirectly on agriculture for their livelihood. Farmers, agricultural labourers, input suppliers, transporters, food processors, and marketers all form part of the agricultural value chain.

As new technologies and innovations emerge, new employment opportunities are also being created in areas such as agri-tech startups, digital agriculture services, farm mechanisation, agricultural consultancy, and rural entrepreneurship. Consequently, agriculture not only sustains traditional occupations but also opens new career pathways for educated youth.

Agriculture also plays a critical role in supporting various allied sectors. Industries such as food processing, textile manufacturing, dairy production, poultry farming, fisheries, and biofuel production depend heavily on agricultural raw materials. For example, cotton supports the textile industry, sugarcane feeds the sugar industry, and oilseeds supply edible oil processing units. The development of agro-based industries strengthens rural economies and contributes significantly to na-

tional economic growth.

As the demand for processed food and value-added agricultural products increases, the interconnection between agriculture and industry will become even stronger. Another significant reason why the scope of agriculture cannot be stopped is its growing role in environmental sustainability. Agriculture is closely linked with natural resource management, including soil, water, and biodiversity conservation.

Modern sustainable farming practices, such as organic farming, conservation agriculture, agro-forestry, and integrated farming systems, help maintain ecological balance while ensuring productivity. These approaches reduce chemical dependency, improve soil health, and promote climate resilience. In the era of climate change, agriculture is not only a sector affected by environmental challenges but also a key solution provider through carbon sequestration, sustainable land management,



and climate-smart agricultural practices. Technological advancements have further expanded the scope of agriculture in recent decades.

Innovations such as remote sensing, geographic information systems (GIS), artificial intelligence, drones, and nanotechnology are transforming traditional farming methods into more efficient and data-driven systems. Precision agriculture allows farmers to apply water, fertilisers, and pesticides in a targeted manner, reducing wastage and improving crop yields. Similarly, biotechnology and genetic improvement techniques have enabled the development of high-yielding, pest-resistant, and climate-tolerant crop varieties. These technological integrations demonstrate that agriculture is not a stagnant sector but one that continuously evolves with scientific progress.

Agriculture also has an important role in ensuring nutritional security. Modern societies are not only concerned about producing sufficient food but also about producing nutritious food. The diversification of agriculture towards horticulture, pulses, oilseeds, millets, medicinal plants, and functional foods contributes to a balanced and healthy diet. Increasing awareness about organic food, natural farming, and farm-to-table concepts has further strengthened the connection between agriculture and human health. As people become more health-conscious, the

demand for safe, fresh, and nutritious agricultural products will continue to grow. Furthermore, agriculture contributes significantly to rural development. Rural areas are the primary centers of agricultural activities, and improvements in agricultural productivity directly influence the socio-economic conditions of rural communities. Infrastructure development, such as irrigation systems, rural roads, storage facilities, and market access improves farmers' income and overall quality of life. Government initiatives promoting farmer producer organizations, crop insurance schemes, and digital agriculture platforms are further strengthening the agricultural sector.

By improving rural livelihoods and reducing poverty, agriculture plays a central role in inclusive development. Global trade is another factor that expands the scope of agriculture. Many countries earn substantial foreign exchange through the export of agricultural commodities such as rice, spices, tea, coffee, fruits, vegetables, and processed foods.

International demand for agricultural products continues to rise due to globalisation and changing dietary preferences. As a result, agricultural exports contribute to economic stability and international trade relations. Developing countries have immense potential to strengthen their position in global markets by improving quality standards, supply chains, and value addition. Education and research in agriculture are also continuously broadening the sector's prospects.

Agricultural universities, research institutes, and extension services are working to develop innovative technologies and disseminate knowledge to farmers. Young professionals are increasingly entering fields such as agronomy, horticulture, agricultural engineering, soil science, agri-business management, and agricultural biotechnology. These academic and research opportunities ensure that agriculture remains a dynamic and progressive discipline capable of addressing emerging challenges.

In conclusion, the scope of agriculture can never be stopped because it is fundamentally linked with human survival, economic stability, and environmental sustainability. The sector continues to adapt to new technologies, societal demands, and global challenges.

From providing food and employment to supporting industries and protecting natural resources, agriculture remains an essential pillar of development. As the world faces challenges such as population growth, climate change, and resource scarcity, the importance of agriculture will only increase. Therefore, rather than declining, the scope of agriculture will continue to expand, offering new opportunities for innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development. *(The writer is Assistant Professor Agronomy, Surajmal University, Kichha, Udham Singh Nagar; views are personal)*

## How Assam's sisters are rewriting the State's economic script

By: Umesh Raj, Samridhi Prakash

Post-covid Assam has been one of the fastest-growing states in India, with a nominal rate of growth of 13 per cent in 2024-25 and average per capita income growth of more than 10 per cent over the past 3 years. While the pursuit of sustained growth is often seen to be driven by industrial corridors and infrastructure, the most potent lever for growth in modern Assam is not made of steel or concrete, but of "Nari Shakti."

Data from the most recent Annual Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) reveal a dramatic acceleration in women's economic engagement. By 2023-24, Assam's overall Female LFPR surged to 50.2 per cent, a figure that stands in stark contrast to the national average of 41.7 per cent. This momentum is most visible in rural areas where participation jumped from a modest 29 per cent in 2021-22 to a staggering 52.8 per cent by 2023-24. (Assam Economic Survey, 2025-26)

As the state aims to become a USD 143 billion economy by 2030, the transition of women from passive beneficiaries of welfare to active economic agents has seen to be moving from the periphery to the very heart of the state's economic strategy. With a female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) that now significantly outstrips the national average, Assam is charting a unique course of empowerment that balances quantitative surges with the need for deep, qualitative structural shifts.

The rise in FLFPR is not merely a product of business-as-usual trends but the outcome of deliberate and targeted policy interventions. The flagship Mukhyamantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyaan (MMUA), popularly known as the "Lakhpati Baiden" mission, represents one of the most ambitious attempts to formalise rural entrepreneurship in India's history. Targeting 40 lakh women associated with Self-Help Groups (SHGs), the mission aims to ensure an annual income of at least Rs 1 lakh for every member.

As of early 2026, 8.8 lakh women have already achieved this "Lakhpati" status. Success stories from districts like Nalbari and Sivasagar showcase the potential of this model: women like Bijumoni Devi are earning INR 1.80 lakh annually through pickle-making, while others like Anita Thakuriya have reached incomes of INR 2.23 lakh through animal husbandry. The program follows a structured approach, starting with Rs 10,000 seed capital and progressing to INR 50,000 based on performance, shifting the narrative from one-time grants to sustained business growth. Also, empowerment in Assam is increasingly being defined by the removal of operational barriers to human capital. The "Nijut Moina" scheme 2.0 aims to provide monthly stipends to over 10 lakh girl students, bridging down the gap of the financial agent, which directly impacts educational continuity. (The Hindu, 2026)

**No reason for complacency**  
Although recent data point to a rise in FLFPR, this is not always an unambiguously positive development. In many cases, an increase in female labour force participation is interpreted as a sign of household distress, where stagnating or inadequate male wages compel women to enter the workforce to supplement family income. Moreover, a look beyond the headline numbers shows participation spike is almost entirely driven by a massive shift into self-



employment. In rural Assam, the share of women engaged in self-sustained ventures skyrocketed from 18.5 per cent to 77.3 per cent over a seven-year period from 2017-18 to 2023-24. A distress sign also comes from the data that salaried positions in rural women fell from 58.8 per cent to just 15.2 per cent (IWWAGE, 2025). To ensure that this is not merely "distress entrepreneurship" driven by compulsion, the state must focus on scaling these micro-activities into viable, high-growth rural enterprises. Even if the current rise in LFPR is partly distress-led, policy should aim to create conditions that enable women to remain in the labour force, sustain gainful employment, and contribute meaningfully to the economy, while simultaneously strengthening their economic agency.

**Way forward**

There are clear pathways to make this happen. Women's Capability Index (WCI) indicates that 31 per cent of women in Assam still experience multidimensional deprivation in health, dignity, and autonomy.

A critical barrier is the prevalence of anaemia, which affects 65.9 per cent of women aged 15-49, making Assam one of the most impacted states in the country. This health crisis is a serious concern, as calculations suggest that anaemia among females in India is estimated to cost nearly 1.2 per cent of the country's GDP. (Government of Assam, Women's Conditions in Assam, 2025)

Furthermore, safety remains a primary concern for workforce entry. Approximately 12 per cent of women feel unsafe while using public transport, with the fear being significantly more acute in rural enclaves (14 per cent) compared to urban centres (7 per cent). (DES Assam, 2025) In such a scenario, true empowerment, therefore, requires a "Credit-Plus" approach, which pairs financial capital with improved health outcomes, safer transit corridors, and also dismantling of the gendered care burden that keeps millions of women at home.

While Assam's GSDP has expanded by 45 per cent over the last five years, far outpacing the national average of 29 per cent, the state's vision of a USD 143 billion economy rests also on the continued mobilisation of the women empowerment schemes put forth.

By focusing and leveraging the state's traditional family value systems and also aggressively tackling modern infrastructural and health deficits, Assam is proving that gender-responsive policy is one of the most effective forms of economic stimulus. The transformation is already visible; the challenge now is to ensure it becomes universal. *(Authors are Research Assistant and Research Associate respectively, associated with Pahle India Foundation; views are personal)*

## 40 lakh women get ₹9,000 each under Orunodoi scheme It is not 'election freebie,' says Himanta

**GUWAHATI, March 10:** Forty lakh families in Assam on Tuesday received ₹9,000 each under the state government's flagship 'Orunodoi' scheme, with Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma asserting that it was not an "election freebie" but a manifestation of the regime's compassionate approach towards the women beneficiaries.

He underlined that the scheme was not a universal one but only meant for women who fulfilled specific criteria, which makes it a "controlled" one and not linked with the coming Assembly polls.

"₹3,600cr straight into the bank accounts of 40 lakh women- and NO this is not an election freebie," Sarma said in a post after attending the central launch programme here.

He said that through 'Orunodoi', one of the country's first beneficiary transfer schemes, eligible families are receiving monthly financial assistance since 2020.

Every month on the 10th, nearly 40 lakh women-led families receive ₹1,250 to take care of their basic expenses, Sarma said.



"To ensure that the #AssamElections2026 doesn't hamper this process, we have transferred ₹9,000 together for 4 months of #Orunodoi & a ₹4,000 Bihu bonus," he added.

The chief minister claimed that the results of Orunodoi have percolated on the ground and shown how effective targeted poverty alleviation schemes can be.

"Lakhs of people have been pulled out of poverty & together with other schemes, a comprehensive security net has been laid to ensure they remain poverty-free," Sarma added.

Orunodoi is a flagship poverty alleviation scheme of the BJP-led state government launched in 2020, under which one eligible woman beneficiary per family receives ₹1,250 per month.

Sarma had announced earlier that payment for four months from January this year, along with an additional amount for Bohag Bihu celebration (marking the Assamese

New Year in mid-April), will be paid together in March, taking the total amount to ₹9,000.

Talking to reporters after the launch, the chief minister maintained that the Orunodoi scheme was not linked with the elections.

"Unlike in other states, there is no mass transfer of benefit in this scheme. The transfer is limited to certain category of women, it is a controlled scheme and not linked with election," he said.

Sarma claimed that had it been linked with the election, coverage would have been universal.

"We have been giving Orunodoi with a lot of compassion. We have been doing it for six years now," he maintained.

"We are winning elections because of (PM) Narendra Modi ji and BJP, not due to schemes. These are ongoing schemes. Perhaps, Congress (ruled states) also have similar ones," the chief minister added.

The Chief Minister's Office (CMO), also in a post on X, said it is a "historic step towards strengthening (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Soren appeals tribals to use democratic rights judiciously in Assam polls



**TEZPUR, March 10:** Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren on Tuesday appealed to the tribal community of Assam to exercise their democratic rights judiciously in the upcoming assembly elections.

Soren addressed a public rally in Biswanath district, where the newly-formed Jai Bharat Party (JBP) announced an alliance with his Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) to contest around 40 seats in the elections.

