

6  
REGION  
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SPORTS

- Farmer, fisherman killed in separate lightning strikes in Gossaigaon
- BGLA condemns trafficking of golden langurs, seeks stringent action



- There should be zero stigma around mental health: Sports Minister
- Neeraj finishes fourth in his season-opening event in Doha Diamond League

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#IDY2026

12<sup>th</sup> International Day of

# YOGA

YOGA FOR HEALTHY AGEING

Chief Guest

**Smti Nirmala Sitharaman**  
Union Minister, Finance, etc.



21 June 2026



6 AM onwards



Central Programme

Brahmaputra Riverfront Park, Guwahati

Simultaneous Yoga Sessions across  
**23,498** villages at **37,383** venues



Participation of

**32 lakh+**

Women SHG members

## List of Chief Guests/ Guests of Honour in Yoga Day Programmes Across Assam

| Chief Guest/ Guest of Honour   | Venue               |  |                         |
|--|---------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Shri Lakshman Prasad Acharya<br>Governor, Assam                                  | Kamrup              | Shri Shiladitya Dev<br>MLA, Hojai LAC                      | Hojai                   |
| Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma<br>Chief Minister, Assam                                  | Kamrup Metro        | Shri Ranjit Dutta<br>MP, Tezpur HPC                        | Biswanath               |
| Shri Ashwini Roy Sarkar<br>Minister, Social Justice & Empowerment, etc.          | Dhubri              | Shri Amar Singh Tisso<br>MP, Diphu HPC                     | West Karbi Anglong      |
| Shri Jayanta Mallabaruah<br>Minister, Finance, etc.                              | Sonapur, Kamrup (M) | Shri Pulok Gohain<br>MLA, Tinsukia LAC                     | Tinsukia                |
| Shri Biswajit Daimary<br>Minister, Sports & Youth Welfare, etc.                  | Tamulpur            | Shri Prithiraj Rava<br>MLA, Tezpur LAC                     | Sonitpur                |
| Shri Charan Boro<br>Minister, Transport, etc.                                    | Udalguri            | Shri Pradan Baruah<br>MP, Lakhimpur HPC                    | Lakhimpur               |
| Smti Nilima Devi<br>Minister, Animal Husbandry & Veterinary, etc.                | Mangaldai, Darrang  | Shri Hagrama Mohilary<br>CEM, BTC                          | Kokrajhar               |
| Shri Pijush Hazarika<br>Minister, Agriculture, etc.                              | Jagiroad, Morigaon  | Tuliram Ronghang<br>MLA, Rongkhang (ST) LAC                | Karbi Anglong           |
| Shri Keshab Mahanta<br>Minister, Revenue & Disaster Management, etc.             | Nagaon              | Shri Pabitra Margherita<br>MoS, External Affairs, etc.     | Jorhat                  |
| Shri Ashok Singhal<br>Minister, Health & Family Welfare, etc.                    | Kamrup Metro        | Shri Kripanath Mallah<br>MP, Karimganj HPC                 | Hailakandi              |
| Shri Rameswar Teli<br>Minister, Transformation & Development, etc.               | Duliagan, Dibrugarh | Shri Tankeswar Rabha<br>MLA, Dudhnoi (ST) LAC              | Goalpara                |
| Shri Bimal Borah<br>Minister, Cultural Affairs, etc.                             | Dibrugarh           | Shri Debolal Gorlosa<br>CEM, Dima Hasao Autonomous Council | Dima Hasao              |
| Shri Susanta Borgohain<br>Minister, Water Resources, etc.                        | Sivasagar           | Shri Paniram Brahma<br>MLA, Sidli-Chirang (ST) LAC         | Chirang                 |
| Smti Ajanta Neog<br>Minister, Women & Child Development, etc.                    | Kamrup Metro        | Shri Jogen Mohan<br>MP, Rajya Sabha                        | Charaideo               |
| Shri Atul Bora<br>Minister, Panchayat & Rural Development, etc.                  | Golaghat            | Shri Phani Bhusan Choudhury<br>MP, Barpeta HPC             | Bongaigaon              |
| Shri Kaushik Rai<br>Minister, Food, Public Distribution & Consumer Affairs, etc. | Cachar              | Shri Dipak Kumar Das<br>MLA, Barpeta (SC) LAC              | Barpeta                 |
| Shri Krishnendu Paul<br>Minister, Public Health Engineering, etc.                | Sribhumi            | Shri Maneswar Brahma<br>MLA, Baksa (ST) LAC                | Baksa                   |
| Smti Bijuli Kalita Medhi<br>MP, Guwahati HPC                                     | Kamrup              | District Commissioner                                      | South Salmara-Mankachar |
| Shri Dharmeswar Roy<br>MLA, Bajali LAC   | Bajali              | District Commissioner                                      | Nalbari                 |
|  |                     | District Commissioner                                      | Majuli                  |
|  |                     | District Commissioner                                      | Dhemaji                 |



A joint initiative by National Ayush Mission and  
Assam State Rural Livelihoods Mission

# World Bank approves ₹ 4,000-crore loan for Haryana water conservation project

**CHANDIGARH, June 20:** Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Saturday said the World Bank has approved a loan of ₹ 4,000 crore for the state's ambitious 'Jal Sanrakshit Haryana' project aimed at making Haryana water-secure and self-reliant. The total cost of the project is ₹ 5,714 crore and it will be implemented in phases between 2026 and 2032. The programme will cover 15 clusters spread across 48.94 lakh acres across the state. Chairing a review meeting of senior officials here, Saini directed departments to prepare a comprehensive water management plan and ensure its effective implementation at the grassroots level. He stressed optimum use of treated water, conservation of every drop of water and development of a digital system for monitoring water availability and usage. The chief minister said village-level water committees would be formed and actively involved in the development and maintenance



of water channels. A dedicated fund would also be created for their upkeep, with financial support from the state government. According to officials, the project includes rehabilitation of the remaining 678 canals in Haryana. Of these, 106 canals will be restored with World Bank assistance at a cost of ₹ 2,484.87 crore, 293 canals through state funding costing ₹ 2,230 crore and 279 canals under NABARD-supported projects. Saini said the programme will rehabilitate 620 water channels, benefiting around 3.18 lakh acres of agricultural land. In addition, 120 canal-based micro-irrigation projects will be upgraded, extending irrigation benefits to nearly 56,830 acres. The project also includes reclamation of about two lakh acres of waterlogged land, promotion of direct seeded rice (DSR) on five lakh acres and crop diversification on

around 1.12 lakh acres. To strengthen groundwater recharge, 147 water bodies will be developed in seven districts -- Bhiwani, Jind, Kaithal, Mahendragarh, Rewari, Charkhi Dadri, and Sirsa. The chief minister said treated wastewater from major sewage treatment plants in Jind, Kaithal, and Dhanvapuri in Gurugram would be reused for irrigation. The initiative will cover nearly 28,000 acres at an estimated cost of ₹ 282.13 crore. Saini said the World Bank had appreciated Haryana's efforts in water resource management and described the programme as a transformational initiative. He added that all canals in the state would be rehabilitated and modernised under the project, strengthening irrigation infrastructure and ensuring sustainable water availability for future generations. State Irrigation and Water Resources Minister Shrutu Choudhry and senior officials attended the meeting. (PTI)

# Mahindra University to organise information session for northeast students

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, June 20:** Mahindra University will organise an information session for students and parents from the Northeast on June 28 at Novotel Hotel, Guwahati, an official statement said on Saturday. The session, scheduled from 10 am to 5 pm, will be led by vice-chancellor Dr Yajulu Medury and Dean of the School of Hospitality Management Chef Thirunagasambandam (Chef Thiru). As per the statement, Chef Thiru will be sharing insights on how the hospitality sector is growing far beyond traditional hotel management and has emerged as a dynamic, technology-enabled and globally connected industry with increasing opportunities for students. "This region is at an interesting point in time where we are seeing new job opportunities within the sectors of tourism, hospitality, infrastructure, and services. Success in this evolving world is contingent upon our youth's capacity to blend technical skills with creativity, communications, business acumen, and problem-solving. With

this session, we hope to bring awareness to both students and their parents about the latest developments and how multidisciplinary training can assist in shaping their future," said Dr Yajulu Medury, vice chancellor at Mahindra University. Northeast India is a fast-emerging tourism destination. The travel and tourism sector currently supports more than 80 million jobs in India and is expected to witness sustained growth over the coming decade. This expansion is creating strong demand for skilled professionals equipped with business acumen, technological understanding and service excellence. Chef Thiru, Dean, School of Hospitality Management "Students from Northeast India carry something rare—cultural warmth, multilingual fluency, and a culinary heritage no classroom can replicate. India's booming hospitality sector, from Hyderabad's iconic food culture to Rajasthan's heritage circuits and Kerala's backwaters, needs exactly this kind of grounded, people-first talent. Through this session, we aim to

connect the right students with real industry exposure, entrepreneurial pathways, and international opportunities across the Europe, USA and Southeast Asia. Hospitality is not a fallback—it is a future. "Mahindra University's School of Hospitality Management is reimagining hospitality education in India. Moving beyond the conventional hotel management approach, the School offers an interdisciplinary curriculum that integrates hospitality with business strategy, analytics, technology, sustainability, entrepreneurship and experiential learning. Students benefit from industry immersion and a multidisciplinary ecosystem that prepares them for leadership roles in the evolving service economy. During the session, Dr Medury will be focusing on Mahindra University's legacy, establishment and evolution into a multidisciplinary institution. The university offers courses across faculties including Engineering, Management, Law, Design, Communications, Hospitality and Education.

# Veeam software signs MoUs with four Assam institutions

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, June 20:** In a significant step towards strengthening digital resilience, cybersecurity capabilities and future workforce readiness in Northeast India, Veeam Software India Private Limited on Saturday signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with four leading higher education institutions of Assam. These institutions are Assam Science and Technology University, Gauhati University, Assam Don Bosco University, Assam Down Town University. The partnership marks a landmark collaboration between industry and academia to develop a robust talent pipeline equipped to address the rapidly evolving challenges of cybersecurity, cyber resilience, artificial intelligence, cloud technologies, and digital transformation. Under the MoUs, Veeam and the participating universities will collaborate to advance research, innovation, workforce development, and industry-integrated learning opportunities.



The initiative is expected to benefit more than 25,000 learners across the northeast region over the next three years, creating one of the region's most comprehensive industry-academia collaborations in emerging digital technologies. The partnership will focus on advancing cyber resilience and ransomware defence, strengthening cybersecurity and secure digital infrastructure, leveraging artificial intelligence for security and digital transformation, promoting advanced research, innovation and capacity building, enhancing workforce skilling, employability and industry integration, co-developing industry-aligned curricula in cybersecurity, cyber resilience, cloud protection, and providing hands-on learning opportunities through virtual laboratories, simulations, hackathons, innovation challenges and experiential training. Speaking on the occasion, Sandeep Bhabure, Vice President & Managing Director, Veeam Software India & SAARC, said, "As organisations across the world accelerate their digital transfor-

# As AI Reshapes Careers, WPU Goa Advocates a Transdisciplinary Approach to Higher Education

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, June 20:** As artificial intelligence and rapid technological change continue to reshape industries worldwide, universities must move beyond preparing students for their first job and instead equip them to navigate multiple career transitions throughout their lives, according to speakers at the World Peace University (WPU) Goa Open House held in Guwahati on Saturday. The event brought together prospective students, parents and educators for a discussion on the future of higher education and the changing expectations from universities in an increasingly unpredictable world. Central to the conversation was WPU Goa's transdisciplinary model of education, which seeks to combine disciplinary depth with the ability to think across domains, adapt to change and address complex real-world challenges. "Universities can no longer assume that preparing students for their first job is enough," said Dr Ashish Bhadrachari, Pro Vice Chancellor of WPU Goa. "The more important question is whether we are preparing students for the multiple changes, transitions and opportunities they will encounter throughout their lives. The future belongs not simply to specialists, but to individuals who can learn continuously, connect ideas across domains and respond to challenges that do not fit neatly into traditional categories." The discussion explored how long-held assumptions about higher education are being challenged as industries evolve faster than traditional academic cycles. New professions are emerging, estab-



lished roles are being transformed, and competition increasingly comes from individuals who can combine expertise from multiple fields rather than operate within a single discipline. Participants heard how the ability to learn, adapt and work across disciplines may become as important as technical expertise itself. The conversation also examined the growing importance of curiosity, resilience and lifelong learning as essential capabilities for future careers. Speakers stressed that higher education institutions must increasingly focus on preparing students for opportunities that cannot yet be predicted rather than training them solely for existing professions. WPU Goa currently offers B.Tech. in Computer Science and Engineering (CSE), Bachelor of Management Studies (BMS), B.Des. in Integrated Product Design, B.Des. in Communication Design, and B.Sc. (Hons.) in Psychology. At a time when students and parents are seeking clarity about the future of work, the discussions reinforced the need for higher education institutions to focus not only on employability but also on preparing learners to navigate continuous change throughout their professional lives.

