

Glorious 16<sup>th</sup> Year

# The Assam Post

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM GUWAHATI & DELHI

Always with Truth & Justice

RNI REGD. NO. ASSENG 2010/34729 THE ASSAM POST



Vol- XVI Issue No. 305 ■ Tuesday, June 09, 2026 ■ Guwahati Edition

E -Paper: centralread.com

Total Pages -12 Rs. 6.00

## Brief Post

### Trader harassed

**Achyut KR Nath, Correspondent, Morigaon, Jun 8:** Serious allegation has come to light against a section of official employees of the forest department, with a vehicle owner accusing them of harassing legitimate business operators despite processing valid at Mayong. According to the complaint, trucks transporting sand from legally approved sandmining areas after paying the required government royalties and obtaining valid challans are allegedly being subjected to unnecessary harassment. At the same time, numerous vehicles reportedly operating without proper documentation are allowed to pass unchecked. The allegations have specifically been directed against Morigaon Forest Officer Munmi Gogoi.

# Smart Border Project in its final execution stage: HM Amit Shah

**Agartala, June 8:** Union Home Minister signed to transform border management by trained jawans and the support of local civil administration into a unified framework capable of creating an impenetrable security system. According to the Home Minister, the Smart Border Project represents the government's commitment to modernising border surveillance and ensuring that India's frontiers remain secure against emerging threats. He noted that the project is being developed with a focus on enhancing real-time monitoring, improving operational efficiency and enabling faster responses to any security challenges that may arise along the country's extensive borders. During his address, Mr. Shah underlined the strategic importance of strengthening security along vulnerable stretches and reiterated the government's determination to prevent infiltration and illegal activities that could threaten national security and social stability. Referring specifically to the porous border regions of Tripura, West Bengal and Bihar, the Home Minister asserted that the government will not allow any demographic shifts to take place through infiltration or exploitation of border gaps. He said that protecting the demographic balance of border areas remains a key priority and that all necessary measures are being implemented to ensure that illegal entry into the country is effectively prevented.



## "We Will Not Allow Any Stain to Fall on Dhekiajuli" Ashok Singhal Declared

**Tapan Sen Gupta, Correspondent,**



**Dhekiajuli, June 8:** The historic martyr town of Dhekiajuli witnessed an evening of celebration, pride, and emotional unity on Sunday as hundreds of citizens gathered to accord a grand civic felicitation to local MLA and senior BJP leader Ashok Singhal following his induction into the newly formed Assam Cabinet for the second consecutive term. The prestigious felicitation ceremony, organised by Dhekiajuli Nagarik Mancha, was held at the fully packed Zubeen Garg Auditorium in Ward No. 5 on Sunday. The

integrating cutting-edge technology, highly day as hundreds of citizens gathered to accord a grand civic felicitation to local MLA and senior BJP leader Ashok Singhal following his induction into the newly formed Assam Cabinet for the second consecutive term. The prestigious felicitation ceremony, organised by Dhekiajuli Nagarik Mancha, was held at the fully packed Zubeen Garg Auditorium in Ward No. 5 on Sunday. The

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## Governor attends 'Amar Shaheed Shradhanjali'

**Guwahati, June 8:** Assam Governor Shri



Lakshman Prasad Acharya attended the "Amar Shaheed Shradhanjali" programme organised by the

## SMCH urges patients to carry Aadhaar Card for hassle free registration and healthcare services

**SILCHAR, June 8:** In a move aimed at streamlining patient registration and enhancing healthcare service delivery, Silchar Medical College & Hospital (SMCH) has requested all patients and attendants from across the Barak Valley to carry their Aadhaar Card while visiting the hospital for treatment, whether in the Outpatient Department (OPD) or the Indoor Patient Department (IPD).

According to the

## DC Issues Comprehensive SOP to Strengthen School Education in Morigaon

**Lipika Bora, Morigaon, June 8:** In a major step towards improving the quality of education across the district, Morigaon District Commissioner Anamika Tewari has issued a comprehensive Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for all schools under the district. The SOP, circulated through Samagra Shiksha, Morigaon, outlines 15 key

## 5 Cyber Fraudsters Arrested by Nagaon Police

**Staff Reporter Nagaon, June 8:** In a ma-



major breakthrough against cybercrime, Nagaon Police have successfully arrested five individuals allegedly involved in a sophisticated online fraud racket that cheated a local resident out of nearly Rs 9.78 lakh.

The arrests were made following a complaint lodged by Ainul Haque Laskar, a resident of

## AI-Based Tuberculosis Detection Training Begins in Sivasagar

**Khairuddin Ahmed, Staff Reporter Sivasagar, Jun 8:** A three-day training programme on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for the



early detection of tuberculosis (TB) patients has commenced in Sivasagar under the National Tuberculosis

## Dibrugarh's Sri Sri Aniruddhadeva Sports University Receives Gold Medal from the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports

**M Hashim Ali correspondent Dibrugarh, June 8:** On the occasion of the widely celebrated World Bicycle Day, marked with great enthusiasm across the country, Sri Sri Aniruddhadeva Sports University in Dibrugarh has brought pride to Assam and the entire Northeast region. As part of a national initiative organized by the Union Ministry of



Youth Affairs and Sports, the university was honored with a Gold Medal, the highest recognition in a special category. The award was presented by Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, at a ceremony held at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi. The award was received on behalf of the university by its Registrar, Pankaj Borthakur. Sri Sri Aniruddhadeva Sports University earned this highest recognition for maintaining its new campus

## DHR Creates History with Highest-Ever Monthly Revenue of Rs 395.60 Lakh in May 2026

**Maligaon, Jun 8:** Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR), the UNESCO World Heritage mountain railway under Northeast Frontier Railway, has created history by recording its highest-ever single-month revenue since its inception. During May 2026, DHR earned an unprecedented Rs395.60 lakh, surpassing the previous record of Rs358.60 lakh achieved in May 2025. The achievement reflects the increasing popularity of the heritage railway among tourists and railway enthusiasts



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# Assam Healthcare expansion and Mineral Growth drive progress

**Guwahati:** Chief Minister of Assam Himanta Biswa Sarma chaired comprehensive review meetings that reflected the state government's determined push toward stronger healthcare infrastructure and sustainable mineral resource development, with discussions highlighting major progress across multiple sectors that are expected to shape Assam's long-term economic and social transformation. The meetings focused on improving access to quality healthcare, expanding medical education, introducing advanced treatment facilities, strengthening patient care systems, and accelerating the exploration of rare earth and critical mineral reserves that are increasingly important for industrial growth and future technologies. Senior officials presented detailed updates before Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on the ongoing construction of 10 medical colleges across Assam, a project that is being seen as one of the most significant healthcare expansion initiatives undertaken in the state in recent years. These institutions are expected to substantially improve access to modern medical education while also enhancing healthcare services for citizens living in both urban and rural regions. The government believes the addition of these medical colleges will create a strong foundation for producing more trained doctors, specialists, and healthcare workers within Assam itself, thereby reducing dependence on outside states for medical education and professional manpower. During the review meeting, officials informed the Chief Minister that construction work at various medical college sites is progressing steadily and that efforts are being made to ensure timely completion of all ongoing projects. The state government is simultaneously focusing on strengthening associated hospital infrastructure so that these institutions become fully functional centres for education, treatment, and medical research. The review also highlighted plans for the phased introduction of robotic surgeries and liver transplant facilities in Assam, reflecting the government's commitment to bringing advanced healthcare technologies closer to the people. Officials explained that these initiatives would significantly reduce the need for patients to travel outside the state for specialized treatment, thereby easing financial and emotional burdens on families seeking advanced care. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma emphasized the importance of adopting modern technologies in the healthcare system and stressed that Assam should move confidently toward becoming a centre for advanced medical treatment in the Northeast. Discussions also covered the integration of Artificial Intelligence in medicine, which the government views as an essential step for improving diagnosis, treatment planning, patient monitoring, and healthcare efficiency. Officials stated that AI-based systems are expected to help doctors make faster and more accurate decisions while also strengthening hospital management and service delivery mechanisms. The Chief Minister underlined that technology-driven healthcare would improve patient outcomes and help create a more responsive and efficient medical ecosystem throughout the state. Another major point of discussion during the review meeting was the establishment of district-level nursing colleges across Assam. Officials informed the Chief Minister that the government is working on plans to expand nursing education opportunities so that trained healthcare professionals can be produced at the grassroots level. The initiative is expected to address shortages of nursing staff in hospitals and healthcare centres while also generating employment opportunities for local youth, especially women. The government believes that empowering young people through professional healthcare education will strengthen the rural healthcare system and create a sustainable workforce for the future. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma reiterated that improving healthcare manpower remains a priority area and directed departments to ensure proper coordination for faster implementation of nursing education projects. The review meeting further focused on the planned introduction of proton beam therapy and the expansion of facilities at Gauhati Medical College and Hospital as well as cancer treatment centres in the state. Officials briefed the Chief Minister on the significance of proton beam therapy, which is considered one of the most advanced forms of cancer treatment available globally. The government aims to provide patients in Assam access to world-class cancer care facilities without forcing them to travel long distances outside the region. Expansion plans for cancer centres are expected to improve treatment capacity, reduce waiting periods, and ensure timely medical intervention for patients. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma stressed that affordable and accessible cancer care is essential for protecting public health and directed officials to maintain momentum in the implementation of these projects. The review also examined broader improvements in healthcare delivery systems across Assam. Officials presented reports on measures being taken to ensure consistent medicine supplies in hospitals and healthcare institutions. They informed the Chief Minister that the government has initiated steps to strengthen procurement and distribution mechanisms so that patients do not face shortages of essential medicines. Discussions additionally covered the ongoing process of filling vacancies in healthcare institutions across the state. Officials stated that recruitment efforts are being accel-

erated to improve staffing levels in hospitals, medical colleges, and health centres. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma emphasized that better staffing and uninterrupted medicine availability are critical for improving patient care services and directed departments to remove delays wherever necessary. The government's focus on strengthening healthcare delivery reflects its broader people-centric governance approach aimed at ensuring that every citizen receives improved access to medical services regardless of location. The review meeting also highlighted the importance of regular monitoring and coordination among departments to ensure that projects are completed efficiently and within targeted timelines. Senior officials informed the Chief Minister that continuous supervision and faster decision-making have helped remove several bottlenecks affecting infrastructure development. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma reiterated that all healthcare projects must move forward with urgency because improved medical infrastructure is directly linked to the welfare and economic productivity of the people. He stated that the government remains committed to building a modern healthcare system capable of meeting future challenges while also supporting the growing healthcare needs of the population. Alongside healthcare, the Chief Minister chaired an extensive review meeting on Mines and Minerals where officials discussed Assam's growing potential in the exploration and development of rare earth and critical mineral resources. The review highlighted the strategic importance of these minerals for Industry 4.0 technologies and national industrial development. Officials informed Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma that Assam possesses significant reserves of rare earth elements and other critical minerals that can contribute substantially to economic growth if explored responsibly. The government is now placing increased emphasis on scientific exploration and sustainable extraction methods to unlock this potential while protecting environmental balance. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma directed officials to accelerate exploration activities and ensure proper coordination with relevant agencies so that the state can fully benefit from its mineral wealth. Discussions during the meeting reflected the alignment of Assam's mineral development strategy with the broader national goals of self-reliance in critical technologies and industrial supply chains. Officials noted that rare earth minerals are increasingly important for sectors such as renewable energy, electronics, electric vehicles, advanced manufacturing, and defence technologies. The government believes that responsible development of these resources can position Assam as an important contributor to India's future industrial landscape. At the same time, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma emphasized that environmental protection must remain a core principle in all mining activities. Officials informed the Chief Minister that sustainable mining prac-

tics are being prioritized to minimize ecological impact and preserve local biodiversity. The government's approach seeks to balance economic progress with environmental responsibility so that development benefits can be achieved without harming the state's natural resources and ecological heritage. The review meeting further highlighted investment commitments worth more than Rs 50,000 crore linked to ongoing and proposed projects in the Mines and Minerals sector. Officials stated that these investment commitments reflect strong investor confidence in Assam's policy environment and governance framework. The government believes that such investments will generate large-scale employment opportunities, strengthen industrial growth, and contribute significantly to the state economy over the coming years. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that transparent governance, faster decision-making, and investor-friendly policies have helped Assam emerge as an attractive destination for industrial and infrastructure investments. Officials also briefed the Chief Minister on efforts being made to improve coordination between departments and accelerate project clearances while maintaining regulatory safeguards. Discussions covered plans for improving transportation and logistics infrastructure connected to mineral exploration areas so that future industrial activity can be supported effectively. The government aims to create an ecosystem where industrial development, employment generation, and environmental sustainability move together in a balanced manner. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma stressed that mineral resource development should ultimately contribute to the welfare of the people and the long-term prosperity of the state. The review meetings on healthcare and mineral development together reflected the Assam government's integrated approach toward building strong economic and social foundations for future growth. Officials informed the Chief Minister that multiple departments are now working in coordination to ensure faster implementation of major projects. The government believes that investment in healthcare infrastructure will strengthen human capital while sustainable resource development will enhance economic resilience and industrial capability. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma reiterated that development initiatives should produce visible and measurable benefits for ordinary citizens and directed officials to maintain accountability and efficiency in project execution. The healthcare expansion initiatives are expected to create far-reaching impacts across Assam by improving access to treatment, increasing medical education opportunities, and attracting specialized doctors and researchers to the state. Officials stated that better infrastructure and advanced treatment facilities will also reduce pressure on patients who currently travel outside Assam for specialized medical care.

## NAP's Memorial Meeting and Celebration of Ramen Barua's Birthday

**Guwahati:** To commemorate the departed members of New Art Players (NAP), one of the state's leading socio-cultural organizations, a tribute programme - "Shradhanjali" was organized on the afternoon of 4 June at the NAP's auditorium. The programme, anchored by Navajyoti Kalita, began with an invocation by Sunayana Goswami Sharma.

Thereafter, the NAP President, Ajay Dutta, lit the ceremonial lamp at a specially decorated memorial space, following which members present and family members of the departed paid floral tributes. In the next segment, General Secretary Rathindra Narayan Bhattacharya remembered the 86 individuals who had passed away over the years, and all present observed a moment of silence and prayed for the eternal peace of their souls. Dwip Barua paid a special tribute to the recently departed member Pragati Bora.

Students of the Satriya Music School of Srimanta Sankar Kristi Bikash Kendra—Bharasha Agarwal, Dhritiman Das, Mithu Mondal and Shruti Kalita—performed Borgets on the occasion. Speaking on behalf of the families of the departed members, Minakshi Deka and Dr. Indira Borthakur appreciated New Art

Players for taking the initiative to keep alive the memories of its departed members through such an annual programme.

In his concluding remarks, President Ajay Dutta fondly remembered the invaluable contributions made by the departed members to

the organization and expressed his gratitude to all those present on the occasion. Following the tribute program, a special \_Adda\_ session featuring conversations and musical reminiscences was organized in connection with the birthday of Ramen Barua. Besides NAP members, several close admirers of Ramen Barua and members of his family par-

ticipated in the gathering. The unique session, conducted by Nitumoni Saikia and \_Adda\_ session was recorded for screening on 6 June. The concluding segment of the \_Adda\_ featured songs by Namita Bhattacharya and a sarod recital by Tarun Kalita, which deeply moved the audience.

On the evening of 6 June, the 86th birthday of NAP's senior member and distinguished music director-composer Ramen Barua was celebrated. The programme was anchored by Humayun Choudhury. Veteran and young artists of the organization performed various songs and dances composed and musically directed by Ramen Barua. Dipen Barua, renowned singer and younger brother of Ramen Barua, participated as a special guest on this occasion, sharing memories of his musical journey with Ramen Barua and presenting a song. Following the musical performances, the documentary Barua Sansar and the video recording of the \_Adda\_ session held on 4 June were screened for the audience.



## Bridge Projects across Assam create new growth and trade opportunities

**Guwahati:** Chief Minister of Assam Himanta Biswa Sarma said that the state's major bridge projects are progressing rapidly under the Assam government's focused infrastructure development mission aimed at establishing seamless, all-weather connectivity across different regions of the state, with the ongoing construction of the Subansiri and Luit Bridges connecting Majuli and Lakhimpur, the Pagladiya Bridge in Baksa district, and the Ghunasuti Bridge in Lakhimpur expected to significantly transform Assam's transportation landscape while opening new avenues for trade, business, tourism, and regional economic growth. The Chief Minister stated that these projects represent the government's long-term vision of building a modern and well-connected Assam where even geographically challenging and riverine areas are brought into the mainstream development process through reliable infrastructure and faster transportation networks. The bridge projects are being executed with close monitoring and sustained momentum, reflecting the government's commitment to ensuring that connectivity reaches every corner of the state. Senior officials informed Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma during project review discussions that work on these bridges is advancing steadily and that the administration is prioritizing timely completion so that the benefits can reach people at the earliest. The government believes that once completed, these bridges will drastically cut travel time, reduce dependence on seasonal river transport, strengthen regional integration, and create lasting socio-economic opportunities for lakhs of people living in the surrounding districts. The Subansiri and Luit Bridges connecting Majuli and Lakhimpur are being viewed as transformational infrastructure projects because they will provide

all-weather road connectivity to Majuli, the world's largest river island, which has historically depended heavily on ferry services for transportation and communication with the mainland. Officials stated that the construction work on these bridges is progressing at an impressive pace and that the projects are expected to remove long-standing transportation challenges faced by residents, traders, students, patients, and tourists traveling between Majuli and nearby districts. During the monsoon season and periods of high river flow, ferry transportation often becomes uncertain and time-consuming, creating hardships for local people and affecting economic activity. The new bridges are expected to eliminate these difficulties by ensuring dependable road access throughout the year. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma emphasized that improved connectivity for Majuli is essential not only for local development but also for preserving and promoting the cultural, spiritual, and tourism significance of the island. The government believes that the bridges will unlock immense tourism potential in Majuli by making travel easier and more convenient for visitors from across the country and abroad. Tourism-related businesses including hotels, homestays, transport services, handicrafts, cultural activities, and local enterprises are expected to receive a major boost once the bridges become operational. Officials noted that improved road connectivity will also help local farmers, artisans, and traders transport their products to larger markets more efficiently, reducing trans-

portation costs and increasing income opportunities. The administration sees the project as a crucial step toward integrating Majuli more closely with Assam's broader economic and developmental framework while preserving its unique heritage and identity. Similarly, the Pagladiya Bridge project in Baksa district is progressing steadily and is expected to significantly improve transportation and communication in lower Assam. Officials informed the Chief Minister that the bridge will provide dependable all-weather connectivity for several communities that currently face difficulties due to inadequate transport infrastructure and seasonal disruptions. The government believes the bridge will play

an important role in supporting agricultural activities and small businesses by enabling faster and safer movement of goods and people throughout the year. Farmers in the region are expected to benefit from improved access to markets, which will help reduce post-harvest losses and transportation expenses while increasing opportunities for better returns on agricultural produce. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma reiterated that infrastructure development in rural and semi-rural regions remains a top priority for the

Assam government because improved connectivity directly contributes to economic growth, social development, and public welfare.

## Resonia Launch Plantation Drive to Mark World Environment Day

**Kajalgaon:** Resonia launched a large-scale plan-

the Sidli Circle Office. Police personnel, government officials and staff members actively participated in the programme, highlighting the importance of environmental conservation and sustainable development. The



tion drive across its project areas to mark World Environment Day 2026, with a target of planting 500 saplings during World Environment Week. The initiative began on June 5 with an inauguration at the KEC Store in Rakhaldubi, followed by plantation drives at Kajalgaon Police Station and

initiative was also organised in collaboration with KEC. The plantation campaign will continue until June 8-9 at various locations, including hospitals, schools, colleges and government offices within the project area.

“Planting trees is not just about increasing green cover; it is about investing in a healthier and more sustainable future for our communities. Through this initiative, we aim to contribute meaningfully to environmental conservation while encouraging collective action towards a greener tomorrow,” a Resonia spokesperson said.

To ensure the long-term success of the initiative, Resonia will undertake regular monitoring and maintenance of the planted saplings through monthly follow-ups and necessary care measures. The organisations thanked all stakeholders for their support and reaffirmed their commitment to promoting environmental sustainability across the region.

### AFFIDAVIT

I, Md Mazidul Islam, S/O Sher Ali, residing at Vill-Maralartari, Mouza-Betbari, P.S. Barpeta, Dist. Barpeta, Assam, shall henceforth be known as Mazidul Islam as declared before the Notary Public, Barpeta Court, Assam, vide Affidavit No. 3824C/2026 dated.06/06/2026 Md Mazidul Islam and Mazidul Islam both are same and identical person.

### AFFIDAVIT

My actual and Correct name is "Jyotsnara Begum" which has been recorded my all in documents including my Aadhaar Card, But my name has been recorded in my Assam Gramin Vikash Bank Passbook, Chillangani Branch, A/C No. 7 2 6 4 0 2 0 0 0 8 7 8 as "Jusnara Begum instead of Jyotsnara Begum. "As a matter of fact Jyotsnara Begum and Jusnara Begum are the same and single person.

Jyotsnara Begum, W/O-Abul Kalam, Bhakatgaon, Chillangani, Nagaon.

### Public Notice

I Md Ataur Rahman S/O-Md Ali Hussain resident of Vill-Sonaibera, P.O-Batamari, P.S-Juria Dist-Nagaon (Assam) do hereby declare that I have changed my name from Md Ataur Rahman S/O- Md Ali Hussain to Ataur Rahman S/O- Ali Hussain and henceforth I shall be known as Ataur Rahman S/O- Ali Hussain in all purpose, vide Affidavit No- 1248/26 sworn before the Notary Public at Nagaon on 22/04/2026. Ataur Rahman S/O- Ali Hussain and Md Ataur Rahman S/O-Md Ali Hussain both are same and identical person i.e. me and my father. Actual fact is Ataur Rahman S/O- Ali Hussain is inserted my all official and non official documents but in my School document's me and my father's name has been wrongly recorded as MD Ataur Rahman S/O- Md Ali Hussain instead of Ataur Rahman S/O- Ali Hussain.