He said that when the poor and

marginalised people unite, no force can suppress their voice.

He also raised concerns over the rising prices of essential commodities, including cooking gas and daily necessities, saying that inflation affects ordinary families the most.

Highlighting the importance of democratic participation, Soren urged people to exercise their voting rights responsibly, noting that even a single vote can determine whether a leader gains or loses power in a democracy.

"Our tribal communities have a long history of courage and resilience, and they have never bowed before injustice. I call upon all of you to remain united and fight for your rights through both political and constitutional means," he said.

Referring to the slogan 'Abua Disum, Abua Raj' (Our Land, Our Rule), Soren said the vision reflects the aspirations of tribal communities to protect their rights, dignity and identity as the original inhabitants of the land.

He urged tribal communities to stand together on a single platform to secure justice, dignity, and a better future, expressing confidence that unity and determination would bring meaningful change in the coming days.

The elections for the 126-member assembly are expected to be held in April.

JBP president Teharu Gour said his party and JMM will together contest around 40 seats.

"We are confident that the parties will secure victories in several seats," he said. (PTI)

## Veteran Cong leader, ex-Union minister Biren Singh Engti dies at 81

**GUWAHATI, March 10:** Veteran Congress leader and former Union minister Biren Singh Engti died at a private hospital here on Tuesday. He was 81.

A party spokesperson said that Engti was brought to Guwahati for treatment from his Diphu residence and breathed his last this morning. "The mortal remains have been taken to Diphu, where last respects will be paid," the spokesperson added.

A five-time Lok Sabha MP from Diphu constituency, Engti had also served as a minister of state in the Rajiv Gandhi government in the Centre.

Having entered the Lok Sabha in the 1970s, the veteran leader of Karbi Anglong had won his last election to the lower house in 2014.

He had also served as the chief executive member of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council.

Condoling Engti's death, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said in a post on X: "The passing away of Shri Biren Singh Engti, veteran leader from Karbi Anglong and former Union Minister, is a great loss for Assam."

"His years of service to the people and efforts for the development of the hill regions will always be remembered," Sarma added, extending his condolences to the bereaved family.

State Congress president Gaurav Gogoi, in a post on Facebook, said the death of Engti is an "irreparable loss not only to the hill district but the entire political field of the state."

"Deeply saddened at the news of the death of senior leader of Assam Congress, former Union minister and my late father's friend Biren Singh Engti," Gogoi said.

Gogoi, son of three-time Assam CM Tarun Gogoi, recalled the time spent (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## CM hails record time completion of project 4.2 km Maharaj Prithu Flyover inaugurated in Guwahati

**GUWAHATI, March 10:** Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday inaugurated the Maharaj Prithu Flyover, connecting Dighalipukhuri and Noonmati, and dedicated it to public use.

The 4.2-km-long four-lane flyover has been constructed at a cost of ₹852.68 crore as part of efforts to improve transport infrastructure in the city.

The State government sanctioned the project on June 26, 2023, while the foundation stone was laid on November 16, 2023.

Though the project was scheduled for completion within 36 months, it was finished in 28 months.

Officials said the flyover has been built with 129 pillars and a steel girder superstructure.

Addressing the gathering, Sarma said the flyover would significantly ease traffic congestion and reduce travel time for commuters in the city.

He added that the completion of the project in a record time reflects advanced planning, technical expertise, effective supervision and coordinated teamwork.

The chief minister also said that in the coming days the flyover would have a rotary near Guwahati Club and a connection with the flyover at Ulubari.

He added that the government has taken steps to improve the surrounding areas through concrete drainage from Dighalipukhuri to Noonmati, refurbishment of roads



and lanes, and installation of improved street lighting.

Sarma noted that GNB Road is one of the busiest roads in the city, with thousands of vehicles passing through daily.

The new flyover, he said, would reduce traffic pressure on the road beneath it, leading to faster movement and lower air and noise pollution.

Describing the project as a blend of development and heritage, Sarma said naming the flyover after Maharaj Prithu honours Assam's historical legacy.

He paid tribute to the ancient Kamrup ruler, recalling his bravery in defending the region against foreign invasions. The chief minister (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Blueprint for multi-domain military reforms and capability upgrades unveiled

**NEW DELHI, March 10:** An ambitious vision document broadly outlining a series of strategic reforms, capability enhancements and organisational changes required to bolster the Indian military was unveiled by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday.

The document, prepared by the Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (HQ IDS), is a strategic blueprint to transform the Indian armed forces into a modern, multi-domain, and integrated force by the centenary of India's Independence.

The release of the 'Defence Forces Vision 2047: A Roadmap for a Future-Ready Indian Military' came eight months after the military conflict between India and

Pakistan. Following the May 7 to 10 conflict, all the three forces were asked to work on the lessons learnt from it.

The vision document envisages the transformation of the military into an integrated, multi-domain and agile force capable of deterring adversaries and to effectively respond to any conflict.

A central pillar of the vision is the emphasis on jointness and synergy among the services, promoting greater coordination in planning, operations and capability development, according to the defence ministry.

It said the blueprint has been articulated by Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff to transform the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday said the government is looking to extend help to exporters on the insurance front to help them deal with the ongoing West Asia crisis.

He said an inter-ministerial group is keeping tabs on developments on a daily basis and is interacting with exporters.

The Customs department has come out with norms for dealing with export cargo returning to Indian ports due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and disruptions in maritime routes amid the West Asia crisis.

"Similarly, we are looking for developing some new schemes like

## Looking to help exporters at insurance front to deal West Asia crisis: Goyal

insurance support... We are consulting ECGC (Export Credit Guarantee Corporation) and other departments on that," Goyal told reporters here.

He said the government is looking at ways to help exporters whose goods have been shipped but are facing problems.

The government is monitoring the situation 24 hours, he added. Exporters are facing issues due to a joint attack launched by the US and Israel on Iran. It has led to a spike in ocean freight, air transport, and insurance premiums because of disruptions in the movement of oil and gas consignments.

West Asia is a major export destination for India.

Meanwhile, speaking at Aahar show, he said India should aspire to become a top exporter of agri and processed food sectors.

At present, India is the seventh-largest exporter of the world.

Agriculture and fish exports stood around Rs 5 lakh crore.

Goyal also said the nine free trade agreements (FTAs) finalised by India have opened huge export opportunities for Indian goods.

"We are now finalising an agreement with Canada. We have just launched discussions with the six nations, GCC group of countries, in the Middle East. All of this provides huge opportunities for friends from the processed food and agri sector," the minister said. (PTI)

## AIUDF releases first list of 9 candidates

**GUWAHATI, March 10:** Opposition All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) announced the first list of nine candidates for the upcoming Assam assembly elections, according to a party circular.

AIUDF president Badruddin Ajmal on Monday night declared the list of candidates, retaining three of the existing MLAs and introducing two new women faces.

The Assam assembly elections for 126 constituencies are expected to take place next month. This will be the first assembly election after the delimitation exercise, which was done in 2023.

AIUDF has given ticket to incumbent Aminul Islam, Hafiz Rafiqul Islam and Nizanur Rahman from Rupahihat, Mandia and Gauripur (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Since 2014, nearly 1,900 kilometres of new railway lines have been constructed

## Assam witnessing major railway expansion under Modi govt

**GUWAHATI, March 10:** Assam and the Northeast are witnessing a major transformation in railway connectivity with increased investments and infrastructure development under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, officials said.

According to official information, the average annual railway budget allocation for Assam and the Northeast has increased significantly in recent years.

During 2009-14, the region received an average annual allocation of about ₹2,122 crore, which has now risen to around ₹11,486 crore for 2026-27. The increased investment has accelerated several major projects across the region.

Currently, railway projects worth more than ₹72,468 crore are underway in Assam and other



northeastern states, including construction of new railway lines, station modernisation and

safety-related initiatives. Under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, 60 railway stations in

Assam and the Northeast are being redeveloped with an investment of approximately ₹2,101 crore to provide modern passenger amenities, improved accessibility and upgraded infrastructure.

Officials said the redevelopment of Haibargaon station has already been completed.

Railway network expansion has also gained momentum. Since 2014, nearly 1,900 kilometres of new railway lines have been constructed in the region.

Electrification work has progressed rapidly, with states such as Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, and Mizoram achieving full electrification, while Assam is nearing the same milestone. To improve safety and ease of movement, 502 rail flyovers and underpasses have been constructed in the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## FSI stalls AI-based alerts on deforestation to states

**NEW DELHI, March 10:** The Forest Survey of India (FSI), which is responsible for the assessment and monitoring of the country's forest cover, has not issued fortnightly alerts to states on deforestation activities since October last year, according to official data.

The last alert was issued in October 2025 and no data has been updated since then, according to the Anvaran-Deforestation Alert System portal.

Since January 2024, the portal has been functioning by combining satellite imagery and machine-learning techniques to help FSI detect changes in forest cover.

FSI is an organisation under the Ministry of Environment and Forests. It used to send location-specific alerts to state authorities every 15 days about areas where forest cover may have declined, allowing officials to conduct focused on-ground inspections in those locations. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Himanta inaugurates state's first Science City

**GUWAHATI, March 10:** Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday inaugurated the state's first Science City at Sonapur, on the outskirts of Guwahati, and said such initiatives will encourage scientific thinking among youth.

He said the state government was building infrastructure which matches the best in the country.

"Assam gets its own Science City and it will be one of the best in the country. Built on the outskirts of Guwahati, this project, spread over 82 acres has been built at Rs 300 cr and has features like Eureka and Space Odyssey, etc, and is bigger than Kolkata's Science City," Sarma said in a post on X.

He said more features like Science Innovation and Science Park will also come up shortly on the premises, which will draw more young minds towards scientific thinking.

"In Assam, we are building things which feature as ones which are best in the country," Sarma added.

The Chief Minister's Office (CMO), also in a post on social media, said the Science City has been developed jointly by the state government and the National Council of Science Museum, which is under the Ministry of Culture.

The CMO said that on the same occasion, Sarma virtually inaugurated five district Science Centres at Amingaon, Majuli, Silchar, Kaliaor and Bongaigaon, equipped with science galleries, digital planetariums and auditoriums.

"Both visionary initiatives will go a long way towards nurturing scientific temperament and inspiring the next generation of innovators across Assam," the CMO added. (PTI)

## Women beneficiaries receive ₹ 9,000 each Financial aid distributed under Orunodoi 3.0



**HT Correspondent**

**HOWRAGHAT, March 10:** In the ongoing BJP government's move towards women's empowerment, over 300 beneficiaries from the Okkereng area under the Nomati Council Constituency were officially granted financial assistance under the Orunodoi 3.0 scheme on Tuesday. Each recipient received an amount of ₹ 9,000.

To mark the occasion, a large-scale public meeting was organised at Okkereng, drawing a crowd of several thousand women from across the Nomati constituency. The event highlighted the government's ongoing commitment to providing a financial safety net for underprivileged households.

The distribution ceremony was graced

by several prominent leaders and officials from the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) and the local administration, including Ritesh Engti, Executive Member (EM), Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council; Britain Mahela, Chairman, Nomati Constituency VDC; Pradip Ingti, Chairman, Dokmoka (Dengao) Municipal Board and Jernel Ronghang, former Chairman, Development Block Board.

During the meeting, the speakers emphasised that the Orunodoi scheme remains a cornerstone of social welfare in the region. By depositing funds directly into the bank accounts of the female heads of households, the initiative aims to alleviate poverty and ensure nutritional and medical security for families.

The massive turnout of women at the event underscores the local impact of the scheme and the community's engagement with developmental initiatives in Karbi Anglong.

**Our Margherita Correspondent adds:** Along with the rest of the State, the Orunodoi 3.0 Special Financial Assistance Distribution Programme was organised on Tuesday at Hamukjan Gaon Panchayat

under Margherita Development Block where beneficiaries present also witnessed the live address of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, delivered as part of the statewide programme.

The programme was attended by 83rd Margherita LAC MLA Bhaskar Sharma, Rahul Doley Co-District Commissioner, Margherita, Rohit Kumar Yadav Block Development officer Margherita Development Block, Gaon Panchayat presidents, Panchayat Secretaries, officials from various departments, beneficiaries and members of the media.

