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## Over 1.5 lakh bighas to be freed: CM

**Himanta inspects Uriamghat, says state committed to clearing encroachments from VGR, PGR, Satras, and forest lands across Assam**

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 25: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday visited Uriamghat in Assam's Golaghat district to inspect large tracts of land reportedly under illegal occupation and reaffirmed the government's commitment to systematically clear encroachments from public lands across the state.

According to an official statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office, the inspection followed eviction notices already served to encroachers in the area.

The Chief Minister informed that thousands of bighas of land in Uriamghat had been unlawfully occupied, with some families claiming as much as 300 to 400 bighas each and engaging in various economic activities on the land.

Speaking to media persons after the inspection, Sarma said, "The government cannot remain indifferent to such large-scale encroachments. We will take appropriate action. So far, nearly 70% of the encroachers have voluntarily vacated the land."



He appealed to the public for co-operation in the eviction process, highlighting that those who had settled on the land included people from different districts of Assam—including Cachar, Sribhum, Dhubri, Barpeta, Hajo, Nagaon, and Morigaon—as well as from other states such as West Bengal and Bihar.

He added that names and addresses of the settlers were being collected and would be shared with respective district authorities for

verification and appropriate action. The chief minister noted that similar eviction notices had also been issued in the Nagerbail area of Golaghat district and expressed hope that encroachers in that area too would vacate the land soon.

Citing intelligence reports, Sarma said that the encroached Uriamghat area had become a hub for criminal activity and stressed that restoring public land would also help in restoring peace.

He further informed that two in-

dividuals allegedly involved in orchestrating the encroachments had already been arrested.

He reiterated that the state government possesses a comprehensive list of encroached areas and will address them in a phased and systematic manner.

The chief minister emphasised that land belonging to Village Grazing Reserves (VGR), Professional Grazing Reserves (PGR), Satras, Naamghars, forest areas, and other public institutions will be cleared of all unauthorised occupation.

Once the Uriamghat drive concludes, he stated, over 1.5 lakh bighas of land will have been cleared across Assam.

The official statement also mentioned the government's plan to utilise reclaimed areas for economic development.

The Forest Department and district administration will work towards generating livelihood opportunities for local youth through sustainable use of resources such as stone, sand, and forest produce. Sarma added that reforestation (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

May declare drought if rainfall deficit persists: CM

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, July 25: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday stated that the state government will be compelled to officially declare a drought if the current rainfall deficit does not improve in the coming days.

Addressing reporters on the sidelines of an event in Dibrugarh, the chief minister informed that the situation is being closely monitored.

He noted that while the paddy planting season in Assam typically continues until August, prolonged lack of rainfall could adversely affect agricultural activities.

"In Assam, paddy sowing generally continues till August. We also have a short-duration paddy variety called Bina Dhan-11, which matures in about three months. However, if the state does not receive adequate rainfall soon, we will be left with no option but to declare a drought," Sarma said.

He further assured that the state government has put in place contingency measures to address any eventuality.

If a drought is declared, farmers would be provided relief through schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

## Speaker Momin reviews influx risk at Bokajan



HT Bureau

DIPHU, July 25: In view of the ongoing eviction drive against illegal immigrants in Dhubri and Goalpara districts, Deputy Speaker of the Assam Legislative Assembly Numal Momin recently visited the Bokajan Railway Station in Karbi Anglong district to assess the ground situation and review preventive measures.

According to an official report, the visit was prompted by concerns that individuals displaced due to the eviction operations might attempt to settle in other regions of the state, including Bokajan.

During his visit, Momin held a review meeting with officers from Bokajan Police Station and the Railway Protection Force (RPF).

He directed the officials to maintain heightened vigilance at transit points and to closely monitor all arrivals in the region.

Meanwhile, the Karbi Students Association (KSA), Diphu District Committee, has also issued an alert urging villagers and village headmen to remain cautious and to report any suspicious movement or unfamiliar individuals in their localities to the authorities.

At a press conference, KSA-DDC president Sonasing Rongpi expressed concerns that people displaced by the eviction drive may attempt to settle in various parts of Karbi Anglong, including areas such as Bakulia, Manja, Borlangpher, and along the Dimapur road. He called (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

## India announces ₹ 4,850 crore line of credit to Maldives

MALE, July 25: India is proud to be the most trusted friend of the Maldives, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday after announcing a ₹ 4,850 crore line of credit to the island nation.

Modi made the remarks after holding wide-ranging talks with Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu, focusing on consolidating cooperation in areas of trade, defence and infrastructure.

The Prime Minister's visit marked a major turnaround in India-Maldives ties after a spell of unease.

Modi also announced that the two countries will work towards finalising a bilateral investment treaty and that negotiations for a free trade pact have already started.

The Maldives holds an important place in India's "Neighbourhood First" policy and MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions) vision, the prime minister said.

Modi said India has decided to provide a line of credit of USD 565 million (₹ 4,850 crore) to the Maldives.

Mutual cooperation in the field of defence and security is a testament to mutual trust, he said.

India will always support the Maldives to strengthen its defence capabilities, he added.

Modi landed in Male this morning to a warm welcome with Muizzu and a number of top ministers of his government receiving the prime minister at the Velena international airport, reflecting the importance Male attached to the trip. Hours later, Modi was accorded a colourful ceremonial welcome and a (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

## People from Bihar among land encroachers in Assam, will verify their claims: Sarma

GUWAHATI, July 25: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Friday that people claiming to be from states like Bihar and West Bengal are among encroachers of government, forest and other land in the northeastern state.

He said his government will share details of these people with local authorities from where they claim to have come, so that it can be verified that they are not actually from "across the border".

Talking to reporters after inspecting sites for eviction drives in Uriamghat in Golaghat district, Sarma said, "When we went through the list of encroachers, we found that these people are not just from Assam. There are people

from districts like Cachar, Sribhum, Dhubri, Hajo, Nagaon, Morigaon, but there are people even from Bihar and West Bengal."

"They have said that they are from Bihar, but they could be from across the border," he added.

The CM said names, addresses and other details will be taken from them, and shared with the authorities of the place they claim to have come from.

"If they are genuine people from those parts, we have nothing against them. But if they are not permanent residents there, the local authorities can take steps," he said. He said encroachers in Uriamghat were in possession of hundreds of bighas of forest land.

"Government cannot be a mute spectator and we have to take necessary action. We seek cooperation from the people," he said.

Sarma said locals have told him that illegal activities like drug use and thefts were rampant in the encroached areas and a "lot of negative things were happening".

"Now, all can work together to make it an area with positive vibes. Local youths can engage in business by utilising the resources after the land is cleared," Sarma said.

He said about 70 per cent of the encroachers have already left the place, and the remaining will also do so before the anti-eviction drive is launched as per law. Sarma said (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

## Assembly elections in Assam may delay process of resolving border dispute: Meghalaya Dy CM



SHILLONG, July 25: Meghalaya's Deputy CM Prestone Tynsong on Friday said the assembly elections in Assam, due next year, may delay the process of resolving the border dispute between the

two states. Speaking to reporters, he said the elections might affect the joint inspection of the remaining six areas of difference by the regional committees of the two states.

Tynsong, who heads the regional committee for Ri-Bhoi district, said the elections in Assam will keep political parties, legislators and ministers occupied, thereby affecting the scheduling of joint field visits to the disputed border areas.

"The assembly elections in Assam are due next year. We understand that preparations for the elections will keep everyone busy. That is one of the reasons why there may be delays in conducting the joint inspections," he said.

Meghalaya is awaiting confirmation from Assam on a mutually convenient date for the visits, he said. "We have already requested Assam to communicate a date. Let us see. Once we get an indication from their (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

## Operation Sindoor ongoing, our preparedness must remain very high: CDS Gen Chauhan



NEW DELHI, July 25: Asserting that Operation Sindoor "still continues", Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan on Friday said the country's military preparedness must remain at a "very high" level, round-the-clock and throughout the year.

In his keynote address at a defence seminar hosted at Subroto Park here, he also said the military

in future will also need "information warriors, technology warriors and scholar warriors."

And, in an emerging landscape of warfare, a future soldier will need to be a mix of all three "info, tech, and scholar warriors," the CDS said.

The seminar on 'Aerospace Power: Preserving India's Sovereignty and Furthering National Interests' was held under the aegis of the 'No.4 Warfare and Aerospace Strategy Programme'.

The CDS said there are no runers-up in a war, and any military must be constantly alert and maintain a high degree of operational preparedness. "An example is Operation Sindoor, which still continues. Our (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

## 'Dibrugarh will be Assam's second capital'

CM lays foundation for ₹65-crore Ministers' Office, convention centre and top officials' chambers to boost administrative reach in Upper Assam

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 25: In a major push towards decentralised governance and improved administrative connectivity for Upper Assam, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday laid the foundation stone for a new Ministers' Office, a convention centre, and office buildings for the Chief Secretary and Additional Chief Secretary in Dibrugarh.

According to an official statement, the ₹65-crore project will be constructed adjacent to the existing Chief Minister's Secretariat at Paltan Bazar, Majan. The initiative is part of the Assam Government's broader vision to develop Dibrugarh as the state's second capital by bolstering its administrative infrastructure and outreach.

Speaking at the foundation-laying ceremony, the Chief Minister said the project represents the government's commitment to taking governance closer to the people of Upper Assam. He noted that once completed, the facilities will significantly enhance govern-

ment presence in the region and improve responsiveness to local issues.

The proposed Ministers' Office will include 20 office rooms and 10 accommodation units, ensuring adequate space for government functionaries during visits and extended engagements in Upper Assam. The convention centre will have a seating capacity of 350 people, while a separate conference hall will accommodate up to 120 persons, the statement added.

Further, the office complex for the Chief Secretary and Additional Chief Secretary will be a ground-plus-one structure.

It will include designated cabins for officers, a meeting room, an establishment office room, a car porch, and other essential support facilities to streamline administrative functioning from the Upper Assam zone. Highlighting the long-term impact of the project, the Chief Minister stated that the infrastructure will support people-centric development in the region and contribute to enhanced (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

## Climate change pushed onion, potato prices in India up by over 80 pc in 2024: Study

NEW DELHI, July 25: Food prices in India saw a sharp rise in 2024 due to an unusually severe heatwave, with onion and potato prices jumping by more than 80 per cent in the second quarter of the year, according to a new study.

The study, led by Maximilian Kotz of the Barcelona Supercomputing Centre and involving researchers from the European Central Bank, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and the UK's Food Foundation, investigated 16 extreme weather-driven food price shocks across 18 countries between 2022 and 2024.

It found that many of these events exceeded all historical precedents before 2020 and were strongly influenced by global warming.

"In India, the price of onions and



potatoes jumped by over 80 per cent in the second quarter of 2024 after a heatwave in May, a 'largely unique event' that was made at least 1.5 degrees Celsius warmer

by climate change," the researchers said.

The year 2024 was the hottest on record and the first with a global average temperature 1.5 degrees

Celsius above pre-industrial levels. In India, extreme heat in May severely affected crop yields and supply chains, contributing to high inflation in essential vegetables.

The study warned that such food price shocks could worsen health outcomes, including malnutrition and chronic diseases and increase economic inequality.

"Rising food prices have direct implications for food security, particularly for low-income households... When the price of food shoots up, low-income families often have to resort to less nutritious, cheaper foods. Diets like this have been linked to a range of health conditions like cancer, diabetes and heart disease," Kotz said.

The researchers said food price inflation due to climate extremes may also "raise (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

## Guv highlights role of MSMEs in driving economic growth

GUWAHATI, July 25: Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya on Friday emphasised the role of MSMEs, maintaining that the sector has been driving growth, employment, and self-reliance in the country.

Acharya, while speaking at the inaugural session of the North East MSME conclave 2025, said the North East stands to benefit from this sector, especially as the region's products like bamboo, tea and silk can be transformed into global bestsellers by MSMEs.

The programme was organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), an official statement said.

Highlighting the crucial role of the MSMEs, the governor said, "In the 21st century, MSMEs are the livelihood source for millions and form the backbone of our economy after agriculture. They

are instrumental in driving growth, employment, and self-reliance".

Speaking about the potential of the northeast, the governor called it a priceless treasure, which is rich in natural resources, biodiversity and traditional industries.

The region's unique products, such as bamboo, tea, silk and handlooms, could be transformed into global assets through the power of MSMEs, he said, adding the northeastern region stands to benefit from this sector, especially as the region's products like bamboo, tea and silk can be transformed into global bestsellers by MSMEs.

Reflecting on historical economic shifts, the governor recalled that India once accounted for nearly 27 per cent of the global economy before colonial exploitation led to the decline of indige-

nous industries, particularly the micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

Post-independence, while large industries received attention, MSMEs remained less patronised for decades, he said.

Acharya lauded the current dispensation for revitalising the MSME sector through initiatives such as the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, Udyog Sathi App, Samarth Scheme and Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises.

He also emphasised the importance of leveraging local industries, such as bamboo crafts, handlooms, organic farming, and eco-tourism, through modern technology, digital innovation, and global marketing strategies.

Acharya also reiterated Assam's strategic role as the gateway to the east and (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

## Guwahati airport records 15 pc growth in passengers

GUWAHATI, July 25: The Adani Group-managed Guwahati airport has registered a double-digit growth in aircraft movements and passenger handling during the first quarter of the current fiscal, a statement said on Friday.

The top three destinations by passenger volume remained Delhi, Kolkata, and Bengaluru, it said.

The Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport (LGBIA) has demonstrated a strong operational performance in the first quarter of the current financial year, posting significant year-on-year growth in both aircraft movements and passenger traffic, it said. During the quarter under review, LGBIA handled more than (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)



# UK FTA will help India; need more such pacts with other countries: RBI Guv

**MUMBAI, July 25:** Reserve Bank Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Friday welcomed the signing of the free trade agreement with the UK, saying it will help multiple sectors of the Indian economy.

Speaking at the Financial Express Modern BFSI Summit here, Malhotra said multilateralism has "unfortunately" taken a back seat, and the country needs more such pacts (like the UK FTA) with countries and added that negotiations with the US are in advanced stages. "Hopefully, it (UK FTA) should help us... that is the way going forward now, because unfortunately multilateralism seems to have taken a back seat," Malhotra said in the central bank's first comments on the trade deal with the UK signed in London.

"It should help various sectors in our manufacturing as well as on the services side," Malhotra added.

Malhotra said that given the current realities, where multilateralism has taken a back seat, it is necessary for India to have more



such pacts with other countries.

He also acknowledged that there are many more such pacts in the negotiation stage.

India and the UK signed the FTA during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's two-day visit to the UK. The agreement has been in the making for many years now and will open up markets for both countries across goods and

services.

Meanwhile, Malhotra backed his US counterpart Jerome Powell for his work on upholding the Federal Reserve's independence, at a time when US President Donald Trump has gone public with his disagreement with its policies.

"... He (Powell) is doing a very good job. Maintaining the independence of the central bank is

very important. I think he has done a commendable job," Malhotra said. On cryptocurrency regulations, Malhotra said the government-appointed panel to look into the issue in India will take into account the RBI's concerns.

There is no work for a separate currency for the BRICS grouping, the RBI governor said, maintaining that like any other country, India is working on popularising its own currency, and the US dollar is here to stay.

India has an agreement with the UAE and is also looking at some arrangement with Maldives on the rupee trade, he said.

"The dollar is here, as you're all aware, it's going to be here, you know, for some time, for a longish time. It's because you need some universal cross-border currency," the RBI governor said.

