

**UNION MINISTER LAYS FOUNDATION OF HIGHWAY PROJECTS WORTH ₹9,500 CR IN ARUNACHAL | 4**

**ZPM CHIEF LALDUHOMA VACATES AIZAWL WEST SEAT, RETAINS SERCHHIP | 3**



## Preparations on for PM's visit to Bogibeel

**2 Lakh Likely To Attend Modi's Programme**

Rajib Dutta | TNN

**Dibrugarh:** Preparations are on full swing at Kareng Bali ghat, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Bogibeel bridge on December 25.



The Bogibeel bridge is the longest rail-cum-road bridge of the country

The venue is situated on the northern banks of the Brahmaputra and falls under Dhemaji district. For the district administration, the preparations have been nothing less than a logistical nightmare, as as estimated 2 lakh people from the districts to the north of Brahmaputra, Dhemaji and Lakhimpur, as well as from various parts of Arunachal Pradesh, like Pasighat, Naharlagun, Itanagar and Ziro, are expected to attend the historic event.

Apart from the main pandal, the organisers have set up three public galleries, which have the capacity to accommodate fifty thousand people each. The ground will be able to accommodate at least 2 lakh people, the organisers have said.

"The temporary helipad where the PM's chopper will land is almost ready. The concreting work of the helipad was done on Tuesday. Work on the pandal and pub-

lic galleries are also in final stages. We will ensure that the public does not face any inconvenience on the inauguration day. Drinking water will be provided to the public on the way to the meeting venue," said Dhemaji deputy commissioner Roshni Aparanji Korati on Thursday.

On the other hand, a second helipad constructed on the south bank of the Brahmaputra, towards Dibrugarh, was completed on Wednesday. The PM is scheduled to first land on the south bank, where he will inaugurate the Bogibeel bridge, before proceeding to the north bank to address the public meeting. The PM will also flag off a passenger train over the Bogibeel bridge that day.

Union railways minister Piyush Goel, Assam governor Jagdish Mukhi, MoS for railways Rajen Gohain, mi-

nister for development of northeastern region Jitendra Singh, chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal and Arunachal Pradesh chief minister Pema Khandu will be among those in attendance at the inauguration.

Dhemaji SP Nilesh T Sawakare said on Thursday security has been beefed up ahead of the PM's visit. "The entire 3-km radius around the Bogibeel bridge has been sanitised and kept under tight security vigilance. We are also carrying out regular river patrolling and jungle patrolling. Counter-insurgency operations have been intensified in all sensitive pockets under various police stations of the district," the Dhemaji SP said.

Situated 17-km downstream of Dibrugarh town, the Bogibeel bridge is the fourth bridge over the Brahmaputra and the longest rail-cum-road bridge of the country.

## NH 37 stir for naming bridge after Ahom king

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Rajib Dutta

**Dibrugarh:** Stepping up their demand to name the Bogibeel rail-cum-road bridge after Ahom dynasty founder Chaolung Sukapha, several Ahom organisations staged a blockade on the NH-37 in Dibrugarh on Thursday.

Several hundred members of eight Ahom organisations — All Assam Ahom Sabha, All Tai Ahom Students' Union, Tai Ahom Yuva Parishad (Asom), Ahom Royal Society, Ahom Youth Federation, Ahom Jatya Ganamancha, Tai Ahom Yuva Chatra Samilhan and Tai Ahom Mahila Parishad — participated in the highway blockade near the Chaolung Sukapha statue located on the Bogibeel bridge approach road entry point on the NH-37.

The blockade lasted for half an hour though it had initially been planned to continue for four hours. The agitators submitted a memorandum to the circle officer of Dibrugarh west revenue circle, Tarali Das, addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal.

The Ahom community has been demanding that the Bogibeel bridge be named as 'Swargadeo Chaolung Sukapha Swamanyu Setu' after the first Ahom king, Chaolung Sukapha. Chaolung Sukapha (1228-1268), also pronounced Sju-Ka-Pha, was the first Ahom king in medieval Assam and was the founder of the Ahom kingdom. A Tai prince originally from Mong



Ahom organizations protest in Dibrugarh on Thursday

Mao (Yunnan province in People's Republic of China), the kingdom he established in 1228 existed for nearly 600 years and in the process unified the various indigenous ethnic groups of the region.