Sd/- Ataur Rahman S/O-Ali Hussain

## Godrej introduces Multi-Ion battery technology for forklifts, advancing clean and efficient supply chains

**Guwahati:** Godrej Enterprises Group (GEG) has introduced India's first Multi-Ion battery technology for electric forklifts through its Mate-

India's industrial and warehousing market continues to demonstrate strong momentum, with over 11 million sq. ft. of leasing across the top



rial Handling Equipment (MHE) business, one of the market leaders in India's material handling segment. The launch addresses the growing need for efficient, reliable, and sustainable energy solutions as India's manufacturing, logistics, and warehousing sectors scale rapidly, to enable 25% lower total cost of ownership, higher equipment uptime, and cleaner industrial operations, with a battery designed to last through the full operational life of the forklift.

eight cities in Q1 2026, registering a double digit year-on-year growth, driven by demand from 3PLs, e-commerce, and manufacturing-led supply chain modernisation. As warehouses grow denser and throughput intensifies, the need for energy-efficient, safe, and future-ready material handling solutions has become central to productivity and performance. Multi-Ion battery combines fast and opportunity charging, zero maintenance, and

high energy efficiency, while eliminating rare-earth dependency and reducing disposal challenges. Developed in collaboration with, one of India's leading deep-tech battery innovators, the technology delivers up to 5,000 life cycles—nearly 60% higher than standard lithium-ion, making it battery for life of equipment, lowering Designed to operate reliably in ambient temperatures above 45°C, the Multi-Ion battery is ideally suited for India's tropical climatic conditions. Mr. Anil Lingayat, Business Head, Material Handling Equipment, Godrej Enterprises Group, said, "As India's supply chains scale in complexity and intensity, material handling requires energy solutions that deliver reliability, long-term value, and sustainability. With Multi-Ion battery technology, we are rethinking how industrial equipment is powered, applying advanced engineering to enable higher uptime, lower ownership costs, and cleaner operations across the value chain, including MSMEs. This reflects our focus on design-led innovation, R&D, and technology-driven product focus that delivers real, scalable impact across the logistics ecosystem." As a leading player in the material handling space, Godrej Enterprises Group views such innovations as critical to strengthening supply-chain efficiency, warehouse productivity, and operational resilience at scale. The launch reflects Godrej Enterprises Group's advanced engineering focus and digital integration within its material handling portfolio. Backed by over 5,000 hours of real-world validation and a 7-year warranty, the Multi-Ion battery technology reinforces the long-term trust customers place in Godrej's industrial solutions.

## Malabar Gold & Diamonds enters Assam with their first flagship store in Guwahati

**Guwahati:** Malabar Gold & Diamonds, a leading pan-India jewellery brand, today, announced its foray into Assam with the launch of its first showroom in Guwahati. Spread across 8000 sq ft, the new store, set to be inaugurated on Saturday, 16th May, 2026 at GS Road, Ganesh Gouri by Bollywood superstar, Sonu Sood, is designed to deliver a world-class jewellery shopping experience to customers combining scale, design excellence, and trusted service under one roof. The showroom will offer a wide assortment of gold, diamond, platinum and silver jewellery and gemstones, catering to diverse tastes - ranging from traditional designs rooted in India's heritage to contemporary styles for modern sensibilities. Exclusive collections in Gold, Diamond, Bridal and Daily Wear Jewellery,

curated to reflect both timeless tradition and contemporary tastes will be showcased. Upholding the brand's core promises, the store will offer assured purity, 100% transparent pricing and a customer-first service philosophy, that has earned Malabar Gold & Diamonds the trust of millions globally. To mark the launch, Malabar Gold & Diamonds is introducing special inaugural benefits for customers. These include instant cash back on Old Gold exchange and making charges starting from just 4.9%, making premium jewellery more accessible for families preparing for weddings, festivals, and everyday milestones. "Assam has a rich cultural relationship with gold, and Guwahati is the gateway to the entire North East. Our first store here is a commitment to bring world-class designs, un-

matched transparency and Malabar Gold & Diamonds' legendary customer trust to the people of Assam. With exclusive bridal lines, daily wear collections and old gold exchange offers we want every family in Guwahati to experience jewellery shopping the Malabar way," said Mr Amir Routh, Business Head, East Region, Malabar Gold & Diamonds. Designed with elegant interiors and supported by a highly trained team of jewellery experts, the showroom will offer customers a seamless and comfortable shopping experience with spacious, thoughtfully planned layouts. The brand extends a warm invitation to families of Guwahati and across Assam to visit the new showroom and experience the Malabar promise of purity, craftsmanship, and value.

## Petrol and diesel prices up by Rs 3 per litre, CNG gets costlier by Rs 2

**New Delhi:** As oil marketing companies (OMCs) face mounting losses amid the ongoing West Asia crisis, they raised petrol and diesel prices by Rs 3 per litre each. The revised rates came into effect immediately across the country. In Delhi, petrol prices rose by Rs 3.14 per litre to Rs 97.77, while diesel became costlier by Rs 3.11 per litre.

Meanwhile, amid the Middle East crisis, oil companies have also raised CNG prices. Effective Friday, the price of CNG has increased by Rs 2 per kilogram. The new CNG rate in Delhi is Rs 79.09 per kilogram.

The OMCs continue to face mounting financial losses from keeping retail fuel prices unchanged despite surge in crude oil prices.

The combined under-recovery on petrol, diesel and LPG has reached nearly Rs 30,000 crore every month, according to Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary in the Union Petroleum Ministry.

"Our OMCs are buying crude oil at higher rates but are not selling at corresponding rates to protect our consumers. This impacts their finances," said Sharma.

She further said the Centre had already cut excise duties on petrol and diesel, sacrificing nearly Rs 14,000 crore in monthly revenue, but under-recoveries continue to widen," she informed.

India's state-run oil marketing companies (OMCs) are staring at the possibility of their entire FY26 profits being wiped out if crude oil prices remain elevated, Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri warned amid escalating tensions in the Middle East.

Speaking at the CII Annual Business Summit 2026 this week, Puri said the ongoing energy crisis triggered by the conflict in the Middle East has sharply increased pressure on Indian fuel retailers, with oil marketing companies cur-

rently losing nearly Rs 1,000 crore every day. He estimated that their combined quarterly losses could touch around Rs 1 lakh crore if current trends continue.

The warning comes at a time when global crude oil prices have surged past the psychologically important \$100 per barrel mark due to fears of prolonged supply disruptions linked to the US-Iran conflict.

"The financial stress on state-run fuel retailers has become so severe that a single quarter of losses at prevailing crude price levels could potentially erase their entire profit after tax for FY26," the minister stated.

The three major public sector oil retailers -- Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum and Hindustan Petroleum -- are projected to report combined losses of nearly Rs 1.2 lakh crore in the first quarter of FY27 alone, according to industry estimates cited during the discussion.

## ITR filing process for AY 2026-27 officially begins

**New Delhi:** The Income Tax Department on Friday said that it enabled the filing of Income Tax Returns (ITRs) for the financial year 2025-26 (assessment year 2026-27) with the release of Excel utilities for ITR-1 and ITR-4 forms on e-filing portal. Announcing the update on social media platform X, the department said taxpayers can now access both the Excel utility and online filing options for the two forms. With the announcement of the offline utilities, the ITR filing process for AY 2026-27 has officially commenced. Now, taxpayers can fill out the forms offline and generate a JSON file and upload it to the Income Tax Department's e-filing website after completing verification. However, non-audit taxpayers are generally required to file their returns by July 31. At present, seven different ITR forms are available, depending on the nature of income and taxpayer category.

ITR-1 -- known as Sahaj -- is meant for resident individuals, excluding not ordinarily resident taxpayers, having an annual income of up to Rs 50 lakh.

ITR-4 -- known as Sugam -- applicable to resident individuals, Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs) and firms other than LLPs with annual income up to Rs 50 lakh. Earlier, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) had notified the ITR forms for AY 2026-27 with revised disclosure norms. The changes include additional reporting requirements related to long-term capital gains, losses from share buybacks and certain trading transactions.

Notably, India's net direct tax collections recorded steady growth in the financial year 2025-26, rising 5.12 per cent year-on-year to Rs 23,40,406 crore, according to data released by the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT). Singapore Airlines (SIA) Group had clocked a net profit of SGD 2.778 billion in 2024-25.

SIA Group said it was committed to its 25.1 per cent investment in Air India, which is a core component of its long-

term multi-hub strategy.

"This strategic investment provides the Group with a direct stake in one of the world's largest and fastest-growing aviation markets, complementing its Singapore hub and strengthening its long-term growth," the airline said in a press statement.

SIA Group's net profit declined by SGD 1.594 billion or 57.4 per cent to SGD 1.184 billion, primarily due to the absence of the SGD 1.098 billion non-cash accounting gain recognised in November 2024 upon the completion of the Air India-Vistara merger.

"The swing from a share of profits of associated companies last year to a loss this year (SGD 846 million) was due to the Group accounting for its share of Air India's full year losses, versus only four months the previous year," the statement said.

Loss-making Air India has been forced to cancel several international flights in recent months due to the closure of Pakistan's airspace and the Middle East conflict, which has adversely impacted its revival plans.

India's air traffic registered a sequential slowdown in April compared to March for both domestic and international passengers, according to data compiled by the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

The downturn comes in the backdrop of the Middle East conflict, which led to a sharp decline in international flights. The increase in jet fuel prices has also led to an increase in operating costs, which has come as a further dampener in the airline's turnaround plans.

India's domestic air traffic stood at 140.8 lakh passengers, which represents a 4 per cent drop year-on-year as well as month-on-month. International traffic saw a sharper decline of 20 per cent in April compared to March as the number of air passengers fell to 28.3 lakh passengers.

## Honda NX500 gets E-clutch technology for smarter adventure touring

**Gurugram:** Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India (HMSI) today announced the addition of Honda E Clutch technology to the NX500, its mid-size adventure touring motorcycle. The E Clutch system uses precise electronic control to manage clutch engagement during starting, gear shifting, and stopping, reducing the need for manual clutch operation, while allowing riders to override the system at any time. For riders navigating India's busy city roads as well as long highway stretches, the addition helps reduce fatigue caused by regular clutch operation. Honda E-Clutch manages this automatically, allowing riders stay focused on the road without compromising on the hands-on riding experience, the NX500 is known for. On the announcement, Mr. Tsutsumu Otani, President & CEO, Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India, said: "The Honda NX500 equipped with E Clutch technology enhances comfort and control across both urban and touring environments in India, by reducing rider fatigue, while retaining the engaging, hands-on riding experience that defines Honda motorcycles." The NX500 is powered by a 471cc liquid-cooled, parallel-twin engine paired with a 6-speed transmission, tuned to deliver strong low and mid-range torque along with linear power delivery at higher RPMs - supporting both city riding and highway touring. The motorcycle features a steel diamond frame, Showa SFF-BP USD front suspension, and a preload-adjustable rear monoshock, along with dual front disc brakes and a rear disc with dual-channel ABS. It rides on a 19-inch front and 17-

inch rear wheel combination. A 5.0-inch full-colour TFT display with Honda RoadSync connectivity enables navigation, call and music functions. Honda Selectable Torque Control (HSTC) and LED lighting are standard. The NX500 is avail-



able in two colour options: Mat Gunpowder Black Metallic and Pearl Horizon White. Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India Pvt. Ltd. (HMSI) is a wholly owned subsidiary of Honda Motor Co., Ltd., Japan. Founded in 1948, Honda Motor is a global leader in two-wheelers with a diverse portfolio spanning automobiles, motorcycles, power products, marine, and aviation, with a strong presence across continents. Rooted in Honda's philosophy of delivering the joy of mobility, HMSI brings world-class engineering and innovation to India. The company manufactures motorcycles and scooters for domestic and export markets. It operates four plants in Manesar, Tapukara, Narsapura, and Vithalapur, and serves more than 70 million customers through a network of over 7,000 touchpoints. Aligned with Honda's global targets, HMSI is working towards carbon neutrality across products and operations by 2050, alongside the goal of zero traffic collision fatalities.

## Rupee trades lower amid elevated crude prices

**New Delhi:** The Indian rupee breached the 96-mark against the US dollar on Friday amid persistent global pressures, rising crude oil prices, and continued geopolitical tensions linked to the Iran conflict. Earlier in the day, the domestic currency opened at 95.86 in the interbank foreign exchange market and slipped to 95.94 during early trade, after touching an all-time low of 95.96 in the previous session. Pressure on the rupee also intensified after oil marketing companies (OMCs) increased petrol and diesel prices by Rs 3 per litre with immediate effect. According to experts, the rupee has remained under pressure in recent weeks and emerged as one of the worst-performing currencies in Asia as India's import bill comes under strain from surging energy costs.

In addition, market sentiment remained fragile after talks between US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi

Jinping failed to deliver significant progress on key geopolitical flashpoints, particularly on the US-Iran front. Despite pressure on the rupee, domestic equity markets showed resilience. BSE Sensex rose 0.62 per cent or 471.64 points during intraday trade, while the Nifty 50 gained 0.63 per cent or 150 points to touch 23,839.30. On the commodities front, international benchmark Brent crude surged 3.46 per cent to \$109.38 per barrel. Similarly, US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude advanced 4 per cent to \$105.24 per barrel. Indian oil marketing companies (OMCs) have raised petrol and diesel prices by Rs 3 per litre. According to a senior official, the marginal increase in fuel prices is significantly lower than the losses being absorbed by public sector oil companies due to soaring global crude oil prices, which have crossed the \$100-per-barrel mark.

## Air India piles up \$2.8 bn loss in 2025-26

**New Delhi:** Air India piled up a loss of \$2.8 billion for the financial year 2025-26, according to the Singapore Airlines' annual report released.

Singapore Airlines Group reported a 57.4 per cent fall in net profit at Singaporean dollars (SGD) 1.184 billion for the financial year ended March 2026 as the losses of Air India, in which the company has a 25.1 per cent share, eroded the overall bottomline.

The Singapore Airlines report states that Air India posted losses amounting to SGD 3.56 billion, or \$2.80 billion at current exchange rates, for the 12 months to end-

March. Singapore Airlines (SIA) Group had clocked a net profit of SGD 2.778 billion in 2024-25.

SIA Group said it was committed to its 25.1 per cent investment in Air India, which is a core component of its long-term multi-hub strategy.

"This strategic investment provides the Group with a direct stake in one of the world's largest and fastest-growing aviation markets, complementing its Singapore hub and strengthening its long-term growth," the airline said in a press statement.

No. PMB-380/15 <sup>th</sup> FC (Tied Grant. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Inst.)/2023-24/2026/729					Date: 03/06/2026
NOTICE INVITING TENDER					
The Executive Officer, Pathasala Municipal Board, Pathasala invites sealed tenders in the prescribed form eventually to be drawn in PWD F-2 Form/Departmental form for the tenders in the given below with a validity period of 180 days, affixing court fee stamp of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees Eight and paise twenty five) only from Government Register Contractor of Class-I, II & III under APWD (Roads & Building) for the year 2025-26 as applicable having past experience of executing work of similar nature and will be received by the undersigned upto 2.00 P.M. on 15/06/2026 and will be opened on the same date at 2.30 P.M. in presence of the intending tenders or their authorize agents. If the office happens to be closed on the date of receipt of the tenders, the tender will be received and opened at the same place and time on the next working day of the office.					
Earnest money at the rate of 2% of the value of the work (1% for ST, SC, OBC and unemployed graduate Engineers) in the form of FD/Call Deposit will have to be deposited along with each tender duly pledged to the Executive Officer, Pathasala Municipal Board, Pathasala. Tender submit without earnest money shall be summarily rejected.					
The detailed tender papers may be obtained from office of the undersigned by the intending tenders on payment of Rs. 1,000/- (Rupees One Thousand) only in the form of Bank Draft payable at Pathasala duly pledged to the Executive Officer, Pathasala Municipal Board, Pathasala for each tender which is non refundable during the office hours on 11/06/2026 Or 12/06/2026 upto 2.00 P.M. No. tender will be issued after the date.					
No.	Name of Work	Approx. value of the work	Earnest money	Time of Completion	
1	Construction of Public Toilet (Pay & Use) at Bajali District Territorial Building Division Campus Ward No. 3 under 15 <sup>th</sup> FC Tied Grant (2 <sup>nd</sup> Inst.) for the year 2023-24 during the year 2024-25.	Rs. 19,33,987.00	Rs. 38,680.00	3 Months	
2	Construction of Public Toilet (Pay & Use) at Dologosai Than Ward No. 9 under 15 <sup>th</sup> FC Tied Grant (2 <sup>nd</sup> Inst.) for the year 2023-24 during the year 2024-25.	Rs. 19,33,987.00	Rs. 38,680.00	3 Months	
3	Construction of RCC Cover Storm Water Drain at Seujnagar Path (East Side) Ward No. 01 under 15 <sup>th</sup> FC Untied Grant (2 <sup>nd</sup> Inst.) for the year 2020-21 during the year 2021-22.	Rs. 13,27,547.00	Rs. 26,551.00	3 Months	
Details of works, terms and conditions may be seen in the office of the Executive Officer, Pathasala Municipal Board during office hours from 04/06/2026 to 15/06/2026 upto 2.00 P.M. which are included in detailed NIT documents.					
				Executive Officer Pathasala Municipal Board Pathasala	
No. PMB-380/15 <sup>th</sup> FC (Tied Grant. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Inst.)/2023-24/2026					

## Editorial



## PMEGP

The Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), a flagship scheme of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises implemented through the Khadi and Village Industries Commission, has emerged as one of the country's most significant initiatives for promoting entrepreneurship, generating large-scale employment opportunities and strengthening rural industrialization by supporting first-generation entrepreneurs in establishing new micro-enterprises outside the agricultural sector, while the scheme during the tenure of the 15th Finance Commission from FY 2021-22 to FY 2025-26 achieved record growth in micro-enterprise development by fully utilizing the approved budgetary allocation of Rs 13,554.42 crore, facilitating the establishment of 403,706 micro enterprises, exceeding the target of 402,000 enterprises, and generating sustainable employment opportunities for nearly 36.33 lakh people across the country, thereby reaffirming its crucial role in strengthening the micro-enterprise ecosystem, promoting self-reliance, empowering women and socially disadvantaged communities, and accelerating inclusive economic growth in both rural and urban India. The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises stated that PMEGP continues to play a transformative role in supporting entrepreneurship and livelihood generation through credit-linked subsidies provided to eligible entrepreneurs seeking to establish manufacturing and service sector enterprises, especially in rural areas where economic opportunities are often limited and access to formal financial support can remain challenging. Officials highlighted that the scheme provides margin money subsidy on bank loans, enabling aspiring entrepreneurs to establish their own enterprises with reduced financial burden while encouraging sustainable income generation and local employment creation. The achievements recorded during the tenure of the 15th Finance Commission have been described as evidence of the growing demand for entrepreneurship-based initiatives and the effectiveness of PMEGP in supporting grassroots economic development across the country. According to the Ministry, the scheme exceeded its performance targets while ensuring complete utilization of budget allocations, demonstrating both strong implementation mechanisms and increasing public participation in entrepreneurship programmes aimed at promoting self-employment and rural industrialization. Officials noted that PMEGP has significantly contributed towards strengthening the country's micro-enterprise sector, which plays an important role in employment generation, local manufacturing, service delivery and balanced regional economic development. The programme's focus on first-generation entrepreneurs has been highlighted as one of its major strengths, as it enables individuals from diverse social and economic backgrounds to establish enterprises and participate in economic activities without requiring large initial investments. The Ministry emphasized that PMEGP supports entrepreneurs in setting up new enterprises in non-farm sectors, thereby helping diversify rural economies and reduce dependence on traditional agricultural livelihoods. During the tenure of the 15th Finance Commission, the scheme facilitated the creation of more than four lakh micro enterprises, reflecting widespread interest in entrepreneurship and small business development across various parts of the country. These enterprises have contributed not only to employment generation but also to local economic activity, production capacity and service availability in both rural and semi-urban regions. The creation of approximately 36.33 lakh employment opportunities under the programme has been viewed as a major achievement in terms of livelihood generation and inclusive growth, particularly at a time when employment creation and economic recovery remain key priorities for the country. Officials observed that the programme has played a critical role in creating sustainable livelihoods at the grassroots level while supporting local economic ecosystems through enterprise development and increased economic participation. One of the most notable aspects of PMEGP has been its strong emphasis on inclusive growth and targeted support for women and socially disadvantaged communities, with around 40 per cent of the total micro enterprises established under the scheme belonging to women beneficiaries. The Ministry said that approximately 45 per cent of the total margin money subsidy disbursed under the programme has been provided to women entrepreneurs, reflecting the government's commitment towards promoting women-led enterprises and strengthening economic participation among women across rural and urban India. The increasing participation of women entrepreneurs under PMEGP has been regarded as an important step towards economic empowerment, financial independence and social inclusion, particularly in regions where women often face barriers related to access to finance, business opportunities and entrepreneurial support. Officials stated that women beneficiaries under the scheme have successfully established enterprises in diverse sectors including manufacturing, food processing, textiles, handicrafts, retail services and small-scale production units, contributing to both local employment generation and household income growth. The Ministry further highlighted that nearly 54 per cent of PMEGP beneficiaries belong to SC, ST and OBC categories, demonstrating the programme's strong focus on social inclusion and equitable economic development. By providing targeted financial support and entrepreneurship opportunities to socially disadvantaged communities, the scheme has helped promote economic participation and reduce inequalities in access to business opportunities and credit support.