**DISMANTLING AND RE-ERECTION OF OHE MASTS**  
Tender Notice No.: TRD/LMG/15 of 2026-27. Dated: 18-06-2026. E-Tender is invited by the undersigned for the following work: Tender No.: EL-TRD-NFR-LMG-OHE-MOD-68. Name of work: Dismantling and re-erection of leaning of OHE Masts, provision of Nylon Net at Critical locations and Iron Door Frames at SP/SSP under Lumding Division. Advertisment Value: ₹47,65,877.77/-, Earnest Money: ₹95,300/-, Date & time of closing of tender at 15:00 hrs. on 13-07-2026. Complete information along with the tender document of above e-tender will be available in the website www.ireps.gov.in  
Sr. DEE/TRD, Lumding  
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY  
Serving Customers With A Smile

**P.WAY MAINTENANCE OF NEWLY CONSTRUCTED BG TRACK ALONG WITH ALL OTHER ANCILLARY WORKS**  
Tender Notice No. SCL-ENGG-52-2026. Works tenders through "E" Tendering system for and on behalf of the president of India are invited for the works as detailed below:- Brief Description of Item: P.Way Maintenance of newly constructed BG track along with all other ancillary works between km 0.575 to km. 51.30 of newly constructed BG Railway line in Bhairabi-Sairang section (total = 50.725 km). Tender Value: ₹1,69,02,874/-, Earnest Money: ₹38,000/-, Date & time of Closing of tender: At 15:00 hrs. on 13-07-2026 & opening at 15:00 hrs. on 14-07-2026. The complete information with tender documents of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. on 13-07-2026 in the website www.ireps.gov.in  
DRM(W), Lumding, Silchar  
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY  
Serving Customers With A Smile

**ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT AT LUMDING DIV.**  
E-Tender Notice No. SNT-06-LMG-2026-27-RT Dated: 18-06-2026. Works tenders through "E" Tendering system for and on behalf of the president of India are invited for the works as detailed below:- Tender No. SNT-06-LMG-2026-27-RT. Name of work: Annual Maintenance Contract of sectional OFC in section Jiribam-Khongsang (54.26 KM), Bhairabi-Sairang (50.5 KM), Lumding-Furkating Jn. ex Nailalung-Diphu (129.2 KM) and other block section (86.89 KM) of Lumding Division. Tender Value: ₹39,49,611.96/-, Earnest Money: ₹79,000/-, Date & time of closing of tender: At 15:00 hrs. & opening at 15:30 hrs. on 10-07-2026. The complete information with tender documents of above e-tender will be available in the website www.ireps.gov.in  
DSTE, Lumding  
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY  
Serving Customers With A Smile

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (PHE)  
DIPHU RURAL W/S DIVISION, DIPHU, KARBI ANGLONG**

**EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

Member Secretary, DWSC, Karbi Anglong cum Executive Engineer (PHE), Diphu Rural W/S Division, Diphu invites "Expression of Interest" (EOI) from reputed contractors for Construction of MMCF and CMCF at various Block as details below:

| Sl. | Name of Block | Number of MMCF | Number of CMCF |
|-----|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1   | Howraghat     | 126            | 30             |
| 2   | Samelangso    | 88             | 20             |
| 3   | Langsomepi    | 70             | 25             |
| 4   | Lumbajong     | 139            | 15             |
| 5   | Nilip         | 58             | 10             |
| 6   | Bokajan       | 90             | 20             |
| 7   | Rongmongwe    | 37             | 10             |

Last date for submission of EOI is 25-06-2026, at 4 p.m. EOI document shall be collected from our office from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m from 05.06.2026 till 25.06.2026.

Member Secretary, DWSC cum Executive Engineer invites sealed expression of interest (Technical and Commercial Bid) with Rs. 10/- KAAC court fix stamp from the reputed agencies for construction of MMCF and CMCF. Interested and eligible bidders are requested to collect from the office of the undersigned with tender document fee Rs. 50/- only (non-refundable) by payment of demand draft or Treasury Challan to be deposited in the Head of Account 8443-120, KAAC or Cash.

The Project approximate cost:  
MMCF – Rs. 32,500/- each (Thirty Two Thousand Five Hundred only)  
CMCF – Rs. 1,75,000/- each (Rupees One Lakh Seventy Five Thousand only)

Member Secretary, DWSC cum Executive Engineer (PHE), Diphu Rural W/S Division reserves the right to accept or reject any or all Bids either in part or in full without assigning any reasons thereof. For more details, please contact SBM-(G) Cell.

Sd/-  
Member Secretary, DWSC  
cum Executive Engineer (PHE)  
Diphu Rural WS Division

RO no. IPRD/ KAAC/ 2026-27/59.

*Contd. from Page 3...*

## Tehran closes Hormuz

of a family, parents and two children. In Arab Salim village, a body was pulled from a destroyed house, and in the villages of Doueir and Kfar Rumman, drone strikes killed a person on a motorcycle and a Lebanese soldier. Nine people were killed in strikes in the villages of Qannari, Sohmar and Shehour. Plumes of smoke rose into the sky over southern Lebanon and Israeli jets flew low over the coastal city of Tyre. Residents there told The Associated Press they were relieved that Tyre had been spared in recent days but the sounds of Israeli planes reminded them the war is not over. Many doubted a ceasefire—even if agreed on—would hold. "Our entire lives would change if there's a ceasefire," said Hussein Khoshman, a Tyre resident. Netanyahu's office did not immediately comment on ceasefire efforts. On Friday, Netanyahu said that, on his orders, the Israeli army had "struck powerfully" 150 Hezbollah targets, killing dozens of militants. Military spokesman Brig. Gen. Effie Defrin said the Israeli forces were operating in a "forward defense zone" and would continue doing so. (PTI)

## 'Paschimbanga Divas'

May Maa Durga bless the state with peace, prosperity and renewed glory," the CM added. (PTI)

## Over 18.56 lakh

a historic shift from a system plagued by leakages and middlemen to one driven by transparency and accountability through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). "The era of middlemen skimming off money meant for the poor has been decisively obliterated through technology-enabled governance. PM-KISAN is one of the finest examples of this transformation where financial assistance reaches farmers directly into their bank accounts without delay, discrimination or leakage," Sonowal said. The Union minister asserted that the DBT architecture has empowered small and marginal farmers, strengthened financial inclusion and enabled rural families to make timely investments in agriculture. He also highlighted the ongoing Khet Bachao Abhiyan being conducted across 728 districts of the country to promote scientific farming practices and healthy soil management among more than one crore farmers. He emphasised that "Viksit Bharat 2047" will be built on the strength of the villages and the prosperity of the farmers. India's farmers have moved from being passive beneficiaries of welfare schemes to active partners in nation-building, Sonowal added. The Union minister also highlighted the broader transformation taking place in the agriculture sector over the last 12 years. He said the agriculture budget has increased from ₹ 27,663 crore to ₹ 1.40 lakh crore, while around 8 crore Kisan Credit Cards have been issued across the country to ensure affordable institutional credit for farmers.

## India to host key

"During the meeting, the National Security Advisers/Heads of Delegation of BRICS member countries will exchange views on the theme 'Non-traditional security challenges confronting the world today'" the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said. It said the officials will also discuss the rapidly evolving nature of national security challenges, as well as the role of new technologies in emerging security threats. "The National Security Advisers/Heads of Delegation will also review the outcomes of the recently held BRICS joint working groups on counter-terrorism, and on security in the use of information and communication technologies," it said in a statement. The BRICS foreign ministers' meeting in May had ended without a joint statement as sharp differences between Iran and the UAE over the West Asia conflict were on full display. BRICS operates under a framework of consensus and India had issued a chair's statement and outcome document featuring two specific paragraphs where unanimity could not be reached. (PTI)

## KAAC to celebrate 75th

minister, will be held. The programme will also feature a special screening of the Karbi feature film "TASAM". The celebrations will also include the illumination of the KAAC Secretariat and other government buildings at 6 pm.

SUNDAY, JUNE 21, 2026

THE HILLS TIMES 3

US-Iran talks to begin Sunday in Switzerland ● Israeli strikes on southern Lebanon kill at least 16 people

## Tehran closes Hormuz over Lebanon fighting

**TYRE (LEBANON), June 20:** Iran dealt two quick blows to the interim agreement with the United States on Saturday, angered by Israel's continued attacks in Lebanon, saying it had closed the Strait of Hormuz and also announcing that while its negotiators were going to Switzerland for talks, not much is likely to happen there.

Key mediator Pakistan, meanwhile, said the technical-level talks will begin on Sunday in Bürgenstock, Switzerland, with Qatari mediators also participating.

In Tehran's first salvo, Iran's joint military command said the strait had been closed, citing the Israeli attacks and US "bad faith" and "clear breach of its commitments" by failing to end the war. Its statement on state television warned that "if the aggression continues, subsequent steps have been planned."

Shortly after that, the state broadcaster announced that Iran's negotiating team was heading to Switzerland "in the coming minutes," a trip that had been originally planned for Friday.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei, however, signalled that little might happen until Iran feels the US is living up to the

deal. "This trip is therefore about demanding that the other side fulfil its obligations," he said, adding that negotiations toward a final agreement will begin only once key commitments are upheld. If they are not, he said, "then the memorandum of understanding as a whole will be jeopardised."

In Washington, Vice President JD Vance confirmed on Saturday that the top US negotiators — Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff — were already in Switzerland and have been working through technical details of the anticipated negotiations on Iran's nuclear program.

Vance told Fox News that he expects to leave for Switzerland "sometime the next couple of days" but acknowledged that "it's always a delicate coordination dance."

Meanwhile, the global economy braced for more uncertainty. Ships had begun transiting the strait after the interim US-Iran agreement was signed earlier in the week, a milestone that has left plenty of questions unanswered.

Earlier Saturday, Israeli strikes on southern Lebanon killed at least 16 people, including two children, hours after reports emerged of a ceasefire agreement there. Seven people remained trapped under the



rubble after the strikes hit the southern city of Nabatiyeh and nearby villages, Lebanon's National News Agency said.

The death toll in the latest war between Israel and Hezbollah has now surpassed 4,000, Lebanon's health ministry later announced.

Mediators were scrambling to halt the fighting between Israel and the militant Hezbollah group after a heavy exchange on Friday killed at least 47 people in Lebanon and four Israeli soldiers.

An Israeli military official said Hezbollah had fired more than 50 projectiles at Israeli forces in southern Lebanon overnight. The official spoke anonymously in line

with regulations. Israel's army said it struck dozens of Hezbollah targets and militants in southern Lebanon, including Hezbollah command centres.

On Friday, the Israeli ambassador to Washington, Yechiel Leiter, said Israel "remains firmly committed to an immediate ceasefire" if Hezbollah honours the agreement and ceases hostilities.

On Saturday, Hezbollah said it had committed to the ceasefire but blamed Israel for violating it several times Friday night. A statement by the group's military wing said it would abide by the ceasefire but would also repel attacks by Israeli troops. Hezbollah and Israel

went to war two days after the US and Israel launched strikes on Iran on February 28, with Hezbollah firing rockets and drones at northern Israel and Israel seizing large swaths of southern Lebanon.

The interim US-Iran agreement reopened the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran had closed as the war unfolded — cutting off the global economy from significant supplies of oil and natural gas. The deal also envisages the relaunch of talks on Iran's nuclear program, a core issue in the war.

Neither Israel nor Hezbollah are signatories to the deal, which calls for a halt to military operations in Lebanon and for the country's sovereignty to be respected.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to keep Israeli forces in southern Lebanon until any threat to Israel is eliminated. Hezbollah has refused to halt its attacks unless Israel commits to withdrawing from Lebanon, which Iran says is also a condition of the deal.

A new round of US-backed talks between the Lebanese government and Israel is expected to take place in Washington next week. A strike on the village of Barish killed four members (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## EU lifts negative travel advisory for Assam partially

Restrictions remain in 3 dists under AFSPA



**GUWAHATI, June 20:** European Union (EU) member-states have withdrawn their negative travel advisory for Assam, except for the three districts under the Armed Forces (Special Power) Act or AFSPA, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Saturday.

EU Ambassador to India Herve Delphin informed the Assam chief secretary that the restriction has been lifted from Friday, he said.

"After reviewing the situation in Assam, they have withdrawn the negative travel advisory from yesterday. All the 27 member-states of the EU have lifted the restrictions for its citizens travelling to our state, barring the three districts of Charaideo, Tinsukia and Sivasagar

which are under AFSPA," Sarma said on Facebook Live.

He said that the USA and Canada are yet to lift the travel restrictions for Assam, and the state government was pursuing the matter with them. Australia and Japan had earlier withdrawn similar advisories for their citizens last year, the CM said in a post on X.

"This development, following the recent visit of EU diplomats, is a strong vote of confidence in Assam and bodes well for deeper EU-Assam engagement. It will further strengthen tourism, business, and people-to-people ties," he said, expressing gratitude to Delphin for his support in taking it forward. (PTI)

## KAAC to celebrate 75th Foundation Day on June 23

Staff Reporter

**DIPHU, June 20:** The Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) is set to celebrate its 75th Foundation Day on June 23.

The Platinum Jubilee marks 75 years of democratic self-governance under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India. A series of ceremonial, cultural and commemorative events will be held across the district, primarily centred at Rangina Sarpo Ahongjai in Taralango and the KAAC Secretariat in Diphu.

The celebrations will begin at 8 am with the simultaneous unfurling of the National Flag at the main venue and the Council Secretariat. At 8:30 am, dignitaries and citizens will pay tribute to prominent Karbi leaders and visionaries, including Semson Sing Ingti, Khorsing Terang and Sarsing Teron (Langkung Habe), at their respective statue sites.

The main open session will commence at 11 am under the chairmanship of KAAC Chairman Raju Tisso. Chief Executive Member (CEM) of KAAC and Rongkhang MLA Dr Tuliram Rongkhang will attend as the chief guest, while Diphu Lok Sabha MP Amarsing Tisso will be the guest of honour.

The programme will be attended by traditional leaders, including Karbi Richo (King) Longsing Rongkhang, along with local MLAs, administrative officials and representatives of student organisations.

In the evening, a cultural programme dedicated to the memory of late Sum Rongkhang, noted cultural figure and former Assam Cabinet (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## 'Paschimbanga Divas' defining moment in India's history: Himanta

**GUWAHATI, June 20:** Greeting the people of West Bengal on 'Paschimbanga Divas' on Saturday, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the day marks a defining moment in the country's history, ensuring that a part of Bengal remained within the Indian Union.

He maintained that the efforts of Hindu nationalists led West Bengal to be a part of the country, and a state which became a refuge for "dispossessed Hindus" during Partition.

"Best wishes to my sisters and brothers of West Bengal on Paschimbanga Divas. This day marks a defining moment in India's history, shaped by the efforts of Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee and countless other Hindu nationalists, who ensured that a part of Bengal remained within the Indian Union and became a refuge for dispossessed Hindus during Partition," Sarma said in a post on X.

The new BJP government has decided to observe 'Paschimbanga Divas' or West Bengal Day on June 20, coinciding with the day in 1947 when the Bengal Legislative Assembly voted in favour of the creation of a separate province that eventually became West Bengal after Partition.

Sarma said that for decades, "the significance of this chapter was intentionally overlooked by the Left ecosystem in deference to their vote bank". "Today, the people of Bengal can rightfully acknowledge and take pride in this important part of their history. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Over 18.56 lakh farmers to benefit in Assam under 23rd instalment of PM-KISAN: Sonowal

**GUWAHATI, June 20:** Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Saturday said that more than 18.56 lakh farmers in Assam are receiving benefits under the 23rd instalment of PM-KISAN, with tillers in the state having received cumulative assistance exceeding ₹ 8,200 crore since the launch of the scheme.