A total of 28,622 beneficiaries under Margherita Development Block are being covered under Orunodoi 3.0 where under this scheme, eligible women beneficiaries receive ₹ 1,250 per month through Direct Benefit Transfer, along with ₹ 9,000 additional financial assistance covering four months, as announced by the Chief Minister.

The programme was simultaneously organised across various Gaon Panchayats, Municipal Wards and VCDC areas under Margherita Development Block to facilitate the distribution of benefits to eligible beneficiaries.

## Veteran leader Biren Singh Engti passes away at 81

Former Union Minister and five-term MP from Diphu mourned across Karbi Anglong



**HT Bureau**

**DIPHU, March 10:** The hill district of Karbi Anglong is in mourning following the demise of Biren Singh Engti, a veteran politician, former Union Minister and one of the longest-serving tribal leaders from Assam. Engti passed away at the Guwahati Health City Hospital at 7:45 AM on Tuesday due to cardiac arrest and a brain haemorrhage. He was 81.

His mortal remains were brought from Guwahati to his residence in Rongmongve, Diphu, this afternoon, where they were received by grieving family members, party workers and a sea of well-wishers.

According to his younger sister, Ingle (Lolita) Engti, the former MP's health took a sudden turn on Sunday, March 8. After going to the bathroom in the morning, attendants became concerned when he did not emerge. Upon opening the door, they found him semi-conscious on the floor.

He was immediately rushed to Diphu Medical College, where doctors identified a blood clot in the brain resulting from the fall. On medical advice, he was shifted to Guwahati for advanced treatment. Despite the best efforts of the medical team at Guwahati Health City Hospital, Engti breathed his last on Tuesday morning.

In honour of the departed leader, the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) has declared a two-day holiday on March 10 and 11. All government offices under KAAC jurisdiction will remain closed, though educational institutions will continue to function as usual.

The Karbi Anglong District Congress Committee (KADCC) has lowered the party flag to half-mast at its headquarters and various block offices. KADCC president Raton Engti described the loss as "irreparable," stating, "As the first and longest-serving MP from the twin hill districts, he embodied Gandhian principles. He was the very foundation of our party in this region and remained a dedicated Congressman until his last breath." Biren Singh Engti's political career was defined by its longevity and loyalty. He was a five-term Member of Parliament, representing the Diphu (ST) constituency in 1977, 1984, 2004, 2009 and 2014.

He served as the Union Minister of State during the tenure of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and was the Chief Executive Member (CEM) and Chairman of the erstwhile Karbi Anglong District Council.

A founding member of the Congress in Karbi Anglong, he served as the District president for several terms between the early 1980s and 2006. The current CEM of KAAC expressed deep condolences, noting that Engti played a pivotal role in shaping the political discourse of the hill districts and representing the aspirations of the Karbi people on the national stage. Born on March 2, 1945, to late Kangther Engti and late Banre Tokbipi in Baroi Rongpi village, Engti was a scholar-politician. He was an alumnus of Nowgong College and held an MA and LLB from Gauhati University.

Beyond politics, his contributions to the infrastructure and social fabric of Diphu were significant. He was instrumental in bringing the All India Radio Station, the Railway Station, Jawaharlal Nehru Vidyalaya (JNV) and Kendriya Vidyalaya to Diphu.

He was the founding president of the Karbi Riso Adorbar (Karbi Youth Organisation) and established the Reenu Teranngpi Memorial College in Diphu in memory of his late wife.

Engti is survived by his siblings and a vast political family. As evening fell in Diphu, a large number of people continued to gather at his residence to pay their final respects to a man who the face of Karbi Anglong was, for many, for nearly half a century.

## KADCC issues show cause notice to nine members

**HT Bureau**

**DIPHU, March 10:** The authority of the Karbi Anglong District Congress Committee (KADCC), in a press release, has stated that a show cause notice has been served to nine of its party members for breach of party discipline here on Tuesday and has asked them to reply to the notice within seven days from the date of its issue.

The party members receiving the show cause notice are Alison Kachop, Soltial Tewa, Elias Tirkey, Khudiram Baghwar, Francis Barla, Jeshua Sona, Poran Bhengra, Benjamin Khakha and Nelson Gogoi.

## Gender sensitisation programme marks Women's Day in KKHSOU

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, March 10:** The Action Group for Gender Sensitisation of Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University celebrated International Women's Day on Tuesday at its City Campus, Khanapara, focusing on women's empowerment and gender awareness in society and academia.

The event was attended by faculty, officials and students, with Sudeshna Bhattacharjya of Gauhati University as the resource person. Dr Dola Borkataki welcomed participants, while Dr Ritimoni Bordoloi highlighted the continued need for awareness and collective efforts toward gender equality.

Prof Bhattacharjya delivered a lecture on women's role in the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, emphasising women-led development and citing inspirational figures like Mula Gabharu, Hima Das and Lovlina Borgohain. She stressed that policies must be paired with social awareness for real change.

Registrar Pranab Saikia and the Vice-Chancellor noted the significant presence of women in the university, highlighting education as a key driver of equality and social progress, especially through open and distance learning.

## P&G SEHAT boat clinic reaches over 20,000 people along Brahmaputra

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, March 10:** P & G SEHAT, the healthcare-focused Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative of Procter & Gamble Health Limited (P&G Health) makers of trusted healthcare brands like Neurobion, Evion, Livogen etc is positively impacting over 20,000 people from underserved communities in 18 peninsular villages and 10 islands along the banks of the river Brahmaputra in Assam through its special boat clinic.

Launched in 2025, the boat clinic initiative has been providing consistent maternal, child and preventive healthcare to the communities of the islands of Thutechapor, Gupaljaroni, Majorchapor, Gonaitapu, Jonkab, Tinighoria, Barule, Jabore, Sowguri, Gospur and the villages of Dipora, Dathkola, Tolto, 1 No Bortamuli, 2 No Bortamuli, Lokosa, Chirakhuwa, Rownamukh, Bholukaguri, Koraihati, Pisolaguri, Duckchapor, Batomari, Kuhimari, Koraihati, Nam Charaibari, Pasung Gaon and Koliyapani area of Tezpur and Biswanath district.

The initiative is also accelerating immunisation uptake through active collaboration with the local primary health centres (PHC). Staffed by trained medical professionals and equipped with a 6-bed ward, a mini operation theatre, a labour room, diagnostic lab and a pharmacy, the boat clinic has seen increasing demand for antenatal care and immunization since its in-



ception.

Through this initiative, all registered pregnant women receive a minimum of three antenatal check-ups, thus strengthening early diagnosis, monitoring and continuity of care. Further, the clinic also conducts special health camps and awareness sessions in the communities.

The project leverages local residents as volunteers in the project areas. These volunteers play an important role in monitoring health parameters at the household level, mobilising communities, encouraging follow-ups and driving advanced communication regarding visits to the clinic, thus ensuring better service utilisation and compliance.

Speaking about the initiative, Milind Thatte, Managing Director, P&G Health, said, "The frequent changes in the course of the river Brahmaputra in Assam and the unique terrain of the surrounding

areas, make access to primary healthcare challenging for the local communities. P&G Sehat is continuing to work with its NGO partners to bridge this gap and provide consistent, reliable and sustained health facilities to people in these underserved communities through its special Boat Clinic.

This is in line with our mission of providing quality healthcare and driving healthcare awareness in underserved communities across India. The Boat Clinic model has also proved to be resilient in terms of its functionality despite the changing river course, seasonal floods and water levels of the Brahmaputra River. The medical teams on the ground use a combination of boat clinics, fishing boats and land transport, if needed, to ensure continuity of outpatient services, immunisation camps and health awareness programmes, even in adverse climatic conditions."

## Dibrugarh Police holds fingerprint training for investigating officers

**HT Correspondent**

**DIBRUGARH, March 10:** Dibrugarh Police on Tuesday conducted a specialised training programme on fingerprint development and lifting at the Police Reserve in Dibrugarh, aimed at bolstering the forensic capabilities of investigating officers across all police stations in the district.

The training brought together investigating officers from every police station in Dibrugarh district under one roof, providing them with hands-on knowledge and practical skills in one of the most fundamental yet critical disciplines of forensic science. The session focused on the identification, development and proper lifting of fingerprints from crime scenes, a technique that often forms the cornerstone of criminal investigations and serves as decisive evidence in courts of law.

Tuesday's training is part of a broader and accelerating push by Dibrugarh Police to modernise its investigative apparatus. It builds on an earlier landmark development on February 1, when the district police inducted a state-of-the-art Mobile Forensic Van sourced from the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in Guwahati. The van, equipped with advanced tools for DNA sampling, fingerprint lifting, blood spatter analysis and ballistic evidence examination, enables forensic experts to conduct scientific examinations directly at crime scenes — drastically reducing delays caused by transporting evidence to centralised laboratories.

## Sutradhaar stages Janma Yatra Bhaona at Nagaon



**HT Correspondent**

**NAGAON, March 10:** A successful staging of the traditional Assamese drama "Sri Krishnar Janma Yatra" Bhaona was held at the temporary stage of Kolong-Jeuti, Khutikatia, Nagaon on the occasion of Falgun Phalguni Purnima recently.

The drama was performed by the artists of Sutradhaar, a branch of Edu-Art Foundation, an organisation dedicated to promoting traditional arts. The drama, written by Sri Sri Gopal Ata was a visual treat, with the artists showcasing their exceptional talent. The event was a tribute to the revered artist Chitta Dev Mahanta.

The performance was marked by captivating music, precise choreography and impressive costumes. The audience was mesmerised by the Sutradhaar artists' portrayal of various characters, including Kangsha, Basudev and others.

The event was coordinated by Anjali Mahanta, a noted writer and cultural activist. The music direction and chief supervision were handled by Shubhjit Saikia.

The successful staging of the drama is expected to promote cultural awareness and appreciation among the younger generation.

## Child protection campaign launched in Karbi Anglong

**HT Bureau**

**DIPHU, March 10:** A district-wide awareness campaign titled "Suroxito Xaishab Sonali Axom 2.0", a 90-day initiative on child protection, has been launched in Karbi Anglong with the aim of strengthening awareness and community participation in safeguarding children.

The campaign is being implemented by the District Child Protection Unit (DCPU), Karbi Anglong in collaboration with the District Administration and with support from the State Child Protection Society, Assam. The initiative seeks to create greater public awareness on various issues related to child safety, rights and welfare.

The theme of the campaign, "The Safety of Every Child is the Future of Golden Assam," highlights the importance of ensuring a secure and nurturing environment for children across the district. As part of the campaign, the District Child Protection Unit in collaboration with the District Administration, Education Department and Police Department is organising a series of awareness programmes in different parts of Karbi Anglong. These programmes involve the participation of line departments, frontline workers, Sarkari Gaon Burahs, students, teachers, parents and religious leaders.

Various outreach activities are being conducted under the campaign to spread awareness among the public. These include the distribution of leaflets, pamphlets and calendars carrying messages on child protection, along with wall paintings at different locations across the district highlighting important issues related to the safety and well-being of children.

## Santhal Students' Union urges to boycott PM and CM's public meeting

**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, March 10:** The All Santhal Students Union (ASSU) expressed its displeasure over the ruling BJP party, particularly in Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) and Upper Assam districts as the community is deprived their grievances and issues.

The students union has decided to boycott the visiting scheduled of the Prime Minister and Chief Minister in the several districts of BTC and Upper Assam.

Speaking the reporters at Habrubil Gossaigaon on Tuesday, Durga Soren, ASSU vice president told that the BJP party has nothing done welfare and developmental activities for the Santhal community across the state. Soren said that during the 2014 Lok Sabha election campaign, PM Narendra Modi had promised that the Santhal/ Adivasi community of Assam along with six other communities would be granted Scheduled Tribe (ST) status within six months.

However, he said that not only six months but more than six years have passed and the community has still not been granted ST status. He also alleged that during the Prime Minister's visits to Assam, he has never men-

tioned the issue of granting ST status. Therefore, the organisation said they have no interest in listening to the speeches of the Prime Minister and Chief Minister and appealed to the Santhal community not to attend their public meeting even organising during the upcoming assembly elections in the state.