## Iran war: America's old playbook is faltering but Bharat can help reset it

There is something common between Iran, America and the rise of Asia, especially Bharat. Of course, there is Israel and the existential threat which the idea of Iran in particular, and Islamism in general, poses. But deep inside is the growing American unease with the ground slipping under its feet — and with Washington getting nervous, tremors in Western European capitals are not unusual. The ongoing Iran war can be analysed in this context. The war — whether in Iran or Venezuela or even in Ukraine, for that matter — is a desperate attempt by the Americans to stop the world as they know it from changing. It is an attempt to rewind the clock back to the immediate post-war order where the US succeeded in recasting the world in its own image, albeit with violence, manipulation and exploitation. Post-1945, it managed to create institutions that pushed its interests in the name of democracy, freedom and liberalism. That post-war 'liberal order' normalised American interests. Donald Trump realised such institutional hijacking had started giving diminishing returns as other nations such as China and Bharat learnt quickly to adapt these policies to their advantage. Thus entered disruptive Trump calling out those very institutions set up by the Americans as biased. Trump's America is attempting to rejig the post-war world order to its advantage again. And it has resorted once more to the old predatory, colonial policies that had, in the first place, made the West "great", economically and geo-strategically. Minhaz Merchant's new book, *Era of India*, captures this predatory foundation on which the modern Western empires rest, writing how the modern West did not rise on the strength of ideas alone, but on the twin engines of "science" and "slavery". For centuries, Europe overwhelmingly exported domination, exploitation and persecution; the transfer of goods and governance were incidental and also accidental. Entire non-Western continents were reduced to quarries and plantations. Civilisations were dismantled, economies hollowed out, and cultures subordinated — all in the name of development and democracy. "Africa, Asia, and the Americas became sources of raw materials and permanent settlement for Europeans," Merchant writes. The entire Trumpian policy of the day, riding high on the MAGA bandwagon, is all about rejigging the world order again in favour of America. This is where a geopolitical paradox sets in. The more

the old order attempts to reassert itself through coercion, the more it exposes its own fragility. The Iran saga will further accelerate the decline of Pax Americana, rather than bolstering it, especially when the rise of Pax Silica is real. The world is no longer unipolar, and it is certainly no longer unquestionably Western. The 21st century is witnessing a gradual but definite shift in global power from West to East. Equally pronounced is the return of a civilisational force that was never meant to remain subdued. What is unfolding is not just an economic rise, but a geo-strategic message of this being Bharat's century. Bharat's current ascent is remarkable not just because it is rising, but how it is rising. It is doing so without replicating the brutality that once defined global power. There are no colonies to exploit, no continents to subjugate, no forced cultural conversions masquerading as "enlightenment", and no liberal pretence of carrying the "white man's burden". Bharat is rising without resorting to typical Western hegemonic tendencies. Even China, often positioned as an alternative to Western dominance, has largely followed the Western template — predatory economic expansion, coupled with strategic coercion, albeit without the façade of Western-style democracy. Bharat stands apart. With its rise, it is attempting something unprecedented in modern world history: to become a major global power without abandoning its liberal, plural and civilisational values. This should not surprise anyone with even a passing familiarity with Bharat's real history. The popular narrative, constructed conveniently during colonial rule and later reinforced by Marxist historians, paints Bharat as a land of rigid hierarchies and stagnant, divisive traditions. But this caricature collapses under scrutiny. Long before modern democratic theory took shape in Europe, India had traditions of decentralised governance, community participation, and negotiated settlement. Consider the Indus-Saraswati civilisation, which, as Oxford University historian Peter Frankopan notes in his 2023 book *The Earth Transformed*, differed intrinsically from Mesopotamia, Egypt and China because "inequality levels were far lower than in other locations". Or consider the civilisational limits placed on rulers in classical Bharatiya thought, where even kings were not above dharma. Compare this with medieval Europe, where over 90 per cent of the population

lived as serfs or worse, tied slave-like to land they did not own, serving masters they could not question. The West, meanwhile, finds itself at an inflection point. Its dominance, once unquestioned, is now visibly eroding. By 2030, as Merchant emphasises in *Era of India*, no European nation will feature among the world's top three economies. Interestingly, "two of the world's three largest economies will be Asian: China and India". This is not a temporary fluctuation; it is a structural shift. The age of transatlantic supremacy is giving way to an Indo-Pacific century. In this shifting landscape, Bharat occupies a unique position. It is today the 'X' factor in global power politics. Not because it is going to dominate the world in the traditional sense, but because it refuses to play by the old rules. Its rise complicates the binary logic of global politics: it is too large to ignore, too independent to control, and too democratic to be easily categorised. Merchant explains this succinctly: "As the trade and technology war between the US and China recasts global alliances, India is the only emerging major power with the economic and military potential to form a long-term strategic partnership with the US-led West, while keeping open trade links with China." For the United States, a partnership with Bharat offers strategic depth in a world increasingly shaped by Asian dynamics. But such a partnership cannot be built on condescension or convenience. It requires recognition of Bharat not as a junior partner, but as an equal force with its own civilisational uniqueness. Merchant writes, "It is America's need to keep India onside as a counter to China in the sweeping arc from the Gulf of Aden to the Malacca Strait." The decline of Pax Americana does not imply chaos, but it does signal a transition when America needs to shun its Rambo-like image and take up a statesman-like cover. It has to appreciate the emergence of a more complex, multipolar world where power is distributed. In this emerging world order, the Iran war is a self-goal. Just as Ukraine was — and has been. Till the time America accepts this changed global reality, and behaves accordingly, it will continue to make blunders and also keep challenging Bharat, as Trump has repeatedly been doing since the inauguration of his second presidential term.

Utpal Kumar

## If Iran collapses, India must be prepared for a surge in weapons smuggling

Much of the public discussion surrounding the US-Israel war with the Islamic Republic centres on Iran's current closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Energy market panic is unwarranted. While Iran and Gulf Cooperation Council states export oil through the Strait of Hormuz, decades of mismanagement and sanctions have left the Islamic Republic unable to refine enough petrol and diesel. Accordingly, the regime must import up to 20 per cent of its needs through Hormuz. Iranian rhetoric and sporadic attacks on shipping might have spiked energy prices, but there is a ticking clock over Iran's capabilities as its gasoline reserves run dry. Revolutionary Guard speedboats operate from small, informal jetties and marinas, each of which has limited petrol storage that US and Israeli bombers now target. Even if Persian Gulf oil exports do not quickly resume, President Donald Trump's temporary sanctions waivers for Russian exports to India suggest, at a minimum, a better willingness in the White House to listen to and understand Indian concerns and perspectives. As second-order effects ripple through the region, the biggest threat to India from the Iran war will not be high energy prices or even refugees, but rather the potential for loose weapons falling into anti-India extremists' hands. In 2007, Mohammad Ali Jafari, at the time newly appointed to lead the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps, concluded that

the greatest threat to the Islamic Republic would come from the Iranian people themselves rather than from outside. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was dead; the Taliban had their backs against the wall. Israel was a paper tiger, he said, and "the Americans cannot do a damned thing," the Revolutionary Guards declared. Jafari proceeded to reorganise the Guards to put a separate unit in each of Iran's 31 provinces, with an extra unit in Tehran due to the size of its population. Each of those units presumably has its own weapons depot. If the Islamic Republic collapses, these depots will become key for two reasons. First, when the regime dies, so too do the pay cheques it issues. Many Guardsmen will loot what they can, raiding the depots to sell weapons and ammunition on the black market. Alternately, if civil war breaks out, different groups will raid the depots, flooding Iranian society with weapons. There is a precedent for the danger loose weapons could pose. In October 2004, then-Senator John Kerry accused President George W. Bush of negligence for not securing a weapons depot at Al-Qaqaa, from which he alleged Iraqi insurgents had stolen 380 tonnes of explosives. In 2011, President Barack Obama, like Trump today, opted for a bombing campaign "without boots on the ground." Extremists looted President Muammar Qadhafi's weapons depots. Not only did they fuel civil war in-

side Libya, but the weapons flows undermined the stability and security of neighbouring Sudan and Niger and also helped fuel insurgencies in Mali, Burkina Faso, and the Central African Republic. While India will not face instability in the manner that African countries did, it will not be immune to the loose weaponry problem. Baloch tribes span the Iran-Pakistan border. Historically, they used their connections to facilitate smuggling of drugs and other contraband. While there is historically little love between Baluch tribes and the Pakistani government, which conquered and annexed the Khanate of Kalat, money matters. Weapons will flood Pakistan and provide Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency the plausible deniability it needs to arm Kashmir and Khalistan movement terrorists or Jamaat-e Islami affiliates that Muhammad Yunus, the coup collaborator in Bangladesh, freed from prison. Criminal elements in India itself might also acquire weaponry, including Sunni extremists whom Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan incites with arguments that no Muslim should live under a non-Muslim government. The problems are not insurmountable, but they are real. At a minimum, India should be prepared: either defensively, to shut down weapons markets and crack down on smugglers, or more proactively, to secure weapons depots in Iran itself should the state collapse.

Michael Rubin

## The mirage of Pax Sinica and Pax Americana: How India's strategic autonomy paves the way for a multipolar world

The strategic rivalry between the United States and China is often framed as a contest between Pax Americana and a potential Pax Sinica. Yet, both concepts are misleading. Despite accretion in China's economic and geopolitical influence, China is as yet neither capable nor willing to underwrite a global order of the type sustained until recently by the United States (US) post World War II. The US today retains the capacity but has lost its commitment to shoulder the burden of leadership in the global order that it once curated.

## Myth of Pax Sinica

Pax Sinica is a chimera. Beijing is still a rising power, not quite the equal of the US. But it has enough power to deny the US the satisfaction of creating a unipolar world. China is a global economic power now but still far from being a global military power. Its military power is concentrated on its periphery, where it seeks to deter or limit the extent of US presence and power. China frames its national vision in the terminology of the global developmental agenda, including the UN SDGs and even the UN Charter, to burnish its claims to equality and peaceful co-existence. Yet, it is not willing to take on the enormous economic and military burden that goes with a leadership role. China seeks selective leadership without universal obligations. China is not an evangelical power. It prioritises its national interests over wider principles.

China attempts to run with the hare and hunt with the hound. China is both a status quo power as well as an anti-status quo power. It is status quo to the extent that it has no desire to genuinely reform the UN Security Council, of which it is a privileged veto-wielding member. It is anti-status quo to the extent that it resents the agenda setting by the Anglo-Saxon powers. It, therefore, endeavours to create parallel global structures and institutions that are more in tune with China-centric objectives.

## Limits of Pax Americana

The US has contributed to the weakening of several multilateral institutions. China is simply filling the vacuum. This kind of opportunism is to be expected from a rising hegemon. All rising hegemonies are opportunistic in accordance with the theory of structural realism. Established powers like the US are also opportunistic and seek exceptionalism. In fact, the stronger the power, the less the resistance to its opportunistic actions outside the four corners of the normative rules-based international order (RBIO).

Political contradictions in the West, between the liberals and conservatives, between the leftists and rightists, between the internationalists and isolationists and between governments and NGOs, all these have provided Beijing with new space to advance its interests. These have allowed China to claim the mantle of championing free trade, climate action, connectivity and

infrastructure.

China's narrative of responsible stewardship finds resonance in the Global South because it speaks the language of the masses even as it pursues its own distinctly national interests. It uses economic and soft power alongside military coercion when necessary to elicit appropriate responses from others, including on maintaining the "One China" policy.

The US has never learnt this art of couching its national objectives in acceptable language. If it did, the world could genuinely benefit more from a democratic America than from a communist China. Right now, this is not a popular view.

Beijing generally approaches policy with long-term strategic planning. It has a political design — that of making China and its way of development and governance the symbol of a rules-based international order. The US is giving China plenty of opportunities to succeed. But the Chinese system has many infirmities — primary among them being its authoritarian system, a self-righteous streak and a tendency to coerce in order to ensure the survival and supremacy of the CPC. Its openness to criticism is contrived — internal study sessions are mounted to perfect the existing system. External criticism is also studied carefully — especially to devise policies to overcome such criticism.

Over the decades, China has used the RBIO to enhance its economic heft and political reach.

# Panama and Venezuela, 36 years apart: How Bush and Trump used law to break law

January 3, 1990, and January 3, 2026—36 years apart yet the same pattern. The leaders of two sovereign nations were captured under two different American imperialist presidents, using the familiar flimsy excuses of the protection of US citizens and the war on drugs. The same brazen display of American hegemony and superior firepower, flouting of international law, a swift, precise and coordinated attack on the sovereign nations and the handcuffing of their dictators dragged to its shores to face its unbiased and honest judicial system. And both attacks were illegal and conducted without Congressional authorisation. Whether George HW Bush or Donald J Trump, American imperialism is unabated—the pathetic excuses and the violent shock-and-awe tactics don't matter; the results do. The international community, including the UN and Europe, is either shocked or in disbelief only to criticise the US mildly or remain mum. The names of such blatant military operations, in the guise of the American way of implementing democracy and freedom in countries that are weak militarily and financially, smack of hypocrisy. Operation Just Cause in Panama in 1989. Operation Absolute Resolve in Venezuela in 2026. And the logic in attacking such nations, overtly and covertly, is based on the following three factors:

- 1) The dictator/president/prime minister is an American stooge-turned-traitor as in the case of Panama's Manuel Noriega
- 2) The country has vast natural resources which can be obtained only through military intervention, like by removing Iraq's Saddam Hussein and Venezuela's Nicolás Maduro.
- 3) Install puppet leaders, like Augusto Pinochet in Chile in 1973, by orchestrating coups for strategic and military interests.

## 36 Years ago, an Illegal Invasion

In Panama's case, Noriega, a CIA spy for 30 years who assisted the US in its dirty wars against Communism in Latin America, especially in Nicaragua and El Salvador, during the Cold War and the country's de facto ruler, became the Frankensteinian monster for Bush.

Bush, a CIA director and two-term Veep to Ronald Reagan, was deeply involved in the Iran-Contra scandal. Noriega, promoted by his mentor and Panamanian military leader General Omar Torrijos, became a useful and highly paid CIA asset against Daniel Ortega's left-wing Sandinista government in Nicaragua by helping the Contras and the rebels in El Salvador. After Torrijos died in a mysterious plane crash, Noriega, with American help, consolidated power to become the de facto military ruler in 1983 and assisted the US in combating Soviet influence in the region. The ruthless Noriega oversaw a wave of torture, death squads and murders to silence his enemies. The strongman was also in cahoots with Pablo Escobar's Colombian Medellín drug cartel. Reagan and Bush overlooked Noriega's crimes, especially drug trafficking to the US, as he was a buffer against Soviet influence in the region. He allowed Escobar to traffic tonnes of cocaine through Tocumen airport to the US in exchange for \$1,000 per kilo. Soon, "Cara de Piña" (Spanish for "Pineapple Face") became too big for his boots and challenged his creator. He covertly supported Fidel Castro and Muammar Gaddafi, threatened US personnel guarding the Panama Canal and declared a "state of war" with the US.

From an asset, Noriega had turned into a liability for the US.

On December 20, 1989, the US started bombing Panama—and on January 3, 1990, Delta Force and SEAL operatives forced Noriega to surrender. The Panama Defence Forces (PDF) were dissolved and pro-US President-elect Guillermo Endara was sworn into office. The dictator was handcuffed, flown to the US and taken to Miami's Federal Detention Center. In 1992, he was found guilty of 8 out of 10 counts of drug trafficking, racketeering and money laundering, and sentenced to 40 years, of which he served 17 due to good behaviour at Miami's Federal Correctional Institution. In 2010, Noriega was extradited to France, where he was convicted and sentenced to seven years for money laundering. In 2011, he was extradited to Panama, where he was jailed for crimes committed during his dictatorship. He died in May 2017 after being diagnosed with a brain tumour. For years, the Reagan and Bush turned a blind eye to Noriega's ties with Escobar and the trafficking of cocaine to the US—but when he turned dangerous, he became expendable. In fact, according to Noriega, the US targeted him after he refused to assist Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, a central figure in the Iran-Contra affair, in providing weapons to the Nicaraguan rebels.

The Panama invasion was illegal.

The UN's Article 2 states: "All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations." The UN can only intervene in matters within the domestic jurisdiction of any state under Chapter VII, which gives the Security Council the authority to "determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression" and to take military and non-military action to "restore international peace and security". The UNGA passed a resolution terming the Panama invasion a "flagrant violation of international law". A similar resolution proposed by the Security Council was supported by a majority of members but vetoed by the US, the UK and France. Even Articles 18 and 20 of the Charter of the Organization of American States prohibit the use of force by member states. No state or group of states has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatever, in the internal affairs of any other state. Neither did Bush seek Congressional authorisation despite Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution granting the power to declare war solely to Congress, not the president.

## From response to readiness: The surge in India's disaster management arc

India's disaster management journey reached a clear inflection point in 2025. Not because disasters receded—indeed, their frequency and intensity continued to rise—but because India reaffirmed its strategic direction with conviction: preparedness over episodic response, resilience over relief, and community capability alongside institutional strength.

This evolving architecture reflects a whole-of-government approach, anchored in national leadership and executive direction, with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) playing a pivotal coordinating role under the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Home Affairs, and working with the state governments and an array of agencies—ensuring that disaster management functions continuously rather than being activated only in moments of crisis.

### Shaping Public Perception

Preparedness has long been the stated national objective, but 2025 saw this translated into practical frameworks. Within this construct, NDMA remains fully conscious that disasters often overwhelm even the best plans. Response, therefore, cannot be diluted; it must remain agile, scalable and integrated. Preparedness and response are complementary pillars. The more enduring challenge lies beyond institutions—in shaping public perception, where disasters are often seen as distant events until impact makes vulnerability undeniable. In an age of pervasive digital communication, embedding preparedness into everyday public consciousness remains demanding. Awareness initiatives have expanded steadily, and institutional outreach—led by NDMA in coordination with central ministries, states and professional bodies—has created important pockets of sensitivity and training. Yet India's scale and diversity require sustained innovation to convert awareness into instinctive behaviour. The disaster management system is therefore refining its communication approach, sharpening objectives, audiences and delivery platforms to normalise preparedness as a routine civic responsibility rather than a crisis-driven recall. Urban Vulnerabilities and Institutional Fire Safety

Urban India has emerged as a major area of concern, where high population density, vertical growth and ageing infrastructure have amplified risk. Repeated fire incidents in schools and hospitals have underscored these vulnerabilities. While the Prime Minister's School Safety Programme has strengthened institutional awareness, hospital fire prevention—particularly

He notified bipartisan leaders several hours before the invasion, but didn't invoke the War Powers Act.

### 36 Years Later, another Illegal Invasion

Trump planned to oust Maduro way back in August, a month before the lethal airstrikes on boats in the Caribbean and the Pacific allegedly belonging to alleged narco-terrorists—the Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua (TdA) and the Colombian guerrilla group National Liberation Army (ELN)—and carrying drugs. So far, 36 airstrikes have killed 115 people with Trump not providing an iota of evidence of the vessels trafficking drugs. All the Trump administration has told Congress is that the US is in an "armed conflict" against drug cartels and the victims are "unlawful combatants". Moreover, the strikes are immune to judicial review due to a classified DOJ finding, which stated that Trump can order lethal strikes against members of drug cartels designated as enemy combatants threatening the US. The US designated TdA as a foreign terrorist organisation on February 20 and Cartel de los Soles, an informal Venezuelan criminal organisation, as a specially designated global terrorist on July 25. Since the boat strikes started on September 2 and the US ordered the biggest naval deployment in the Caribbean Sea after the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, the Trump administration repeatedly denied that it wanted to remove Maduro and capture Venezuelan oil. In December, secretary of state and NSA Marco Rubio and defence secretary Pete Hegseth told the Senate the administration had no regime change intentions in Venezuela. In fact,



according to Trump's first-term NSA John Bolton, the president was "very interested in the Venezuelan oil" in 2018-19. After Maduro's capture, Trump clarified that the US will have "a presence in Venezuela as it pertains to oil". "We're going to have our very large United States oil companies, the biggest anywhere in the world, go in, spend billions of dollars, fix the badly broken infrastructure, the oil infrastructure, and start making money for the country," he said. Now, Democratic lawmakers are livid. Senator Andy Kim senator tweeted: "I didn't trust them then and we see now that they blatantly lied to Congress." Senator Chris Murphy said, "When they came to Congress, and they literally lied to our faces. They said, 'This is just a counter-narcotics operation.' This seems to be mostly about oil and natural resources." Rubio and Hegseth lied to lawmakers in November as well. In a briefing, they said that the administration lacked a legal justification for striking targets inside Venezuela as the classified DOJ finding didn't allow attacking land targets. However, considering how Trump has upended decades-old ties with Europe, sided with Russia in the Ukraine War and bombed Iran, the massive naval build-up and the boat strikes were the beginning of Maduro's end. Trump not only attacked Venezuela but also didn't seek Congressional authorisation. Congress authorised the Iraq War in 2002 and the Global War on Terrorism in 2001 after 9/11. Trump's comments clearly hinted that he wouldn't seek Congressional authorisation for striking targets inside Venezuela, which meant Maduro's removal. In the same month, when Hegseth and Rubio lied to lawmakers, Trump said that he didn't need congressional authorisation to attack targets inside Venezuela. So, how did Bush and Trump order the invasions without Congress's approval?

Both presidents used a DoJ legal opinion to justify the invasions. Reagan and Bush had planned the Panama invasion around six months before the bombardment. So did Trump, according to M

In June 1989, then-assistant US attorney general (AG) William Barr, Bush's future AG and Trump's AG in his first term, concluded that the DoJ's 1980 opinion, "Extraterritorial Apprehension by the Federal Bureau of Investigation", "erred in ruling that the FBI does not have legal authority to carry out extraterritorial law enforcement activities that contravene customary international law". According to Barr, responding to the FBI's request, the DoJ undertook "a comprehensive review" of 1980 opinion and concluded that the Bureau "may use its statutory authority to investigate and arrest individuals for violating United States law even if the FBI's actions contravene customary international law".

The 1980 opinion stated that under customary international law, it was considered an invasion of sovereignty for one country to carry out law enforcement activities within another country without that country's consent.

Per Barr's legal opinion, the president, "acting through the attorney general", can deploy the FBI to investigate and arrest individuals for violating US law in contravention of customary international law—even if "unexecuted treaties or treaty provisions, such as Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter", are contravened.

"An arrest that is inconsistent with international or foreign law does not violate the Fourth Amendment. Per Barr, US law enforcement agents frequently travel to foreign countries to conduct investigative activities or to meet foreign informants. "Formal consent cannot always be obtained from the foreign government, and indeed, in many cases, to seek such consent would endanger both the agents and their investigation," Barr said, which basically means that the FBI can be deployed in a foreign nation without its consent. That's precisely what Trump did in the Venezuelan attack—he also deployed the FBI along with the Delta Force. To make the case for the invasion watertight, the FBI's elite Hostage Rescue Team (HRT), tasked with the arrest of high-risk individuals, undercover operations and surveillance, assisted the Delta Force in capturing Maduro. Trump's AG, Pam Bondi, had already framed Maduro's indictment to ensure a maximum prison term, which proved that the Venezuela operation was planned. The DOJ unsealed the indictment while Maduro was en route to the US, a superseding one based on his initial indictment in the Southern District of New York in Trump's final year of his first term in 2020.