He was addressing a gathering at Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Kamrup, after virtually attending the PM-KISAN Samman Utsav as Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the 23rd instalment of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) in West Bengal, transferring more than Rs 18,880 crore directly into the bank accounts of over 9.44 crore farmers across the country.

"Today is not merely the release of another instalment under a government scheme. It is a celebration of the trust between the government and our Annadatas,"



the Union minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways said.

Highlighting the impact of PM-KISAN in Assam, Sonowal said that more than 18.56 lakh farmers in the state are receiving benefits under the 23rd instalment, with over ₹ 371 crore being transferred directly into their bank accounts.

Since the launch of the scheme, farmers in Assam have

received cumulative assistance exceeding ₹ 8,292 crore, he added. "The money transferred to the farmers of the region means seeds are purchased on time, fertilisers bought without borrowing, farm investments made with confidence and support reaching farmers exactly when they need it," Sonowal said. He maintained that the country has witnessed (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Assam Police busts wildlife trafficking racket; 9 held with 8 Golden Langurs

**GUWAHATI, June 20:** A suspected transnational wildlife trafficking network has been busted by Assam Police, leading to the arrest of nine people and rescue of endangered Golden Langurs in Chirang district, an official statement said on Saturday.

The arrests and rescue were made by the Special Task Force (STF) of the state police on Friday night, it said.

Acting on specific information regarding illegal trafficking of Golden Langurs, STF launched the operation with the assistance of Chirang Police.

"During the intervening night of 19th

and 20th June, STF, Assam apprehended nine wildlife traffickers and rescued eight Golden Langurs from their possession at Bamungao Road under Sidi Police Station in Chirang district," the statement said.

The rescued Golden Langurs are an endangered species notified under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, with an estimated black market value of around ₹ 16 lakh.

The STF said the animals were captured from the Ultapani area of Kokrajhar district and were being trafficked through local intermediaries in

Chirang for delivery to prospective buyers.

During the operation, two vehicles, 13 mobile phones and documents were seized.

STF, Assam has lodged a formal complaint before the Forest Range Officer, Runkhata Range under Chirang Wildlife Division and handed over the arrested persons, rescued Golden Langurs and seized articles to them for necessary legal action and further investigation into the organised interstate and transnational wildlife trafficking network, the statement said. (PTI)

## Nagaland governor asks DGP to act swiftly in sexual assault cases

HT Correspondent

**DIMAPUR, June 20:** Expressing serious concern over the recent rise in incidents of sexual assault against women, particularly minor girls, in Nagaland, Governor Nand Kishore Yadav on Saturday directed DGP Rupin Sharma to take swift, effective and exemplary action against the perpetrators.

The governor issued the directive to the state police chief during a meeting at Lok Bhavan in Kohima.

During the meeting, Yadav expressed deep concern over the growing number of reported sexual assault cases and asked the DGP to review the prevailing law-and-order situation

and the measures being taken to address such crimes in the state.

He underscored the importance of ensuring the safety and security of women and children, calling for greater vigilance, stronger preventive measures and prompt investigation of all such cases.

Yadav also directed the police department to intensify efforts to curb crimes against women and children, strengthen monitoring mechanisms and ensure that victims receive timely support and justice.

He further stressed the need for greater public awareness and community participation in preventing such offences. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Brahmaputra Board launches project to develop Basistha riverfront in Guwahati

'Efforts will also be made to enhance local biodiversity'

**GUWAHATI, June 20:** The Brahmaputra Board has launched a project to develop the Basistha riverfront in Guwahati, with an aim to restore and improve a stretch of the river that has been affected by indiscriminate dumping of solid waste over the years.

The Basistha Riverfront Development Project will be undertaken along the river stretch adjacent to the Board headquarters in Basistha area of the city, an official statement said.

The project was inaugurated on Friday by Brahmaputra Board chairman Ranbir Singh, with residents of the area, senior citizens and other officials also present on the occasion.

Over time, the left bank road-cum-embankment adjoining the Brahmaputra Board campus had



become a dumping site for solid waste, leading to environmental degradation, foul odour, mosquito breeding and public health concerns. The project has been taken up to address these issues and im-

prove the condition of the riverfront, the statement said.

The development work covers approximately 370 metres of the Basistha river and includes landscaping and plantation, develop-

ment of green spaces, pedestrian pathways, viewing areas, riverbank protection measures and improvements in sanitation and waste management.

Efforts will also be made to enhance local biodiversity and create a clean and accessible public space for residents.

The Brahmaputra Board has partnered with the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) for planning and designing the project. The initiative is expected to serve as a model for similar riverfront improvement and river rejuvenation efforts in other stretches of the Basistha river, the statement added.

Originating in East Khasi Hills of adjoining Meghalaya, the Basistha river flows through a part of Guwahati (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## India to host key BRICS security conclave amid rising geopolitical tensions

**NEW DELHI, June 20:** Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Russian NSA Sergei Shoigu and other top BRICS security officials will converge in New Delhi on Monday for a two-day conclave that will focus on pressing geopolitical and regional security challenges. The conclave of BRICS National Security Advisers will be chaired by NSA Ajit Doval.

China has already announced that Wang will attend the deliberations. The Chinese foreign minister is also expected to hold a bilateral meeting with Doval.

It is learnt that Iranian Supreme National Security Council's deputy secretary Nezamipour is also expected to join the conclave that is set to prepare the grounds for the BRICS summit to be held in September in India.

New Delhi is hosting the summit in its capacity as the current chair of the influential grouping. BRICS, originally comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, expanded in 2024 to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates, with Indonesia joining in 2025.

The BRICS has emerged as an influential grouping as it brings together 11 major emerging economies of the world, representing around 49.5 per cent of the global population, around 40 per cent of the global



GDP and around 26 per cent of the global trade.

The top BRICS security officials are expected to deliberate extensively on the overall regional security scenario including the situation in West Asia as well as the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

The Indian side is likely to raise its concerns over terrorism including cross-border terrorist activities targeting Jammu and Kashmir by terror groups based in Pakistan.

The Pakistan-Afghanistan hostilities may too figure in the deliberations, people familiar with the matter said. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

# Chupa Chupi

## A Much-Discussed Film

The global film industry has recently witnessed a growing fascination with horror narratives. In many cases, however, horror functions merely as a device intended to frighten audiences. Chupa Chupi distinguishes itself precisely at this point. Rather than using horror as a superficial ingredient, the director employs it as a storytelling mechanism to reveal how certain powerful sections of society manipulate superstition to satisfy personal desires, preserve authority



By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

About two years ago, a web series titled Chupa Chupi attracted considerable attention. With its unconventional title and distinctive storytelling style, the series found itself at the center of debate. Yet, despite the controversies, it became remarkably popular. Encouraged by the overwhelming love and support from viewers, the creators later expanded the narrative into a more elaborate and complete form, bringing it to the big screen as a full-length feature film under the same title, Chupa Chupi. Directed by the promising young filmmaker Pranab Bharali, the film is currently winning the hearts of audiences across cinema halls in different parts of Assam and remains one of the most talked-about releases of the moment. By portraying a simple rural setting, the struggles and realities of everyday life, and various facets of society with sincerity and authenticity, the film has demonstrated that successful cinema does not necessarily require a massive budget or excessive artificiality. What truly matters is a compelling story, a strong screenplay, and a genuine creative effort. Through his very first feature-length film, Pranab Bharali has displayed a level of skill and courage that offers genuine hope for the future of Assamese cinema.

Built around the lives of ordinary people in a rural backdrop, Chupa Chupi succeeds in creating a special place in the minds of viewers. The film presents a remarkable blend of story, screenplay, and direction. One of the greatest challenges for any filmmaker is to keep the audience engaged from beginning to end, and in that regard, this film succeeds completely. Naturally, the first half progresses at a somewhat slow and conventional pace because it focuses on laying the foundation for the central narrative. The director takes his time allowing viewers to become familiar with the characters and their world. However, the real surprise lies in the second half. The seemingly routine progression of the opening section transforms dramatically into an impressive display of cinematic craftsmanship. The film's latter half, with its succession of twists, spine-chilling mysteries, suspenseful moments, distinctly Assamese rural atmosphere infused with elements of horror, vibrant activity, convincing performances, and effective music, creates an experience that keeps viewers glued to the screen. The final forty-five minutes are especially gripping. An exciting and unexpected turn, almost impossible to anticipate, arrives toward the conclusion and leaves the audience genuinely astonished. Admittedly, there were a few areas where the film could have been improved. Certain scenes felt slightly prolonged. Yet, aside from those minor inconsistencies, the performances, direction, background score, camera work, and musical arrangement maintain a high standard throughout. Every technical and artistic element has been handled so effectively that the film's small shortcomings barely register. The screenplay is every bit as strong as the story itself. Ultimately, Chupa Chupi is the kind of film that compels viewers to believe once again that honesty, selfless love, and human values still survive in an increasingly mechanical world. It belongs to that category of cinema which exposes the true face of society through relevant and realistic subject matter. The natural performances and the story's gentle lessons about morality and humanity leave a profound impact on the audience.

One of the long-standing ailments of Assamese cinema and mobile theatre productions has often been the tendency to sacrifice narra-

tive flow in an attempt to force social messages upon viewers. Such efforts frequently undermine artistic beauty and disrupt storytelling. The greatest achievement of Chupa Chupi lies in its ability to avoid that trap. Without disturbing the natural progression of the narrative, the film subtly highlights various social problems and contemporary issues through satire. Alongside its serious observations, it also incorporates a pleasant and restrained sense of humor that enhances the viewing experience. Audiences laugh, enjoy themselves, and at the same time find themselves reflecting upon deeper social realities. Set within the simple environment of

which ordinary people are treated like pawns. These themes are presented with considerable realism in the second half of the film. The narrative also touches upon the growing addiction to mobile phones and the internet, illustrating how traditional games and forms of social interaction are gradually disappearing. Within a limited span of screen time, the film addresses these concerns with notable depth. It conveys the timeless truth that moral corruption and wrongdoing eventually come to light. Simultaneously, it portrays how superstition and blind belief continue to take root within society and often obstruct the emergence of truth. Through



a village, the film presents a harsh yet realistic depiction of how a local political figure, driven by ambitions of becoming a larger leader in the future, manipulates young people for personal gain. The manner in which politics can mislead and exploit the younger generation is portrayed with remarkable ease and effectiveness. The story also reveals how so-called respectable individuals take advantage of simple and innocent people for selfish purposes and employ various strategies to conceal the truth. A particularly memorable birthday sequence, skillfully integrated into the narrative, along with the creative use of the character Hari, serves as a sharp, satirical reflection of the direction in which Assamese society is currently moving. These scenes expose social hypocrisy in a humorous yet thought-provoking manner.

The global film industry has recently witnessed a growing fascination with horror narratives. In many cases, however, horror functions merely as a device intended to frighten audiences. Chupa Chupi distinguishes itself precisely at this point. Rather than using horror as a superficial ingredient, the director employs it as a storytelling mechanism to reveal how certain powerful sections of society manipulate superstition to satisfy personal desires, preserve authority, and advance their own interests. Through the creation of a thoroughly indigenous horror universe, the film courageously explores these realities. Particularly striking is its portrayal of the witch-hunting problem that continues to haunt society, along with the dirty entanglements of politics and the selfish games in

the character of Jayanta Salfa, the film attempts to communicate several deeper truths and messages, and in this endeavor the director succeeds completely. The character's presence and dialogue encourage viewers to think beyond the immediate events unfolding on screen.

From an acting standpoint, the film's greatest strength undoubtedly lies in its cast. Every performer, whether in a major or minor role, delivers a spontaneous and natural performance. Not once does the acting appear exaggerated or artificial, and that remains one of the film's most significant strengths. Each character feels alive and authentic. Veteran Assamese actor Arun Nath delivers a powerful and unforgettable performance that is likely to remain in viewers' memories for a long time. His acting, dialogue delivery, and expressive range are thoroughly captivating. Anyone watching the film will once again recognize why Arun Nath is considered one of the most valuable assets of Assamese cinema. Among the younger generation, Kamal Lochan not only plays the central protagonist but also carries much of the narrative forward. His ability to handle such responsibility with confidence and ease is clearly visible in his performance. Alongside him, Jeet Kalita's impeccable comic timing adds a distinctive flavor to the film. Jintu Kumar Kashyap impresses with his mature portrayal of emotionally tragic moments, while Kaushik Bhardwaj brings strength and conviction to his romantic role. Both performances leave a lasting impression. Among the female characters, Snigdha Gogoi stands out as Urmila Bou, delivering a deeply moving and



powerful performance. Through the portrayal of a resilient woman who refuses to surrender her individuality and self-respect despite social humiliation, she inspires courage and resistance against injustice. Vaibhavi Goswami demonstrates remarkable maturity and talent, proving herself to be an actress of considerable promise. Although Bedabrata Bora and Ragini Kaushik have comparatively limited screen time, they make their presence felt effectively. Saptarshi Gogoi, Kathanandi, Alankrita Mahanta, Anju Dahal, John Choudhury, Jon Kalita, and Kishore Tahsildar all shine in their respective roles. Particularly noteworthy is the performance of child artist Amaira Ditya, affectionately known as Amu. Despite her young age, she acts with impressive ease and succeeds in winning the audience's affection. The presence of accomplished actor Himangshu Prasad Das and veteran actor-director Rajesh Bhuyan further enhances the film's gravity. As a director, Pranab Bharali demonstrates a keen understanding of how to bring out the best in every performer, and this quality is evident throughout the film. A sublime and timeless vision of love also emerges from the narrative. The emotional moments reaffirm that love remains pure and sacred even today. Viewers are reminded of how love can help individuals remain humane and strengthen the bonds of unity within society.

Beyond its direction and performances, the film is equally impressive on the technical front. Chandrakumar Das's cinematography captures the beauty of Assam's rural landscapes and village life with remarkable authenticity. The meticulous editing of Uddipta Kumar Bhat-tacharya and the color grading by Azanur Rahman lend the film an international visual standard. Bijiyeta Patgiri's makeup work and Kamal Lochan Bora's costume design make each character appear more realistic and believable. One of the most striking technical achievements is the way the painful past of Kamal

Lochan's character is presented through special visual techniques. These sequences draw particular attention and reveal the director's refined artistic vision. Palash Surya Gogoi has poured his heart and soul into the film's music. The background score not only enhances the emotional weight of scenes but also leaves a lasting impression on viewers. Its effective use makes every moment feel more vibrant and engaging. The film also contains an unexpected and delightful surprise. The use of the voices of several well-known Assamese personalities through a particular character represents a unique and highly enjoyable experiment in Assamese cinema. From art direction to costume design and every other technical detail, the production demonstrates careful attention and balance.