Meanwhile, he also appreciated the work done by the Ministry of Petroleum in managing the oil procurement despite the sanctions on Russia. (PTI)

## Stock markets fall for 2nd day; Sensex tanks 721 pts dragged by Bajaj Finance, foreign fund outflows

**MUMBAI, July 25:** Stock markets declined for the second day in a row on Friday, with the Sensex tumbling 721 points due to heavy selling in financial, IT and oil & gas shares amid persistent foreign fund outflows.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 721.08 points or 0.88 per cent to settle at over a month's low of 81,463.09. During the day, it plunged 786.48 points or 0.95 per cent to 81,397.69.

The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 225.10 points or 0.90 per cent to a month's low of 24,837.

Analysts said a weak trend in Asian and European markets also dented investors' sentiment.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said, "Subdued corporate results and lacklustre global cues triggered a broad-based sell-off across domestic equities. Elevated valuations in large-cap stocks, coupled with significant net short positions held by FIIs, added to the downward pressure."

Among Sensex firms, Bajaj Finance declined 4.73 per cent post its June quarter earnings announcement. Power Grid, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, Bajaj Finserv, Trent, Tata Motors, NTPC and Adani Ports were also among the laggards.

However, Sun Pharma and Bharti Airtel emerged as gainers.

"Markets extended their decline on Friday,

losing nearly a per cent amid weak global cues. Benchmark indices remained under pressure from the outset, largely due to disappointing earnings, with the situation worsening as the session progressed.

"The recent correction reflects growing concerns around earnings disappointments and cautious management commentary, which are weighing heavily on investor confidence. Additionally, continued selling by FIIs is exacerbating the pressure," Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

The BSE smallcap gauge tanked 1.88 per cent and midcap index dropped 1.46 per cent. Utilities slumped 2.37 per cent, power tumbled 2.36 per cent, oil & gas (2.11 per cent), industrials (1.88 per cent), capital goods (1.83 per cent), IT (1.65 per cent) and metal (1.64 per cent).

BSE healthcare emerged as the only gainer. As many as 2,892 stocks declined while 1,117 advanced and 145 remained unchanged on the BSE.

On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark gauge declined 294.64 points or 0.36 per cent, and the Nifty dipped 131.4 points or 0.52 per cent.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹ 2,133.69 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data. However, Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought stocks worth ₹ 2,617.14 crore. (PTI)

## India-UK FTA to boost electronics manufacturing and exports: SEMI India President

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, July 25:** The recently signed India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is poised to significantly boost India's electronics manufacturing sector by lowering production costs and opening new export avenues, according to Ashok Chandak, President of SEMI India and the India Electronics and Semiconductor Association (IESA).

In an official statement issued on Friday, Chandak described the agreement as a "strategic milestone" that not only elevates India's position in global trade but also strengthens its standing in high-technology sectors such as electronics.

"The India-UK Free Trade Agreement is a strategic milestone that enhances India's global image and unlocks significant business opportunities across key sectors," he stated. Chandak highlighted that the FTA eliminates tariffs on a wide range of electronic products, components, raw materials, and capital equipment, thereby reducing overall production costs for domestic manufacturers.

This, he noted, will enhance the global competitiveness of 'Made in India' electronics and bolster efforts to meet the country's ambitious target of achieving a US\$500 billion electronics industry by 2030. With duty-free access now extended to Indian exports such as smartphones, optical fibre cables, and inverters, the agreement is expected to help India scale up its current ~US\$2 billion share of the UK's electronics imports.

"Crucially, this agreement sets a new benchmark for future FTAs, reflecting India's alignment with like-minded democracies and strengthening its strategic position in high-tech sectors," Chandak added. The pact is also expected to benefit India's services sector through increased collaboration in design, testing, and embedded software development. By combining the UK's established leadership in design with India's engineering capabilities, the two countries can deepen cooperation in innovation and product development.

In addition, Chandak noted that the FTA promotes skilled talent mobility, enhances supply chain resilience, and lays the groundwork for joint initiatives in green and sustainable electronics.

The India-UK FTA comes at a time when India is looking to expand its share in the global electronics market, attract high-value manufacturing, and position itself as a preferred destination for electronics design and production.

## MakeMyTrip launches global booking platform for tours and attractions

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, July 25:** In a major expansion of its service offerings, MakeMyTrip, one of India's leading online travel companies, has launched a dedicated Tours and Attractions Booking Platform designed specifically for Indian outbound travellers.

The platform provides access to more than 200,000 experiences across 1,100 cities in 130 countries, ranging from cultural tours and adventure sports to iconic landmarks and entertainment destinations.

According to an official statement issued by the company, the newly launched platform aims to simplify the fragmented process of booking international travel experiences, which Indian tourists often find challenging due to scattered information, foreign currency pricing, and lack of consolidated planning tools.

The service seeks to offer a seamless, personalised, and integrated interface—mirroring the ease of booking flights, hotels, and transport.

Co-founder and Group CEO of MakeMyTrip, Rajesh Magow, stated that experiences form a significant part of Indian travellers' spending abroad, yet the process of booking them remains disjointed.

"Our attempt is to make the discovery and booking experience simple, convenient, and personalised—just like the rest of our services. This launch is a natural extension of our vision to be a one-stop shop for all travel needs," he said.

The platform enables users to browse and book experiences in Indian rupees, removing the ambiguity and hassle of currency conversion.

Featured activities span globally recognised attractions such as the Eiffel Tower, Disneyland Paris, and Dubai's Desert Safari, alongside immersive experiences like helicopter tours over Kauai Island in Hawaii and live sumo wrestling shows in Tokyo's Asakusa district.

MakeMyTrip's service is powered by strategic partnerships with top global experience providers and is supported by a 24/7 Travel & Assistance Desk.

*Contd. from Page 1*

## Over 1.5 lakh bighas

and other conservation initiatives would be undertaken to protect the vacated land. He acknowledged the role of public feedback, stating that many citizens had recently flagged cases of encroachment in their areas via social media. He urged the public and organisations to continue reporting such instances to the administration to prevent further illegal occupation of public lands.

Sarma was accompanied during the visit by local MLA Biswajit Phukan, Special Chief Secretary (Forests) MK Yadav, Inspector General of Police (Law & Order) Akhilesh Kumar Singh, Golaghat Deputy Commissioner Pulak Mahanta, and other senior administrative and police officials.

He also expressed gratitude to the Government of Nagaland for extending cooperation in the ongoing drive.

## May declare drought if

and the State Disaster Relief Fund (SDRF). "We have already made necessary arrangements. In the event of a drought declaration, farmers will be supported under the PMFBY and SDRF," the chief minister added.

As per official data, 27 out of 35 districts in Assam have been identified as experiencing a rainfall deficit. Earlier this week, the state government had declared a drought-like situation in five districts—Baksa, Barpeta, Bongaigaon, Dhubri and Kokrajhar.

## Speaker Momin reviews influx

on villagers to remain watchful and to coordinate with the Village Defence Parties (VDPs) and village authorities to report any suspected cases of infiltration.

Highlighting the importance of proactive community involvement, Rongpi urged local residents to track movement of unknown individuals in their areas.

He cited demographic changes in districts like Dhubri as a cautionary example and emphasised the need for vigilance to protect the socio-cultural fabric of Karbi Anglong.

The call for alertness comes as part of the wider community mobilisation and administrative measures to prevent unauthorised settlement in the district following displacement caused by the state government's intensified crackdown on illegal encroachments.

## Assembly elections in Assam

end, we will proceed accordingly," he added. The two neighbouring states had signed a Memorandum of Understanding in March 2022 to resolve disputes in six of the 12 areas along their 884-km-long border.

The second phase of border talks, focusing on the remaining six areas, has witnessed delays despite several rounds of discussion at official and political levels.

The six unresolved areas are Langpih, Borduar, Nongwah-Mawtamur, Desh Doomreah, Block-I and Block-II, which have long been flashpoints of tension between the two states.

Some of these areas have seen violence in recent years, underscoring the urgency for resolution. (PTI)

## People from Bihar among

two persons suspected of being key figures behind the encroachments have already been arrested.

Besides, in Uriamghat, notices for eviction have been served in the Neghribil area, he added.

Sarma said residents from various parts of the state have reached out to him via social media over the last few days to urge action against encroachments in their respective areas.

Asked about cooperation from Nagaland, which borders Uriamghat area, Sarma said, "The only concern for them is that the evicted people should not enter their state. Whenever I have requested them, they have always helped us." He said just as the government is working to clear all encroached land, people should be vigilant to ensure that no new areas are illegally grabbed.

"All Satra (Vaishnavite monastery) land, grazing land will be cleared in a phased manner. We also don't want to give the impression that only evictions are happening here. Otherwise, the court will also think about what is happening."

"That's why we are working in a planned and phased manner," he said.

The chief minister had said earlier that 1.29 lakh bighas (nearly 43,000 acres) have been cleared of encroachment in the last four years, and around 29 lakh bighas (almost 10 lakh acres) of land are still under encroachment in the state. He had also claimed that these lands were under encroachment of "illegal Bangladeshis and doubtful citizens", with the state government under "international pressure" to stop eviction drives after the operation at Gorukhuti in Darrang district. (PTI)

## India announces ₹ 4,850 crore

guard of honour at the iconic Republic Square. "Deeply touched by the gesture of President Muizzu to come to the airport to welcome me, I am confident that India-Maldives friendship will scale new heights of progress in the times to come," Modi said in a social media post.

The two leaders held a one-on-one meeting before settling down for delegation-level talks.

The turnaround in the bilateral ties assumes significance as Muizzu, known to be close to China, came to power in the island nation in November 2023 on the back of an "India Out" campaign.

His policies in the first few months of his presidency resulted in severe strain in the ties. Within hours of his oath, he had demanded the withdrawal of Indian military personnel from his country. Subsequently, India replaced the personnel with civilians. The Indian military personnel were deployed to the Maldives to maintain and operate two helicopters and an aircraft, which were used for humanitarian and rescue operations.

It is widely believed that New Delhi's sustained efforts, including its assistance to the island nation to deal with economic woes, helped bring the relations back on track. The Maldives is one of India's key maritime neighbours in the Indian Ocean Region and the overall bilateral ties, including in areas of defence and security, witnessed an upward trajectory under the previous governments in Male. (PTI)

## Operation Sindoor ongoing

preparedness level has to be very high, 24x7, 365 days (a year)," Gen Chauhan said. India launched Operation Sindoor early on May 7 and decimated multiple terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK). Pakistan also launched offensives against India, and all subsequent counter-offensives by India were also carried out under Operation Sindoor.

The military conflict between the two nuclear-armed neighbours halted after they reached an understanding on the evening of May 10. The CDS also emphasised the importance of learning about both 'Shastra' (warfare) and 'Shastra' (knowledge system).

Gen Chauhan defined a scholar warrior as a military professional who combines intellectual depth and combat skills, who possesses strong academic knowledge and practical military expertise that enable him to analyse complex situations and address "diverse challenges to meet military aims and objectives".

Tracing the relationship between a scholar and a warrior, from ancient Indian history, through the World Wars up to recent conflicts, the CDS highlighted that today's military professional must be a "well-calibrated mix of a scholar warrior, a techno warrior and an info warrior".

A technology warrior to understand and apply the new technologies that are changing the nature of warfare, and an "info warrior" to understand and explain India's perspective and counter wrong narratives.

Elucidating the changing character of warfare, especially as evinced through recent and ongoing conflicts, the CDS underscored the important role of a scholar warrior in modern warfare, emphasising their role in preserving India's sovereignty and furthering national interests. (PTI)

## 'Dibrugarh will be Assam's

governance outcomes through regular administrative engagement. Several dignitaries were present at the event, including Minister for Industries and Commerce Bimal Bora, Minister for Medical Education and Research Prasanta Phukan, and Transport Minister Jogen Mohan. Additional Chief Secretary Ajay Tewari, senior officials, local MLAs, and members of the public also attended the programme.

## Guwahati airport records 15 pc

18 lakh passengers against 15 lakh during the same period last year, registering a growth of 15.37 per cent, it said. The airport handled 12,470 aircraft movements during the quarter, an increase of 11.41 per cent from 11,193 during the same period last year.

The highest single-day footfall was recorded on April 10, when 21,594 passengers travelled through the terminal. "This performance reaffirms the airport's role as a critical aviation hub in Northeast India and reflects the increasing demand for air connectivity across the region," the statement said. (PTI)

## Guv highlights role of

said, "This opportunity must be seized with MSMEs playing a leading role in building bridges of trade, innovation and cultural exchange". The governor urged industry leaders to invest more in the northeast, and also lauded CII's efforts in boosting the economic progress of Assam and the entire region.

The event brought together key stakeholders from across the region. It offered a platform to deliberate on the potential of the MSMEs in shaping the future of the northeast, the statement said. (PTI)

## Climate change pushed onion

headline inflation", making it harder for central banks to maintain price stability, especially in developing countries where food has a larger share in household budgets. "High rates of inflation can directly alter election outcomes... and boost support for extremist, anti-system and populist parties," the study said.

The study said that in Ghana and Ivory Coast, global cocoa prices increased by around 280 per cent by April 2024 after a February heatwave. The heat was made 4 degrees Celsius hotter by climate change.

In Brazil and Vietnam, heatwaves and drought led to a 55 per cent rise in Arabica coffee prices and a 100 per cent rise in Robusta prices. In the European Union, olive oil prices rose 50 per cent year-on-year by January 2024 after a drought in Spain and Italy.

In the United States, vegetable prices increased by 80 per cent in November 2022 due to a drought in California and Arizona. The researchers called for urgent measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and warned that without climate action, such food shocks will become more frequent. "Until we get to net-zero emissions, extreme weather will only get worse and it is already damaging crops and pushing up the price of food all over the world," Kotz said. The study also recommended that governments and central banks use seasonal climate predictions to anticipate food price shocks and prepare targeted support.

It cited an HSBC analysis showing that "temperatures are now a better metric for forecasting food prices across India compared to reservoir levels". (PTI)

eCFNo.320507/290

### CORRIGENDUM

IN RESPECT OF ADVERTISEMENT UNDER ASSAM PENSION SCHEME FOR JOURNALISTS FOR SELECTION OF PENSIONERS FOR THE YEAR 2025-26 PUBLISHED on 19<sup>th</sup> of July 2025 VIDE No eCFNo.320507/289 dtd 17-07-2025

It is hereby informed all applicant journalists of journalist pension for the year 2025-26 to **Read the self declaration of the application as mentioned below:**

**"I do hereby declare that the information provided in my application is accurate, complete and true. I authorize the Director of Information & Public Relations, Assam to verify any aspect of my application and/or my credentials. I understand and agree that any inaccurate information, misleading information, or omission of a material nature relevant to the application will be liable to be rejected."**

Sd/-

Director of Information and Public Relations  
Assam, Dispur, Guwahati-6

### AFFIDAVIT

I, Md. Shamsul Hoque Choudhury S/o Habib Ali Choudhury, R/o: Vill. Karaiyani, P.O: Karaiyani, P.S: Murajhar, Dist: Hojai, Assam, do hereby solemnly affirm and declare by swearing an affidavit before Additional District Commissioner, Nagaon on 19/07/2025 that my father's actual and correct name is Habib Ali Choudhury but my father's name is recorded in my previous passport vide Passport No. F3210006 as Mohammed Habib Ali Choudhury instead of his correct name Habib Ali Choudhury. I, hereby declare that both Habib Ali Choudhury and Mohammed Habib Ali Choudhury are the names of one and same person i.e my father.

DIPR /D/HLT/84/26-Jul-25

### ADVERTISEMENT

Applications are invited from publishers, distributors, authors, etc. with 1 (one) copy each of their published books, other than textbooks, as specimen copies in any of the languages, viz., English, Assamese, Bodo, Hindi, Bengali, Sanskrit, or any other local language of Assam. Books relating to career guides & competitive examination-related books, motivational & inspirational books, dictionaries, children's books, religious books, etc. may also be submitted. Information about the books, such as the title, name of the author, year of publication, price, etc., must be incorporated in the application for selection of books to be purchased for different libraries under the Directorate of Library Services with the fund of the State Govt. for the year 2025-26.