The earlier indictment, based on criminal charges related to Venezuelan cocaine trafficking, first brought by the DoJ in 2011, charged Maduro and 14 current and former Venezuelan officials with narco-terrorism, corruption, drug trafficking and other criminal charges.

Like the first one, the rewritten indictment, which adds the names of Maduro's wife and son, two senior Venezuelan officials and an alleged TdA leader, also contains several charges that haven't been proved.

The charges are on four counts: "narco-terrorism" conspiracy, cocaine importation conspiracy, possession of machine guns and destructive devices, and conspiracy to possess machine guns and destructive devices.

First, per the indictment, Maduro, as a National Assembly member, foreign minister and president, in collusion with drug traffickers, moved thousands of tonnes of cocaine to the US. However, 84 per cent of the cocaine seized in the US is of Colombian origin, not Venezuelan, according to the US Drug Enforcement Administration's March report, titled "DEA 2025 National Drug Threat Assessment". The report doesn't even mention Venezuela—it cites Ecuador, Central America and Mexico as the major trafficking hubs. The top three cocaine producers are Colombia, Peru and Bolivia, accounting for 99 per cent of the world's cocaine production, per the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Similarly, UNODC's 2025 World Drug Report found that only five per cent of Colombian drugs are trafficked through Venezuela. Most US-bound cocaine is trafficked through the Pacific, not Caribbean, according to the UN—Venezuela does not have a Pacific Coast. Moreover, drug cartels operating in the Caribbean traffic most of the cocaine to Europe, not the US, due to much higher prices. According to a report funded by the Norwegian government, one kg of cocaine costs around \$40,000 on average in Europe and \$80,000 in some nations compared to only about \$28,000 in the US. A 2023 report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, an American bipartisan nonprofit think tank, found that cartels operating in the Caribbean do use Venezuela to traffic drugs—but mostly to Europe, not the US.

"To get to the Caribbean, drug traffickers favour transiting from Colombia through Venezuela."

The Colombia-Venezuela border in particular has "lax controls on the Venezuelan side and some members of the Venezuelan military are involved or support drug trafficking. Once cocaine reached Venezuela, it is then transported to the Caribbean through the Guajira and Paraguaná Peninsulas. Cocaine leaves Colombia and Venezuela in small planes transiting through Guyana or the porous border with Suriname, where drug traffickers cross the Maroni River, a natural border between Suriname and French Guiana. Once in French Guiana, the cocaine departs in cargo vessels or by mules that take commercial flights to France, according to the report. Cocaine shipments from Venezuela enter the European Dutch territories via go-fast boats. From Aruba and Curaçao, cocaine is shipped directly to the Netherlands via sea or air or it continues its transshipment route to the eastern Caribbean.

Second, Maduro, per the indictment, has "partnered with narco-terrorists" from Colombia's FARC, ELN, the Sinaloa Cartel, the Zetas and TdA. However, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum denied last August that Maduro had links to the Sinaloa Cartel as claimed by the US. "On Mexico's part, there is no investigation that has to do with that," she told reporters. An Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) memo last April concluded that Maduro "probably does not have a policy of cooperating with TdA and is not directing TdA movement to and operations in the United States". "While Venezuela's permissive environment enables [Tren de Aragua, or TdA] to operate, the Maduro regime probably does not have a policy of cooperating with TdA and is not directing TdA movement to and operations in the United States," the report concluded.

Third, it's true that in 2018, Maduro "declared victory in a disputed and internationally condemned presidential election in Venezuela".

It's also true that in 2019, the Opposition-controlled National Assembly, led by President Juan Guaidó, declared that Maduro had usurped the presidency, and 50 countries, including the US, refused to recognise him as president. It's again true that in the disputed 2024 presidential election, Maduro declared himself the winner. However, neither the US nor other Western nations have the right to question the election results or interfere in Venezuela's internal matters.

Aninda Dey

in critical care environments—has required urgent attention. The rapid induction of high-load medical equipment into legacy electrical systems has been a recurring cause, with several ICU fires traced to this mismatch. Outreach efforts, guided by national policy, have therefore extended beyond civilian healthcare to include military and other institutional hospitals, recognising that risk is universal.

Urban floods have been a constant worry, where increasing infrastructure has not been matched by growth of drainage in consonance. An urban flood mitigation programme for major cities is now in the offing. At the state level, disaster governance has matured steadily. State Disaster Management Authorities now map threats with greater precision, increasingly leveraging geospatial technologies. Resource mapping has also evolved. The Indian Disaster Resource Network is shifting from equipment inventories to capability-based mapping, integrating entire operational entities such as Engineer Task Forces of the Army and civil aviation assets. This evolving transition from listing resources to visualising response capability has quietly strengthened preparedness planning.

### Enhancing Community Response

Human resource development was another defining strand of 2025. Guided by the Prime Minister's Ten-Point Agenda, community-based response received sustained emphasis. The Aapda Mitra scheme has matured into a credible national asset, with over 100,000 volunteers trained across 350 disaster-prone districts. This success has led to a major expansion. An additional 250,000 volunteers drawn from organisations such as the NCC, NYKS, NSS and Bharat Scouts and Guides are now progressively under training. The philosophy is clear: the fastest and most effective response comes from the community itself, often within the golden hour.

### Review of the DM Act

Legislative reform has reinforced this approach. The Disaster Management (Amendment) Act, 2025 now mandates the raising of State Disaster Response Forces by all States and Union Territories. Once properly trained and institutionalised, SDRFs will significantly strengthen local response capacity, reduce dependence on national assets and improve response timeliness. The amended Act also reflects a more nuanced understanding of contemporary risk. The creation of Urban Disaster Management Authorities ac-

knowledges the distinct vulnerabilities of large cities. The establishment of a National Disaster Insurance Fund introduces financial innovation into recovery and reconstruction. Clearer categorisation of disaster types—biological, chemical, nuclear and others—enables more tailored planning and capacity-building. Strengthened statutory roles across NDMA, SDMA and DDMA, supported by empowered national coordination mechanisms, signal a shift towards an integrated, anticipatory and "always-on" system. Disaster Resilience Cells at district level promise to embed preparedness within routine administration rather than episodic review.

### Enhancing and Inducting Technology

Technology has continued to act as a critical force multiplier. Early warning systems, particularly for cyclones, have matured substantially. Platforms such as the Sachet application now issue large volumes of timely alerts. The deployment of cell broadcast technology has addressed long-standing concerns regarding delayed message delivery during fast-evolving emergencies. As with all technology, effectiveness improves with familiarity, and 2025 saw growing public trust in these systems.

The Himalayan disasters of 2025—affecting J&K, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand—served as a stark reminder of climate-linked vulnerabilities. In response, the Central Government, in close coordination with states and specialist agencies, initiated a comprehensive review of Himalayan risks on a war footing. Early warning mechanisms for cloudbursts, glacial lake outburst floods and landslides are under prioritisation, supported by extensive threat mapping across vulnerable valleys and catchments—marking a shift from reactive relief to anticipatory risk management in one of India's most fragile ecological regions. Military-Civil Fusion for Disaster Management

Another significant development in 2025 was the deeper integration of the Armed Forces into the disaster management framework. While military support has always been central to response, deliberate efforts were made to strengthen institutional linkages with preparedness and awareness. The Corps of Engineers remains the Army's nodal organisation, while the Indian Air Force, Navy and Coast Guard continue to provide critical mobility, evacuation and maritime relief, often proving decisive in the earliest hours of a crisis.

Lt Gen Syed Ata Hasnain

# Indian Economy remains strong despite Global Crisis: PM Modi

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asserted that the foundation of the Indian economy remains exceptionally strong, emphasizing that the country recorded a robust 7.7 percent growth during the fiscal year 2025-26 despite facing a challenging global economic environment marked by uncertainty, slowing growth in several major economies, and ongoing geopolitical disruptions. Addressing a large gathering after launching a series of developmental projects worth around Rs 2,970

crore in Daman, the Prime Minister said India continues to remain among the fastest-growing economies in the world and is steadily moving forward on the path of progress through a combination of reforms, infrastructure expansion, and welfare-driven governance. He stated that the resilience displayed by the Indian economy reflects the collective efforts of the government, industries, entrepreneurs, workers, farmers, and citizens who have contributed to the nation's development journey. Highlighting the country's economic achievements, Mr Modi noted that India has been able to maintain growth momentum even at a time when many economies across the globe are struggling with inflationary pressures, supply chain disruptions, and financial uncertainties. He said the government remains committed to strengthening economic fundamentals while ensuring that the benefits of growth reach every section of society. The Prime Minister assured citizens that India would continue moving ahead with its reform express, focusing on modern infrastructure, enhanced connectivity, industrial expansion, digital transformation, and welfare initiatives aimed at improving the lives of the poor and vulnerable. He emphasized that economic development and social welfare are not competing priorities but complementary goals that together form the foundation of a strong and inclusive nation. Referring to the developmental projects launched in Daman, Mr Modi said such investments are essential for accelerating regional growth, creating employment opportunities, improving public services, and enhancing the quality of life for citizens. He noted that the government's development agenda is driven by the objective of ensuring balanced growth across all regions while strengthening the country's economic competitiveness. The Prime Minister underlined that infrastructure development remains one of the key pillars of the government's strategy for achieving long-term growth. He said investments in roads, ports, railways, airports, logistics networks, urban facilities, and digital infrastructure are creating new opportunities for businesses and citizens alike while laying the groundwork for future prosperity. According to him, infrastructure projects not only generate immediate economic activity but also contribute significantly to productivity and efficiency in the long run. Mr Modi reiterated that the government would continue investing heavily in infrastructure while maintaining a strong focus on social welfare programmes designed to uplift the poor and empower marginalized communities. He stressed that development should be inclusive and sustainable, ensuring that economic progress translates into tangible improvements in living standards. During his address, the Prime Minister also emphasized the importance of self-reliance in the energy sector, describing energy security as a crucial component of India's broader development strategy. He stated that the world is increasingly moving toward a green future and India is not merely participating in this transition but actively leading the way by balancing economic growth with ecological preservation. He said India's approach demonstrates that environmental responsibility and economic advancement can go hand in hand when supported by innovation, technology, and effective policy measures. The Prime Minister highlighted the country's growing investments in renewable energy, clean technologies, and sustainable development initiatives as evidence of its commitment to building a greener future. He observed that the transition to renewable energy is not only important from an environmental perspective but also essential for reducing dependence on imported fuels and strengthening national energy security. Earlier in the day, Mr Modi launched various infra-



structure projects worth more than Rs 18,000 crore in Surat, underscoring the government's commitment to expanding industrial capacity, improving connectivity, and supporting economic growth. Addressing a large gathering in the city, the Prime Minister pointed out that Gujarat has emerged as a leading contributor to India's renewable energy sector. He stated that out of the nation's total renewable energy capacity of 250 Gigawatts, Gujarat alone contributes 50 Gigawatts, accounting for a sig-

nificant one-fifth share of the country's green energy capacity. According to Mr Modi, this achievement reflects Gujarat's leadership in adopting clean energy solutions and its commitment to supporting India's energy transition. He said the state has become a model for sustainable development through its investments in renewable energy infrastructure, innovation, and industrial growth. The Prime Minister noted that Gujarat is poised to play an even more significant role in the country's future energy landscape as India shifts from conventional energy sources toward advanced green technologies. He emphasized that the transition from solar energy to green hydrogen and green ammonia would be critical for achieving energy self-reliance and securing the nation's long-term energy needs. Mr Modi explained that green hydrogen and green ammonia have the potential to transform multiple sectors, including industry, transportation, and power generation, while reducing carbon emissions and enhancing sustainability. He stated that Gujarat's strategic investments and favourable ecosystem position it as a major hub for these emerging technologies, which are expected to contribute significantly to India's economic growth and environmental objectives. The Prime Minister said that achieving self-reliance in energy would strengthen the country's resilience, reduce dependence on imports, and create new opportunities for innovation, manufacturing, and employment. During his address in Surat, Mr Modi also highlighted the remarkable transformation of the city over the years. Praising the spirit, determination, and entrepreneurial energy of its people, he said Surat has evolved into a modern and dynamic urban centre that exemplifies the possibilities of sustainable development. He described Surat's journey as a reflection of how effective governance, public participation, and innovative planning can work together to create a cleaner, greener, and more prosperous city. The Prime Minister particularly lauded Surat's emergence as a Green City and highlighted several initiatives that have contributed to this achievement. He praised the city's circular water economy model, which

promotes efficient use, recycling, and conservation of water resources. According to him, such initiatives are becoming increasingly important as cities across the world face growing challenges related to water management and sustainability. Mr Modi said Surat's approach demonstrates how urban centres can adopt innovative solutions to address environmental concerns while supporting economic growth. The Prime Minister also commended the city's 'Waste to Wealth' initiative, describing it as a successful example of turning environmental challenges into opportunities for development. He noted that what began as a local effort has evolved into a mass movement over the last twelve years, inspiring greater awareness and participation among citizens. The initiative, he said, reflects the broader vision of transforming waste management into a resource-generating activity that benefits both the environment and the economy. By encouraging recycling, reuse, and sustainable practices, Surat has shown how communities can contribute to cleaner cities while creating economic value. Mr Modi stated that such models are increasingly relevant as India pursues its goals of sustainable urbanization and environmental stewardship. He emphasized that the government remains committed to supporting cities and states that embrace innovative solutions for sustainable development. The Prime Minister said that India's progress in renewable energy, urban development, infrastructure creation, and environmental conservation demonstrates the country's ability to pursue growth while remaining committed to ecological responsibility. He observed that the nation's development journey is being guided by a vision that seeks to combine economic prosperity with environmental sustainability and social inclusion. Before addressing the gathering in Surat, Mr Modi visited Hazira, where he reviewed ongoing industrial and infrastructure operations. During the visit, he assessed key projects and developments that contribute to the region's economic growth and industrial strength. The Prime Minister's visit highlighted the importance of industrial hubs such as Hazira in supporting manufacturing, exports, investment, and employment generation. He noted that strong industrial infrastructure is essential for sustaining economic growth and enhancing India's competitiveness in the global marketplace. Throughout his engagements in Daman and Surat, Mr Modi reiterated the government's commitment to building a developed India through a combination of economic reforms, infrastructure expansion, technological innovation, environmental sustainability, and social welfare. He stressed that the country's growth story is being shaped by long-term investments, forward-looking policies, and the collective efforts of citizens across sectors. The Prime Minister expressed confidence that India's strong economic fundamentals, expanding infrastructure, growing renewable energy capacity, and commitment to inclusive development would enable the nation to overcome global challenges and continue its rise as a major economic power. He said the government would remain focused on accelerating development, improving living standards, empowering citizens, and creating opportunities for future generations. Emphasizing that the foundation of the Indian economy remains strong and resilient, Mr Modi concluded that the nation is well-positioned to achieve its aspirations while contributing meaningfully to global growth, sustainability, and innovation in the years ahead.

## Amit Shah lays foundation for Tripura Heritage Tourism Project

**New Delhi:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah formally laid the foundation stone for the transformation of the historic 1917 Pushpabanta Palace into the luxury Taj Pushpabanta Palace Hotel at Kunjaban in Agartala, marking a significant milestone in Tripura's efforts to promote heritage tourism, economic growth and employment generation. The foundation-laying ceremony was attended by Tripura Chief Minister Dr. Manik Saha, royal scion Pradyot Bikram Manikya, senior government officials, tourism stakeholders and a large gathering of citizens who witnessed the launch of one of the most ambitious hospitality projects in the Northeast. The Home Minister solemnized the beginning of the project through traditional Vedic bhumi puja rituals, symbolizing the cultural and spiritual significance of the occasion, before unveiling a commemorative plaque inscribed in Kokborok, Bengali, Hindi and English, reflecting the linguistic and cultural diversity of Tripura. The event highlighted the growing importance being attached to preserving historical landmarks while adapting them for modern economic and tourism needs. The iconic Pushpabanta Palace, built in 1917 and deeply connected with the royal heritage of Tripura, has long stood as a symbol of the state's rich history and architectural legacy. Through its conversion into a world-class heritage hotel, the palace is set to enter a new chapter that combines preservation with development, ensuring that its historical character remains intact while creating new opportunities for tourism and local livelihoods. Developed by the Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL), the hospitality arm behind the prestigious Taj brand, the project will span approximately 7.78 acres and emerge as a premium five-star heritage destination designed to attract visitors from across India and around the world. The upcoming Taj Pushpabanta Palace Hotel will feature 100 premium rooms equipped with modern amenities while

retaining the architectural elegance and historical charm of the palace structure. In addition to luxury accommodation, the project will include a major convention center capable of hosting conferences, business summits, cultural gatherings and high-profile events, thereby expanding Tripura's capacity to participate in the rapidly growing meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions segment of the tourism industry. Officials associated with the project emphasized that the heritage hotel is expected to become a landmark destination in the Northeast, creating a unique blend of royal heritage, luxury hospitality and cultural tourism. During the ceremony, speakers highlighted how the project aligns with broader efforts to strengthen tourism infrastructure across the region and position the Northeast as a major destination for domestic and international travelers. The development is expected to generate significant economic activity through increased visitor arrivals, higher spending on local services and greater visibility for Tripura on the global tourism map. The participation of Amit Shah underscored the importance attached by the Union Government to infrastructure-led development and heritage conservation in the Northeast. Observers noted that the conversion of a historic palace into a luxury heritage hotel represents a model that successfully balances cultural preservation with contemporary economic requirements. The presence of Chief Minister Dr. Manik Saha reflected the state government's commitment to creating investment-friendly conditions and encouraging partnerships that can unlock Tripura's tourism potential. Royal scion Pradyot Bikram Manikya's participation added a special historical dimension to the occasion, linking the state's royal legacy with its future development aspirations. Tourism experts believe that heritage hotels often serve as powerful attractions because they offer visitors a chance to ex-

## Tribal Governance Reforms

**New Delhi:** India's efforts to accelerate inclusive development and ensure equitable progress for tribal communities received a significant boost with the organization of the National Conference on Strengthening Integrated Tribal Development Agencies and Projects (ITDAs/ITDPs) by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi. The conference brought together Project Officers, Directors, senior officials from ITDAs and ITDPs across the country, representatives of various state governments, policymakers, and experts to deliberate on a comprehensive roadmap aimed at transforming tribal governance institutions and strengthening last-mile service delivery. The event highlighted the Government of India's commitment to empowering tribal communities and ensuring their active participation in the nation's journey toward becoming a developed country. The conference assumed particular importance as tribal development initiatives have witnessed unprecedented expansion and investment over the past decade. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has implemented a series of transformative measures focused on socio-economic advancement, educational empowerment, infrastructure development, and livelihood enhancement for tribal populations. Officials noted that the Eklavya Model Residential School (EMRS) network has expanded substantially, with 499 schools now operational across the country, providing quality education to tribal children in remote and underserved regions. Simultaneously, scholarship assistance exceeding Rs 22,000 crore is benefiting nearly three million tribal students annually, helping bridge educational gaps and improve access to higher learning opportunities. Large-scale initiatives such as PM-Janman and the Dharti Aaba Janjati Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan have further expanded developmental outreach in tribal areas, backed by a combined investment exceeding Rs 1 lakh crore. The Ministry's annual budget has also grown significantly from Rs 4,295 crore to nearly Rs 13,000 crore, reflecting the government's sustained emphasis on tribal welfare and inclusion. The conference took place during the Tribal Dignity Festival, a nationwide campaign designed to enhance awareness, participation, and access to government services among tribal communities. The recently concluded public participation initiative titled "Sabse Door, Sabse Pehle" was highlighted as a successful example of grassroots engagement that brought developmental benefits to some of the country's most remote tribal settlements. The inaugural session was graced by President of India, Droupadi Murmu, who launched three landmark initiatives aimed at promoting educational excellence, technological advancement, and community participation among tribal populations. These included the establishment of a Training Fab at the Centre for Nano Science and Engineering (CeNSE) at the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, the launch of Space Labs in 75 Eklavya Model Residential Schools across the country, and the release of the documentary film "Sabse Door, Sabse Pehle." In her address, the President reaffirmed the nation's determination to ensure that every tribal citizen participates equally in India's developmental journey and emphasized that no tribal community should remain excluded from the mainstream of progress.

One of the most significant announcements made during the event was the establishment of India's first dedicated semiconductor microfabrication training facility at CeNSE, located within the Indian Institute of Science in Bengaluru. Supported by financial assistance of Rs 4.7 crore from the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, the facility is expected to provide advanced practical training to students and professionals, contributing to the creation of industry-ready talent for India's expanding semiconductor ecosystem. The initiative aligns with the broader national vision of technological self-reliance and aims to provide tribal youth with access to cutting-edge scientific and industrial opportunities. Equally noteworthy was the launch of state-of-the-art Space Labs in 75 EMRS institutions across 18 states. Developed with support from Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited under its Corporate Social Responsibility framework and backed by an investment of approximately Rs 12 crore, the initiative is expected to directly benefit around 50,000 tribal students. Designed under the guidance of organizations recognized by the Indian Space Research Organisation, the laboratories will promote experiential learning, scientific research, innovation, and technological curiosity among students. The initiative is intended to inspire future careers in aerospace engineering, astronomy, satellite technology, artificial intelligence, robotics, and other emerging STEM fields. President Murmu emphasized the importance of expanding such facilities nationwide to provide tribal students with greater access to advanced scientific education and opportunities. The conference also highlighted the achievements of the "Sabse Door, Sabse Pehle" campaign, which formed a major component of the Janjati Dignity Festival. The campaign focused on reaching remote tribal communities through large-scale public participation and direct service delivery initiatives. Through extensive mobilization efforts, government services were brought closer to tribal populations residing in geographically isolated regions, helping improve awareness and access to welfare schemes. Addressing the gathering, Union Minister for Tribal Affairs Jual Oram emphasized that tribal communities should be viewed not merely as beneficiaries of government welfare programs but as equal partners in India's development journey. He underlined the historical role of ITDAs and ITDPs in addressing developmental disparities in tribal and forest-dependent regions and argued that the time had come for structural reforms to strengthen staffing patterns, financial mechanisms, governance frameworks, and accountability systems. He announced that the Ministry was considering a dedicated capacity-building framework aimed at equipping ITDA officials with modern governance skills, digital tools, management techniques, and best practices. He stressed that integrated area-based planning and effective interdepartmental coordination could significantly improve developmental outcomes in tribal regions. Minister of State for Tribal Affairs Durgadas Uikhey described ITDAs as one of the most important pillars of India's tribal governance architecture and noted that their effectiveness directly influences the quality of life of millions of Scheduled Tribe citizens.

perience history, architecture and local traditions in a living environment rather than through static displays alone. The Taj Pushpabanta Palace Hotel is expected to capitalize on this growing demand by offering guests an immersive experience rooted in Tripura's cultural identity. The project is also anticipated to strengthen related sectors such as transport, handicrafts, cultural performances, local cuisine and small-scale entrepreneurship, creating a multiplier effect throughout the regional economy. One of the most significant benefits highlighted during the event was the potential for employment generation. The hotel and convention center are expected to create substantial direct and indirect job opportunities for local youth, ranging from hospitality management and guest services to maintenance, security, event management and tourism operations. Training and skill development initiatives linked to the project are also expected to improve employability among young people and enable them to participate in a rapidly expanding tourism ecosystem. Stakeholders noted that such projects can help reduce migration by creating attractive career opportunities within the state itself. The foundation-laying ceremony also served as a reminder of the Northeast's growing prominence in India's development narrative. Over the years, the region has witnessed substantial investments in roads, railways, airports, digital connectivity and tourism infrastructure, helping integrate it more closely with national and international markets. The Taj Pushpabanta Palace Hotel project is expected to complement these broader efforts by adding a globally recognized hospitality brand to Tripura's tourism landscape. Analysts suggest that the presence of a luxury heritage hotel can significantly enhance a destination's appeal among high-value travelers seeking unique experiences.