The film does not depend on an enormous budget, dazzling technology, or unrealistic spectacles. Its true strength lies in its simple and honest narrative, its authentic Assamese rural atmosphere, and its naturally humorous moments that genuinely entertain. The characters are not inhabitants of an imaginary world. They feel like people from our own villages and neighborhoods. The dialogues are so natural and practical that they carry the unmistakable fragrance of the soil. While watching the story unfold, audiences often feel that they are not observing performances but witnessing reflections of familiar lives. This is a complete family film that can be enjoyed together amid laughter and warmth. By avoiding artificiality, the director succeeds in creating a genuinely Assamese environment. The film proves that a work can possess an unmistakably Assamese identity without resorting to forced cultural displays. Its narrative foundation and the lifestyles of its characters are so deeply rooted in local realities that viewers continuously feel connected to their own origins.

The true success of a film cannot be measured solely by box-office collections. It resides in the spontaneous applause inside the theatre, the sincere laughter of audiences, and the lingering sense of satisfaction that remains long after leaving the cinema hall. Judged by these standards, Chupa Chupi is a complete success. More than just an entertaining film, it stands as a bold and meaningful experiment in Assamese filmmaking. The director and the entire creative team deserve appreciation for presenting important issues related to society, politics, and human values in a manner that is both engaging and accessible. The film convincingly demonstrates that the Assamese film industry remains deeply connected to its language, culture, and roots while continuing to provide refined and healthy entertainment. Every admirer of Assamese cinema and the arts should make an effort to experience this remarkable work on the big screen. Alongside the powerful performances of veteran artists, the dedication, sacrifice, and talent of both established and emerging performers shine throughout the film, offering a promising glimpse into a future that could lead Assamese cinema toward even greater heights.



## World Music Day -21 June, 2026

## Music against the noise of war: A symphony of peace, healing and humanity

By: Lalit Garg

The world today is passing through an unprecedented period of crises. On one hand, humanity is witnessing the devastation of wars; on the other, it faces the growing threats of terrorism, social violence, mental stress, depression, loneliness, and intolerance. While science and technology have undoubtedly made life more comfortable and convenient, inner peace, emotional balance, and genuine happiness seem to be slipping away. In such challenging times, if there is one force capable of reconnecting human beings with themselves, with society, and with humanity at large, it is music. Music is far more than a source of entertainment. It is an awakening of the deepest human emotions and sensitivities. It is the language of the soul—a language that reaches the heart even without words. This is why World Music Day, celebrated on 21 June, is not merely a cultural event but a global celebration carrying a powerful message of peace, harmony, and human unity.

World Music Day originated in France in 1982 with a simple yet profound vision: music should not remain confined to concert halls and elite stages but should flow freely into streets, parks, public squares, and everyday life. Over the decades, this celebration has spread to more than 120 countries, reminding the world that music belongs to no single nation, religion, race, or language—it is the shared heritage of all humanity. The greatest challenge confronting humanity today is not merely war; it is the growing hardness of hearts and the erosion of human sensitivity. Violence begins not with weapons but with thoughts. Music possesses the unique power to humanize those thoughts, nurturing compassion, love, empathy, and coexistence. Where dialogue fails, music often opens new pathways of understanding.

History bears witness to the fact that wars have rarely brought lasting peace, but music has consistently healed wounded hearts and united divided communities. Songs have inspired courage on battlefields and have become the voice of peace movements across the world. At a time when many regions remain trapped in conflict and unrest, music can transcend borders and create invisible bridges between people. Perhaps the greatest miracle of music lies in its ability to heal from within. Modern medical science increasingly recognizes that music does far more than please the ears; it has a profound positive impact on both the body and the mind. Numerous studies have shown that soothing music can reduce stress hormones, regulate blood pressure, improve sleep quality, and help alleviate anxiety and depression.

Millions of people around the world today struggle with mental stress and emotional exhaustion. Intense competition, relentless schedules, social isolation, and an increasingly digital lifestyle have left many feeling disconnected and overwhelmed. In such circumstances, music serves as a gentle yet powerful therapy. This is why music therapy is now being incorporated into healthcare systems and hospitals worldwide. It helps calm the mind, restore emotional balance, and inspire hope and positivity. Music is not only linked to health and well-being; it is also deeply connected with creativity and innovation. Wherever there is music, there is rhythm, and rhythm is essential to a balanced life. A life devoid of rhythm breeds tension and chaos, whereas music brings harmony and equilibrium. People who engage with music often become more imaginative, sensitive, and creative. This explains why music occupies a central place in literature, painting, dance, theatre, and virtually every form of artistic expression.

On a deeper level, nature itself is a grand



symphony. The songs of birds, the call of the cuckoo, the murmur of flowing streams, the roar of ocean waves, the rhythm of falling rain, the whisper of the wind, and the rustling of leaves—all are expressions of nature's eternal music. This universal melody teaches us that life is not about conflict but about harmony. Where there is harmony, there is music; where there is music, there is peace. Indian culture has long regarded music as a manifestation of the divine. The sounds emerging from Lord Shiva's damru are symbolically considered the primordial vibrations of creation. The flute of

Lord Krishna is not merely a musical instrument but a timeless symbol of love, attraction, and spiritual unity. The veena held by Goddess Saraswati represents the sublime union of wisdom and music.

India's musical heritage stretches back thousands of years. From the sacred chants of the Vedas and the melodies of the Samaveda to the devotional traditions of the Bhakti movement and the masterpieces of classical music, music has played a pivotal role in elevating society to spiritual heights. Great saints, poets, and musicians such as Kabir, Mirabai, Surdas, Tulsidas,

Namdev, Tansen, and Baiju Bawra brought the transformative power of music to the masses. Music is not merely an art form; it is also a powerful instrument of non-violence. Violence divides, while music unites. Terrorism and extremism are born from hatred, whereas music cultivates an atmosphere of love and understanding. If children are introduced to music, arts, and culture from an early age, they are more likely to develop sensitivity, tolerance, and empathy. These qualities can become the strongest safeguards against violence and fanaticism in the future.

Just as the world increasingly recognizes the importance of yoga, it must also acknowledge the vital role of music. In essence, both yoga and music guide human beings toward the same destination—inner balance and spiritual peace. Yoga harmonizes the body and mind, while music harmonizes the mind and soul. Together, they offer a pathway to holistic health and a more meaningful life. Music is also a powerful catalyst for social harmony. No festival, celebration, wedding, religious gathering, or national event feels complete without it. Music brings people together, creating shared experiences that transcend differences. When people sing, listen, and celebrate together, hostility naturally diminishes and mutual understanding grows.

World Music Day reminds us that if we aspire to build a more peaceful, compassionate, and humane world, music must become an integral part of everyday life. It should not remain confined to performances and entertainment venues; it deserves a meaningful place in schools, families, workplaces, and communities. The need of the hour is to recognize music not merely as entertainment but as a powerful tool for education, mental well-being, social cohesion, and global peace. When the world trembles under the noise of war, music offers a melody of hope. When individuals are engulfed by stress, anxiety, and despair, music becomes a light that rekindles optimism and inner strength.

Ultimately, music is non-violence. Music is yoga. Music is peace. Music is energy. Music is the voice of humanity's soul. World Music Day celebrates this timeless truth: as long as music lives, the possibilities of love, compassion, harmony, and peace will continue to live within the human heart. "When words divide, music unites. When violence wounds, music heals. When hope fades, music rekindles the light of humanity."

## 'FERENGADAO' RABHA: DISPERSING THE LIGHT BY PIERCING THROUGH THE DARK NIGHT

By: Beauty Hazarika

"Oh, the poor and helpless brothers of my Mother Assam, Who will believe why you are in such a miserable plight today!"

The wealth you saved by shedding your brow's sweat on your feet,

Was sucked dry by the wealthy leeches, breaking your spirit. Once, it was you who built this beautiful, golden Assam. The whole of Assam belonged to you, a sweet dream of your heart."

"Bishnu Rabha, how far along is the night now?"

In response to this question, had he been alive today, he might have pierced through the darkness to scatter the light. Breaking through the waves of sorrow, he would have comforted the oppressed masses, saying—"I am here, do not worry, my children."

Who else but Rabha could make the choice to sacrifice their utmost to illuminate the lives of others? He is the one whose aura wraps around the poor, the downtrodden, and the oppressed as a shield of courage. How much courage must it take for someone, along with a few comrades, to pull down and burn the British national flag, the 'Union Jack', flying atop the three-story building of the then Michael College, and hoist the Indian Tricolor in its place? Just how much courage? At that time, drawing pictures of a black and a white goat on a blank sheet of paper, he pasted the following poem on the walls of the royal palace:

"There are two goats in the kingdom,

One is black and the other is white,  
If you desire the welfare of the kingdom,  
Sacrifice both these goats."

How resolute must one be to flee from their place of study due to British wrath, and then launch a movement to defy the British magistracy? Though he appeared grave, his true character was equally profound. Since the development of society is intrinsically linked with labor, culture also shares an inseparable bond with it. The characteristics of a nation depend on the lifestyle, customs, and rituals of its working-class people.

The world-renowned artist Paul Robeson, while evaluating national characteristics in his writing 'Here I Stand', mentioned that the character of a nation can only be judged by assessing the condition of its working-class masses. In this context, Caudwell wrote, "The social standard of a nation depends on its economic condition. Therefore, culture cannot be separated from the system of economic production."

"You must awaken—Oh Kachari,  
Mikir, Khasi, Rabha, Garo, Miri,  
Kuki, Naga, the brave Khamti, Mishimi..."

The Assamese nation is formed encompassing all these inhabitants of Assam."

His poetry echoed the rights of the exploited laborers and peasants, carrying a message of unity and a call to eradicate untouchability and class discrimination from the broader Assamese society. His poems were not merely forms of literature; they were powerful mediums to awaken the masses. In Kolkata, Rabha managed the newly introduced 'Chitralekha' section of the magazine 'Bahi', marking his formal entry into cultural endeavors.

In a letter written to the Assam State Council, he noted: "Those who are the soul of the Assamese people, those who are the bearers and preservers of Assamese culture, are the plowers, laborers, workers, lower-income masses, the exploited, the downtrodden, the oppressed, and the persecuted. Sharing the grief of these masses, I swam and played in the deep ocean of their love and affection. Jumping into their midst, I expressed my gratitude to the people through numerous public meetings."

This was Rabha—someone who sacrificed his life on the foundation of suffering and became the very breath of farmers and hard-working people. Roaming through every nook and corner, he earned the people's love as their dear 'Feren-

gadao'. In the Bodo language, the word 'Ferenгдаo' means the Drongo bird (Phehu bird). This bird wakes up sleeping people with its melodious voice just before dawn breaks. Because he awakened consciousness and created awareness in society, he was affectionately called by this sobriquet.

**Contributions to Cinema, Theater, and Politics**

In 1935, he assisted in choreography for Jyotiprasad Agarwala's film 'Joyoti'. Working alongside Jyotiprasad between 1935 and 1937, Rabha prepared the audio recordings of the plays 'Joyoti' and 'Sonit Kunwori'. Earlier in 1931, Bishnu Prasad Rabha, in collaboration with a person named Moni Rai in Bhawanipur, Kolkata, established a film production company named Agro Pictures Corporation, though he could not produce any films through it.

By the end of 1945, Bishnu Rabha came into contact with the Revolutionary Communist Party of India (RCPI). In 1946, while visiting Kolkata for the film 'Siraj', he met Saumyendranath Tagore, the leader of the party, and became an active member. In 1948, the Revolutionary Communist Party was banned, and Rabha went into hiding from 1948 to 1952. The Bishnuram Medhi government of that time had placed a bounty of ten thousand rupees on his head. In 1952, he was arrested along with his wife at Gilaguri village under the Dotma revenue circle in the present-day Kokrajhar district (formerly the undivided Goalpara district) and was jailed for a year.

**Musical Legacy**

Rabha composed numerous timeless songs. A total of 137 songs written by him have been compiled in the 'Bishnu Prasad Rabha Rachana Sambar'. His songs cover diverse themes such as love, nature, heritage, and the revolutionary spirit of proletarian liberation, alongside several children's songs. Some of his most popular songs include:

Mor Kobitar Chhondo Lagi  
Porojonomor Shubhogonot  
Logon Ukoli Gol  
Tilai Tilai Ghuri Phule Ulahere  
Nahor Phule Nuxuwai  
Eye Mor Kekh Gan  
Bol Bol Bol Krishak Shakti Dol  
Xurore Deulore Rupore Xikoli  
Bishwar Chhonde Chhonde  
Aji Mondir Duwar Kholo  
Tejor Bolere Likhi Zam Itishah  
He Biplobi Bir Odhinayok He  
Mor Jivonor Akaxote Indrohdhonu Gorhim  
Azoli Sowali Nana Phul Tuli  
Bilote Haliche Dhuniya Podumi  
O Guru Mor Xonkor Toribor Kino Upay  
Nisala Aire Ami Khati Oxomiya  
Kaxote Koliqi Loi  
Xokhi He Ki Kome Dukhore Kotha  
Uti Za Rupali Nao  
O Oxomiya Deka Dol, etc.

Notably, in Jyotiprasad Agarwala's play 'Karengar Ligiri', Rabha poured his heart into singing the song "More Jivonore Lykha Krishna". Due to the distinct characteristics of the lyrics and tunes composed by him, these creations are uniquely recognized as Bishnu Rabha Sangeet.

**A Versatile Genius and Master Painter**

Bishnu Prasad Rabha was involved in various fields of culture. Apart from music, dance, painting, and acting, he also worked as a music director and film director. In 1928, while studying in Kolkata, he was deeply inspired to pursue dance after witnessing a performance by the legendary Russian ballerina Anna Pavlova.

