

Khandu lays base of ₹750cr edu infra projects digitally

This Is In Line With Shikshit Arunachal '29 Mission: CM

Joken Ete | TNN



Arunachal CM Pema Khandu (centre), his deputy Chowna Mein and education minister PD Sona at the foundation laying ceremony

Itanagar: Arunachal Pradesh CM Pema Khandu on Friday digitally laid the foundation for various infrastructure development projects across the state worth Rs 750 crores under the education department to be executed by rural works department (RWD) in FY 2025-26.

A major part of this effort involves the implementation of multiple education infrastructure projects, including upgrading 39 govt higher secondary schools under the SASCI scheme with a budget

of Rs 300 crore, construction of 156 hostels and teachers' quarters in all districts under SASCI with Rs 322 crore, 14 large-capacity hostels (120 beds each) under the DAJ-GUA scheme costing Rs 71.40 crore, 60 bachelor barracks in rural schools with Rs 9 crore, infrastructure development of Arunachal University, Pasighat with Rs 30 crore and constructing 394 kitchen sheds cum stores for the PM

Poshan scheme with Rs 23.64 crore, an official statement from the CMO said.

"This is in line with our commitment to successfully implement the Shikshit Arunachal 2029 Mission adopted by our govt," Khandu said.

Under this mission, he said, all infrastructural needs of govt schools will be fulfilled while also making policy decisions to rejuvenate the education system of the state. Khandu reiterated that schools not functioning or with zero attendance will be closed and the inter-village school model will be implemented.

"Over the years with focus on quantity, we lost quality. Under this Mission Shikshit Arunachal, we intend to take the quality of our education to top-notch by 2029," he said.

He expressed optimism that under education minister PD Sona, the mission will be achieved as stipulated. Congratulating the RWD and education department on the huge responsibility, he advised the officers and officials of RWD to maintain quality and the timeline for completion without fail.

Deputy CM Chowna Mein, education minister PD Sona, advisor to education minister Mutchu Miithi and senior officials from the RWD and education depts were present on the occasion.

Mizoram issues advisory after 2 new Covid cases detected

HC Vanlalruata | TNN

Aizawl: The Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) of Mizoram health & family welfare department issued an advisory on Friday after two new cases of Covid-19 were detected in the state on Thursday.

The advisory issued by the IDSP appealed to the people not to panic as the two Covid-19 infected persons recently detected are being treated at the Zoram Medical College & Hospital (ZMC&H) in Falkawn near Aizawl. They are not serious.

It also said most of those infected across the country are mainly being treated in their respective homes while the IDSP and Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) are closely monitoring the situation through the national surveillance system. The Covid-19 detected in the country are JN1, XFG and LE7.9 variants and those infected are having only mild symptoms, the advisory said, advising people to wash their hands frequently and to use hand sanitiser while advising people having cough to wear masks.

During the Covid-19 pandemic years (March 2020-Oct 2024), 734 people died in Mizoram out of 2,39,637 people infected. During last year, 73 people infected with Covid-19 were found while no positive cases were found after Oct last year. At least 11 samples have so far been tested in Mizoram with two positive cases detected during this year after the resurgence of Covid-19 in some countries and India.

On Thursday, Gauhati high court issued notice to the state govt directing it to provide details on the whereabouts of two brothers, who were declared foreigners by a tribunal and subsequently released on conditional bail. One Torap Ali, nephew of Abu Bakkar Siddik and Ak-

If judiciary has given stay order, we are respecting it: Himanta

► Continued from P 1

There are many who have shown the higher court's order. If judiciary has given a stay order (on their tribunal order declaring them as foreigner), we are respecting the judiciary and we have allowed such people to stay," Sarma said.

Sarma added that there are two types of illegal foreigners—one category is people who are coming in and the other category who have been declared as foreigners by tribunals. "The Supreme Court (in Feb) has ordered that those declared as foreigners and have not made any appeal should be sent back by any means. Only yesterday, 35 Bangladeshis who came in few days ago were detected near the border with Meghalaya and in Silchar were immediate pushed back," Sarma said.

