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सत्यमेव जयते

Government of Assam  
Department of Food, Public Distribution & Consumer Affairs

## SPECIAL ANNA SEWA DIN

1-20 June 2025

A special initiative under PMGKAY to  
Ensure Food Security of NFSA Beneficiaries

# Free Rice for 3 Months at One Go

June, July, August 2025



**35 kg/month** free rice for  
each **AAY** family

**Total - 105 kg**

**5 kg/month** free rice for  
each member of **PHH** family

**Total - 15 kg**

For June & July 2025



Total beneficiaries  
**2,45,00,674**



Total families  
**70,35,509**

For August 2025



Total beneficiaries  
**2,44,98,252**



Total families  
**70,35,051**

### Appeal to Beneficiaries



Authenticate three times separately  
through e-PoS devices



Collect separate receipts from e-PoS  
device against online transaction for each  
month



Entitled quantity of free rice only through  
e-PoS devices is to be collected



If any beneficiary does not receive due  
quantity of free rice

Contact 1800-345-3611 | 1967  
(toll free) between 9 AM to 6 PM

### Shop Owner Must



Provide free rice for three months at one go  
to eligible families



Mandatorily inform beneficiaries about Anna  
Sewa Din through wide publicity



Keep the shop open throughout the day  
during Anna Sewa Din



Ensure full distribution of rice entitled to  
beneficiaries during Anna Sewa Din



Produce receipts of e-Pos machines against  
rice received by the beneficiaries





## Import duty cut on crude edible oils will protect local processors Industry bodies

**NEW DELHI, May 31:** Edible oil industry bodies SEA and IVPA have hailed the government's decision to cut basic custom duty on crude oils to 10 per cent, saying the move will discourage imports of finished products and safeguard the interests of domestic refiners.

On Friday, the government reduced the basic custom duty on crude palm oil, crude soyabean oil and crude sunflower oil to 10 per cent from earlier 20 per cent.

The effective import duty (including basic custom duty and other charges) on these three products will now be 16.5 per cent, as against 27.5 per cent earlier.

With a sharp rise in imports of refined palmolen in the past six months, both industry bodies have been urging the government to increase the duty difference between crude edible oils and refined edible oils. Welcoming the decision, Solvent Extractors Association of India (SEA) President Sanjeev Asthana said, "the government's decision to increase the duty differential from 8.25 per cent to 19.25 per cent is a bold and timely move. It will discourage imports of refined palmolen and shift demand back to crude palm oil, thereby re-



vitalizing the domestic refining sector."

This move will not impact the overall volume of edible oil imports and is unlikely to cause any upward pressure on edible oil prices, he said.

"On the contrary, the reduction in duty on crude oil will help reduce domestic prices, benefiting consumers," Asthana said.

India imports more than 50 per cent of its domestic edible oil requirement.

India imported 159.6 lakh tonnes of edible oils during the 2023-24 oil marketing year (No-

vember to October) valuing ₹ 1.32 lakh crore.

The basic custom duty on refined oils remains unchanged at 32.5 per cent.

At present, the effective duty on refined oils is 35.75 per cent.

The Indian Vegetable Oil Producers' Association (IVPA) President Sudhakar Desai said, "We thank the government for accepting the IVPA recommendation to increase the duty differential between crude and refined edible oil to 19.25 per cent."

It is a significantly bold move towards ensuring Make in India

and also protecting the sector from influx of refined oils causing capacity injury to the vegetable oil sector, Desai said.

"This is a win-win situation for vegetable oil refiners and consumers, as local prices will go down due to lower duty on crude oils," SEA Executive Director B V Mehta said.

India imports palm oil from Malaysia and Indonesia. Soyabean oil comes from Brazil and Argentina. SEA pointed out that the previous import duty difference of 8.25 per cent between CPO (crude palm oil) and refined palmolen had inadvertently incentivized imports of the finished product over the crude form.

As a result, during the oil year 2023-24 (November-October), refined palmolen accounted for over 20 per cent of total palm oil imports, and in the first half of oil year 2024-25 (November 2024-April 2025), its share rose to nearly 27 per cent.

On May 29, the C&F price of RBD palmolen was USD 45 per tonne lower than CPO, further encouraging refined imports at the cost of domestic value addition, the SEA added. (PTI)

## Flagship Killer realme GT 7 Series launched in India

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, May 31:** realme, the most popular smartphone brand among Indian youth, on Saturday unveiled its highly anticipated realme GT 7 Series in India, in sync with its global launch in Paris. Headlining the announcement is the realme GT 7 Dream Edition, co-created with the Aston Martin Formula One™ Team, making its official debut as the first co-branded smartphone with AMF1.

Packed with industry-first features and performance upgrades, the realme GT 7 Series marks realme's boldest step yet toward redefining the flagship smartphone experience for Indian users.

Commenting on the launch, realme spokesperson said that with the realme GT 7 Series, they are redefining what it means to be a flagship killer in 2025.

"This isn't just about top-tier specs, it's about offering a complete experience that blends power, intelligence, and craftsmanship in a way that resonates with the aspirations of today's youth. From the debut of our Dream Edition co-created with the Aston Martin Formula One™ Team, to innovations like the AI Planner and IceSense Graphene cooling, every detail has been engineered to push boundaries," he added. He further said that The GT 7 Series is a bold step forward in our journey to democratize cutting-edge technology, making premium experiences accessible, desirable, and unapologetically performance-driven.

At the center of the lineup is the realme GT 7, a performance powerhouse designed to meet the evolving needs of India's tech-savvy generation. It features a 7000mAh Titan Battery paired with 120W Ultra Charge—powering up to 50% in just 14 minutes, and 100% in only 40 minutes. With Smart Bypass technology to reduce heat and extend battery life, the GT 7 also becomes the first smartphone globally to earn the TÜV Rheinland 5-Star Battery Certification.

## Doubling tariff on steel aluminium by US to disrupt India's metal exports Experts

**NEW DELHI, May 31:** US President Donald Trump's announcement to double tariffs on imported steel and aluminium will impact Indian exporters, particularly those engaged in value-added and finished steel products and auto-components, experts say.

Expressing concern over the Trump-administration's move, they said the Indian government should take up the matter bilaterally with the US authorities.

On May 30, Trump announced that he would double the existing 25 per cent tariffs on steel and aluminium imports from June 4.

This hike comes under Section 232 of the US Trade Expansion Act of 1962, a law that allows the president to impose tariffs or other trade restrictions, if imports are deemed a threat to national security. Trump originally invoked this provision in 2018 to set the 25 per cent tariff on steel and 10 per cent on aluminium. He raised tariffs on aluminium to 25 per cent in February 2025.

For India, the consequences are direct, the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said.

In 2024-25, India exported USD 4.56 billion worth of iron, steel, and aluminium products to the US, with key categories, including USD 587.5 million in iron and steel, USD 3.1 billion in articles of iron or steel, and USD 860 million in aluminium and related articles.

"These exports are now exposed to sharply higher US tariffs, threatening the profitability of Indian producers and exporters," GTRI founder Ajay Srivastava said.

India has already issued a formal notice at the World Trade Organization (WTO) signalling its intention to impose retaliatory tariffs on US goods in response to the earlier steel tariffs.

"With Trump now doubling the tariffs, it remains to be seen whether India will carry out the retaliation by increasing tariffs on certain US exports within a month," he said.

The Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) President S C Ralhan said the proposed increase in import duty will have a significant bearing on India's steel exports, especially in semi-finished and finished categories like

stainless steel pipes, structural steel components, and automotive steel parts.

"These products are part of India's growing engineering exports, and higher duties could erode our price competitiveness in the American market," he said.

The US is among the top destinations for Indian steel manufacturers, who have been gradually increasing market share through high-quality production and competitive pricing.

"Such sharp increases in tariffs send discouraging signals to global trade and manufacturing supply chains. We urge the government to take up the issue at the bilateral level to ensure that Indian exporters are not unfairly disadvantaged... as 25 per cent additional duty will be a huge burden, which is difficult to be absorbed by the exporter/importer," Ralhan said.

The FIEO chief also emphasized on the need for Indian exporters to diversify their markets and invest in higher-grade value-added products to mitigate the impact of such protectionist measures. (PTI)

## PhysicsWallah student scores 99.8%, three others above 99%

**BHARATPUR, May 31:** Several students from PhysicsWallah (PW) have recorded strong performances in the RBSE Class 10 Board Examinations 2025. Among them, Chanchal from Gopalgarh, Bharatpur has scored the highest marks with a score of 99.83%.

Other top-performing students include Deepika from Weir with 99.67% and Avani Sharma from Sikar with 99.33%. These students have been a part of PW's online programs which have specifically been designed to support students preparing for Class 10th RBSE Board Examinations.

In total, four students from PhysicsWallah scored 99% and above, 51 students achieved 98% and over 250 students have secured 95% and above. Commenting on the results, Alakh Pandey, Teacher, Founder and CEO of PhysicsWallah, said, "We congratulate all students who appeared for the exams and appreciate their effort. Class 10 board exams are an important ac-

ademic milestone, laying the foundation for future studies and career choices. Our focus remains on providing structured learning support that helps students prepare effectively and stay on track. These results reflect steady progress toward that goal."

"I prepared for each subject by completing the syllabus chapterwise. PW's online classes made it easy to understand concepts. I used to attend classes at 5 am for Maths and these really helped me," said Chanchal talking about how she supplemented her learning.

This year, over 10 lakh students appeared for the RBSE Class 10 examination. The strong performances by many students highlight the increasing importance of structured academic preparation and the growing role of online learning platforms in supporting student success. PhysicsWallah provides academic resources for students across India through a combination of digital platforms and offline centers. (PTI)

## Aayush Wellness's FY25 revenue rockets 8,645%, net profit soars 489%

**NEW DELHI, May 31:** Aayush Wellness Limite, India's leading preventive healthcare company, has reported excellent results for the financial year 2024-25, reflecting robust growth.

The company registered revenue of ₹7,338.59 lakh for the financial year 2024-25, a remarkable surge of 8,645% from ₹83.92 lakh in the previous financial year. The company's net profit for 2024-25 stood at ₹336.58 lakh, reflecting a growth of 489% over the profit of ₹57.18 lakh in the previous fiscal year. Aayush Wellness registered a net profit of ₹109.3 lakh in the fourth quarter of the financial year 2024-25, an increase of 546.6% from ₹16.85 lakh in the corresponding quarter in the previous fiscal year. Revenue for the latest quarter was ₹2,236.81 lakh, an increase of 59,000% over the previous year, underscoring strong demand for its health and wellness

portfolio.

Commenting on the excellent financial performance, Naveena Kumar, Managing Director of Aayush Wellness Limited, said, "We have demonstrated remarkable growth in the last quarter and the whole of the financial year. The revenue, EBITDA and net profit for the financial year were the highest yet in our history. There is strong momentum across all our product verticals, and with several new launches lined up, we are confident of accelerating our growth in the coming quarters."

The shares of Aayush Wellness closed at ₹134.28 on Friday, 2% higher than the previous close. The shares have been on a roll and are up by more than 10% in the past week, 51% in the last month, 103% in the last three months, and 689% in the last year. The stock has delivered more than 6,500% returns in the last two years and a

staggering 9,000% in the last three years.

Strengthening its presence in the healthcare market, Aayush Wellness launched its first healthcare centre in Mumbai's Virar. At its core is a smart Health ATM capable of performing a wide range of diagnostic tests in just 2-3 minutes. The innovation not only enables early detection and preventive care but also empowers individuals, especially those in rural and semi-urban areas, to take charge of their health in an accessible, cost-effective manner.

Aayush Wellness focuses on critical areas such as tobacco de-addiction, nutrition, and holistic health improvement. Its offerings include Dreamy Sleep Gummies, Beauty Vitamin Gummies, and Aayush Herbal Masala, and it is poised to capture opportunities in the rapidly growing nutritional and fortified food segments. (PTI)

*Contd. from Page 3...*

## Over 10,000 people affected

The local resident had reportedly died in his house and the family had to arrange for a bamboo shaft to take the body out to a dry place for it to be taken to the cremation ground. Several localities of the city remained submerged for the second day with different rescue agencies taking people to safer places as residents abandoned their waterlogged houses with no water or power supply.

The ASDMA bulletin said floods have been reported in six districts, with five revenue circles of Kamrup Metropolitan, Kamrup and Cachar reeling under 'urban floods'.

Floods have also been reported in Dhemaji, Lakhimpur and Golaghat, impacting eight revenue circles in these three districts.

A total of 10,150 people have been affected by 'urban floods', with two camps and one relief distribution centre being opened.

Nearly 2,000 people have been affected by floods in the other three districts, though no camps or relief distribution centres are operational in the flood-hit urban areas till now. One ring 'bandh' (a type of dyke) has been breached under the North Lakhimpur revenue circle. NDRF and SDRF personnel have been evacuating people in different affected parts, the bulletin added. Almost all the major rivers across the state were on a 'rising' water level trend, as per ASDMA information.

The Brahmaputra was flowing near the danger level in Dibrugarh, Ranganadi in Lakhimpur, Dhansiri in Nulmaligarh, Jia Bharali in Sonitpur, Kopili in Kamrup and Beki in Barpeta. As per the latest RMC data, Dhubri, Kokrajhar and Bongaigaon have 'red alert' issued, while the districts of South Salmara Mankachar, Goalpara, Chirang, Baksa, Barpeta, Bajali, Dima Hasao and Cachar are on 'orange alert'.

'Red alert' implies 'warning/take action', and the districts with such a warning may witness heavy to very heavy rainfall at a few places, with extremely heavy rainfall at isolated places, and squally winds with speed reaching 40-50 kmph gusting to 60 kmph.

An 'orange alert' asks people to be 'alert/be prepared to take action' for thunderstorm and lightning accompanied with gusty wind reaching wind speed 30 to 40 kmph with heavy to very heavy rain very likely at isolated places.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had said on Friday that the state was facing an 'abnormal situation' due to incessant downpours caused by massive cloud cover over several parts of the Northeast. Heavy rainfall has also been recorded in Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya, aggravating the situation in Assam, especially in Guwahati, which has been hit by massive waterlogging, he said.

A special casual leave was announced for government employees of Kamrup and Kamrup Metropolitan districts on Saturday, who have to commute some distance to reach their offices. Educational institutions have also been closed in the two districts on Saturday. Flight services at Guwahati airport were affected on Friday due to heavy rain and gusty winds, the officials said. (PTI)

## 4 including 3 Myanmar refugees

Sixty-three families were also evacuated to safer places due to landslides and floods, it said. Landslides have also blocked national and intra-state highways at 69 locations, the bulletin said. Officials also said that many travellers intending to travel to the southern part of the state were stranded in Serchhip town after landslides damaged a national highway. A report from Lawngtlai town said two persons were rescued from the debris of buildings that collapsed due to landslides triggered by heavy rain on Friday. An official said the two survivors were rescued on Saturday morning and the search for the other missing persons is underway.

No fatality has been reported so far and the number of missing persons is yet to be ascertained, he said.

Rescue operation and debris clearance are being carried out by personnel of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), security forces along with volunteers of Young Lai Association (YLA), the largest civil society organisation in Lawngtlai district, he said.

The incident occurred at around 10:30 am on Friday in the border area of Bazar Veng and Chandmaly localities in Lawngtlai when the landslides struck a four-storey building and five other houses, including two under construction, according to the official. One floor of the four-storey building was used as a hotel and around 20 people from Myanmar were believed to be staying in the hotel at the time of the incident.

However, the majority of the occupants(guests) have reportedly escaped before the building collapsed, while occupants of other buildings did not spend the night at their homes when the incident occurred, he said. (PTI)

## 3 sentenced to 20 years of rigorous

The judge also expressed concern over the unprecedented increase in the use of drugs in the district. He also directed the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) to open a drug rehabilitation centre in Diphu. (PTI)

## Cong asks Modi if he chose

"Will Pakistan hand over Pahalgam terror attack 'mastermind' and Laskar-e-Taiba Commander and terrorist, Saifullah Kasuri, who attended an anti-India Rally in Lahore on 29th May, 2025," he said. Surjewala also asked whether, as part of the ceasefire, Pakistan has agreed to proscribe or ban all anti-India terrorist groups.

And he named several outfits: Jaish-e- Muhammad (JeM), Jamaat-ul-Dawa (JuD), Tehreek-e-Azadi Jammu & Kashmir (TAJK), Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM), Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuA, presently known as HuM), Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jammu & Kashmir National Liberation Army, Kashmir Jihad Force, Al Jihad Force, Jammu & Kashmir Students Liberation Front, and Tehrik-e-Hurriyat-e-Kashmir.

The Congress leader also asked, now that there is supposedly a truce, whether Pakistan would shut down terror camps, hand over Masood Azhar, Hafiz Saeed, and Dawood Ibrahim to India. "All patriots, all true nationalists, and the entire nation demand these answers," he said.

According to para 18 of Lutnick's affidavit, Trump brokered peace between India and Pakistan to avoid a full-scale war between the two nuclear nations. "For example, India and Pakistan – two nuclear powers engaged in combat operations just 13 days ago – reached a tenuous ceasefire on May 10, 2025. This ceasefire was only achieved after President Trump interceded and offered both nations trading access with the United States to avert a full-scale war. An adverse ruling that constrains presidential power in this case could lead India and Pakistan to question the validity of President Trump's offer, threatening the security of an entire region and the lives of millions," it read. (PTI)

## Former school teacher 'deported'

Tribunals in 2016, against which he had approached the Gauhati High Court. The High Court had upheld the FT decision, leading to Islam's detention in 2018.

He was set free in 2020 following a Supreme Court general order for releasing all detainees who have spent more than two years term. Khanam claimed that her husband's appeal against the FT decision is pending before the Supreme Court. Islam's mother Jahanara was a member of the village panchayat in the last term and all members of the family, including the former school teacher, had voted in the just concluded rural polls in the state, the family claimed. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had asserted that the detection of foreigners in the state will be expedited and action against Declared Foreign Nationals (DFN) will be taken as per the law.

The chief minister had said that the course open to those who have been declared foreigners by the Tribunal is to appeal to the High Court. If some say that they have appeals pending before the Supreme Court or High Court, then no action will be taken against them but those who have not appealed in the higher judiciary, will be pushed back, he said. The chief minister pointed out that if a person who is once declared a foreign national by the Tribunal does not challenge it in the court then their 'right to stay in Assam is forfeited'. (PTI)

## Heavy rains disrupt life

hectares of land. The main road connecting Hojai, Tumprang, and Dongkamukam remains cut off at Bhelapara due to the submergence of the Assam Mala Project road.

## Move to deport illegal

mechanisms, has resulted in a situation where Indian citizens were being wrongfully incarcerated and threatened with removal to foreign territories without lawful basis. The plea sought a direction that no person shall be deported pursuant to the February 4 order without a prior reasoned declaration by the foreigners tribunal, without adequate opportunity of appeal or review and verification of nationality by the Ministry of External Affairs.

It has also sought a declaration that the "push back" policy adopted by Assam was violative of Articles 14 (equality before law) and 21 (protection of life and personal liberty) of the Constitution and contrary to binding judicial precedents. (PTI)

## CAs can empower youth with financial skills, says Jayanta Mallabaruah

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, May 31:** Assam minister Jayanta Mallabaruah on Saturday asserted that Chartered Accountants can help younger generation in their skill development and education by empowering them with financial knowledge.

He was speaking during a two days Sub Regional Conference of Chartered Accountants which was held on the 30th and 31st of May 2025 at ICAI Bhawan, Manik Nagar in Guwahati. While speaking on the occasion, the minister stressed on the role of Chartered Accountants in creating a robust economy of the country and more particularly the state of Assam.

"The Chartered Accountants can greatly assist in skill development and education of the younger generation by empowering them with financial knowledge and skills and thereby contributing to the society at large," he added.

He also emphasised that the professionals shall be pivotal in the vision of the chief minister of Assam to bring state at par with the advanced state economies of the country.

The minister further highlighted the growing inflow of investments in Assam by major multinational corporations, asserting that such developments present a great opportunity for professionals in the financial sector.

CA Vishnu Kumar Tulsyan, chairman EIRC lauded the two day conference and its theme.

"The conference justified the spirit of its theme, as it witnessed commendable presentations by expert and dynamic speakers from



across the country," he added.

Commenting on the conference, Tulsyan said that the sessions on Day 1 dealt with topics relating to Direct Taxes and Technology and Artificial Intelligence. The second day witnessed sessions on Indirect Taxes, Capital Markets, Accounting and Audit.

On the other hand, CA. (Dr.) Swati Tejwari informed the press that the two day conference was successfully concluded on Saturday evening in the presence of Central and Regional Council members, managing committee members and delegates from various parts of the re-

gion. "The Conference saw active participation of 300 plus delegates despite the inclement weather in the city," she added.

The conference was organised by the Eastern India Regional Council of ICAI and hosted by Guwahati Branch. CA. Jay Prakash Gupta, secretary Guwahati Branch initiated the inaugural session. CA Ragineegoyal, chairman of the Guwahati Branch delivered the welcome address and unveiled the theme of the conference.

CA Ravi Kumar Patwa, Central Council member briefed the minister about the background and initiatives of ICAI.



SUNDAY, JUNE 1, 2025

THE HILLS TIMES 3

## Over 10,000 people affected; landslides claim 5 lives

### Heavy rain continues to create havoc in parts of Assam for 2<sup>nd</sup> day

**GUWAHATI, May 31:** Five persons were killed in landslides in Assam in the last 24 hours as incessant rain led to floods in six districts, affecting over 10,000 people, an official bulletin said on Saturday.

Three districts in the western part of the state remained on 'red alert' and eight more were on 'orange alert', as per Regional Meteorological Centre (RMC) data, while rainwaters from upstream areas in Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya aggravated the flood situation in the state.

The Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) said all five deaths have been reported from the Kamrup Metropolitan district.

Urban Affairs minister Jayanta Malla Baruah had on Friday said that three members of a family, a mother-daughter duo and a niece, were killed in a landslide in Bonda area on the outskirts of Guwahati.



He had said that several agencies were working to provide relief to affected people as massive waterlogging was reported from most localities in the city on Friday.

Baruah inspected the situation in

different parts of the city during the day to assess the prevailing situation and review the government's emergency response measures.

Video of a person being taken for the last rites on a bamboo shaft

from his residence amidst knee-deep waters from Rukminigaon area of the city led to sharp criticism among the citizens of the government's flood control measures. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Former school teacher 'deported to Bangladesh' returns home in Assam

**MORIGAOON, May 31:** A former school teacher, who was detained by Assam Police on the charges of being a foreigner and allegedly deported to Bangladesh, returned to his home in Morigaon district on Saturday, an officer said.

Khairul Islam and eight others were picked up from different parts of the district on May 24 but family members claimed they were not told about their whereabouts.

Islam's family had claimed that they saw him in a video purportedly showing him being taken to Bangladesh. They claimed he was 'shot at' at the India-Bangladesh border in South Salmara Mankachar district.

Islam's family members claimed that the police brought him home on Saturday morning.

An officer of the Assam Border Police said that his medical check-up was conducted and he was found to be physically fit.

The officer, however, refused to divulge details on where he was detained.

The other eight persons who were picked up along with Islam have been shifted to a detention centre at Matia in Goalpara district, police said.

Their family members claimed that their appeals were pending before either the Supreme Court or the Gauhati High Court.

Islam's wife Rita Khanam had said on Friday that her husband is a former school teacher and a law-abiding citizen.