#### Terms & Conditions:

- The book shall not be printed/reprinted earlier than 2022.
- Printed prices of the books should not be altered/tampered with in any way.
- Printing/binding of books should be of the best quality.
- Ordered books shall be delivered to the Directorate of Library Services, Assam.
- The maximum rate of discount will be fixed by the Book Selection Committee.
- Publishers/Distributors must submit their trade license.
- Publishers/distributors may submit a maximum of 15 (fifteen) book titles.
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- The Selection Committee has full right to select or reject any title of the books without assigning any reason thereof.
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- While selecting the books, the suggested book lists of the reader and librarian compiled by the Director of Library Services may be considered.
- Books should cater to diverse age groups and genres, including fiction, nonfiction, and children's literature.

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Director of Library Services, IC, Assam  
Guwahati

DIPR /D/HLT/85/26-Jul-25



## ASEC reviews BTC poll preparedness in Kokrajhar



**HT Correspondent**  
**KOKRAJHAR, July 25:** Assam State Election Commissioner Ranjan Sarma on Thursday chaired a review meeting at the District Commissioner's conference hall in Kokrajhar to assess the preparedness for the upcoming Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) elections, 2025.

Gitartha Baruah, Secretary of the Assam State Election Commission, along with senior officials of the district and police administration, including BTR IGP Vivek Raj Singh, Kokrajhar DC Masanda Magdalin Pertin, SP Pushparaj Singh, ADC Subhram Aditya Bora, Election Officer Keshabanda Taid, Assistant

Returning Officers, and Executive Magistrates, participated in the meeting.

In his address, the State Election Commissioner expressed satisfaction with the election preparedness and commended the district administration for the timely publication of the Draft Electoral Rolls.

He emphasised the need for detailed planning, effective inter-departmental coordination, and strict adherence to guidelines to ensure free, fair, and peaceful elections in the region.

The preparedness of all 912 polling stations spread across the 12 BTC constituencies in Kokrajhar district was reviewed.

Particular focus was given to identifying and

mapping critical and vulnerable polling stations, including nine booths flagged based on high voter concentration during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

The meeting also discussed the deployment and training of sector officers and polling personnel, with an estimated requirement of around 4,378 officials.

Officials assessed the readiness of distribution and collection centres, with plans to establish one hub for every 10 to 12 polling stations in Parbatjhora, Gossaigaon, and Kokrajhar subdivisions.

Transport and communication logistics, as well as security deployment strategies, were thoroughly reviewed.

The functioning of Control Rooms, Video Surveillance Teams (VSTs), Static Surveillance Teams (SSTs), Flying Squads, and the deployment of sector and zonal magistrates were also discussed to ensure round-the-clock monitoring and rapid response.

Sarma urged all stakeholders to maintain a proactive and coordinated approach in the lead-up to the polls.

He underscored the importance of transparency and neutrality, and called for strict compliance with the Model Code of Conduct once notified.

He reiterated the Commission's commitment to ensuring a smooth and credible election process in the Bodoland Territorial Region and thanked the district officials for their systematic groundwork.

## Pradyot urges TDC to form monitoring committee to detect illegal immigrants



**HT Correspondent**  
**AGARTALA, July 25:** Tipra Motha Party founder and royal scion Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma on Friday urged the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) to immediately constitute a monitoring committee to detect illegal immigrants entering the council's juris-

diction.

Raising concerns over possible infiltration from neighbouring states, Pradyot said the issue should be taken seriously, especially in light of recent evictions of illegal settlers from Assam.

"I have requested the TTAADC to form an all-party monitoring committee to identify illegal immi-

grants entering the council areas. This committee should not function along political lines, but as a body committed to protecting the rights of our people," he said.

Highlighting the broader implications of unchecked migration, Pradyot emphasized that such movement poses a threat to the demographic composition and indigenous identity of the region.

Earlier, on July 23, a nine-member delegation of the Tipra Motha Party, led by Pradyot, met with the Election Commission of India (ECI) to demand the implementation of a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in Tripura. The delegation submitted a memorandum to Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar, urging the ECI to detect, delete, and deport illegal immigrants from the electoral rolls.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Pradyot said, "We told the ECI that just like Bihar is conducting SIR, Tripura must do the same. Illegal migration cannot be allowed in Tripura or anywhere else in the Northeast."

## Man kills wife in her sleep in Bokajan, arrested

**HT Correspondent**  
**BOKAJAN, July 25:** In a shocking incident, a 62-year-old man allegedly hacked his wife to death while she was asleep at their residence in Hatigarh Kawaram Taro village under Bokajan subdivision on Wednesday.

The accused, identified as Tapan Kakoti, reportedly attacked his 57-year-old wife, Bhoniti Kakoti, with a sharp weapon, fatally injuring her neck.

According to police sources, after committing the act, Kakoti approached one of his daughters and said, "I have killed your mother, now it is your turn."

Alarmed and confused, the

daughter rushed to check on her mother and found her lying motionless with deep cut wounds.

Following her cries for help, neighbours gathered at the scene and informed the Bokajan police.

A police team arrived promptly and arrested Tapan Kakoti from the spot.

Locals and family members informed the police that Kakoti had been behaving erratically over the past few days.

The deceased, Bhoniti Kakoti, was the mother of two daughters.

Police have taken the accused into custody for further investigation.

## NFR enhances frequency of Silchar-Maishashan passenger trains

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, July 25:** The Northeast Frontier (NF) Railway has announced a significant enhancement in train connectivity in the Barak Valley region by increasing the frequency of two pairs of passenger trains operating between Silchar and Maishashan.

According to an official statement issued on Friday, the move is aimed at improving regional mobility and boosting the local economy through better access and transport services.

The trains involved in this frequency upgrade are train no 55662/55661 and train no 55686/55685 (Silchar-Maishashan-Silchar passenger services).

Both services, which previously operated only twice a week, will now run six days a week from their respective directions starting July 28, 2025.

As per the revised schedule,



train no 55662/55661 will now operate every day except Friday, while train no 55686/55685 will run daily except Sunday.

This change is expected to significantly benefit regular commuters, including students, office-goers, and traders, by offering more consistent and frequent transportation between the two

destinations.

NF Railway stated that the decision to increase the frequency was made keeping in view the growing demand for daily connectivity between Silchar and Maishashan.

The enhanced service is anticipated to aid the movement of small-scale traders, facilitate the transport of agricultural produce,

and improve access to local markets and essential services.

The added frequency is also expected to stimulate the economic activity of surrounding areas by strengthening trade and improving livelihood opportunities for residents.

Officials said that the revised schedules, along with details of stoppages and timings, are now available on the National Train Enquiry System (NTES) and have been disseminated through the NF Railway's official social media platforms.

Passengers planning to travel on these routes have been advised to check the updated timings before their journey.

With this measure, NF Railway reaffirms its commitment to improving rail services in remote and underserved regions of the Northeast, furthering connectivity and fostering inclusive regional development.

## Pramod Boro lays foundation stone for Bodofa statue at CIT Kokrajhar



**HT Correspondent**  
**KOKRAJHAR, July 25:** Pramod Boro, Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), laid the foundation stone for the statue of Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma at the Central

Institute of Technology (CIT) campus in Kokrajhar on Friday.

The statue will be constructed under the initiative of the CIT Society at an estimated cost of ₹30 lakh, which will be funded by the Bodoland Territorial Council

(BTC) government.

Speaking at the event, CEM Boro said the statue is being built to honour the legacy of Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma—widely regarded as an iconic figure of the Bodo community—and to inspire future generations.

He reiterated the BTC government's commitment to the development and welfare of all communities in the Bodoland region.

"Honouring our icons, empowering our future—I'm delighted to lay the foundation stone for the statue of revered Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma at CIT Kokrajhar," Boro stated.

The ceremony was attended by Prof. Devendra Jalilal, Director (Additional Charge), CIT Kokrajhar, along with faculty members, senior officials, and dignitaries from the region.

## CSIR-NEIST concludes week-long 'One Day as a Scientist' programme in Jorhat

**HT Correspondent**  
**JORHAT, July 25:** The CSIR-North East Institute of Science and Technology (CSIR-NEIST) on Friday concluded its week-long programme titled 'One Day as a Scientist' under the CSIR-JIGYASA initiative.

The five-day event, which began on July 21, was designed to ignite scientific curiosity and offer school students a first-hand experience of scientific research and innovation. The inaugural session was held at the J N Baruah Auditorium of the institute, where Dr Dipankar Neog, Senior Principal Scientist, delivered the keynote address.

Drawing inspiration from the life and contributions of Dr A P J Abdul Kalam, Dr Neog urged students to develop a research mindset and contribute to national progress through science.

Chief Scientist Er Jayanta Jyoti Bora also addressed the gathering, encouraging students to embrace continuous learning and resilience, remarking that setbacks are essential stepping stones to success.

Interacting with students, Dr V M Tiwari, Director of CSIR-NEIST, underscored the institute's role in advancing India's scientific and technological frontiers and encouraged the participants to explore the limit-

less possibilities that science holds for nation-building. Each day, students from Classes 8 to 10 representing various schools from across the region participated in hands-on scientific learning sessions.

Activities included guided laboratory tours, live demonstrations, and group experiments across disciplines such as chemical sciences, biotechnology, materials science, and engineering—aimed at bridging classroom concepts with real-world scientific applications. A major highlight of the event was the "Student-Scientist Connect" session, which provided an interactive platform for students to engage directly with CSIR-NEIST scientists.

The session included open discussions, mentoring interactions, and guidance on pursuing careers in science and research. More than 300 students from nearly 40 schools took part in the five-day programme, which was coordinated by Dr Dipankar Neog.

The initiative concluded with positive feedback from both students and educators, with many participants describing it as a transformative experience that deepened their interest in science as a viable and exciting career path.

## BTC Legislative Assembly session to convene on July 31

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, July 25:** The Governor of Assam, Lakshman Prasad Acharya, has summoned the next session of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) Legislative Assembly, scheduled to be held on Thursday, July 31, 2025.

According to an official notification issued by Raj Bhavan, Guwahati, the session will begin at 10:00 AM and will take place at the Council Assembly House, Bodofa Nwgr, in Kokrajhar.

The session is expected to address key administrative and policy matters related to the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR).

Elected members of the BTC Legislative Assembly will participate in the proceedings, which may include discussions on regional development, governance priorities, and review of government programmes.

This will be a significant sitting ahead of the upcoming BTC elections, with possible focus on fiscal matters, departmental reports, and implementation of welfare schemes across the region.

## Tripura Professor suspended after viral video shows 'inappropriate' act with student

**HT Correspondent**  
**AGARTALA, July 25:** The Tripura Government has suspended an Assistant Professor Dr Santanu Majumder of Chemistry following the circulation of a purported video on social media that allegedly shows the teacher in a compromising situation with a female student inside a college laboratory. Raval H Kumar, Special Secretary of the education department in an order said that as per a viral video in social media, it appears that D. Santanu Majumder, Assistant Professor of GDC, Kamalpur,

Dhalai, Tripura and a student of the college was seen behaving inappropriately in the college.

"...a preliminary report was submitted by the disciplinary committee of the College which was forwarded by the Principal of GDC, Kamalpur. WHEREAS, the report forwarded by the Principal, GDC, Kamalpur reflected that Dr. Santanu Majumder, Assistant Professor, GDC, Kamalpur, Dhalai Tripura confessed that it was a mistake on his part to be involved in the inappropriate act," the order reads.

## Aadhaar enrolment, medical camp held for Divyangjan and marginalised communities in Kheroni

**HT Correspondent**  
**KHERONI, July 25:** The Rastriya Divyang Ekta Sangh (RDES) Trust, in collaboration with the West Karbi Anglong district administration, organised an Aadhaar enrolment drive, a free medical camp, and an awareness programme at Adarsha Senior Secondary School, Dikhrang (Kheroni Charali), on Friday.

The outreach programme was aimed at extending welfare services to Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), widows, senior citizens, and members of the third gender community, and was seen as a significant step towards fostering inclusion and empowerment in the district.

Deputy Commissioner Saranga Pani Sarma attended the event as the chief guest and was formally appointed Chief Adviser to the RDES.

Speaking on the occasion, DC Sarma assured the participants of the administration's continued support and later visited a proposed site at Dayangmukh for the construction of an official office building of the Trust.

He also briefed participants on government welfare schemes for persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups.

RDES Chairman Dipak



Chauhan elaborated on the objectives of the programme and reaffirmed the Trust's commitment to serving underserved communities.

Key members of the Trust present at the event included Operating Trustee Mongal Sing Phangcho; Trustees Mohar Ali, Kenson Roghphar, Dipankar Chauhan, Hemson Kathar, and Sunil Chauhan; and the West Karbi Anglong district RDES unit represented by President Mohan Sing Kathar and Secretary Manoj Kumar Gour.

Among others who attended were Dr Rajesh Kumar Chauhan, Lecturer at Thong Nokbe College, Dokmoka; Chhotelal Chauhan, Assistant Professor at Kapili College,

Kheroni; and Ramji Chauhan, Vice Principal of the host school.

More than a hundred specially-abled individuals and community workers participated in the day-long programme, which provided Aadhaar registration and updation services, free medical consultations, and awareness sessions on rights, entitlements, and government welfare schemes for differently-abled citizens.

Organisers said the initiative underlined the importance of documentation, access to healthcare, and awareness in ensuring inclusive development, particularly in remote and hilly areas such as West Karbi Anglong.

## Assam researcher highlights Majuli's climate crisis at UN Conference in Germany

**HT Correspondent**  
**MARGHERITA, July 25:** Madhuri Meelee, a native of Margherita in Tinsukia district, has brought a pressing local issue to global attention by presenting her research at the Environmental and Climate Mobilities Network (ECMN) conference organised by the United Nations University in Bonn, Germany, on July 9.

An Assistant Professor at the KIIT School of



Law, Bhubaneswar, Madhuri Meelee underscored the urgent need for stronger legal protections for people displaced by environmental factors.

She pointed out the inadequacy of current

legal interventions in India, noting the absence of a dedicated policy for internally displaced persons (IDPs), and remarked that a proposed bill for climate migrants had lapsed in 2022.

Meelee is an alumna of National Law University, Jodhpur, and Leiden University, Netherlands, and specialises in International Human Rights and Environmental Law.

She is also the co-founder of the Hague-based NGO Ojodu Grassroots Alternatives Foundation.

Her participation in the UN-backed conference is seen as a significant step in spotlighting the climate vulnerabilities of Assam and India on a global platform.

Madhuri Meelee is the daughter of international arm-wrestler Rajen Mili and Ritu Rani Meelee, residents of No 1 Lazum, Ward 4, Margherita in Tinsukia district.



## QUOTE OF THE DAY

*Hope is but the dream of those who wake*  
—Matthew Prior

## A strategic reset in India-UK trade ties

The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) signed between India and the United Kingdom on July 24 marks a pivotal shift in the economic engagement between the two countries, reflecting not only a shared desire to strengthen commercial ties but also a growing alignment of strategic interests. In an era where globalisation faces headwinds and protectionist impulses are on the rise, this agreement sends a powerful message that mutually beneficial, rules-based trade is both feasible and desirable. Under the deal, India will gain duty-free access on 99 per cent of its tariff lines—covering nearly all of its exports—while the UK will see tariff elimination or significant reduction on 90 per cent of its lines, covering 85 per cent of its exports. For Indian exporters, this opens wide avenues in processed foods, marine products, garments, and pharmaceuticals. British exporters, in turn, stand to benefit from reduced tariffs on high-end products like luxury cars, alcoholic beverages, and electronics. What makes this agreement particularly notable is that it reflects a shift from historic asymmetry—rooted in colonial legacy—towards economic parity and mutual respect.