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HIMANTA BISWA SARMA
Assam CM

bar Ali, in his petition in the high court, claimed that his family apprehends both his uncles "may be in danger of being illegally pushed into Bangladesh".

The duo was declared as foreigners by a tribunal in 2017 and were sent to the transit camp in Goalpara. They were released on bail in 2020 following the Supreme Court's directive that those who are in detention for over two years may be released on bail. They were detained by police on May 24, the petitioner submitted and claimed that the authorities have refused to give details of the whereabouts of his two uncles. The court has posted the next date of hearing on June 4.

Similarly the Supreme Court on Friday said it will hear on Monday a habeas corpus petition filed by a 26-year-old man stating that his mother Monowara Bewa of Dhurbri, also a declared foreigner, was detained by police on May 24 and since then her whereabouts are not known.

On the other hand, the All BTC Minority Students' Union (ABMSU) of Assam has also filed a petition in the Supreme Court highlighting the "grave violation of fundamental rights arising out of the ongoing deportation of Indian citizens under the guise of implementing" the apex court's Feb order. The organisation has appealed to the court to declare the push-back policy "without due process—including judicial declaration, MEA verification, and exhaustion of remedies" unconstitutional.

"This policy of push back—being executed in border districts like Dhurbri, South Salmara, and Goalpara—is not only legally indefensible, but also threatens to render stateless numerous Indian citizens, especially those from poor and marginalised communities who were either declared foreigners ex-parte or have no access to legal aid to challenge their status," the ABMSU stated in its petition.

Assam's first wildlife health & research institute in Dinjan

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Guwahati: Assam's first institute dedicated to wildlife health and research will be set up at Dinjan in Dibrugarh district, chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Friday.

The institute, requiring an investment of Rs 250 crore, will span 120 bighas of land. It aims to safeguard biodiversity through advanced diagnostics, forensic analysis, and policy assistance, the CM said.

The project was first initiated by former CM Sarbananda Sonowal in Feb 2021. The facility will not only support conservation efforts but also provide research opportunities for scientists and academics from India and abroad.

70% of our population backs Siang dam project: Arunachal minister

Rajib Dutta | TNN

Dibrugarh: Arunachal Pradesh rural development and panchayati raj minister Ojing Tasing on Friday said nearly 70 per cent of the population supports the Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP), despite facing fierce opposition from protesters just days earlier.

The 11,000MW hydropower initiative in Siang district has emerged as a strategic response to China's dam constructions upstream on the Yarlung Tsangpo river, which becomes the Siang as it enters Indian territory. Beyond water security, the SUMP is projected to gener-



Arunachal minister Ojing Tasing

ate clean, renewable energy that could address chronic power shortages across northeastern states. The hydropower project represents one of India's largest proposed renewable energy initiatives in the region.

However, the project has been facing local resistance,

with recent protests turning violent. On May 27, Tasing himself was caught in a high-voltage anti-dam protest in Boleng and escaped attack by demonstrators.

"While 70 per cent of our population backs this crucial initiative for our region's water security, it's important to note that this majority remains largely silent. The 30 per cent opposing the project are more vocal and often dominate the narrative, but that doesn't reflect the true sentiment of our community. Some anti-dam activists from outside and my political opponents are misleading residents and fueling resistance to the project," Tasing said.

HC Vanlalruata

Zoram Medical College & Hospital

Civil service officers backbone of governance system: Khandu

Joken Ete | TNN

Itanagar: Arunachal Pradesh CM Pema Khandu has termed civil service officers as the backbone of the state's governance system.

Speaking at the 16th Triennial Conference of the Arunachal Pradesh Civil Service Officers Association (APCSOA) at Itanagar on Friday, Khandu stressed that their performance is not just their own but it reflects the effective-

ness of the political leadership and credibility of the govt itself. He urged the APCSOA officers to take ownership of the state and contribute to its holistic growth.