Rabha initially acted in the role of a prince in the play 'Harishchandra'. A regular performer at the Baan Stage in Tezpur, Rabha later acted in mobile theatre groups (Yatra Parties) and starred in several Assamese films. The films he acted in include 'Era Bator Sur', 'Pratidhwani', and 'Siraj'. At Jyotiprasad's invitation, he assisted in dance choreography and several other departments during the making of the first Assamese film 'Joyoti'. When direct-

ing Jyotiprasad Agarwala's play 'Karengar Ligiri', Rabha took charge of the music direction and also played the character of 'Sudarshan'. He co-directed 'Siraj', the most successful film of that era, alongside Phani Sarma. In Bhupen Hazarika's 'Era Bator Sur', Rabha played the role of 'Bhojlunga', and in 'Pratidhwani', he portrayed the Khasi Chief (Siem).

Bishnu Rabha was also an accomplished painter. He painted portraits of Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardeva as well as a joint portrait of Sankardeva and Madhavdeva, which he printed in three colors and distributed among the public. Nineteen photographs of his paintings are included in the appendix of his collected works. Rabha painted three portraits of Sankardeva—one in 1935, one in 1940, and another in 1945. Among these, the 1940 portrait is the most widely acclaimed. The joint portrait of Sankardeva and Madhavdeva was painted in 1935. Other notable paintings by Rabha include Chitralekha (1935), Nataraj (1937), Snan (A Bathing Lady, 1933), Shakuntala (1939), Gormor Dinor Tirota (Women in Summer, 1940), Bodoswokolor Bibah Somodol (Bodo Wedding Procession, 1944), Bhumikompo (Earthquake, 1950), and Gawor Prakriti Drishya (Village Landscape, 1965). He also designed cover pages for magazines like 'Bahi' and 'Amar Pratidhwi'.

The Relevance of Rabha in Modern Times

The biographical essence of cultural icon Zubeen Garg shares a similar flavor with Rabha's ideals. Zubeen Garg, too, has dedicated himself to society, uniting people under socialist ideals with messages like "I have no caste, I have no base," urging society to scale the highest peaks. Kalaguru Bishnu Prasad Rabha remains the favorite personality of the immortal artist Zubeen Garg.

**In today's mechanical, selfish, and divided society, the relevance of Rabha has increased manifold:**

**A) Secularism and the Concept of a Greater Assamese Nation:**

Today, when society is being polarized in the name of religion, caste, and language, Rabha's philosophy of harmony can guide us. He dreamed of building a vibrant and unified "Greater Assamese Nation" by integrating all ethnic communities, including the Koch, Bodo, Rabha, Mising, and others.

**B) Protest Against the Commercialization of Culture:**

In contemporary times, art and culture are being heavily commercialized and distorted in the name of modernity. Rabha taught us that culture must be people-oriented and alive—something that awakens society. The spiritual and social significance of his "Bishnu Rabha Sangeet" and theatrical works remains immense even today.

**C) Social Equality and Economic Justice:**

In today's capitalist society, the gap between the rich and the poor is widening continuously. Farmers, laborers, and workers are still exploited. Rabha termed India's independence as merely a "transfer of power from the white British to the black British" and demanded true independence (economic and social liberation). His thoughts on economic equality are 100% relevant today.

**D) Selfless Patriotism and the Ideal of Sacrifice:**

At a time when the greed for power and money is visible everywhere in politics and social service, the lifestyle of a leader like Rabha, who sacrificed everything, serves as an eye-opening example. Rejecting power or high status (he even declined the post of Police Superintendent offered by the British) and never hesitating to go to jail for the country, his spirit of sacrifice is a source of inspiration for today's youth.

Bishnu Prasad Rabha should not remain confined to just a few songs or speeches on "Rabha Divas" on June 20th. His dream was an exploitation-free, egalitarian, and culturally rich society. To free today's society from violence, corruption, and instability, it is absolutely essential to revive the revolutionary thoughts and humanistic lifestyle of the Kalaguru.

"Because a people's artist can never die."

### Short Story

## The Colours of Rongali

By: Meenakshi Gogoi

The sun rays piercing through the glass windows looked like scattered golden hues from a thousand halogen bulbs early in the morning. Rina woke up to an eye-catching, gleaming sight of a bright morning welcoming the Rongali/Bohag Bihu, the Assamese New Year, after a few wet, rainy days. At heart, Rina felt a vibrant morning she hoped would lead her to go out and enjoy the festival with her friends in the village. She hurriedly took a bath, loosely opened her wet hair, put on her mother's purple-golden thread handloom-woven mekhela-chador from her closet, and bravely walked out of her room, heading towards the garden. Rina spotted the bright colours of nature and a flock of white pigeons adorning her home garden, with some long pinkish-violet Kopou (foxtail orchid) swinging softly and fluttering in gay, at the touch of a mild breeze. Her eyes caught sight of the blossoming, pretty Togors (Gardenia) covering thickly all over the branches. Rina couldn't resist smelling the sweet fragrance of Togor that curled her lips, broadening her smile, and bringing her adorable dimples alive. The scented marigolds and red roses, the purple-pink bougainvilleas, the tall and thick Nahor and Bakul trees, and strings of charming yellow orchids growing at the tree trunks were in full bloom, beautifying her garden. It was an eye-pleasing sight for the passerby. With ecstasy, Rina plucked some scented white Togors to spread their fragrance inside her house. As she entered the home veranda, Rina met Junti, her young cousin. Junti asked, "Baa, please give me one Togor. I will keep it inside my school book. It will smell very nice." Rina happily replied, "Surely, take it. Happy Rongali Bihu to you." They exchanged Bihu greetings and smiles, and Rina straightaway went to the Puja room. She lit a few incense sticks, placed one Togor at the feet of Goddess Durga's idol, sought her blessings, and bowed before the earthen saaki (lighting Diya). She placed Togor in each room of the house.

When Rina entered the kitchen, she heard her mother and aunt exchanging stories about their experiences of Rongali Bihu celebrations at home. Her aunt expressed her happiness and competitive zeal for participating in Bihu dance competitions during her college days. Rina placed a few Togor above the kitchen shelves to spread their fragrance. Rina excitedly asked her aunt, "Khuri, do you still miss performing the Bihu dance?" Her aunt smiled and replied, "I used to, but not now. I feel good remembering my Bihu days at my village." Her aunt talked about the first day of Rongali Bihu, when villagers would take their cows to rivers and ponds to bathe them. The very ritual of softly hitting cows' bodies with small pieces of bitter gourd, brinjals, and raw turmeric, and putting turmeric dots on their foreheads, would gear up the festival of Rongali Bihu. Rina's mother talked about how such pleasant village sights during Bihu were slowly disappearing in towns and cities. It was only the Bihu

melas, Bihu dance & musical programmes that towns in Assam would celebrate to welcome the month of April, the auspicious Bohag/Rongali, which marks the peak of spring, the colours of nature and the arrival of pre-monsoon time.

In the evening, Rina and her family attended the Bihu celebration with fellow neighbours in their house's front field. Rina's father, her uncle, and some elderly village men, as well as adolescent boys and girls, had arranged aromatic tea with snacks and Bihu delicacies, such as pitas, black sesame and coconut laddus, and Jolpan with jaggery, cream and curd. The Bihu songs were played, which transformed the atmosphere into a wonderful musical evening. A few elderly couples were sipping hot tea and enjoying the evening, reminiscing about their old Bihu times. Rina's next-door male neighbour, an enthusiastic Dhulia, played the Dhool (a musical instrument) with thick sticks wrapped tightly by a piece of red cloth at the edges, which excited everybody to take a step into the Bihu dance, opening and stretching out their moving arms in gaiety. The married women and young girls began performing Bihu to the beats of Dhool. Rina and her cousin joined them with great enthusiasm. Her mother and aunt stood nearby, watching, smiling, and clapping in time to match the beats of Dhool. Rina called her aunt and mother to dance with them. Her aunt saw it as a wonderful opportunity to perform Bihu with other village women, and she brought Rina's mother along.

As soon as they entered the circle where other women were performing, Rina's mother and her aunt couldn't resist the swift, shrill, but melodious musical beats of the Dhool. Their feet began to move spontaneously, their curved waists began swinging in shapes, and their arms were lifted in grace, with glimmering smiles on their faces, as the Bihu dance was joyfully performed. In her mind, Rina's aunt was suddenly back in her college days, dancing Bihu carefree, like old times, forgetting that she was somebody's wife and a mother of a young girl. She performed like a true Bihu dancer who knew only to dance with her heart pouring out. Rina's mother felt free of all worries and gazes, and was able to fulfil her desire to dance again in her own liberty. With every swirl and back-bending Bihu steps, Rina noticed how happy, care-free, and excited those Bihu dancing women were, including her mother and aunt. She had not seen her mother and aunt performing Bihu with such absolute grace and freedom. They danced beautifully as if they would never get another chance to perform Bihu, with an expressive, jovial mood. Rina captured every suave move of theirs and pleased faces in her Sony camera. Her father and uncle did a few steps of Dhulia dancing around her mother and aunt. It was a wonderful sight for her, and Rina captured their happiest moment in group photos and selfies. That evening was well spent amidst the vibrant Rongali fervour to be cherished for years to come.

## Farmer, fisherman killed in separate lightning strikes in Gossaigaon

**HT Correspondent**  
GOSSAIGAON, June 20: Two persons lost their lives in separate lightning strike incidents in Gossaigaon subdivision on Friday, while a livestock animal was also killed during one of the incidents.

According to reports, the first incident occurred at No. 1 Jaraguri village under Gossaigaon subdivision.

The deceased, identified as Refendra Narzary, was ploughing his field in the morning when he was struck by lightning during a sudden thunderstorm accompanied by heavy rain. He died on the spot. A livestock animal accompanying him in the field was also killed in the lightning strike.

In another incident, Parma Mardi, a resident of Haldibari village under Sapkata Police Outpost, died after being struck



by lightning while fishing in the Sankosh River. His body was later recovered from the river.

Following the incidents, personnel from Simultapu Police, Sapkata Police Outpost and Gossaigaon Police reached the respective locations and initiated necessary procedures. The bodies were recovered and sent to

Kokrajhar for post-mortem examination.

The incidents have left the families of the deceased and local residents in shock. Local people expressed their condolences and urged the government to provide adequate compensation and financial assistance to the affected families.

## Sonitpur imposes restrictions near NEET-UG re-exam centres

**HT Correspondent**  
TEZPUR, June 20: In a bid to ensure free, fair and smooth conduct of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET-UG) Re-Examination, 2023, scheduled to be held on June 21, the District Magistrate of Sonitpur, Ananda Kumar Das, ACS, has promulgated a prohibitory order under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023.

The order has been issued to maintain the security and confidentiality of examination-related materials and prevent any unauthorised activity that may obstruct or interfere with the peaceful conduct of the examination.

The NEET (UG) Re-Examination will be conducted at PM Shri Kendriya Vidyalaya No. 1, Misamari; PM Shri Kendriya Vidyalaya No. 2, Air Force Station, Salonibari; Kendriya Vidyalaya No. 1, Tezpur, Solmara; PM Shri Kendriya Vidyalaya, Lokra; and Kendriya Vidyalaya, Tezpur University, Napaam.



The order prohibits the assembly of unauthorised persons, unauthorised entry into examination centres, photography, videography, communication with candidates, and any activity intended to facilitate unfair means or disrupt the examination process within a 100-metre radius of the examination centres on the day of the examination.

Any act causing obstruction, interference, or compromise to the se-

curity, custody or transportation of confidential examination materials has also been prohibited within the specified area. Any violation of the order will attract penal action under Section 223 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, and other relevant provisions of law.

The prohibitory order has come into force with immediate effect and will remain in force until the completion of the NEET (UG) Re-Examination on June 21, 2023.

## Police nab alleged thief, recover computers and other stolen items

**HT Correspondent**  
MORIGAON, June 20: In a major breakthrough, Morigaon Police on Saturday arrested an alleged thief during a raid conducted in the Bhuragaon and Laharighat areas and recovered a large quantity of stolen items.

The accused, identified as Anarul Islam, is alleged to have been involved in thefts at five schools in Morigaon town.

Following the registration of FIRs by the school authorities, a special police team led by the Officer-in-Charge of Morigaon Police Station launched a series of raids in the two areas.

During the operation, police recovered several stolen items, including computers, CPUs, ceiling fans and other materials suspected to have been stolen from the schools.

Police said efforts are underway to apprehend other members of the alleged gang, who remain absconding.

Further investigation is in progress.

## Gauhati HC judges attend legal awareness programme in Goalpara

**HT Correspondent**  
GOALPARA, June 20: The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Goalpara, organised a legal awareness programme on "Art of Cross Examination and Skill Development of Advocates" at Goalpara Law College on Saturday, with Hon'ble Gauhati High Court Judges Justice Kalyan Rai Surana and Justice Mridul Kumar Kalita in attendance. Justice Kalyan Rai Surana, who attended the programme as the chief speaker, delivered an insightful address on the art of cross-examination and the importance of skill development for advocates.

In his speech, he emphasised the need for continuous learning and professional refinement among members of the legal fraternity to ensure effective advocacy and strengthen the justice delivery system.

The programme began with a welcome address by Goalpara District and Sessions Judge Ujjal Rajkhowa.

Addressing the gathering, Justice Mridul Kumar Kalita also spoke on the significance of legal awareness, advocacy skills and professional competence in the legal profession.

Speakers at the event included Jiten Das, President of the Goalpara Lawyers' Association, and Zakir Hussain Khan, President of the Goalpara Bar Association, who also addressed the participants.

The event opened with a Saraswati Vandana presented by local artist Aastha Goswami. It was attended by the Principal of Goalpara Law College, members of the faculty, students and several advocates associated with the Goalpara court.

On the occasion, Goalpara Deputy Commissioner Pradip Timung and Senior Superintendent of Police Nabaneet Mahanta also paid a courtesy visit to the two Hon'ble Gauhati High Court judges.

## NFR leads green initiative at Sairang Railway Station in collaboration with Mizoram government

**HT Correspondent**  
GUWAHATI, June 20: In a significant initiative aimed at promoting environmental sustainability, improving passenger amenities and fostering community participation, Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR), in collaboration with the Department of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Government of Mizoram, and Clean & Green Revolution Mizoram, recently organised a tree plantation, beautification and cleanliness drive at Sairang Railway Station.

According to an official statement, the programme reflects the shared commitment of all stakeholders towards creating cleaner, greener and more passenger-friendly railway stations while contributing to environmental conservation and sustainable development.