There has been at least seven demands from various communities and organisations of the state to name the Bogibeel bridge according to their choice of preference. The state's Chutiya community has proposed up the name of Chutiya dynasty queen Sati Sadhani for the bridge name. The Mising community wants it to be named after freedom fighter Swahid Kamala Miri while the Deori community wants the bridge be named after another freedom movement leader, Bhimbora Deori.

On the other hand, some BJP leaders want the Bogibeel bridge to be christened as 'Atal Setu' as a tribute to former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who had kickstarted the Bogibeel project on April 21, 2002. The banned Ulfa (U), on the other hand, has suggested the name of two cultural luminaries, Bishnu Prasad Rabha and Jyoti Prasad Agarwal.

## Panchayat win shows NE has taken to BJP: Sonowal

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Guwahati:** The state BJP leadership, led by chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal along with finance and health minister Himanta Sarma and state president Ranjeet Dass, on Thursday addressed media in New Delhi, saying that while the nation was glued to BJP's performance in the assembly elections, it missed the party's huge victory in Assam's panchayat election and the 'complete ouster of Congress' from the northeast.

Sonowal said, "BJP's victory in the panchayat elections in Assam held in December is very important for us. Since its inception, the panchayati raj system in Assam has been under control of Congress. In 2013, we had won just 15 of the 420 zila parishes. We have won 221 ZPs this time and this is an example how people of the state, particularly those at the grassroots, have accepted BJP as their party for delivering good governance."

Sonowal said that Congress, which had 270 ZPs in 2013 but won just 147 this time, has been punished for looting



Chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal at the BJP headquarters in Delhi on Thursday

funds meant for village development and cheating the people time and again.

Joining in, Sarma said, "In the month of December, we were all focused on elections on the national stage. But, certain developments took place in the northeastern region at the same time and so we thought to flag it today."

"First, the Congress for the first time has been completely ousted from the northeastern region. There has been never been an occasion in the past when Congress was not ruling in at least two states in the region. Today, no government in the region is headed by Congress or has it as a partner," Sarma said.

"There was another development that happened in Mi-

zoram. A chief minister, Lal Thanhawla, who was the incumbent, lost in both the seats he had contested from. This shows the level of anger of people against Congress in northeast," Sarma said.

Sarma also attacked Congress president Rahul Gandhi for his comments on GST and schemes for farmers announced by the Assam government, accusing him of spreading false propaganda for 'petty politics'.

Hitting out at Rahul for his comment on announcing loan subsidies for farmers, Sarma said the Assam government's schemes were announced long back to commemorate the farmers' uprising of Patharughat against British rule in 1894. "These schemes have nothing to do with any loan waiver but are meant to give 25% subsidy to farmers on loan and also to make it interest-free. Does this fellow (Rahul) know about the Patharughat uprising? He is indulging in false propaganda. This uprising is a sentimental issue for the people of Assam, and he has no right to bring his petty politics into this. It demeans our sacrifice," Sarma said.

## IWT to ply 2 safer, faster boats from Jan

Pranjal Baruah | TNN

**Guwahati:** Waterway transportation between the city and the Brahmaputra's northern banks will get a major boost in January. The Inland Water Transport (IWT) has announced it will start plying at least two ramp propelled launch (RPL) vessels to provide faster and safer waterway transportation between the two banks from next month.

The announcement came on Thursday after the IWT successfully made a test run of one of these vessels from the city's Pandu port to Kachari ghat. Bharat Bhushan Dev Choudhury, IWT Assam director, said, "After the boat capsize incident here in September, IWT has given high priority to safety of waterway commuters. We hope to start plying the two RPLs before the Bhogali Bihu celebrations in mid-January."

These boats will be equipped with modern safety measures and GPS. It is believed that these boats will take less than ten minutes to cross the river, whereas the mechanized country boats take at least 20 minutes.

Describing the technical details of the RPL, the director added, "The length of the vessel is 30 metres and the breadth

is around 7.5 metres. It has the capacity of carrying up to 60 people, two loaded trucks and four light motor vehicles. A vessel costs around Rs 1.9 crore."

The IWT is also going to add two more steel vessels with higher seating capacity in May-June next year, followed by two luxurious fiberglass-reinforced plastic vessels.