Appreciating the theme of the conference, 'Civil Service at the crossroads: Reimagining public service for a new era', the CM said the role of to-

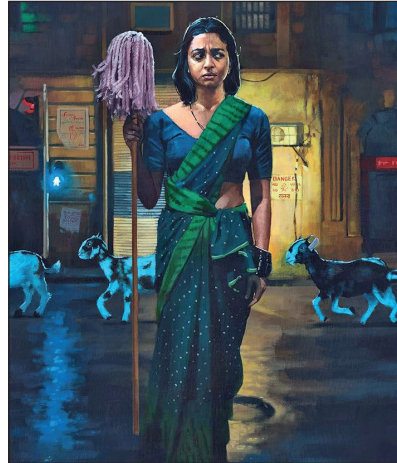
day's civil service officers is not just administrative but transformational.

"You are the first point of contact for the public. You are the ones who interpret govt schemes in a language the people understand. You are the ones who mediate between tradition and modernity. You are the ones who can prevent alienation and foster ownership among the people for every development initiative," he said.



CINEMA OF THE WEEK

Sister Midnight (Dark Comedy, Drama) ★★★★★
Cast: Radhika Apte, Ashok Pathak, Chhaya Kadam, and Smita Tambe
Director: Karan Kandhari
Duration: 1 hour and 47 minutes
Language: Hindi (A)



Uma, a headstrong small-town woman, moves to Mumbai after an arranged marriage but feels out of place. Restless and trapped, she undergoes a wild transformation that breaks society's rules.

'Sister Midnight' is one of those films that's hard to describe without resorting to words like "bizarre," "surreal," or simply "what did I just watch?" From the very first frame, it throws you into a world that's chaotic, wild, and often confounding. On the surface, it's about a newlywed woman battling loneliness and frustration—but any attempt to explain the plot beyond that feels futile. This Radhika Apte-led British production is less interested in telling a story and more in creating an experience—one that's metaphor-heavy and deliberately unsettling.

There are moments in the film that really grab you—strange little scenes that linger in the mind—but trying to piece them together into a coherent whole is a losing game. It's clearly an experimental film, packed with long, static shots and an almost maddening sense of stillness that dares you to stay with it. If you're someone who enjoys decoding metaphor and swimming

through ambiguity, there's something here for you. If you're after a narrative that makes sense from start to finish, you might struggle.

The story follows Uma (Radhika Apte), a new bride who moves into her husband Gopal's (Ashok Pathak) cramped home in a slum. She's temperamental, clueless about running a household, loves smoking, and speaks to her husband mostly in commands. Her only real support is a kind neighbour. Eventually, boredom pushes her into taking a cleaning job, which is when things start to spiral. She kills a goat and dumps it in a pile of trash. Then, it's birds.

Later, during an awkward attempt at intimacy, her husband dies—and she casually keeps the corpse in the house. The events become increasingly surreal: a visit to a monastery, a train journey, and finally, a strange chase scene involving goats. It's dreamlike, absurd,

and tough to pin down.

The one thing that keeps it all from collapsing is Radhika Apte. She's in practically every frame and is terrific—layered, unpredictable, and completely convincing as a woman gradually losing her grip. Her performance gives the film a strange sort of grounding. Ashok Pathak plays her husband with a quiet, believable helplessness and proves once again that he's an actor to watch. Chhaya Kadam, in a brief role as the neighbour, is understated and effective.

Tonally, the film sits somewhere between black comedy and fever dream. There's a certain reckless energy in how it moves—from one weird scene to the next—that keeps you watching, even if you're not always sure why. The cinematography is striking and helps build a mood that's equal parts grimy and hypnotic. But there's no getting around the fact that much of it is repetitive and, at times, exhausting. The use of foreign music tracks might come across as inventive, but their relevance is often hard to figure out. Ditto for a scene from 'The Seven Samurai' playing on TV at a chai shop—interesting, yes, but what's the point?