She claimed that policemen had come to their residence at night, and took him away, saying they have some questions to ask and he can return home after that but since then the family was not given any information about his whereabouts till the video surfaced.

Islam, along with his three siblings, was declared a foreigner by the Foreigner (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Plea in SC claims 'sweeping' drive by Assam to deport persons suspected to be foreigners

## Move to deport illegal foreigners: SC moved



**NEW DELHI, May 31:** A plea has been filed in the Supreme Court alleging that the Assam government has reportedly launched a "sweeping and indiscriminate drive" to detain and deport persons suspected to be foreigners without nationality verification or exhaustion of legal remedies.

The plea referred to a February 4 order of the apex court which, while dealing with a separate petition, directed Assam to initiate the process of deportation of 63 declared foreign nationals, whose nationality was known, within two weeks.

"Pursuant to the said order (of February 4)... the state of Assam has reportedly launched a sweeping and indiscriminate drive to detain and deport individuals suspected to be foreigners, even in the absence of foreigners tribunal declarations, nationality verification, or exhaustion of legal remedies," said the plea filed by the All BTC Minority Students Union.

The petition, filed through advocate Adeel Ahmed, referred to news reports including one about a retired school teacher who was allegedly "pushed back" into Bangladesh.

"These instances reflect a growing pattern of deportations con-

ducted by the Assam Police and administrative machinery through informal 'push back' mechanisms, without any judicial oversight or adherence to the safeguards envisaged by the Constitution of India or this court," it said.

The plea alleged that this policy of "push back", being executed in border districts like Dhubri, South Salmara and Goalpara was 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.

It said such actions were directly contrary to the fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution.

"The 'push back' policy, as implemented, violates Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution by deporting individuals without due process, thereby denying them the opportunity to contest their deportation and infringing upon their right to life and personal liberty," the plea claimed.

It alleged that the indiscriminate application of deportation directives, coupled with absence of proper identification, verification and notice (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## One more arrested in Assam for being 'Pakistan sympathiser', total at 79

**GUWAHATI, May 31:** One more person, accused of being a Pakistan sympathiser, has been apprehended in Assam, taking the total number of such arrests to 79 in the state since the Pahalgam terror attack last month, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

The arrested person has been identified as Farjul Haque from Mangaldai in Darrang district.

"Crackdown on pro-Pakistani sympathisers. Total arrests made: 79," the chief minister posted on 'X' on Friday.

Sarma had earlier said the state-wide crackdown on traitors would continue, and nobody would be spared.

The police have launched action against those people who have been allegedly indulging in 'anti-India and pro-Pakistan activities'.

The chief minister had also said that the provisions of the National Security Act (NSA) would be imposed on certain people arrested for their alleged pro-Pakistan activities, but not on all.

Opposition AIUDF MLA Aminul Islam was arrested on sedition charges for allegedly defending Pakistan and its complicity in the Pahalgam terror attack but after he was granted bail in this case, he was booked under the NSA.

At least 26 people, mostly tourists, were killed in the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir. (PTI)

## 3 sentenced to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment for drug trafficking in Assam

**DIPHU, May 31:** A court in Assam's Karbi Anglong district sentenced three persons to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment for trafficking drugs three years ago.

The District and Sessions Court here also imposed a fine of ₹ two lakh on them.

The three were arrested in August 2022 at Dilai under the Bokajan subdivision of the district after drugs worth ₹ 10 crore were seized from their possession.

District and Sessions Judge D K Deka sentenced them to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment. The traffickers - Rajesh Lakhendri, Kumar Gajimer and Tanganbo Marianmai - were booked under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

The three were arrested when they were coming in a vehicle from the neighbouring Nagaland.

The drugs recovered from their possession included 383 grams of heroin, 2.28 kgs of crystal and one kg of morphine. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## IndiGo's direct Delhi-Jorhat flight from mid-September: Himanta

**GUWAHATI, May 31:** Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday said that low-cost airline IndiGo will commence a non-stop flight between Delhi and Jorhat from mid-September and has planned to enhance air connectivity to other locations in the state.

During his recent visit to New Delhi, the chief minister had met the senior management of the airline and urged them to expand air connectivity to other key locations across Assam, particularly Silchar, Dibrugarh, and North Lakhimpur, he said.

"New Delhi-Jorhat Direct Flight from September 2025- It was a pleasure to meet the leadership of @IndiGo6E in New Delhi to discuss their roadmap for expanding air connectivity in Assam," the chief minister posted on 'X'.

"Delighted to share that @IndiGo6E will commence a non-stop flight between Delhi and Jorhat starting mid-September 2025", he added.

Expressing satisfaction about his meeting with

the airline's management, the chief minister said IndiGo has responded positively and shared the upcoming deployments.

The Delhi-Dibrugarh flight will now include a stopover at Guwahati, "providing morning connectivity between the two capitals of Assam", he said.

The low-cost carrier will restructure its schedule to introduce a morning Guwahati-Silchar flight, addressing the long-standing demand of passengers, Sarma said. A new Guwahati-Navi Mumbai service will commence from the 2025-26 winter schedule, he said. IndiGo will soon evaluate scheduled operations from Lilabari Airport in North Lakhimpur, the chief minister said. "These additions, along with the upcoming Delhi-Jorhat direct flight, mark a significant step forward in improving Assam's air connectivity," Sarma said.

He appreciated IndiGo's "prompt response" and looked forward to their continued efforts in delivering quality service to the people of Assam. (PTI)

## Heavy rains disrupt life in Karbi Anglong, trigger flood panic

HT Bureau

**DIPHU, May 31:** Incessant rainfall for over 36 hours in Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong districts has disrupted normal life. Diphu, the headquarters of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), faced power outages for over 12 hours. Roads were deserted, construction activities came to a halt, and business transactions dropped significantly.

In West Karbi Anglong, the water level of the Kapili River is steadily rising. The situation has worsened due to water released from the Khandong Dam of the Umrangso Hydropower Project and the Karbi Langpi Hydro Electric Project on May 30.

Floodwaters from the Kapili have entered agricultural fields in Kheroni Das Basti, triggering panic among residents. Soil erosion and strong winds uprooted several trees along roads and in villages. A massive tree fell on the Lanka-Kheroni-Umrangso arterial road at around 11 p.m. on May 30, bringing traffic to a halt. Local residents mobilised in the morning,



using hand saws and chainsaws to clear the debris and restore traffic flow.

Tributaries of the Kapili River, including the Dongka and Amlong rivers, are also swelling rapidly. These rivers, carrying red muddy water at high velocity, have inundated areas around Dongkamukam town. As of filing this report, no human casualties had been reported. Authorities had already issued alerts, urging residents to move to safer locations with their

belongings.

The most affected villages under the Dongkamukam Revenue Circle include Kheroni, Sildubi, Lalmati, Jalpara, Rengthama, Hatimura, Wakanta, Namtaradubi, Baligaon, East Bhelapara, Boithalangso, Hongkram, Borthol, and Doloni.

Meanwhile, the Kapili River has caused flooding in the Hojai, Nagaon, and Morigaon districts of central Assam, submerging thousands of (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Profits earned through ethical means create wealth for nation: FM

**NEW DELHI, May 31:** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said the government led by Narendra Modi refers entrepreneurs as wealth creators as the profit earned by them through ethical ways help drive development goals. "Wealth creation in India has never been a taboo in India. We promoted wealth creation. We would want wealth creation. That is why entrepreneurs in India, under Prime Minister Modi, we refer them as wealth creators. They are not thieves," she said while addressing the National Commemorative Seminar on 60 years of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Integral Humanism Lectures.

Pandit Upadhyaya was one of the founding members of Jan Sangh from which the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerged in April 1980. "We would like to have profit created by genuine ethical practices, and that is what is going to create wealth for the nation. And once you have wealth, you give dignity of labor, you provide for education, you provide for skill, and you lift the tempo and the spirit of the nation," she said. (PTI)

## 4 including 3 Myanmar refugees killed in landslides in Mizoram

**AIZAWL, May 31:** Four persons, including three Myanmar refugees were killed and one injured when their houses collapsed due to landslides triggered by heavy rain in Mizoram on Saturday, taking the toll in the current monsoon to five, officials said.

Three persons aged between 34 and 71 years from a Myanmar family have died and another was injured when a massive landslide struck and buried their rented house at Vaphai village in east Mizoram's Champhai district near the Myanmar border on early Saturday, they said.

The family has been taking shelter in the village since 2021 following the military coup in the neighbouring country, they said. The injured person was taken to a nearby hospital at Farkawn.

In a separate incident, a 53-year-old man was killed when his house collapsed due to landslide in Serchhip district about 114 km from state capital Aizawl on Saturday.

Officials said that the victim succumbed to his injuries in Serchhip district hospital.

On Friday, a 37-year-old man was killed and another injured when a wall collapsed on a labourer camp at Aizawl's Thuampui area.

Mizoram has been experiencing heavy rain since Friday, triggering landslides and rockfalls at several places.

An IMD report said Lawngtlai district received 205 mm of rainfall on Saturday followed by Khawzawl district 184 mm, Hnahthial district 130 and Aizawl received 91 mm of rainfall. At least 56 houses were damaged in 147 landslides across the state on Saturday, according to a bulletin by state emergency operation centre. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

'These discoveries are testament to Meghalaya's unique biodiversity'

## Unique cave fish species found in M'laya by Gauhati University: Researchers

**GUWAHATI, May 31:** A new species of cave-dwelling loach from Meghalaya has been discovered by researchers of Gauhati University and Lady Keane College of Shillong, making it the sixth discovery of unique cave fish species in the northeastern state.

These discoveries are a testament of the state's unique biodiversity, Meghalaya chief minister Conrad Sangma said.

Announcing the discovery in a post on X on Friday, Gauhati University said, "Dr Kangan Sarma and his team from #GauhatiUniversity have discovered Schistura densiclava, a new species of cave-dwelling loach from #Meghalaya, marking their ninth such discovery."



The discovery has been featured by a prominent foreign news outlet, bringing international recognition to northeast region's rich

ecological heritage, it maintained.

"Hon CM of Meghalaya, Shri @SangmaConrad has congratulated the team, lauding their com-

mitment to advancing scientific knowledge and exploration," the GU post added.

Sangma, also in a post on social media, said, "Intrigued by the discovery of a new blind cave dwelling fish species 'Schistura densiclava' in Krem Mawjymbuin, a limestone cave near Mawsynram, Meghalaya."

He said it is the sixth discovery of unique cave fish species in Meghalaya.

"These discoveries are testament to Meghalaya's unique biodiversity and must be further researched. Thank the team led by Dr Khlor B Mukhim of Lady Keane College and Gauhati University for this amazing discovery," the chief minister added. (PTI)

## Cong asks Modi if he chose 'trade' over country in making truce with Pak, cites US affidavit

**NEW DELHI, May 31:** The Congress on Saturday demanded answers from Prime Minister Narendra Modi on why he chose "trade" over the nation, after a top US administration official told a US Court that a trade deal was offered to broker the India-Pakistan ceasefire.

In a post on X, the party's general secretary Ran-deep Surjewala said that while Trump has claimed 11 times that he "brokered the ceasefire" between India and Pakistan, Modi negated it not even once.

Now, documentary evidence in the form of an affidavit is also available, he said.

The evidence was an affidavit US secretary of Commerce Howard W Lutnick filed in the US Court of International Trade.

"...This ceasefire was only achieved after President Trump interceded and offered both nations trading access with the United States to avert a full-scale war."

"An adverse ruling that constrains presidential power in this case could lead India and Pakistan to question the validity of President Trump's offer, threatening the security of an entire region and the lives of millions," a part of the affidavit read, Surjewala claimed. He termed the excerpt an "official proof" of Trump's claims, and asked a series of questions to



the prime minister.

"Modi ji and BJP-NDA government must answer the following questions. Why did we permit U.S to broker a 'ceasefire Agreement', when our Armed Forces had a clear upper hand and Pakistan was cracking up? What is the 'trade deal' that U.S President offered and Modi Ji accepted?"

"Is 'trade' more important than Nation? What are the terms of ceasefire? Where are the terrorists who killed 26 innocent people in Pahalgam? Will Pakistan hand them over to us so that we can hang them? Was it part of the ceasefire agreement?" the Congress leader asked. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



## Editor's pick

## Crisis on repeat: The IMF, Pakistan, and failed reform

By : Soumya Bhowmick &amp; Shashank Shekhar

Pakistan's relationship with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reflects a deeper pattern of structural dependence. The US\$ 7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) approved in 2024 is not merely a financial lifeline but an attempt to manage entrenched dysfunction. The IMF, acting as a lender of last resort, demands reforms in exchange for support: fiscal discipline, subsidy cuts, and transparency. Yet in politically resistant environments like Pakistan, these reforms often remain superficial. This marks Pakistan's 24th IMF bailout since independence—the most for any country—highlighting a recurring cycle of crisis and external assistance. While the Fund aims to restore stability, it increasingly finds itself propping up states that are fiscally mismanaged, strategically insecure, and institutionally fragile.

This dynamic is not unique to Pakistan. From Lebanon to Sudan, several fragile economies are accumulating unsustainable debt burdens, not only due to exogenous shocks or administrative inefficiencies, but because of deliberate political decisions—ranging from military adventurism to strategic ambiguity. Nevertheless, IMF conditionalities revolve around technical indicators such as fiscal consolidation, subsidy reform, and governance diagnostics, with limited consideration of the political economy of conflict and control.

In such contexts, the effect of bailouts is often counterintuitive as they end up underwriting the very dysfunctions they are meant to address. The IMF's approach rests on the premise that financial instability can be corrected through market-oriented reforms and institutional strengthening. Yet, these measures have limited traction in fragile states where political power is fragmented and often resides outside civilian control.

## The Limits to Technical Conditionality

As part of its Extended Fund Facility, the IMF required the Pakistani government to release a Governance and Corruption Diagnostic Assessment (GCDA) by mid-2025. However, by March 2025, a cabinet committee remained undecided on whether the report should be released in full or redacted format—an early signal of resistance within the state apparatus. In reality, governance in many fragile states is characterised by dual structures of power, where informal networks, military actors, and entrenched elites influence or override official policy. IMF programmes often fail to account for this fragmentation.

This disconnect also raises concerns about accountability. By operating within a narrowly defined economic framework, the IMF avoids addressing how power is exercised and contested. As a result, programmes may stabilise foreign exchange reserves or improve fiscal balances in the short term, but they rarely produce lasting institutional reform. In such cases, technical neutrality masks a deeper failure to grapple with the sources of systemic dysfunction.

Additionally, in conflict-prone environments, fiscal crises are not just a consequence of weak institutions—they are often strategically engineered outcomes. Prolonged military spending, proxy conflicts, diplomatic isolation, and deteriorating investor sentiment contribute to macroeconomic stress. These are political decisions with economic costs. Yet, the IMF rarely differentiates between debt generated by poor governance and that driven by deliberate strategic behaviour.

This has been a recurring pattern in Pakistan. The country's balance-of-payments crises are frequently linked to geopolitical choices, be it increased defence spending, cross-border tensions, or restricted access to foreign investment due to its greylisting by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) from 2018 to 2022. Nonetheless, IMF frameworks treat such crises as technocratic problems, amenable to fiscal solutions. In certain years, Pakistan's defence expenditure has exceeded the total value of IMF assistance. In 2024, Pakistan received US\$ 1 billion as part of a US\$ 7 billion EFF from the IMF, spread over 37 months. Yet, in the same year, it spent a staggering US\$ 10.2 billion on defence—more than ten times the bailout tranche, raising serious questions about whether international financial support inadvertently sustains militarised priorities rather than economic reform.

These dynamics have clear regional implications, particularly for India. The IMF's financial assistance stabilises Pakistan's macroeconomic position without addressing its military posture or support for proxy terrorist networks. This inadvertently creates fiscal space for security-sector spending, with implications for cross-border peace. Indian taxpayers, through their IMF quota contributions, find themselves underwriting stability in a country that has, at various points, sponsored actors responsible for cross-border attacks and ceasefire violations.

## Towards a Geopolitically Intelligent IMF

The objective should not be to politicise IMF lending but to enhance its strategic relevance in today's complex geopolitical environment. Conflict-prone states increasingly demonstrate characteristics that go beyond mere fiscal mismanagement. Many are structurally resistant to reform, shaped by informal hierarchies, elite capture, and entrenched military dominance. If the IMF is to remain future-ready and effective, its lending framework must account for these underlying realities.

Firstly, civil-military fiscal transparency must be integrated into programme design. This requires detailed reporting on defence spending, off-budget security expenditures, and military control over state-owned enterprises. Without such disclosures, assessing whether proposed reforms are credible or merely performative becomes nearly impossible. Transparency in these domains is essential to understanding the actual fiscal structure of fragile states and ensuring that IMF funds are not inadvertently sustaining entrenched power networks.

Secondly, the IMF should distinguish conflict-induced debt from other forms of macroeconomic distress. When a country's economic instability is rooted in prolonged military escalation or provocative foreign policy behaviour, additional scrutiny must precede financial disbursement. The intent is not punitive, but precautionary: to avoid reinforcing actions that undermine peace and regional stability. By flagging such debt separately, the IMF can better align its lending practices with broader international peacebuilding efforts.

Thirdly, regional impact assessments should precondition large financial packages to be distributed to countries in active or latent conflict zones. These assessments must include data on ceasefire violations, sanctions exposure, and FATF compliance, helping the Fund anticipate the spillover risks of its decisions. Independent audits should be mandated in high-risk areas, particularly defence and internal security, to ensure accountability and mitigate misuse. Such mechanisms will help protect the integrity of IMF assistance in politically volatile contexts.

Finally, it must be acknowledged that while the IMF was never intended to function as a conflict-resolution body, its lending decisions today carry undeniable geopolitical consequences. As fragile states increasingly blur the lines between economic fragility and strategic risk, the IMF can no longer afford to rely solely on technical neutrality. Financial support that ignores how power is exercised will fail to deliver genuine reform. It is even more problematic when IMF assistance insulates governments from the consequences of conflict-driven behaviour, as it delays rather than averts future crises. The question, therefore, is not whether fragile states deserve support—it is whether that support can be structured to promote reform, deter strategic irresponsibility, and recognise the regional risks at stake. (Courtesy: ORF)

## Manipur's unhealed wounds

Can Unity Prevail Amid Ethnic Strife and Political Turmoil?

By: Dipak Kurni

Two years after the cataclysmic ethnic violence of May 3, 2023, which claimed over 260 lives and displaced more than 70,000 people, Manipur remains a state teetering on the edge of chaos. The communal strife between the Meitei majority in the Imphal Valley and the Kuki-Zo tribal communities in the surrounding hills has left deep scars, with law and order still in disarray. The recent push by a faction of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) legislators to form a new government, claiming the support of 44 Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), offers little reassurance. Far from addressing the root causes of Manipur's unrest, this move underscores the persistent disconnect between the Union government's policies and the complex socio-political realities of the state. Compounding the crisis, a civil disobedience movement led by the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI) has erupted, protesting an alleged order by central security forces to remove the word "Manipur" from a state transport bus's destination board. This violent, though seemingly minor, has ignited widespread outrage, symbolizing a broader assault on Manipuri identity and pride. As the state grapples with these challenges, the imposition of President's Rule, the resignation of former Chief Minister N. Biren Singh, and the appointment of a new governor have done little to restore normalcy, raising critical questions about the path forward for this beleaguered border state.

The ethnic violence that erupted in May 2023 was triggered by a Manipur High Court order recommending Scheduled Tribe status for the Meitei community, a decision that stoked fears among the Kuki-Zo tribes of losing their reservation benefits. What began as a tribal solidarity rally in Churachandpur spiraled into a brutal conflict, leaving over 260 dead, 1,500 injured, and 70,000 displaced. The violence exposed deep-seated ethnic divisions, with the Meiteis, who constitute 53% of Manipur's population, pitted against the Kuki-Zo communities in the hills. The state's social fabric was further strained by historical tensions, such as the 1993 riots between Hindu Meiteis and Meitei Pangals (Muslims), which killed around 100-140 people. The 2023 clashes, however, were unprecedented in their scale and ferocity, rendering large swathes of Manipur ungovernable.

The Union government's response has been marked by delay and indecision. Former Chief Minister N. Biren Singh, a polarizing figure accused of exacerbating divisions, remained in office until February 2025, despite his inability to anticipate or contain the violence. His administration was criticized for partisan governance, with allegations that it fanned the flames of ethnic discord rather than fostering reconciliation. Singh's resignation on February 9, 2025, followed by the imposition of President's Rule on February 13, was intended to stabilize the state. However, the suspension of the state assembly, which has a tenure until 2027, has created a political vacuum, leaving Manipur under the administration of Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla, a former Union Home Secretary who assumed office on January 3, 2025.

Bhalla's tenure has been anything but smooth. Tasked with restoring normalcy,



he has faced significant challenges, including a civil disobedience campaign spearheaded by COCOMI, a prominent Meitei organization. The campaign, launched on May 24, 2025, was triggered by an incident on May 20, when central security personnel, reportedly from the 4th Mahar Regiment, allegedly ordered the removal of the words "Manipur State Transport" from a government bus carrying journalists to the Shirui Lily Festival in Ukhrul. COCOMI condemned the act as an affront to Manipur's identity, demanding a public apology from Bhalla and the resignation of Chief Secretary P.K. Singh, Security Advisor Kuldeep Singh, and Director General of Police Rajiv Singh. The group's 48-hour statewide bandh, starting May 21, disrupted life in the Imphal Valley, with protests, torch rallies, and sit-ins underscoring the depth of public anger. COCOMI rejected the government's two-member bureaucratic inquiry into the incident, calling for an independent probe led by a retired High Court judge.

The protests took a dramatic turn on May 26, when Bhalla, returning from New Delhi, was airlifted by an Indian Army helicopter from Imphal International Airport to Kangla Fort, a mere 6 kilometers away, to avoid a human chain of protesters along Tiddim Road. Demonstrators, carrying placards demanding an apology, accused the governor and the President's Rule administration of being disconnected from Manipur's realities. The Congress party, led by figures like Jairam Ramesh and former Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh, seized on the incident to criticize the central government. Ramesh, in a post on X on May 27, 2025, argued that President's Rule had "made no difference whatsoever," pointing to Bhalla's helicopter ride as evidence of governance failure. Ibobi, speaking at an event marking Jawaharlal Nehru's death anniversary, called the bus incident "embarrassing" and demanded that the "competent authority" responsible for the order apologize, questioning why no action had been taken against the security personnel involved.

The bus incident, while symbolic, reflects deeper grievances about the Union government's handling of Manipur. COCOMI's convener, Khuraijam Athouba,

described the removal of the state's name as "anti-Manipur," challenging its historical and cultural identity. The organization's call for mass protests, including gheraoing Raj Bhavan and boycotting central government offices, highlights a growing sense of alienation. Women protesters in Bishnupur and Thoubal districts even pasted "Manipur/Kangleipak" on security vehicles, a defiant act of reclaiming identity. COCOMI's broader demands include not only an apology but also a rejection of what it calls the "surrender of governance to narco-terror threats" under President's Rule.