"A Ro-Ro (Roll on Roll-off) vessel is also going to join the service. It has already started sailing from Kolkata last week and will reach here soon," Choudhury informed. The Ro-Ro, titled MV Sankardev, was flagged off from Kolkata on Saturday. The vessel is equipped to carry 12 trucks of 25 tonnes each and 200 passengers. The Ro-Ro's route is however yet to be finalized. The Ro-Ro service is already active in Dhubri and Majuli.

In September, three persons drowned and several others suffered injuries when a mechanized country boat carrying around 40 passengers capsized. The incident brought into focus questions about the safety and of waterway transportation in the state. The state government had later announced that it was contemplating building an additional bridge over the river.

## Cachar paper mill employee critically ill

BB Goswami | TNN

**Silchar:** Partha Deb (54), an employee of the Cachar Paper Mill's mechanical department, a unit of the state-owned Hindustan Paper Corporation Ltd, is in a critical condition. However, with thousands of employees of the closed mill not receiving their salaries for the past two years, Deb is almost without treatment. Sources said Deb was shifted to the ICU of a Silchar hospital with help of other mill employees on Thursday.

HPC Paper Mill Revival Action Committee chief convener Manabendra Chakraborty said on Thursday, "Deb is critically ill and not in a position to afford treatment due to non-payment of salary and medical claims for more than 24 months. During this period, 49 workers of Cachar and Nagaon Paper Mills have died without treatment."

Chakraborty added that Parliament recently passed a Rs 90 crore grant to meet the outstanding salaries but this amount has been withheld. "This implies that the government is inclined to impose more circumstantial death. We have again taken up the issue with all concerned authorities, including the Prime Minister and the chief minister," he said.

## New bridge to be called Bogibeel, for now

Prabin Kalita | timesgroup.com

**Guwahati:** While the debate over a name for India's longest double-deck rail-cum-road bridge rages, officially, the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR), which undertook construction of the 4.94-km-long bridge, refers to it simply as Bogibeel Bridge.

It will be inaugurated on December 25 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to coincide with former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's birth anniversary.

"No name for the bridge has been proposed yet. The Railway Board has not sought any suggestions from the NFR headquarters. In all official communication, the bridge is referred to as Bogibeel Bridge till now," a source said.

A few years ago, the source added, the Railway Board had asked NFR authorities to submit a list of names of legendary figures from the sta-

te after whom projects in the state could be named. "But the list was not specifically for the Bogibeel bridge," the source further said.

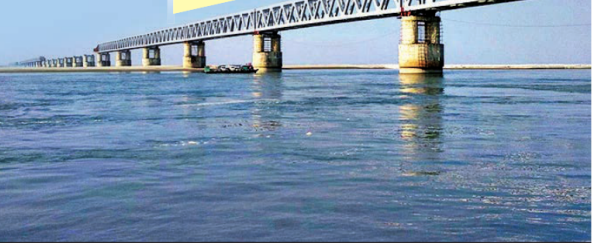
Various ethnic bodies have been demanding that the bridge be named after legendary personalities from their respective communities. Even the banned Ulfa (U) has joined the cry for naming the bridge after the state's two cultural icons, Bishnu Prasad Rabha and Jyoti Prakash Agarwala.

The name game was triggered after BJP MLA from Dibrugarh, Prasanta Phukan suggested that the bridge be named as 'Atal Setu' after the late Prime Minister.

The politics over naming sites and structures is not new. In 1963, the country's first Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru had inaugurated the state's first bridge (a rail-cum-road) over the Brahmaputra in Guwahati at a grand function at Maliga-

### WHAT'S IN A NAME

<b>■ CHUTIYA COMMUNITY</b> Birangana Sati Sadhani Setu	<b>■ DEURI COMMUNITY</b> Bhimbor euri bridge	<b>■ ULFA (U)</b> Bishnu-Jyoti Bridge
<b>■ TAI-AHOM COMMUNITY</b> Chaolung Sukapha bridge	<b>■ MISING COMMUNITY</b> Swahid Kamala Miri bridge	<b>■ LOCALS</b> John Berry White/Bogibeel Setu
<b>■ MLA PRASANTA PHUKAN</b> Atal Setu		



on railway station. Then, he had announced that the bridge would be called the Sarighat Bridge after the famous Battle of Sarighat on the Brahmaputra river in 1673, in which the Ahom army had

vanquished the Mughals in their last major attempt to take over Guwahati.