## Book released by Nagaon's DC

**Achyut KR Nath, Morigaon, Jun 8:** In a well attended function,altogether 59 leading women and really praiseworthy for initiating to recognize the talented women socially by providing event was attended by two former presidents of Morigaon District Sahitya Sabha Mileshwar



were honoured by Project Morigaon, a Morigaon based premier literary and cultural organization at Morigaon Pobitara Hut auditorium today. A book title 'Ardha Akashar Jilmil Tora' edited by the president of Project Morigaon Bubumoni Goswami, was released by the Nagaon's DC Debashis Sarma. While inaugurating the book, Nagaon's DC Debashis Sarma said that though they seem to be general in external perspective, but everyone has immersed creative possibility which are hiding inwardly pointing out the leading women in the meeting. He added ' This is a good work

a platform to them'. He also said literary discussion among women is invaluable which help the society healthy and progress that is why the women society should give more importance in creative literary discussion. While highlighting literary works of 59 talented women, the president of Project Morigaon Bubumoni Goswami said that many women who have immersed contribution in different fields have been ignored of getting recognize are the part & parcel and the power of elegance in the society. The event was moderated by General Secretary of Project Morigaon Jitumoni Nath. The

Patar and Mahendra Saikia, BarAssam newspaper owner Birinchi Kumar Sharma, District Journalists Association President Ajit Sharma and other speakers. He delivered a welcoming speech

This is the first time that Bubumoni Goswami has published such a book. The 59 leading women were felicitated with a gamocha, a book and a momento each in the presence of Assam Unnati Sabha Secretary Atanu Sharma. The event was attended by Diplip Devi Oja who recited Parvati Prasad's song and Lukumani Bardoloi recited Zubeen Garg's poem "Water".

## 'Gyanbriksha' Unveiled at Jamuguri in Nagaon on World Environment Day by Pranjal Bordoloi

**David Das, Guwahati, June 8:** "Even future promising writers or intellectuals are born on the pages of wall magazines. Breaking past the limits of wall magazines, they pave their way into the world of print. That is why schools and rural areas must develop these wall magazines as important platforms for intellectual practice and engagement."

These remarks were made by journalist Pranjal Bordoloi while unveiling the wall magazine titled "Gyanbriksha" at Jamuguri Bapuji Higher Secondary School in Nagaon district on World Environment Day.

At the solemn event where the wall magazine was released, Bordoloi spoke about its long history, noting that its immense significance has been acknowledged since ancient times. He pointed out that ancient stone inscriptions serve as proof in the history of civilization, and from an archaeological perspective, these inscriptions are now treated as valuable research material.

Edited by teacher Kanika Mandal, Gyanbriksha will serve as a platform to inspire students of the school in the development of their academic and literary talents, Bordoloi added in his inaugural address.

The program, anchored by the school's Headmaster Jyotiprasad Bora, began with retired teacher Raseswar Nath lighting a lamp in front of a portrait of the beloved artist Zubeen Garg. Another retired teacher, Ratnakanta Nath, paid tribute and prayed for the eternal peace of the soul of the school's recently deceased retired Headmaster, Binod Deka.

Following the event, a fine arts competition was held among the students. The program was attended by School Management Committee President Jagadish Nath, senior AIR artist Gambhir Nath, noted actor Bhuvan Nath, Premeshwar Nath, teachers including Nilakshi Bora, Bharati Devi, Tilo Devi, Dudumoni Goswami, Alaka Nath, Mridul Goswami, Kanika Mandal, and Nipa Bora, as well as staff members Raseswar Nath, Babul Nath, and Khagen Nath. Teachers Arun Chandra Bora and Ripunjoy Nath conducted the quiz, extempore speech, dance, and drawing competitions held among the students.

In keeping with World Environment Day, the tree plantation drive was inaugurated at 9:30 AM by Headmaster Jyotiprasad Bora, ahead of the attractive program featuring the wall magazine unveiling and fine arts competition.

Notably, during the fine arts competition, the school's mid-day meal cook Dibya Devi and meritorious former student Pokhi Rani Devi performed Borgets, entralling everyone present.

Meanwhile, under the initiative of Akoni Sahitya Sabha, World Environment Day was also observed at the premises of Jamuguri No. 90 Primary School. At the event held on the occasion, child welfare worker Dulal Bora said, "On Assam's fertile soil, seeds of fruits are now sprouting all around. Raising and nurturing these young saplings is itself the celebration of World Environment Day."

The Environment Day program, presided over by the school's Headmistress Gitanjali Devi, was attended by special guest Pranjal Bordoloi, Secretary of the Press Club, Bebejia. Anchored by Nagaon District Secretary of Akoni Sahitya Sabha, Bidyut Baruah, the event was attended by teachers Rupjyoti Saikia, Suntimoni Thakuria, and artist Pankaj Nath. Students of the school—Jayashree Devi, Anamika Devi, Angel Saikia, Priyanshu Nath, and Kritika Devi—performed dance and songs, creating a unique atmosphere on World Environment Day.

It may be noted that at 9:00 AM, teachers, local guardians, students, and residents participated in a tree plantation drive within the school premises to mark the day.

## Dr. Anwar Hussain Choudhury of Doboka Conferred Dr. B. R. Ambedkar National Award

**Guwahati, Jun 8:** In a solemn special ceremony organized with the collaboration of

GHRPF Research Institute and various socio-cultural organizations from different states of India, renowned physician, healthcare worker, and humanitarian Dr. Anwar Hussain Choudhury of Doboka in Assam's Hojai district was conferred the prestigious Dr. B. R. Ambedkar National Award by Asia Digital University on May 23 at Dwarka Sector-7, New Delhi. Dr. Choudhury received this honour in recognition of his long-standing and dedicated contributions to healthcare, social service, and humanitarian activities.

The award ceremony was held at the Creative Unlock Auditorium in New Delhi and was conducted by socio-cultural activist Mahananda Sarkar Datta. Distinguished personalities present on the occasion included eminent educationist and retired principal Dr. Sanjay Prabhakar Harse, retired administrative officer Dr. Kashiram Govind Paithan, retired army officer Jivan Govind Vishwakarma, and several other notable individuals.

It is noteworthy that Dr. Anwar Hussain Choudhury of Doboka, Hojai district, has brought pride and honour to the district by receiving the Dr. B. R. Ambedkar National Award. Various organizations, institutions, distinguished individuals, and well-wishers from the region have extended their congratulations and best wishes to him on this achievement.



## District Governor Pankaj Poddar Applauds Service Excellence During Official Visit to Lions Clubs of 'Guwahati Pride' and 'Guwahati Smart City' on Historic Lionism Anniversary Day

**Guwahati, June 8:** The Official Visit of District activities and inspired greater public awareness ration for the commitment and spirit of service

Governor Pankaj Poddar of Lions Clubs International District 322G was held with great enthusiasm, grandeur and fellowship on June 7, at Hotel Ornate, Guwahati, which was jointly organized by "Lions Club of Guwahati Pride" and "Lions Club of Guwahati Smart City" and witnessed the presence of a large gathering of Lions members, dignitaries and guests.

The meeting was jointly presided over by Anup Kumar Jajodia, Charter President of Lions Club of Guwahati Pride, and Madhu Khakholia, President of Lions Club of Guwahati Smart City. Also present on the dais were Region Chairperson Rupa Gaggar and First Lady Ritu Poddar.

A special attraction of the event was its vibrant Assamese theme, which beautifully showcased the rich cultural heritage of Assam. The venue was tastefully decorated with traditional Assamese motifs, while banners, stage décor and the traditional Assamese attire worn by members and guests added colour, elegance and authenticity to the occasion. The unique cultural ambience received widespread appreciation from all present.

During the programme, detailed reports on the service activities undertaken by both clubs during the current Lionistic Year 2025-26 were presented. Sunidhi Agarwal and Anup Kumar Jajodia highlighted the numerous humanitarian projects and community initiatives carried out by 'Guwahati Pride', while Pratibha Choudhary and Madhu Khakholia presented the achievements and service activities of 'Guwahati Smart City.'

In recognition of academic excellence, children of club members who successfully passed their Class X and XII examinations were felicitated. The winners of the Online Bihu Dance Competition organized by 'Guwahati Pride' were also honoured with trophies and certificates.

A highly engaging and thought-provoking session on Emotional Wellness was conducted by CA Priyanka Jain. The interactive session focused on positivity, emotional balance and mental well-being and received enthusiastic participation and appreciation from the audience.

The cultural segment added colour and vibrancy to the programme. Performances by Jayshree Agarwal, Disha Khakholia and several other talented artists captivated the audience and were warmly appreciated. All performers were felicitated for their valuable contributions to the success of the event.

Among the distinguished guests present were Binod Keyal, Ashok Agarwal, Bijay Agarwal, Niru Kabra, Prakash Kabra, Ramesh Jain, Meenakshi Saxena Mathur, Aditya Agarwal, Mohanish Vishwakarma, Rupashree Choudhary and several other prominent members of the Lions fraternity.

Addressing the gathering, District Governor Pankaj Poddar highly appreciated the remarkable service activities undertaken by both clubs. He praised the dedicated leadership of Anup Kumar Jajodia and Madhu Khakholia and congratulated the members for their active participation in community welfare projects which have made a significant impact through their humanitarian initiatives.

The District Governor particularly commended Guwahati Pride for its innovative projects, strong member engagement and consistent service efforts. He described the club as one of the most active and vibrant clubs in the district and praised its excellent communication, documentation and media outreach. He observed that the club's professionally prepared reports and regular press coverage have significantly enhanced the visibility of Lions



and participation in service initiatives.

He further lauded the teamwork, fellowship and enthusiasm displayed by the members of both clubs and remarked that the successful joint organization of the Official Visit reflected the unity, strength and dedication of the Lions movement.

As a mark of recognition and appreciation, District Governor Pankaj Poddar presented the prestigious Lions International President's Pin to Anup Kumar Jajodia and Madhu Khakholia for their dedicated leadership and valuable contributions to Lionism.

Region Chairperson Rupa Gaggar congratulated both clubs on their remarkable achievements and appreciated the wide range of service activities undertaken during the year. She particularly praised the excellent presentation of reports, the beautiful Assamese theme and the extensive publicity efforts undertaken by the clubs, which have significantly enhanced the visibility of Lions service activities in society.

On the occasion, Rajesh Hansaria, Rishabh Lodha, Shyamlee Baruah, Poonam Agarwal and Narendra Lodha also applauded the leadership of Anup Kumar Jajodia and Madhu Khakholia and appreciated the outstanding service projects, teamwork, dedication and enthusiasm displayed by both clubs throughout the year.

First Lady Ritu Poddar expressed her admira-

demonstrated by the members. She appreciated their efforts in serving the needy and encouraged them to continue their noble mission of humanitarian service with dedication and compassion. She also thanked Lord Krishna for blessing and inspiring members to continue their selfless service to humanity.

A noteworthy aspect of the event was that the Official Visit coincided with a historic occasion for the Lions movement. June 7 marks the anniversary of Lionism, as Lions Clubs International was founded on June 7, 1917, in Illinois, USA, by the visionary leader Melvin Jones. Members felt especially honoured and privileged that the District Governor's Official Visit took place on this significant day, making the celebration even more memorable and meaningful. The coincidence added a special dimension to the programme and served as an inspiring reminder of the organization's rich legacy of service spanning more than a century.

The vote of thanks was jointly proposed by Sunidhi Agarwal and Pratibha Choudhary. The programme was efficiently anchored by Chitra Bhartia, Shilpa Nahata and Nidhi Agarwal.

The event concluded on a high note of fellowship, cultural pride, emotional enrichment and renewed commitment to the ideals of Lionism, leaving a lasting impression on all those present.

## Public clear Roads

**City Correspondent, Jun 8:** The local committee members of Fatasil Ambari led by its president Kushal Kalita served to clear the lanes



and drains for the easy travelling of the students of Schools and Colleges from Fatasil Bazar to Santipur Bazar including Krishnanagar to Bharalumukh on 7th of June from 7.00a.m. The short cut roads were dilapidated condition and the responsible public of Fatasil Ambari have taken the practical steps for using the parts of the lane or road.

## Handicrafts Awareness and Exhibition Programme Held at Nagsankar High Secondary School

**Birinchi kr Deka, Raha, June 8:** In a significant initiative aimed at promoting India's rich handicrafts heritage and



fostering awareness among the younger generation, a Handicrafts Exhibition and Awareness Programme (CDAP) was organized at Nagsankar High Secondary School in Biswanath district by the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from the school's Headmistress, teaching staff, students, and members of the local community, creating a vibrant platform for interaction, learning, and cultural appreciation. Addressing the gathering, Assistant Director of the Handicrafts Department, S. K. Gupta, highlighted the immense potential of the handicrafts sector in generating employment, promoting entrepreneurship, and strengthening rural livelihoods. He emphasized the importance of

## OECD cuts 2026 global growth forecasts over Mideast war fallout

Paris: The global economic outlook hinges on how long the war in the Middle East lasts, with recession in some countries and sharply higher inflation a real possibility if it drags on into next year, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation



and Development warned on Wednesday (Jun 3). If the conflict proves short-lived, Gulf oil and gas production could gradually return to pre-crisis levels from the third quarter with shortages confined to Asia and cushioned by strategic reserves and shipments from other producers. In that baseline scenario, global growth is projected to slow from 3.4 per cent in 2025 to 2.8 per cent in 2026 before picking up to 3.1 per cent in 2027, broadly in line with the OECD's March forecasts. But if energy disruption persists well into next year, global growth could slow sharply to 2.1 per cent in 2026 and 1.8 per cent in 2027 - rates rarely seen outside major crises such as the 2008 to 2009 financial crash or the COVID-19 pandemic. Some economies could fall into outright recession, with Asian countries reliant on Middle East energy supplies expected to be hit hardest. Higher energy prices could add 0.4 percentage points to global inflation in 2026 and 1.3 percentage points in 2027, likely prompting central banks to hike interest rates by 0.5 to 0.75 percentage points in the short term. In the baseline scenario, the OECD forecast that inflation across

G20 economies would peak at 4 per cent this year before slowing to 3.1 per cent next year with interest rates largely on hold this year and cuts expected next year. Global trade growth is set to moderate following a strong 2025, though robust demand for AI-related goods and investment, especially in Asia, should provide some support.

### UNEVEN OUTLOOKS ACROSS MAJOR ECONOMIES

In the baseline scenario, stronger energy exports are expected to support US growth, partly offsetting the drag from higher prices on household purchasing power. Growth is projected to ease from 2.1 per cent in 2025 to 2.0 per cent in 2026 and 1.8 per cent in 2027. In Europe, eurozone growth was seen slowing from 1.4 per cent to 0.8 per cent this year before rising to 1.2 per cent next year as resilient labour markets and higher defence spending help offset government belt-tightening. In Britain, growth is projected to slow to 0.9 per cent this year before recovering to 1.1 per cent in 2027 as global trade stabilises and financial conditions ease. In Asia, China was seen slowing from 5.0 per cent growth in 2025 to 4.5 per cent in 2026 and 4.3 per cent in 2027 with ample energy reserves limiting exposure to oil price spikes. Exports are set to benefit from lower U.S. tariffs and a competitive tech sector, although a property slump remains a drag. Japan is expected to be among the hardest-hit by trade disruptions linked to the Gulf conflict, with growth slowing from 1.1 per cent in 2025 to 0.6 per cent in 2026 before edging up to 0.8 per cent in 2027, a downgrade from March. While subsidies will help cushion the energy shock, the OECD said Japan needs a "clear and credible" plan to rein in public finances over the medium term as interest rates rise.

## UK interior minister condemns violent reaction to handcuffed student's murder

London: Britain's interior minister Shabana Mahmood on Wednesday (Jun 3) condemned as "completely unacceptable" violent protests which broke out over the case of an 18-year-old who was handcuffed as he lay dying after his killer falsely alleged a racist attack. The murder of student Henry Nowak last year has dominated headlines in Britain since the sentencing of his Sikh killer on Monday, with the footage of officers ignoring a dying innocent man sparking a political storm about how police treat different ethnicities. The government welcomed a move by police chiefs to review guidelines, which were drawn up in response to well-documented incidents of racism in policing, but denied the existence of a "two-tier" system, a much-discussed topic on social media. "There can be no justification for hijacking this tragedy to stir up violence and disorder," Mahmood said, after protesters clashed with police last night in the port city of Southampton, close to where Nowak was killed. A further protest is planned outside parliament in London at midday (7pm, Singapore time) on Wednesday. Nowak's family called his treatment by police "inhumane and degrading", but in a statement outside court, his father said his death should not be "used to create further division, hatred or tension". Court pathologists found that Nowak would have died of his injuries at the scene regardless of the emergency response. He was handcuffed by officers as he lay dying. They later called an ambulance and performed CPR.

### POLICE TREATMENT SPARKS ANGER ACROSS BRITAIN

The populist leader of the anti-immigrant Reform Party Nigel Farage said that Nowak's death showed how police officers gave preferential treatment to ethnic minorities, and that people should respond with "pure cold rage". Elon Musk, the United States billionaire who is a vocal critic of Britain's government, police, and anti-racism and diversity policies, has posted

repeatedly about the case, saying on Tuesday: "Did you know that official police policy requires them to be racist against Whites?" Mahmood on Tuesday said everyone was equal before the law, and urged people to wait for the outcome of an investigation by the Independent Office of Police Conduct into how

the Nowak incident was handled. But the case has already prompted a reassessment. The National Police Chiefs' Council said they were reviewing the language of guidance given to officers, which under the Police Race Action Plan advises officers not to be "colour blind" in their approach and to treat ethnicities differently. "It's right that it should be reviewed, but I think that shouldn't be taken to mean we need to rip up the whole system, we don't," policing minister Sarah Jones told Sky News. Hampshire Police has apologised and said in a statement on Tuesday that one of the officers involved in the arrest had resigned, while three others were being treated as witnesses in the investigation. In the attack last December, Nowak's killer Vickrum Digwa, 23, lied



was sentenced to life in prison on Monday. Farage, whose party is leading in the polls, tried to draw parallels with the 2020 killing of George Floyd in the US, which sparked the Black Lives Matter movement, contrasting it with what he said had been a muted response to the Nowak death. Floyd had said "I can't breathe" as a police officer knelt on his neck for several minutes. At a protest on Tuesday evening, hundreds of people waved flags and held up signs saying "Henry Nowak", "Unite the Kingdom" and "I Can't Breathe". Mahmood called the violence that later followed, when objects were hurled at police, "disgraceful", and said those responsible would face the full force of the law. Two arrests were made, one for assaulting an officer.

## Hostilities flare in Iran war, with Kuwait airport hit by drone strike

Dubai: Gulf hostilities flared again on Wednesday (Jun 3), with an Iranian missile attack damaging Kuwait's airport and the US military carrying out strikes near the Strait of Hormuz, as diplomacy between Washington and Tehran showed little progress. The latest flare-up, which sent oil prices up more than 1 per cent, comes with the conflict stalemated in a shaky ceasefire and the Strait of Hormuz largely closed, more than three months after initial US and Israeli strikes on Iran. Kuwait's foreign ministry said that one person was killed in the attack, which caused damage to "vital infrastructure including diplomatic missions". Flights at Kuwait International Airport were suspended and diverted elsewhere until further notice, the state news agency said, citing aviation authorities, after an Iranian drone and missile attack on its T1 building. The attack caused injuries and severely damaged some airport facilities, it added, but gave no further details. Kuwait Airways suspended operations after the attack, the airline said in a statement. Hours after, the Kuwaiti aviation authority said that it would resume flights for Kuwait Airways, its flagship airline. Bahrain's army intercepted three missiles and several drones, it said in a statement. Earlier, the US Central Command said two Iranian missiles shot at Kuwait fell short or broke up in flight, while several ballistic missiles aimed at regional targets failed and three missiles heading for Bahrain were intercepted. Since the conflict began, Iran has repeatedly attacked targets in the Gulf region home to US military bases. Central Command said the US military also downed Iranian drones targeting civilian ships in regional waters and US forces in Kuwait, and carried out strikes on Qeshm Island near the Strait of Hormuz following attempted attacks by Iran. Iran's state media said the elite Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) attacked the headquarters of the US Fifth Fleet in Bahrain, as well as an airbase and helicopters in an unspecified regional country. It sent missiles and drones in response to what the IRGC described as a US attack on a communications tower south of Qeshm. Central Command said all the attacks failed, however, and US forces stayed ready to repel "unwarranted Iranian aggression". Last week, Iran and the United States said they had reached a tentative initial agreement to halt the war, but they have yet to sign off on the deal. Iranian media said Tehran has not communicated with Washington for several days, but US President Donald Trump said negotiations had not stopped. "The conversations between us have been going on continuously, including four days ago, three days ago, two days ago, one day ago, and today," he said in a social media post.