The organisation warned that any member of the Santal community who attends the meeting will be considered acting against the community.

Durga Soren also alleged that in the Gossaigaon Legislative Assembly Constituency, the Santhal community has been politically weakened by dividing their voters into four constituencies. He has criticised minister Ashok Singhal, saying that an outsider minister like him has politically weakened the community. He also said that if Ashok Singhal comes to Gossaigaon for election campaigning, he will be greeted with black flags.

The student organisation also expressed anger against the BPF government led by Hagrama Mohilary in BTC, alleging that no nominated council member or CSB members from the Santhal community was appointed during its tenure.

## Governor at Assam Women's University convocation

360 graduates honoured; social worker Riniki Bhuyan Sharma receives D Litt



**HT Correspondent**

**JORHAT, March 10:** The Governor of Assam and Chancellor of Assam Women's University, Lakshman Prasad Acharya, attended the university's 5th convocation on Tuesday, conferring degrees on 360 graduating students. Addressing the graduates, he emphasised the transformative power of knowledge, saying it is the greatest asset for individual and societal progress. He expressed confidence that the students would make meaningful contributions to society and wished them success in their future endeavors.

On the occasion, social worker Riniki Bhuyan Sharma was awarded an honorary D.Litt in recognition of her contributions to social service and Assam's socio-cultural development. The Governor lauded her life of service as an inspiration to women across the state.

Highlighting the importance of women's education, he noted that Assam Women's University plays a key role in providing quality higher education to women from rural, tribal and urban areas, while promoting research, innovation and skill development in line with the National Education Policy.

Encouraging graduates to embrace lifelong learning, the Governor urged them to pursue their goals with dedication, integrity and confidence, adapt to new technologies and contribute to inclusive and sustainable development.

The convocation address was delivered by renowned Khasi poet and scholar S Streamlet Dkhar, with MLA Rupjyoti Kurmi and university officials, including Vice-Chancellor Ajanta Borgohain Rajkonwar and Registrar Dr Binod Chandra Bora, also in attendance.

## 'Birla partisan in conduct of House' Resolution against LS Speaker to save Constitution: Gogoi

**NEW DELHI, March 10:** In a scathing attack on Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi on Tuesday accused him of partisan behaviour, making "baseless" allegations against women MPs of the opposition and not allowing Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi to put forth "critical issues" before the House.

Initiating the debate on the resolution for the removal of Birla from the Speaker's post, Gogoi said the opposition was compelled to bring a resolution for Birla's removal as Lok Sabha Speaker to "save the Constitution" and the "dignity of the House". Where is the freedom of speech now, the Congress deputy leader in the House asked as he slammed Birla for being "partisan". He raised questions over the manner in which the Speaker presided over the House on February 2 when Gandhi had to speak on the motion of thanks to the president's address.

"There was an expectation that the chair would be neutral. But research of uncorrected versions would show the number of times the LoP was interrupted. While the LoP was on his feet, another member was called upon (to speak)," Gogoi said. "Is this Parliamentary



tradition we want to show? Microphones are being used to silence MPs. It stands in direct contradiction with the rituals of this House." "The same thing happened to MP Shashi Tharoor. He was speaking on February 9, and in the middle of his speech, his mic was switched off. It is said that the opposition must have its say... but how can we say when you switch off the mic? Tharoor stated that his mic was switched off, which has never happened before," he said. Gogoi also cited the first prime

minister, Jawaharlal Nehru's remarks that the Speaker represents the dignity of the House and becomes the symbol of the nation's freedom and liberty. "Where is the freedom of speech now?" he added. The Congress MP from Assam's Jorhat said the objectives of women MPs are being questioned.

"When the PM had to speak on the motion of thanks to the president's address, the Speaker advised PM Modi not to come to the House, claiming credible information that certain women MPs

would surround the PM's chair and create an unexpected situation.

"Shame, shame, shame, shame, shame... The 2026 incident is legally distinct because the speaker preemptively advised the PM not to attend, and that is a complete breach of neutrality," the Congress MP said. He said the charges against women MPs were baseless. Gogoi also alleged that a "paternalistic" tone is adopted in the House towards women MPs. He said the LoP's remarks are often expunged, but when treasury bench members make baseless allegations against former PMs, it is allowed. The Congress leader claimed that the environment of Parliament has become such that the LoP is not allowed to speak in the House because the leadership of the country is "weak".

Giving reasons as to why the opposition was compelled to bring the resolution, the MP from Assam's Jorhat said, "When the LoP wanted to speak on the motion of thanks to the President's address, he was interrupted 20 times by the Speaker, members of the chairpersons' panel, and senior members of the treasury benches. (PTI)

## No genuine voter to be axed; zero tolerance for violence, intimidation: CEC

**KOLKATA, March 10:** Asserting that no eligible voter's name would be removed from the electoral rolls in West Bengal, Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar on Tuesday said the EC's priority was to ensure free, fair and peaceful polls in the state as it stepped up preparations for the upcoming assembly polls, amid a charged political atmosphere.

Addressing a press conference here after the commission's full bench held a series of meetings with political parties and senior administrative officials to review Bengal's poll preparedness, Kumar said the EC will finalise the state's election schedule, including the number of phases it would vote in, after the panel returns to Delhi. Kumar said the commission has instructed officers in the state to enforce rule of law strictly without fear or favour.

"We have reviewed the law and order condition in the state and the entire government, led by its chief secretary, the DGP, the CPs and SPs, has assured the commission that the election will remain free of violence and intimidation," the CEC said.

Kumar was unambiguous on the operational boundaries within which the commission expected the state officials to work during the poll process.

"All officials must work within the purview of law, constitutional provisions and EC's instructions. Any slackness in that regard will result in strict disciplinary action," he said. Speaking about the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR), a politically sensitive exercise that has triggered sharp exchanges between the TMC and the BJP, Kumar said the process was being carried out across the country in accordance with constitutional norms.

"Logical Discrepancy (LD) cases were flagged off

in all 12 states where the SIR exercise was held. The cases where voters remained unmapped with the 2002 rolls, whether deliberate or by mistake, were scanned by BLOs with the help of documents provided," the CEC stated, rejecting claims that LD cases were introduced only for Bengal.

Explaining the data patterns that emerged during the SIR in the state, Kumar revealed that around 4-5 per cent of electors failed to map themselves with the 2002 rolls post submission of enumeration forms, while an additional 7-8 per cent of voters were found to have mapped themselves incorrectly, either deliberately or by inadvertent errors.

According to EC data released on February 28, around 63.66 lakh names, about 8.3 per cent of the electorate, were deleted since the revision began in November last year, bringing down the voter base from about 7.66 crore to a little over 7.04 crore.

To a question on the engagement of micro-observers to dispose of LD cases, Kumar said, "In Bengal, a lot of cases remained undecided at the level of EROs and AEROs before the publication of final rolls because of which micro-observers had to be appointed for document verification, which had to be carried out stringently."

The CEC avoided a direct answer on the fate of the voters who continue to remain in the 'under adjudication' list and whether polls would be announced before the publication of supplementary rolls. "People whose names have been deleted have the option of filing Form 6 for re-inclusion. Those under adjudication are being scrutinised by the learned judicial officers appointed by the Calcutta High Court in accordance with a Supreme Court order," he said. (PTI)

## WB SIR: SC orders setting up of tribunals to hear appeals against exclusions

**NEW DELHI, March 10:** In a fresh set of directions, the Supreme Court on Tuesday ordered setting up of independent appellate tribunals, headed by former high court judges, to hear appeals against exclusions from voter lists during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in West Bengal.

The top court also issued a stern warning against attempts to undermine the integrity of judicial officers who are deployed to deal with claims and objections of those facing deletion from voter lists in the SIR process.

Describing such moves as an affront to the judiciary, a three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant said, "How did you dare file such applications? It shows as if you don't have trust... No one should dare question the judicial officers. As Chief Justice of India, I will not tolerate this."

The bench, also comprising Justices R Mahadevan and Joymalya Bagchi, was irked over the submissions made in one of the fresh petitions that the judicial officers be not permitted to deal with the claims and objections of those facing deletion from voter lists.

Earlier, the top court had allowed deployment of district judges and civil judges of West Bengal in the ongoing SIR process.

It had also asked the Calcutta High Court chief justice to seek requisition of judicial officers from Jharkhand and Odisha to handle 80 lakh claims and objections of those facing deletion from the electoral roll in the SIR exercise in the state.

On Tuesday, the bench perused the fresh report of the Calcutta High Court chief justice and passed a slew of fresh directions.

It also asked the West Bengal government and the Election Commission to provide all logistical support to judicial officers in the ongoing SIR of electoral rolls.

The bench noted that the judicial officers so far have dealt with 10.16 lakh objections and claims of those facing deletion from the electoral rolls by the evening of

March 9.

"The ECI shall not introduce any mandatory requirement that could disrupt the process unless approved by the Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court," it directed.

"Technical issues affecting the online portal must be promptly resolved," it said.

The bench said new login IDs for judicial officers be created promptly to ensure smooth revision of electoral rolls. It also said that decisions of the judicial officers cannot be examined in appeals by any administrative officers of the Election Commission.

It said the chief justice of the Calcutta High Court may request some former high court chief justices and two or three former high court judges, preferably from the Calcutta High Court or neighbouring states, to serve on the appellate tribunals.

Once recommended, the Election Commission will have to notify them as Appellate Tribunals to hear such appeals.

The number of members on each bench has been left to the discretion of the Calcutta High Court chief justice.

During the hearing, a few senior advocates raised two concerns that there was absence of an appellate mechanism for individuals whose claims were rejected by the judicial officers, and the publication of supplementary lists of voters whose objections have already been disposed of, particularly in light of the large number of objections reportedly exceeding 10 lakh.

Referring to its order of February 24, the bench reiterated that orders passed by judicial officers could not be appealed before any executive or administrative authority.

The CJ, however, said that the chief justice of the high court will create an independent appellate forum consisting of retired judges.

The bench also said that once the chief justice of the high court makes an appropriate recommendation, the poll panel will issue the requisite notification. (PTI)

## India seeks boost in inbound tourism after participation in ITB, Berlin

**NEW DELHI, March 10:** India's participation along with a country pavilion in the recently-held ITB Berlin -- one of the world's leading travel trade show -- provided a platform for strengthening existing partnerships, and establishing it as a premier 365-day global destination, the tourism ministry said on Tuesday.

The ministry participated in ITB Berlin 2026, held from March 3-5 at Messe Berlin exhibition centre in Germany. As the world's leading travel trade show, ITB Berlin (Internationale Tourismus-Börse Berlin) is a key meeting point for the global tourism industry, providing an important platform for networking and exchange for the Indian travel stakeholders.

Union Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat along with an Indian delegation took part in it, and he also engaged with a few leaders.

While addressing a press conference, the minister said, "Germany remains one of India's most important tourism partners". Germany ranks as the 8th largest tourist generating source market for India with 260,000 (provisional figure) Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) from Germany in 2025, according to a statement issued by India's tourism ministry.

Shekhawat also held "productive bilateral meetings" with Widiyanti Putri Wardhana, Minister of Tourism of Indonesia, and Christoph Ploß, Federal Government Commissioner for Tourism of Germany.

The discussions focused on enhancing tourism flows, boosting sustainable travel, expanding air connectivity, and deepening people-to-people ties between the nations, it said.

The Union minister also engaged with Shaikha Al Nowais, Secretary General, UNWTO, and discussed about different ways to enhance sustainable tourism development and regenerative tourism.

India's "strong presence" at the ITB, Berlin highlighted the country's strategic goal of further boosting inbound tourism and establishing the country as a premier 365-day global travel destination, the ministry said. The key event "provided an important platform for strengthening existing partnerships, establishing new business relationships and promoting innovative travel routes and experiences".

The diversity of the cultural and craft heritage was also showcased to visitors at the India Pavilion through "mehendi" and other activities such as block printing and calligraphy, it said.