However, beyond the tariff reductions, the FTA is also a structural milestone. It lays out a broader economic partnership—governing not just goods but services, investment, intellectual property, and regulatory standards. The United Kingdom, with its advanced economy and services-led growth model, will find in India a rapidly expanding market with a young demographic, growing purchasing power, and an appetite for high-quality goods. Simultaneously, Indian producers will gain access to a demanding yet lucrative consumer base in Britain, encouraging a rise in product quality, compliance, and value addition. As both economies undergo transformation—India in terms of manufacturing growth and services export strength, and the UK in its post-Brexit search for stable trade anchors—the agreement will help shape future economic behaviour. Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar has often noted that trade agreements are no longer about tariffs alone—they are about development, technology, standards, and long-term trust. That makes the India-UK pact a modern agreement, focused on comparative advantage but mindful of national interest.

Nevertheless, the success of this FTA will depend on how both countries manage its execution and adapt to market shifts. Indian policymakers will need to ensure that vulnerable sectors—particularly MSMEs and agriculture—are not exposed to sudden competitive pressures. The phased reductions, safeguard clauses, and periodic review mechanisms built into the agreement acknowledge this. At the same time, Indian industry must see this as an opportunity to upgrade and compete, not retreat. For the UK, the Indian market represents one of the few large-scale growth zones in a stagnant global landscape. It is no surprise, then, that this FTA is being seen as a template for future deals—with the EU, the US, and others. With India set to become the world's third-largest economy in the coming decade, the geopolitical value of its trade partnerships will only rise. This agreement signals that India is ready to lead not only as a consumer market but also as a trade rule-setter. In that sense, the India-UK FTA is more than a commercial document—it is a strategic reset that recognises the mutual promise of two democracies charting their course in a complex world.

# Encroachment, Eviction, and Identity

## Assam's struggle for land and demographic balance

Since taking office in May 2021, the Sarma government claims to have reclaimed over 1.19 lakh bighas (approximately 160 square kilometres) of encroached land and evicted more than 50,000 people

In recent months, Assam has once again found itself at the crossroads of land, law, and identity politics, with large-scale eviction drives drawing intense public attention and political fire. The state government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, has launched an unrelenting campaign to reclaim thousands of hectares of encroached government, forest, and wetland lands. This drive, though lauded by some as a necessary measure to protect the rights of indigenous communities and uphold the law, has been denounced by others as politically motivated and inhumane. The controversy not only reflects the complexity of land ownership in Assam but also underlines the long-standing anxieties around illegal immigration and demographic change in the northeastern state.

According to official figures, as many as 4,47,916 families have erected houses illegally on government lands across various districts of Assam. In a troubling revelation, a significant portion of these families already own land and property elsewhere in the state. The data reveals staggering district-wise figures: 47,810 in Kamrup (Metro); 4,121 in Sivasagar (with 1,142 already owning land elsewhere); 3,871 in Jorhat; 6,549 in Golaghat (including 57 landowning families); 749 in South Salmara; 1,027 in Chiraidoo (440 with land elsewhere); 43 in Cachar (15 already owning land); 4,209 in Hailakandi; 19,022 in Kamrup; 12,491 in Bongaigaon, of which 7,468 families already own land; 15,298 in Dhubri (1,165 land-owning); 11,776 in Biswanath (310 families); 1,160 in Bajali (950 with land elsewhere); 34,437 in Lakhimpur (10,576 with existing properties); 12,722 in Hojai; 8,883 in Sonitpur (120 families elsewhere); 14,171 in Morigaon (4,424 land-owning); 77,810 in Tinsukia; 460 in Majuli; 10,321 in Dhemajai; 10,922 in Dibrugarh (443 families with land elsewhere); 62,253 in Darrang (with 23,168 already owning land); 448 in Sribhumi (132 landowners); 9,598 in Nagaon (6,487 with prop-

erty elsewhere); 3,459 in Nalbari (640 with land); 31,065 in Goalpara (5,562 already owning land); and 43,191 in Barpeta (4,947 already with landholdings). These figures not only point to the widespread nature of land encroachment but also call into question the narratives of helplessness often used to resist eviction.

Government sources have clarified that indigenous landless encroachers, if found eligible, will be granted land settlement rights under the 2019 land policy. However, Chief Minister Sarma has reiterated that eviction drives will continue unabated and will not falter in the face of opposition or threats. "If people think the government will stop after a few drives, they are mistaken. We are not afraid of intimidating stares," he declared, reinforcing the state's firm stance on evictions. Sarma drew attention to the demographic changes since 1951, claiming that the indigenous Assamese population is at risk of becoming a minority in their own homeland within the next decade due to unchecked illegal immigration, which he claims has persisted for over a century.

Uriamghat and Negeribil, two sensitive areas along the Assam-

Nagaland border in Golaghat district, have been earmarked as the next targets in this wave of evictions. The forest and police departments have begun conducting drone surveys to identify encroached lands and have started door-to-door verifications. In response, many encroachers have begun vacating the area voluntarily. However, student organisations have raised concerns, stating that these settlements have electricity, Anganwadi centres, roads, and PM Awas Yojana houses—suggesting that state officials may have facilitated illegal occupancy. They have also alleged cross-border coordination, suggesting that displaced encroachers might find refuge in Nagaland, where they could be employed as agricultural labourers—a practice reportedly prevalent in disputed border areas for years.

Since taking office in May 2021, the Sarma government claims to have reclaimed over 1.19 lakh bighas

(approximately 160 square kilometres) of encroached land and evicted more than 50,000 people. Despite this, over 8 lakh bighas (roughly 2,006 square kilometres) of land remain under encroachment. Among the key priorities are lands belonging to revered Sattras (Vaishnavite monasteries), especially in Barpeta, Nagaon, and Lakhimpur districts, which were allegedly encroached upon during the tenure of previous Congress governments. In Goalpara's ecologically sensitive Paikan reserve forest, the government recently recovered around 1,040 bighas. The eviction was conducted smoothly, with more than 90% of the encroachers vacating voluntarily. However, a violent backlash occurred on July 17 when a mob attacked police and forest officials with stones, injuring more than 20 personnel. The authorities responded with police firing, leading to one fatality (Shakuar Hussain) and several injuries.

Tensions were similarly high in Dhubri district, where residents of three Muslim villages—Charuwa Bakra, Chirakuta, and Santospur—

clashed with law enforcement during evictions, resulting in over 3,500 bighas of recovered land. This area has since been earmarked for a 3,200-MW thermal power plant to be built by the Adani Group on behalf of Assam Power Distribution Company Limited (APDCL). In mid-June, another significant eviction was carried out at Hasila Beel, a wetland in Goalpara, where over 670 Bangladeshi-origin Muslim families were removed and nearly 1,500 bighas of land recovered. Smaller drives followed in Bakrikuchi (Nalbari district) and other regions, largely targeting families whose settlements were allegedly politically patronised during previous regimes.

As expected, the eviction drives have ignited fierce political battles. The Congress party, led by Gaurav Gogoi, appealed to the state governor to halt the evictions, terming them "inhuman." On July 16, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and leader of the opposition Rahul Gandhi visited Assam to rally support and promised land and housing to evicted families if the party returned to power in 2026. CM Sarma swiftly responded, accusing Gandhi of emboldening encroachers. He linked Gandhi's "reckless" comments to the subsequent attack on police in Goalpara, calling it a betrayal of the Assamese people.

Predictably, the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) and All Assam Minority Students' Union (AAMSU) have condemned the evictions as anti-Muslim and politically driven. Protests have erupted in multiple towns, from Bongaigaon to Doboka, and even at Delhi's Jantar Mantar. Asom Nagarik Samaj and Rajior Dal leader Akhil Gogoi have also alleged that these drives are a pretext to transfer land to corporates like Adani and Ambani. The Communist Party of India and Assam Jatiya Parishad have echoed similar concerns.

Yet, there is another voice gaining traction—that of environmentalists, civil society, and nationalist groups who support the evictions.

Wildlife activist Soumyadeep Datta has backed the drives, emphasising that most illegal settlers were propped up by Congress for vote-bank politics. The Assam Public Works (APW) organisation has similarly supported the evictions, urging the indigenous communities to rally behind the government's campaign. The Patriotic People's Front Assam (PPFA) went a step further, calling for lawful compensation to evicted families but also demanding an honest discourse on the identity of encroachers. The PPFA has questioned the media's reluctance to identify evictees as Bangladeshi-origin migrants, arguing that the "Bengali-origin Muslim" label masks deeper truths and misleads the public.

Indeed, Assam's eviction drives have exposed a multi-layered problem—illegal migration, political opportunism, institutional lapses, and conflicting ideas of justice. While it is essential to ensure that land rights are restored to their legitimate holders, it is equally important to undertake follow-up action to prevent re-encroachments. History shows that evictions without long-term rehabilitation and monitoring plans often result in cyclical displacement. Moreover, the state must draw a clear distinction between genuine landless indigenous claimants and those exploiting political patronage to illegitimately occupy public resources.

Assam stands today at a historical juncture. The choices made now—by the government, the judiciary, civil society, and political stakeholders—will determine not just the future of its land but also its demographic and cultural landscape. The question that confronts every Assamese today is not just about land, but identity: whether they are willing to let demographic change erase the memory of the Assam Movement or rise to reclaim what they believe rightfully belongs to them. Between corporate suspicion and immigration anxieties, between legal rights and humanitarian concerns, Assam's struggle for balance continues. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmigptd@gmail.com)

## DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Dipak Kurmi

# Kargil Vijay Diwas: July 26<sup>th</sup> & The Kargil War

By: Diganta Barooah

Kargil Vijay Diwas, which is celebrated on July 26 commemorates the success of "Operation Vijay" launched by the Indian Army to recapture the Indian territories from Pakistani intruders in the Kargil-Drass sector in 1999. On this day the grateful nation remembers and honors the tribute to the fallen heroes of Indian armed forces who sacrificed their lives to safeguard the territorial integrity of India.

Kargil Vijay Diwas is observed on July 26th each year in India to commemorate the success of "Operation Vijay," which led to the victorious conclusion of the Kargil War in 1999. The day honors the valor, sacrifice, and dedication of the Indian Armed Forces, who played a crucial role in recapturing the high-altitude positions in the Kargil region of Jammu and Kashmir from Pakistani infiltrators.

**Background of The Kargil War:**

India and Pakistan have a history of conflicts, including a significant one in 1971 that led to the creation of Bangladesh.

Post-1971, both nations faced ongoing tensions, particularly vying for control over the Siachen Glacier through military outposts on nearby mountain ridges.

In 1998, both countries conducted nuclear tests, escalating tensions. The Lahore Declaration in February 1999 aimed to resolve the Kashmir conflict peacefully and bilaterally.

During the winter of 1998-1999, Pakistani armed forces covertly trained and deployed troops across the Line of Control (LoC) to seize fortified positions overlooking NH 1A in the Drass and Batalik Sectors of Kargil, Ladakh.

Indian troops initially mistook the infiltrators for terrorists or 'jihadis', but it soon became clear that the attack was a well-organised military operation.

It was fought in the summer of 1999 along a 170km mountain frontier, stretching from Mashkoh Valley to Turtuk in the Kargil sector.

In response, India launched Operation Vijay, deploying over 200,000 troops to the region to counter the incursion.

**Operation Vijay:**

This was the codename for the Indian military operation that led to the successful eviction of Pakistani forces from the Indian side of the Line of Control (LoC) in Kargil.

**Kargil War (May-July 1999):**

The conflict began when Pakistani soldiers and militants were found to have infiltrated the Indian side of the LoC. The war lasted for nearly three months and was fought in extremely challenging terrain, with battles occurring at altitudes of over 18,000 feet.

The war commenced shortly after the signing of the Lahore declaration in 1999, when Pakistani forces disguised as Kashmiri terrorists infiltrated on the Indian side of the Line of Control (LoC) and took over winter-vacated posts of the Indian Army as part of "Operation Badr".

The aim was to cut the link between Kashmir and Ladakh, to isolate Indian Army troops on the Siachen Glacier, and force India to negotiate a settlement of the Kashmir dispute.

During the war, the Indian Army evicted Pakistani intruders and succeeded in recapturing Tiger Hill and other posts as a part of "Operation Vijay".

Indian Army bravely fought the war launching Operation Vijay and later on was also supported by Indian Air Force and recaptured most of the infiltrated site.

Finally, in July, Pakistani troops surrendered and withdrew from the positions along LOC. Pakistan was highly criticized for its military activities from the United Nations and other superpowers like the USA and UK.

**Operations Associated with the Kargil War:**

■ Operation Vijay: Operation Vijay was the code name for India's military response to the Pakistani incursion in the Kargil region. The operation aimed to clear the infiltrators from the Indian side of the Line of Control (LoC) and restore the status quo.

■ Operation Safed Sagar: The Indian Air Force conducted "Operation Safed Sagar" to support ground operations. High-altitude operations involved aircraft like MiG-21s, MiG-23s, MiG-27s, Mirage 2000, and Jaguars.

■ Operation Talwar: The Indian Navy's "Operation Talwar" ensured maritime security and deterrence. The Navy's readiness sent a strong message to Pakistan about potential responses to further aggression.

**Honor and Remembrance:**

Kargil Vijay Diwas is marked by ceremonies across India, including at the Kargil War Memorial in Dras, near the site of the conflict, where leaders, military personnel, and citizens pay homage to the fallen soldiers.

**National Unity:**

The day serves as a reminder of the strength and resilience of the Indian nation and the unity that was displayed during the conflict.

**Gallantry awards:**

About 545 soldiers from the Indian Armed Forces lost their lives during the war. Four Param Vir Chakras and 11 Maha Vir Chakras were awarded. Captain Vikram Batra of 13 JAK Rifles, Lieutenant Manoj Kumar Pandey of 1/11 Gorkha Rifles received Param Vir Chakra posthumously while Grenadier Yogendra Singh Yadav of 18 Grenadiers and Rifleman Sanjay Kumar of 13 JAK Rifles were the living recipient of this award.

The Kargil War memorial in Dras was built in 2000 by the Indian Army to commemorate the success of Operation Vijay in 1999.

It was later renovated in 2014. It is also known as the "Dras War Memorial" due to its location in the town of Dras in the Kargil district of Jammu and Kashmir.

The National War Memorial was inaugurated in 2019. It is dedicated to soldiers who sacrificed their lives in various conflicts and missions, including the Sino-Indian war in 1962, Indo-Pak wars in 1947, 1965, and 1971, Indian Peace Keeping Force Operations in Sri Lanka 1987-90, and the Kargil Conflict in 1999.

Soon after the war, the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government set up the Kargil Review Committee to look into the matters relating to the alleged intelligence failure and other issues relating to this War. Pakistan suffered not just on the military front but also political front. Soon after the war, public opinion in Pakistan grew against the then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his policies. He was ousted from the government in a coup orchestrated by then General Pervez Musharraf who seized the control of the civilian government.

**Impact of Kargil War:****Global Recognition of the Line of Control (LoC):**

The international community largely recognized the LoC as the de facto border between India and Pakistan, reinforcing India's stance on the territorial integrity of Jammu and Kashmir.

**Strengthened Strategic Partnerships:**

Kargil also marked the turning point in Indo-US relations. India was regarded as a responsible nuclear actor in the international arena leading to the next step in Strategic Partnership, culminating in the Indo-US Nuclear Deal.