DISCUSSIONS ON NUCLEAR PROGRAMME Since mid-March, Trump has repeatedly said he is close to a deal to end the fighting and allow negotiators to tackle thorny issues, in-

cluding the future of Iran's nuclear programme. Trump has said his top priority is to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Iran denies it is developing a nuclear bomb and says its atomic programme is for peaceful purposes. Tehran is seeking access to billions of dollars in oil revenues, waivers on crude exports, a lifting of a US blockade on its ports and continued leverage over the strait, traversed by a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas traffic before the war. Iranian media said the IRGC's

cratic Senator Cory Booker of New Jersey, who disagreed.

### ISRAEL KEEPS UP STRIKES IN LEBANON

The war has killed thousands since it began on Feb 28, mainly in Iran and Lebanon, while also causing global economic pain by pushing up energy prices. It also triggered the latest round of conflict between Israel and Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, with Israel pursuing its deepest incursion into Lebanon in 25 years. On Tuesday, Israel kept up strikes

on a string of southern towns, Lebanese security sources said, despite a US-mediated partial ceasefire unveiled on Monday. The move failed to reassure many Lebanese, 1.2 million of whom have been displaced, and an Israeli drone over Beirut kept residents on edge on Tuesday. "Every time we return to our homes, there is a warning for us to be displaced again," said Faten Al Chehime, who fled to a displacement camp on Monday from her home in Beirut's southern suburbs, just two weeks after she had returned. On Tuesday, the world's largest shipping group, MSC, said two projectiles struck one of its vessels while in Iraq's Umm Qasr port the previous day. The IRGC said it carried out the attack in retaliation for a US attack on an Iranian vessel in the Gulf of Oman. Children's agency UNICEF flagged the widening humanitarian crisis as surging transport prices and supply chain disruptions hinder life-saving aid to countries from Gaza to Nigeria.



navy targeted a vessel it identified as the Panaya with missiles in response to what it said was a US attack on an Iranian tanker near Hormuz. "Disrupting the security of the Strait of Hormuz will carry a heavy price for the US military," media cited the IRGC as saying. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio told lawmakers on Tuesday that the US would agree to sanctions relief only if Iran agreed to give up its nuclear activity. "The war is over," Rubio declared during a sharp exchange with Demo-

## Solomon Islands' PM says to review secretive security pact with China

Canberra: New Solomon Islands Prime Minister Matthew Wale said on Wednesday (Jun 3) that he would review a secretive 2022 security pact with Beijing, which rattled Canberra and Washington by opening the door to Chinese forces in the South Pacific. Asked about that pact alongside Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, the Solomons leader - who was elected last month - said he had been "praying and fasting" about the Chinese security deal. "We are going to be reviewing, as we are reviewing other security agreements that we have with many other countries," he said. Asked about Wale's comments, China's foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning told a news conference that Beijing stood "ready to expand pragmatic cooperation with the new government of the Solomon Islands across all fields". Australia and the United States have been sharply critical of the 2022 deal over concerns it could allow a permanent Chinese navy presence in the South Pacific. It was signed under one of Wale's predecessors, Manasseh Sogavare, who was seen as Beijing's staunchest ally in the South Pacific. Wale said the deal contained a non-disclosure agreement, and he had not seen it until just before his visit to Australia. "I have had to remove certain people from key positions. I have not been afforded a copy, even, of

that agreement, until a day before I left, so I have not had a good look at it," he told a news conference in Canberra. Australia is the largest aid donor to the country of 800,000 people that sits 2,000km to its north-east, and historically provided police support during crises. After the Solomons switched diplomatic ties from Taiwan to Beijing in 2019 and struck the security pact, relations with Canberra and Washington deteriorated. China quickly became the strategically-



located Pacific island state's largest bilateral creditor, with Solomon Islands' debt to Chinese banks for infrastructure projects doubling last year. Seeking to counter Beijing's in-

### North Korea slams US remarks comparing South to 'dagger'

Seoul: North Korea on Wednesday (Jun 3) slammed remarks by the top American military official in South Korea comparing his host nation to "the dagger in the heart of Asia", saying it reflected Washington's strategy to contain China. General Xavier Brunson made the comments in an interview as speculation builds that Washington may seek to expand the US Forces Korea (USFK) role in countering China's regional influence. About 28,500 US troops are stationed in South Korea to help guard against the nuclear-armed North. The state-run Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) published a commentary by analyst Kim Myong Chol, who said Brunson's remarks showed the US as "the chieftain of harassing peace and the world's worst war empire". The comments reflected how Washington intended to use South Korea "as an important geopolitical instrument to realise its regional strategy aimed at containing China", said Kim, who is based in Japan and considered an unofficial overseas spokesman for North Korea. China

has for decades been Pyongyang's main trading partner and a key source of diplomatic and economic backing. Seoul's presidential office said at the weekend that it was aware of Brunson's remarks and has been "maintaining communication at various levels regarding all relevant issues". Local media outlets including News1 and JTBC reported that Seoul has raised concerns with the United States. USFK commander Brunson said in the interview, "When (the Chinese) look out from the east coast of China, what they see is there's Korea, the dagger in the heart of Asia." Brunson also compared Japan to a "shield that's sort of a backstop" against China's regional ambitions, according to a transcript posted by the Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College. Beijing's embassy in Seoul last week condemned the remarks as having "truly crossed the line" and "rife with hostility and aggression toward China", asking whether they were authorised by Washington.

### Trump confirms using foul language with Israel's Netanyahu

Washington: US President Donald Trump has confirmed a tense exchange with Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in which he reportedly berated his close ally with expletives. In an interview published Wednesday (Jun 3) in the New York Post, Trump was asked about the conversation he had with Netanyahu over the phone on Monday. "You said, 'Are you f-ing crazy? What are you f-ing doing? I helped you stay out of jail.' Is that true? Did you speak to him in those terms?" the in-

terviewer asked. "I did," Trump responded. "I was a little bit perturbed at his constantly fighting with Lebanon." "I said, 'Bibi, we gotta stop this.'" Trump went on to say he had a "very good relationship" with Netanyahu. "We've done well together... I like Bibi a lot." Trump unleashed the profane tirade over Israel's threats to bomb the Lebanese capital Beirut, fearing it would undermine talks with Tehran to end the war in the Middle East, the Axios news outlet and ABC News reported.

fluence, Australia has seized the opportunity to rebuild ties, hosting Wale on his first international visit as leader. Albanese said on Wednesday the two countries would begin work on a "comprehensive" new treaty as well as deepen ties in policing, with Australia seeking to be the top security partner for the Pacific. The treaty will be "underpinned by mutual trust, respect, and open dialogue", the prime minister said.

### POLICING, INFRASTRUCTURE DEALS

"We have sought a reset in this relationship - we acknowledge there have been problems over the last few years," Wale told reporters. The Pacific should turn to other countries within the region for their security, he stressed. The leaders also agreed to push ahead with a major police training deal. Australia's offer to fund the expansion of the Solomons' own police force had stalled under the previous Solomon Islands government, which allowed Chinese police to enter villages to collect household and biometric data. Wale also said he was in discussions with Australia and the US for financing for critical infrastructure such as ports. Former Solomon Islands prime minister Sogavare rejected US offers of infrastructure grants, instead opting to partner with Chinese state companies. Australia has sought to bind South Pacific countries closer by striking treaties with a string of small but strategically located island states, Tuvalu, Nauru and Papua New Guinea, offering significant economic support in return for curbs on Chinese security ties. Vanuatu and Fiji have said they are close to signing similar deals.

## Dalmia Bharat celebrates World Environment Week

**Guwahati:** Reinforcing its commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable development, Dalmia Bharat Ltd., one of India's leading cement companies, observed World Environment Week 2026 across its operations in Assam through a series of community engagement initiatives in Umrangso, Jagiroad and Lanka. Aligned



with the global theme, "A Global Call for Climate Action," the celebrations brought together over 615 participants, including employees, students, teachers and local community members, encouraging collective action towards environmental conservation and climate responsibility. As part of the celebrations, Dalmia Bharat organized a range of community-centric initiatives across its locations. In Umrangso, plantation drives, a drawing competition and an environmental awareness rally were conducted at Lovelywell Durong Memorial School, with enthusiastic participation from students, teachers, parents and members of the Environment, Health and Safety (EHS) team. In Lanka, 55 saplings were planted at the Rehabilitation Colony ad-

joining the plant premises to strengthen local green cover and promote ecological balance. At Jagiroad, a series of activities including awareness campaigns, plantation drives, green belt maintenance and plant cleanliness initiatives, along with drawing and slogan-writing competitions and an environmental quiz was observed. As part of the programme, 200 saplings were planted encouraging employees and community members to actively contribute towards environmental conservation and sustainability. Commenting on the occasion Company spokesperson said, "Environmental care is not just about protecting nature but it is about safeguarding the resources, ecosystems and communities that support our collective future. Clean air, water security, biodiversity and climate resilience are fundamental to sustainable development and the well-being of future generations. At Dalmia Bharat, we recognize that our responsibility extends beyond business operations and we are committed to creating long-term environmental and social value. World Environment Day provides an opportunity to reaffirm this commitment and inspire collective action towards building a greener, more sustainable future for all." As a company committed to sustainable growth, Dalmia Bharat places environmental stewardship at the heart of its operations. Through initiatives focused on renewable energy adoption, carbon footprint reduction, biodiversity conservation, water positivity and green manufacturing practices, the company continues to drive meaningful progress towards its sustainability goals.

## LPU hosts second edition of "Experience LPU – A Day of Lifetime Inspiration" in Guwahati

**Guwahati:** Lovely Professional University (LPU) successfully organised the second edition of its flagship outreach programme, "Experience LPU – A Day of Lifetime Inspiration", in Guwahati, attracting an enthusiastic response from students and parents across Assam and neighbouring states. Participants from Guwahati, Shillong, Tezpur, Nagaon, Bongaigaon, Goalpara, Barpeta, Dibrugarh and Dimapur attended the programme to explore higher education opportunities, career pathways and scholarship prospects offered by the university. The programme was graced by noted academician, science activist and author Tapan Kumar Sarma as the Chief Guest. A former Vice Principal and Associate Professor of Physics at North Gauhati College, Sarma has made significant contributions towards the popularisation of science through the People's Science Movement and has authored several acclaimed works on science, history and the Assamese diaspora. The event was designed to provide students and parents with comprehensive information on higher education opportunities, career-oriented learning, student development initiatives, placement support, international exposure programmes and the wide range of scholarship opportunities available at Lovely Professional University. Senior university representatives, including Dr. Rajesh Verma, Dr. Vishal Sharma, Dr. Varun Kumar and Dr. Balpreet Singh, interacted extensively with attendees and addressed queries related to admissions, academics and student life. The sessions offered detailed insights into LPU's academic ecosystem, industry collaborations, internships, placement opportunities, skill-development initiatives and global learning experiences that prepare students for future careers.

One of the major highlights of the programme was the recognition and distribution of scholarships to deserving students. Scholarships

environment, support systems and career prospects available at LPU. The programme was successfully coordinated and executed by the LPU



were awarded on the basis of academic excellence, achievements in sports and cultural activities, as well as performance in national-level competitive examinations. The initiative received an encouraging response from both students and parents. The event witnessed active participation from students accompanied by their parents, reflecting the growing aspiration among the youth of the region for quality higher education and future-ready career opportunities. The interactive format of the programme enabled participants to gain a deeper understanding of the academic envi-

Guwahati Office team under the leadership of Mr. Bhuwan Sareen, Assistant Director & Zonal Head – East Region, and Mr. Jitendra Kumar Dixit, Assistant Director – Communication, Engagement & Alliances, Lovely Professional University. The successful conduct of "Experience LPU – A Day of Lifetime Inspiration" further reinforces Lovely Professional University's commitment to empowering students through educational awareness, career guidance and transformative learning opportunities, while strengthening its engagement with aspiring learners across the North East.

## Indian surgeon sets world record with longest robotic cardiac telesurgery across continents

**Guwahati/ New Delhi:** In a landmark achievement that could redefine the future of surgery worldwide, a world record in medical history was established with the successful completion of a robot-assisted cardiac procedure across nearly 20,000 kilometres of fibre network distance between Guyana and India, making it the world's longest-distance robotic cardiac telesurgery ever conducted. Prior to this historic event, the longest robotic cardiac telesurgery done was from Strasbourg, France to Indore, India with a communication distance of 10,000 kilometers utilizing the Made in India SSI Mantra Surgical Robotic System. To date, 22 cardiac telesurgeries have been successfully performed using the SSI Mantra system, the only robotic surgery system globally that has been used for cardiac telesurgery. The historic procedure connected Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC), Guyana with IRCAD India, Indore, where renowned robotic cardiac surgeon Dr. Sudhir Srivastava remotely performed a Left Internal Mammary Artery (LIMA) takedown using the India-developed SSI Mantra Surgical Robotic System.

How The Surgery Was Carried Out? For the historic intercontinental procedure, Dr. Sudhir Srivastava created a operated remotely from Georgetown, Guyana using the SSI Mantra/Asana tele-surgeon console - a compact, chair-based robotic surgery command system designed to perform procedures from distant locations in real time. The patient-side robotic setup was stationed at IRCAD India in Indore, where the robotic arms and surgical instruments precisely replicated Dr. Srivastava's hand movements from nearly 20,000 kilometers away. The system functioned with a network latency of 290-300 milli seconds, allowing communication between both locations during the surgery. Equipped with high-definition 3D visualisation and advanced robotic controls, the technology enabled the surgical teams in Guyana and India to coordinate the complex cardiac procedure with precision and stability despite the vast geographical distance. In India, the surgery was supported by Dr. Lalit Malik, Chief Cardiac Surgeon at Manipal Hospitals Jaipur, Dr. Ram Shukla, Consultant Cardiac Surgeon at Bhandari Hospital and Research Center, and Dr. Mohit Bhandari, Bariatric Surgery and President of IRCAD India. Dr. Mohamed Irfan Ali, President of Guyana, said, "As Guyana celebrates its 60th Independence Anniversary, we are proud to mark the beginning of a transformative new chapter in our nation's healthcare journey. Our vision has always been to position Guyana as a leader in advanced healthcare and medical innovation, and today we take a significant step forward with the adoption of robotic surgery technology, one of the most groundbreaking advancements in modern medicine. Adding to the significance of this historic milestone, renowned Indian surgeon Dr. Sudhir Srivastava and his team successfully performed the world's longest-distance telesurgery, operating remotely from Guyana on a patient in India across a distance of nearly 20,000 kilometers. This landmark achievement showcases the immense potential of technology to transcend geographical boundaries, while placing Guyana at the forefront of next-generation healthcare innovation. He further added, we are confident that with the SSI Mantra robotic surgical system and its comprehensive training ecosystem,

Guyana will rapidly build a strong pool of skilled robotic surgery practitioners. This initiative will enhance the capabilities of our healthcare workforce, expand access to advanced medical care, and further strengthen Guyana's position as an emerging leader in healthcare innovation in the region". Commenting on the achievement, Dr. Sudhir Srivastava, Chairman and CEO, SS Innovations International, said, "The successful completion of this intercontinental cardiac telesurgery between Guyana and India at a world-record distance of 20,000 kms, marks a historic milestone for SS Innovations and our SSI Mantra surgical robotic system. With each new remote procedure, we continue to push the boundaries of telesurgery and move closer to democratizing access to world-class surgical expertise globally. I would like to thank the leadership of Guyana, especially President Dr. Mohamed Irfan Ali, and the Honourable Health Minister, Dr. Frank Anthony, for positioning the country as a modern robotic surgery hub for the Caribbean. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the remarkable clinical and technical teams in both Guyana and India for making this telesurgery possible."

Hon. Dr. Frank Anthony, Minister of Health, Government of Guyana said, "As Guyana marks its 60th Independence Anniversary, this landmark achievement serves as a testament to the transformative role of innovation in advancing healthcare. We congratulate the team at SS Innovations for successfully accomplishing this historic world-record in robotic cardiac telesurgery. This collaboration represents an important step forward in strengthening Guyana's healthcare capabilities and expanding access to advanced medical technologies. We are confident that initiatives such as these will help enhance patient care, build local expertise, and contribute towards improving the quality of life for the people of Guyana." H. E. Seeraj Dharamkumar, High Commissioner of the Co-operative, Republic of Guyana to India said, "The successful completion of the world's longest-distance robotic cardiac telesurgery between Guyana and India is a remarkable milestone in the advancement of global healthcare. This achievement demonstrates the transformative potential of technology in overcoming geographical barriers and expanding access to

specialized medical expertise. As Guyana continues to strengthen its healthcare infrastructure and embrace innovative medical solutions, collaborations such as this play a vital role in enhancing patient care and building future-ready healthcare capabilities. Our association with SS Innovations reflects a shared vision of making advanced healthcare more accessible and inclusive. We believe this partnership will contribute significantly to developing robotic surgery expertise, improving healthcare outcomes, and reinforcing Guyana's position as a growing center for medical innovation in the Caribbean region." As part of the launch of Guyana's National Robotic Surgery Programme, three robotic procedures were successfully performed on the inaugural day. The achievement also coincided with Guyana's Diamond Jubilee celebrations commemorating the country's 60th Independence anniversary, adding symbolic significance to what healthcare experts are calling the beginning of a new era in borderless surgical care. The SSI Mantra's tele-surgical architecture has been specifically designed to maintain procedural precision across high-latency, long-haul network environments. To date, more than 173 telesurgeries have been successfully performed globally using the SSI Mantra surgical robotic platform. Additionally, the SSI Mantra system is the only system globally that has been used for robotic cardiac telesurgery. The Company recently received regulatory approval for the SSI Mantra Surgical Robotic System from Guyana's Government Analyst-Food and Drug Department (GA-FDD) in May 2026. The SSI Mantra robotic surgical system has received regulatory approval in fourteen countries across Asia, the Middle East, Africa, South America, and Eastern Europe, reflecting its growing global acceptance and clinical adoption. The countries where the system has been approved include India, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Indonesia, Kenya, Oman, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, Guyana, Nepal, and Iraq. These approvals highlight the expanding international footprint of the Made-in-India robotic surgery platform and underscore its potential to enhance access to advanced, technology-driven surgical care across diverse healthcare systems worldwide.

## Modern English School creates history at CATC-34, JNV Nalbari

**Guwahati:** Modern English School, Kahilipara etched its name in history at the 10-day Combined Annual Training Camp (CATC-34) held at JNV Nalbari, conducted by 1 Assam Battalion NCC. A 36-member NCC contingent from Modern English School participated in the camp, marking the institution's debut in the competitive arena. In a stellar performance, the school secured 12 trophies out of 14 competitions and was honoured with the prestigious Best Institution Award (Jointly with two other city based schools South Point School and Little Flower School). Achievements at CATC-34: 1st Position: Best Drill Contingent, Group Song, Solo Song, Idea & Innovation, 2nd & 3rd Positions: Best Cadet JD/JW, Solo Dance, Instrumental Music, Group Dance, Sports. These accomplishments were achieved under the dedicated mentorship of CTO Parveen Sultana, whose guidance proved instrumental in shaping the cadets' performance. The journey to victory was marked by rigorous training, demanding schedules, and unwavering discipline. The cadets endured physical exhaustion and challenges with resilience, turning countless hours of practice into triumph. Modern English School extends its heartfelt congratulations to all cadets and CTO Parveen Sultana for this landmark success.

## LGBI Airport pays tribute to Lokapriya Gopinath Bardoloi on his Birth Anniversary

**Guwahati:** Lokapriya Gopinath Bardoloi International Airport (LGBI Airport) observed the birth anniversary of Lokapriya Gopinath Bardoloi, the first Chief Minister of Assam and a visionary leader whose contributions continue to inspire genera-



tions. The programme commenced with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp and offering of floral tributes before the statue of Lokapriya Gopinath Bardoloi by Chief Airport Officer Mukesh Nankani, along with officials of Guwahati International Airport Limited (GIAL) and the Central Industrial

Security Force (CISF). As part of the observance, passengers at the terminal were invited to offer floral tributes to the iconic leader. The terminal team also distributed saplings to passengers to mark the occasion and celebrate the legacy of the Bharat Ratna awardee. The annual observance reflects LGBI Airport's commitment to honouring the life and contributions of the leader after whom the airport is named. The airport's new integrated terminal, inspired by the culture, craftsmanship and natural beauty of Assam, serves as a modern gateway to North-east India. With its blend of regional identity, digital innovation and passenger-centric facilities, the terminal reflects the aspirations of a progressive Assam while preserving its rich heritage. Through such initiatives, the airport continues to celebrate and preserve the legacy of Lokapriya Gopinath Bardoloi.

## Link between smoking & lung cancer

**Guwahati:** Every No Tobacco Day is a reminder that lung cancer prevention starts from the moment you quit using tobacco consumption. Tobacco smoking remains one of the most firmly established causes of lung cancer. Studies have repeatedly shown that cigarette smoke contains thousands of chemicals, including known cancer-causing substances which can damage the DNA of lung cells and gradually trigger cancerous changes. According to Dr. George Karimundackal, Principal Director Thoracic Surgery, Nanavati Max Institute of Cancer Care, Nanavati Max Super Specialty Hospital, Mumbai, the concern is not limited to people who smoke. Breathing other people's tobacco smoke, commonly called passive smoking or second-hand smoke, also increases risk. A major analysis of epidemiological studies found a higher risk of lung cancer among non-smokers who lived with smokers compared with those who lived with non-smokers. The study concluded that environmental tobacco smoke is also a cause of lung cancer. This is especially important for families, be-

cause children, elderly people and non-smoking spouses may be exposed inside homes, cars and closed public spaces without choosing that risk themselves. Tobacco affects the lungs in more ways than one. It can lead to chronic cough, breathlessness, repeated chest infections, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and reduced lung capacity. In cancer, smoking has been linked not only to the development of lung cancer but also to poorer outcomes after diagnosis. Research shows that lung cancer risk rises with the duration and intensity of tobacco use, and smoking is strongly linked with small-cell lung cancer and squamous-cell carcinoma, while changes in cigarette design and inhalation patterns have also contributed to shifts in lung cancer subtypes over the decades. The most effective protection is complete tobacco cessation and avoidance of second-hand smoke. People who smoke should not wait for symptoms such as persistent cough, blood in sputum, chest pain, unexplained weight loss, breathlessness or repeated pneumonia.