The India Pavilion showcased the country's rich kaleidoscope of culture, languages and traditions, its diverse tourism landscape as well as the gamut of niche tourism experiences such as spiritual and wellness, wedding, adventure and ecotourism and gourmet.

The theme of the pavilion revolved around the unique and diverse tourism experiences of India.

Representatives of various destination management companies, hoteliers, state governments and Union Territories and tour operators from across the country took part in it. (PTI)

## India has made significant strides in climate protection under Modi: Environment minister

**NEW DELHI, March 10:** India has made significant strides in climate protection with a "whole-of-government" approach adopted by the Narendra Modi-led government, Union minister Bhubendra Yadav said, asserting that the number of protected areas and wildlife reserves has increased substantially since 2014.

Replying to a debate on the working of his ministry in the Rajya Sabha, the Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change said that the number of protected areas in the country has increased from 757 in 2014 to 1,134 in 2026. The total protected area has expanded from 1,68,838.37 sq km to 1,87,162.91 sq km, Yadav said.

Highlighting conservation efforts, he said the number of tiger reserves has increased from 47 in 2014 to 58 now, elephant reserves from 26 to 33, and the Asiatic lion population has risen from 523 to 891. "Around 70 per cent of the world's tigers in wild are in India," he said.

Yadav further said that India has enhanced its tree cover from 92,572 sq km to 1,12,014 sq km and created additional carbon sinks as part of its climate commitments.

The minister said that environmental governance has been strengthened through digital platforms such as the



PARIVESH portal, which has reduced the time taken for environmental clearances from about 600 days to less than 90 days.

He said that the government has also framed rules on construction and demolition waste, electronic waste, fly ash disposal and single-use plastics to tackle pollution.

Participating in the debate, Congress member Neeraj Dangi raised concerns over deforestation, air pollution and the impact of infrastructure projects on ecosystems and tribal communities.

"I want to express the pain of people who are suffering from air pollution. Jungles are being cut and the future is being threatened by climate change," he said.

Dangi referred to the degradation of the Aravalli mountain range and alleged that illegal mining has destroyed several

hillocks. He also cited reports suggesting rising deaths linked to air pollution and criticised the government for allegedly downplaying the health impact of particulate pollution. He also raised concerns over the proposed infrastructure project in Greater Nicobar, saying it could threaten the fragile ecosystem and indigenous communities living there.

Before Dangi spoke, Rajya Sabha Chairman C P Radhakrishnan said he was making a special exception to allow the Congress member to intervene even though the discussion had concluded.

"Normally, as per convention, once the discussion is concluded, no further interventions are permitted. However, the essence of democracy lies in discussion, dialogue and debate," he said.

Radhakrishnan said the request by the Congress chief whip was being permitted "as a special case" so that the opposition could participate in the debate. He added that it should not be seen as discrimination but as a symbolic gesture to encourage wider participation.

Opposition parties staged a walkout from the Rajya Sabha on Monday and did not return to the House thereafter. As a result, they largely did not take part in the debate on the functioning of the environment ministry. (PTI)

**GOVT OF ASSAM**  
**DIRECTORATE CUM ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER,**  
**P.W.D. (R&B), HILLS, ASSAM,**  
**DIPHU.**

No. ACEH/CS/AAP/83/2825-26/9, Date 10/03/2026

**PRESS NOTICE (RE-TENDER)**

Director-Com-Additional Chief Engineer, P.W.D.(R&D), Hills, Assam, Diphu, on behalf of Governor of Assam invites Item Rates bids from registered contractors of Class-II(A) category for the work "Improvement of BA Road at Chingthu Ronghang to Dikurso Waterfall road, L-600 Km for the year 2025-26 under Dokmoka Rond Division, Dokmoka. Details may be seen at e-procurement portal website [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in), and also in the office of the under the undersigned during office hours from 11/03/2026 to 13/03/2026. The Bidders must be registered with the E-Tendering system (ETS) of the Govt. of Assam.

Sd/-  
Director-Cum-Additional Chief Engineer,  
PWD(RAB), Hills, Assam, Diphu

Memo NOACEH/CS/AAP/83/2025-26/9-(A) Date 10/03/2026.

**GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM**  
**DIRECTORATE CUM ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER,**  
**P.W.D. (R&B), HILLS, ASSAM,**  
**DIPHU.**

No. ACEH/CS/AAP/83/2025-26/8 Date: 10/03/2026

**Cancellation Notice**

It is for information to all concerned that the Bid for "Improvement of BA road at Chingthu Ronghang gaon to Dikurso Waterfall road, L-6.00 Km for AAP 2025-26 under Dokmoka Road Division, published vide Press Notice Inviting No. ACEH/CS/AAP/83/2025-26, Dated 27/02/2026 is hereby cancelled due to non received of bid and Re-tender notice will be floated for the same shortly.

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

Memo No ACEH/CS/AAP/83/2025-26/8-(A), Date 10/03/2026.

**GOVT OF ASSAM**  
**DIRECTORATE CUM ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER,**  
**P.W.D. (R&B), HILLS, ASSAM,**  
**DIPHU.**

No. ACEH/CS/PM-ABHIM/98/2025-26/03 Dated. 10/03/2026.

**PRESS NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

Director-Cum-Additional Chief Engineer, PWD (R&B), Hills Assam, Diphu on behalf of the Governor of Assam, invites bids in EPC-I mode of Contract from approved and eligible Contractors registered under APWD (Building) for "PM-ABHIM" pertaining to E.E., P.W.D., Karbi Anglong District Territorial Building Division, Diphu for a total bid amount of Rs.20,67,90,828.00 (Rupees Twenty Crore Sixty Seven Lakhs Ninety Thousand Eight Hundred and Twenty Eight) only (approx). The details may be seen at the website [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in) and also in the office of the undersigned during office hours.

Sd/-  
Director cum Additional Chief Engineer  
PWD (R&B), Hills, Assam, Diphu.

Memo No. ACEH/CS/PM-ABHIM/98/2025-26/03-(A) Dated. 10/03/2026.

## Curfew imposed, internet suspended as clashes erupt over participation of non-tribals in elections

# Two killed in police firing, curfew clamped in Meghalaya

**SHILLONG, March 10:** Two persons were killed when security forces opened fire to disperse violent mobs in Meghalaya's West Garo Hills district early Tuesday amid tensions over the GHADC election nomination process, officials said.

West Garo Hills Superintendent of Police Abraham T Sangma said the incident took place in the Chibinang area, where a clash broke out between tribal and non-tribal groups.

"The two persons who died were residents of Chibinang. There was a clash between tribals and non-tribals regarding the GHADC elections and the firing occurred while we were dispersing an unlawful assembly," Sangma said.

He said the situation in the area is currently under control. The district administration has clamped curfew for the entire day on Tuesday across West Garo Hills to prevent further escalation of tension.

"We have sought additional forces and they are on the way," the SP said.

The incident came hours after the Meghalaya government ordered a 48-hour suspension of mobile internet services in the district from March 10 following reports of mobilisation, assaults and circulation of misinformation on social media that could threaten law and order during the nomination process. Voice calls and SMS services, however, remain unaffected.

## Arunachal Governor encourages people to adopt kitchen gardening

**ITANAGAR, March 10:** Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lt Gen KT Parnaik (Retd) on Monday advised citizens to grow seasonal vegetables in their own backyards wherever possible. Planting saplings of avocado in the horticultural farm of Lok Bhavan here, Parnaik, who has consistently encouraged people to adopt kitchen gardening, said even small kitchen gardens can provide fresh, healthy and chemical-free vegetables for families, while also reducing dependence on market supplies, an official statement said.

The governor further highlighted that cultivating vegetables at home will ensure food security and better nutrition, promote a healthy lifestyle, strengthen the bond with nature, and also instil a sense of responsibility towards sustainable living. If more households take up kitchen gardening, it will gradually evolve into a people's movement for healthy food, environmental sustainability and self-sufficiency in the state, he said. Two varieties of avocado, Hass and Pinkerton, were planted as part of a pilot project organised by the horticulture department. The initiative aims to explore the suitability of high-value fruit crops in the region while promoting sustainable horticulture practices. Parnaik advised the horticulture officials to make optimum use of the available vacant space in the Lok Bhavan premises for innovative horticulture pilot projects. He emphasised that such initiatives can serve as demonstration models and inspire people to utilise small spaces at their homes for vegetable gardens. (PTI)

## Deputy CM presents ₹ 36,607 crore budget in Arunachal assembly with focus on six key sectors

**ITANAGAR, March 10:** Arunachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein on Tuesday presented a ₹ 36,607 crore budget for the 2026-27 financial year in the state assembly, with thrust on six key sectors aimed at strengthening infrastructure, people-centric development, economic growth and governance reforms.

Mein, who also holds the finance, planning and investment portfolios, said the total budget estimate has a deficit of ₹ 701.43 crore.

Compared to the budget of ₹ 36,607 crore in 2026-27, the previous fiscal year's budget was ₹ 39,842 crore, reflecting a reduction of about 8.1 per cent.

The deputy chief minister said the budget has been structured around six major focus areas, including strengthening of infrastructure with an allocation of ₹ 2,038 crore and people-centric development with ₹ 3,320 crore.

The other priority areas are sustaining economic growth with ₹ 630 crore, entrepreneurship and employment generation with ₹ 307 crore, resource mobilisation and fiscal stability with ₹ 188 crore and governance and reforms with ₹ 727 crore.

Mein said the reduction in the budget size in 2026-27 was mainly due to a shortfall in allocation from the Centre following the recommendations of the 16th Finance Commission



based on horizontal devolution. "Despite the shortfall, we have presented a people-centric and growth-oriented Budget for the development of the state," he said.

Under the first focus area, the budget prioritises roads and connectivity, hydropower and border power infrastructure, transmission and distribution of electricity, solar energy production and off-grid electrification.

The second focus area covers people-centric development, including health infrastructure, public health and disease prevention, school and early childhood education, higher education and skill development, as well as support for girls and youth.

Another key point targets sustained economic growth through initiatives such as oil palm cultivation, Atmanirbhar youth programmes, promotion of millets and agricultural education, diversified high-value farming, tourism and the wine



The authorities in West Garo Hills district have also sought Army assistance for a flag march in sensitive areas amid unrest over the participation of non-tribals in the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council (GHADC) elections, officials said.

In a communication to the Commanding Officer of 101 Area under the Eastern Command, Deputy Commissioner Vibhor Aggarwal requested the Army to conduct a flag march in the plain belt areas of the district in

view of the prevailing tense law and order situation.

"The presence of the armed forces through a flag march will greatly help in reassuring the public, preventing any further untoward incidents and restoring confidence among the residents," Aggarwal said in the letter.

He said the request was made as the district has witnessed disturbances to public peace following opposition to the participation of non-tribals in the GHADC elections.

## Nagaland Dy CM Patton dismayed over repeated assault on NE people

**HT Correspondent**  
**DIMAPUR, March 10:** Nagaland deputy chief minister Y Patton on Tuesday expressed dismay over repeated racial discrimination against the people of Northeast in Delhi.

"I am appalled and disturbed by the repeated instances of racial discrimination against people from Northeast India," Patton said in a statement, asking "when will we learn to see each other as Indians first". Strongly condemning the racial discrimination and alleged assault against

two Northeast residents near the Saket district court complex in New Delhi on March 8, he said such acts of prejudice and bias are not only hurtful but also go against the values of unity and inclusivity that our country stands for.

He said it is disheartening to see individuals being judged or mistreated based on their appearance, ethnicity, or place of origin.

"Let us come together to promote understanding, empathy and respect for all cultures and communities," Patton urged. He stressed

that every Indian deserves to be treated with dignity, regardless of their background.

"We must celebrate our diversity and recognise the strength it brings to our nation and promote inclusivity," he stated. Patton urged everyone to stand against racism and promote inclusivity in all aspects of life.

"Let's build a society where everyone feels valued, respected and safe," he said, adding racism and violence are completely unacceptable and deserve strict legal consequences.