Nearly two decades later, in 1987, then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had announced the name of the second

## State tea workers to get ₹2.5K each as incentive

**Guwahati:** The state government on Wednesday announced that it would deposit Rs 2,500 each in over seven lakh bank accounts of tea garden workers that were opened just after the demonetisation drive two years ago. This amount is the second installment of the Rs 5,000 incentive announced in the budget for 2017-18 last year.

"The state government approved release of Phase-II of the scheme. All beneficiaries covered during the Phase-I will receive the second part of Rs 2,500 in their bank accounts on January 15, 2019," Assam Finance Mi-

nister Himanta Biswa Sarma said at a press conference.

The Union government had on November 8, 2016, stopped use of high value banknotes of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 denomination.

The state government had transferred Rs 2,500 to each of the 7,21,485 accounts of tea garden workers across 752 tea gardens in 26 districts during the first phase, he added.

"It is heartening to know that out of those accounts, around seven lakh remained active. We had spent around Rs 182 crore in the first phase," Sarma informed. **PH**

**StarPlus**  
रिश्ता वही, बात नई

'Ishqbaaz - Pyaar Ki Ek Dhinchaak Kahani' at 22:00 Hrs

1300 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala  
1330 Kasauti Zindagi Kay 2  
1400 Ishqbaaz - Pyaar Ki Ek Dhinchaak Kahani

1430 Nazar  
1500 Maram Khan Reporting Live  
1530 Kasauti Zindagi Kay 2  
1600 Yeh Rishita Kya Kehlata Hai  
1630 Ishqbaaz - Pyaar Ki Ek Dhinchaak Kahani

**Zoom**

0645 Kadak Start  
0800 Music Takatak  
1030 Likes Bajao  
1200 Toofani Hits  
1300 Fab 10  
1400 Loudspeaker  
1500 Teleshot  
1600 Toofani Hits  
1715 Shaamdaar Hits  
1900 Planet Bollywood News  
1930 Eors Game Show  
2000 Loudspeaker  
2200 Toofani Hits  
2300 Imprefect

**&tv**

'Bhaji Ji Ghar Par Hain!' at 23:30 Hrs

0700 Bhabiji

**1700 Nazar**  
1730 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala  
1800 Kasauti Zindagi Kay 2  
1830 Yeh Rishita Kya Kehlata Hai  
1900 Karsangni  
1930 Maram Khan Reporting Live  
2000 Kasauti Zindagi Kay 2  
2030 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala  
2100 Krishna Chali London  
2130 Yeh Rishita Kya Kehlata Hai  
2200 Ishqbaaz - Pyaar Ki Ek Dhinchaak Kahani  
2230 Yeh Hai Mohabbaten  
2300 Nazar  
2330 Kasauti Zindagi Kay 2

**1400 Daayan**  
1600 Laal Ishq  
1900 Bhabiji  
1930 Agniphera  
2000 Vikrami Bettal  
2030 Paramparar Shri Krishna  
2100 Siddhivinayak  
2130 Perfect Pati  
2200 Meri Haanikarak Bhai  
2230 Bhabji Ji Ghar Par Hain!

## NE students find home away from home in Kolkata

**Kolkata:** Aldy towers over his friends as the group of friends sit down to talk. Sweating and exhausted from a game of football they were playing with other northeastern students in the hostel, he starts eagerly, "Football is basically indoor football played with five-member teams. The hostel security guards saw us play and invited us to a competition in Kakkwip, so we went to play there."

A final year student at the Regional Institute of Printing Technology in Jadavpur University, Aldy Maryo Kharsyntier left his home in Meghalaya two-and-a-half years ago to study here. He is passionate about football and like many of his friends, he has made it into the college team. "I think Kolkata is a good place, especially for us northeastern people. There is no racism here, at least I haven't faced any. Kolkata has been good to me," he says.

Alemao I Longkumer from Nagaland, another Kolkata-based student who enjoys art and wants to work in the anime and manga industries, chips in, "I've always been a fan of anime, and I hope to work as an animator."