## Jayant Chaudhary inaugurates daycare facility at Kaushal Bhawan

**Guwahati:** In a significant step towards fostering a more inclusive, compassionate, and people-centric work environment, Shri Jayant Chaudhary, Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Minister of State for Education, Government of India, inaugurated a new Daycare Facility for Children of employees at Kaushal Bhawan—the headquarters of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE). Spread across nearly 600 sq. metres, the new Daycare Facility offers a welcoming, safe, and nurturing environment where children can learn, play, rest, and grow. The facility features comfortable sleeping and resting areas, an engaging play and activity zone, age-appro-

priate learning resources, child-friendly furniture, hygienic washrooms, and specially designed feeding and baby-changing rooms to ensure the comfort and well-being of infants and young children. Staffed by trained caregivers and support personnel, the DayCare Facility has been thoughtfully designed to cater to the developmental and care needs of children aged 6 months to 6 years. The newly inaugurated Daycare facility goes beyond infrastructure—it embodies a culture that values care, celebrates childhood, and enables employees to balance professional commitments with family responsibilities. By bringing quality childcare closer to the workplace, the initiative aims to support working parents and re-

flects MSDE's commitment to fostering a more inclusive, family-friendly, and people-centric work environment. Smt. Debashree Mukherjee, Secretary, Shri Dilip Kumar, Director General (Training), Directorate General of Training (DGT); Prof. (Dr.) Ashok Kumar Gaba, Executive Member, NCVET; Shri Niranjan Kumar Sudhansu, Additional Secretary, MSDE; Smt. Manisha Sensarma, Senior Economic Advisor, MSDE; Smt. Hena Usman, Joint Secretary, MSDE; Smt. Archana Mayaram, Economic Advisor, MSDE; Smt. Manasi Sahay Thakur, Joint Secretary, MSDE; Shri M. Subramanian, Joint Secretary, MSDE along with other senior officials from the ministry, DGT, NCVET, and NSDC, were present on the occasion.

## Sibling rivals line up for different teams at World Cup

**June 8** : Four sets of brothers will compete at the World Cup, all for different countries in a reflection of how steady migration around the world has had an impact on football. Desire Doue and his older brother Guela are French-born, but while Paris St Germain starlet Desire plays for Les Bleus, Guela is an overlapping fullback for the Ivory Coast from where their father hails. The Williams brothers Inaki and Nico are both Basque-born, and the 23-year-old Nico was player of the match when Spain beat England in the European Championship final two years ago. Older brother Inaki, who turns 32 next week, played once for Spain too, but only in a friendly, which qualified him after a hiatus to switch allegiance and declare for Ghana, the country from where his parents migrated. Also in the Ghana side is the 30-year-old Dutch-born defender Derrick Luckassen, who was added at the last minute to the World Cup squad as an injury replacement and joins his half-brother Brian Brobbey at the tournament. Brobbey, 24, is a back-up striker for the Netherlands, going into the tournament in Canada, Mexico, and the United States on the back of a strong second half of the Premier League season with Sunderland. They share the same mother but have different fathers. Australia selected Scottish-born centre-back Harry Souttar, 27, while his two-year-older brother John will be playing for Scotland. They were born in Aberdeen, but their mother is Australian, and Harry switched his allegiance seven years ago after being capped at junior level by the Scots. In the opening stage of the tournament, there are no scheduled meetings between any of the

siblings, but only last week, Desire watched from the stands in Nantes as Guela swept home the opening goal to help the Ivorians beat France 2-1 in a warm-up friendly.

### BROTHERS TEASED BEFORE THE MATCH

"Sure, we teased each other a bit before the match," Guela told reporters afterwards. "In the end, we're family and we're very happy for each other."

The two brothers, born in Angers in northwestern France, took their first steps together at Stade Rennais, but Guela, who is three years older, was overshadowed by his younger brother's prodigious talent, which has seen him move to PSG and win back-to-back Champions League honours. Migration to Europe over the last decades has opened a major pool of talent for African national teams who dip into the diaspora ranks for players. World Cup participants like Algeria, Cape Verde, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Morocco, Senegal, and Tunisia have more European-born players in their 26-man squad than those born at home. There has been only one case of siblings squaring off against each other at the World Cup, and it happened in back-to-back tournaments. Jerome Boateng was at the back for Germany against his older half-brother Kevin Prince, who suited up for Ghana, in a 1-0 win for the Germans in Johannesburg. Four years later, the pair were at opposite ends again in Fortaleza when the group game ended 2-2. "Of course, it was something special, but somehow it was also different four years later," said Jerome Boateng. "In 2010, it was truly something new, something extraordinary."

## MLS aims to turn 2026 World Cup attention into lasting gains

**Los Angeles** : Major League Soccer Commissioner Don Garber says the league is treating the 2026 FIFA World Cup not as a six-week showcase but as the launchpad for a new era, aiming to convert global attention on North American soccer into lasting growth in fans, relevance and stature. Garber said MLS began planning for the tournament after hosting rights were awarded in 2018, using the event as fuel to expand, improve infrastructure and strengthen the league's global profile. "We sat back and said, this will be that North Star," Garber told Reuters in an interview. "What do we need to do to be a different league by the time the World Cup is on our shores?" Since then, MLS has added seven teams and nine soccer-specific stadiums, changed roster rules to encourage investment in young players, increased attendance by 35 per cent and launched a global media partnership with Apple. Club valuations had also tripled since 2018 and were now collectively valued at approximately \$23 billion, MLS said.

### LASTING GAINS

Garber said MLS did not want the World Cup to be a short-lived spectacle that faded once the tournament ended. "We don't want the tournament to be like a Taylor Swift concert where there's enormous energy and then it's a period of time until she comes back on tour," he said. "We want this to be more like the front porch to a new house." He said MLS expected a post-World Cup boost in attendance, as domestic leagues in host countries have historically benefited from the event. But he added that the league would measure success more broadly through popularity, relevance, awareness, player recognition and fan engagement. "What we're really going to measure is, through research, are we more

popular? Are we more relevant? Do more people know about MLS?" Garber said. Garber rejected lingering criticism that MLS remains a destination for players at the end

"We'll wait and see how any of those discussions progress."

### APPLE PARTNERSHIP

Garber said MLS remained pleased with



of their careers, pointing to the league's average age of 26 and the competitiveness described by players who have joined.

### MESSI AND SALAH

He said Lionel Messi's arrival at Inter Miami had transformed global perception of MLS, noting that the league had beaten Barcelona and Saudi suitors for the Argentine great. "He certainly did not come here to retire," Garber said. "The guy plays a full 90 every single game and scraps as if winning that game is as important as winning any other match he's played in." Garber also said MLS would be interested in signing Mohamed Salah, who ended a nine-year run with Liverpool last month, if the opportunity arose. "We'd love to sign him," he said.

Apple, despite moving away from an exclusively subscription-based approach. He said combined viewership across Apple TV, linear broadcast partners and other platforms was up 62 per cent year on year. He also defended the league's planned calendar shift, saying MLS needed to better align with the global game, including transfer windows and a postseason outside the crowded U.S. sports calendar. Garber, MLS commissioner since 1999, said he was under contract until 2027 and that the league had an active succession process. "Commissioners are caretakers of leagues for a period of time," he said. "At some point, I'm going to hand this off to somebody who will take it to new heights."

## In Mexico City, axolotl salamanders are everywhere before the World Cup — except in the wild

**Mexico city** : One of the first things visitors arriving in Mexico City for the World Cup are likely to see is the wide grin of an axolotl, with the salamander unique to this part of the world splashed in bright purple on murals and subway cars or depicted in sculptures dribbling a soccer ball. Named after the Nahuatl word for "water monster," the axolotl (pronounced ah-sho-LO-tul) has become the unofficial mascot as the city gears up to host five World Cup matches, including the competition opener on Thursday. But despite the undoubted cuteness of the almost otherworldly axolotl, the use of its image has drawn backlash from many Chilangos - as Mexico City residents are known - who say the poppy portrayal of the critically endangered animal is being used to distract from both the infrastructure problems of the capital and its lack of conservation efforts. Scientists trying to count axolotls in the wild say they have not seen a single one in two years, and a campaign against what has been dubbed "axolotlization" has unleashed a wave of internet memes in which Godzilla-like axolotls rampage around the city.

The Mexico City government did not respond to requests for comment. Ernesto Velazquez, 19, who runs an axolotl-themed stand selling cuddly toys in Chapultepec park, told Reuters he hopes the newly painted images around the city can drive more interest in conservation. "Some foreigners have asked if you can eat them - well no, they're at risk of extinction," he said. "I hope the World Cup will help people learn more so we take better care of them."

### A DISAPPEARING HABITAT

For centuries, *Ambystoma mexicanum*, an amphibian that remains living in water through its life cycle, thrived between chinampas - farms built on man-made floating islands that once sustained the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan, where modern-day Mexico City lies. The lake the city was built on was largely drained under colonial rule and its remnants are being used up and contaminated by the growing urban sprawl. But the city's southern Xochimilco district - known for its maze of muddy canals whose spooky folklore and colorful barges attract boisterous boat parties - remains one of the axolotl's last hiding places. UNAM, Mexico's top university, identified around 36 axolotls per square kilometer in Xochimilco in 2014 - a steep decline

there," Mendoza said. SOCCER AND MASS TOURISM Luis Zambrano, who heads UNAM's ecological restoration laboratory, said that besides a constant flow of poorly treated wastewater, fresh dangers to the axolotl include chinampas being turned into soccer pitches and the overcrowding of what began as ecological tourism. Axolotls consume oxygen through their skin, making them highly vulnerable to water pollution. "Mass tourism has become a terrible problem now with the World Cup," said Zambrano. "The government thinks more is better, but that's not true in these areas of high ecological value." Even as their habitat disappears, axolotls are widely bred in captivity. Scientists believe their unique skin mucus and ability to regrow limbs and even parts of their brain offer promising leads in cancer research. Andres Huerta, 28, a pharmacist from Phoenix, Arizona, visiting during the World Cup, told Reuters he knew little about axolotls before arriving, but was impressed by a large mural he saw after landing at the airport.



"It's really beautiful," he said. Outside the Azteca stadium, where the opening match will be held, a football-themed axolotl statue named 'Ajolotl' was removed last month. Mayor Clara Brugada told reporters too many people had been taking photos and blocking the way in, but that Ajolotl would soon be resetled nearby. For UNAM ecologist Zambrano, the axolotl's viral popularity has yet to translate into concrete action that could save their home. "People prefer to see them in fish tanks," he said.

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## Seattle World Cup barge gives soccer's global language a waterfront home

**Everett** : Every World Cup is memorable, but Seattle's two pro soccer clubs - the Sounders and the Reign - hope they have created an unforgettable waterfront venue for fans to watch games and for kids to play: a pierside barge with a mini soccer pitch, a huge video screen and amenities. The barge commemorates a campaign by the RAVE Foundation, the clubs' charitable arm, to build 52 mini soccer pitches in communities around Washington state where children had nowhere to play. "If you give a child a ball, and a place to use that, in (a) community that maybe doesn't have access to a free park ... it's going to change your community," said Courtney Carter, chief revenue officer of the two clubs. The World Cup is being co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico this year, with a number of matches in Seattle. About 18 months ago, Sounders and Reign executives "looked around the room at each other...and said, 'How are we going to show up for the World Cup?'" Carter said. Getting attention amid the World Cup is a bit like shouting into a hurricane. To cut through, they landed on hosting watch parties on a barge, an idea inspired by Puget Sound, the waterway connecting Washington's biggest cities, she said. "What if we put the 52nd pitch on a barge, put a screen at the end of it, and we delivered it to the waterfront of the City of Seattle and said, 'Here's a global game, come celebrate,'" Carter said. She started calling maritime companies looking to borrow a barge. The reaction of plenty of people on the other end was "Are you crazy?" she said, "I'm like, 'Maybe.'" Not Western Towboat, though. "If it floats, we can move it, and if you have an idea, we can usually make it happen," said Russ Shrewsbury, vice president and co-owner of Western Towboat, which hauls barges to Alaska. The company once helped put a Wendy's restaurant on a

barge and helped the Seattle Kraken, the city's pro hockey franchise, broadcast the National Hockey League draft on a barge in Lake Union in the center of Seattle. Angela Dunleavy, owner and founder of Rally, a Seattle-based hospitality company, jumped at the opportunity when a representative from the Sounders and Reign pitched it to her unexpectedly at a local brewery. Figuring out how to get pallets of food, drinks and other necessities, and hundreds of people on and off the barge is unlike any other project she has worked on, said Dunleavy, a veteran of Seattle's restaurant industry. "There have definitely been some strategy sessions that have gone late into the night to figure out, you know, pumping (out) port-a-potties." The barge is ringed by shipping containers turned into concession stands and info booths about the Seattle soccer clubs and their mini-pitch campaign. Above is a VIP area. An 18-foot-by-30-foot video screen dominates one end of the barge. It will have stadium staples, including the Seattle dog - a hot dog with cream cheese, caramelized onions, and jalapeños. The barge will also host several free soccer clinics for kids ages 14 and younger. Western Towboat will tug the Seattle Soccer Celebration barge from the Port of Everett to Seattle on Tuesday. A few months ago, the barge was hauling goods to Alaska. Last week, it was still coming together at an Everett shipyard, across from a U.S. Navy destroyer parked at Naval Station Everett. To get from the shore to the worksite required crossing five gangways, going through a decommissioned state ferry that has been turned into shipyard offices, and crossing a floating dry dock. "It's totally different from every project I've worked on," said Jorge Cardenas, who was laying down artificial turf. "When they told us we would be working on a barge, we didn't believe them," he said.

## Suthar makes dream debut in India's largest test victory

**New delhi** : Manav Suthar's dream test debut concluded with India registering their biggest test victory - by an innings and 300 runs against Afghanistan - inside three days of the one-off test in New Chandigarh on Monday. The hosts piled up 564-8 before declaring their first innings and unleashing their spin-heavy attack on Afghanistan. Left-arm spinner Suthar claimed 6-33 as India bundled out Afghanistan for 152 in the first innings before enforcing the follow-on. India off-spinner Washington Sundar (4-36) did most of the damage in Afghanistan's second innings as the visitors folded for 112. Sharafuddin Ashraf did not bat with a quad injury. "A complete win from our side, ticked all the boxes, so very happy," India captain Shubman Gill said after the win.

"It was very hot. We decided that if we bowl them out by lunch or around the first drinks break in the second innings we will ask them to bat again," Gill said of his decision to enforce the follow-on. "For the spinners it was more about getting the experience of how to set up the batters." Earlier, Afghanistan lost their last five wickets in the morning session of the third day itself after resuming their first innings on 113-5. Rahmat

Shah (60) led their resistance in the first innings with a composed knock that included nine fours and a six. Player-of-the-match Suthar, who had already removed Ashraf caught behind, bowled Rahmat round the legs to complete a five-wicket haul. He also sent back Mohammad Saleem in the same over. Afghanistan wilted after barely crossing the 150-mark but their openers had to walk out to bat again after Gill enforced the follow-on. Seamer Mohammed Siraj trapped opener Abdul Malik for eight but Sediqullah Atal (42) and Rahmanullah Gurbaz (24) decided to counter-attack. Kuldeep Yadav (3-30) cut short Gurbaz's run-a-ball knock and Rahmat (13) also threw away his wicket trying to go after spinner Sundar. Yadav removed Nangeyalia Kharote and Saleem off successive deliveries - both batters fell to rash strokes - to seal India's victory on a frenetic day when 14 Afghan wickets tumbled. "The reality is we don't have that much experience in this format," Afghanistan captain Hashmatullah Shahidi said. "I think we learned a lot from this game because we don't get enough opportunities to play this format. "Everybody knows India is a tough team playing in their own conditions.

## Netravalkar juggles tech job while chasing Olympic dream

**June 8** : Saurabh Netravalkar played a key part in U.S. cricket's finest moment when they stunned Pakistan at the 2024 T20 World Cup, but the software engineer is keen to prove himself on an even bigger stage when Los Angeles hosts the Olympics in two years' time. Netravalkar thought he was done with cricket after leaving India to study in the United States in 2015. The former India under-19 international gradually resumed playing on a recreational level before entering club cricket and he debuted for the U.S. in 2019, three years after landing a job at Oracle. For years, his work colleagues had no idea he was travelling around the country on the weekends to play in tournaments. The fast bowler's life story, and the famous victory he led the U.S. team to in their maiden Twenty20 World Cup campaign, have inspired a documentary set to be aired by Willow TV this month. "The Long Game: Saurabh Netravalkar, Between Two Worlds" is directed by Pierre 'Pyare' Friquet and chronicles Netravalkar's journey in the fields of tech and cricket, the highlight being the 'Super Over' where his tight bowling led the U.S. to a landmark victory against former champions Pakistan. Climactic moments in the match are

shown in parallel with key events in Netravalkar's life, recreating his memories through animation. "We also recreated nightmare sequences where we explore his ego... a kind of evil self, the voice that says you're never going to make it, you're never going to be a cricketer, you're never going to follow your passion," Friquet said. Netravalkar said the film accurately depicts moments from his childhood. "I actually had tears in my eyes when I watched it," he said. "I'm very comfortable being a raw version of myself and just put it out there." Netravalkar, 34, has now set his sights on becoming an Olympian when cricket returns to the Games at LA 2028. The International Cricket Council is yet to announce the qualification format but it is expected to pick one team from each continent, while the U.S. may get a place as hosts.

"We can see a trend where the team is transitioning into more youngsters ... there's a focus to build that team for 2028," Netravalkar told Reuters. "I aim to stay fit and try my best to keep performing to be there." Netravalkar finds a way to juggle his work with matches, practice sessions and international tours. He says his IT background helps him on the pitch.

**Contd. From Page 1****Smart Border Project in its final...**

Stressing the need for constant vigilance, he praised the efforts of BSF personnel who remain deployed under challenging conditions to safeguard the nation's frontiers and maintain security in sensitive regions. Mr. Shah further highlighted that border management today extends beyond guarding territorial boundaries and includes combating a range of transnational crimes that pose serious challenges to the country. He specifically pointed to drug smuggling, human trafficking and cattle smuggling as major threats that require a coordinated and sustained response. The Home Minister stated that these activities not only undermine law and order but also fuel organised criminal networks that exploit vulnerable populations and threaten economic and social stability. He emphasized that the government is committed to eliminating such threats through stronger enforcement mechanisms, improved intelligence gathering and enhanced cooperation among various security agencies. According to him, the integration of technology under the Smart Border Project will play a crucial role in detecting and preventing illegal activities while supporting the efforts of security personnel on the ground. The Home Minister said that modern surveillance systems, digital monitoring tools and coordinated field operations will significantly strengthen the country's ability to respond to emerging challenges along international borders. During his visit to the Lankamura Border Outpost, Mr. Shah also participated in a mass plantation drive, highlighting the government's broader commitment to environmental conservation and sustainable development. As part of the initiative, he planted an Agar tree and encouraged security personnel to actively contribute to environmental protection alongside their national duties. Addressing the jawans present at the event, the Home Minister commended the role played by the Central Armed Police Forces in advancing environmental objectives across the country. He noted that since 2019, CAPF personnel have planted an impressive 6.40 crore trees, demonstrating their dedication not only to national security but also to ecological preservation. Mr. Shah described the achievement as a remarkable example of how security forces can contribute meaningfully to nation-building beyond their operational responsibilities. He stated that the plantation efforts undertaken by CAPF units have helped enhance green cover, support biodiversity and promote environmental awareness in different regions of the country. Highlighting the importance of balancing development with sustainability, he said that environmental protection must become a collective responsibility and that every citizen, institution and organisation has a role to play in safeguarding natural resources for future generations. In this context, the Home Minister announced a new collective resolution for CAPF personnel to further expand their environmental contribution. He said that beginning next year, the forces will undertake a mission to plant more than 2 crore trees within a single year. The initiative, he explained, will allow jawans to simultaneously serve the nation and contribute to environmental conservation. Mr. Shah expressed confidence that the ambitious target would be achieved through the dedication and discipline that have consistently characterised the work of India's security forces. He noted that the plantation campaign would not only enhance ecological sustainability but also strengthen public participation and awareness regarding environmental protection. The Home Minister remarked that security personnel across the country have repeatedly demonstrated their ability to rise to national challenges, whether in the field of border security, disaster response, internal security operations or social initiatives. He said that the proposed plantation drive reflects the government's vision of integrating environmental responsibility into the broader framework of national service. Throughout his address, Mr. Shah emphasized the importance of combining technological innovation, strong security measures and public participation to address contemporary challenges facing the nation. He stated that the Smart Border Project represents a forward-looking approach to securing India's borders while ensuring that security agencies are equipped with modern tools and resources. At the same time, he highlighted the significance of environmental stewardship, noting that sustainable development and national security are complementary goals that must advance together. The Home Minister's visit to Tripura underscored the government's focus on strengthening border infrastructure, enhancing the capabilities of security forces and promoting initiatives that contribute to long-term national development. His remarks reflected a comprehensive vision that links effective border management with technological advancement, social stability, environmental conservation and national progress. By combining security reforms with ecological initiatives, the government aims to create a stronger, safer and more sustainable future while ensuring that India's borders remain secure and resilient against evolving threats. Mr. Shah reiterated that the dedication of the nation's jawans remains central to achieving these objectives and expressed confidence that their commitment and professionalism will continue to play a vital role in protecting the country and supporting its development goals in the years ahead.

**Governor attends 'Amar...**

Directorate of Sainik Welfare, Assam, at the Assam State War Memorial, Dighalipukhuri, and Don Bosco High School, Panbazar, Guwahati, to honour the brave soldiers of Assam who made the supreme sacrifice in the service of the nation.

Paying homage to the martyrs, the Governor said that the Nation remains forever indebted to its brave sons and daughters who laid down their lives while safeguarding the sovereignty and integrity of the country. He noted that the Indian Armed Forces continue to uphold the highest traditions of courage, discipline and dedication while protecting the nation across diverse and challenging terrains.