**Diplomatic Gains:**

The war placed significant diplomatic pressure on Pakistan, culminating in a high-profile visit by Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to the U.S. on July 4, 1999, where he faced strong criticism from the US President. This international condemnation of Pakistan's actions helped isolate it diplomatically.

**Highlighting Nuclear Diplomacy:**

The conflict brought global attention to the volatile relationship between India and Pakistan, especially concerning nuclear risks. The war underscored the potential for conflict escalation in a nuclear-armed region.

**Impact on Global Perception:**

The war highlighted India's military capabilities and its ability to effectively manage and respond to regional conflicts, enhancing its global stature as a rising power with robust defence capabilities.

**Reforms Undertaken After the Kargil War:****Security Sector Reforms:**

The Kargil War prompted a review of India's National Security Structure, leading to increased transparency and the establishment of the Kargil Review Committee (KRC) led by K. Subrahmanyam. The KRC report highlighted deficiencies in intelligence, border, and defence management, leading to significant security sector reforms and institutional changes.

**Creation of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS):**

It was created to promote "jointness" among the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

The CDS acts as the single-point military advisor to the government and oversees the integration of the three services.

**Establishment of Tri-Service Commands:**

Andaman and Nicobar Command was created as a test-bed for future theatre commands, integrating resources from the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

**Intelligence Reforms:**

National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO) was established to enhance technical intelligence capabilities.

**Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) was formed**

to coordinate intelligence across all three services.

**Technical Coordination Group was created**

to oversee high-tech intelligence acquisitions.

**National Security Advisor (NSA) was designated**

as the coordinator of all intelligence agencies, supervising the NTRO and ensuring better intelligence integration.

**Border Management Enhancements:**

Improved surveillance and patrolling along the borders to prevent incursions were adopted. Deployment of better technology for border security. E.g., installation of thermal imaging cameras, motion sensors and radar systems came into force.

**Operational Reforms:**

Weapon systems, artillery, and communication equipment were modernised. Increased focus on specialised training for high-altitude warfare and joint operations. E.g., Dhanush Artillery Gun, Akash surface-to-air missile etc. came into force.

**Improved Coordination and Communication:**

Emphasis was put on joint exercises and operations among the Army, Navy, and Air Force to ensure better coordination. Enhanced mechanisms were established

for real-time sharing of intelligence between different agencies and military branches.

**Counter-Terrorism Measures:**

Intelligence Bureau (IB) became the principal counter-terrorism agency. Counter-terrorism capabilities and coordination among various security agencies were strengthened.

**Indigenous Satellite Navigation System:**

The space-based navigation system maintained by the US government would have provided vital information, but the US denied it to India. A need for an indigenous satellite navigation system was felt earlier, but the Kargil experience made the nation realise its inevitability. E.g., Development of Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS).

**Doctrinal Changes:**

The war led to the evolution of Indian military doctrines, including the Cold Start Doctrine. Kargil highlighted the need for a holistic doctrine to address multi-dimensional proxy wars and shaped future military strategies.

This year's commemorations come months after India carried out airstrikes under "Operation Sindoor," targeting nine alleged terror camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-administered Kashmir, along with 11 airbases, according to Indian defence officials.

As part of its outreach initiative, the Indian Army is reaching out to the families of 545 soldiers who were killed in the 1999 Kargil conflict. Army teams are visiting households across 25 states, two Union Territories, and Nepal to deliver letters of gratitude, commemorative mementoes, and detailed information on welfare benefits extended by the central and state governments. The visits also aim to gather feedback on unresolved issues or support gaps faced by the families.

In one such visit, Army officers presented a memento to the parents of Captain Vijayant Thapar, who was killed in the conflict. The meeting took place at their residence in Noida, northern India.

The Army also plans to collect personal memorabilia from the families of the deceased to preserve at the Kargil War Memorial in Dras. The commemorations will conclude with a wreath-laying ceremony at the memorial on July 26.

The Kargil War of 1999 was a pivotal event for India, significantly impacting its military strategy and national security policies. Operation Vijay's success restored control over strategic areas and strengthened India's defence capabilities. The war highlighted the need for robust security measures and prompted major reforms in national security infrastructure. It reaffirmed the Line of Control (LoC) as an effective international border and accelerated the development of new military doctrines, such as the Cold Start Doctrine. The conflict's legacy continues to shape India's defence strategies and diplomatic relations.

The observance of Kargil Vijay Diwas is also a powerful symbol of national unity and patriotism. The Kargil War brought together people from all corners of India, unified in their support for the Armed Forces. This collective spirit of resilience and solidarity continues to be celebrated on Kargil Vijay Diwas, fostering a sense of national pride among citizens.

Additionally, the stories of bravery and heroism from the war inspire future generations, instilling in them a sense of duty and dedication to the nation. Kargil Vijay Diwas ensures that their sacrifices are not forgotten, serving as a solemn tribute to the heroes who defended the nation's sovereignty.

## Celebrating Kargil - Honoring the Heroes of operation Vijay

By: Vinod Chandrashekhara Dixit

26 July is "Kargil victory day". July 26 was declared as Vijay Diwas, and the way in which the Indian Armed Forces fought the war and tried to ensure that it did not escalate into a nuclear conflict, has been acclaimed the world over. The Kargil War was started on 3 May 1999 and ended on 26 July 1999 in which Indian army got the victory. This day marks the successful conclusion of Operation Vijay, which was launched to reclaim Indian territory occupied by Pakistani infiltrators in the Kargil district of Ladakh. Kargil Vijay Diwas celebrates the bravery, sacrifice, and determination of the Indian military and this day reinforces national pride and patriotism, serving as a reminder of India's military capabilities and strengths.

The Nation, hopefully remembers the 400 plus martyrs for laying down their lives in the service of their Nation, in the true spirit of "laying down their today for our tomorrows. Kargil Vijay Diwas is a special occasion for the people of Ladakh. Kargil war took place in the Kargil-Drass sector Ladakh of Jammu and Kashmir. It has been 17 years since the Kargil war, but the memory of the bloodshed remains fresh in the minds of the brave soldiers, who responded to the call of duty and defended the country's borders, and their families. Kargil Vijay Diwas has been named after the success of Operation Vijay. Kargil Vijay Diwas is celebrated on this day to pave the honour of the martyred soldiers in Kargil war. As India celebrates Kargil Diwas and pays homage to martyrs of the war, it is time to recall the significant role of air power that actually tilted the balance in Operation Vijay. The Kargil War will always be remembered for its strategic and tactical surprises, the self-imposed national strategy of restraint in keeping the war limited to Kargil-Siachen sectors, and the swiftly executed tri-services military strategy and plans.

It is both a pride inducing moment and a prick in the hearts of the soldiers who valiantly fought for our nation. As India prepares to hold a memorial service for the martyrs, there are certain facts that we must all know about the historic day. With its significant war footage, Kargil was the first Indo-Pak War that impacted public opinion through mass media coverage. Every patriotic Indian's heart swells with pride at the bravery of our jawans in evicting Pakistani Northern Light Infantry and a few terrorists from the inhospitable Kargil heights. One hopes India's strategic planners have built in & have planned for more robust scenario's to face inevitable, future threats. Kashmiri Pandits all over the world are grateful to these warriors and brave sons of the land for defending the Kashmiri Pandit homeland "MAEJ KASHEER" (MOTHER KASHMIR). There is an old saying in Punjabi's Army "Jine jeet nahi vekhai usay jeetna kaun sikhayega." Loosely translated it means that if one has not seen victory, how can you teach 'em to win a war. Its pride and pain for the soldiers as the nation celebrates the anniversary of the war victory against Pakistan. India continuously stepped up attack against Pakistan and ended up recapturing two key positions in Batalic sector.

The Kargil War will always be remembered for the determination and daring junior leadership and the raw courage of our jawans. Youth and students should draw inspiration from soldiers of the Indian Army who laid down their lives in the Kargil war in 1999 while safeguarding the country. Let us remember this significant occasion to remember the sacrifices of India's heroes and celebrate the country's military triumph.





# Rural development as a career choice

By: **Ranjan K Baruah**

In a country like India where the majority of its population lives in rural areas, rural life or development is crucial. It is not only in India but in most of the developing countries majority lives in rural areas. We need to know

the importance of rural development and how it helps to bring sustainable changes for us. It is a comprehensive process focused on improving the economic and social well-being of people living in rural areas. It encompasses various initiatives aimed at enhancing

livelihoods, infrastructure, and social transformation in villages and other sub urban areas.

Rural development in India focuses on improving the economic and social well-being of people living in rural India, which constitute a significant portion of the

country's population. It encompasses various aspects like agricultural development, infrastructure building, social infrastructure development, and improving access to healthcare, education, and other essential services. Rural development is crucial for India's overall progress, as it addresses the needs of a large segment of the population and contributes significantly to the national income and employment. It is a must for Viksit Bharat.

In a gesture both symbolic and strategic, the United Nations General Assembly declared July 6 as World Rural Development Day, reaffirming its unwavering commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This declaration, steeped in the spirit of international solidarity, acknowledges the deep-rooted challenge of rural poverty and the necessity of addressing it as a precondition for achieving the broader goals of

economic, social, and environmental sustainability. Drawing from a lineage of global declarations and resolutions—from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda—the resolution seeks to shine a sustained light on the lives and struggles of those who till the soil, harvest the seas, and nurture the land in rural corners of the world.

The observance of World Rural Development Day, as outlined, is not intended as a mere ceremonial gesture, but as a catalyst for meaningful action. Governments, civil society, international organizations, and academic institutions are invited to partake in the annual commemoration through concrete activities, policy dialogue, and grassroots initiatives. With a clear emphasis on voluntary contributions and locally driven strategies, the resolution entrusts this Day with the power to elevate rural

voices, galvanize development efforts, and renew the world's collective promise: to leave no one behind, not even in the most remote and forgotten places of the earth.

Rural development could be a career option for those who dream to bring social changes around them. There are options and opportunities for aspirants who are committed and also qualified. There are many courses related to rural development. A Rural Development professional plays a key role in transforming villages by planning and monitoring developing plans and activities and enhancing different targets of the governments or other development agencies. This career is ideal for those who want to support the economic, environmental, and social transformations. One may get jobs in government and also in nongovernmental organisations or other developmental agencies.

Most of the universities and colleges offer courses related to rural development. National Institute of Panchayati Raj and Rural Development offers different courses like Post Graduate Diplomas. Tata Institute of Social Sciences also offers specialized courses related to rural development. There are different management courses related to rural development which are also offered by B Schools. Open and distance learning courses are also available including courses from IGNOU. Apart from academic qualifications one must possess employability skills to succeed through rural development. (**Ranjan K Baruah is a Career Mentor and Skill Trainer and currently is the Advisor to Skill Employment and Entrepreneurship Department (SEED) of Bodoland Territorial Council, Kokrajhar and can be reached at 8473943734 for career related queries**)

## IB Security Assistant Recruitment 2025 – 4987 Posts, Online Apply

Last Date: 17/08/2025

Intelligence Bureau (IB) has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 4987 Security Assistant/ Executive (SA/ Exe) posts in the Intelligence Bureau, (Ministry of Home Affairs), Government of India. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here .

IB Security Assistant Recruitment 2025  
Name of post: Security Assistant/ Executive (SA/ Exe)  
No of posts: 4987 posts  
No of posts @ Guwahati SIB: 124 posts  
Category-wise vacancy:

# UR: 2471  
# OBC: 1015  
# SC: 574  
# ST: 426  
# EWS: 501

Name of organisation: Intelligence Bureau, (Ministry of Home Affairs), Government of India  
Classification of service: General Central Service, Group 'C' (Non-Gazetted, Non-Ministerial)  
Pay scale: Level 3 (Rs.21,700-69,100) in the pay matrix plus admissible Central Govt. allowances.  
Age Limit: The age of the applicant must be between 18 to 27 years as of the closing date of the application.

Age Relaxation: The category-wise age relaxation is as mentioned below.

# SC/ST: 5 years  
# OBC: 3 years

Essential Qualification: The minimum qualification required is matriculation (10th pass) or equivalent from a recognized board.  
Domicile Certificate: The candidate must possess a domicile certificate of the state against which they are applying.  
Local Language: Must have knowledge of any one of the local language/ dialect as mentioned in the advertisement.  
Desirable Qualification: Must have field experience in intelligence work.  
Examination Fee:  
Category Fee  
UR/OBC/EWS (Male) Rs.650/-  
Others Rs.550/-  
# Payment Mode: Payment can be made online via SBI EPAY LITE through Debit Cards (RuPay/Visa/MasterCard/Maestro), Credit Cards, Internet Banking, UPI, SBI challan etc.  
Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for these vacancy. They may follow below mentioned steps to apply online.

# Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .  
# Click on the "Online Application Form" and complete the registration process.  
# In the next stage, click on "Online Application Form" Link and Login.  
# Fill your all personal and educational details and upload necessary documents.  
# Make payment of application fee as per your category and submit the form.  
# At the end, take a print out of the application form.  
# Starting date of submission of online application: 26th July 2025  
# Last date of submission of online application: 17th August 2025 (11:59 PM)

## C V Raman Academy Goalpara Recruitment – 2 Faculty Posts

Last Date: 30/07/2025

C.V. Raman Academy of Science, Goalpara has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 2 PGT & TGT posts. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here.

Name of post: Subject Teacher (Mathematics)

No of posts: 2 posts (PGT: 1, TGT: 1)

Educational Qualification: M. Sc in Mathematics with B. Ed is preferred. Experienced candidates will be preferred.

Age Limit: No age limit.  
Pay: Rs. 30,000/- (Negotiable) + HRA  
Application fee if any: No .?  
# Applicants can share their updated CV to the following E-Mail Address: hr@cvracademy.com.  
# Last date of submission of application: 30/07/2025 .  
# For more details contact: 7896709518C. V. Raman Academy of Science

C.V. Raman Academy of Science, a well known name of Assam in the field of education, is a co-educational institution which was established in 2018. It is situated at Bapujinagar, in the heart of the city Goalpara. C.V. Raman Academy of Science is a Junior College of Science stream .The Academy with sincere and devoted faculty has achieved a unique position in the educational scenario of Assam. The Academy provides Cyber Library, Smart Classes, along with a well stock library with more than 4,000 books and subscribes to a number of journals and newspapers.

## AIIMS Nursing Officer Recruitment 2025 – NORCET 9, Online Apply

Last Date: 11/08/2025

All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi has released an employment notification to conduct Nursing Officer Recruitment Common Eligibility Test (NORCET) 9 for the recruitment of Nursing Officer Vacancy for AIIMS New Delhi and all other AIIMS. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here.  
Name of post: Nursing Officer

No of posts: To be updated later

Name of exam: Nursing Officer Recruitment Common Eligibility Test (NORCET)

Category-wise vacancy:

# UR: To be updated later  
# OBC/NCL: To be updated later  
# SC: To be updated later  
# ST: To be updated later  
# EWS: To be updated later  
# PWD: To be updated later

Name of AIIMS:

# AIIMS Bathinda  
# AIIMS Bhopal  
# AIIMS Bhubaneswar  
# AIIMS Bibinagar  
# AIIMS Bilaspur  
# AIIMS Deoghar  
# AIIMS Gorakhpur  
# AIIMS Jodhpur  
# AIIMS Kalyani  
# AIIMS Mangalagiri  
# AIIMS Nagpur  
# AIIMS Delhi  
# AIIMS Patna  
# AIIMS Rae Bareli  
# AIIMS Raipur  
# AIIMS Rajkot  
# AIIMS Rishikesh  
# AIIMS Vijaypur

Pay: Pay Matrix pre-revised Pay Band-2 of Rs.9300-34800 with Grade Pay of Rs.4600/-  
Toll Free Number: 1800117898  
Age Limit: Between 18- 30 years as on the last date of closing of application form.