## Police compassionate recruitment results on hold: Arunachal home minister

**ITANAGAR, March 10:** Arunachal Pradesh Home Minister Mama Natung on Monday said the final results of recruitment for 35 posts in the police department under the compassionate appointment scheme have been kept in abeyance following directions from the Gauhati High Court.

Responding to a question by Independent MLA Laisam Simai during the Question Hour in the Assembly, the minister said the recruitment process had already been conducted, but the declaration of the final results was withheld in compliance with orders issued by the Itanagar permanent bench of the court.

Natung said the appointments under compassionate grounds are being carried out strictly in accordance with the provisions laid down in the government office memorandum issued in 2022.

"The government has earmarked 5 per cent quota in the police department for compassionate appointments. Though several candidates were appointed under this provision in 2019, the new guidelines issued by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs require candidates to undergo certain qualifying assessments depending on the post offered," the minister

said. He informed that candidates applying under the compassionate scheme are required to clear basic qualifying procedures, including a physical efficiency test (PET), medical examination, document verification and a written test before being considered for appointment.

According to the minister, some candidates who failed to qualify in these tests challenged the process in court, following which the declaration of the final results has been kept on hold.

Under the latest guidelines of the Centre for recruitment on compassionate grounds, a dependent family member of a government employee who dies while in service or is medically retired may be considered for appointment in government departments, including the police, to provide immediate financial relief to the bereaved family.

The scheme, framed by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), allows such appointments only against regular vacancies and within a ceiling of five per cent of posts meant for direct recruitment, generally in Group 'C' or equivalent posts. (PTI)

## Budget allocation of ₹ 734 cr for violence-hit displaced people not sufficient: Manipur Cong

**IMPHAL, March 10:** Congress legislature party leader Keisham Meghachandra Singh on Tuesday said that a budgetary allocation of ₹ 734 crore for those who have been displaced by the ethnic strife in Manipur was not sufficient to cover the losses incurred by them in the violence.

Singh told the House, during discussion on the budget estimates for 2026-27, that it was the responsibility of both the state and central governments to provide compensation to IDPs for damage incurred in the strife. "I think the ₹ 734 crore allocated for IDPs (internally displaced persons) in the budget was not sufficient for their welfare. Several of their houses, properties, vehicles and business activities have been lost in the violence," Singh said.

He also asked how the amount of ₹ 350 crore allocated in the budget for 3.5 lakh women in the state as part of a scheme will be distributed.

Responding to his queries, Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh said, "I agree with the claim that ₹ 734 crore for IDPs is not sufficient. But that amount has been extended in 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26 financial years." He also said a process was underway to issue a notification regarding the women's empowerment scheme.

The Manipur government has earmarked ₹ 734 crore in the 2026-27 budget for rehabilitation and resettlement of IDPs, the chief minister Y Khemchand Singh had said on Monday. (PTI)

## Study to build comprehensive database of indigenous herbal practices in Nagaland

**HT Correspondent**  
**DIMAPUR, March 10:** An ongoing research under the National Innovation Foundation aimed to build a comprehensive database of indigenous herbal practices, grassroots innovations and medicinal plant resources of eastern Nagaland.

The research study titled "scouting and documentation of local grassroots innovators and traditional herbal practices in Tuensang district" is being undertaken by Nohochem Sangtam, head of the department of environmental science at Fazl Ali College, Mokokchung.

The research primarily focuses on the documentation of indigenous medicinal knowledge, traditional herbal healing practices and the identification of local grassroots innovators among tribal communities in eastern Nagaland.

The study aims to record valuable traditional knowledge preserved by village elders, herbal practitioners and local innovators who continue to rely on nature-based solutions for healthcare and livelihood. The research believes that focused research efforts in this region will play a vital role in preserving indigenous wisdom, promoting grassroots innovation and strengthening community-based knowledge systems for sustainable development. Extensive field visits were conducted from January 2025 to March 2026 across several remote villages in Tuensang district. As the research progressed, the scope of the study was further extended to the newly created Noklak and Shamator districts, where additional field documentation and community interactions were carried out. During these field surveys, the

researcher interacted closely with traditional herbal practitioners, village elders, grassroots innovators and community leaders to document the medicinal use of various plant species available in forests and surrounding ecosystems.

The research findings indicate that many rural communities in eastern Nagaland continue to depend heavily on locally available medicinal plants and herbal remedies for treating common ailments such as fever, stomach disorders, wounds, infections, skin diseases and other health-related conditions. Traditional knowledge relating to plant identification, preparation of herbal medicines and treatment techniques still plays a crucial role in local healthcare systems, especially in remote villages where modern medical facilities are limited.

## 48,655 enterprises registered on Udyam portal in Nagaland: Rio



**HT Correspondent**  
**DIMAPUR, March 10:** Nagaland chief minister Neiphiu Rio on Tuesday said, a total of 48,655 enterprises have been registered on the Udyam portal in the state.

Of these, 48,464 are micro enterprises, most of which fall under nano enterprises with a turnover below ₹ 25 lakh, while 175 are small enterprises and 16 are medium enterprises, he said.

During the discussion on the critical role of MSMEs in improving Nagaland's economy on the fourth day of the 8th session of the 14th Nagaland assembly in Kohima, Rio highlighted the steady expansion of the MSME sector and the various initiatives undertaken by the government to promote enterprise development in the state.

He said under the chief minister's micro finance initiative (CMMFI), 777 MSME units have been established since its inception, generating investments of over ₹ 65 crore through government subsidy support and credit linkages.

He said these enterprises, mainly in transport services, retail trade, hospitality and small manufacturing are expected to create more

than 1,500 direct employment opportunities across the state.

Rio also said 13 MSME development projects are currently under implementation, while 15 additional projects have been submitted to the Union ministry of MSME for approval.

These projects aim to strengthen industrial infrastructure and promote cluster-based development to improve productivity and competitiveness, he added.

Under the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), he said the target for the financial year 2025-26 is 454 projects, of which 66 have already been sanctioned by banks.

Over the past five years, 3,715 beneficiaries have been supported through the scheme. Rio further said the state is also implementing programmes such as the RAMP (Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance) initiative to enhance MSME competitiveness through capacity building, registration drives and buyer-seller meets.

Additionally, he said the PM Vishwakarma Scheme has received over 25,000 artisan applications and training and financial assistance is being provided.

## Kohima DC asks banks to ensure CSR activities benefit local populace

**HT Correspondent**  
**DIMAPUR, March 10:** Kohima DC B Henok Buchem on Tuesday urged banks to ensure that corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities directly contribute to local development.

Addressing the district level review committee (DLRC) meeting for the combined quarter ending September and December 2025 in his office in Kohima, Buchem underlined the importance of accountability and transparency. He stressed that the resources generated within the district should benefit the people of the district and not be diverted elsewhere.

The meeting was held to review the performance of banks and financial institutions in the district.

Buchem asked the bank branches to submit detailed reports in the next meeting, indicating where and how their CSR initiatives have been implemented. The DC also asked the banks to highlight the CSR activities undertaken in the district. The meeting reviewed the progress under the district annual credit plan 2025-26, lending to priority sectors and the implementation of government-sponsored schemes. Performance of banks under social security schemes, including the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) and Atal Pension Yojana (APY), was also reviewed.

Altogether, 24 banks are currently operating in Kohima district. A review of performance under the district annual credit plan 2025-26 showed that achievement under the agriculture sector stood at 60.32%, MSME at 104.47% and other priority sectors at 15.52%, while the overall achievement under the total priority sector was recorded at 80.80%.

Representatives from various banks shared that several initiatives had been carried out in areas such as support to educational institutions through the provision of computers and learning equipment, installation of solar lighting in rural areas, setting up of smart classroom facilities and assistance towards community welfare initiatives, including support for patients requiring nutritional aid.

No. KDB/BTC/15<sup>th</sup>FC/NIT/2025-26/

Dated Kokrajhar the 09<sup>th</sup> Mar, 2026

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

Sealed tenders affixing a non-refundable Court Fee Stamp of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees Eight & Twenty-Five Paise) only with a validity period of 180 (one hundred eighty) days. Which will subsequently to be converted and drawn up in the APWD's printed F-2 forms are invited from the registered contractors of Class-II and Class-I (A, B & C) category of Assam PWD (Roads & Building) and BTC, according to their eligibility for submitting tenders for the following work under 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission fund for the year 2024-25 during 2025-26. The tenders will be received by the undersigned up to 2.00 P.M. on 31.03.2026 and will be opened on the same date & place at 2.30 P.M.

Against the scheme shown below:-

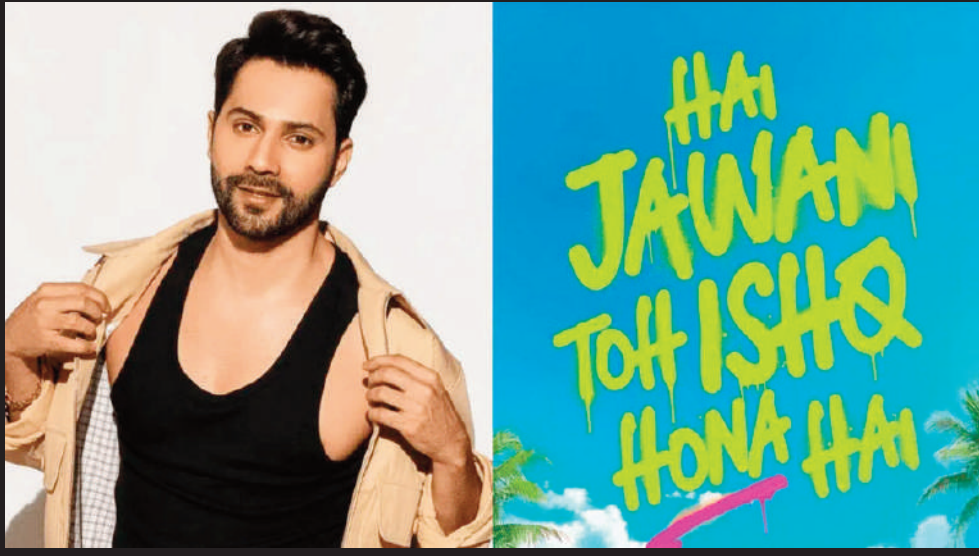
Sl. No.	Name of Scheme	Estimated Amount	Earnest Money	Cost of Tender	Time for completion
1	Const. of RCC Box Culvert at Anguri Village on the road from PWD road to Suleman Munda's house under North Nayeogaon VCDC	10,00,000.00	(ST, SC, OBC-1% & Gen-2%)	300/-	3 months

Details NIT may be seen in all working days in the office of the undersigned. Tender paper will be issued to the contractors or their authorized agent from 09-03-2026 to 31-03-2026 in the office of the undersigned on payment of cost of Tender paper in the form of demand draft/Banker Cheque from any Nationalized Bank, duly pledged in favour of Principal Secretary, BTC, Kokrajhar, payable at Kokrajhar.

Sd/-  
Block Development Officer,  
Kokrajhar Dev. Block, Titaguri

**IPR(BTC)/C/2025-26/4427**

# Varun Dhawan's 'Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai' shifted to June 12



It is always healthy when filmmakers support one another rather than compete unnecessarily, the makers of Varun Dhawan's upcoming movie "Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai" said on Tuesday while announcing a new release date for the film.

The move comes after Kannada superstar Yash's new film "Toxic" was postponed to June 4 due to escalating tensions in West Asia.

"Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai", directed by Varun's father David Dhawan, was set to be released in theatres across the country on June 5 but will now come out a week later on June 12. It also stars Mrunal Thakur and Pooja Hegde.

Producer Ramesh Taurani's banner Tips Films shared the news of the movie's new release date in a statement posted on its social media pages.

"We would like to clarify that our film 'Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai' was originally scheduled for release on 5th June, a date we had announced several months ago. However, after recent developments and considering the prevailing situation, we felt it would be more appropriate to shift our release.

"We strongly believe that it is always healthier for the industry when filmmakers support

one another rather than compete unnecessarily on the same date. In that spirit of solidarity, we have decided to move the release of 'Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai' to 12th June and bring our film to the audiences a week later," read the statement.