Referring to Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's observation that the armed forces safeguard not only the Nation's borders but also the aspirations and future of its people, the Governor said that India's soldiers embody the nation's strength, character and unwavering resolve.

As part of the programme, six Veer Naris paid floral tributes to their husbands who attained martyrdom in line of duty. The Governor also interacted with the Veer Naris and expressed the nation's gratitude for their courage, resilience and sacrifice. He said that their strength and devotion serve as a lasting inspiration for society.

The programme brought together veterans, serving defence personnel, NCC cadets and students, who joined in remembering the gallant heroes of Assam. The Governor called upon all citizens to reaffirm their commitment to national unity and support the welfare and dignity of the families of martyrs, describing it as the most meaningful tribute to the nation's immortal heroes.

The programme was attended by Lieutenant Gen Rana Pratap Kalita (Retd.), former General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Command; Maj Gen Ajay Kumar Sarma, VSM, GOC, HQ 51 Sub Area; Director of Sainik Welfare Brig Palash Chowdhury; Principal of Don Bosco High School, Fr. Alex Mathew; and several other dignitaries.

Later, the Governor interacted with the students of Don Bosco High School and encouraged them to imbibe the values of patriotism, discipline and service to the nation.

**SMCH urges patients to carry...**

hospital administration, the Aadhaar Card will facilitate proper patient identification assist in the creation and updating of hospital records and help ensure the efficient delivery of various healthcare services. Patients have been advised to bring either the original Aadhaar Card or a clear photocopy or digital copy at the time of registration.

The initiative is expected to make the registration process more systematic and convenient while enabling the hospital to maintain accurate patient records for better healthcare management.

The administration has appealed to patients and their attendants to extend their cooperation in this regard so that registration procedures and healthcare services can be provided smoothly and efficiently.

The advisory has been issued in the interest of patient care and effective hospital administration. This is stated in a press release issued by the Regional office of Information & Public Relations Barak valley Zone Silchar Assam.

**DC Issues Comprehensive SOP...**

directives aimed at enhancing academic standards, promoting holistic student development, and strengthening collaboration among schools, parents, and the community.

The District Commissioner emphasized that educational progress cannot be achieved by schools and teachers alone and called for active participation from parents, School Management Committees, local communities, and other stakeholders. The SOP seeks to create a vibrant, inclusive, and learner-centric educational environment through a collaborative approach. Under the new guidelines, schools have been directed to ensure disciplined and engaging classroom environments by effectively utilizing blackboards, teaching-learning materials, libraries, Smart TVs, digital boards, and other educational resources. The SOP also encourages the development of reading habits, collaborative learning practices, and responsible behaviour among students.

A key feature of the SOP is the introduction of Educational Gram Sabhas, which will be organized once every three months in every school. These forums will discuss important educational issues such as achieving 100 percent enrolment and attendance, bringing school dropouts back into the education system, promoting skill development, creating awareness about the ULLAS programme, and identifying measures for overall school improvement. The participation of parents, local leaders, former students, retired teachers, and community members has also been encouraged. To strengthen school-community engagement, the SOP makes Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs) mandatory on a regular basis. These meetings will facilitate discussions on students' academic performance, attendance, behaviour, strengths, and areas requiring improvement, helping to build stronger partnerships between teachers and parents.

The guidelines further recommend rotational seating arrangements in classrooms to ensure equal learning opportunities and encourage greater student participation. Schools have also been advised to maximize the use of tele-education facilities, Smart TVs, and digital boards to make learning more interactive and effective. Teachers have been instructed to adopt lesson plan-based teaching methods and conduct regular revision and assessment tests to monitor students' progress. The SOP also stresses timely communication with parents through WhatsApp groups, proper monitoring of homework, and continuous academic follow-up.

Recognizing the importance of character development, the SOP places special emphasis on moral education. Schools have been encouraged to introduce short value-based curricula focusing on honesty, discipline, empathy, responsibility, and other essential human values. Educationists and stakeholders have welcomed the initiative, describing it as a visionary roadmap for educational reform in Morigaon. They believe the SOP will significantly contribute to improving learning outcomes, increasing community participation, and fostering values-based education, ultimately ensuring a brighter future for students across the district.

**5 Cyber Fraudsters arrested...**

Middle Siyalmari near Nagaon town, who reported being defrauded of a substantial amount of money through cyber deception.

Acting swiftly on the complaint, Nagaon Sadar Police registered a case (Nagaon Sadar P.S. Case No. 436/2026) and launched a targeted investigation. Based on credible leads and technical surveillance, police conducted a series of operations that led to the apprehension of five accused persons identified as Ejajul Haque, Benacha Khatun, Faruk Ahmed, Ikramul Hussain, and Saidur Rahman.

During the operation, police recovered several mobile phones, a large number of ATM cards, and multiple bank passbooks believed to have been used in carrying out fraudulent transactions.

According to investigators, the accused allegedly siphoned off ₹9,78,196 from the victim through cyber fraud. Preliminary findings suggest that the group had been actively involved in similar cybercrime activities across Nagaon, Morigaon, and other parts of Assam, targeting unsuspecting individuals through various online scams.

Police officials stated that further investigation is underway to uncover the full extent of the network, identify additional victims, and trace possible links with larger cybercrime syndicates operating in the region.

The successful crackdown underscores Nagaon Police's intensified efforts to combat the growing threat of cybercrime and protect citizens from online financial fraud.

Authorities have urged the public to remain vigilant, avoid sharing banking credentials or OTPs with anyone, and immediately report suspicious online activities to the nearest police station or cybercrime helpline.

**"We Will Not Allow Any Stain..."**

programme turned into a historic public gathering as people from all sections of society including social and cultural organisations, educational institutions, political leaders, noted business man and social worker Chandan Mol Bothra and Mahendra Chandak, intellectuals, youth groups, and common citizens assembled to honour the Minister.

The atmosphere remained vibrant and emotionally charged throughout the evening, reflecting the immense public affection and confidence enjoyed by Ashok Singhal in the Dhekiajuli area. Traditional Assamese culture and hospitality added colour to the event as several organisations felicitated the Minister with gamosas, bouquets and words of appreciation.

Presiding over the programme, Dhekiajuli Nagarik Mancha President Narayan Chandra Bora described the occasion as "a proud and memorable chapter in the history of Dhekiajuli." Secretary Jadav Chandra Nath, while delivering the welcome address, highlighted the Minister's contributions towards the development of the constituency and expressed hope for greater progress under his leadership.

Speakers from various organisations hailed Ashok Singhal's re-induction into the Assam Cabinet as a matter of immense pride not only for Dhekiajuli but for the greater Assam as well. They expressed confidence that his continued leadership would further strengthen development, infrastructure, education, healthcare and public welfare initiatives across the constituency.

Addressing the massive gathering amid loud applause, Minister Ashok Singhal expressed heartfelt gratitude for the overwhelming love and support shown by the people. In an emotional speech, he stated that serving the citizens of the historic martyr town remained the greatest honour of his life.

"The honour I received today truly belongs to every citizen of Dhekiajuli. Together, we shall continue to lead our town towards prosperity, harmony, and progress. We will not allow any stain to fall on Dhekiajuli," the Minister declared firmly, drawing thunderous applause from the audience.

He further credited the blessings, trust, and continuous support of the people for his political journey and assured that he would continue to work tirelessly for the all-round development of the constituency and Assam.

Adding further significance to the event, the Dhekiajuli Press Club also felicitated the Minister and extended warm wishes for his new tenure in the Assam Cabinet. Journalists and members of the media fraternity participated enthusiastically in the programme.

**DHR Creates History with Highest....**

record-breaking revenue was driven by strong passenger patronage during the peak tourist season, particularly on the iconic heritage joy rides and regular passenger services operating through the scenic Darjeeling hills. The growing demand highlights the enduring attraction of the world-famous narrow-gauge railway and the success of Northeast Frontier Railway's efforts to enhance passenger amenities and promote heritage tourism.

The revenue trend over the last five years demonstrates the remarkable growth of DHR. Revenue earned during May stood at Rs 319.64 lakh in 2022, Rs 358.18 lakh in 2023, Rs 288.58 lakh in 2024, Rs358.60 lakh in 2025 and a record Rs395.60 lakh in 2026.

With passenger demand continuing to remain exceptionally high, DHR is expected to maintain this momentum during the current month. Based on present booking trends and traffic patterns, revenue for June 2026 is projected to cross Rs370.00 lakh, which would make it one of the highest revenue-earning June months in the railway's history.

The historic achievement underscores the growing appeal of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway as one of India's most celebrated heritage attractions. Northeast Frontier Railway remains committed to preserving the unique legacy of this UNESCO World Heritage railway while continuously improving service quality, safety standards and visitor experience. The strong revenue performance also reflects the important role of DHR in promoting tourism and contributing to the economic development of the Darjeeling region, informed by CPRO of NFR Kapinjal Kishore Sharma.

**AI-Based Tuberculosis Detection...**

Elimination Programme (NTEP) of the Government of Assam. The programme is being organized by the Sivasagar District TB Department to train healthcare workers in identifying TB cases more quickly and effectively through AI-based technology.

The training was inaugurated today at the Morabazar Block Primary Health Centre and subsequently conducted at Geleki Block Primary Health Centre. District Tuberculosis Officer Dr. Dwijen Koch informed that after the completion of the training, healthcare workers will begin collecting samples from the public for TB screening. The programme will continue tomorrow at Khelua and Dimow Block Primary Health Centres, while training sessions on June 10 will be held at Kalugaon and Gaurisagar Block Primary Health Centres. Resource persons for the programme include Priyanshu Sagar Dihingia, Programme Officer of the Wadhvani AI Project under NTEP Assam, and District Tuberculosis Officer Dr. Dwijen Koch. Healthcare workers, including Community Health Officers (CHOs) and Multi-Purpose Workers (MPWs) from all Block Primary Health Centres of Sivasagar district, are participating in the training. Officials stated that the initiative will enable healthcare workers to detect TB cases at an earlier stage, thereby helping reduce the severity of the disease and lowering mortality rates associated with tuberculosis.

**Dibrugarh's Sri Sri Aniruddhadeva...**

77th edition of the "Fit India Cycling Drive" was organized by the Union Ministry and the Cycling Federation of India. From Kargil and Leh in the north to Kanyakumari in the south, and from Tripura in the east to Vadodara in the west, more than 400,000 people participated in the one-day cycling campaign at thousands of locations across the country, creating unprecedented public awareness. At the main event in Delhi, more than 15,000 sports enthusiasts and fitness lovers participated in the cycling drive alongside Union Minister Dr. Mandaviya. Among them were popular actor Vikrant Massey and World Championship silver-medalist boxer Nupur Sheoran. The participants promoted awareness about healthy living and environmentally friendly lifestyles through cycling.

During the event, Dr. Mandaviya urged citizens to engage in at least 30 minutes of physical exercise or cycling every day, emphasizing that such habits would help save fuel, reduce pollution, and ease traffic congestion while contributing to a healthier society. Congratulating Sri Sri Aniruddhadeva Sports University on this prestigious achievement at the national level, Sarbananda Sonowal, Union Minister, extended his best wishes. The news of the award has also brought great joy to the university community and the people of Dibrugarh, who are delighted and proud of this significant recognition.

# Silent Cries of Modern Families in 2 Recent Assamese Films



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Cinema has never been merely a medium of entertainment. A meaningful film does not simply help pass the time; it also reflects society, human emotions, social transformation, and the silent struggles of ordinary life. Throughout history, regional cinema in India has played an important role in preserving cultural identity and emotional values. Assamese cinema, in particular, has carried a long tradition of portraying realistic stories centered on human relationships, rural life, social responsibility, and emotional truth. In today's context, many commercial films largely depend on glamour, action, and visual spectacle. At the same time, however, several recently released Assamese films have sincerely addressed themes of family, childhood, emotional suffering, and social change. In this regard, the recently released Assamese films *Moromar Deuta* (Beloved Father) and *Homework* are two significant additions to that meaningful cinematic tradition. Although different in subject matter, both films deeply explore the emotional condition of modern society and the silent crises gradually growing within families.

Released on May 15, *Moromar Deuta* has been directed by Himjyoti Talukdar and produced by Mamata Mahilary. Based on the famous novel of the same name by the legendary writer and filmmaker Dr. Bhabendra Nath Saikia, the film builds an emotional bridge between Assamese literature and cinema. The novel was originally serialized in the children's magazine *Xofura* during 1989-1990 and became highly popular for its sensitive portrayal of adolescent psychology and family relation-

ships. Over time, the story became an integral part of the emotional world of Assamese readers. Adapting such a beloved literary work into cinema was certainly not easy; nevertheless, the filmmakers have made a sincere effort to preserve the emotional essence of the original story while presenting it in a form suitable for modern audiences.

At the heart of *Moromar Deuta* lies the painful relationship between a father and his rebellious son. The story revolves around a hardworking father who struggles to rescue his misguided son from drug addiction, aggressive behavior, and destructive influences. However, the film does not present the issue simplistically. While many films blame only "bad company" for the moral decline of young people, *Moromar Deuta* points toward a deeper emotional crisis. The film raises important questions about parental responsibility, lack of communication, emotional neglect, and the role of the family environment in a child's development.

The father character, portrayed by Mintu Baruah, is not an extraordinary hero; he is an ordinary middle-class man living amidst financial limitations, social pressure, and emotional helplessness. Yet, his determination to save his son from self-destruction forms the emotional strength of the film. The mother character, played by Aparna Dutta Choudhury, represents the silent suffering and endurance of countless mothers in Indian middle-class society. She quietly carries pain, anxiety, and helplessness while trying to hold the family together. On the other hand, the son character portrayed by Bodhisattva Sharma represents a generation gradually drifting away from emotional warmth, discipline, and human understanding. His anger, rebellion, disrespect, and slow descent into addiction are

portrayed realistically without unnecessary melodrama. The film subtly demonstrates how emotional distance within a family gradually transforms into misunderstanding, loneliness, and conflict.

The emotional center of the film is the father-son relationship. Their bond constantly oscillates between affection, frustration, helplessness, anger, and emotional anxiety. The father's struggle is not limited to punishment or control; rather, he attempts to understand his son and bring him back into the warmth of the family. This emotional complexity gives the film a universal significance, as many viewers may find reflections of their own lives and families within the story. Director Himjyoti Talukdar creates emotional depth through simplicity, silence, and realistic performances instead of relying on excessive glamour or dramatic spectacle.

Technically as well, *Moromar Deuta* remains restrained yet effective. Chandra Kumar Das captures the rural and semi-urban life of Assam with warmth and realism. The visual composition strengthens the emotional atmosphere of the film, while the music and sound design remain subtle and meaningful. Elements of Assamese cultural sound traditions have been delicately used to express the father's inner pain. Significantly, the film arrives at a time when social, economic, and technological pressures are gradually weakening family relationships. In this age of individualism and emotional alienation, the film reminds viewers of the importance of empathy, patience, responsibility, and parental guidance.

While *Moromar Deuta* mainly focuses on family conflict and the father-son relationship, another recent Assamese film, *Homework*, explores the emotional struggles of children in modern society. Directed by Achintya Shankar, this bilingual film was also released on May 15. The film draws attention to a highly relevant issue of contemporary times. Amid academic pressure, urban loneliness, and digital addiction, childhood itself seems to be gradually disappearing. The story revolves around a young boy named Apu, who dreams of spending his school holidays in his grandfather's village. When he finally arrives in the rural environment filled with nature, relatives, freedom, and emotional warmth, the story transforms into a profound reflection on modern parenting and the changing reality of childhood.

One of the greatest strengths of *Homework* is its simplicity. The film does not loudly preach or attempt to manipulate the audience emotionally. Instead, it quietly observes the emotional suffocation experienced by many children in modern society. Education, which ideally should nurture curiosity and creativity, has in many cases become a burden of homework, tuition classes, examinations, and endless competition. Many parents unknowingly impose their unfulfilled dreams upon their children. As a result, children's lives become so controlled that very little space remains for imagination, play, emotional growth, or social relationships. In this sense, *Homework* is not merely a film; it is a mirror reflecting the anxieties of modern middle-class society.

The social significance of the film becomes even greater in the context of rapid urbanization. Over the last two decades, dramatic changes have taken place in family structures and lifestyles. Joint families have gradually transformed into nuclear families. Children who once grew up surrounded by grandparents, relatives, playgrounds, and rural life are now largely confined to apartments, coaching centers, and mobile or laptop screens. The emotional support naturally received through family and neighborhood relationships has weakened over time. Many children spend long hours alone at home while their parents remain occupied with professional responsibilities and financial struggles. This growing loneliness has contributed to anxiety, behavioral changes, and emotional insecurity among children and adolescents.

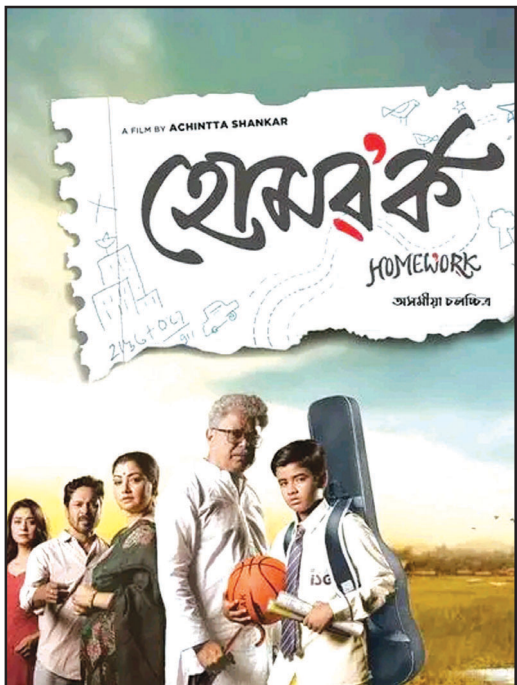
The film also indirectly raises the issue of digital dependency. Mobile phones, gaming platforms, tablets, and social media have transformed the very nature of childhood. While technology has undoubtedly created new opportunities for education and communication, excessive screen usage has increasingly distanced children from nature, play, and real human relationships. Psychologists across the world have long warned about the negative effects of excessive screen exposure on children's mental health and emotional balance. *Homework* reminds viewers that childhood cannot survive entirely within a digital

world. Open skies, laughter, friendship, emotional warmth, and real-life experiences are equally essential for a child's healthy development.

The village-centered setting of *Homework* also carries deep symbolic significance. Assamese cinema has always remained closely connected to rural life and nature. Legendary filmmakers such as Dr. Bhabendra Nath Saikia, Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, and Jahnu Barua portrayed the village not merely as a geographical space but as a moral and emotional universe. Through *Homework*, Achintya Shankar attempts to continue that cinematic tradition, where nature itself becomes a symbol of healing, peace, and human connection.

The performances in the film are also highly commendable. Child actor Suryang Jiu Margherita delivers a sincere and believable performance as Apu. The relationship between the grandfather and grandson forms one of the emotional strengths of the film. Instead of excessive melodrama, the film progresses through ordinary conversations, human emotions, and realistic situations. Zubeen Garg's music further strengthens the emotional atmosphere of the film. Most importantly, *Homework* raises several difficult yet necessary questions. Can academic success replace emotional happiness? Can technology substitute human companionship? Can endless competition truly create mentally healthy individuals? The film does not reject modernity, ambition, or education entirely; rather, it urges society to reconsider its priorities.

Viewed together, *Moromar Deuta* and *Homework* reveal a larger emotional crisis within modern society. Though their stories differ, both films show how emotional relationships within families are gradually weakening. One film portrays a father struggling to reconnect with his misguided son, while the



## Dima Hasao District Itihas Sankalan Samiti Constituted

**Maibang, Jun 8:** The Dima Hasao District Committee of Itihas Sankalan Samiti was formally constituted at a meeting held at Maibang Degree College on Monday in the presence of dis-

tinguished historians and office-bearers of the organization. The meeting was attended by Hemanta Dhing Mazumdar, General Secretary of the Akhil Bharatiya Itihas Sankalan Yojana, New Delhi, along with several members of the Assam State Committee. The gathering witnessed enthusiastic participation from academicians, researchers, teachers, and history enthusiasts of the district. Addressing the meeting, Hemanta Dhing Mazumdar emphasized the importance of documenting and preserving the rich indigenous history, traditions, and cultural heritage of the diverse communities of Dima Hasao. He stated that India's history



must be understood and written from an Indian perspective, highlighting the contributions of local communities, unsung heroes, and regional historical traditions that have often remained neglected in mainstream historiography. He further remarked that Dima Hasao possesses a unique historical and cultural legacy that deserves systematic research and documentation. He urged scholars, students, and local intellectuals to actively participate in collecting oral histories, folk traditions, archival materials, and historical records so that future generations can better understand their roots and heritage. During the meeting, a new district committee was unanimously constituted for Dima Hasao. Dr. Sujit Kumar Sinha was elected as President, Rajshree Nunisa as Secretary, Alice Daulagaphu as Assistant Secretary, and Dr. Amitabha Goswami as Organising Secretary.

The newly elected office-bearers expressed their commitment to strengthening historical research and awareness activities in the district and to working closely with the state and national bodies of the Itihas Sankalan Samiti. The meeting concluded with a collective resolve to promote the study, preservation, and dissemination of the rich historical heritage of Dima Hasao and the wider North-East region. The news was shared by our regular columnist Gautam Sarma.

## 152 Swimmers Participate in All Kamrup Swimming Championship

**Guwahati, June 8:** As many as 152 swimmers from different age groups participated in the 9th All Kamrup Swimming Championship held at the Dr. Zakir Hussain Memorial Swimming Complex on June 7.

The championship featured competitions across various categories and provided a platform for young swimmers to showcase their talent, skills and competitive spirit. A special felicitation ceremony was organised to honour Kamal Krishna Das for successfully completing a 29-km swim across the Palk Strait from Sri Lanka to India. His coach, Babul Gurung, was also felicitated for his contribution to the achievement.



The prize distribution ceremony was attended by Mukuteswar Goswami, Publicity Secretary of the Assam Swimming Association; Navajyoti Gogoi, General Secretary of the All Kamrup Swimming Association; Siddhant Das, Joint Secretary of the association; noted journalists Debarun Borthakur and Pulin Saha; Hemanga Phukan; and Sagar Kumar.

The distinguished guests distributed medals and certificates to prize-winning swimmers across different categories and encouraged the budding athletes to strive for excellence in the sport.