Every year, several students from the northeast make Kolkata their home as they pursue courses like medicine, mathematics, hospitality, engineering and various other courses. "Bengalis are very friendly," says Lalrinchhana, who hails from Mizoram. "Sometimes they make me feel proud to be an Indian. Northeastern people look very different from everyone else, but there is no racism or ragging here," he says.

Chadambe, a student of Techno India, however, relates an incident that left a mark on him. "My lecturer asked me where I was from, and when I

said Meghalaya, she said, "Are you from China?" She didn't mean to be rude, she just didn't know that Meghalaya was in India."

Chadambe thinks that northeastern students face harassment primarily because of their culture and their looks, but agrees that Kolkata is much better than other big cities in this regard. He says, "I've been to Delhi and Bangalore and faced harassment. Some people shouted at me to go back to China."

But why did Chadambe choose Kolkata to do his Master's degree? "When I was in class II, I saw on the news that a Congress MLA's son was murdered in Delhi, and his parents were talking about how Kolkata was much safer than other cities for northeastern students, that people there are more kind. I wanted to go to this city and study and learn their culture," he says.

Chadambe misses home and finds breakfast at 10 am amusing. "Back home, we have breakfast at 7 am and mostly boiled food. Here food is very oily." He thinks that people in the city are helpful, and is impressed by queues in auto stands, as they don't maintain such queues back home. He says he is also learning Bengali from local friends here.

Darimeka from Shillong, who studies food production at IHM, Taratala, says, "I came to Kolkata because it's an hour's flight from Shillong and my aunt works here." She says she has found her local friends to be warm and open-minded. "Our hostel deadline is 7 o'clock, so my friends here help me out in buying supplies," she says.

Same Rani, from Shillong, says most northeastern students choose Kolkata as the city is closer home and that harassment is less here. "Once you go out for your studies, you have to make sacrifices," he adds.

Rajkumar Bablu Singh from Manipur, who is the chairman of the Northeast Students' Forum, says he hopes events like the Northeast Students' Sports and Cultural Meet, which will be held in April next year, will spread awareness in places around Kolkata like Durgapur and Asansol, where discrimination is more prevalent and there are no associations to support their cause.

**Romeo NOW**

'Bridget Jones's Baby' at 21:00 Hrs

0600 Series: Ground Floor  
0630 Series: Undateable  
0700 Series: Mike & Molly  
0730 Series: The Middle  
0800 New Year's Eve  
1025 The Parent Trap  
1300 Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore  
1425 Alvin And The Chipmunks: The Squeakquel  
1555 Love & Other Drugs  
1800 Series: Ground Floor

**MOVIES NOW**

1830 Series: Undateable  
1900 Series: Mike & Molly  
1930 Series: The Middle  
2030 Series: The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
2100 Bridget Jones's Baby  
2330 Fly Me To The Moon

'Van Helsing' at 21:00 Hrs

0735 End of Days  
0955 Brave  
1145 Kung Fu Killer  
1350 Finding Dory

**MN X**

'Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of The Black Pearl' at 21:00 Hrs

0740 Harry Potter And The Prisoner of Azkaban

**ZEEACTION**

'Phool Bane Angare' at 20:00 Hrs

0805 Kshatriya The Fighter

**MOVIES ON TV**

1015 A View To A Kill  
1225 Pete's Dragon  
1410 Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince  
1700 Planes: Fire & Rescue  
1845 Mr. & Mrs. Smith  
2100 Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of The Black Pearl

1105 Police Police  
1214 Maidan E Jung  
1516 Naag Lok  
1709 Tapori Wanted  
2000 Phool Bane Angare  
2333 Yeh Kaisi Anthoni

**ZEEBOLLYWOOD**

'Haseena Maan Jayegi' at 21:00 Hrs

0804 Radha Ka Sangham  
1122 Dil Aashna Hai  
1439 Partner  
1736 Sandwich

**2100 Haseena Maan Jayegi**

0645 Sniff  
0814 Madaani  
1019 Aakash Vani  
1243 Mechanic: Resurrection  
1429 Luck By Chance  
1659 Dil Chanta Hai  
2000 Transformers: Age of Extinction  
2237 Ragini Mims

**2300 Tu Hai Mera Sunday**

'Goimaal Again' at 13:45 Hrs

0755 Ghar Ho To Aisa  
1050 Vlogam  
1345 Goimaal Again  
2000 Jeena Hai Dooonga  
2305 The Real Jackpot