The push to form a new government adds another layer of complexity. On May 28, 2025, ten MLAs, including eight from the BJP, one from the National People's Party (NPP), and one Independent, met Governor Bhalla to press for a "popular government." BJP legislator Thokchom Radheshyam Singh claimed the support of 44 MLAs, excluding the ten Kuki-Zo MLAs and five Congress MLAs. However, ethnic divisions and internal BJP rivalries cast doubt on the feasibility of this move. The choice of a new chief minister remains contentious, with Singh's legacy as a divisive figure looming large. The Indian Express reported on May 29, 2025, that the lack of unanimity among MLAs could undermine government formation, while the ethnic fault lines between Meiteis and Kuki-Zo communities make consensus elusive.

Congress leaders have been vocal in their criticism. Keisham Meghachandra Singh, president of the Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee, alleged that both the "double-engine" BJP government and President's Rule had failed Manipur. In a post on X, he demanded Bhalla's recall and Home Minister Amit Shah's resignation, accusing them of neglecting the state. Meghachandra questioned who authorized the removal of "Manipur" from the bus, warning that erasing the state's name within its borders could spell its end. Ibobi, meanwhile, argued that the 44 MLAs should exercise their constitutional rights to form a government without relying on civil society organizations, emphasizing that Manipur's integrity cannot be compromised.

The Union government's broader approach has been criticized for its ad-hocism. The decision to resume traffic on the national highway despite ongoing ethnic clashes was reversed after two months, with the Ministry of Home Affairs admitting that peace could not be restored quickly. The first tripartite meeting between Meitei and Kuki-Zo representatives in April 2025, described by COCOMI as a "symbolic gesture," failed to yield progress. The Justice Gita Mittal committee, tasked with overseeing relief and rehabilitation since August 2023, had its tenure extended to July 31, 2025, but its impact remains limited. Meanwhile, the state's economy and social cohesion continue to fray, with shutdowns like the "Sinthla Leppa" on May 3, 2025, marking the violence's second anniversary, paralyzing the Imphal Valley and hill districts.

Manipur's crisis demands a nuanced, long-term strategy, not short-term political maneuvers. The ethnic divide, exacerbated by historical grievances and recent violence, requires dialogue that addresses the insecurities of both Meiteis and Kuki-Zo communities. The bus incident, though a flashpoint, reflects a deeper failure to respect Manipuri identity and pride. Governor Bhalla's efforts to engage with stakeholders are a start, but replacing him with a potentially fractious elected government risks further instability. The Union government must prioritize rebuilding trust through transparent investigations, such as an independent probe into the bus incident, and invest in infrastructure, education, and economic recovery to heal a fractured society.

As Manipur navigates this turbulent period, the path to peace lies in acknowledging its complex ethnic mosaic and historical sensitivities. The protests over the bus incident underscore a collective yearning for dignity and recognition. Strengthening the governor's initiatives, fostering inter-community dialogue, and addressing systemic issues like unemployment and displacement are critical. Ad-hocism and political one-upmanship have already inflicted irreparable damage; only a committed, empathetic approach can restore Manipur's fragile peace. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmigpld@gmail.com)

## Parents live for us

By: Vinod Chandrashekar Dixit

In order to appreciate all parents for their "selfless commitment to children and their lifelong sacrifice towards nurturing this relationship, the Global Day of Parents is observed every year on 1 June 2025 will focus on the theme "Raising Parents." This theme acknowledges that parenting is a learned skill and emphasizes the importance of providing parents and caregivers with the necessary support, resources, and training to effectively raise children. This observance recognizes that the family unit is integral to the social, emotional, and physical development of children, serving as the foundation for creating responsible and productive citizens.

The Global Day of Parents is an important event that looks at the role of a mother, a father or a guardian in building their children's future. The day recognises the efforts of parents as they play a major role in the social, mental and physical development of their kids. It gives them an opportunity to thank them for their unconditional dedication. Celebrating the Global Day of Parents can be as simple as letting your parents or guardians know how thankful

you are for their love and commitment. Of course, parents have been doing an important job since the beginning of human history! Bringing children into the world and then raising them up to be happy, healthy and productive members of society is no small task. Being a parent is one of the biggest joys and responsibilities that cannot be described in words. All the love, care, affection, and hard work that parents put towards nurturing their kids is beyond comparison. Therefore, it is important to recognize the efforts and sacrifices of parents towards providing their kids with a healthy and balanced life.

Studies show that trauma and emotional wounds sustained during childhood significantly hinder a child's development and outlook on life, posing a barrier to achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. During the 1980's, the United Nations began to focus on family-related issues, recognizing how the emotional and well-being of children significantly impacts broader spheres of development. On December 9, 1989, the General Assembly passed a resolution declaring 1994 as the International Year of the Family. Subsequently, in 1993, another resolution established May 15 as the International

Day of Families.

Parents play a crucial role in a child's development, encompassing numerous and varied responsibilities. They provide everything a child needs during their growth and formative years. Parents are a beacon of a child's life. They lay the foundation for children, and nurture and equip them with the skills that are necessary throughout life. Parents protect their children and make countless selfless sacrifices to ensure their growth.

Those of us who have a friendship with our parents and are able to have a healthy relationship based on trust and respect rather than authority or strict guardianship are lucky. It is truly a blessing to have good parents. Let us remember that Parents' Day is the perfect time to show gratitude and appreciation towards your parent's for blessing you with a life worth living as it is believed that celebrating Parents' Day help kids realize the importance of parents in their lives and strengthen their relationship further. In today's busy world, this day brings kids and parents together to celebrate and spend some quality time with each other. (The author can be reached at dixitptrakar@yahoo.in)

## Cracks appear in ties between Donald Trump and his buddy Elon Musk



By T N Ashok

Cracks have begun to emerge in the Trump-Musk relationship as the latter has shown his disappointment with President Donald Trump on the recent domestic policy endorsed by the Congress. He said in a TV interview that he was "disappointed" that it would increase the federal deficit.

"I was, like, disappointed to see the massive spending bill, frankly, which in-

creases the budget deficit, not just decrease it, and undermines the work that the DOGE team is doing," Musk told CBS' "Sunday Morning" in an interview. The GOP has been constantly criticizing the previous Biden administration for increasing the budget deficit and had been going hammer and tongs with spending cuts. Now the Trump administration seems to have fallen into the same trap of deficit balloon for an entirely set of different reasons.

Musk's public break comes as the Republicans' bill heads to the Senate, where several senators have also criticized the legislation for increasing the deficit. The legislative package encompasses many of Trump's priorities, and the president has urged Congress to send the bill to his desk for a signature "as soon as possible."

He has called it the Big Beautiful Bill, and for the urban middle class its anything but beautiful, as Trump has sought to cut down the expenditure on Medicare and Medicaid, considered a socialistic

measure, to compensate for the tax cuts he is offering the rich bold and beautiful. In the first instance the bill eliminated 8 million people from their eligibility avail of the benefits of the bill.

Secondly it enhances coverage under the two schemes by boosting the cost by over \$1,000 which coming on top of inflation and grocery prices could end up being unacceptable to the middle-class populations.

This is how its playing out: Biden pandered to the middle-class expanding Obamacare offering them discounted Medicare and Medicaid and making up the losses by taxing the rich, but Trump has gone in reverse gear cutting down on expenditure on Medicare and Medicaid on specious grounds that many were falsely doctored into the scheme and by saving thus subsidise the rich by lowering their taxes.

Biden depended on the middle class votes for his party to retain power. But Trump needs donations from the rich to

sustain his election campaigns as the Biden era, not that Biden was responsible for it, but his own doings put a big hole in his pocket also drained out the finances of the GOP which subsidized its court cases expenditure.

Now that Biden is out, Trump could also see his policies boomeranging on him in the November 2026 mid-term elections to the house. The urban middle class is deeply disappointed with Trump, whom they voted for against Biden, has not delivered on the promise of keeping prices down. In fact, prices have gone up to the contrary.

Taking 8 million out of the health care net has angered many. Besides the pricing of drugs, one does know, if it goes south now. And anyone earning over 4 million dollars a year gets a huge tax break, and that's 0.1 per cent of the population.

It's in this context that one has to see how mindset of Tesla boss and close friend of Trump works now. The tech

mogul's remarks in the interview also come as he has suggested he would be backing away from his administration role to return his attention to the private sector. Musk said in a post on X last week that he had to be "super focused" on his companies and was "back to spending 24/7 at work and sleeping in conference/server/factory rooms."

Medicaid, Medicare, and Obamacare are distinct but related healthcare programs. Medicaid and CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program) provide health coverage for low-income individuals and families, while Medicare primarily serves people age 65 and older and some individuals with disabilities. The Affordable Care Act (ACA), often referred to as Obamacare, expanded health insurance access through the Health Insurance Marketplace and Medicaid expansion.

While Musk was highly enthused about Trump about reducing expenditure and reduce the deficit in the budget, it's not

working that way. Not only is the work he was doing in DOGE being undone by Trump with his domestic policies that was not putting in place a watertight scheme that brings in more revenue and compensates for Trumps tax cuts.

DOGE cuts down heavily on government jobs considered redundant and saves expenditure, but Trump's budget effects huge tax cuts on the bold and beautiful rich people and does not bring in the revenue needed, the cuts in government jobs, health care are not being compensated in an equal measure by increased revenues which is leading to the deficit – back to square one of Biden.

Musk, a Trump ally and top White House figure, has also distanced himself from the president on his tariff policies. Musk, whose automaker Tesla has parts made in North America, China and Europe, has called for a "zero-triff situation" between Europe and the U.S., and positioned himself as an advocate of "free trade and lower tariffs." (IPA Service)



# Bhaimon Da - A film that celebrates roots

By: Himanshu Ranjan Bhunia

A skilled director, screenwriter, and one of the key architects of the golden era of Assamese cinema, the late Munin Barua was fondly and respectfully addressed as 'Bhaimon Da' in the film industry. Recently released, the Assamese film 'Bhaimon Da' has emerged as a significant creation in the history of Assamese cinema, portraying Munin Barua's life and work while presenting the struggles, successes, and artistic identity of the golden era of Assamese cinema on a grand canvas. Written and directed by young cultural activist and popular lyricist Shashank Samir, and produced by Shyamantak Gautam under the banner of Zeal Creations, this film is not merely a biographical account of an artist but a living document of the cultural, social, and economic landscape of Assamese cinema.

From his childhood, Munin Barua had an immense passion for cinema, and his formal journey in the film industry began as a screenwriter for the highly acclaimed director Shiva Prasad Thakur's popular film 'Bowan', where his creativity first gained recognition. Subsequently, with films like 'Pratima', 'Pita-Putra', 'Prabhati Pokhir Gaan', 'Hiya Diya Niya', 'Nayak', 'Kanyadaan', 'Daag', 'Bidhata', and 'Deenabandhu', he left an indelible mark on the hearts of Assamese audiences. These films not only achieved commercial success but also reflected various facets of Assamese society's social and cultural life. The film 'Bhaimon Da' beautifully portrays Munin Barua's personal struggles, artistic vision, and contributions as a guiding light in the commercial and artistic success of Assamese cinema. Far from being limited to the personal aspects of his life, the film presents a broader narrative of the heritage, struggles, and identity of Assamese cinema.

The central theme of the film revolves around the struggle to secure a place for Assamese cinema amidst adverse circumstances of that era. At the time, the dominance of Hindi cinema made it a significant challenge for Assamese films to secure screening opportunities in theaters. Theater owners and distributors relied heavily on the popularity of Hindi films and paid little attention to Assamese cinema. In the context of Munin Barua's life, this film vividly depicts the social, cultural, and economic conditions

of that period. During the challenging times for Assamese cinema, filmmakers like Nip Barua, Brajen Barua, Abdul Majid, Shiva Prasad Thakur, Bhabendra Nath Saikia, Jahnua Barua, and Munin Barua tirelessly worked to draw audiences toward cinema. This film, based on Munin Barua's life, subtly yet effectively portrays events like the formation of Surabahi, CD piracy, VCD film production, and the new political environment following the Assam Movement, along with people's hopes and aspirations toward the new government, albeit briefly. The director's insight, keen observation, and study have crafted a seamless screenplay. Various layers of Munin Barua's life—his relationships with family, dedication to art, and commitment to society—are beautifully expressed through the film's narrative. Through its storytelling, the director maintains a fine balance between reality and imagination, making it easy for audiences to connect with the film's emotional depth, rendering it a carrier of a universal message.

From a stylistic perspective, 'Bhaimon Da' is not only a biographical film but also a unique blend of docu-drama. The director has created a compelling narrative by blending real events with imagination. The film's structure is designed to seamlessly present the significant moments of Munin Barua's life while simultaneously highlighting notable events in the history of Assamese cinema. The use of flashback techniques adds dynamism to the narrative, making it easier for audiences to journey through the various phases of his life. Through flashbacks, his early struggles, the beginning of his artistic journey, and moments of success are beautifully recreated. The film's visuals meticulously recreate the ambiance of cinema halls, the director's office, film sets, and scenes of everyday life from that era. The director has successfully depicted, in a highly realistic manner, the crisis that struck Assamese cinema in the early 21st century due to various factors. Notably, the portrayal of a shuttered cinema hall's condition is vividly captured. The scene where a flock of bats flies out as the dust-covered projector room is opened is an utterly authentic depiction. These scenes help audiences connect with the atmosphere of that era, enhancing the film's realism and emotional depth.

In terms of artistry, the film's cinematography is one of its strongest elements. Through cinematography, the



director brings the era's ambiance to life. Chennai-based cinematographer Banshi Nathan's skillful use of camera angles, frame composition, and lighting enhances the film's visual beauty. The use of dark colors and low lighting in scenes of struggle conveys their intensity and despair, while bright colors and ample lighting in moments of success evoke joy and inspiration. This nuanced cinematographic technique amplifies the film's emotional intensity and leaves a lasting impression on the audience. The director's meticulous vision is evident, particularly in recreating the backdrop of the 1980s and 1990s. The depiction of items like biscuits and oil bottles in Munin Barua's shop, as well as the set design, costumes, and makeup, reflects the director's success in capturing the era's ambiance. In terms of costumes,

Garima Saikia Garg successfully outfits each character with period-appropriate attire. The editing creates a beautiful bridge between reality and memory. Scene transitions are crafted to maintain narrative flow and provide audiences with a cohesive experience. The use of music is another powerful aspect of the film. The lyrics and melodies of the songs reflect Munin Barua's emotional depth and the cultural heritage of Assamese cinema. The background score strengthens the film's emotional moments, with intense melodies in scenes of struggle and uplifting tunes in moments of success leaving a profound impact on audiences. The music establishes a connection between the narrative's various phases, making it easier for audiences to emotionally engage with the film, further elevating its artistic value.

In terms of acting, a major highlight of the film is that around 360 actors and actresses performed in it. Most of the performers are fresh faces, yet their acting is mature, marking another success for Assamese cinema. The lead actors deliver outstanding performances. Bandwip Sarma, portraying Munin Barua, brings the character to life with a nuanced performance, capturing his struggles, creativity, and resilience. His portrayal of the character's human aspects—love for family, dedication to art, and commitment to society—comes alive through his expressive acting, leaving a lasting impression on audiences. The performance of young actor Abhinav Bora as the adolescent Munin Barua is also praiseworthy. Veteran actor Gu-nakar Dev Goswami, playing Munin Barua's father, delivers a heartfelt performance, beautifully balancing the gravitas of a responsible father and a Mauzadar. Veteran actress Pakija Begum delivers a seamless performance as the mother. The characters of sisters Manu and Lakhmi are portrayed beautifully by Bidya Bharati and Himani Kalita. Emerging actress Yashasree Bhunyan's portrayal of Manjula Barua, initially Munin Barua's lover and later his wife, is natural and engaging. Having already performed significant roles in several TV serials, Yashasree's performance in 'Bhaimon Da' paves the way for her to become a promising actress in the future. The character of Munin Barua's son, Manas Barua (Riju), a devoted son who remains by his father's side, is brought to life by young actor Geetarthia Sarma, whose acting suggests he could become a skilled actor in the near future. Popular actor Nilim Dutta vividly portrays the character of Biju Phukan, while Samu-drugupta Dutta's performance as Shiva Prasad Thakur is touching. Partha Hazarika beautifully portrays the complex character of Zubeen Garg. The roles of Jatin Bora and Ravi Sharma are portrayed with ease by promising actors Kaushik Bharadwaj and Joy Saikia, respectively. Capturing the physical expressions, gestures, dialogue delivery, and tone of characters beloved by Assamese audiences is no easy task, yet these new actors have largely succeeded. Supporting roles by artists like Kalpana Kalita, Arghadwip Barua, Dipjyoti Keot, Ashish Bidyarthi, Harpal Saikia, Pratyushplavan, Ujjwal Rajkhowa, Abinash Sarma, Navajit Konwar, Sanjiv Buragohain, Sima Barua, Ujjwal Kumar,

Navajyoti Nath, Himanshu Barman, Tarun Parikshit Barua, Nirupam Saikia, Imon Talukdar, Taruntirtha, Prakash Sarma, Baibhavi Goswami, Rishabh Sarma, and Shilpishikha Bora add depth to the narrative with their natural performances. The performances of characters like cinema hall owners, producers, and co-artists authentically reflect the environment of Assamese cinema, vividly portraying the social and cultural context of the time. The performances of other artists also exhibit a naturalness and credibility that enhance the film's overall quality.

The struggle against the influence of Hindi films, as depicted in the history of Assamese cinema, remains relevant today. Through this struggle, the film highlights the importance of Assamese identity, culture, and art. Munin Barua's films reflected various aspects of Assamese society, such as rural life, family relationships, and social changes, and 'Bhaimon Da' serves as a reminder of these themes. Additionally, the film raises the idea of an artist's responsibility toward society and the potential for change through their work. It conveys the message that artists have a crucial role in preserving and enriching society's identity and culture through their art. For the new generation, the film introduces the history of Assamese cinema, while for older audiences, it offers a beautiful nostalgic experience. The film's emotional depth, artistic excellence, and cultural significance make it capable of winning the hearts of audiences of all ages. However, the film is not without a couple of minor flaws. The inclusion of excessive drinking scenes across different decades feels somewhat overdone. Additionally, the use of certain words popular among today's youth in scenes set in the 1970s feels anachronistic. Despite these minor shortcomings, the film can be deemed highly successful overall.

In conclusion, 'Bhaimon Da' not only introduces the new generation to the history of Assamese cinema but also provides older audiences with a beautiful nostalgic experience. It is not merely the story of Munin Barua's life but a living document of the heritage, struggles, and pride of Assamese cinema, destined to shine in the future. We extend our heartfelt best wishes and congratulations to the producer, director, actors, and all the behind-the-scenes artists of 'Bhaimon Da'. (The author can be reached at himangshur1989@gmail.com or 9954812261, 9864000260)

## Edgar Allan Poe: A tale of mystery



By: Satyabrata Borah

Edgar Allan Poe, a master of the macabre and a pioneer of the short story genre, has left an indelible mark on the literary world with his haunting tales and melancholic poetry. Born in 1809, Poe's life was as tumultuous as the dark narratives he crafted, marked by personal tragedy, financial instability, and a relentless pursuit of artistic perfection. His works, characterized by their exploration of death, madness, and the supernatural, continue to captivate readers and influence writers across genres.

Poe's literary career began with poetry, and his early works, such as 'Tamerlane and Other Poems' (1827), already displayed his penchant for themes of loss and despair. However, it was his short stories that truly established his reputation. 'The Fall of the House of Usher' (1839) is a quintessential example of Poe's ability to create an atmosphere of dread and decay. The story revolves around the narrator's visit to the crumbling mansion of his childhood friend, Roderick Usher, and his twin sister, Madeline. The house itself becomes a character, its fissures and gloom mirroring the psychological disintegration of its inhabitants. The tale culminates in a chilling climax, where the boundaries between life and death blur, leaving readers in a state of unsettling ambiguity.

Another seminal work, 'The Tell-Tale Heart' (1843), delves into the mind of an unnamed narrator who insists on his sanity while recounting the meticulous planning and execution of a murder. The story is a masterclass in psychological horror,

as Poe explores the themes of guilt and paranoia. The narrator's obsession with the old man's 'vulture eye' and the subsequent beating of the heart beneath the floorboards create a palpable tension that lingers long after the story ends. Poe's use of first-person narration allows readers to experience the protagonist's descent into madness, making the tale all the more disturbing.

Poe's fascination with the macabre is also evident in 'The Masque of the Red Death' (1842), a story that combines Gothic elements with allegory. Set during a plague known as the Red Death, the narrative follows Prince Prospero and his courtiers as they retreat to an abbey, believing they can escape the disease. The abbey is described in vivid detail, with its seven colored rooms symbolizing the stages of life. The arrival of a mysterious figure dressed as the Red Death shatters the illusion of safety, leading to a grim conclusion that underscores the inevitability of mortality. The story's rich symbolism and evocative imagery have made it a staple in discussions of Poe's work.

In addition to his tales of horror, Poe is celebrated for his contributions to the detective fiction genre. 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue' (1841) is often regarded as the first modern detective story, introducing the character of C. Auguste Dupin, a brilliant amateur sleuth. Dupin's methodical approach to solving the gruesome murders in Paris laid the groundwork for future fictional detectives, including Sherlock Holmes. Poe's emphasis on logic and deduction, combined with his flair for the dramatic, created a new literary archetype that continues to thrive in contemporary literature.

Poe's poetry, though less numerous than his prose, is equally significant. 'The Raven' (1845) is perhaps his most famous poem, renowned for its musicality and melancholic tone. The poem's narrator, grieving the loss of his beloved Lenore, is visited by a raven that repeatedly utters the word 'Nevermore.' The bird's ominous presence and the narrator's increasing despair create a haunting meditation on loss and the human desire for meaning in the face of death. The poem's intricate rhyme scheme and rhythmic cadence have made it a favorite for recitation and analysis.

Another notable poem, 'Annabel Lee' (1849), is a poignant elegy for

a lost love. The narrator's devotion to Annabel Lee transcends death, as he imagines their souls united even in the afterlife. The poem's lyrical beauty and themes of eternal love have resonated with readers, making it one of Poe's most enduring works. Similarly, 'The Bells' (1849) showcases Poe's mastery of sound and rhythm, as he uses the imagery of bells to explore the passage of time and the inevitability of death.

Poe's literary style is characterized by its precision and economy. He believed that a work of literature should be concise and focused, with every word contributing to the overall effect. This philosophy is evident in his essay 'The Philosophy of Composition' (1846), where he outlines his approach to writing 'The Raven.' Poe's emphasis on unity of effect and his meticulous attention to detail have influenced countless writers, from the Symbolists to the modernists.

Despite his literary achievements, Poe's life was fraught with hardship. He struggled with poverty, alcoholism, and the loss of loved ones, including his wife Virginia, who died of tuberculosis in 1847. These personal tragedies are often reflected in his work, which frequently explores themes of death, mourning, and the fragility of human existence. Poe's own death in 1849, under mysterious circumstances, has only added to the aura of intrigue surrounding his life and work.

Edgar Allan Poe's legacy is one of innovation and enduring influence. His ability to evoke fear, sorrow, and wonder through his writing has cemented his place as a literary icon. Whether through his chilling tales of horror, his pioneering detective stories, or his melancholic poetry, Poe's work continues to resonate with readers, offering a glimpse into the darker corners of the human psyche. His exploration of the macabre and the mysterious has inspired generations of writers, ensuring that his voice remains a vital part of the literary canon. In the words of Poe himself, 'The boundaries which divide Life from Death are at best shadowy and vague. Who shall say where the one ends, and where the other begins?' This enigmatic question, central to much of his work, continues to captivate and challenge readers, making Edgar Allan Poe a timeless figure in the world of literature.