As part of the initiative, tree plantation activities, flower garden development and a comprehensive cleanliness campaign were carried out within and around the station premises, enhancing its aesthetic appeal and ecological value.

The Department of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Government of Mizoram, extended valuable support by providing 50 April tree saplings and 50 Chawnpui saplings for plantation.

"These plantations are expected to strengthen the green cover around the station, improve the local environment, support biodiversity and contribute to a healthier and more pleasant atmosphere for passengers, railway employees and nearby residents," the statement added.

Speaking on the occasion, chairperson of Clean & Green Revolution Mizoram, Lalmaisawmi, highlighted the organisation's vision of transforming Sairang Railway Station into one of the cleanest, greenest and most beautiful railway stations in the country.

She also appreciated the support and cooperation extended by NFR and the Government of Mizoram in undertaking beautification measures that would further enhance the station environment and create a welcoming experience for passengers and visitors.

## ASRLM to observe Yoga Day across rural Assam

**HT Bureau**  
GUWAHATI, June 20: The Assam State Rural Livelihoods Mission (ASRLM), Panchayat and Rural Development Department in collaboration with the Department of AYUSH, Government of Assam, will observe the International Day of Yoga 2023 on 21 June across Assam with the active participation of Self-Help Group (SHG) members, said an official statement.

While a central International Day of Yoga celebration will be held at Guwahati, to be ceremonially graced by Nirmala Sitharaman, Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, Government of India, and Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, chief minister of Assam, P&RD minister Atul Borah will attend the Yoga programme at Golaghat.

"The state-wide initiative aims to promote yoga as an integral part of a healthy lifestyle among SHG members and their families, fostering physical, mental, and emotional well-being across rural communities," the statement added.

As part of the observance, yoga sessions will be organised across 23,498 villages at 37,383 venues, with an expected participation of 32,19,898 SHG members.

In preparation for the International Day of Yoga, the Department of AYUSH has developed a Common Yoga Protocol comprising basic yoga asanas for SHG members, and SHG members across the State have been practising the protocol since 1st June 2023.

The Department of AYUSH has also provided capacity-building support, trained resource persons, and necessary tools and materials to facilitate the large-scale implementation of yoga activities across the state.

The observance reflects ASRLM's commitment to holistic empowerment by integrating health and wellness initiatives with its ongoing efforts to strengthen women's collectives and rural livelihoods.

Through this collaborative effort, ASRLM and the Department of AYUSH seek to encourage SHG members to adopt yoga as a regular practice and inspire healthier communities across rural Assam.

## BGLA condemns trafficking of golden langurs, seeks stringent action



**HT Bureau**  
KOKRAJHAR, June 20: The Bodoland Golden Langur Association (BGLA) on Saturday condemned the trafficking of eight golden langurs and appealed to the authorities to take stringent action

against those involved in the trade.

In an official statement, the association said the recovery of eight golden langurs from a vehicle at Kashikotra in Chirang district was a matter of serious concern. It said the animals were allegedly being

transported from the Sikhna Jwhlwao National Park area in Kokrajhar district and that one of the langurs died due to suffocation.

"The recovery of eight golden langurs (one succumbed to suffocation) being transported from the

Sikhna Jwhlwao National Park area in Kokrajhar is really a matter of shock and serious concern. It is suspected that there could be an organised international network of golden langur trafficking," the BGLA said.

The association also stated that the golden langur is an endangered species and the pride of Bodoland.

"Bodoland is the largest home to golden langurs in the world. Protection of this rare primate is the responsibility of every individual. We must join hands to conserve the habitats of golden langurs and extend support to the concerned departments in protecting the species," it added.

The BGLA demanded a crackdown on the alleged international trafficking network and prompt action against the transporters involved in the case.

## Kalaguru Bishnu Rabha Divas observed

**HT Correspondent**  
KOKRAJHAR, June 20: The Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) government on Saturday solemnly observed Kalaguru Bishnu Prasad Rabha Divas at the BTC Secretariat, Bodofa Nwgr, Kokrajhar, commemorating the life, works and enduring ideals of the legendary cultural icon of Assam.

The programme commenced with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp and offering of incense by BTC Chief Executive Member (CEM) Hagrama Mohilary, followed by garlanding and floral tributes to the portrait of Kalaguru Bishnu Prasad Rabha.

BTC Executive Members (EMs), Members of the Council Legislative Assembly (MCLAs), senior officers, staff members and members of the public also paid their respects to the renowned artist, litterateur, social reformer and revolutionary.

The commemorative address was delivered by Bhaskar Jyoti Manta, Secretary, BTC, who highlighted the immense contributions of Kalaguru Bishnu Prasad Rabha to Assamese literature, art, culture and society. He elaborated on Rabha's multifaceted genius and lifelong dedication to the promotion of indigenous culture, social justice and human welfare.

## Memorial lecture, scholarship award ceremony held to mark Nitya Bhattacharyya's birth centenary

**HT Correspondent**  
JORHAT, June 20: A memorial lecture and scholarship award ceremony were organised in Jorhat on Saturday evening to mark the birth centenary of eminent educationist Late Nitya Bhattacharyya.

The event was held at Jorhat Theatre Hall. The memorial lecture was delivered by noted historian and Sahitya Akademi Translation Award recipient Dr Rajen Saikia.

Speaking on the topic, "Tracing the Political History of Post-Independence Assam", Dr Saikia traced Assam's political trajectory through an examination of significant events and developments in the post-independence period. He observed that while the pre-independence era represented a quest for identity for the Assamese people, the post-independence period has largely been a struggle for survival and self-preservation.

Later, Utpal Bhattacharyya shared personal memories of his father. Recalling Nitya Bhattacharyya's life and ideals, he said they had shaped not only the outlook of his family but also influenced generations of students, colleagues and members of the wider community.

The programme began with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp and floral tributes to the educationist's portrait by his eldest daughter, Smriti Sharma, and daughter-in-law, Dr Rupanjali Phukan. An invocation was presented by Pankajyoti Baruah.

The event was conducted by Dr Aditi Bezbaruah, retired professor of Jorhat Engineering College, noted science writer and daughter of Nitya Bhattacharyya. She delivered the welcome address and outlined the objectives of the programme before introducing mem-

bers of the Bhattacharyya family to the audience.

Inaugurating the event, Dr Jyotiprasad Saikia, vice-chancellor of Jagannath Barooah University and noted writer, said the ideals of Nitya Bhattacharyya continue to serve as an inspiration for future generations. He also underlined the importance of studying political history.

Tapatee Bhattacharyya, the youngest daughter of Nitya Bhattacharyya, presented an overview of his life and achievements. She highlighted his contributions as a former Professor of Political Science at Jagannath Barooah College and Principal of Titabar Nandanath Saikia College. She described him as a thinker, writer, lifelong educator and a firm believer in discipline, integrity and moral values.

Among the distinguished guests were Sanjib Kumar Phukan, editor-in-chief of the Assamese daily Dainik Janambhumi, and Girindra Kumar Goswami, retired professor of B.N. College, Dhubri, and a former student of Nitya Bhattacharyya. Both addressed the gathering.

The scholarship award ceremony was conducted by Abhishruti Sharma, granddaughter of Nitya Bhattacharyya. The scholarship was awarded to Tuhiin Bhagawati, the best graduate of the Department of Political Science at Jagannath Barooah University. Receiving the award, Bhagawati said the recognition would encourage him in his academic pursuits.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by Dr Rupanjali Phukan.

The event was attended by members of the Bhattacharyya family, educationists, writers, cultural personalities, media representatives and around 300 guests.

*'The venue occupies a special place in Tezpur's sporting history'*

## Foundation stone laid for ₹ 8-crore gallery at Tezpur Polo Field

**HT Correspondent**  
TEZPUR, June 20: Tezpur Polo Field is set to receive a major infrastructural upgrade with the foundation stone for a modern gallery being laid here on Friday at a ceremonial function.

The Tezpur District Sports Association (DSA) has taken the initiative to construct the state-of-the-art gallery and undertake associated development works at the sports ground. The project is being funded through a grant of approximately Rs 8 crore sanctioned by Assam Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma.

The ceremony began with the lighting of a lamp by Mahendra Nath Keot, advisor to the Tezpur DSA. Veteran sportsman and sports organiser Pradip Choudhury performed the customary coconut-breaking ritual, following which Tezpur MLA Prithiraj Rabha formally laid the foundation stone.

The event was attended by DSA president Jiten Borthakur, executive president Mridul



Kumar Sarma, former Tezpur Municipal Board chairperson Puspa Deka, Sonitpur district BJP president Madhusmita Hazarika

Deka, retired Tezpur College principal Dr Jyotikamal Hazarika, youth leader Hiranya Bhuyan, senior DSA member Nip Bora and

BJP Sonitpur district general secretary Jayanta Kumar Bora, among others.

The programme was anchored by DSA general secretary Jiten Das, who briefed attendees on the project and felicitated the MLA and other dignitaries with traditional gamochas.

Speaking to the media, Rabha said the ground earned the name "Polo Field" during the British era when the sport was played there. He added that the venue occupies a special place in Tezpur's sporting history, having hosted events ranging from the historic Dugar Shield football tournament to the present-day Rajen Borthakur Memorial Tezpur Challenge Cup.

The MLA said he had apprised the Chief Minister of the need to improve infrastructure at the venue, following which the funds were sanctioned.

Expressing gratitude to the Chief Minister, Rabha said construction work would begin soon and would be completed at a fast pace.

## Teacher-student ratio in Nagaland stands at 1:12: Official

**HT Correspondent**  
DIMAPUR, June 20: Nagaland's teacher-student ratio stands at 1:12, adviser to school education Dr Kekhriehoulie Yhome said on Saturday, and called it describing it as "very healthy".

Yhome said Nagaland has around 1,900 government schools, 880 private schools and a dozen central schools, with a total of about 34,000 teachers.

Addressing an orientation programme on the Nagaland School Quality Assessment and Accreditation Framework (NSQA) pilot project at the Capital Convention Centre in Kohima, he noted that many schools in the state are facing issues such as having zero enrolment or very few students.

To address these issues, he said, the government has initiated the process of closing such schools through amalgamation.

"But to ensure children's Right to Education, many schools have also been opened and regulated through the reauthorisation of the school system and restructuring of government schools," Yhome added.

He said the NSQA pilot programme covers 100 schools, including 50 government schools and 50 private schools.

He also stated that schools would be evaluated across five domains — administration, curriculum, assessment, infrastructure and inclusiveness.

Yhome said the new framework would help schools understand their strengths and areas for improvement through a structured assessment across these five key domains. He urged schools to view the pilot project as an opportunity to improve and work towards higher standards.

He stressed that the initiative would play an important role in shaping a stronger and brighter future for education in the state.

Commissioner and Secretary for School Education and Chairperson of the Interim Nagaland State School Standards Authority (NSSA), Kevelino Angami, said the NSQA proposes a standardised set of criteria for both government and private schools to assess their performance and identify areas for improvement.

She further stated that the framework would not be a one-time exercise but would function as a permanent, independent regulatory body.

# Neeraj finishes fourth in his season-opening event in Doha Diamond League



**DOHA, June 20:** Forced to delay the start of his season due to an injury, Indian javelin throw ace Neeraj Chopra finished a creditable fourth in the Doha Diamond League event here.

The 28-year-old Chopra produced a best of 85.69m in his third attempt, which placed him fourth in the end in his season-opening event on Friday night.

He breached the 82.61m qualifying distance set by the Athletics Federation of India for the upcoming Commonwealth Games. He was earlier named in the 32-member Indian team for the Glasgow CWG (July 23 to August 2).

Chopra has been hampered by a back injury which he sustained before the World Championships in Tokyo in September 2025.

He was competing here for the first time after finishing eighth in the World Championships. He has been training in Switzerland since May 25 after a rehabilitation stint in Turkey.

"Happy to be back on the field. 85.69m felt good, and ready for the season ahead!" Chopra said in a tweet.

Rising Sri Lankan star and world leader Ramesh Tharanga Pathiraje won the title in the star-studded field with a throw of 88.68m, while two-time world champion Andersen Peters of Grenada was second with 86.38m.

American Curtis Thompson, who won a bronze in the Tokyo World Championships, was third with 85.99m.

This was the first time Chopra has not finished in top-two in a Diamond League event in the last four years. He has been in top two in all the DL meetings he had participated since finishing second in Stockholm in June 2022 with a throw of 89.94m.

His first DL win came in Lausanne in August the same year. In Doha, he won the title in 2023, before finishing second in 2024

and 2025. Chopra began with a foul and was placed fourth after his second round throw of 82.77m, which sealed his 2026 Commonwealth Games berth.

He did even better in his third attempt, sending his spear to 85.69m, and jumping up one place to third. But once the 23-year-old Pathiraje took the lead with his fourth round throw of 88.68m, Chopra was pushed down to fourth place.

Pathiraje, who has been in the form of his life this season, was at the fourth spot at the halfway stage, after modest throws of 82.62m, 84.63m and 80.53m.

But he proved why he is the hottest javelin thrower this season with his fourth round effort of 88.68m, which was followed up by 84.47m and 81.35m.

This was his second DL win. He had won the title in Rome earlier this month with a monster throw of 92.62m which is the currently the world leading distance.

He became only the fourth Asian and 28th overall to breach the coveted 90m mark.

He has had two more 89m-plus throws this season. He had come into the Doha DL after winning the prestigious Golden Spike meet in Ostrava, Czechia, with a throw of 86.57m.

It was Pathiraje's back to back Diamond League win, having won in Rome earlier.

"2026 has been a very good season so far, but I wasn't able to get a massive throw today. However, I will keep trying my best and I'm glad I had a win today. I'm happy in this Doha Diamond League, it was one of my dreams to compete here as the first ever Sri Lankan in the Wanda Diamond League circuit," Pathiraje said.

For Chopra, the lengthy injury-forced absence from competition affected his rhythm, and he could not replicate his stunning performance here last year, when he breached the coveted 90m mark with a throw of 90.23m, while finishing second.

It was only the third meeting between Chopra and Pathiraje and their first on the Diamond League stage.

The head-to-head record now stands 2-1 in favour of the Sri Lankan.

Chopra won gold in the NC Classic which he hosted in Bengaluru in July 2025, while Pathiraje had finished third with 84.34m.