At its core, 'Sister Midnight' doesn't follow a traditional plot structure. It thrives on moments, mood, and metaphor. If you like your cinema strange and symbolic, it has something to offer. But if you're looking for a clear beginning, middle, and end, this one might just leave you bewildered.

—Abhishek Srivastava

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Chidiya (Drama) ★★★★★
Cast: Vinay Pathak, Amruta Subhash, Svar Kamble, Ayush Pathak, Inaamulhaq, Brijendra Kala
Director: Mehran Amrohi
Duration: 1 hour, 55 minutes
Language: Hindi (U)



Young brothers Shanu (Svar Kamble) and Bua (Ayush Pathak) live in a cramped Mumbai chawl and dream of playing badminton. But their aspiration is constantly deferred as they're compelled to work and support their widowed mother. The story captures their trials in chasing their dream, and whether they succeed.

Writer-director Mehran Amrohi delivers a slice-of-life film that's as feel-good as it is emotive. The story follows Shanu and Bua (short for Bhuvan), whose father has recently passed away, while their mother, Vaishnavi (Amruta Subhash), struggles to make ends meet. The boys are pulled out of school and begin helping her by delivering sarees to the local tailor, Taj (Inaamulhaq), after she finishes stitching the fall. It's a bleak setting, needless to say, but the movie stands out for resisting gloom. What we get instead is an innocent yet poignant story of childhood, brotherhood, and people standing by each other. This spirit is portrayed throughout the film, whether the kids are trying to create a badminton court in their chawl's compound or working as spot boys on a film set—a gig their uncle Bali (Vinay Pathak), also a spot boy, gets them. The characterisation is refreshingly grounded, with no dramatic antisocial or exploitative tropes—the most villainous character here is a bickering neighbour.

Themes of childhood resilience, hope, and community spirit shine through, keeping you invested in the kids' journey toward a simple yet powerful dream—to play. Taj stitching up the badminton net with patches of clothes, a contractor letting them take sand and pillars, and a film crew member helping them with lights so they can play at night after their shift—all of it fills your heart with warmth. And the experience becomes thoroughly wholesome thanks to stellar performances by the leads and supporting cast.

Svar Kamble and Ayush Pathak are brilliant, and their spontaneity as performers shines through. They are convincing as brothers and as young boys with childlike desire. Amruta Subhash stands out as the hapless mother who has likely not had the chance to grieve her husband's passing. She strikes a fine balance between frustration and deep love for her children, emoting with understated finesse. Amruta especially shines in a scene where she's sending her children away on an outdoor shoot schedule for 15 days. Vinay Pathak is equally impressive as the loving and supportive uncle. One of the most poignant moments is the three of them discussing their loved one's death and how the boys are struggling to process it. Inaamulhaq and his ribald talk as the ladies' tailor (which never gets vulgar) and Brijendra Kala as the tea vendor at the film set also deserve mention.

Chidiya is a must-watch family fare, offering simple yet profound storytelling that warms the heart and leaves you smiling.

—Dhaval Roy

Arunachal govt to set up community radio stations in all dists

Joken Ete | TNN

Itanagar: Arunachal Pradesh govt is pushing forward with a plan to establish community radio stations (CRSs) in all the districts, with a strong focus on enhancing grassroots communication, disseminating govt policies effectively and promoting local socio-economic and cultural development.

The move aims to transform the way information reaches communities by adopting a two-way communication model that values both outreach and feedback.

Information and public relations secretary Nyali Ete, through a video conference on Friday addressed all the deputy commissioners to discuss the strategic rollout of the CRSs, an official statement said. Ete emphasised that these stations will not treat districts as homogenous units but will instead cater to the distinct needs of multiple communities within each district. He said CRSs will serve as vital conduits for both spreading information and gathering community input, which can, in turn, sha-



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pe policy decisions.