## The enigma of Amarnath's ice Shiva Linga: A natural and spiritual marvel

By: Mowsam Hazarika

Hidden deep in the Himalayas, at an elevation of approximately 3,888 meters (12,756 feet), the Amarnath Cave is one of Hinduism's most sacred pilgrimage destinations. Each year, thousands of devotees embark on a challenging journey to witness the miraculous ice Shiva Linga, believed to be a divine manifestation of Lord Shiva. While religious beliefs uphold this structure as a sacred phenomenon, the science behind its formation offers an equally intriguing explanation.

The periodic appearance and disappearance of the ice Shiva Linga have long fascinated both spiritual seekers and researchers. This article delves into the environmental and scientific processes responsible for this extraordinary occurrence.

**A Sacred Destination in the Himalayas**  
Situating in Jammu and Kashmir, around 141 kilometers from Srinagar, the Amarnath Cave is surrounded by snow-capped peaks. For most of the year, harsh weather conditions render the area nearly inaccessible. However, between June and August, as summer melts the surrounding snow, the cave opens to pilgrims undertaking the annual Amarnath Yatra.

The cave, standing at approximately 40 meters (130 feet) in height, maintains an environment conducive to ice formation. As the pilgrimage season progresses, the ice Shiva Linga reaches its maximum size around the time of Shrawana Purnima (full moon in July-August), before gradually melting away with the rising temperatures.

**The Scientific Explanation Behind the Ice Shiva Linga**

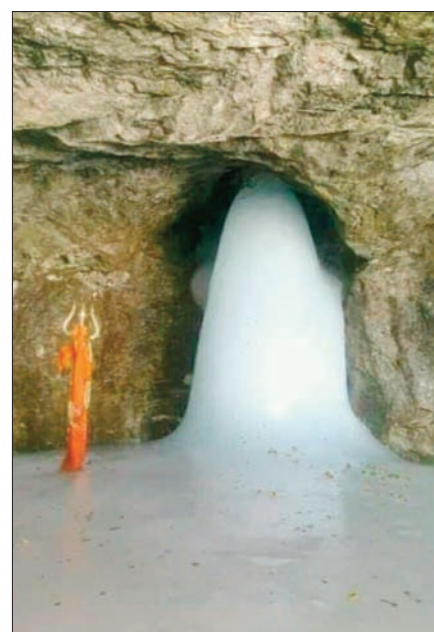
The natural formation of the Shiva Linga is primarily attributed to the freezing of moisture within the cave. Water seeps in through natural fissures in the surrounding rocks and glaciers. Due to the cave's low temperatures, this moisture condenses and gradually freezes, forming an ice structure over time.

This process is similar to how stalactites and stalagmites develop in limestone caves, except that instead of minerals, frozen water accumulates to create the Shiva Linga.

Another critical scientific factor influencing the formation is sublimation and condensation. Sublimation occurs when ice transitions directly into vapor without becoming liquid—a process common at high altitudes where atmospheric pressure is low.

At night, as temperatures inside the cave drop further, water vapor condenses and refreezes onto the existing ice, causing the Shiva Linga to grow. Conversely, during the daytime, slightly warmer temperatures lead to minor sublimation, contributing to its gradual shrinkage. This continuous cycle of condensation and freezing explains the Shiva Linga's characteristic waxing and waning.

**The Role of Temperature and Humidity**  
The cave's internal climate plays a crucial



role in determining the ice formation. Because it remains significantly colder than the external environment, seepage from surrounding glaciers consistently provides water, sustaining the process.

Humidity levels also influence the size of the Shiva Linga. When humidity is high, as it often is during the monsoon season, increased moisture in the air leads to greater condensation and ice accumulation. This explains why the Shiva Linga reaches its largest size in July and August, when humidity is at its peak.

**Connection to the Lunar Cycle**

A long-standing belief among devotees is that the ice Shiva Linga expands and contracts in sync with the moon's phases. While this phenomenon holds spiritual significance, some scientists propose that temperature fluctuations and humidity variations—potentially influenced by lunar gravity—could contribute to these changes.

The full moon is known to bring subtle shifts in atmospheric pressure and humidity, which might impact the condensation and freezing process inside the cave. However, this correlation remains an area of speculation rather than definitive scientific proof.

**The Annual Cycle of Formation and Melting**

Each year, as summer temperatures rise, the ice Shiva Linga gradually melts, eventually disappearing by late August or early September. As winter approaches, the cycle resets. Water seeping into the cave freezes again during the colder months, laying the foundation for the next year's formation.

Interestingly, variations occur from year to year. Some seasons see the Shiva Linga forming earlier or later, or appearing larger or smaller than usual. These changes depend on environmental factors like snowfall levels, glacier activity, and overall climatic conditions.

In recent years, concerns have been raised about how climate change and increased human activity might impact this delicate natural cycle.

**Faith and Science: Two Perspectives on a Marvelous Phenomenon**

The formation of the ice Shiva Linga at Amarnath stands at the intersection of faith and science. For millions of Hindus, it is a sacred symbol of divine presence, reinforcing their spiritual beliefs. From a scientific standpoint, it is a remarkable example of how environmental conditions align to create a unique natural structure.

These perspectives are not necessarily conflicting. Rather, understanding the scientific processes enhances appreciation for the wonder of nature, without diminishing the spiritual significance that devotees attach to the phenomenon.

**Environmental Challenges and Preservation Efforts**

The increasing number of pilgrims and tourists visiting Amarnath has raised concerns about its ecological impact. Pollution, waste accumulation, and rising temperatures pose potential threats to the ice Shiva Linga's natural formation.

To address these challenges, environmentalists and local authorities are implementing measures to regulate visitor numbers and promote eco-friendly pilgrimage practices. Key initiatives include:

■ Limiting visitor access: Authorities have introduced caps on the number of pilgrims allowed inside the cave at a given time.

■ Reducing pollution: Encouraging biodegradable offerings and minimizing waste disposal in and around the cave.

■ Climate monitoring: Studying the effects of climate change on the ice formation process and proposing conservation strategies accordingly.

**A Phenomenon Worth Preserving**

The ice Shiva Linga of Amarnath remains an extraordinary marvel—one that continues to inspire awe among devotees and scientists alike. While religious beliefs celebrate it as a divine manifestation, science attributes its formation to a complex interplay of temperature, humidity, and condensation processes.

Regardless of one's perspective, the Shiva Linga's existence reminds us of nature's intricate workings and the importance of preserving such sacred sites for future generations. Understanding its scientific basis does not detract from its spiritual significance; rather, it deepens our admiration for this natural wonder, which seamlessly blends faith, geography, and meteorology.

As pilgrimage traditions continue and scientific research advances, the Amarnath Cave will remain a place of reverence, wonder, and discovery—a testament to both devotion and the beauty of the natural world. (The writer is a Poet, Science Journalist, Sustainability Advocate, Former Director, Assam Seed & Organic Certification Agency, Ex-Joint Director of Agriculture, Assam)



'They held discussions on the challenges posed by cross-border terrorism to India'

## All-party Indian delegation apprises Denmark of cross-border terrorism challenges

COPENHAGEN, May 31:

An all-party delegation visiting Copenhagen on Saturday apprised the Danish leaders of challenges posed by cross-border terrorism to India, emphasising Denmark's important voice in global affairs as a powerful tool in the fight against the global menace.

The delegation led by BJP MP Ravi Shankar Prasad is in the Danish capital as part of India's diplomatic outreach following the terrorist attack in Pahalgam that claimed 26 lives.

"A delegation of MPs from all parties, led by Ravi Shankar Prasad, who is currently visiting Denmark, met with selected former MPs, former ministers and a former diplomat. They held discussions on the challenges posed by cross-border terrorism to India, Operation Sindoor and global issues that threaten peace and security.

"Denmark's important voice in global affairs - as a



non-permanent member of the UN Security Council and incoming EU Presidency - was highlighted as a powerful tool in the fight against terrorism," the Indian Embassy said in a post on X.

Prasad in a post on X said: "Along with my colleagues from the all-party delegation, I met with Mr Lars-Christian Brask, Deputy Speaker of the Danish Parliament, and briefed him on the Pahalgam terrorist attack and Operation Sindoor. During the meeting, we emphasised India's firm

stance against terrorism and its call for a global united effort to combat this threat."

The delegation also met Christian Friis Bach, Chairman of the Danish Parliament's Foreign Policy Committee, and Trine Pertou Mach, committee member.

"During our discussion, we briefed the Danish representatives on the horrific Pahalgam terrorist attack and India's decisive response through Operation Sindoor, emphasising that those responsible for terrorism will be held account-

able," Prasad said in another post.

"We all welcomed Denmark's unequivocal condemnation of terrorism, valuing the country's strong stance against this global threat," the post said.

The delegation, on a visit to Copenhagen from May 29-31, conveyed India's unwavering stance against terrorism and its perpetrators.

The delegation also met a group of former officials, ministers, members of parliament and diplomats who carry an influential voice in Denmark and abroad to convey India's stance on the resolute action taken in the form of Operation Sindoor, a statement from the Indian Embassy here said.

It clarified that India's warranted response through 'Operation Sindoor' was diplomatically measured and commensurate, and emphasised India's zero-tolerance towards terrorism, the statement added. (PTI)

### Death toll reaches 151 in north-central Nigeria town submerged in floods, thousands displaced

ABUJA (NIGERIA), May 31: At least 151 people have now been confirmed dead after heavy rainfall unleashed flooding in a market town in north-central Nigeria, the local emergency services told The Associated Press on Saturday.

More than 3,000 people were displaced in the flooding in the town of Mokwa in Niger state, more than 300 kilometres west of Abuja, the capital of Africa's most populous nation, Nigerian state emergency agency spokesman Ibrahim Audu Hussein said.

At least 500 households across three communities were affected in the predawn rain Friday, leaving roofs barely visible and residents waist-deep in water, Hussein added. (AP)

### 34 terrorists arrested, major attack foiled in Pakistan's Punjab

LAHORE, May 31: At least 34 terrorists were arrested when a major terror attack was foiled by law enforcement agencies in Punjab province of Pakistan, a statement said on Saturday.

Most of the arrested militants belong to the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) group, with three of them categorised as the "most dangerous terrorists", a Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) statement said.

The statement said it conducted 415 intelligence-based operations in different districts of the province during this week and arrested 34 terrorists.

It said the terrorists planned to target law enforcers and important buildings in the province and were arrested from various locations in Lahore, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Jhelum, Bahawalpur, Sahiwal, Narowal, Jhelum, Pakpattan, Bahawalnagar, Bukhara, Kasur and Nankana Sahib. (PTI)

## Country that made smoking sexy is breaking up with cigarettes

'Tobacco must disappear where there are children'

PARIS, May 31: Brigitte Bardot lounged barefoot on a Saint-Tropez beach, drawing languorous puffs from her cigarette. Another actor, Jean-Paul Belmondo, swaggered down the Champs-Élysées with smoke curling from his defiant lips, capturing a generation's restless rebellion.

In France, cigarettes were never just cigarettes — they were cinematic statements, flirtations and rebellions wrapped in rolling paper.

Yet beginning July 1, if Bardot and Belmondo's iconic film scenes were repeated in real life, they would be subject to up to 135 euros (USD 153) in fines.

After glamorising tobacco for decades, France is preparing for its most sweeping smoking ban yet.

The new restrictions, announced by health minister Catherine Vautrin, will outlaw smoking in virtually all outdoor public areas where children may gather, including beaches, parks, gardens, playgrounds, sports venues, school entrances and bus stops.

"Tobacco must disappear where there are children," Vautrin told French media. The freedom to smoke "stops where children's right to breathe clean air starts".

If Vautrin's law reflects public health priorities, it also signals a deeper cultural shift. Smoking has defined identity, fashion and cinema here for so long that the new measure feels like a quiet French revolution in a country whose relationship

with tobacco is famously complex.

According to France's League Against Cancer, over 90 per cent of French films from 2015 to 2019 featured smoking scenes — more than double the rate in Hollywood productions. Each French movie averaged nearly three minutes of on-screen smoking, effectively the same exposure as six 30-second television ads.

Cinema has been particularly influential. Belmondo's rebellious smoker in Jean-Luc Godard's "Breathless" became shorthand for youthful defiance worldwide. Bardot's cigarette smoke wafted through "And God Created Woman", symbolising unbridled sensuality.

Yet this glamorisation has consequences. According to France's public health authorities, around 75,000 people die from tobacco-related illnesses each year.

Although smoking rates have dipped recently — fewer than 25 per cent of French adults now smoke daily, a historic low — the habit remains stubbornly embedded, especially among young people and the urban chic.

France's relationship with tobacco has long been fraught with contradiction. Air France did not ban smoking on all its flights until 2000, years after major US carriers began phasing it out in the late 1980s and early '90s.

The delay reflected a country slower to sever its cultural romance with cigarettes,



lift sanctions and allow the country's nuclear program to continue.

The comments came a day after Trump said he has told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to hold off on striking Iran to give the US administration more time to push for a new nuclear deal with Tehran.

Trump said on Friday that he still thinks a deal could be completed in the "not too distant future".

"They don't want to be blown up. They would rather make a deal," Trump said of Iran. He added, "That would be a great thing that we could have a deal without bombs being dropped all over the Middle East."

Trump said he's warned Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu from carrying out preemptive strikes on Iran's nuclear program, while the talks are playing out. (AP)

## Appeals court keeps block on Trump administration's downsizing of federal workforce

SAN FRANCISCO, May 31: An appeals court on Friday refused to freeze a California judge's order halting the Trump administration from downsizing the federal workforce, which means that DOGE-led cuts remain on pause for now.

The Republican administration had sought an emergency stay of an injunction issued by US Judge Susan Illston of San Francisco in a lawsuit brought by labour unions and cities, including San Francisco and Chicago.

The judge's order questioned whether Trump's administration was acting lawfully in trying to pare the federal workforce.

Trump has repeatedly said voters gave him a mandate to remake the federal government,

and he tapped billionaire Elon Musk to lead the charge through the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE).

Tens of thousands of federal workers have been fired, have left their jobs via deferred resignation programmes or have been placed on leave. There is no official figure for the job cuts, but at least 75,000 federal employees took deferred resignation, and thousands of probationary workers have already been let go.

Illston's order directs numerous federal agencies to halt acting on the president's workforce executive order signed in February and a subsequent memo issued by DOGE and the Office of Personnel Management. (AP)



GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM  
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (P.H.E) HAMREN DIVISION,  
HAMREN: WEST KARBI ANGLONG

NIT NO.- 01 of 2025-26 Dated.30-05-2025

Separate sealed tender affixing non-refundable KAAC cash receipt of worth Rs.10.00 (Rupees ten) only, eventually to be drawn in APWD F-2 Form, are hereby invited by the undersigned up to 2.00 p.m. on 16/06/2025 from the registered contractors/ firms of PHE Department under KAAC area for the works as mentioned below in details of AAP 2025-26, (SOPD) duly approved and accorded administrative approval by KAAC authority vide No. KAAC/PHE/AAP/2024-25/4886 Dated 27/05/2025 under this Hamren (PHE) Division. Tenders received will be opened at the same date & hours in presence of intending tenderers or their authorized agents who like to be present. In case the last date of receiving tenders happens to be a holiday, the tenders will be received and opened at the same hours on the next working day. Tenders must be accompanied with an earnest money of 2% of the estimated cost (1% in case of SC/ST/OBC/MOBC tenderers) deposited in the form of 'NSC' or 'KVP' duly pledge in favour of "Executive Engineer (PHE) Hamren Division, Hamren."

The detail tender papers and other terms & conditions may be obtained from the office of the undersigned on all working days up to 1:00 PM 16/06/2025 on payment of Rs.200.00 (Rupees two hundred) only in cash.

The undersigned have reserved the right to accept or reject the tender as a whole or part without assigning any reasons thereof and will not be bind himself to accept the lowest rate quoted by the tenderer.

### Name of works against NIT No.01 of 2025-26

Sl.No.	Name of work	Group No.	Estimated Cost (In Rupees)
1	Construction of Langchor Scheme at Langni village under Hamren (PHE) Division	I	Rs.9,80,000.00
2	Construction of Langchor Scheme at SepaiTisso Arong under Hamren (PHE) Division	II	Rs.8,80,000.00
3	Construction of Langchor Scheme at Dera Nihang under Hamren (PHE) Division	III	Rs. 8,80,000.00
4	Construction of Langchor Scheme at Amlong Apam, Phongjangre under Hamren (PHE) Division	IV	Rs. 8,30,000.00
5	Construction of Langchor Scheme at NokterangMongal Bey Arong village under Hamren (PHE) Division	V	Rs. 7,80,000.00
6	Construction of Langchor Scheme at Nokterang Ramsing Ronghang Arong under Hamren (PHE) Division	VI	Rs. 7,80,000.00
7	Construction of Langchor Scheme at LinchikaLangMehek Parai under Hamren (PHE) Division	VII	Rs. 7,80,000.00
8	Construction of Langchor Scheme at Somupong Ronghang Arong under Hamren (PHE) Division	VIII	Rs. 7,80,000.00
9	Langchor Scheme at Hamren Habe Rongkimi under Hamren (PHE) Division	IX	Rs. 7,80,000.00
10	Construction of Langchor Scheme at RongkarbiEngli Arong under Hamren (PHE) Division	X	Rs. 3,50,000.00
11	Construction of Langchor Scheme at Hamren near Rongkarbi High School under Hamren (PHE) Division	XI	Rs. 3,50,000.00
12	Construction of Langchor Scheme at NongkrongEngti Arong under Hamren (PHE) Division	XII	Rs. 4,50,000.00
13	Construction of Langchor Scheme at SarpoEngti Habe Arong Amselam under Hamren (PHE) Division	XIII	Rs. 7,80,000.00
14	Construction of Langchor Scheme at RonghidiEngleng Arong under Hamren (PHE) Division	XIV	Rs. 7,50,000.00
15	Construction of Langchor Scheme at Rongchindon Rongkimi under Hamren (PHE) Division	XV	Rs. 3,50,000.00
16	Construction of Langchor Scheme at Mulokbong (Tamelam Side) under Hamren (PHE) Division	XVI	Rs. 10,50,000.00
17	Construction of Langchor Scheme at Umdap under Hamren (PHE) Division	XVII	Rs. 5,80,000.00
18	Construction of Langchor Scheme at Harlongjuve under Hamren (PHE) Division	XVIII	Rs. 6,80,000.00
19	Construction of Langchor Scheme at Amlong Apam Langminso under Hamren (PHE) Division	XIX	Rs. 7,80,000.00
20	Repairing & renovation of Hamren Sub-Division office building	XX	Rs. 3,00,000.00
21	Repairing & color washing of Staff quarter at Hamren (PHE) new colony	XXI	Rs. 3,40,000.00
22	Repairing & color washing of Staff quarter at Hamren (PHE) new colony	XXII	Rs. 3,40,000.00
23	Repairing & color washing of Staff quarter at Kheroni (PHE) colony.	XXIII	Rs. 3,00,000.00
24	Water Supply arrangement including installation of DTW by using DTH rig at Koka IB, near Koka Picnic spot.	XXIV	Rs. 20,00,000.00

### TERMS & CONDITIONS:-

1. Tenderer should quote their rates distinctly both in figures & words in percentage basis as per above/below/the Schedule of rates / departmental approved rates /estimated rates as applicable.
2. The tenderer should furnish their full name and address distinctly in the tender papers.
3. Earnest money to be deposited of 2% for General and 1% for ST, SC, OBC & MOBC.
4. GSTIN will be deducted as applicable.
5. The work should be completed within the stipulated time.
6. Payment will be made subject to availability of fund released by the authority of KAAC, Diphu.
7. The work should be started after signing necessary agreement in consultation with the AEE (PHE) / SO (PHE) i/c.
8. No advance payment will be made for the work.
9. Approximate value of the works may vary as necessary.
10. Necessary Challans etc. against Forest products utilized in the work will have to be submitted with the Bill.
11. Non tribal tenderer must produce up to date KAAC trading license along with the tender documents.
12. All other terms & conditions will be followed as per APWD F-2 form of tender.
13. The right of settlement/allotment of any work to the tenderer is reserved by the Authority of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu.

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer (PHE)  
Hamren Division, Hamren

Memo. No.- PHEE/HRN/TB-23/2025-26/ 213

Dated. 30-05-2025



# 9 dead in flash floods, landslides in Arunachal

ITANAGAR, May 31: At least nine people have been killed in flash floods and landslides in Arunachal Pradesh after heavy rainfall in the past few days, officials said on Saturday.

Seven members of two families lost their lives after their vehicle was swept off the road by a landslide late Friday night along the Bana-Seppa stretch of National Highway 13 in East Kameng district, police said.

The vehicle was en route to Seppa from Bana in Bichom district when a sudden landslide triggered by heavy rainfall pushed it into a deep gorge, said East Kameng Superintendent of Police (SP) Kamdam Sikom.

"All the victims were residents of Kitchang village in Bana," he said.

Rescue efforts began immediately but were severely hampered by torrential rain, fresh landslides, and extremely poor visibility through the night. Despite these challenges, police and rescue teams continued their efforts.

"On Saturday, the operation resumed with vital support from local villagers. After several hours of a painstaking search, the wreckage was located approximately 150 metres below the highway," Sikom said, adding that all seven occupants were found dead inside.

The deceased have been identified as 35-year-old Shankar alias



Saju Budi Aka, owner of the vehicle, his wife Tasum Budi Aka (25), who was four months pregnant, his daughter Kachung Budi Aka (8) and four-year-old son Nisha Budi Aka, the SP said.

Another pregnant woman Jajum Yame (33) also died along with her five-year-old daughter Tushum Yame and seven-year-old son Patiya Yame, the SP added.

In a separate incident in Lower Subansiri district, two labourers were killed and two others rescued after a landslide struck a cabbage farm near the Pine Groove area along the Ziro-Kamle road, police said.

The incident occurred late Thursday night at the Rann Poliyon

Cabbage Farm, said Lower Subansiri Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Ojing Lego.

In Upper Subansiri, flash floods caused extensive damage in Daporijo, the district headquarters, after the Sigin river overflowed, inundating several low-lying areas, they said.

At least 117 houses, along with several vital infrastructure in the district, were affected due to inclement weather conditions.

The most impacted localities include Polo colony, Sigum Rijo, Sigin colony, Bukpen colony, and Forest colony, the officials said.

Upper Subansiri Deputy Commissioner Tasso Gambo, along with additional DC Biero Sorum

and other district officials, visited the affected areas to assess the damage and oversee response measures.

The DC has issued a prohibitory order urging residents in vulnerable areas to stay alert and relocate to safer places.

All departments concerned, police and disaster management teams, have been placed on high alert and directed to remain prepared for any emergency, said Upper Subansiri District Information and Public Relations Officer (DIPRO) Taw Ekke.

Relief and rescue operations are underway, with the administration and disaster management department conducting damage assessments and providing immediate support to affected families.

In West Kameng district, hundreds of people have been stranded at 35 Charai near Jamiri, along the Balipara-Chariduar-Tawang (BCT) road, another official said.

Road blockades have also been reported at Jyoti Nagar, Dirang, Padma, and Durga Mandir in the district.

District Disaster Management Officer (DDMO) Mindu Yangzom said Border Roads Organisation (BRO) teams and machinery have been deployed near Jamiri, though continuous rain has hampered restoration efforts.