Last week, there were reports claiming that the makers of "Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai" were unhappy with "Toxic" team for shifting their movie to June 4 without even informing them.

"Toxic", directed by Geetu Mohandas and billed as an action-thriller saga that unfolds in Goa between the early 1940s and the 1970s, was earlier set for release on March 19. It would have competed with Ranveer Singh's "Dhurandhar: The Revenge". In a statement on March 4, Production banner KVN Productions and Yash's Monster Mind Creations announced the new date for the movie.

The two companies had said the film was "conceptualised with the vision to create cinema for a global audience" and that the decision to postpone was driven by "the current uncertainty, especially in the Middle East" which has "created a situation that impacts our goal to reach and connect with the widest possible audience."

"Therefore, in the interest of our partners and our audience, we have made the difficult but carefully considered decision to reschedule our release. We thank you for your understanding and patience and look forward to your continued love and support," the statement read. (PTI)

## Bengali actor Tamal Roy Choudhury dies at 80

Veteran Bengali film and television actor Tamal Roy Choudhury died on Monday, family sources said.

Roy Choudhury, who was 80, died of cardiac arrest in his sleep at his south Kolkata residence, they said.

A well-known character actor in Bengali film industry, he began his acting career on the stage and remained deeply associated with theatre throughout his life.

Though theatre was his primary passion, he was also a familiar face in Bengali television and films.

From mid-1990s onwards, he became a regular presence in several popular Bengali television serials, portraying important supporting roles that earned him wide recognition among viewers.

The actor later appeared in a number of Bengali films across both mainstream commercial cinema and alternative genres.

Some of the popular films he acted in include 'Challenge', 'Le Halua Le', 'Bindass', 'Amazon Obhijaan' and 'Chander Pahar'.

He was also part of critically acclaimed films such as 'Jatiswar' and 'Gorosthane Soddhan'.

Roy Choudhury, due to health problems, had curtailed his work in recent times.

Actor and politician Debdut Ghosh paid tribute to Roy Choudhury in a social media post and also spoke about him fondly.

"He was a wonderful and warm person who loved long conversations without worrying about the time. He was extremely affectionate towards juniors and would step forward to help whenever someone faced difficulties during work," Ghosh said.

Recalling Roy Choudhury's sense of humour, Ghosh said the actor could lighten even tense situations with his witty remarks. (PTI)

## Yash Raj Films sets Alia Bhatt-Sharvari starrer 'Alpha' for July 10 release

"Alpha", Yash Raj Films' next Spy Universe movie starring Alia Bhatt and Sharvari in the lead roles, will now be released in theatres on July 10, the studio announced on Monday. Billed as the first female-led YRF Spy Universe film, the movie is directed by Shiv Rawail, who previously helmed the banner's Netflix series "The Railway Men".

"#ALPHA 10.07.2026," YRF posted on Instagram alongside the official poster of the movie.

"Alpha", which will also feature actors Bobby Deol and Anil Kapoor in pivotal roles, was earlier set for release on Christmas 2025 before being moved to April 17. The movie will see the actors join the spy franchise, which already boasts of blockbuster titles such as Shah Rukh Khan's "Pathaan", Salman Khan's "Tiger" and Hrithik Roshan's "War". The YRF Spy Universe was launched back in 2012 with Salman and Katrina Kaif's "Ek Tha Tiger". Its success spawned two sequels — "Tiger Zinda Hai" (2017) and "Tiger 3" (2023).

Hrithik and Tiger Shroff's "War" released in 2019, which was followed by 2023's "Pathaan", starring Shah Rukh and Deepika Padukone.

The franchise's most recent entry was 2025's "War 2", featuring Hrithik and NTR Jr. "Alpha" was teased in the post credit scene of the movie.

In the scene, a mysterious man played by Bobby Deol was shown with a young girl, whom he inducts into a covert programme

called "Alpha", marking her initiation by tattooing the Greek letter alpha on her arm.

Besides "Alpha", the studio is reportedly developing two more titles in spy universe — "Pathaan 2" with Shah

Rukh, and "Tiger vs Pathaan", starring Salman and Shah Rukh. (PTI)



# EUROPEAN UNION TO JOIN SIKKIM INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL AS PROGRAMME PARTNER



The European Union is set to join the Sikkim International Film Festival (SIFF) 2026 as a programme partner, marking an important step towards strengthening cultural collaboration and artistic exchange between Europe and India, an official said.

The SIFF will be held from March 19 to 22 in Gangtok.

A statement from Yougan Tamang, press secretary to the chief minister, said that this milestone reflects the leadership and continued encouragement extended to artists and creative communities in Sikkim by CM Prem Singh Tamang Golay, who has consistently championed the growth of arts, cinema, fashion, and cultural expression in the state.

As the minister-in-charge of the Information and Public Relations Department, Government of Sikkim, Tamang's commitment to nurturing creative talent and building global cultural connections has opened new avenues for artists and filmmakers from the region.

The statement said that the collaboration with the European Union aligns with the broader agenda of strengthening people-to-people engagement and cultural ties between Europe and India, as envisioned during the EU-India Summit earlier this year.

Through this partnership, audiences in Gangtok will experience diverse cinematic voices and perspectives from across Europe, fostering dialogue and deeper cultural understanding through the medium of film.

Representatives from at least 10 EU filmmaking countries are expected to participate, with around ten films from member nations scheduled to be screened at various venues in Gangtok during the four-day film festival.

The Sikkim International Film Festival is an official initiative of the Information and Public Relations Department and the Sikkim Film Promotion Board. The initiative has been supported by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India and NFDC.

Envisioned as a curated international platform in the Himalayan region, SIFF 2026 aims to bring distinguished global cinema to audiences in Sikkim and the North-Eastern region while simultaneously promoting local storytelling and creative exchange.

By bringing filmmakers, artists, and industry professionals from around the world to Gangtok, the festival will not only celebrate cinema but also place Sikkim more prominently on the global cultural and film tourism map, opening new opportunities for collaboration, creativity, and the growth of the state's creative economy, said the statement. (PTI)

## Aamir Khan's 'Sitaare Zameen Par' to make streaming debut on SonyLIV

Sitaare Zameen Par OTT release: Superstar Aamir Khan's sports comedy-drama Sitaare Zameen Par is set to make its streaming debut on Sony LIV nearly a year after its theatrical run, the streamer announced on Monday.

Directed by R S Prasanna, Sitaare Zameen Par was released in cinema halls across the country in June 2025, earning over Rs 250 crore and receiving praise for its heartwarming story as well as performances.

In a statement, SonyLIV said the film's upcoming streaming premiere will also mark a milestone. Sitaare Zameen Par will become the first Hindi theatrical film to debut on the service.

The film, a remake of the Spanish movie Champions, featured Aamir as Gulshan Arora, an assistant coach of a major basketball team. After being fired from his job, his life takes an unexpected turn when a drunk-driving incident lands him in court.

He is given a choice between serving jail time or completing 90 days of community service, which involves coaching a team of neurodivergent players and



training them for a basketball tournament.

In July 2025, a month after the film's debut in theatres, Aamir Khan had opted to bypass traditional OTT platforms and instead release Sitaare

Zameen Par directly on his YouTube channel Aamir Khan Talkies under a pay-per-view model, allowing viewers to watch the film by paying around Rs 100 per view.

At the time, the actor had described

the move as an attempt to make cinema more accessible and to experiment with a new digital distribution model.

"This is my private cinema chain. Think of it like Aamir Khan Productions has opened a new cinema chain, which is in everyone's house and in everyone's pocket... I got good offers from OTT channels. But I don't want those Rs100-125 crore from OTT channels. I want to earn Rs 100 from my audience. I prefer that more," Aamir told PTI.

Besides Aamir Khan, Sitaare Zameen Par also stars Genelia Deshmukh, Ashish Pandey, Aroush Datta, Aayush Bhansali, Rishi Shahani, Gopikrishnan K Varma, Rishabh Jain, Vedant Sharma, Simran Mangeshkar, Samvit Desai and Naman Mishra.

Produced by Aamir and Aparna Purohit under the banner of Aamir Khan Productions, the film is written by Divy Nidhi Sharma.

Sitaare Zameen Par was a follow-up to Aamir's critically acclaimed 2007 film Taare Zameen Par, which explored the struggles of a dyslexic child, played by Darshel Safary. (PTI)

## I wasn't a very confident dancer: Zeenat Aman

Actor Zeenat Aman says she was never a confident dancer as she never had formal training, unlike her contemporaries back then, which made directors realise to avoid burdening her with complicated choreography.

Aman went down memory lane and shared a video clip of "Oh Diwano Dil Samhalo" from her 1979 film "The Great Gambler" on her Instagram handle on Monday. Calling the song, which was sung by Asha Bhosle, her personal favourite, Aman said it depicted "the confidence and sass of a woman who knows her desirability".

"Another hit from 'The Great Gambler'! 'Do Lafzon Ki' was the movie's most loved song by popular consensus, but this one is my personal favourite. None of that drippy romance stuff here. Just the confidence and sass of a woman who knows her desirability," she wrote.

"The sequence had three outfit changes, of which the shimmering gold track-pant set tickled me the most! Not only was the outfit completely over the top, the hair team decided to give me a short pageboy wig to go with, and the dance master decided to add in some high kicks for good measure," she added.

The film was directed by Shakti Samanta and featured Amitabh Bachchan alongside the actor. The music for the film was composed by the late R D Burman.

"As I've mentioned before, I wasn't a very confident dancer as I never had formal training unlike most of the actresses of the time. Still, I could "groove" and many a director realised it's better to leave me to my own swaying device than frustrate themselves trying to coax complicated choreography out of me! Anyway, enjoy this snippet. P S: can you guess who sang this number," she said.

"The Great Gambler" featured Bachchan in a dual role as Jai, an expert gambler who works for the underworld don, Ratan Das and Vijay, a CID inspector. Aman essayed the role of Shabnam in the film. (PTI)

# India need a draw against Wales to book semis berth in Women's Hockey WC Qualifiers



**HYDERABAD, March 10:** India will look for at least a draw against Wales in their final pool match to advance to the semifinal of the FIH Women's Hockey World Cup Qualifiers here on Wednesday.

The top two teams from each pool will qualify for the semifinals and India will need a draw or a win to enter the last four round.

The Indian defence has also held firm, with goalkeeper Bichu Devi making crucial saves consistently.

Playing in front of a cheering home crowd in Hyderabad has also given the hosts a wonderful boost of energy.

India captain Salima Tete is satisfied with the team's performance so far.

# Feels good to join the elite company of Rohit and Dhoni: SKY



**MUMBAI, March 10:** Two days after captaining India to a T20 World Cup title, Suryakumar Yadav is slowly taking in the enormity of the achievement that has put him in august company of Kapil Dev, M S Dhoni and Rohit Sharma, who too helped the team lift ICC trophies.

Soon after returning from Ahmedabad, where India won a record third T20 World Cup title on Sunday, Suryakumar reflected on the side's successful campaign and the road ahead.

Kapil Dev's team won the 1983 ODI World Cup, the first major title for the country.

Speaking to reporters outside his residence, Suryakumar revealed that he had spoken to Dhoni ahead of the ICC event.

## India bows out of AFC Women's Asian Cup

**SYDNEY, March 10:** A profligate India bowed out of the AFC Women's Asian Cup with a 1-3 defeat to Chinese Taipei in their must-win last group stage fixture here on Tuesday, paying a heavy price for the lack of finishing touches.

Despite dominating large portions of the game and creating numerous opportunities, the India's inability to convert chances in the final third proved costly, leading to an early exit after they qualified for the prestigious tournament on merit for the first time.

Manisha Kalyan scored India's lone goal in the 39th minute, the winger unleashing a powerful shot from about 30 yards to find the target.

Chinese Taipei took the lead in the 12th minute when Y H Su slotted the ball inside an empty goal post after a horrible back pass from Sanju to J W Chen.

India struck back after that, but just before half time (45+9), Y. Y. Hsu's shot hit the upright corner of the post and deflected off Panthoi to enter the India goal.

This was after Pyari Xaxa handled the ball inside the box and referee pointed to the spot.