In the Tokyo World Championships last year, Chopra ended a disappointing eighth while Pathiraje finished seventh 84.38m. (PTI)

**NEW DELHI, June 20:** Psychological screening to catch "shifting stress levels" has been made mandatory in a new Athlete Wellbeing Policy unveiled on Saturday by Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, who asserted that concerns of sportspersons seeking help would be addressed with "zero stigma".

In an interaction with select media here, Mandaviya said coaching and administrative staff at the Sports Authority of India's National Centres of Excellence (NCOEs) and Sports Training Centres (STCs) have been given strict directive that athletes' concerns must be met with "total safety" and they should be assured that seeking psychological help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

"This mandatory policy shifts our focus from simple talent management to comprehensive, athlete-centric development. It protects our athletes in National Centres of Excellence (NCOEs) and Sports Training Centres (STCs)," he said.

"Our youth face intense pressures, from selection anxieties and injury fears to homesickness. If left unaddressed, this leads to burnout.



This framework systematically acts before burnout forces a talented athlete to drop out," he explained.

The Minister said the policy works on a Universal Acceptance model.

"Every single athlete, from the grassroots level to the elite tier, can formally or informally file concerns regarding anything impacting their peace of mind. Every regional centre will have dedicated counsellors," he said.

"We will no longer wait for a crisis to occur. Wellness tracking begins on day one with mandatory psychological screenings immediately upon an athlete's induction," he added.

SAI centres will conduct regular, non-invasive Wellbeing Assessments across the annual calendar to catch "shifting stress levels early".

"If an issue remains unresolved with primary counsellors, the policy establishes a clear pathway to transition the matter directly to the Regional Director. Athletes must feel secure."

"We have operationalised robust safeguards and independent, anonymous gateways like suggestion boxes so athletes can safely raise concerns about peers, management, or coaching staff without fear of retaliation," he said.

In addition, the appointed counsellors

## ATHLETE WELLBEING POLICY

# There should be zero stigma around mental health: Sports Minister

## AIFF proposes changing name to Football Federation of Bharat, approaches ministry

**NEW DELHI, June 20:** The All India Football Federation (AIFF) on Saturday decided to approach the sports ministry to change its name to Football Federation of Bharat (FFB) after a proposal to that effect was accepted during the Special General Body Meeting here.

AIFF President Kalyan Chaubey told PTI that the name change will happen only after a go ahead from the sports ministry. He said the national federation will also take approval from the world governing body, FIFA.

"This proposal (to change) will be sent to the sports ministry. It's a process and the process began today," Chaubey said.

"If the ministry does not approve, or if they have any other opinion, then there is no question. If the ministry approves, then we will bring to the general body. Then we will send to FIFA. That is the second part of this process."

"We need several approvals, FIFA's approval, the ministry's approval, but then you have to start from somewhere. So it is a start."

He cited examples of football associations of countries like Turkey and Czechia (Czech Republic) for the move to change AIFF's name.

ISL 2026-27 to start on Sept 4. The annual calendar of the AIFF was also passed, and the schedule of the ISL will be decided by the managing committee.

The 2026-27 ISL is expected to be a full seven-month season, with home and away matches for the 14 participating teams.

Meanwhile, the AIFF yet again did not take a final decision on the structure of the ISL, leaving the matter to the managing committee made up of five representatives of the 14 clubs, three officials from the national federation and three from the commercial partners.

"The proposal has come from the clubs. And it's a proposal which has to be discussed across the table. The clubs will have to be party to the discussion. So, the AIFF will discuss with the clubs."

"The managing committee will have the right to take it forward. After that, it will go to the executive committee for the ratification."

On May 23, the AIFF, in an earlier SGM, had approved the adoption of the National Sports Governance Act, 2025. The AIFF constitution will now be aligned with the NSGA 2025.

Earlier this month, the AIFF has agreed "in principle" to the club-led model of running the ISL for two years after a meeting with sports minister Mansukh Mandaviya.

London-headquartered Genius Sports had emerged as the highest bidder for the commercial rights of the ISL after the AIFF floated the tender earlier this year. It had promised ₹ 2,129 crore for ISL and a cup competition for the next 15+5 years, including 5% increase per year. That amounted to around Rs 64 crore per year.

Under the revenue sharing model as per the Genius Sports bid, the AIFF was to get ₹ 12.4 crore in the first year. The AIFF also wanted to charge the clubs an entry fee, a proposal that has not found favour with the ISL clubs. The clubs had opposed to Genius Sports becoming the commercial rights holders.

They instead proposed to acquire the commercial rights of the ISL for the two-year period and pay the AIFF ₹ 15.4 crore per year to cover the costs associated with the regulatory functions that the national federation is required to discharge in its capacity as the governing body, including refereeing, legal, integrity and anti-doping support.

In their proposal, the ISL clubs had made "unequivocal" commitment that the AIFF's role as the regulatory body of Indian football will be fully preserved and respected.

All core regulatory functions shall continue to remain exclusively with the AIFF, including referee appointment and management, legal and integrity oversight, anti-doping support and compliance, sporting regulations, player registration and transfer systems, compliance with FIFA and AFC regulations. (PTI)

## Fit Hardik Pandya can be invaluable for India's World Cup plans: WV Raman

**CHENNAI, June 20:** Former India batter WV Raman believes a fit Hardik Pandya can provide India a crucial edge in the 2027 ODI World Cup, with his ability to contribute as a batter and a bowler offering the team much-needed flexibility in the big-ticket event.

Raman, however, stressed that Pandya's role will depend on his ability to maintain fitness levels, while also calling on the team management to use the next 12 to 15 months to experiment and finalise the squad and define individual roles ahead of the tournament.

"I believe that he can be a terrific cricketer for the Indian team. The flexibility he can provide if fit and able to bowl 10 overs is invaluable. But I think it will all come down to the fitness levels he can maintain," Raman told PTI Videos in an exclusive interview here.

"Even for this Afghanistan series, he was picked in the squad, but unfortunately, he was pulled out at the last minute because of injuries," he observed.

India have around 15 ODIs before the World Cup, and Raman feels those games should be used to identify the right combination and address the team's repeated struggles in knockout matches.

Raman believes the team management must enter an "experimental mode" over the next year.

"Having reached the knockout stage eight times and succeeded only twice shows that the team management needs to look at various options and get into an experimental mode," he said.

"The 12 to 15 months leading up to the tournament are very important. They must utilise all bilateral series to try different combinations. This will help players discover themselves and allow the management to assess their main strength, bench strength and possible options as the World Cup approaches," he added.

India have won the ODI World Cup twice - in 1983 and 2011 - but lost finals in 2003 and 2023 besides suffering semi-final exits in 1987, 1996, 2015 and 2019.

Raman said India's overall white-ball record remains outstanding, but the focus has to be on delivering under pressure.

"They have been extraordinarily good in the white-ball format despite not winning the 50-over World Cup. They were perhaps found wanting in crucial periods of knockout games and they will address that," he added.

On the question of Rohit Sharma's future in the ODI side, Raman left the decision to the selectors and team management, while acknowledging the veteran opener's contribution to Indian cricket.

"Rohit is an individual who has done extraordinarily well in that format. He is one of the greats of the game. Whether he is still as good as he was is something for the team management to decide," he said. (PTI)

# Don't want to be known as man of comebacks, hope I'm here to stay this time: Ravi Bishnoi

**NEW DELHI, June 20:** India leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi doesn't want to be known as a man of comebacks in his stop start international career that saw him missing the last three T20 World Cups despite being on the selectors' radar.

Back in the side again after the completion of another World Cup cycle, the 25-year-old from Jodhpur is hoping to get a longer rope this time around. Interestingly, he has been picked ahead of Kuldeep Yadav in the squads for the Ireland, England and Asian Games tour.

He is the only specialist spinner in the side alongside Varun Chakaravathy with Axar Patel and Washington Sundar performing the roles of an all-rounder.

A good IPL usually leads to India selection in the shortest format but Bishnoi did not have the best of times in the latest IPL where he was benched for the second half of the tournament with rookie Yash Raj Punja playing ahead of him.

To be fair to Bishnoi, he has a decent international record with 64 wickets in 44 games at an impressive economy rate of 7.40 runs per over. He has also been ranked number one in the ICC rankings.

In an interaction with PTI, a determined Bishnoi said he would do all in his powers to secure a spot in the 2028 World Cup in Australia and New Zealand as the management tries out players and combinations starting with the Ireland series under the new leadership of Shreyas Iyer.

"Honestly, all my energies will be on ensuring that I am here to stay as a permanent member of the side. I don't want to be known as someone who keeps making comebacks," he said.

Bishnoi is yet to speak to Shreyas and coach Gautam Gambhir on the upcoming assignment as the team is currently involved in an ODI series. In his mind, he has absolute clarity about his role.

"Cricket is all about competing and making comebacks. And you keep your preparation complete. Try to be ready for any situation, for any series or upcoming games. When you are backed, your role



is to be ready and do well. Which I always try to do," Bishnoi, who is managed by SSpark Sports led by Rajeev Khanna, said.

Missing World Cups disappointing but important to move on

Bishnoi last played for India in January this year before missing the bus for the World Cup at home. To be not considered for three World Cups in a row was disappointing but Bishnoi said he did not have an option other than to keep working on his craft with coach Shashiraj back home.

"It is everyone's dream to play in the World Cup. To win it. It is my dream too. Even though I have missed the World Cups, I have more opportunities. So I will try not to miss this time. I should make it count."

"And when you miss, it is not like suddenly someone is playing in my place. But India won the World Cup. Whoever plays in my place, they did really well."

"You know how good the competition is going on right now in the Indian team. It is competitive. I have only one goal in life. When I get a chance, I should be prepared and deliver myself. Then I shouldn't have those regrets that I didn't get that chance," he said.

Having said that Bishnoi is only

human and he does feel dejected when life is not going his way.

"It is a little difficult because you want to play in the World Cup. The World Cup was at home this time. But it is sports, ups and downs and part of it. That is why we choose sports. It teaches you how to come back and how to lift yourself in this tough phase."

"My parents are there. My coaches always stay with me. Shah Rukh bhai and others. They have been like pillars to me. They always say, this time or next time. To feel bad is human. Everyone feels bad. But it shouldn't take long to move on."

"That is my mindset. Because if you feel bad for a long time, it affects your performance. And you can't focus on your game."

Focusing on landing every ball in 5-6m area

Bishnoi is someone who is not known for his sharp turning leg breaks. His strength lies in bowling sliders and googlies. Of late he has not tried anything fancy, he has just focused on maintaining accuracy.

"I keep my bowling so simple that if I throw a ball in a 5-6m length area, it is very difficult to hit it from there. So after coming home, I try to hit that area as many times as I can."

"So these days, I was working on my basics. I want to keep my bowling so simple and not so complicated. My bowling's speciality is that if I keep simplicity in it, I get success," he said.

Bishnoi understands the need to evolve with batters redefining the T20 game. With the current management keen on playing all-rounders, he has also worked on his batting.

"Cricket has progressed so much that you have to contribute in all departments. This is what I am trying to do. I practice a lot with my batting. Because you have to become a match winner in all departments," said Bishnoi, who also has aspirations to play Test cricket for India as that is the "main format". (PTI)

No.DPRD/BTC/15<sup>th</sup> FC (T)-167/2026/18. NOTICE INVITING TENDER. Dated Kokrajhar the 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2026

Sealed tenders with a validity period of 180 (one hundred eighty) days from the date of receipt in prescribed form affixing non-refundable court fee stamps of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees eight and paise twenty five) only subsequently to be drawn up in printed F-2 form are hereby invited from the Govt. registered PWD Building/PWD Electrical Govt. Contractor's under Class-I (A, B, C), Class-II and Class-III category from approved firm/ suppliers of 2020-21/2021-22 according to tender limit of eligibility for the following works and will be received in the office of the undersigned up to 2.00 pm on 23-06-2026 and will be opened on the same date and place at 2.15 pm in the presence of willing contractors or their authorized agents.

| Sl. No | Name of Dev. Block | Name of Scheme   | A.A Amount (Rs.) | Earnest Money              | Cost of Tender in Rs. |
|--------|--------------------|--|------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 01     | Bilasipara         | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Ujanpara VCDC             | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 02     | Kokrajhar          | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Harinaguri VCDC           | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 03     | Kokrajhar          | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Salakati VCDC             | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 04     | Kokrajhar          | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Nadanguri VCDC            | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 05     | Debtola            | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Monglajhora VCDC          | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 06     | Debtola            | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Debtola VCDC              | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 07     | Debtola            | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Kazigaon VCDC             | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 08     | Dotma              | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Chithila VCDC             | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 09     | Dotma              | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Borsbijhora VCDC          | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 10     | Dotma              | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Serianguri VCDC           | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 11     | Dotma              | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Shialmani VCDC            | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 12     | Dotma              | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Dumariguri VCDC           | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 13     | Dotma              | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Jharbari VCDC             | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 14     | Dotma              | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Aflagaon VCDC             | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 15     | Kokrajhar          | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Sijunguri VCDC            | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 16     | Kokrajhar          | Inst. Of 9 mtr. Solar High light Mast light at Patagaon VCDC       | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 17     | Kokrajhar          | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Owaban VCDC               | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 18     | Kokrajhar          | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Gendrabli VCDC            | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 19     | Kokrajhar          | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Bhatipara VCDC            | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 20     | Hatidhura          | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Thakurpur VCDC            | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 21     | Hatidhura          | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Rangapur VCDC             | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 22     | Hatidhura          | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Majadabari VCDC           | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 23     | Mahamaya           | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Jajabila VCDC             | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 24     | Mahamaya           | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Mahamaya VCDC             | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 25     | Gossaigaon         | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Panbari VCDC              | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 26     | Gossaigaon         | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Asharikandi-kartaman VCDC | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 27     | Gossaigaon         | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Harbhanga-Gossaigaon VCDC | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 28     | Gossaigaon         | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Rimijhimi VCDC            | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 29     | Gossaigaon         | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Joypur VCDC               | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 30     | Gossaigaon         | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Kartiarnary VCDC          | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 31     | Kachugaon          | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Anthaibari VCDC           | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 32     | Kachugaon          | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Jaraguri-Goladangi VCDC   | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 33     | Kachugaon          | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Hatigarh VCDC             | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |
| 34     | Kachugaon          | Inst. Of 9 mtr. solar high Mast light at Joleswan VCDC             | 8.50             | (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%) | 255/-                 |

Time for completion in days : 3 Months Pre-Bid meeting date & time : 2.00 pm on 22-06-2026 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 up to 12.00 Noon on all working days from 23-06-2026 to 10-07-2026 in the office of the undersigned on payment of in the form of Banker cheque/ Demand draft of any nationalized Bank (Preferable SBI) duly pledged to the Director, P&RD, BTC, Kokrajhar.