A major landslide in Petaling colony in Bomdila, the district

headquarters, on Friday washed away portions of roads and culverts and an abandoned house.

Though no casualties were reported, landslides caused disruptions in power supply.

Road connectivity between Nafra-Nakhu-Nachibom villages in West Kameng and Bichom district was cut off due to landslides at several points, leaving many commuters stranded.

The DDMO in West Kameng district has issued an advisory, urging people to avoid landslide-prone areas, streams, and unstable zones.

Citizens have been warned against venturing into water bodies for fishing or hunting and advised to evacuate immediately in case of flash floods or landslides.

Landslides have also been reported from Kurung Kumey, Kamle, and Lower Subansiri districts, where authorities are working to clear blockades and restore traffic movement.

Meanwhile, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast widespread rainfall due to a depression over Bangladesh.

Light to moderate rain is expected in most areas, with heavy to very heavy rainfall likely in several regions.

Isolated places may experience extremely heavy rainfall, thunderstorms, and lightning, increasing the risk of floods and landslides in vulnerable locations. (PTI)

## Arunachal Guv honours Armed Forces for role in 'Operation Sindoor', border security

Parnaik expressed special admiration for mentorship programs run by the military, such as UPSC coaching, Sainik School preparation, and pre-recruitment training, efforts



ITANAGAR, May 31: Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lt Gen K T Parnaik (Retd) on Saturday hailed 'Operation Sindoor' as a defining moment in India's border security strategy.

He noted that the operation, executed under strong political and military leadership, has contributed to shaping a new and robust doctrine of deterrence along sensitive border areas.

Parnaik urged continued innovation in technology use and unwavering vigilance from the armed forces to maintain the momentum.

In recognition of their outstanding service in operational duties, Parnaik presented the Governor's Citation to 13 Rajputana Rifles, 9 Grenadiers, and 31 Assam Rifles during a ceremony at the Raj Bhavan, here.

The awards were given for exceptional professionalism, operational acumen, and their close synergy with both the district administration and local communities in the state, an official statement said.

Commanding Officer of the 13th Battalion of The Rajputana Rifles (Thundering Thirteen), Col Sangam Kumar, along with Subedar Major Bhom Singh Rathore and Agniveer Vibin A, received the citation.

From the 9th Battalion of The Grenadiers Regiment (Mewar), Colonel Saurabh Sharma, Subedar Major Mahaveer, and Grenadier Dharamveer were honoured.

From the 31st Battalion of The Assam Rifles, Col Dushyant Singh Lamba, Subedar Major Banwari

Lal Sharma, and Rifleman K I Singh received the citation.

In his address, Parnaik praised the forces for their tireless commitment to securing the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and managing the Indo-Myanmar border, highlighting the visible improvements in security and coordination.

He also applauded the armed forces for their community outreach initiatives, including the construction of community halls, school buildings, and playgrounds in border villages, along with organizing local sports tournaments to unite and inspire youth.

Parnaik expressed special admiration for mentorship programs run by the military, such as UPSC coaching, Sainik School preparation, and pre-recruitment training, efforts that have opened new avenues for local youth.

The governor shared that during his visits to remote villages; he observed a strong bond of trust and goodwill between the armed forces and the local population, a relationship nurtured through consistent Sadbhavana (goodwill) operations.

He also highlighted the force's role in the vibrant villages programme, where their collaboration has contributed to reverse migration, strengthening both the population and the security of India's border areas.

Parnaik expressed confidence that the armed forces will continue to build on their achievements, especially in the context of Operation Sindoor, and uphold their legacy of service, vigilance, and national pride. (PTI)

## Inter-Battalion Yoga Competition concludes at 186 CRPF Battalion in Namsai

HT Bureau NAMSAI, May 31: The Inter-Battalion Yoga Competition hosted at the 186 Battalion Core Hub Camp Complex in Jajapur, Namsai, Arunachal Pradesh, concluded recently with a vibrant closing ceremony held on May 27.

The event was organised to promote physical, mental, and spiritual well-being among Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel.

According to an official statement, the event saw participation and support from various dignitaries, including D.S. Hernwal, Rector of Arunachal University of Studies; Ajay Jha, Professor and Vice Chancellor of the same university; Tongke Ering, Yoga Trainer from Patanjali Yogpeeth; and Nang Sujata Namchoom, Principal of Blooming Buds Public School, Namsai.

Their presence added significance to the occasion.

Commandant of the 186 Battalion, Dharmendra Kumar Singh, welcomed all



the guests and expressed sincere gratitude for their attendance. Students from Blooming Buds Public School were also invited to the event and delivered a well-received band performance during the closing ceremony, showcasing youthful energy and discipline.

Senior CRPF officials, including Shri Bipin Kumar Singh (2nd-in-Command, Administration), Sandip Sharma (2nd-in-Command, Operations), K N Haldhar (Deputy Commandant), Ch Lakshmi Manasa (Senior Medical Officer, Deputy Commandant), Karpoor Babala (Assistant Commandant), and S Seema Devi

(Assistant Commandant), along with subordinate officers and jawans of the 186 Battalion, were present at the event. In the competition results, Team 186 Battalion emerged as the winner, while Team 142 Battalion secured the first runners-up position and Team 68 Battalion was declared the second runners-up. All participating teams were congratulated for their spirited involvement and sportsmanship.

The competition underscored the CRPF's ongoing commitment to promoting holistic fitness and mindfulness among its personnel through yoga and related initiatives.

## CM lays digital foundation for ₹750-cr education infrastructure projects

HT Bureau NAMSAI, May 31: In a major step towards transforming the education sector in Arunachal Pradesh, Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Saturday digitally laid the foundation stones for a range of infrastructure development projects valued at ₹750 crore.

The projects, to be implemented by the Rural Works Department (RWD) during the financial year 2025-26, fall under the ambit of the state's Education Department.

According to an official statement, the initiative is a key component of the state government's Shikshit Arunachal 2029 Mission, which aims to address infrastructure gaps and improve the overall quality of education across government schools.

A significant portion of the funding will be used to upgrade 39 government higher secondary schools under the SASCI scheme at a cost of ₹300 crore.

An additional ₹322 crore has been earmarked for the construction of 156 hostels and teachers' quarters in various districts, also under the SASCI scheme.

Further, the plan includes the development of 14 large-capacity hostels, each accommodating 120 students, under the DAJGUA scheme at a cost of ₹71.40 crore.

Sixty bachelor barracks for school staff in rural areas will be built with a budget of ₹9 crore.

The Arunachal University in Pasighat is set to receive ₹30 crore for infrastructure upgrades, while ₹23.64 crore has been allocated for constructing 394 kitchen sheds cum stores

to support the PM Poshan scheme.

Speaking at the launch, Chief Minister Khandu emphasized that the initiative reflects the government's determination to overhaul the education system.

He said the Shikshit Arunachal mission is not only about infrastructure, but also about introducing key policy reforms to revitalise the education sector.

Schools that are non-functional or have zero attendance will be closed down, and the Inter-Village School Model will be implemented to streamline resources and improve outcomes.

Khandu acknowledged that in the past, excessive focus on expanding the number of schools had led to a decline in educational quality.

He said the new mission aims to reverse this trend and ensure top-tier education across the state by 2029.

Expressing confidence in the leadership of Education Minister Pasang Dorjee Sona, Khandu said he was optimistic that the goals of the mission would be achieved within the stipulated timeframe.

Congratulating both the RWD and the Education Department, the Chief Minister advised officials to ensure timely completion of the projects with strict adherence to quality standards.

The event was also attended by Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein, Education Minister Pasang Dorjee Sona, Advisor to the Education Minister Mutchu Mithi, and senior officials from the concerned departments.

## 'Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan' launched in Namsai

HT Bureau NAMSAI, May 31: The inaugural programme of the nationwide pre-Kharif campaign "Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan" was held across several locations in Namsai district, including Jona, Alubari, Mahadevpur, Chowkham, and Lekang blocks.

The campaign, aimed at promoting awareness on scientific farming practices and agriculture-related schemes, commenced with the ceremonial flagging off of three awareness 'raths' designed to educate farmers on modern agricultural methods.

According to an official statement, the programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from local farmers and was attended by key government officials and agricultural experts.

At Chowkham, Zilla Parishad Member Chow Jenia Namchoom and Additional Deputy Commissioner K Tikhak were present, along



with 120 farmers from six surrounding villages.

The scientific team included experts from Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), agriculture, veterinary, horticulture, and fisheries departments.

A similar programme at Jona-I was graced by Namsai Deputy Commissioner C R Khampa, District Planning Officer Dr K Sharmah, and other senior officials.

Over 100 farmers from the Jona cluster participated in the session, which focused on educating farmers about sustainable practices and government initiatives.

At Mahadevpur, the event was attended by Kamal Roy, Assistant General Manager

of NABARD, along with a scientific team and 145 participants.

The discussions covered a wide range of topics, including soil health management, natural farming, crop diversification, and effective utilization of fallow land.

Officials also highlighted various central and state schemes designed to support agriculture and allied sectors. As part of the initiative, Soil Health Cards, high-yielding variety seeds, and agricultural tools were distributed to farmers.

The sessions included interactive discussions, allowing participants to raise queries about best practices and government support available to them.

The campaign, led by officials from KVK and state departments, aims to boost agricultural productivity and encourage the younger generation to engage in farming through informed, scientific methods.

## NCP appoints Toko Tatung as Arunachal Pradesh unit president

ITANAGAR, May 31: The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) has appointed Toko Tatung as the new president of its Arunachal Pradesh unit, a party release said.

Tatung, a first-time MLA from the Yachuli constituency in Keyi Panyor district of the northeastern state, was appointed state president following approval by NCP's national working president Praful Patel, under the guidance of national president Ajit Pawar, the release said here.

NCP chief national spokesperson Brijmohan Shrivastav said Tatung's leadership is expected to bring fresh energy and commitment to strengthening the party's presence and organisational structure in Arunachal Pradesh.

"The NCP looks forward to his active contribution towards furthering the party's mission and upholding its values in the state," Shrivastav added.

A businessman-turned-politician, Tatung made headlines by defeating sitting state Education Minister Taba Tedi in the April 2024 elections. (PTI)

## One more tests positive for COVID-19 in Arunachal, tally rises to 3

ITANAGAR, May 31: A 51-year-old man has tested positive for COVID-19 in Arunachal Pradesh, taking the total number of infections in the current wave to three in the state, a senior health official said on Saturday.

The man had undergone a rapid antigen test at Ramakrishna Mission Hospital (RKMH) here on May 28 and was found positive for the coronavirus infection, he said.

Arunachal Pradesh had earlier reported two cases of the new COVID-19 variant on May 27, State Surveillance Officer Dr Lobsang Jampa said.

These cases were detected through RT-PCR tests at the Virus Research and Diagnostic Laboratory (VRDL) of Tomo Riba Institute of Health and Medical Sciences (TRIHS), he said.

A 34-year-old woman, who is in her 21st week of pregnancy, tested positive after she had developed COVID-like symptoms of fever and mild cough.

The woman had arrived in Itanagar from Bengaluru on May 13. The woman's 53-year-old mother also tested positive for the infection but remained asymptomatic.

The pregnant woman is currently admitted to a hospital, while her mother has been placed under isolation, the official said. Jampa urged the public not to panic, assuring that the new strain appears to be less severe than earlier variants. "The health department is closely monitoring the situation and taking all necessary precautions to prevent the spread of the virus. We are also tracing all possible contacts the two women may have had," he added.

He noted that a comprehensive public health advisory will be issued soon after consultation with the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) in Delhi.

So far, the state health department has tested four samples, of which three have been found positive, the official added. (PTI)

### MAHABODHI LORD BUDDHA COLLEGE, NAMSAI

Namsai 792103

Affiliated to RAJIV GANDHI UNIVERSITY

No.: MLBC/Adv/2024-25/002

Dated: 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2025

### VACANCY

Applications are invited for the following post for Mahabodhi Lord Buddha College, Namsai, Arunachal Pradesh.

Sl. No.	Post	No. Of Post	Qualification
1.	Assistant Professor Foundation of Education	2	a) PG in Social Science/ Humanities/ Science/ Mathematics/ Languages/ Commerce with 55% marks and M.Ed with 55% marks. b) NET/SLET
2.	Assistant Professor Political Science	1	a) PG in concerned subject with 55% marks and M.Ed with 55% marks. b) NET/SLET )
3.	Assistant Professor Hindi	1	a) PG in concerned subject with 55% marks and B.Ed/M.Ed with 55% masks. b) NET/SLET
4.	Assistant Professor Education	1	a) PG in concerned subject with 55% marks and B.Ed with 55% marks. b) NET/SLET

Interested candidates are requested to send their resume to the following email id on or before 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2025.

Email: [mlbcollege6@gmail.com](mailto:mlbcollege6@gmail.com)

\*Note: Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted over phone/ by mail for the interview.

Sd/-  
Principal i/c)  
Mahabodhi Lord Buddha College, Namsai



# Bullets will be answered with cannon balls: Modi warns Pak

*'This means the BJP government is empowering our sisters and daughters at every level and in every field'*

**BHOPAL, May 31:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said proxy wars by terrorists will not work and bullets will be answered with cannon balls, adding that 'sindoor' has become a symbol of valour following India's response to the Pahalgam terror attack.

He also described Operation Sindoor as the biggest and most successful anti-terror operation in the country's history.

Speaking at the 'Lokmata Devi Ahilyabai Mahila Sashaktikaran Maha Sammelan' here on the occasion of the legendary queen's 300th birth anniversary, Modi said, "Through a decisive response, Bharat gave a message that proxy war by terrorists will not work. Bharat, a land of culture and values, sees sindoor as a symbol of women's power. Today, that same sindoor has become a symbol of our valour and resistance to terrorism." "If you fire bullets, then rest assured that they will be answered with cannon balls," Modi said.

"India is a country of culture and traditions, and sindoor is a symbol of women power in our tradition. Hanuman ji, who is immersed in Ram Bhakti, also sports sindoor. We offer sindoor in Shakti Puja. This sindoor has become a symbol of bravery," he said.

Earlier this month, Indian armed

forces carried out missile strikes on nine terror targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir under Operation Sindoor. The operation was conducted two weeks after the massacre of 26 civilians in Kashmir's Pahalgam.

Sindoor or the vermilion mark symbolises the marital status of Hindu women, and its use as the operation's name resonated powerfully in light of the April 22 Pahalgam massacre.

"In Pahalgam, terrorists not only shed the blood of Indians, but also attacked our culture. They tried to divide our society and the biggest thing is that they challenged the women power of India," Modi said. "This challenge has sounded the death knell for terrorists and their handlers. Operation Sindoor is the biggest and most successful operation in the history of India against terrorists. While the Pakistan army could not even imagine, our army destroyed the terrorist hideouts," he added.

Talking about the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, also known as the Women's Reservation Bill, which aims to reserve one-third of the total seats in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies, the PM said, "This time, 75 women have become members of Parliament. Our effort is to increase this



number." This is the spirit behind the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam. Women reservation in Parliament and state assemblies had remained pending for a long time, but has been achieved now, he said. "This means the BJP government is empowering our sisters and daughters at every level and in every field," he said. He also said the world is witnessing the capability of India's daughters in the defence sector today.

"To achieve this, the government took many steps in the last decade. From school to the battlefield, the country today has unprecedented faith in the bravery of its daughters," he said.

Referring to Lieutenant Commanders Roopa A and Dilna K, who recently returned to India after circumnavigating the globe in a sailing boat, the PM said the two brave daughters of the Navy completed the 250-day voyage.

"They circumnavigated the earth by travelling thousands of kilometres in a boat that runs not on a motor but on wind. Imagine staying at sea for 250 days," he said.

He also praised Ahilyabai Holkar, describing her as the guardian of India's heritage. She protected the country's temples and pilgrimage sites when they were being attacked, he said.

"Our government is working on

the mantra of 'Nagrik Devo Bhava' (citizen is god), which was the philosophy of Ahilyabai Holkar," he added. Rani Ahilyabai Holkar was born on May 31, 1725, at Chondi village in Maharashtra's Ahilyanagar. She ruled the Malwa region of central India from 1767 to 1795, as the queen of the Holkar dynasty in the Maratha Empire.

"When we talk of girls' marriageable age, some people in the country see secularism in danger. They think it is against our religion. But Devi Ahilyabai thought about the marriageable age of girls in those times," he said.

"She got married at an early age. She knew the way to girl's progress. In Malwa Sena, she created a special battalion of women. These people of the western world do not know. They curse us in the name of the rights of women and try to portray us in a bad light. Women were in our army even 250-300 years ago. At village level, she created safety groups for women," Modi noted.

"When the country was in shackles of slavery 250-300 years ago, it was not easy to do something so impactful that future generations would remember it. But Devi Ahilyabai did it. She never separated devotion to God from service to the people," he said. (PTI)

## Constitution should be credited for keeping country united during crises: CJI



**PRAYAGRAJ (UP), May 31:** The Constitution has ensured that whenever the country has faced a crisis, it has remained united and strong, Chief Justice of India (CJI) B R Gavai said on Saturday.

The CJI was addressing a function after the inauguration of advocate chambers and multi-level parking at the Allahabad High Court here.

"When the Constitution was being made and its final draft was presented before the Constituent Assembly, at that time some people used to say that the Constitution is too federal while some used to say that it is too unitary."

"Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar had replied that the Constitution is neither wholly federal nor wholly unitary. But one thing I can tell you is that we have given a Constitution which will keep India united and strong both in times of peace and war," CJI Gavai said.

He said India has been on the path of development after independence due to the Constitution.

"Today we see what is the condition of our neighbouring countries. And India is making a journey towards development after independence. Whenever there has been a crisis in the country, it has remained united and strong. The credit for this should be given to the Constitution," he said.

In the 75-year journey of the Constitution coming into effect, the legislature, the executive and the judiciary have contributed a lot in bringing social and economic equality, he said.

"It is our fundamental duty to reach out to the last citizen of this country who needs justice. Be it

the legislature, the executive or the judiciary, everyone has to reach out to that citizen," the CJI told the gathering.

Referring to the land reforms, he said some laws were brought under which land was taken from the landlord and given to the landless persons.

"These laws were challenged from time to time. Before 1973, the Supreme Court's view was that if there is a conflict between the Directive Principles and the Fundamental Rights, then the Fundamental Rights will prevail."

Gavai said, "In 1973, a decision of 13 judges came that the Parliament has the right to amend the Constitution and for this, it can amend the Fundamental Rights, but it does not have the right to change the basic structure of the Constitution."

The Chief Justice of India said that this bench had also said that both the Fundamental Rights and the Directives Principles are the soul of the Constitution.

Both of these are the two wheels of the golden chariot of the Constitution, if you stop one of these wheels, the entire chariot will stop.

He said, "I have always been saying that the bar and the bench are two sides of the same coin. Unless the bar and the bench work together, the chariot of justice cannot move forward."

"Today the Allahabad High Court has given a good role model for the whole country in which the judges vacated 12 bungalows for the bar (for the construction of the complex) and took care of the convenience of their lawyer brothers." (PTI)

## Andhra Pradesh govt works for poor, says CM Naidu

**ANDHRA PRADESH, May 31:** Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Saturday said that the TDP-led NDA government works for the poor, executes all programmes, so that they are not put into any trouble.

Addressing a village meeting at Cheyveru in this district, the chief minister noted that over 64 lakh people in the state receive pensions akin to employees on the first day of every month.

"This government works for the poor. We are doing all the programmes to avoid any trouble for the poor," said Naidu, adding that the NDA government is a unique one in history to disbursing pensions. The state government has so far spent ₹ 34,000 crore on welfare pensions, he added.

He said that the southern state gives welfare pensions more in terms of value and volume than richer states such as Maharashtra and Telangana. Referring to the Deepam-2 scheme, which offers three free cooking gas cylinders to eligible beneficiaries, the CM noted that he will deposit money into the bank accounts of the beneficiaries once in four months to make it easy to avail the scheme.

Likewise, Naidu called on SC and ST communities to avail solar power scheme (PM Surya Ghar) to generate power on their rooftops and stand a chance of avoiding electricity bills completely, along with the possibility of selling excess power to the grid.

Under this scheme, the TDP supreme highlighted that SC and ST communities will get 100 per cent subsidy, BCs ₹ 98,000 subsidy for 3 kw solar power system and Other Castes (OCs) ₹ 78,000 subsidy. Naidu tasked MLAs and officials to achieve the target of installing 10,000 solar power systems per constituency.

Further, the CM noted that 'Mega DSC' (District Selection Committee) notification has been issued for the recruitment of over 16,000 teachers. Issuing a warning to marijuana and drug users and peddlers, the CM vowed that he would not spare them, underscoring that he set up a separate wing (Eagle) to nab them using drones.

Naidu reiterated his promise to implement 'Talliki Vandanam' (₹ 15,000 per annum for every school going child in a given family) before schools reopen for the 2025-26 academic year in June.

Similarly, he also reiterated the importance of population management, calling on people to have more children to avoid problems such as aging and facing a situation where there would be lower number of workers and higher number of pensioners. When it comes to population, Naidu said South India is at a disadvantage when compared to North India.

The CM also promised to implement 'Annadatta Sukhibhava' (₹ 20,000 financial aid to farmers per annum) in three installments soon.

Similarly, he also assured to start implementing free bus travel for women from August 15. The CM observed that he is implementing his welfare promises one after the other as there are several problems.

Referring to Konaseema district, Naidu advised the local farmers to incorporate inter-cropping of cocoa or fodder grass in their 90,000 acres of coconut orchards to increase their income. (PTI)

## Reveal truth to country: Cong to govt after CDS' remarks on losses in Operation Sindoor

**NEW DELHI, May 31:** The Congress asked the government on Saturday to truthfully tell the country what losses were suffered during the four-day conflict with Pakistan after Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan acknowledged aircraft loss in the hostilities.

Gen Chouhan, however, dismissed as "absolutely incorrect" Islamabad's claim of downing six Indian jets.

Latching on to the comment by the chief of defence staff (CDS), Congress leader Uttam Kumar Reddy said the country wanted to know whether any aircraft were downed during the conflict, especially in the wake of the CDS' "admission".

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said that on July 29, 1999, the Vajpayee government set up the Kargil Review Committee under the chairmanship of "India's strategic affairs guru K Subrahmanyam, whose son is now our external affairs minister".

This was just three days after the Kargil war ended, he said.

"The committee submitted its detailed report five months later. The report titled 'From Surprise to Reckoning' was then laid on the Table of both Houses of Parliament on February 23, 2000, after the necessary redactions."

"Will the Modi government now take a similar step in light of what the Chief of Defence Staff has just revealed in Singapore?" Ramesh posed in a post on X.

Soon after CDS Gen Chouhan's remarks, made during an interview with Bloomberg TV, got published, Reddy took the opportunity to say, "It appears very clearly a Rafale fighter aircraft was downed in the four-day operations."

"Today, an hour ago, CDS Gen Chauhan has confirmed that a Rafale aircraft was brought down in the four-day operation. The fact that the fighter aircraft were down is something that

the Government of India needs to stop denying. The CDS himself mentioned that."

At a press conference, the Congress leader said, "Earlier, Air Marshal (Awadesh Kumar) Bharti had mentioned it indirectly in his briefing along with the DGM. He specifically said that 'losses are normal in combat; the mission objective of the operation has been achieved, and all pilots have come home'."

He said when Rahul Gandhi first pointed it out in a question to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, it was "very bizarre and strange" that the ruling party functionaries at all levels accused him of not being patriotic.