Senior officials including, IPR director Gijum Tali, deputy director Marbang Ezing, photographic officer Manoj Bhattacharjee and DGM of Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Ltd (BECIL) Khushinder Singh Bhatia, attended the meeting.

Key principles outlined by Ete include the requirement that CRSs be operated by non-profit entities to ensure credibility and public trust, and that at least 50 per cent of the broadcast content must be localised, featuring official information, community-driven discussions and participation through talk shows.

Sabroom ICP awaits biz between India & B'desh

Biswendu Bhattacharjee | TNN

Agartala: The economic and trade relationships in Bangladesh have deteriorated under Muhammad Yunus's leadership, affecting not only India but also dampening prospects across Southeast Asia. The border communities, particularly villagers engaged in supplementary trade, have faced difficulties for nearly a year due to Yunus's passive approach.

The collaborative develop-

menting 50 years of diplomatic ties and enhancing regional connectivity.

According to experts from GPM Architects & Planners, the Sabroom ICP delivers comprehensive border management amenities, offering efficient and secure services for regular border-crossing passengers and cargo operators.

The Landport (ICP) aims to reduce traffic congestion through specific vehicle lanes while thorough border surveillance.

"Sabroom ICP enhances access for the northeastern states to the Chittagong Port, bolstering bilateral trade and opening up direct access to global shipping routes—thereby accelerating regional economic growth," the experts underlined and added that spanning 50 acres, the site is characterised by dense vegetation and undulating topography.

SOUR TIES

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Karate Kid: Legends (Action) ★★★★★
Cast: Jackie Chan, Ben Wang, Ralph Macchio, Joshua Jackson, Sadie Stanley, Aramis Knight
Director: Jonathan Entwistle
Duration: 1 hour, 35 minutes
Language: English (UA)

trains a much older Victor Lipani (Joshua Jackson), a pizzeria owner and former boxing champ. Then, it builds towards a fighting style that merges kung fu and karate. This setup paves the way for engaging training sequences—made even more exciting by the return of shifu Han (Jackie Chan) from Li's Beijing dojo and Sensei Daniel LaRusso (Ralph Macchio) of the Japanese Miyagi school, once led by the late Nariyoshi Keisuke Miyagi (Noriyuki "Pat" Morita).

At 95 minutes, the narrative moves at a brisk pace, which can sometimes feel a bit too frantic as it juggles multiple threads—Li's budding romance with Mia (Sadie Stanley), training her father, Victor, and preparing for the final showdown with her ex, Conor (Aramis Knight), the undefeated Five Boroughs Tournament champion. Kung fu and karate are known for their focus on discipline, but the new movie prioritises technique, which makes the balance feel slightly off. However, the steady stream of well-



executed action sequences more than makes up for these narrative detours.

What stands out right away is the film's old-school charm. While most reboots lean on updating the story to reflect contemporary society, Karate Kid: Legends opts for a stripped-down, classic approach that echoes the spirit of the 1984 original. The Karate Kid. That said, the plot often feels simplistic and leans on tropes—like Li freezing while his brother is attacked, and later, when Victor is defeated by an illegal move during the fight.

Ben Wang delivers a standout performance, impressing with his nimble-footed action. Jackie Chan and Ralph Macchio (the original Karate Kid) share an

easy, engaging chemistry as the "two branches of one tree," and their playful bickering and one-upmanship while training Li is a delight to watch. Aramis Knight has limited screen time, but makes a strong impact as a formidable and menacing opponent. Keep an eye out for the 'dragon kick'—a signature move that recurs throughout the film and is executed with remarkable finesse.

Karate Kid: Legends is a fun and exciting watch, packed with well-choreographed martial arts sequences, a tight narrative, and strong performances—especially for fans of the franchise. It delivers just the right kick of nostalgia and action.

—Dhaval Roy