Age Relaxation: Upper age relaxation is as mentioned below:

# SC/ST: 5 years,  
# OBC: 3 years  
# PwBD: 10 years  
# PwBD + OBC: 13 years  
# PwBD + SC/ST: 15 years  
# Ex-servicemen: 5 years

Educational Qualification:

a. B.Sc. (Hons.) Nursing / B.Sc. Nursing from an Indian Nursing Council/state Nursing council recognized Institute or University OR B.Sc. (Post-Certificate) / Post-Basic B.Sc. Nursing from an Indian Nursing Council/State Nursing council recognized Institute/ University.  
b. Registered as Nurses & Midwife with State / Indian Nursing Council

OR

a. Diploma in General Nursing Midwifery from an Indian Nursing Council/State Nursing council recognized Institute / Board or Council  
b. Registered as Nurses & Midwife in State / Indian Nursing Council.  
c. Two Years' Experience in a minimum 50 bedded Hospital after acquiring the educational qualification mentioned above as applicable.

Application Fee: The category-wise application fees are as under.

Category	Fee
General/OBC	Rs.3000/-
SC/ST/EWS	Rs.2400/-
PWD	Exempted

# Payment Mode: Through Online by using Debit/ Credit Card/ Net Banking.

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for these vacancy through online mode by visiting official AIIMS Recruitment Portal. Candidates may follow below mentioned steps to apply for AIIMS Nursing Officer recruitment.

# Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .  
# Click on the "Online Application Form" and register your self by clicking "New Registration".  
# Next again click on "Online Application Form" and log in .  
# Fill your all personal and educational details and upload necessary documents.  
# Make payment of application fee as per your category and submit the form.  
# At the end, take a print out of the application form .  
# Starting date of online application submission: 22nd July 2025  
# Last date of online application submission: 11th August 2025  
# Online (CBT) for Stage I: NORCET Preliminary, Date: 14th September 2025  
# Online (CBT) for Stage II : NORCET Mains, Date: 27th September 2025

## UPSC EPFO Recruitment 2025 – 230 Posts, Online Apply

Last Date: 18/08/2025

Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 230 Enforcement Officer/ Accounts Officer and Assistant Provident Fund Commissioner posts under Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), Ministry of Labour & Employment. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here .

1. Enforcement Officer/ Accounts Officer

No of posts: 156

Category-wise vacancy:

# UR: 78  
# EWS: 1  
# OBC: 42  
# SC: 23  
# ST: 12

# PwBD: 9

Pay: Level-08 in the Pay Matrix as per 7th CPC.

Age Limit: Category-wise upper age limit is as mentioned below.

# UR/ EWS: 30  
# OBC: 33  
# SC/ ST: 35  
# PwBD: 40

2. Assistant Provident Fund Commissioner

No of posts: 74

Category-wise vacancy:

# UR: 32  
# EWS: 7  
# OBC: 28  
# SC: 7  
# PwBD: 3

Pay: Level-10 in the Pay Matrix as per 7th CPC.

Age Limit: Category-wise upper age limit is as mentioned below.

# UR/ EWS: 35  
# OBC: 38  
# SC/ ST: 40  
# PwBD: 45

Related Article: ESIC Recruitment

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for these vacancy through online mode by visiting official UPSC Recruitment Portal. Candidates may follow below mentioned steps to apply for UPSC recruitment.

# Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .  
# Click on the "Online Application Form" and complete the registration process by clicking "New Registration".  
# In the next stage, click on "Online Application Form" Link and Login.  
# Fill your all personal and educational details and upload necessary documents.  
# Make payment of application fee as per your category and submit the form.  
# At the end, take a print out of the application form .  
# Starting date to apply online: 29th July 2025  
# Last date to apply online: 18th August 2025

Bank of Baroda Recruitment 2025 – 2500 Local Bank Officer Posts

Name of post: Local Bank Officer (LBO)

No of posts: 2500 posts

State-wise Vacancy:

Arunachal Pradesh: 6  
Assam: 64  
Manipur: 12  
Meghalaya: 7  
Mizoram: 4  
Nagaland: 8  
Tripura: 6  
Goa: 15  
Gujarat: 1160  
Jammu & Kashmir: 10  
Karnataka: 450  
Kerala: 50  
Maharashtra: 485  
Odisha: 60  
Punjab: 50  
Sikkim: 3  
Tamil Nadu: 60  
West Bengal: 50

Age Limit: Age must be between 21 to 30 years as on 01/07/2025.

Age Relaxation: Category-wise age relaxation is as mentioned below

# SC/ST: 5 years  
# OBC: 3 years  
# PwD (Unreserved): 10 years  
# PwD (OBC): 13 years  
# PwD (SC/ST): 15 years

Educational Qualification: Graduation in any discipline from a recognized University / Institute [including Integrated Dual Degree (IDD)]. Professional qualifications in Chartered Accountant, Cost Accountant, Engineering, or Medical are also eligible.

Post Qualification Experience: Minimum 1 year of post-qualification experience as an officer in any Scheduled Commercial Bank or any Regional Rural Bank as listed in Second Schedule of Reserve Bank of India only.

Experience in NBFCs, cooperative banks, Payment Banks, Small Finance Banks or fintechs will not be considered.

Local Language Proficiency: Candidates must be proficient in the local language of the State they are applying for (reading, writing, speaking and understanding).

Application Fee: Category-wise application fee is as under.

Category	Fee
PwBD	Rs.175/- + Payment Gateway Charges
SC/ ST/ Female	Rs.175/- + Payment Gateway Charges
UR/ EWS/ OBC	Rs.850/- + Payment Gateway Charges

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for these vacancy through online mode by visiting official Bank of Baroda Recruitment Portal. Candidates may follow below mentioned steps to apply for Bank of Baroda Local Bank Officer recruitment.

# Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .  
# Click on the "Online Application Form" and complete the registration process.

# Fill your all personal and educational details and upload necessary documents.  
# Make payment of application fee as per your category and submit the form.

# At the end, take a print out of the application form .

# Starting date of online application submission: 4th July 2025  
# Last date of online application submission: 3rd August 2025



# SIX STUDENTS DEAD AS PORTION OF SCHOOL BUILDING COLLAPSES IN RAJASTHAN

**JHALAWAR , July 25:** A portion of a government school building collapsed in Rajasthan's Jhalawar district on Friday, leaving six children dead and 29 injured, police said. The children at the Piplod Government School in Manoharthana block of the district were assembling for morning prayers when the incident took place.

The police were informed at around 7:45 am.

Police said the children were pulled out of the debris with the help of teachers and villagers.

Five of the deceased have been identified as Kundar, Kanha, Raidas, Anuradha and Badal Bhil, Station House Officer, Manoharthana, Nand Kishore said.

There were around 35 students in the building when the incident occurred, officials said. Earlier Station House Officer at Dangipura police station Vijendra Singh had said that classes for 6 and 7 in the building gave away leading to the collapse.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi condoled the loss of



lives in the incident.

In a post on X, he said, "The mishap at a school in Jhalawar, Rajasthan, is tragic and deeply saddening. My thoughts are with the affected students and

their families in this difficult hour". "Praying for the speedy recovery of the injured. Authorities are providing all possible assistance to those affected," he added.

Condoling the loss of lives, Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma said, "The concerned officials have been directed to ensure proper treatment of the injured children."

"May God grant a place to the departed divine souls in his lotus feet and give strength to the bereaved family to bear this immense sorrow," he said. Education minister Madan

Dilawar said a high-level inquiry will be conducted into the incident.

He directed officials to rush to the spot and ensure that the children get proper treatment.

"A very unfortunate incident occurred in Piplod village in Jhalawar where roof of a school collapsed. I have instructed district collector and education officer to make all kinds of arrangements for treatment. The collector and other officers have reached the spot," he said.

"I will get a high-level inquiry done to find out why this incident happened," the minister said.

Former chief minister Ashok Gehlot hoped for the speedy recovery of the injured students. "There are reports of many children and teachers getting injured due to the collapse of a government school building in Jhalawar's Manoharthana. I pray to God for minimum loss of life and speedy recovery of the injured," he said on X.

Leader of opposition Tikaram Jullu also expressed grief over the incident. (PTI)

**₹1.44 crore in cash, 1.5 kg gold found from Odisha forest officer's residence**

**BHUBANESWAR, July 25:** Anti-corruption Vigilance sleuths on Friday found ₹ 1.44 crore in cash and 1.5 kg gold from the residence of a forest department official working as a deputy ranger in Odisha's Koraput district.

The vigilance department launched a search operation at six locations of Rama Chandra Nepak, currently serving as Deputy Ranger-cum-In-Charge Ranger of the Jeypore Forest Range, based on an allegation of possession of disproportionate assets to his known sources of income.

As many as 6 DSPs, 5 Inspectors, 9 ASIs, and other supporting staff conducted raids on the strength of search warrants issued by Special Judge, Vigilance, Jeypore, the department said in a statement.

It said that the officer draws a gross monthly salary of ₹ 76,880 (net ₹ 69,680). Nepak began his career on March 9, 1989, as a Village Forestry Worker under the Social Forestry Division in Koraput.

Following the merger of Social Forestry with the Territorial Forest Division, he was transferred to the Jeypore (Territorial) Forest Division.

"In ongoing DA searches against Rama Chandra Nepak, Rs 1.4 crore (approx) concealed in a secret treasury in his Flat No 510, Golden Height Residential Apartment, Jeypore Town, has been unearthed."

"Counting machines have been deployed and counting is being taken up," the vigilance said in the statement.

It also said that gold weighing 1.5 kg, silver 4.63 kg, four gold biscuits, 16 gold coins and two high-value plots in Jeypore town were also unearthed.

Nepak, however, claimed that the properties detected at his places also belong to his son and wife, who are doing business. Regarding recovery of gold and silver, he said: "The gold and silver were received as gifts during his marriage and that of his son. There is nothing illegal in it," he said.

The department said that the raids are ongoing and further verification of documents, assets, and financial records is also underway. (PTI)

## My mistake we couldn't get caste census done earlier; correcting that now: Rahul Gandhi



**NEW DELHI, July 25:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday acknowledged that it was his "mistake" and not that of the party that they could not get a caste census conducted earlier, saying he is correcting that now.

Gandhi further said he committed a "mistake" in his political career of 21 years, which is not protecting the interests of the Other Backward Classes (OBC) section as much as he should have done.

Addressing a 'Bhagidari Nyay Sammelan' of OBCs at the Talkatora Stadium here, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha said the caste census in Telangana is a "political earthquake" that will cause a huge "aftershock" in the country. "I have been doing politics since 2004, it has been 21 years, and when I look back and do a self-analysis, where all I did the right thing and where I fell short, I see two-three big issues - land acquisition bill, MGN-REGA, food bill, fight for tribals, I did these things wrong," Gandhi said. "When it comes to Dalits, tribals and minorities, I should get good marks. On women's issues, I should get good marks.

"But when I look back, I can

see clearly that in one thing I was lacking, I committed one mistake -- I did not protect the OBC section deeply 10-15 years ago.

He said he could not understand the issues of the OBC section deeply 10-15 years ago. "I understood Dalit problems, which are clear; one can understand issues of STs also clearly. The issues of OBCs are hidden. "I regret that if I had known more about your history and issues, I would have gotten the caste census done. That is my mistake and not that of the Congress. I am going to correct that mistake," Gandhi said.

He, however, added that in a way, it is better that the caste census was not done earlier, as it would not have been done in the manner it would be done now following the Telangana example.

"The caste census in Telangana is a political earthquake. It has shaken the political ground of the country. You have not felt its aftershock but the impact will be there," Gandhi said.

"We will conduct a caste census and an X-ray of the population in all Congress-ruled states," he said. (PTI)

## Modi overtakes Indira Gandhi to become PM with second longest unbroken stint

**NEW DELHI, July 25:** Narendra Modi on Friday overtook Indira Gandhi to become the second longest serving prime minister of India in consecutive terms.

Modi, officials noted, completed 4,078 days in office on Friday, Gandhi to become the second longest serving prime minister of India in consecutive terms.

The record for the unbroken stint is held by Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister. Both Modi and Nehru led their respective parties to victory in three consecutive Lok Sabha elections.

Nehru, who remained at the helm from August 15, 1947, till his death on May 27, 1964, had an uninterrupted tenure of 6,130 days.

As an elected head of a government, in state and at the Centre, Modi already enjoys the longest stint.

He became Gujarat chief minister in 2001 and remained in office before taking over as prime minister in 2014.

Modi, the first prime minister born after Independence, is also the longest serving non-Congress PM. The officials noted that the Gujarat-born leader is the only non-Congress leader to complete two full terms as the head of the central government.

"Modi is the only leader in India, among all PMs and CMs, to win six consecutive elections as the leader of a party -- Gujarat assembly polls in 2002, 2007 and 2012, and the national elections in 2014, 2019, and 2024," an official said. (PTI)



## ₹ 512 cr bank fraud case: Court orders auction of sports academy, land parcel of ex-MLA

**MUMBAI, July 25:** A special anti-money laundering court has ordered the auction of properties linked to former MLA Vivekanand Shankar Patil to facilitate repayment to creditors of a cooperative bank based in Panvel in Maharashtra's Raigad district.

The properties, comprising a multi-acre sports academy and a land parcel in Panvel, have been attached by probe agencies in an alleged fraud of over Rs 512 crore at the Kamala Nagari Sahakari (cooperative) Bank.

Patil, the prime accused in the case, represented Panvel as a Peasants and Workers Party of India MLA for three terms and was a legislator from Uran once.

A total of 87 properties, including some ancestral assets of Patil, were attached under the MPID Act, or the Maharashtra Protection of Interest of Depositors (in Financial Establishments) Act, by Navi Mumbai police's Economic Offences Wing.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED), which is also probing a money laundering

case linked to the fraud, has dual attachment to some of these properties.

Special PMLA Judge Satyanarayan Navander on Tuesday ordered the release of these attached properties, allowing a plea by the bank's liquidator.

The liquidator had sought release of Kamala Sports Academy and a plot of land, both located in Panvel taluka, to discharge the bank's liabilities to its creditors, including depositors.

All the parties, including the accused, had given their no objection to proceed with the auction of these properties.

Given the consensus among all parties, the court deemed it proper to make the attachment of these two properties absolute. It then directed the immediate commencement of the auction process in the interest of the bank's depositors.

The ED case is based on an FIR registered against Patil and 75 others in February 2020 by the Economic Offences Wing, which had alleged irregularities of Rs 512.54 crore in the Panvel-headquartered Kamala co-operative bank. (PTI)

## Opposition MPs tear, throw 'SIR' posters in bin as symbolic rejection of exercise

**NEW DELHI, July 25:** Several MPs of the INDIA bloc parties, including Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and former party chief Rahul Gandhi, on Friday held an unusual protest in Parliament House complex against the voter roll revision in Bihar by tearing posters with 'SIR' written on them and putting them in a 'disposal bin'. The opposition MPs also staged a protest march in Parliament House complex, demanding the rollback of SIR as well as a discussion on the issue in both houses. Kharge alleged that the Modi government wants to remove the votes of the poor, Dalits, tribals, backward classes, minorities and the deprived, so that it can change the Constitution of India according to the Manusmriti. (PTI)

### NOTICE

Ecf No: 639138/14

In continuation of the earlier notification issued vide no: 639138/12 dated 11-07-2025, regarding admission and in larger interest of the student community, the undersigned is directed to notify that the new Registration option for Non-CUET will be available during final Spot admission round from 28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2025.

Any interested applicant who has not yet registered in the Assam State Higher Education Portal 2025-26, may register afresh and apply to the University/College of their choice. Applicants who had registered earlier need not register again and can proceed with the admission process using the previous registration number. The admission shall be granted based on the availability of seats, as reflected in the admission portal, and respective institution's policy for Spot admissions.