"We are happy that the objectives (of Operation Sindoor) have been achieved, but the fact that the fighter aircraft were down is something that needs to be... the Government of India should stop denying that. The CDS himself has mentioned it and Air Marshall Bharti had also done so," Reddy said. (PTI)

## Not joining UDF, will not contest in Nilambur bypoll: P V Anvar

**MALAPPURAM (KERALA), May 31:** Trinamool Congress (TMC) state convener P V Anvar on Saturday said he was not interested in being part of the Congress-led UDF alliance any more, but he will not contest in the upcoming Nilambur assembly bypoll either as he does not have the money needed for it.

Anvar's declaration comes a day after the UDF said that if the TMC leader withdraws his recent remarks against its candidate, Aryadan Shoukath, he will be included in the front's fold.

The TMC state convener, at a press conference here, said that he was not going to the UDF at this stage and none of its leaders should call him anymore.

Following his declaration, the Congress said there was still time and they were hopeful that Anvar would join them.

They also said that Leader of Opposition in the state assembly V D Sathesnan did not take any decision on his own with regard to inclusion of Anvar in the UDF.

The clarification came as Anvar claimed that one person -- Sathesnan -- was the reason why he was not included in the UDF till now and was being offered only an associate member position.

Congress general secretary K C Venugopal, UDF convener Adoor Prakash, Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) chief Sunny Joseph and senior party leader K Muralaiah indicated that the doors of the front were not closed to Anvar.

Venugopal said the UDF will take with it everyone opposed to the ruling Left government and it was Anvar to decide if he wants to join the front, while Prakash and Joseph said there was still time for the TMC leader to change his stand.

Prakash also said that he would continue to believe till the end that Anvar would join the UDF. Muralaiah said the "doors were not closed" to Anvar and it was up to him to decide whether he wanted to join the front by changing his stand towards the UDF candidate. (PTI)

## Army chief felicitates BSF woman officer, praises ex-servicemen for role during Operation Sindoor

**JAMMU, May 31:** Army chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi has awarded a BSF woman officer and praised the paramilitary force and ex-servicemen for their role during Operation Sindoor, the army said on Saturday.

The chief of Army Staff (COAS) reached Jammu on a two-day visit on Thursday and attended the high-level security review meeting chaired by Home Minister Amit Shah.

"General Dwivedi reviewed operational preparedness in Jammu and Kashmir's Paragwal sector and visited the Tiger Division where he commended troops for their outstanding performance in Operation Sindoor."

"He stressed the importance of staying agile and vigilant in response to evolving security dynamics," the additional directorate general of public information (ADGPI) of the Indian Army wrote on X on Saturday.

It said the COAS also praised the BSF's close operational integration with the Army and lauded the bravery of Assistant Commandant Neha Bhandari and her team for defending the forward posts in the Akhnoor sector of Jammu. "He also acknowledged the valuable contribution of ex-servicemen in supporting the armed forces during operation Sindoor," the Army said, sharing several pictures of Gen Dwivedi's visit.

Before returning to Delhi on Friday, the Army chief awarded BSF Assistant Commandant Neha Bhandari with the Commendation Disc for her ex-

ceptional courage and operational proficiency during Operation Sindoor in the Jammu frontier.

Commanding a border outpost within eyeball-to-eyeball contact of a Pakistani post along the International Border, the assistant commandant led her troops to silence three forward hostile posts across the zero line (the area closest to enemy territory) by giving a befitting reply. "On 30 May 2025, COAS General Upendra Dwivedi, PVSM, AVSM, felicitated Assistant Commandant Neha Bhandari of BSF Jammu with the Commendation Disc for her exceptional courage and operational proficiency during Operation Sindoor," BSF Jammu had said in a post on X.

She gallantly commanded a forward-deployed BSF company under challenging conditions, it said. Apart from Neha, six women constables held gun positions at a forward border post, with their "josh" rising with every bullet they fired at the enemy positions across the International Border in the Samba, R S Pura and Akhnoor sectors.

Apart from Neha, six women constables held a gun position on a forward border post, with their "josh" rising with every bullet they fired at enemy positions across the IB in Samba-R S Pura-Akhnoor sectors. Neha, a third-generation officer from her family in Uttarakhand, takes pride in being part of the BSF and commanding a border outpost in the Pargwal forward area of the Akhnoor sector in the Jammu district during Operation Sindoor. (PTI)

## UP CM inaugurates advocate chambers

**PRAYAGRAJ (UP), May 31:** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday said that in the rule of law, the litigant is as important as the bar and bench, according to a statement.

Adityanath addressed a gathering after the inauguration ceremony of advocate chambers and parking building constructed for Rs 680 crore within the Allahabad High Court premises. Chief Justice of India Justice Bhushan Ramakrishna Gavai was also present at the event. Adityanath said, "In the rule of law, the litigant is as important as the bar and bench."

During the event, Adityanath recalled the 2017 programme organised at the Allahabad High Court where the prime minister had emphasised that the first condition of good governance is the rule of law, the statement read. He expressed empathy for advocates, noting that despite working under difficult conditions -- such as broken chambers or even under trees -- they continue to strive for justice.

Highlighting the significance of the day, the chief minister said, "Today marks the 300th birth anniversary of Lokmata Ahilyabai Holkar. This year is also the Amrit Mahotsav year of the implementation of the Constitution of India." (PTI)

## 'Bring back crown' India cheers as Nandini Gupta fast tracks to Top 40 of Miss World

**HYDERABAD, May 31:** India is chanting 'bring the crown back', as Nandini Gupta is all set to take the stage as one of the 18 contestants who have 'fast tracked' their way into the Top 40 category at the 72nd Miss World contest on Saturday evening at Hitex Exhibition Centre in Hyderabad.

If Gupta wins the pageant, she will be the seventh one from India to take the crown -- Manushi Chhillar was the last one to win in 2017. Gupta booked her spot at Top 40 by winning the sub event Miss World Top Model on May 24.

In an interview to PTI Videos, Gupta had said she came to know about the pageant after she watched 'Devdas' and started digging about Aishwarya Rai.

"My mother was watching 'Devdas' on DVD. I was mesmerised looking at Aishwarya's beauty, and I asked my mother, 'Who is she?' She said, 'She is Miss World'. I was like 'How do you become that?'," Gupta had told PTI, right after she won the Miss India crown.

But it is not going to be easy for this beauty queen from Rajasthan.

For instance, Thailand's Suchata Chuangsri is a seasoned pageantry participant, too. She has already represented her country in Miss Universe 2024, finishing third runner-up. With

an ease, Chuangsri flipped her narrative a couple of days ago on her Instagram page, winning herself a spot at Top 40.

"This wasn't just about representing Thailand. It's about the many women who haven't been heard -- and using my voice to stand for something that really matters," she wrote, making it clear that she might have an edge at the crucial question-answer round that often makes or breaks a candidate.

Other Multimedia Media Challenge winners, which ranks social media presence are Cameron's Issie Princesse, Dominican Republic's Mayra Delgado and Montenegro's Andrea Nikolic.

Namibia is rooting as hard as India for their representative, Selma Kamanya, too. On their official Instagram page of Miss World Namibia, Namibians are encouraged to log on and watch the event live, showing support to their beauty.

The only time anyone from their country came any close to a Miss World crown was when Michelle McLean was placed as the Top 5 finalist in 1991.

Incidentally, Kamanya, too, reached the grand finale by clinching the Miss World Top Model. Ireland's Jasmine Gerhardt and Martinique's Aurelie Joachim are others who were crowned Miss World Top Model. (PTI)

No.JDB/6\*-ASFC/2/2025-26/1053

Date- 29/05/2025

### NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed Tenders affixing a non-refundable Court fee stamp amounting Rs. 8.25 (Rupees eight & twenty five paisa) only with a validity period of 180 Days which will subsequence to be converted and drawn up in the printed of F-2 form are invited from the registered Contractor of Class-I (A, B, C), Class-II, Class-III category of Assam PWD (Roads & Building) and BTC for the following works under 6\*-ASFC fund for the year 2023-24 during 2024-25 under Jalab Dev. Block of BTC area. The Tenders will be received by the undersigned up to 2.30 PM on 20-06-2025 and will be opened on the same date & place at 3.30 PM.

Sl. No.	Name of Scheme	Tender Value (In Rs.)	Bid Security	Cost of BID documents (D/D) @ 0.03% (Approx)	Time of Completion
1	Const. of Culvert at north khamardwisa village near Mintu Basumatary house	Rs. 6,00,000/-	Rs. 6,000/- @ 1% for ST/SC/OBC & Rs. 12,000/- @ 2% for General	Rs. 180/-	3 (Three) months from the date of issue of work order
2	Const. of Culvert at Simla village near Brajen Basumatary house	Rs. 6,00,000/-	Rs. 6,000/- @ 1% for ST/SC/OBC & Rs. 12,000/- @ 2% for General	Rs. 180/-	3 (Three) months from the date of issue of work order
3	Const. of Culvert at Bungoon Village near Kamal Basumatary house	Rs. 7,00,000/-	Rs. 7,000/- @ 1% for ST/SC/OBC & Rs. 14,000/- @ 2% for General	Rs. 210/-	3 (Three) months from the date of issue of work order
4	Const. of Culvert at Panbari under 22 No. Koklabari BTC Constituency	Rs. 6,00,000/-	Rs. 6,000/- @ 1% for ST/SC/OBC & Rs. 12,000/- @ 2% for General	Rs. 180/-	3 (Three) months from the date of issue of work order

Details NIT may be seen at the office of the undersigned from 29/05/2025 to 20/06/2025 up to 1.00 PM.

Sd/-

Block Development Officer,  
Jalab Dev. Block, Jalabghat

IPR(BTC)/C/2025-26/554



# BTC registers development milestone under Pramod Boro's leadership: Minister

*'The commitment and seriousness shown in Kokrajhar should inspire other districts'*

**HT Correspondent**  
**KOKRAJHAR, May 31:** Assam Minister for Panchayat & Rural Development and Tourism, Ranjeet Kumar Dass, on Friday hailed the developmental progress made in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), crediting the leadership of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) Chief Executive Member (CEM) Pramod Boro for the effective implementation of flagship government schemes.

"BTC, under the leadership of CEM Pramod Boro, has achieved a milestone in implementing Panchayat and Rural Development schemes, particularly in reaching the marginalised and underserved communities," Minister Dass said during a review meeting at the BTC Secretariat in Kokrajhar.

He further lauded Kokrajhar's performance, noting it as a model district in comparison to others in Assam.

"The commitment and seriousness shown in Kokrajhar should inspire other districts," he remarked.



The Minister was in Kokrajhar to assess the progress of key programmes under the Panchayat & Rural Development Department, the Assam State Rural Livelihoods Mission (ASRLM), and the Tourism Department.

During the review, Dass expressed satisfaction with the execution of major schemes such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Gramin

(PMAY-G), noting their impact on rural infrastructure and livelihood development in BTR.

The review also focused on ASRLM initiatives such as the Mukhya Mantri Mahila Udyamita Scheme, One District One Product (ODOP), and Lakhpati Abou.

Dass stressed the importance of marketing and support infrastructure under ODOP to bolster rural entrepreneurship.

In the tourism sector, the Minister urged both the P&RD and

Tourism departments to work together to improve tourism infrastructure, especially in Raimona National Park.

He noted the encouraging rise in tourism, with foreign tourist arrivals in BTR increasing from just 33 in 2021–22 to 3,975 in 2024–25, and a total of 80,660 tourists visiting the region over the past year.

BTC CEM Pramod Boro, addressing the officials at the meeting, called for dedication and innovation in implementing government schemes to ensure timely delivery of benefits to the most deserving sections of society.

He also sought continued cooperation from the state government to drive further development in BTR.

The meeting was attended by BTC Executive Members Dharma Narayan Das (Tourism), Nilut Swargiary (PHE), Political Adviser to the CEM Madhab Chetry, BTC Secretary Dhiraj Saud, and senior officials from the Panchayat & Rural Development and Tourism departments.

# Tripura to boost industrial infrastructure with \$85.4 million ADB loan

**HT Correspondent**  
**AGARTALA, May 31:** In a significant push to attract investment and boost industrial development in Tripura, Chief Minister Manik Saha on Saturday announced that major initiatives are underway to enhance the state's industrial infrastructure with the support of an \$85.4 million loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The funding will be directed towards improving power supply, roads, plug-and-play infrastructure, warehousing facilities, and more.

Saha made the announcement while addressing delegates at a Stakeholder Consultation organized under the initiative of the High-Level Task Force on Investment Promotion in the North Eastern Region.

The event was held in collaboration with the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER).

"With the objective of developing a strategic roadmap to position the Northeast as a preferred investment destination, this consultation brings together key stakeholders. I extend a warm welcome to all participants and believe your insights will significantly contribute to

shaping our strategy report," Saha said.

He informed the gathering that the High-Level Task Force has already held two meetings where members provided valuable suggestions and feedback.

"We've adopted a six-month action plan to frame a comprehensive roadmap for investment promotion. Both long-term and short-term strategies are being devised to attract investments across various promising sectors," he added.

Highlighting recent achievements, the Chief Minister pointed to the success of the Rising Northeast Investor Summit 2025, held on May 23–24, which secured substantial investment commitments.

"For Tripura alone, 64 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) worth ₹15,823 crore were signed during the summit. Before this, with the support of DoNER, Tripura signed 184 MoUs through roadshows, investment summits, and conclaves, with an estimated investment potential exceeding ₹15,000 crore. Over 25% of these have already been grounded," he stated.

Saha underlined Tripura's proactive approach toward en-

abling reforms and investor facilitation.

"Tripura has implemented all 387 business reforms under the Business Reforms Action Plan 2024. We are also among the first states to enact the Tripura Jan Vishwas Ordinance 2025, aimed at decriminalizing provisions in various state laws and repealing outdated regulations," he said.

He added that the state is working closely with the Cabinet Secretariat's Task Force on Deregulation to reduce compliance burdens across laws, local bodies, industrial corporations, and utility services.

Further strengthening its industrial policy, the state government has amended the Tripura Industrial Investment Promotion Incentives Scheme 2022 to introduce customised incentives for mega projects.

"The Tripura Industrial Development Corporation (TIDC) is implementing an ambitious expansion plan, developing over 1,500 acres of new industrial zones, establishing sector-specific industrial parks, and unlocking land along key transport corridors to meet rising investor demands," Saha informed.

## Ujoni Asom Muslim Kalyan Parishad alleges harassment

**HT Correspondent**  
**SIVASAGAR, May 31:** The Ujoni Asom Muslim Kalyan Parishad has alleged that indigenous Muslims in Assam are facing harassment by the state police during the government's ongoing crackdown on illegal Bangladeshi immigrants. In a press release issued here on Saturday, the organisation claimed that despite being native residents of Assam, some indigenous Muslims have been wrongfully detained and even sent to detention camps.

Parishad President M I Bora stated that four years ago, chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had announced a comprehensive survey to identify and document the state's indigenous Muslim communities—including the Garia, Moria, Deshi, Sayed, and Jolah groups.

However, Bora alleged that the survey has not yet been conducted. He further mentioned that the then Director of the Minority Development Board, Sayed Tahidur Rahman, had visited Charaideo and other districts in connection with the proposed survey, but no concrete action followed.

Parishad Adviser, Advocate Nekibur Zaman, along with M I Bora, has submitted a letter to the chief minister urging the government to refrain from harassing members of the indigenous Muslim population and to ensure that their rights and identity are protected.

## Over 1,000 join BJP in Chinthong amid rain Ronghang vows development push

**HT Bureau**  
**DIPHU, May 31:** Undeterred by continuous rainfall and inclement weather, residents of Chinthong turned out in large numbers to attend a mass joining programme organised by the BJP Chinthong Mandal Committee at Rongmadu playground in West Karbi Anglong on Friday. Over 1,000 individuals from various political backgrounds—including the All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC), Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC), and the Congress—formally joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) during the event. Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) Chief Executive Member (CEM), Tuliram Ronghang, attended the programme as chief guest.

In his address, Ronghang reaffirmed his commitment to prioritise the development of Chinthong constituency. He appealed to the people to maintain their support and cooperation with the government in order to fully benefit from welfare schemes, including housing, ration cards, and healthcare services.

He further assured that areas still lacking electricity connectivity would be addressed soon.

Expressing gratitude for the warm reception, Ronghang thanked the locals for honouring him with organic rice, vegetables, and a traditional shawl, saying he

would always remember their affection and support. Deputy Chairman of KAAC and local Member of the Autonomous Council (MAC), Avijit Kro, welcomed the new members to the party, emphasising that support for the ruling government was essential for bringing meaningful development to the region.

Highlighting achievements made in the past three years, Kro pointed to improvements in roads, education, electricity, and healthcare infrastructure in Chinthong.

Criticising APHLC president JI Kathar, Kro said, "I have worked with JI Kathar. If you invite him as a chief guest, he expects to be paid. APHLC has no government and cannot bring development—there is no use supporting such a party." Member of Parliament (MP) Amarsing Tisso was also present at the event.

Earlier in the day, CEM Ronghang inaugurated the Umlapher Town Committee office and laid the foundation stone for a traditional entrance gate at Chinthong Amri Government Model Degree College.

He also inspected the ongoing construction of the college campus at Langhonjar, near the Assam-Meghalaya border. The new college infrastructure will include 31 classrooms, four lifts, two canteens, a mini indoor stadium, a conference hall, a swimming pool, and separate hostels for boys and girls with a capacity of 300 each.

## World No Tobacco Day observed in Golaghat with awareness drives

**HT Correspondent**  
**GOLAGHAT, May 31:** In observance of World No Tobacco Day, the Office of the Joint Director of Health Services, Golaghat, organised a series of awareness programmes across the district on Saturday to highlight the harmful effects of tobacco use.

The day began with an awareness rally, flagged off at 9:30 A.M. by Dr Badilal Deuri, Joint Director of Health Services, from the premises of Swahid Kushal Konwar Civil Hospital.

The rally saw active participation from Dr Upal Bora, District Nodal Officer, officials from the National Health Mission, the District TB Control Programme, healthcare workers, GNM students, and ASHA workers. Following the rally, a street play was performed by the health department at Bata Point in Golaghat town.

The performance urged people to boycott tobacco and highlighted its devastating impact on health.

The street play drew a large crowd, in-

cluding local residents and officials from the health department.

An awareness meeting was also organised at Merapani Jatiya Vidyalaya in collaboration with the District Legal Services Authority.

Students of Classes 8, 9, and 10 attended the programme, where Dr Upal Bora spoke about the serious health risks associated with tobacco use.

Students also took a pledge to abstain from tobacco.

Advocate Rahul Bora, representing the Legal Services Authority, addressed the gathering on the provisions of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA).

He explained the legal implications of violating the act and the penalties imposed for such offences.

In addition to the central events, awareness meetings were held at every health centre in Golaghat district to engage local communities and reinforce the message about the dangers of tobacco consumption.

## Artist showcases conformist art at 'From Eight with Art' exhibition

**HT Correspondent**  
**NAGAON, May 31:** Assam's rich artistic heritage is being represented at the ongoing "From Eight with Art" exhibition at the Indian International Centre (IIC) Annexe Art Gallery, Lodi Estate, New Delhi.

The exhibition, which opened on May 30 and will continue until June 5, 2025, features acclaimed traditional 'Sanchi Pat' artist Sujit Das from Assam.

Organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) and Tribal Wave, the exhibition brings together artists from all eight northeastern states—Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, and Sikkim.

It aims to highlight the diverse and vibrant artistic traditions of the region while showcasing contemporary expressions rooted in indigenous culture. Curated by Padma Shri awardee Sentila T Yangfo, the exhibition is open to the public daily from 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM.

Sujit Das, who has received recognition from UNESCO, Cambridge University, and the Guinness World Records (2012), is known for his intricate manuscript paintings using handmade bark paper and natural color pigments. His work vividly reflects Assam's traditional art and the cultural tapestry of the North-East.

According to an official statement, the exhibition seeks to celebrate the artistic excellence of the region and promote greater national visibility for its creative talents.

## Gaurav Gogoi receives hero's welcome in Jorhat

**HT Correspondent**  
**JORHAT, May 31:** Newly appointed Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president, Jorhat MP, and Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, Gaurav Gogoi, received a rousing welcome from party workers and supporters upon his arrival in his constituency on Saturday.

Gogoi was greeted with loud chants of "Gaurav Gogoi Zindabad" as enthusiastic crowds lined the streets, waving Congress flags and stopping his cavalcade to felicitate him with traditional phulam gamosas and jaapis.

His arrival at the airport was marked by scenes of celebration, as party cadres, well-wishers, and local residents turned out in large numbers to welcome him.

Upon reaching Jorhat, Gogoi first visited his ancestral home at Nazir Ali, where he sought blessings from elders, offered prayers, and paid homage to his late father, former Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi.

A large poster of a smiling Tarun Gogoi adorned the family residence, evoking memories of his enduring legacy.

In a brief address, Gaurav Gogoi said he had been advised to first take

charge at Rajiv Bhawan in Guwahati, but he chose to visit Jorhat first due to his deep emotional connection with the place.

"Jorhat is where my father began his social and political journey. This is home for me," he said, recalling his roots in Rangajan, Titabar, and his residence in Ward No 10.

He expressed gratitude to the people of Jorhat for their unwavering love and support, especially during the recent Lok Sabha elections, and reiterated his commitment to the constituency.

Gogoi also indicated that the Congress would soon begin formulating its strategy for the upcoming Assam Assembly elections, scheduled for 2026.

"The people of Assam have high hopes from the Congress, and we will work towards fulfilling those expectations," he stated.

The APCC president was accompanied by Leader of the Opposition in the Assam Assembly Debabrata Saikia, MLAs Rekiuddin Ahmed and Bhaskar Baruah, Jorhat District Congress president Putul Buragohain, and several representatives from the NSUI, Youth Congress, and other district-level party units.

## Rice under PMGKAY to be distributed in single phase across Karbi Anglong

**HT Bureau**  
**DIPHU, May 31:** The Department of Food, Public Distribution & Consumer Affairs under the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Diphu, has announced that rice allocated under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) for the months of June, July, and August 2025 will be distributed in a single phase during June.

According to a press release issued by the department, this decision follows directives from the Government of India and the Government of Assam under the National Food Security Act, 2013.

The distribution will cover all beneficiaries across West Karbi Anglong and Karbi Anglong districts.

Eligible families are requested to collect their full three-month entitlement during the 'Anna Seva Din' in June. Beneficiaries will be required to provide their thumbprint three separate

times on the electronic Point of Sale (e-POS) machine—once for each month—and will receive individual receipts for June, July, and August as proof of collection.

The department further stated that the next round of rice distribution for September will take place as per schedule during that month.

Fair Price Shop dealers have been instructed to initiate the distribution only after verifying the three separate thumb impressions and to actively spread awareness about the schedule among cardholders. Notices must also be prominently displayed at the shops.

The department has warned that any violation of the guidelines by Fair Price Shops will invite strict punitive action under existing regulations.

Officials appealed for co-operation from all stakeholders to ensure a smooth, transparent, and accountable distribution process.

## Kapili river crosses danger mark in Kampur, red alert issued

**HT Correspondent**  
**NAGAON, May 31:** The Kapili and Borpani rivers in Nagaon district are flowing above the danger mark following the release of additional water from the Kapili Hydro Power Station in Dima Hasao.