Sd/-Director, Panchayat & Rural Development, BTC, Kokrajhar

IPR(BTC)/C/2026-27/606

# India face South Africa test in Manchester as World Cup campaign gathers pace

**MANCHESTER, June 20:** India will look to build on their excellent start to the ICC Women's T20 World Cup when they take on a dangerous South Africa side in a Group 1 clash at Old Trafford here on Sunday.

The Harmanpreet Kaur-led side began their campaign with a commanding 64-run win over Pakistan, with opener Smriti Mandhana and wicketkeeper-batter Richa Ghosh providing the batting impetus before Deepti Sharma produced a match-winning spell with a five-wicket haul.

India continued in the same vein against the Netherlands, beating them by a huge margin of 95 runs after an all-round show by the Asian heavyweights.

India, who are still chasing their maiden T20 World Cup title despite five semi-final appearances, will be keen to carry the momentum forward against a South African team known for their aggressive batting and quality bowling attack.

The contest could revolve around India's top order against South Africa's varied bowling attack.

Mandhana's ability to dominate the powerplay, coupled with the experience of Harmanpreet, and the big-hitting prowess of Shafali Verma and Richa Ghosh, will be crucial, while the Proteas will rely heavily on captain Laura Wolvaardt and their middle-order firepower to put pressure on the Indian bowlers.

With a two-wicket victory over Pakistan, South Africa bounced back after a tough outing against Australia, where they were bowled out for 107 while chasing 173.

Their batting unit will need to be more consistent against an Indian attack that gained confidence from their bowlers' exceptional performance in the team's first two outings.

The Manchester conditions could bring spinners into play, and India's ability to use their slow-



bowling options effectively may prove decisive. Both teams will also be looking for improve-

ments in the field after early tournament games exposed the importance of discipline in the short-cut format.

For India, the biggest positive so far has been the contribution from multiple players.

While Mandhana, Shafali and Richa starred with the bat, the bowlers complemented the effort with a disciplined display, suggesting the team is not overly dependent on any one individual.

The team management would also be pleased with the balance of the side, which offers a variety of bowling options.

Apart from Deepti's off-spin, India have enough pace and spin resources to adapt to different match situations and conditions.

South Africa, however, remain one of the most competitive sides in women's cricket despite their recent setback.

Having reached the final of the previous T20 World Cup, the Proteas possess ample experience

of handling pressure situations and are capable of bouncing back strongly. With two sides possessing strong all-rounders and match-winners, the clash promises to be one of the key encounters in the group stage as India aim to establish themselves as serious title contenders.

**Teams :**

**India Women:** Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Bharti Fulmali, Deepti Sharma, Richa Ghosh, Shree Charani, Yastika Bhatia, Nandani Sharma, Arundhati Reddy, Renuka Singh, Kranti Gaud, Prema Rawat, Radha Yadav.

**South Africa Women:** Laura Wolvaardt (c), Tazmin Brits, Nadine de Klerk, Annerie Dercksen, Shabnim Ismail, Sinalo Jafta, Marizanne Kapp, Ayabonga Khaka, Sune Luus, Karabo Meso, Nonkululeko Mlaba, Kayla Reyneke, Tumi Sekhukhune, Chloe Tryon, Dane van Niekerk.

Match starts at 7 PM IST. (PTI)

## All eyes on Sooryavanshi as India A face Sri Lanka A in final



**DAMBULLA, June 20:** Smarting from an ill-tempered defeat in their previous meeting, India A will look to settle scores when they take on Sri Lanka A in the final of the tri-series here on Sunday, with teenage sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi set to be in the spotlight once again.

Tempers had flared after Sri Lanka A edged India A in a Super Over in their last league game in Dambulla, with Sooryavanshi involved in an on-field altercation

with Sri Lanka's Vishen Halambage at the end of the match.

After the game was tied at the end of 50 overs, Sri Lanka A scored 16 in the Super Over and then restricted India A to nine, with rookie pacer Kugathas Mathulan, a slinger in the mould of Matheesha Pathirana, keeping Sooryavanshi and Suryansh Shedge quiet.

The tension spilled over after the match ended. Halambage and Wanuja Sahana were seen exchanging words with the departing Indian batters, with visuals showing Shedge pointing his bat towards Halambage before Sooryavanshi turned back and got into a heated exchange with the Sri Lankan player.

The two were then seen shoving each other before wicketkeeper Niroshan Dickwella stepped in to separate them, in ugly scenes rarely witnessed in an A team match.

It remains to be seen whether both teams have moved on from that episode, but the focus will firmly be on Sooryavanshi, both for his temperament and his batting on Dambulla's slow surfaces.

The 15-year-old, who was recently named in India's senior squad for the upcoming T20I series against Ireland and England, has already enjoyed a breakthrough in IPL.

He had a record-breaking IPL 2026 season, smashing 776 runs in 16 matches at a staggering strike-rate of 237.31, including 72 sixes.

Coming to Sri Lanka after riding the IPL high and a maiden India call-up, Sooryavanshi has found the slow pitches in Dambulla a bigger test, with the conditions curbing his natural strokeplay.

The flamboyant left-hander has not quite been able to convert his starts. In four matches so far, he has scored 14, 44, 21 and 38.

He looked scratchy in India's must-win game against Afghanistan A in the last outing, surviving a few anxious moments before making 38, and the onus would be on him to bounce back in style.

India A, however, would take confidence from the way they bounced back from the Sri Lanka

defeat to beat Afghanistan A and seal a place in the final. Asked to defend 319/9, they bowled Afghanistan out for 218 in 36.5 overs.

Captain Tilak Varma, Priyansh Arya and Kumar Kushagra struck half-centuries in that game, while left-arm spinner Nishant Sindhu led the bowling effort with 4/31.

Ruturaj Gaikwad has been India's batting mainstay in the competition, aggregating 234 runs including a century, and the team will once again look to him for stability at No. 3 if the openers fail to provide a brisk start.

India A will also hope to be sharper in the field after conceding 10 penalty runs in the previous game against Sri Lanka A when Vipraj Nigam was penalised twice for running on the danger area.

With the ball, India A will expect Arshad Khan and Yash Thakur to provide early breakthroughs.

Arshad had done particularly well in the earlier game against Sri Lanka A, conceding just four runs in the 50th over to force the match into a Super Over. (PTI)

## Without the injured Christian Pulisic, US beats Australia 2-0

**SEATTLE, June 20:** Christian Pulisic's injury absence didn't hurt the Americans one bit. The U.S. national soccer team found a way to advance to the knockout round without the injured forward on the field, beating Australia 2-0 for its second straight victory at the largest World Cup in history.

"C.P. is a fantastic player — the quality and the leadership that he gives us," said Folarin Balogun, who scored two goals in the 4-1 victory over Paraguay on June 12.

"We didn't have him today, but I think you saw we're still capable to go out there and get a result and put up a performance."

Pulisic, who plays for AC Milan and has 33 goals in 87 international appearances, missed Friday's match because of a calf injury.

To play without a superstar like Pulisic could have derailed previous American teams in World Cup play. But much has changed since the last time they served as World Cup hosts in 1994, when they advanced by being one of the best third-place teams. They then lost to eventual champion Brazil in their next match, which was in the round of 16.

At this year's 48-team tournament, the U.S. has won consecutive games for the first time at a World Cup since 1930. The Americans have scored six goals, one off their record for most in a single World Cup, and received contributions throughout their roster. Alex Freeman, the youngest player on the team at 21 and son of Super Bowl champion Antonio Freeman, gave the Americans a 2-0 lead in the 43rd minute off a set piece.

Freeman headed in a deflected shot by Sergiño



Dest for his first career World Cup goal. The goal was confirmed after a video review.

"(He) is doing a fantastic job," coach Mauricio Pochettino said of Freeman.

"The evolution is massive. He's so humble. He wants to learn. He always listens. He's a player that you really enjoy being with him. Not only coaching, but being with him."

The U.S. took a 1-0 lead in the 11th minute after a run down the left sideline by Balogun.

He directed a centering pass towards striker Ricardo Pepi, who started in place of Pulisic. The ball never reached Pepi, deflecting off Australia defender Cameron Burgess and into the Socceroos' net for an own-goal.

"I want to be dangerous. I want to create opportunities," Balogun said.

"It might not always be myself that scores, but if I can force an error that gives us the lead, then for me it's like a goal as well. It was a special start to the game to give us the momentum." (AP)

## Matheus Cunha scores 2 goals as Brazil eliminates Haiti from WC with 3-0 win

**PHILADELPHIA, June 20:** Vinicius Júnior scored and assisted on one of Matheus Cunha's two goals as five-time champion Brazil eliminated Haiti from the World Cup with a 3-0 victory here. Haiti, the Western Hemisphere's poorest nation that qualified for the World Cup for the first time since 1974, became the first team guaranteed not to reach the knockout round. Meanwhile, the Seleção got the decisive performance they needed.

Cunha, the Manchester United standout, got the start and showed with every surf-and-slide goal celebration why he should have been in the starting lineup in Brazil's listless 1-1 draw against Morocco. Brazil coach Carlo Ancelotti made the surprising decision in the opener to instead insert Cunha as a late substitute. Cunha thrilled the Brazilian fans who made up the bulk of the 68,324 spectators at Lincoln Financial Field when he tapped in a rebound for his first career World Cup goal. He then sent a left-footed strike into the upper left corner for a 2-0 lead in the first half against the overmatched Haitians. Brazil forward Raphinha, who was subbed out with an injury in the first half, had an early goal disallowed on an offside call that only temporarily muted the yellow-clad Seleção fans in an otherwise festive atmosphere at the home of the two-time Super Bowl champion Philadelphia Eagles — whose

cheerleaders did their part to rally the crowd.

Haitian fans danced and sang "Grenadye Alaso" ("Grenadiers to the Attack"), the traditional battle cry of the national team. Brazilians chanted back, reminding them their country is the five-time World Cup champion and the home of the king of soccer: "A thousand goals, a thousand goals, a thousand goals, a thousand goals, a thousand goals! Only Pelé, only Pelé!" Cunha added to the frivolity in Philadelphia, home to nearly 6,000 Brazilian immigrants, when he flashed his familiar surfing celebration.

Vinicius, whose 32nd-minute goal helped Brazil earn the tie against Morocco, helped Brazil get on the board when his shot was stopped by goalkeeper Johnny Placide and Cunha was there to slam home the rebound to make it 1-0. Cunha extended both arms as if trying to catch some tasty waves and was mobbed by his teammates.

Vinicius slid a pass through the defense to find Cunha and he powered one high into the net that Placide never had a chance to stop to make it 2-0. Cunha slid on his stomach and mimicked a swimming motion that all but put Haiti in the drink — and validate the Brazilians' fans decision not to tempt fate and dress the Rocky statue in team gear for bad luck. (AP)

## 'Heroes': Book captures stories of courage, resilience of 15 Indian athletes

**NEW DELHI, June 20:** Shooter Manu Bhaker was let down by a malfunctioning pistol in her Olympics debut in 2021, fencer C A Bhavani Devi couldn't move beyond two games in her inaugural Olympics journey the same year, and boxer Nikhat Zareen was defeated by her idol Mary Kom in a match to reach Olympic qualifiers.

The setbacks were temporary even as the journey back to form was arduous and required unrelenting efforts. It wasn't long before they returned to their individual sporting arena. And, the rest is sporting history.

The stories reflecting determination, resilience, and labour of 15 Indian athletes are captured by journalist-author Thirumoy Banerjee in "Heroes: The Changemakers of Indian Sports", published by Scholastic India.

Based on over a year of interviews, research, and deep dives, the book tells the stories of some of the most celebrated athletes as well as lesser known sportspersons, including archer Sheetal Devi, javelin thrower Sumit Antil, Srihari Nataraj, taekwondo athlete Aman Kumar Kadyan, sailor Vishnu Saravanan, equestrian Divyanki Singh.

While Bhavani Devi bounced back and became the first Indian to win a bronze at Asian Championship in 2023, Zareen made the nation proud by winning the gold at the Commonwealth Games 2022, World Boxing Championship 2022 and 2023, and World Boxing Cup in 2025.

Bhaker became the first Indian to win



two medals at the same Olympic games in Paris 2022 by securing two bronze for India.

"It was not easy to pick fifteen athletes from our time. Through this book, we celebrate not the results but the efforts and the journeys in pursuit of the finishing line. Because success always has the same route — through gumption, belief, and resilience," Banerjee writes in the book.

From runner Parul Chaudhary, who once lacked proper shoes, to wrestler Aman Sehrawat who overcame personal tragedy to achieve global glory, the stories "celebrate resilience, grit, and the refusal to give up".

In the opening chapter "Spin Kick",

Banerjee profiles Kadyan, who enjoyed dancing as a child and picked up taekwondo because it involved "many body movements".

After gaining early success in the sport, becoming the first Indian to win a gold medal at China Open 2019, defeat at the South Asian Games selection process brought his career to almost a halt.

"Everything seemed to be going my way in 2018. And by 2019 I was winning a lot of medals at international events. I think I won ten to twelve medals in international events in 2019 alone. When I won the title at the China Open, it felt there was no stopping me," Kadyan says in an interview with Banerjee.

"That defeat shook me up in more ways than one. I didn't play well at all, and the player I lost to wasn't strong. And what broke me even more was when I saw everyone around celebrating. Only my team was sad," Kadyan recalled.

Following the defeat, the young athlete lost interest in training, social media, and even family and friends. After a slow return to training, Kadyan became the first Indian to qualify for the Grand Slam that features the top 16 players from around the world.

In 2022, he became the first Indian to qualify for the World Taekwondo Grand Prix and won the gold in Riga Open 2025.

Javelin thrower Sumit Antil's story too was borne out of a tragedy that struck him when he was 17 and already training to become a wrestler in the leagues of his hero, Olympian Yogeshwar Dutt. (PTI)

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**Shri Lakshman Prasad Acharya**  
Hon'ble Governor of Assam

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