Additionally, all seats reserved for admissions through the CUET mode, against which admission is not granted till 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2025 through CUET mode shall be released by 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2025 for admission through the Non-CUET mode during the final spot admission round from 28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2025.

Sd/-

DIPR /D/HLT/86/26-Jul-25

Director of Higher Education, Assam  
Kahilipara, Guwahati

### NOTICE

Ecf No: 649072/9

In larger interest of the student community, the undersigned is directed to notify all students admitted in the admission session 2025-26 to various participating Higher Educational Institutions (Universities/ Colleges) in Assam through Non-CUET and CUET mode in the Assam State Higher Education Admission Portal that in the event of their admission to any other programme or Institution outside the Assam State Higher Education Admission Portal like ITEP-2025 (Integrated Teacher Education Programme) or Polytechnic or Medical or Law or Engineering or Four Year Undergraduate programme (FYUGP) in any Institution outside Assam are hereby required to cancel their admission in the Assam State Higher Education Admission Portal from 26<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2025 for processing of refund of their admission fee.

In this regard, it may be noted that if any admitted applicant has paid their admission fee through the integrated payment gateway in the admission portal then the fee shall be refunded to their bank account, as per the bank account details provided in their profile in the admission portal. If any admitted applicant has not yet entered their bank account details in the portal by 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2025, then the admission fee shall be refunded back to the source from where the payment was made and the liability of ensuring that the refunded amount is credited to the applicant's bank account shall not rest with the undersigned.

It is also to be noted that if the students have not made payment through the integrated payment gateway but have directly made payment to the Institution either in Cash or any other mode, then in the event of cancellation of admission, the entire admission fee will be refunded back to the applicant by the Institution positively within 2-3 working days of initiation of cancellation by the applicant.

The Institutions are requested to kindly comply with the provisions mentioned above without any deviation.

Sd/-

DIPR /D/HLT/87/26-Jul-25

Director of Higher Education, Assam  
Kahilipara, Guwahati

## India has to triple its satellites in orbit in next three years: ISRO chief

**HYDERABAD, July 25:** ISRO Chairman V Narayanan on Friday said that India has to nearly triple its number of satellites in space, from the current 55, within the next three years.

Delivering 'The GP Birla Memorial Lecture on Indian Space Programme - Accomplishments, Challenges and Future Perspectives', Narayanan said by 2040 India would be on par with any other nation in terms of space technology, application area, and infrastructure. He also said as many as 12 launch vehicle missions are planned by the ISRO this year. The upcoming mission, NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) is scheduled to be launched by India's GSLV F16 on July 30.

"Now we are working on building our own space station. We are going to have our own Chandrayan landing. Right now, 55 satellites are in orbit serving the common man in this country. And in another three



years, this number has to become almost three times. The requirement is huge. The demand is so much that we have to build satellites. We are working towards that," he said. Later, talking to reporters, he said that in 2035 India will build a full space station, and the first module will be placed in orbit in 2028.

Narayanan said, as far as space sector reforms are concerned, a lot of work is going on, and earlier, ISRO's model of work used to be service-oriented, but now it wants to grab business opportunities.

He said after the success of Chandrayaan-3, Japan wanted to collaborate with India, and as a result, ISRO and JAXA, the Japanese space agency, decided to work towards the Chandrayaan-5/LUPEX mission.

"We are building the satellite together, and the launch will be done by Japan. Chandrayaan-3's lander mass was 1,600 kg and this will be

6,600 kg. We are working on that and you will hear great news in another two years," he said.

Narayanan stated that ISRO is in the process of launching a 6,500 kg communication satellite of the USA into orbit using Indian rockets, in another three months.

He further said the centre gave its approval for setting up a third launch pad at Sriharikota with a budget of about ₹ 4,000 crore.

According to him, the ISRO expects the Gaganyaan mission to launch Indian astronauts into space only in the first quarter of 2027. ISRO has placed 433 satellites belonging to 34 countries which do not have space technology into orbit using Indian rockets.

In the last ten years the total number of satellites launched by ISRO stands at 518, he added. Narayanan, Chairman of ISRO and Secretary of the Department of Space received the prestigious GP Birla Memorial Award. (PTI)



# Guv Parnaik urges Indian Army to deepen strategic understanding of Op Sindoor

Commends role in border development and community outreach in Arunachal Pradesh

HT Correspondent

**DINJAN, July 25:** The Governor of Arunachal Pradesh, Lt. General K.T. Parnaik, PVSM, UYSM, YSM (Retd.), interacted with officers of the Indian Army at the Dinjan Military Station in Assam's Dibrugarh district on Friday, during which he spoke at length about the strategic, operational, and humanitarian dimensions of national security, with a particular emphasis on the Indian Army's role in Arunachal Pradesh.

According to an official statement issued by the Raj Bhavan, the Governor's address covered the evolving global geopolitical landscape and its direct implications on India's eastern frontier.

He discussed at length Operation Sindoor, encouraging the Army officers to engage in an in-depth and multi-faceted study of the operation.

Governor Parnaik said such analysis should encompass operational, strategic, and humanitarian aspects, as this would not only strengthen their professional acumen but also equip them with valuable lessons for future developments.

Drawing from his extensive military experience, the Governor provided insights into perception management, the use of emerging



technologies in modern warfare, and the significance of sustained operational preparedness.

He highlighted the importance of anticipating threats and adapting to adversarial tactics in the dynamic security environment that Arunachal Pradesh faces.

The Governor lauded the Indian Army for its dual commitment

ment to national security and civil outreach, particularly acknowledging the efforts of certain units in extending educational and healthcare support to students and residents in remote border villages of Arunachal Pradesh.

These initiatives, he noted, often take place in extremely challenging terrain and reflect the Army's unwavering commitment

to the people it serves.

Governor Parnaik also called upon the officers to sustain and expand their community-focused activities under Operation Sadbhavana.

He emphasised that these people-centric initiatives not only improve the quality of life in remote areas but also deepen the relationship of trust and respect between the Army and the civilian population.

Earlier in the day, the Governor was formally received by the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the 2 Mountain Division, Major General VS Deshpande.

The GOC briefed him on the Division's operational responsibilities and the wide-ranging development initiatives undertaken by the Army in the border regions under Operation Sadbhavana.

These projects, he said, are aimed at fostering strong and lasting partnerships with local communities while maintaining border vigilance and national integrity.

The Governor's visit was part of his continued engagement with the armed forces stationed along Arunachal Pradesh's sensitive international borders, reinforcing the symbiotic relationship between defence preparedness and regional development.

# Arunachal CM Pema Khandu joins Dalai Lama's spiritual gathering in Ladakh



**ITANAGAR, July 25:** Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Friday joined thousands of devotees at the revered Karsha Photang in Zaskar to participate in 'Yarchos Chenmo', the great summer dharma gathering, hosted by the Karsha Monastery in Ladakh.

The sacred congregation witnessed the presence of nearly 30,000 spiritual seekers who assembled under the vast Ladakhi skies to receive teachings from the Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama.

Khandu, in a social media post described his encounter with the Dalai Lama in Ladakh as a deeply humbling and spiritually uplifting

experience, highlighting the quiet power of compassion and the timeless wisdom radiated by the revered Tibetan leader.

Khandu is currently on a visit to Ladakh.

The revered Tibetan spiritual leader delivered a powerful discourse on key Buddhist principles, including compassion, dependent origination, the Four Noble Truths, the concept of emptiness, and the path of the Bodhisattva.

"We gathered under open skies, in the shadow of the mountains, to listen to His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, whom the world rightly calls the Ocean of Peace," Khandu posted in X, sharing his

reflections on the experience.

The chief minister described the teachings as both graceful and profound, offering a timely reminder of the enduring strength found in peace and compassion.

"In a world often driven by division, moments like this remind us: peace isn't just a dream, it's a practice. And compassion isn't weakness, it's strength," Khandu said in another social media post.

He expressed gratitude for the rare spiritual experience and paid heartfelt tribute to the Dalai Lama, calling him "Avalokitesvara in human form, beacon of universal compassion".

Earlier in the day, Khandu was also granted a private audience with the Dalai Lama at Karsha Photang, the leader's official residence in Zaskar.

The chief minister described the meeting as a moment of "deep stillness and awakening".

"To be in the presence of His Holiness is to feel the quiet power of compassion, the boundless depth of wisdom, and the warmth of a smile that holds centuries of spiritual legacy," the chief minister added.

Khandu's presence at the gathering reflected Arunachal Pradesh's deep-rooted spiritual and cultural ties with the broader Himalayan Buddhist tradition.

His visit also served as a reminder of the unifying power of faith and the enduring influence of the Dalai Lama in inspiring compassion, harmony, and wisdom across borders. (PTI)

# Governor Parnaik pays solemn tribute to Kargil War Martyrs on Vijay Diwas

HT Correspondent

**ITANAGAR, July 25:** Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lt General KT Parnaik, PVSM, UYSM, YSM (Retd), on the solemn occasion of Kargil Vijay Diwas, paid heartfelt tributes to the brave soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice during the Kargil War of 1999.

In an official message issued from Raj Bhavan, the Governor conveyed his deepest respects on behalf of the people of Arunachal Pradesh and in his personal capacity.

He recalled the extraordinary courage and sacrifice of the Indian armed forces in defending the nation against immense odds during the conflict.

"Kargil Vijay Diwas is more than just a commemoration of military triumph; it is a powerful and enduring reminder of the indomitable spirit, selflessness, and unmatched patriotism of our soldiers," the Governor said.

He emphasized that the valiant defence of the nation by Indian troops in the high-altitude battlefields of Kargil continues to inspire every Indian to rise above divisions and embody the ideals of unity, national pride, and resilience.

Referring to the unforgiving terrain and extreme conditions under which Indian soldiers fought during the war, Governor Parnaik said, "Against im-

possible odds, our soldiers stood tall to protect the motherland. Their legacy reminds us that service to the nation is the highest form of duty."

Highlighting the relevance of Kargil Vijay Diwas beyond the battlefield, the Governor said that the occasion should serve as a lasting source of inspiration, particularly for the younger generation, to uphold the values of patriotism, courage, and collective responsibility.

"As we remember our fallen heroes with reverence and gratitude, their legacy continues to awaken the spirit of service and sacrifice in every Indian," he added.

The Governor also called upon all citizens to reflect on the valour and commitment of the Indian armed forces and to renew their own dedication to national service in whatever capacity they can.

"May the valour of Kargil continue to guide and enthuse generations to come," he said in conclusion.

Kargil Vijay Diwas is observed every year on July 26 to mark India's victory in Operation Vijay, when Indian forces successfully recaptured all positions held by Pakistani intruders in the Kargil sector of Jammu and Kashmir in 1999.

Across the country, the day is observed with memorial ceremonies, tributes to fallen soldiers, and reaffirmations of national solidarity.

# ANYA-EKDU demands re-verification of land compensation for Lada-Sarli Highway Project

HT Correspondent

**ITANAGAR, July 25:** The All Niyishi Youth Association, East Kameng District Unit (ANYA-EKDU), has called for a time-bound re-verification of land compensation distributed to beneficiaries under the Lada to Sarli stretch of the Frontier Highway project.

In an official statement issued during a press briefing at the Arunachal Press Club (APC) on Friday, the association alleged serious irregularities and a lack of transparency in the compensation process and warned of possible legal and democratic agitation if corrective steps are not taken within a fortnight. ANYA-EKDU president Ramesh Taku, addressing the media, claimed that the land compensation awarded for the Lada-Sarli highway was marred by discrepancies.

"There have been significant lapses in the disbursement of compensation. During our field visits, several genuine landowners reported receiving disproportionately lower compensation than others, despite owning larger land parcels," Taku stated. The association has demanded an immediate halt to the ongoing compensation process until a proper and transparent re-verification is completed.

They stressed the importance of ensuring that all project-affected families receive fair and equal compensation as per their entitlement under the government's guidelines.

Alleging administrative failure, the association questioned the credibility of the District Land Revenue and Settlement Officer (DLRSO) and other concerned officials involved in the compensation process.

# Horticulture Input Kits distributed in Jang Under Vibrant Village Programme

HT Correspondent

**JANG, July 25:** In a significant step towards promoting sustainable and organic agriculture in remote border areas, the Department of Horticulture, Tawang, on Friday distributed horticulture input kits to farmers under the Vibrant Village Programme (VVP).

The event, held at the office premises of the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) in Jang, was aimed at empowering local farmers with essential tools and resources to adopt healthier and eco-friendly farming practices.

According to an official statement, a total of 45 beneficiary farm families from the Jang-Thingbu Block received Hybrid Vegetable Seed Kits, Organic Manure Kits (granular and liquid), Organic Pesticide Kits, and Knapsack Sprayers.

The initiative falls under the centrally sponsored Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) and is part of the broader VVP agenda that focuses on holistic rural development in India's frontier regions.

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Jang, Hakraso Kri, who graced the occasion as chief guest, stressed the urgent need to shift from chemical-based agriculture to organic cultivation.

Addressing the beneficiaries, he highlighted the harmful health and environmental effects of synthetic inputs and called for widespread adoption of organic farming methods.

"Organic farming is not only safer for our health and environment, but it also



provides access to high-value markets with premium pricing," ADC Kri said.

He also encouraged farmers to embrace group farming and to build strong forward linkages to secure better market access for their produce. District Horticulture Officer Safior Rahman gave a detailed presentation on the application schedules and technical use of organic inputs.

He explained the benefits of organic fungicides, bactericides, bio-pesticides, and liquid enzymes, reiterating their safety and environmental advantages over conventional chemical alternatives.

Sub-Divisional Horticulture Officer Koncho Gyatso elaborated on the goals of the Vibrant Village Programme and urged farmers to participate actively in horticultural initiatives.

He emphasised the importance of such activities in improving food security, generating sustainable income, and enhancing

the economic resilience of remote communities.

The event also saw participation from Vinod Kumar, Assistant Sub-Inspector of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), PRI members, and other local stakeholders. Their involvement underscored the importance of community-level collaboration in strengthening agricultural practices and improving livelihoods in sensitive border regions.

The Vibrant Village Programme aims to ensure that rural and border villages are integrated into the national development framework by providing access to key infrastructure, services, and sustainable livelihood opportunities.

The horticulture kit distribution drive in Jang is seen as a meaningful step toward building an organic, profitable, and climate-resilient farming ecosystem in the region.

## KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL DEPARTMENT OF SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, (S.E.) WORKS, KAAC::SECRETARIAT DIPHU - 782460

No. KAAC/S.E. -W-970/2025-26/209(A)

Dtd. 22/07/2025

### RE - TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tender affixing non refundable KAAC court fee stamp (receipt) Rs. 10.00 (Rupees Ten) only eventually to be drawn up in form are hereby invited from KAAC registered contractor/reputed firms of works department and will be received by the undersigned up to **4 P.M. on 29/07/2025.** and will be opened on the same date, place and the hours in presence of the tenderer or their authorized agent if any.

If the day of the opening of tender happens to be a holiday/non-working days, the tender will be opened in the next day. The undersigned has the right to accept, reject any tender without any assigning reason thereof and will not be bound to accept the lowest tender quoted rate.