The rivers rose nearly one centimetre above the danger level, impacting the Kampur, Kachua, and Raha areas.

The release of water comes in the wake of incessant rainfall over the past week in Dima Hasao and adjoining parts of Meghalaya.

The Hydro Power Station has opened seven sluice gates to manage excess water in the reservoir, leading to flooding concerns downstream.

Overflowing water from the Borpani River has already submerged croplands in over 27 villages under the Kampur and Kachua revenue circles, as per district reports.

In response, the district administration has declared a red alert and urged residents living along the riverbanks to remain vigilant.

The water level in Kampur began rising rapidly early Friday morning, sparking widespread concern among locals.

Severe erosion has also been reported near the Garokhanda rock embankment, prompting fears of a major flood event overnight.

Local village head Rahul Teron used public address systems to warn residents in areas including Garokhanda, Kawoimari, Paschim Kawoimari, Borchung, and Gosaingaon to stay alert and be prepared for possible evacuation.

Authorities continue to monitor the situation closely and have advised people in vulnerable areas to take necessary precautions.

## 'Chandrajyoti' book released on first death anniversary of Chandra Kanta Kalita



**HT Correspondent**  
**MANGALDAI, May 31:** A commemorative book titled "Chandrajyoti," chronicling the life and legacy of noted social worker Chandra Kanta Kalita, was released on his first death anniversary at a solemn event held in Mangaldai on Friday.

The book was formally un-

veiled by Dr. Kamala Kanta Bora, Principal of Mangaldai College and a respected educationist. In his address, Dr Bora drew a parallel between Mangaldai's Pritinagar locality and the village of Ogimi in Okinawa, Japan—renowned for its strong community bonds.

He credited the late Kalita as

the unifying force behind Pritinagar's close-knit spirit.

Chandra Kanta Kalita, remembered as both a committed social worker and an avid reader, played a significant role in various social and religious organisations.

He was closely associated with the Darrang District Kalita Sammilani, the Mangaldai Sanatan

Dharma Sabha, and regularly participated in events in Dipila.

Among the distinguished guests was Phulendra Nath Saharia, former president of the Darrang District Sahitya Sabha, who praised Kalita as a man of deep devotion.

"He was someone who not only worshipped but actively served—often seen cleaning temple premises. That was his way of expressing true spirituality," Saharia remarked.

Speakers Bhumidhar Barua and Puran Chandra Deka spoke about Kalita's generosity, his unwavering commitment to Pritinagar, and his approachable, sincere nature. They also recalled his years of service at the local post office, where he continued to support the community in various ways.

The memorial meeting was presided over by Bharat Bhushan Kalita, former president of the Darrang District Sahitya Sabha. Ahead of the programme, family members of the late Chandra Kanta Kalita welcomed attendees with traditional gamochas, adding a cultural and personal touch to the tribute.

## NFR extends services of two summer special trains to manage passenger rush

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, May 31:** In an effort to accommodate increased passenger demand during the summer season, the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has extended the periodicity of two pairs of summer special trains for additional trips in both directions.

The information was shared in an official statement issued by NFR on Saturday.

According to the release, train numbers 07325/07326 (SSS Hubballi Junction – Katihar – SSS Hubballi Junction) and 06559/06560 (SMVT Bengaluru – Narangi – SMVT Bengaluru) will operate for four and five additional round trips, respectively.

The trains will continue to run with their existing schedules, timings, composition, and designated stoppages.

Train No. 07325 will depart from SSS Hubballi Junction at 3:15 PM every Wednesday, from May 28 to June 18, 2025, reaching Katihar at 2:00 PM on the third



day.

In the reverse direction, Train No. 07326 will leave Katihar at 2:30 PM every Saturday, from May 31 to June 21, 2025, and arrive at SSS Hubballi Junction at 10:50 AM on the third day.

Meanwhile, Train No. 06559 will depart SMVT Bengaluru at 11:40 PM every Tuesday, from May 27 to June 24, 2025, and reach Narangi at 5:00 AM on the fourth day.

The return service, Train No. 06560, will depart Narangi at 5:30

AM every Saturday, from May 31 to June 28, 2025, arriving at SMVT Bengaluru at 9:45 AM on the third day.

NFR has advised passengers to check complete route details, stoppages, and schedules for these trains on the IRCTC website or the official social media platforms of Northeast Frontier Railway before planning their journeys.

The move aims to alleviate the travel rush and ensure smoother passenger movement during the peak summer season.



# OFTEN SEE WORKING WOMEN BEING DISCUSSED WITH DISRESPECT IN ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY, SAYS MANUSHI CHHILLAR

**NEW DELHI, May 31:** Actor Manushi Chhillar says working women are often discussed with disrespect and contempt, especially when it comes to entertainment industry but it is different for men. Chhillar got crowned Miss World in 2017 and later went on to make her acting debut with Akshay Kumar-starrer "Samrat Prithviraj" (2022), shared a post on her X handle on Saturday.

The 28-year-old actor said she grew up in an empowered and educated environment where everyone was treated equally.

But she was also "exposed to the mentality" which viewed successful men as "hardworking and

talented" individuals, contrary to women, who were perceived as "opportunists, gold diggers or manipulators".

"A misogynistic mindset finds it easier to attribute a woman's success to a man's patronage than her own merit. I've always really ignored silly comments which have no consequence in the real world, but I constantly see working women, specially in the entertainment industry being discussed with such disrespect and contempt," her post began, "I grew up in an empowered, educated environment where irrespective of gender, we all had equal value to add. But I have also been exposed

to this mentality of "men are hardworking and talented if successful, whereas women and opportunists, gold diggers or manipulators," she added.

She concluded by questioning if there is a "deep rooted bias". "Is it as simple as 'if you hear something bad about a woman, it's from a female who can't be her or a male who can't have her' Or is there a deep rooted bias?" Chhillar's latest work is "Bade Miyan Chote Miyan". The film released in April last year. It also starred Tiger Shroff and Kumar. (PTI)



# GOVT NOTIFIES AGE-BASED CATEGORIES FOR CERTIFICATION, EXHIBITION OF FILMS

**NEW DELHI, May 31:** The government on Saturday notified age-based categories of certification of films to promote age-appropriate viewing, particularly for the parental guidance group.

In a gazette notification, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting amended the rules notified in December 1991 laying down principles for sanctioning films for public exhibition. The rules allow the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) to allow certification of films for unrestricted public exhibition with an endorsement in accordance with the nature and type of content with the markers - "U/A 7+", "U/A 12+" and "U/A 16+".

"Content suitable for a child aged

seven years and above and under the age of seven years with parental guidance shall be classified as "U/A 7+" rating; (ii) content suitable for a child aged thirteen years and above and under the age of thirteen years with parental guidance shall be classified as "U/A 13+" rating; and (iii) content suitable for a child aged sixteen years and above and under the age of sixteen years with parental guidance shall be classified as "U/A 16+" rating," the notification read.

Last year, the CBFC had introduced an updated film certification system aligned with social values and promoting age-appropriate viewing. The rules were substantially overhauled to improve, update and modernise the entire process of certification of films for public viewing. The three age-based categories were suggested for U/A certification against the previous age group of 12 years.

Rules for certifying films are formulated under the Cinematograph Act, 1952. Earlier, there were just two categories: U - for unrestricted public exhibition - and A - restricted to adult audiences, but nudity was not allowed. (PTI)

# Cinema meant everything to my father: filmmaker Raj Khosla's daughter Sunita

**MUMBAI, May 31:** Cinema meant everything to Raj Khosla and he kept working till the very end, says daughter Sunita Bhalla, reminiscing about the director's career and the close bond he shared with Guru Dutt, Dev Anand and Vijay Anand. Khosla was an important figure in Hindi with several hits like "C.I.D." (1956), "Woh Kaun Thi?" (1964), "Mera Saaya" (1966), "Mera Gaon Mera Desh" (1971) and "Dostana" (1980) to his credit. His 100th birth anniversary will be celebrated on Saturday.

Legacy was something that Khosla never thought off or even talked about with his family, said Sunita, the second of the director's five daughters.

"He never thought or talked about legacy, like what he is going to leave behind. He just worked and worked. That's all he did all his life. He never regretted what he did. He never regretted his work. He loved his work. He was very happy with what he did till the end. Cinema meant everything to him," Sunita told PTI in an interview. Khosla would take good care of people who worked with him and maintained a calm atmosphere on his sets, she said. "He used to enjoy his work and that was the best part... The stars used to

enjoy working with him. He would just say, 'Give your best.' Everybody worked so happily with him. He worked with many top actresses -- from Madhubala, Sadhana, Mumtaz, Waheeda Rehman, and Asha Parekh, and others," she added.

Among the over 25 films that her father made as a director, Sunita said she loved "C.I.D.", "Bombai Ka Babu" and "Mera Gaon Mera Desh".

She remembered being on the set of "Mera Gaon Mera Desh", which featured Dharmendra and Asha Parekh in lead roles with Vinod Khanna playing the antagonist.

"It was in Udaipur. I saw my dad taking shots for the movie, the song 'Maar Diya Jaye Ke Chhod Diya Jaye', which is such a brilliant song, was shot in the studios. 'Apni Prem Kahaniyan' was another memorable track. 'We fell in love with the costumes and jewellery and we would tell dad we wanted to wear all that,' Sunita said, adding that she also saw the shooting of "Dostana" in Ooty, and "Kachche Dhaage" in Mahabaleshwar. Dev Anand and Guru Dutt played a pivotal role in Khosla's life. The director wanted to be a playback but destiny had different plans for him.

He served as an assistant director to Dutt before making his directorial debut with

"Milap" in 1955.

Anand and Khosla collaborated on several hits, including "C.I.D.", "Kala Pani" and "Solva Saal".

Sunita said the bond between the trio was "strong" and unbreakable.

"I've been with him to Dev Anand's house. He had close association with Chetan Anand and Guru Dutt. So, it was four of them together. They would often talk about films. I remember a discussion around who would direct 'Guide'. Some of the portion was shot by dad also, and then Vijay Anand took over after that."

She said Bhatt considered Khosla as a mentor. "He was an assistant at that time, working under him, assisting in movies and all that." Khosla was also close friends with poet lyricist Majrooh Sultanpuri, lyricist Anand Bakshi, filmmaker Hrishikesh Mukherjee and writer Rahi Masoom Raza.

"They were like a family (Bakshis). I must be 14 or 15 maybe that time. There were so many good moments... Rahi Masoom Raza was his close friend. He also had a bond with Majrooh Sultanpuri, and Hrishikesh Mukherjee. With Hrishikesh Mukherjee, he used to play chess everyday. That's how he used to pass his time in the evenings." (PTI)

# Prime Video sets 'The Terminal List: Dark Wolf' for August 27 premiere



**NEW DELHI, May 31:** "The Terminal List: Dark Wolf", the prequel series to Prime Video's hit action show "The Terminal List", will debut on the streamer's platform on August 27.

"Dark Wolf" is co-created by Jack Carr, the author of "The Terminal List" book series and David DiGilio, who developed and served as a showrunner of "The Terminal List", which came out in 2022.

The show will debut with its first three episodes on August 27, followed by new episodes weekly until the season finale on September 24, a press release said.

"Dark Wolf", an espionage thriller that explores the darker side of warfare and the human cost that comes with it, is set in the

years prior to "The Terminal List".

It tells the origin story of Ben Edwards (Taylor Kitsch) throughout his journey from the Navy SEALs to the clandestine side of CIA Special Operations.

Chris Pratt, who headlined the original show as James Reece, will reprise the part in the new series. They are joined by actors Tom Hopper, Robert Wisdom, Luke Hemsworth, Dar Salim, Rona-Lee Shimon, Shiraz Tzarfaty, and Jared Shaw.

"The Terminal List: Dark Wolf" is executive produced by Kitsch alongside Pratt through Indivisible Productions. DiGilio, Carr, Antoine Fuqua and Kat Samick executive produce through Hill District Media. (PTI)

# Raj Khosla@100: The master of suspense and melodrama in Hindi cinema

**NEW DELHI, May 31:** His first stint in cinema came as a stunt double for a heroine, Waheeda Rehman made her Hindi debut in his film, he wanted to be singer instead went on to become the master of the crime-suspense genre with gems such as "CID" and "Woh Kaun Thi?".

Raj Khosla, the director with unlikely beginnings, would have been 100 on Saturday. He had a limited oeuvre of just over 25 films in 34 years but most stand out in the crowded gallery of Indian movies for their watchability, their star power and perhaps most of all for the many songs heard and remixed even today.

With his centenary -- which will be celebrated in Mumbai with a one-day retrospective of his restored films -- cinephiles reopen a chapter of Indian cinema history that may not have got the prominence it deserved. Beginning his movie making career with "Milap" in 1955 and ending with "Naqaab" in 1989, both fairly forgettable, Khosla directed a host of major hits in between. He gave Sadhana three of her best films in "Woh Kaun Thi?", "Mera Saaya" and "Anita", worked with Dev Anand in memorable classics, including "Kala Paani" and "Solva Saal", and was mentored by Guru Dutt.

With his second film "CID", a stylish crime drama, Khosla sealed his place as a hit director still remembered. The 1956 film, which also starred Dev Anand and Shakila and introduced Waheeda Rehman, was offered to him by Guru Dutt.

Khosla, the director who carefully balanced art and commerce in his movies, has also given Hindi cinema some of its most memorable songs -- "Lag Jaa Gale", "Mera Saaya", "Jhumka Gira Re", "Kahin Pe Nigaahein Kahin Pe Nishaana", "Yeh Hai Bombay Meri Jaan", "Nazar Lagi Raja Torey Bangley Per" and "Hai Apna Dil To Awara" and so many more.

In fact, "Jhumka Gira Re" from "Mera Saaya" has been repurposed in Karan Johar's 2023 film "Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani".

Born on May 31, 1925, in Rahon in undivided Punjab, Khosla's parents moved to Mumbai when he was just three. Khosla attended Anjuman-I-Islam school. He completed his college from Elphinstone College, where he became interested in theatre.

Khosla trained in Hindustani classical music from a young age and hoped to make a career in music after graduation but life had other plans.

He was a fan of legendary singer



Kundan Lal Saigal and they sometimes did their 'riyaz' together.

"At my ancestral house in Matunga, just down the road, Mr K L Saigal used to stay, and every day in the morning, dad used to go to his place and do riyaz. He would listen to him sing as well. He used to practice with him also. This was an everyday ritual," Khosla's daughter Sunita Bhalla told PTI.

"Later, KL Saigal sahab told dad, 'Why don't you go and sing on the radio or in movies'. So, he got two-three opportunities to sing in films and

he sang as well. This was before he made his debut as a director with 'Milap'," she recalled.

According to "Raj Khosla: The Authorized Biography" by Ambarish Roychoudhury, Khosla worked briefly at a bank after college but quit the job after just three months.

His first stint in cinema came as a stunt double for a heroine. He had to ride a horse. Khosla was paid Rs 75 for this adventure.

He would eventually make his acting debut with a film called "Raen Basera"

where he also got to sing for one of the songs. But the movie did not do well and Khosla continued to search for playback opportunities. He got his second song for "Bhool Bhulaiyan", the book says.

The singing career was shortlived. It was his friendship with Dev Anand, a rising star at the time and the actor of many of Khosla's hits later, which changed the course of his life.

Dev Anand offered Khosla a chance to work as an assistant director with Guru Dutt on "Baazi" and promised that he would get a chance to sing as well. And life took a turn.

The book has Khosla telling Nasreen Munnai Kabir in an interview, "I met Guru Dutt and he asked me, 'Have you any experience in assisting?' I said, 'Yes, I have.' Tommy-rot, I knew nothing about film-making. The second thing he asked, 'Do you know Hindi?' I replied, 'Of course I know Hindi.' Guru Dutt said, 'Okay, start from tomorrow.' " "I couldn't actually write in Hindi. I'm from Punjab, Gurdaspur, so I knew Urdu. In those days, in the Punjab learning Urdu was very common; even now you will find that many Punjabis who are over forty know how to write Urdu, not Hindi," he is quoted as saying.

The first thing Khosla did after the meeting was to buy a book on the Hindi alphabets and learn the letters from scratch, the biography goes on to say.

Khosla assisted Guru Dutt on "Jaal" (1952) and "Aar Paar" (1954). In fact, his directorial debut "Milap" starred his friend Dev Anand and Geeta Bali, who was married to Guru Dutt.

The very next year came "CID", which propelled him to the big league. After that came back to back hits in "Kala Pani", "Solva Saal", both in 1958, and "Bombai Ka Babu", all with Dev Anand.

In 1964, he directed "Woh Kaun Thi?", a ghostly tale starring Sadhana, Manoj Kumar and Prem Chopra. The movie set the standard for Bollywood suspense and established Khosla's flair for moody psychological dramas. Sadhana's dual performance as the twin sisters and Madan Mohan's haunting music, including the still-popular track "Lag Jaa Gale" sung by Lata Mangeshkar.

In 1966's "Mera Saaya" was another gem from Khosla in the thriller space that once again featured Sadhana in a dual role. The film cemented his reputation as a filmmaker who could blend suspense with emotion. (PTI)



## Alcaraz cruise into fourth round of the French Open

PARIS, May 31: Defending champion Carlos Alcaraz reached the fourth round of the French Open after laboring past Damir Dzumhur 6-1, 6-3, 4-6, 6-4 in the night session.

The second-seeded Spaniard had never before played Dzumhur, a 33-year-old Bosnian who had never been past the third round at any major tournament.

"I suffered quite a lot today," Alcaraz said.

"The first two sets was under control, then he started to play more deeply and more aggressively. It was really difficult for me." Dzumhur hurt his left knee in a fall in the second round, and had treatment on Friday on his right leg during the changeover at 3-2 down in the third set. He then laid down on the ground while the trainer worked on both legs for several minutes.

The crowd on Court Philippe-Chatrier did a Mexican wave and shouted "Ole" while it waited.

Then Dzumhur received cheers when he made an improbable smash despite being off balance, again when he won the third set, and once more when he broke Alcaraz in the opening game of the fourth set.

An improbable turnaround seemed to be happening as Alcaraz made clumsy unforced errors, hitting routine-looking winners long or forcing shots on his usually accurate forehand. At one point in the fourth set, Alcaraz even stared down at the clay in frustration after sending a booming forehand way out. But the four-time Grand Slam singles champion broke back in the sixth and the eighth games to serve for the match.

Still, the resilient Dzumhur, whose face was red with effort and glistening with sweat, broke back to drag the suspense out a little longer.

"That's why it's difficult to win Grand Slams because you have to maintain your focus over three or four hours," Alcaraz said. "I didn't enjoy it too much."

Alcaraz finally clinched victory on his second match point and faces No. 13 Ben Shelton in the fourth round. (AP)

## FRENCH OPEN

# Swiatek and Sabalenka reach fourth round without dropping a set



PARIS, May 31: Defending champion Iga Swiatek joined No. 1-ranked Aryna Sabalenka in the fourth round of the French Open and neither player has dropped a set. Sabalenka, a three-time Grand Slam winner who has only once reached the semifinals at Roland-Garros, beat Olga Danilovic 6-2, 6-3 on Court Philippe-Chatrier, where the hot weather contrasted with previous days.

"The ball flies much faster," Sabalenka said. "The bounces are much higher." Swiatek, who has won four of her five major titles at Roland-Garros, defeated Jaqueline Cristian 6-2, 7-5 on Court Suzanne-Lenglen to extend her French Open winning streak to 23 matches. A second set lasting 1 hour, 16 minutes, tested the Pole, who yelled in relief after winning on her second match point. Swiatek had 20 winners and 21 unforced errors.

"She used her chances and just went for it," said Swiatek, who enjoyed temperatures which reached 29 degrees (84 F). "For sure I don't mind. On clay it gives the balls the extra bounce." Sabalenka and Swiatek have been in contrasting form. Sabalenka has reached six

singles finals this year, the most for a woman entering Roland-Garros since Serena Williams in 2013.

But Swiatek is looking to reach her first final anywhere since winning her third straight French Open title, and fourth overall, a year ago. No woman has won four straight French Opens in the Open era.

Asked who was under the most pressure to win this year — her or Swiatek — Sabalenka said, jokingly: "Let's just leave it on Iga since she won it, what, three times in a row?"

Defending men's champion Carlos Alcaraz labored to a 6-1, 6-3, 4-6, 6-4 win against Damir Dzumhur, meaning the four-time major winner has dropped two sets so far. No. 4-seeded Jasmine Paolini, last year's runner-up, beat Ukrainian Yuliia Starodubtseva 6-4, 6-1, and No. 12 Elena Rybakina won against 2017 champion Jelena Ostapenko.

Olympic champion Zheng Qinwen beat 18-year-old qualifier Victoria Mboko 6-3, 6-4, while No. 16 Amanda Anisimova and Liudmila Samsonova also advanced. In men's third-round play, No. 8 Lorenzo Musetti of Italy beat Mariano Navone, No. 10 Holger Rune of

Denmark beat Frenchman Quentin Halys in five sets, and 12th-seeded American Tommy Paul did the same against No. 24 Karen Khachanov.

No. 15 Frances Tiafoe beat No. 23 Sebastian Korda 7-6 (6), 6-3, 6-4 in an all-American matchup, joining Paul and No. 13 Ben Shelton to give the U.S. three men in the French Open fourth round for the first time since 1995. If qualifier Ethan Quinn wins on Saturday, there would be four American men in Week 2 in Paris for the first time since 1991. Shelton won against Matteo Gigante 6-3, 6-3, 6-4.

No. 25 Alexei Popyrin of Australia also advanced.

Novak Djokovic plays in the night session on Saturday much to his frustration as he hoped to play earlier so he could watch the Champions League final in Germany between Paris Saint-Germain and Inter Milan on TV.

The 24-time major winner, who recently won his 100th career title, faces qualifier Filip Misolic. If Djokovic wins quickly, though, he may be able to catch the end of the soccer final, which starts at 1900 GMT (3 p.m. EDT). Or possibly

extra time.

In remaining third-round men's play, Alexander Zverev — last year's runner-up — takes on Flavio Cobolli on Court Philippe-Chatrier, while No. 1 Jannik Sinner — who beat Zverev in this year's Australian Open final — faces Jiri Lehecka on Court Suzanne-Lenglen. Over on Court Simonne-Mathieu, British hope Jack Draper plays 18-year-old rising Brazilian star Joao Fonseca. They are followed by Cameron Norrie vs. Jacob Fearnley, guaranteeing a British player in the fourth round.

In remaining third-round women's play, former U.S. Open champion Coco Gauff faces Marie Bouzkova on Court Philippe-Chatrier, and No. 3 Jessica Pegula, the runner-up at last year's U.S. Open, plays former Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova earlier on the same court. There is an all-American contest on Court Suzanne-Lenglen between current Australian Open champion Madison Keys and former Australian Open champion Sofia Kenin, who won that major in 2020, the year she went on to lose in the French Open final to Swiatek. (AP)

## Young Indian team capable of achieving something special on England tour: de Villiers



MUMBAI, May 31: India's young guns have the talent to achieve something special in the upcoming England Test series, provided they back themselves, said AB de Villiers here on Saturday, adding that it's time for the new generation to step up.

With the 25-year-old Shubman Gill at the helm, India will start a new cycle of the World Test Championship with a five-Test tour of England next month without their seasoned campaigners in Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, who both announced their retirement recently. India will also miss the services of off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, who retired during last year's tour of Australia, and senior pacer Mohammed Shami, who was not selected for this tour owing to his lack of fitness for the conventional format.