India had earlier lost to Vietnam and Japan, and to make the next stage of the tournament, the Blue Tigress needed to beat Chinese Taipei by minimum two goals on Tuesday and Japan to prevail over Vietnam.

## 'A little bit disheartened', Lakshya shifts focus to recovery and upcoming major events

**NEW DELHI, March 10:** Lakshya Sen admits the physical demands of modern men's singles are forcing him to rethink recovery and preparation, even as the Indian badminton ace continues to feel "a little bit disheartened" after falling short in his second All England final.



Lakshya battled through a series of long matches during a taxing week in Birmingham before finishing runner-up to Chinese Taipei's Lin Chun-yi.

"It's been a good week overall, but also an emotional week. Getting into finals for the second time and not winning, it feels a bit disheartened after the match. But overall, if I look back at the tournament, some good wins, a good run and the way I played, I think something to look forward to in the coming tournaments."

The 24-year-old told reporters on Tuesday, Lakshya had spent more than five hours on court during the week, including a grueling semifinal in which he battled severe cramps, before going down narrowly in the final.

The experience, he said, reinforced the importance of balancing tournament schedules with recovery and structured training blocks.

"It has been very physical in the matches and tournaments and also with the age, I mean, I'm not 20 anymore to recover as fast as I am," Lakshya said.

"I'm not saying I'm old. I mean, there are changes that you make in terms of your preparations, your recovery towards the next matches and especially the diet. When I was 21-22, I would not gain any weight if I eat

everything. But now there's a slight difference where I have to be conscious about the diet a bit more.

"And also with the recovery, a lot of the things I have to manage. Tactically also, I feel the better I can get in my overall game, I try to do that in training and play a certain game style that suits me."

The shutter from Almora said managing workload has also become crucial as the calendar grows increasingly demanding.

"I've had also some shoulder in-

juries that took some toll on the shoulder where I was playing the attacking shots better in the last few years. But yeah, over time, you are cautious about how much you can push, how many matches you can play and then you have to give it rest," he said.

"And yes, there has been a little bit of a shift in that sense where the recovery part I'm taking much more care in between tournaments to stay injury free. I mean, that is a really interesting thing that I find. And I like to keep learning new things, new techniques to recover better, get back stronger in the recovery."

With the Asian Championships and the World Championships among the major targets this season, Lakshya said the focus will now be on analysing the All England campaign with his team.

"I think those two are the major events that I will be playing this year. I will sit with my team and analyse a bit deeper how the (All England) tournament went and how the training programme in the last few months has been. (PTI)

## Jammu and Kashmir Ranji triumph to inspire youth across region: Dy CM Choudhary

**JAMMU, March 10:** Jammu and Kashmir Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary has said their cricket team's historic Ranji Trophy triumph will inspire aspiring sportspersons across the Union Territory and prove that the youth of the region can excel at the national level.

Choudhary, along with J&K Sports Minister Satish Sharma, on Sunday felicitated the members of the Jammu and Kashmir cricket team at the Maulana Azad Stadium.

Led by domestic stalwart Paras Dogra, the side clinched their maiden title after holding eight-time champions Karnataka to a draw and securing a massive 291-run first-innings lead in the final at Hubballi on February 28.

"This historic victory will serve as a major inspiration for aspiring sportspersons

across Jammu and Kashmir. The success of our cricket team proves that with determination and hard work, the youth of the region can achieve excellence at the national level," Choudhary said. The Sports Minister also hailed the players and the coaching staff for their performance throughout the tournament.

"This victory is not just a cricketing achievement but a moment of pride for the entire Jammu and Kashmir. Our players have demonstrated that with dedication, discipline and the right support, athletes from J&K can excel at the highest level.

"The government remains committed to strengthening sports infrastructure and creating more opportunities for our youth to showcase their talent," Sharma said. (PTI)

## Next target is Olympics gold, says Suryakumar Yadav

**MUMBAI, March 10:** The captain of India's T20 World Cup winning team Suryakumar Yadav on Tuesday said his next target is to win the Olympics gold for the country.

"We have the momentum. Our target now is to get the 2028 Olympics gold medal," Yadav told reporters after returning to his house in Mumbai's Deonar area following the World Cup triumph.

"The same year (2028), there will be the T20 World Cup. Winning that also will complete our hat trick," Yadav said. He said it was a "special feeling" to be in the "elite company" of skippers who have won the Cup for India.

"I will try to live up to the expectations and my efforts will be to win more trophies for India," Yadav said.

"When we won the Cup in 2024, it was a special feeling that we have won the final played on our soil," he said. (PTI)

## Hero Indian Open set to tee off from March 26 with record prize purse



**NEW DELHI, March 10:** The 2026 Hero Indian Open, to be held in Gurugram from March 26 to 29, will feature a world-class field led by PGA Tour star Akshay Bhatia and a record prize purse.

Sanctioned by the DP World Tour and Indian Golf Union (IGU), the tournament's prize purse has been increased to a record USD 2.55 million, up from USD USD 2.25 million on offer a year ago.

The star-studded field will include the 24-year-old Indian-American Bhatia, who has risen to new heights by winning the iconic Arnold Palmer Invitational 2026 at Bay Hill, Orlando, USA.

Now placed second on the FedEx Cup standings, Bhatia, who is Hero MotoCorp's Global Brand Ambassador, will make his first trip to India with this tour.

Another Hero MotoCorp Brand Ambassador, Rayhan Thomas, who has been on the Korn Ferry Tour for last two years, is also confirmed for the field.

The field will also include Italy's Francesco Molinari, who is also a three-time PGA Tour winner. Molinari became the first player from Italy to win a Major Championship when he triumphed at the 147th Open Championship in 2018.

The six-time DP World Tour winner has also represented Europe in three victorious Ryder Cup

teams in 2010, 2012 and 2018 - where he secured the winning point at Le Golf National in Paris.

The current list of confirmed players also includes the reigning champion Eugenio Chacarra of Spain, and Thomas Detry of Belgium, winner of the Phoenix Open on the PGA Tour in 2025.

Also, in the field are current season winners on DP World Tour - South African Casey Jarvis, who won two successive events on the DP World Tour recently, Spain's Nacho Elvira and Germany's Freddy Schott amongst others.

Former runner-up Veer Ahlawat, Yuvraj Sandhu, the 2025 India No. 1, Manu Gandas, along with Shaurya Bhattacharya, will be among the top Indian names in the field.

Brijinder Singh, President, Indian Golf Union, said, "The Hero Indian Open remains the crown jewel in the calendar of the Indian Golf Union. This year's tournament promises to be bigger than ever as we welcome a stellar field of leading international players along with India's finest professionals."

"The association between Hero MotoCorp and the Indian Open has grown stronger with every passing year and today stands as a proud partnership spanning more than two decades," said Sanjay Bhan, Executive Vice President, Hero MotoCorp. (PTI)

## ICC books individual commercial flights for WI, SA players after charter flight cancellation

**KOLKATA, March 10:** The ICC on Tuesday booked separate commercial flights for the stranded West Indies and South Africa teams after their charter flight scheduled to take off from Kolkata "was cancelled due to logistical issues".

"All the West Indies and South African players have been booked on individual commercial airline flights. Obviously, all can't be booked on same airlines but ICC has taken care of individual bookings. ICC chairman Jay Shah has personally spoken and assured players of a safe journey back home," an ICC source privy to the development told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

"It must be mentioned that Darren Sammy is already on his way home having left on Monday night," the source also informed.

The two teams that played their final games in Kolkata (West Indies in Super 8s on March 1 and South Africa on March 4 in semi-final) have not been able to fly out due to the disruption that has

been caused by International airspace restrictions across parts of West Asia following American and Israeli strikes on Iran.

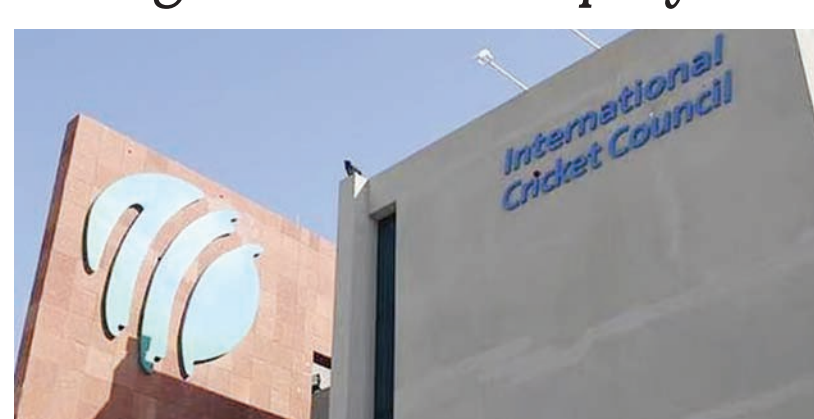
The situation has forced multiple airlines to avoid routes through the Gulf region. ICC's airline partner is Emirates and they are unable to operate due to shutdown of Dubai airspace.

The restrictions severely complicated outbound travel from India towards the Caribbean and Africa, forcing cricket authorities to explore alternative routes and charter arrangements.

Earlier, in a communication conveyed on Tuesday evening, both teams were scheduled to leave Kolkata on a shared charter flight to Johannesburg on Tuesday afternoon.

From there, the West Indies contingent was to continue onward to Antigua, while the South Africans were expected to disperse for their respective commitments.

However, the flight arrangement was called off hours before the scheduled de-



parture because of some "logistical issues", an official of the Cricket Association of Bengal told PTI.

"As per a latest development on Tuesday afternoon the chartered flight was cancelled and no further information regarding this is received", read a message communicated to the West Indies and

South Africa teams.

"Due to logistical issues the chartered flight may have been cancelled at the last minute so now maximum players are making their own arrangements," the local official told PTI.

being knocked out of the T20 World Cup by India, who defeated them by five wickets in their Super Eight match at Eden Gardens on March 1.

South Africa's campaign had ended a few days later when they lost their first semifinal to eventual runners-up New Zealand at the same venue on March 4, leaving them caught in the same boat.

At the time of this report, around 12 West Indies players along with 10 members of the support staff remain in India, while the South African contingent includes 12 players and two support staff.

West Indies head coach Sammy had earlier expressed his frustration over the delay on social media, posting that he "just wanna go home".

A few South African players had already departed earlier due to upcoming commitments.

Keshav Maharaj, George Linde and Jason Smith have travelled to New Zealand ahead of a bilateral series against the hosts beginning March 15.

Earlier, Cricket West Indies had said it was working with the International Cricket Council to arrange safe travel for the team amid the complex situation caused by airspace restrictions.

"While the situation remains complex and fluid due to international airspace restrictions arising from security concerns in the Gulf region, CWI assures the public that every precaution is being taken to ensure the safe return of the team to the Caribbean," the CWI had said.

It is likely that some of the West Indies players will stay back to join their respective IPL franchises. The IPL is slated to begin this month-end.

Rovman Powell is part of Kolkata Knight Riders, whose camp begins on March 18, while Sherfane Rutherford represents Mumbai Indians.

Shimron Hetmyer plays for Rajasthan Royals and Romario Shephard is with Royal Challengers Bengaluru, who are expected to start training from March 15. (PTI)



Strengthening  
Cancer Care Across  
**Assam**  
with the Tata Trusts

- Developing a 17-Hospital Cancer Care Network

# Inauguration of DIPHU CANCER CENTRE



**Chief Guest**  
**Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma**  
Chief Minister, Assam

Date: 11 March 2026 | Time: 2:30 PM  
Venue: Diphu Cancer Centre, Old Civil Hospital Road,  
Diphu, Karbi Anglong

Project  
Investment  
**₹270  
Crore**

### Affordable & Accessible Treatment

- ✓ Cashless treatment under PMJAY & MMJAY
- ✓ Services capped at CGHS rates

### Key facilities

#### Diphu Cancer Centre

#### - Comprehensive Cancer Care Hospital

-  Radiation Oncology (LINAC & Brachytherapy)
-  Chemotherapy & Surgical Oncology
-  PET-CT, CT Scan, MRI
-  ICU & Indoor Patient Services
-  Laboratory Services