"Yes, it's time for the younger guys to step up... Shubman Gill taking on the responsibility," de Villiers told the media on the sidelines of a NGO Project Mumbai event here.

"There's lots of talent in India and largely credit to the IPL for that, (it is) really giving great exposure to some of the youngsters at a very early age."

"We saw Vaibhav Suryavanshi this year (and) many other youngsters, they come in their first year and they look very mature and ready to play cricket and it's a great platform for Indian cricket," he said. The former South African skipper said the tour of England will be a tough test for the young Indian side, but keeping the belief could help

them pull off a favourable result.

"They've got to take some responsibility on in England, it'll be a tough test, but they have all the talent in the world and if they believe, maybe they can achieve something special."

De Villiers, who shares a special bond with his former Royal Challengers Bengaluru teammate Kohli, said he will be missed in Test cricket.

"He followed his gut feel. I think he has done a lot for cricket around the world over the years. Luckily, we'll still see him on the cricket field. He will be missed in Test matches, there is no doubt about it, but he leaves (behind) a great legacy with the red ball," de Villiers said. Talking about the Indian Premier League, de Villiers still backed Punjab Kings, who suffered an eight-wicket thrashing at the hands of RCB in Qualifier 1, to reach the final.

PBKS will take on Mumbai Indians in Ahmedabad on Sunday for Qualifier 2.

"I said quite a while ago, about a month ago, that Gujarat (Titans) and RCB will be in the final. It looks like the odds are against my call but it is still cricket, you never know, it is a knockout match," he said. "It takes one or two great performances to turn the pressure onto your opposition. It's still going to be Punjab but I've got a little bit of doubt on my mind after watching last night's game," said de Villiers, pointing out at the contest between MI and Gujarat Titans in which the five-times champion emerged winner in the high-scoring Eliminator. (PTI)

## Inter Kashi set to move CAS again after AIFF upholds appeal of Namdhari, Real Kashmir and Churchill

NEW DELHI, May 31: I-League club Inter Kashi is set to knock on the doors of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) for a second time after the All India Football Federation upheld the appeal of Namdhari FC, Real Kashmir and Churchill Brothers against the Varanasi-based club over re-registration of Mario Barco.

The AIFF appeals committee's latest judgement means four points would be deducted from Inter Kashi while two would get added to Churchill's tally and Namdhari would get three.

Thus Churchill would rise to an "unassailable" 42 points and would be champions irrespective of Kashi's appeal at CAS.

Inter Kashi would drop to 37 points while sixth-placed Namdhari would jump to 35 points.

Inter Kashi said they would appeal against the judgement at CAS -- the highest court to adjudicate sports disputes internationally -- where an appeal by club is pending.

"Inter Kashi will now appeal the decision at the Court of Arbitration for Sport. While it is unfortunate that Inter Kashi has to approach CAS yet again for a truly free and fair hearing of the matter, it seems to be the new reality of Indian football," Inter Kashi said in statement and posted it on X.

"The club fully believes that a free and fair hearing at CAS will bring all relevant facts to the forefront. There will be no further comment on this matter at this time," the club added in the statement. In its order passed on Saturday, the AIFF appeals committee rejected the league committee's earlier decision, saying that the ruling cannot be used for making an ineligible player (Mario Barco) into a valid player for Inter Kashi. In the provisional standings, Churchill had 40 points from 22 matches, one point more than Kashi, while Real Kashmir were third with 37 points.

The I-League officially concluded on March 31, and after weeks of uncertainty, the AIFF ap-

peals committee declared Churchill Brothers as champions on April 19.

But Inter Kashi appealed against the ruling at CAS, which had asked the AIFF to not declare Churchill Brothers as I-League champions or organise medal ceremony. The CAS had stayed the AIFF's decision while hearing the appeal from Inter Kashi.

A ruling from the Deputy President of the CAS Appeals Arbitration Division Sport had stated: "The All India Football Federation is ordered not to declare the winner of the I-League 2024/2025 or organise a medal ceremony for the I-League 2024-25 until the present arbitration has been concluded."

The AIFF meanwhile announced a set of amendments to its regulations on the status and transfer of players, which will come into effect from June 1.

The AIFF said it focuses on enhancing player welfare, supporting women's football and youth football more effectively, and improving regulatory transparency.

"A standout feature of the updated regulations is the increased attention to the rights and well-being of female players," the sports body said.

The AIFF said it has "introduced provisions addressing menstrual health, allowing female players to take leave from training during the onset of their menstrual cycle."

"Expanded clauses now also cover pregnancy, adoption, and family leave for both players and coaches, aiming to create a more inclusive environment for women in the sport."

"The amendments also introduce structural reforms in player transfers and youth development. New limitations on the number and duration of player loan deals have been set to ensure fairness."

"To safeguard young talent, the AIFF has revised its regulations concerning the registration of minors at academies, emphasising child protection in accordance with FIFA standards." (PTI)

## Olympic boxing champ Imane Khelif must undergo genetic sex screening to fight for new governing body

LONDON, May 31: Olympic boxing champion Imane Khelif must undergo genetic sex screening to participate in upcoming events with the sport's new governing body.

World Boxing announced mandatory sex testing for all athletes Friday. The governing body specifically mentioned Khelif when announcing the policy, saying the Algerian gold medal winner must be screened before she will be approved to fight at any upcoming events, including the Eindhoven Box Cup next month in the Netherlands.

"The introduction of mandatory testing will be part of a new policy on Sex, Age and Weight" to ensure the safety of all participants and deliver a competitive level playing field for men and women," World Boxing wrote in a statement. The fighters' national federations will be responsible for administering the tests and providing the results to World Boxing.

Khelif won a gold medal at the Paris Olympics last summer amid international scrutiny on her and Taiwan's Lin Yu-ting, another gold medal winner. The previous governing body for Olympic boxing, the Russian-dominated International Boxing Association, disqualified both fighters from its 2023 world championships after claiming they had failed an unspecified eligibility test.

The IOC ran the past two Olympic boxing tournaments after the banishment of the IBA for decades of misdeeds and controversy, and it applied the sex eligibility rules used in previous Olympics. Khelif and Lin were eligible to compete under those standards. Khelif intends to return to international competition next month in Eindhoven as part of her plan to defend her gold medal at the Los Angeles Olympics, but some boxers and their federations had already spoken out to protest her inclusion.



Chromosome testing was common in Olympic sports during the 20th century, but was largely abandoned in the 1990s because of numerous ambiguities that couldn't be easily resolved by the tests, collectively known as differences in sex development (DSD). Many sports switched to hormone testing to determine sex eligibility, but those tests require

governing bodies to make difficult decisions on the eligibility of women with naturally high testosterone levels. Three months ago, World Athletics — the governing body for track and field — became the first Olympic sport to reintroduce chromosome testing, requiring athletes who compete in the women's events to submit to the test once in their careers.

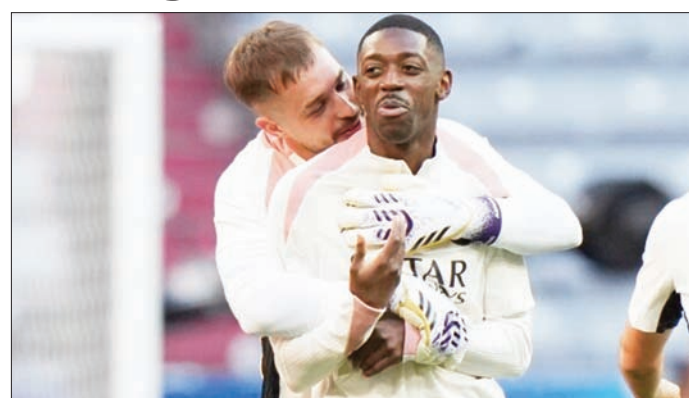
## Dembélé's incredible transformation has PSG on the verge of Champions League glory

MUNICH, May 31: Ousmane Dembélé has never been a Ballon d'Or contender.

Until this season. The tipping point could come on Saturday night if Dembélé leads Paris Saint-Germain to its first Champions League title.

Few people could have imagined at the start of the season matching Dembélé with the annual award for the world's best footballer. Dembélé has always had explosive raw talent. But he showed it only in bursts in an underwhelming six-year spell at Barcelona. That was followed by three goals in 26 Ligue 1 games for PSG last season.

This season has seen a major transformation. Dembélé finished Ligue 1 with 21 goals as PSG wrapped up another title. He also chipped in eight in the Champions League to give PSG a second ever shot at the European crown. PSG plays Inter Milan in the final in Munich on Saturday.



PSG coach Luis Enrique is credited with finally getting Dembélé to live up to his potential.

"Dembélé has been one of the best players of the season, if not the best one. He scores, he passes, he fights, he defends, and that's the real mentality — that's a leader," Enrique said on Friday. "A real leader

is the guy who shows with his example the way to go. It's so nice for me to hear Ousmane, to give him confidence, to develop his qualities."

Dembélé showcased his qualities when he starred for Borussia Dortmund over one season after joining from Rennes in 2016. He helped Dortmund to third place in the Bun-

desliga and scored in the final to help win the 2017 German Cup. That preceded a summer of discontent at Dortmund when Dembélé went on strike to force a transfer to Barcelona.

The Catalan club paid 105 million euros (then \$125 million) with possible add-ons taking the fee up to 147 million euros for the player. Unfortunately for Dembélé, he never lived up to that price tag. He was plagued by injuries in his first seasons at Barcelona. Though he won three La Liga titles, he could only ever contribute goals in single digits. Early on, he was accused of being unprofessional as he turned up late for training. He seemed to drift through games.

Dembélé eventually consolidated himself as one of Barça's key players thanks to his speed and playmaking. But the club was forced to accept a 50-million-euro transfer fee from PSG when he exercised a

buyout clause in his contract to leave in 2023.

Dembélé found it hard to shine in his first season in Paris, where Kylian Mbappé was the undisputed team star.

But when Mbappé left for Real Madrid in the offseason, an opening was presented for Dembélé. However, the new season started as before. Then in December, Dembélé scored in a 3-1 win over Lyon. He followed with 10 goals in his next five Ligue 1 games, took a break for one game, then scored five in his next four.

It was a similar tale in the Champions League. Dembélé was sent off in November when PSG lost at Bayern Munich 1-0. He returned a different player, scoring as PSG came from two goals down to beat Manchester City 4-2, then grabbing a hat trick against Stuttgart, then two more goals at Stade Brest. (AP)



# Punjab Kings face stern test against rampant Mumbai Indians in Qualifier 2

**AHMEDABAD, May 31:** A rampant Mumbai Indians will present a stern test of character for a rattled Punjab Kings in a virtual semifinal when the two teams face off in Qualifier 2 of the Indian Premier League here on Sunday.

An eight-wicket hammering at the hands of Royal Challengers Bengaluru in a one-sided Qualifier 1 may have eroded some amount of confidence in Shreyas Iyer's Punjab Kings, who are now in a do-or-die situation as they dream of winning a maiden IPL trophy.

On the other hand, Mumbai Indians took another stride towards a potential sixth title with a comprehensive victory, which knocked out title favourites Gujarat Titans in the Eliminator.

History tells Mumbai Indians know their way around these lanes of IPL knockouts better than either of the other two teams left in the competition and that certainly tilt the scales in favour of Hardik Pandya's side.

But coach Mahela Jayawardene's challenge would be to keep his troops organised which the former Sri Lankan captain has been able to do exceedingly well after taking over a side that finished at the bottom in the previous season.

For the Iyer-Ricky Ponting pair, the task would be to ensure their players put behind the crushing defeat in their last game and channel their energies to fight the fires that have erupted particularly in the bowling line-up, where Arshdeep Singh is carrying extra pressure.

The absence of Marco Jansen and unavailability of IPL's highest-ever wicket-taker in Yuzvendra Chahal was evident when PBKS scrambled to find options to apply pressure on a spicy wicket in Mullanpur against RCB.

But at the same time, PBKS camp could feel that that 'one bad day', collectively for their batters and especially in the knockouts, is now behind them and that it did not rob them of an opportunity to make the final.

PBKS would also know the margin of error is getting leaner looking at how Rohit Sharma pulverised GT's bowling attack and set up the win for MI, riding on a couple of early lifelines to produce a match-winning knock.



A holistic view would perhaps leave one without spotting any chink in Mumbai Indians' armour who have fired on all cylinders. They would continue to lean on their rich blend of Indian players including Rohit, Jasprit Bumrah, Suryakumar Yadav, Tilak Varma and Pandya to come together.

MI will also be particularly pleased with how their new recruits Jonny Bairstow and Richard Gleeson eased into the heat of the competition to deliver their bits, which at the end, proved vital in crushing GT on a batting-friendly pitch.

After all, the outcome of the contest at the Narendra Modi Stadium could well be decided over how the two bowling attacks execute their plans since the surfaces here have regularly produced high-scoring games.

Jasprit Bumrah's exploits and a clever deployment of the ace Indian bowler across the 20 overs have been one of MI's biggest strengths this season.

While Bumrah's accuracy and guile has not allowed the batters to score runs off him easily, PBKS would also want to draw from their win over MI earlier this season when despite his measly returns, they were able to go over the line with seven wickets in hand.

Suryakumar's unmatched consistency with the bat met with a sparkling knock from Tilak Varma against the Titans but for PBKS, it will be important to have their explosive opening pair of Prabhshimran Singh and Priyansh Arya finding their rhythm to set the tone.

## Teams :

**Mumbai Indians:** Hardik Pandya (c), Suryakumar Yadav, Rohit Sharma, Tilak Varma, Bevon Jacobs, Robin Minz (wk), Krishnan Shriarth (wk), Naman Dhir, Raj Bawa, Mitchell Santner, Jasprit Bumrah, Arjun Tendulkar, Ashwani Kumar, Reece Topley, Karn Sharma, Trent Boult, Deepak Chahar, Satyanarayana Raju, Mujeeb Ur Rahman, Raghu Sharma, Jonny Bairstow (wk), Richard Gleeson, Charith Asalanka.

**Punjab Kings:** Shreyas Iyer (c), Nehal Wadhwa, Vishnu Vinod (wk), Josh Inglis (wk), Harman Pannu, Pyla Avinash, Prabhshimran Singh (wk), Shashank Singh, Marcus Stoinis, Harpreet Brar, Azmatullah Omarzai, Priyansh Arya, Aaron Hardie, Musheer Khan, Suryansh Shedge, Mitch Owen, Arshdeep Singh, Yuzvendra Chahal, Vysakh Vijaykumar, Yash Thakur, Kuldeep Sen, Xavier Bartlett, Pravin Dubey, Kyle Jamieson.

Match starts at 7:30PM IST. (PTT)

# Winning culture built over the years does help in big games: Mahela

**MULLANPUR, May 31:** The winning culture that Mumbai Indians have built over the years with their core group of players does help them perform in high-pressure situations, said head coach Mahela Jayawardene after their tight win over Gujarat Titans in the IPL Eliminator here.

Having won five titles, the storied franchise is one step away from reaching another IPL final.

With Sai Sudharsan looking unstoppable in the middle, Titans were on course to chase down 229 in the knock-out game on Friday but individual brilliance from the likes of Jasprit Bumrah enabled Mumbai Indians to get over the line.

Like they usually do, Mumbai Indians were slow starters this season before lifting their game in the second half of the tournament.

Jayawardene gave his thoughts on what makes them tick on the big stage.

"Well, when you have a winning culture, it is easier to try and have that same thing going through. Even when you get a new group, we still have a very experienced co-group within our ranks."

"So, the conversations that we have, planning and everything is about, how can we get better, how can we push through," he said referring to the core including Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav, Hardik Pandya and Bumrah, who have been part of the team's triumphant campaigns over the years.

The seniors know all about winning and they try to inculcate the same spirit in the youngsters who join the squad. "That winning mentality itself comes through from those senior players and having that experience, guys who have won trophies does help and my job is to try and cultivate that for the new guys who are coming into the spot."

"After the big auction, we had quite a few new faces, but I think telling them about the history of Mumbai and how we go, how we operate and have that attitude that we will never die from a situation, we will always fight through. So, I think that is shown today," said the Sri Lankan great.

While Bumrah got them back in the



match by casting Washington Sundar with a yorker, Rohit rode his luck early to make 81 off 50 balls after being dropped twice in the powerplay.

On the lead pacer, who returned from a long injury lay-off in the middle of the season, Mahela said: "There are definitely no concerns when he comes back because the reputation itself carries through and he was quite confident. 'He had bowled few sessions, he was nailing those yorkers and all that. He is a massive asset for us, the experience that he carries through to the team and the situation that he has been bowling for us as well."

"It is great to have him around the group, the experience that he brings, talking to Ashwini (left-arm pacer) in that last over (of the match)."

Mahela said Rohit's hand at the top of the order was equally important.

"Rohit was brilliant. He let Johnny take control initially and then when he knew it was his time and the bowler then he picked and he got into a brilliant tempo."

"The pressure that he put on the two spinners, especially Sai and Rashid in that situation was absolutely brilliant and that is what Rohit does. Big games he does have a different gear that he plays. That is what experience does and he cannot replace that."

He also said rookie pacer Ashwani

Kumar is a fine talent and needs to be groomed properly by the franchise.

The heavy dew in the second half of the game aided Sudharsan and Washington who were collecting boundaries at will in the run chase. Mahela said they forced to change their plans considering the unexpected dew. "I didn't anticipate dew because I was here practising and knew yesterday's game as well (Qualifier 1), there wasn't much dew."

"I looked at the wicket, we had a chat, we felt that against this opposition that batting first is the right call. So, we played tactically, brilliantly, the way we batted, the tempo was great and we put runs on the board and took that early wicket of Shubman as well, which was a massive one."

"But halfway stage, I saw the dew coming in...So, we had to make a call, there was a, like planning wise, we were thinking, long boundaries, the way we gripped, the leg spinner might be an option for us, but we then took that out and then bowl Ashwini."

"Changed our plans to bowl yorkers, as much as we can, because the balls were skidding through."

Mahela has been left impressed with the way Sudharsan batted this season. He backed the left-hander to do well on his maiden Test tour of England. (PTT)

# Sachin, Parul shine with silver, Kujur and two others win bronze at Asian Athletics C'ships



**GUMI (SOUTH KOREA), May 31:** Parul Chaudhary clinched her second silver and javelin thrower Sachin Yadav also finished second while sprinter Animesh Kujur shattered the national record en route a bronze show as India's medal rush continued on the final day of the 26th Asian Athletics Championships here on Saturday.

Vithya Ramraj and Pooja also won bronze medals in their respective events.

Chaudhary, who had earlier bagged silver in the 3000m steeplechase, clocked 15:15.33s to finish second in the women's 5000m. In the men's javelin throw event, rising star Yadav produced a personal best performance as he sent his spear to 85.16m to finish behind reigning Olympic champion Arshad Nadeem, who fetched the gold with a best effort of 86.40.

Hailing from a farmer's family at Khekra village near Baghat in Uttar

Pradesh, the 25-year old had a previous personal best of 84.39m.

Fellow Indian Yashvir Singh also impressed with a personal best of 82.57m for a fifth-place finish.

India's first medal of the day came through Kujur, who claimed a rare medal in the men's 200m. He produced a standout performance, setting a new national record of 20.32 seconds.

The 21-year-old bettered his previous mark of 20.40s, set earlier this year at the National Federation Senior Athletics Competition.

Japan's Towa Uzawa won gold with a time of 20.12s, while Saudi Arabia's Abdulaziz Abdul Aftah took silver in 20.31s. Asian Games medallist Vithya sailed smoothly over the 400m hurdles to finish on the third step of the podium. The 26-year-old Tamil Nadu athlete clocked 56.46s to finish on the podium.

China's Mo Jiajie clinched gold in 55.31s, edging out Bahrain's Oluwakemi Adekoya, who finished second in 55.32s. Anu Raghavan, the other Indian in the race, was placed seventh with 57.46s. (PTT)

# Avalanche Club win 3<sup>rd</sup> Women Inter-Club Kokrajhar Football League



**HT Correspondent KOKRAJHAR, May 31:** The third edition of Women Inter-Club Football Football League 2025, organised by the Kokrajhar District Sports Association

(KDSA), concluded successfully at the SAI Stadium, Kokrajhar on Friday.

In a thrilling final, Avalanche Club defeated NRL with a 3-2 victory. With this win, Avalanche Club has also been se-

lected to represent Kokrajhar in the Assam League.

The champion team received a trophy and cash prize of ₹15,000. The runners-up team, NRL, received ₹10,000 and a trophy.

The championship, aimed at promoting women's football and fostering sportsmanship among young female athletes in the region, saw participation from six clubs across the district.

The prize distribution ceremony was graced by Assam Olympic Association Vice President Kabiranjana Brahma and All Assam Masters Athletic Association Working President Maguram Balari, Centre In-Charge of SAI STC Kokrajhar, Babul Kumar Basumatary, former SAI Kokrajhar Director In-Charge Pradip Brahma, Ramen Basumatary among others.

# How Bobat, Flower, Karthik changed RCB's auction dynamics to lead team to IPL final

**BENGALURU, May 31:** Insight, perhaps, was not the watchword in Royal Challengers Bengaluru's auction process, for long. In the past, they assembled a slew of stars and then tried to build the team around them.

It was so glaring in the mid 2010s 'Galactico' era of Virat Kohli, Chris Gayle and AB de Villiers when RCB was a three-man team.

But the appointment of Mo Bobat and Andy Flower and Dinesh Karthik into the coaching staff changed the template, and it reflected in RCB's approach in the auction room in 2024.

In Rishabh Pant, KL Rahul and Shreyas Iyer some of the biggest names in contemporary Indian cricket were available to buy, and going by the past precedent, RCB would have broken their vault to acquire at least two of them.

Instead, they focussed on value buys such as Josh Hazlewood, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Krunal Pandya, Phil Salt, Suyash Sharma, Romario Shepherd and Tim David.

Each of them have played important roles in RCB's wins this season to prove their worth — home and away.

It was clear that RCB wanted certain players to suit certain roles within the team, rather than purchasing players merely on their reputation.

"I think we got predominantly what we wanted in terms of playing personnel. But more importantly, with the actual shape



of the team and the vision of that team that Andy and I spent so much time thinking about and talking about, we pretty much nailed that. And you get to see that come to life on the field," said Bobat, the RCB's director, in a release.

The acquisition of Salt offers the most palpable validation of those words.

The RCB was ready to let go Will Jacks, who had blitzed a 41-ball hundred against Gujarat Titans last year, for Salt, whom the coaching staff thought can produce big overs consistently upfront.

He plays the high-risk game, and has taken apart the biggest names in opposition ranks like Mitchell Starc (Delhi Capitals) and Pat Cummins (Sunrisers Hyderabad) to destroy their morale.

However, Salt has also produced those little cameos that made a big difference in

the eventual outcome of the match.

The Royal Challengers needed a quick start while chasing an imposing 228 against Lucknow Super Giants, and a win was imperative for them to ensure a top-two finish.

The English opener made 30 off 19 balls, helping Kohli milk 61 runs in just 5.4 overs and RCB did not let that early momentum slip away.

Karthik, the mentor who had a critical role in finalising the RCB auction pattern, explained the rationale behind selecting players like Salt.

"I thought we did beautifully in picking a very balanced squad, knowing what sort of players we want and which player would fit in which role. As we were picking the team, we used to put players in certain roles and see how they fit. (PTT)

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