Sl No.	Name of Works	Tender Amount (Rs)	A/A Amount (Rs)	Earnest money	Time allowed completion
1	Installation of Fire Prevention and Safety Measures at Multi Purpose Sports Complex (Sarsing Teron Langkung Habe) Diphu	Rs. 84.56,600.00	Rs. 84,56,600.00	ST/SC/OBC=1% General =2%	60 days

### Terms & Condition N.B

- The rate to be quoted as % (Percent) above/below/as per schedule rate for building/sanitary/works for all division under CPWD-2020-21.
- Earnest money should be deposited in favour of the undersigned in the form of call deposit/bank draft & should be attached with the tender without which no tender will be accepted.
- The Contractor shall repair/re-Construction if the works executed failed due inferior quality of works, The KAAC Authority will take legal action if the contractor refuse to repair/re- construction the woks.
- The work must be carried on as directed by the EE (W), KAAC Diphu Authority.
- The following up to date documents should be enclosed with the tender.
  - Professional Tax Clearance Certificate
  - Sale Tax Clearance Certificate/GST.
  - Council Registration.
  - Call Deposit.
  - Council receipt.
  - Caste Certificate.
  - Pan Card/Adhaar Card.
  - Account number.
  - Payment will be made subject to availabilities of fund.
  - The undersigned is not bound to accept the lowest quoted rate.

Sd/-  
Superintending Engineer, (Works)  
Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council  
**DIPHU.**



# NAGAL RETURNS TO DAVIS CUP FOLD AFTER TWO YEARS, YUKI ALSO COMES BACK; RAMKUMAR DROPPED

**NEW DELHI, July 25:** India's top singles player Sumit Nagal on Friday returned to the Davis Cup squad after a two-year absence while number one doubles player Yuki Bhambri also made a comeback to the national fold after missing two ties as the AITA selection panel picked an eight-member squad for the away match against Switzerland.

India will travel to the city of Biel for the World Group I first-round tie, which will be played on indoor courts from September 12. Nagal's last appearance was the home tie against Morocco in Lucknow in September 2023 where he won both his singles matches in India's 4-1 win.

He did not travel to Pakistan for the historic tie in February 2024 and also missed the subsequent matches against Sweden and Togo.

Nagal has dropped outside the top-300 bracket due to lack of form and unfavourable results this season. A semifinal finish at the Trieste Challenger in Italy this month has been his best showing this season.

Apart from Nagal (ranked 306), India chose singles players in Karan Singh (403) and young Aryan Shah (442). Sasikumar Mukund (463) and talented Dakshinashwar Suresh (790) will be



the reserve singles players for the tie.

Top-ranked Bhambri (ranked 35), and N Sriram Balaji (75) are the doubles players chosen in the squad which will have Rithvik Bollipalli (77) as reserve.

Bhambri had travelled to Pakistan and contributed to the team's 4-0 win against the hosts in Islamabad but has not featured

in the national team since then.

The tie will be played on the indoor courts, which are likely to be fast. Nagal's game is best suited for slower courts.

"Sumit Nagal had a great journey to top-100. He plays at a high level, he can make those adjustments. It's not going to be easy. In the Denmark tie against Holger Rune, it was a tight match. We

have to see what kind of bounce the court offers," India skipper Rohit Rajpal told PTI.

Asked about Dakshinashwar's inclusion ahead of a few higher-ranked players, Rajpal said, "We have been studying his game for some time. His hard court game is good. He is 6'5" and has a big serve, and this is going to be an asset on fast indoors courts. I

think, he has a crucial role to play in this tie.

"We will have practice matches and pick the final team on form, fitness and match sharpness," he added.

Rajpal also informed that young Manas Dhamne was available for selection only if he was in the playing squad.

"I don't like these conditions but he has a bright future and this time we have accepted his decision. He wants to up his ranking by playing tournaments."

It will be interesting to see Switzerland's line-up. They had lost to Spain 1-3 in the Davis Cup qualifiers.

Jerome Kym is their highest-ranked singles player at number 145, followed by Stan Wawrinka (156), Marc-Andrea Huesler (170) and Dominic Stricker (205). Rajpal said rankings do not reflect the right picture of the European players.

"In Europe, they do not play many tournaments so their ranking is not high but they can easily beat the top-100 players. It's going to be a tough tie. The Indian team is going through a transition phase and we need to develop players for the future."

It may be mentioned that all tennis players receiving funds under various government

schemes had given an undertaking that they will make themselves available for national duty.

The selection committee led by former Davis Cup coach Nandan Bal dropped Ramkumar Ramanathan from the squad. His axing was expected since the 30-year-old has been struggling on the Tour this season.

Ramkumar is one player who can smoothly switch from singles to doubles and vice versa but his form has not been encouraging as he is even struggling to enter the main draws of the singles events on the Challenger Circuit.

India have competed against Switzerland thrice, emerging winners twice.

The last time the two sides competed was way back in 1993 when hosts India edged Switzerland 3-2 on the grass courts of the Calcutta South Club.

The winning team will compete in the 2026 Davis Cup Qualifiers while the losing nation will get back to the World Group I Play-offs next year.

**Davis Cup Squad:**

**Singles:** Sumit Nagal, Karan Singh and Aryan Shah.

**Doubles:** Yuki Bhambri and N Sriram Balaji.

**Reserves:** Dakshinashwar Suresh, Sasikumar Mukund, and Rithvik Bollipalli. (PTI)

## RCB pacer Yash Dayal accused of raping minor; FIR registered in Jaipur

**JAIPUR, July 25:** IPL side Royal Challengers Bengaluru's under-fire pacer Yash Dayal has been accused of raping a minor in an FIR registered against him by Jaipur Police.

The 27-year-old cricketer from Uttar Pradesh is already facing charges of sexual exploitation from a woman in Ghaziabad who has alleged that Dayal abused her after promising to marry her during a five-year relationship.

SHO of Jaipur's Sangner Sadar police station Anil Jaiman said that the latest FIR was registered on Wednesday.

"FIR was registered against Yash Dayal for rape under relevant sections of POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) act and the BNS (Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita)," he said here on Friday.

According to Jaiman, the victim has alleged that the player raped her first in 2023 when she was 17 and a similar assault took place in April this year at a hotel in Sitapura area. "She alleged that the cricketer had promised help and support in her career. He contacted her in April this year when he was in Jaipur for IPL and called her to the hotel where he allegedly raped her again," the SHO said, adding that the matter was under investigation. (PTI)

## FIDE Women's World Cup to have an Indian winner for first time

**BATUMI (GEORGIA), July 25:** In a first for Indian chess, the FIDE Women's World Cup will have a winner from the country with Koneru Humpy and Divya Deshmukh set to fight it out in what could be anybody's game in the grand finale here on Saturday.

It's the first in the event's history that two Indians are facing each other in the final. Both Humpy and Deshmukh have qualified for the Women's candidates' tournament next year after reaching the final here.

On pure experience of playing big games, Humpy goes in the final as the favourite against compatriot Deshmukh.

Humpy held her nerves to score a come-from-behind victory in the semifinals over Tingjie Lei of China in the tiebreaker on Thursday, while Deshmukh defeated former world champion Zhongyi Tan -- also of China -- in the second game of the last-four stage match.

Grandmaster Humpy, 38, was the winner of the world women's rapid tournament and also tied for first at the women's grand prix in recent times and she has proved yet again that age is just a num-



ber. Her grit and determination has not faded one bit in the past many years.

"It's one of the happiest moments for chess fans because now the title will go to India for sure. But of course, as a player, tomorrow will be quite a tough game as well -- Divya has played tremendously well in this whole tournament," Humpy told FIDE website.

At half the age of Humpy, International Master Deshmukh has already stunned as many as three players ranked in top ten in the event. Her first victim was second seed Jiner Zhu of China, before ousting D Harika.

The 19-year-old Nagpur-based Deshmukh then beat former women's world champion Zhongyi Tan of China in the semifinals.

"I just need some sleep and some food, these days have been so anxious for me," Deshmukh said after entering the final.

"I think I could have played much better. I was winning at a certain point and then it got complicated. I think I messed up in the middle game and that I should have had a much smoother win," she said about her semifinal match.

"She put up such a great fight at a certain point. I was just doubting if it was just a draw -- I think I got lucky in the end."

Humpy was stretched to the tiebreaker in the pre quarter-finals by former world champion Alexandra Kosteniuk of Switzerland and she followed it up with a clinical performance against Yuxin Song.

Her best, thus far, was re-

served for the semifinals as she outclassed top seed Tingjie Lei of China in the five minutes' games after the players had reached a 3-3 deadlock.

"I played a bit shaky in the rapid, but she also gave a very good fight. It could have gone either way," Humpy said about her semifinal opponent.

"It was a very tough match. Initially, I played quite badly with the Black pieces and she always had the advantage. After the loss (in Game 3), it was a very difficult situation, but I was able to come back."

Saturday's final will also be played over two classical games and if the results stand at 1-1, games of shorter duration will be played to determine the winner.

The minimum take away for finishing second here is USD 35000 while the winner will take home USD 50000.

The additional bonus is qualification to the next Women's Candidates tournament in which both the Indians have reserved their seats now.

The 8-player Candidates tournament will decide the challenger for reigning world champion Wenjun Ju of China in the next world women's championship match. (PTI)

## Parneet, Dalal win mixed compound gold; archers win three medals at World University Games

**RHINE-RUHR, ESSEN (GERMANY), July 25:** India's Parneet Kaur and Kushal Dalal held their nerves in a thrilling finish to beat South Korea's Yerin Park and Seunghyun Park and clinch the mixed compound archery gold medal at the World University Games, here on Friday.

Parneet and Dalal's triumph also gave India its first gold at the event, adding to two other medals won in archery team events earlier in the day.

Both archers had to deal with disappointment as Dalal settled for a silver in the men's team event, while the

Asian Games team gold medalist Parneet returned with a bronze in the women's team event.

The duo showed remarkable character and composure in the mixed pair event to bounce back and overturn a one-point deficit at the halfway mark, nailing eight perfect arrows -- including one '9' (closer to the centre) -- across the final two ends to seal a 157-154 win.

In the mixed team final, both the sides were locked at 39-39 in the first end.

The Koreans then edged ahead by a point after the second end, leading 78-77. However, Parneet and

Dalal came back brilliantly in the penultimate end, shooting four perfect 10s with an X to grab a three-point lead at 117-114 as the Korean duo faltered with two 9s and an 8.

Keeping their composure, the Indian pair delivered another flawless 40 in the final end.

Although the Korean team also shot a perfect 40 in response, it was not enough to deny India the gold.

Earlier, the women's compound team of Parneet, Avneet Kaur and Madhura Dhamangaonkar opened India's account with a commanding 232-224 win over

Great Britain's Chloe A'Bear, Hallie Boulton and Grace Chappell in the bronze medal match.

The Indian trio dropped just one point in the first end to build an eight-point cushion, which they maintained with consistent shooting, sealing the bronze with another strong fourth-end score of 59.

Meanwhile, the men's compound team of Dalal, Sahil Jadhav and Hritik Sharma came agonisingly close to winning gold medal, losing by just one point to Turkey's Bauhan Akcaoglu, Yunus Emre Arslan and Yakum Yildiz. (PTI)

## Xavi Hernandez's application surprises AIFF, but coaching job set to go to an Indian

**NEW DELHI, July 25:** Spain's World Cup-winning mid-field superstar Xavi Hernandez was among those who applied for the position of India's head coach, leaving the All India Football Federation (AIFF) pleasantly surprised but also unable to process his application for reasons which had nothing to do with the game.

Xavi, it is learnt, "sent an email from his own account" to apply for the post.

However, the AIFF could not go ahead with the processing of his application as the costs involved in recruiting one of the world's finest mid-fielders was way beyond the federation's means.

"Yes, he (Xavi) applied for the job of the Indian senior men's team football head coach. He has himself mailed his application to the people in the technical committee, and it looks like he was very much interested in the job," a source in the AIFF told PTI on Friday.

"However, those tasked with the responsibility of recommending the shortlist of coaches to the executive committee for final approval federation know that it's difficult.

"You understand that Xavi is one of the greatest mid-fielders of all time, people talk about Messi all the time but he along

with (Andres) Iniesta are right up there as far as Barcelona is concerned. So, yes, it is what it is," he added. The experienced Anglo-Cypriot Stephen Constantine, Stefan Tarkovic of Slovakia and home-bred Khalid Jamil were among three candidates shortlisted on Wednesday by the technical committee of the AIFF.

Out of the three, Jamil appears to be the frontrunner to replace Manolo Marquez, who quit earlier this month after a string of poor performances by the national team. The side's FIFA ranking has plummeted to 133, which is its lowest in nine years.

The AIFF had invited applications for the top job on July 4 with July 13 as the deadline. It received 170 applications, which included big names like former Liverpool stars Robbie Fowler and Harry Kewell.

Before Xavi, Fowler and Kewell had thrown their hats into the ring for the position.

Besides the World Cup triumph with Spain in 2010 and Euro title victories in 2008 and 2012, the 45-year-old Xavi has won five La Liga titles, three Copa del Rey trophies, and three UEFA Champions League trophies with FC Barcelona, including two continental trebles in 2008-09 and 2014-15.

A product of the famed La Masia like his long-time illustrious FCB teammate Messi, Xavi's last coaching job was at FC Barcelona, where he was in charge from 2021 to 2024.

Before that, the maestro was managing Qatari club Al Sadd from 2019-21.

After his glorious 24-year stint at Barcelona, Xavi had also played for Al Sadd before being appointed the team's manager. He left Barcelona as a player in 2015 for Al Sadd, where he also won four trophies before retiring in 2019.

As Barcelona manager, he led them to the 2023 Supercopa de Espana and the 2022-23 La Liga tile. (PTI)



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## ULTIMATE TEAM MAN

### Cricket fraternity hails Pant's gritty fifty with fractured foot

**MANCHESTER, July 25:** Rishabh Pant's audacious fifty with a fractured foot on day two of the fourth Test showed not just courage but also proved that he is the "ultimate team man", felt former India coach Ravi Shastri, as the cricket fraternity showered praise on the gutsy wicket-keeper-batter.

Pant's return to top-flight cricket after a horrific car accident in December 2022 was already remarkable, but he took his daring streak to another level by completing a half-century with a broken foot on Thursday after retiring hurt on 37 the previous day.

"If anyone doubted he was ever a team man, they got to see it first-hand today. That requires more than just steel," Shastri said in a video posted by the BCCI on its website.

"For him to come back and do what he did was something special. Sometimes the motivation goes to another level. What he did today for the team -- if that does not lift the team up, then nothing will. The applause he got from everyone in the England team

out there is... I mean, that's what you live for, that's what you play for, that's what makes you."

Before the fourth Test, Pant's availability as a keeper-batter was rendered doubtful after he sustained a finger injury while keeping during the Lord's Test.

"He was asked, how's the finger, will you play, then he said 'toota bhi toh khelta' (I would play even if it's broken) -- It shows now what he's done. He loves playing Test cricket, he loves playing for his country," Shastri recalled.

Barely able to move, Pant batted standing still, improvising shots off one leg and limping through singles.

In 70 minutes, he added 17 runs off 27 balls en route to his 54, a knock that mattered more than just the numbers.

"We need players like him who can step up in difficult moments. He showed so much courage and character despite having so much pain. It's never easy to come out there and show that fight and willingness to do it for the

country," former India Test batter Cheteshwar Pujara said in the video.

"One thing is for sure that England love Rishabh Pant. Still being out there, getting those 16-18 runs, it's always inspirational. In sport there are certain moments which you live a long time and that felt like a moment -- when you were there in the ground -- that will last long," said former India wicketkeeper Dinesh Karthik, who is also commenting for the ongoing five-match Test series.

Pant launched Archer over midwicket for a six and then brought up his half-century by driving England captain Ben Stokes through the covers for four.

"He showed massive heart, which is what made me slightly cross about how India bowled (when loose deliveries allowed England openers Ben Duckett and Zak Crawley to get off to a flier).

"He risked a lot. He has talent but a huge heart as well," said former England cricketer Nasser Hussain on 'Sky Sports'.

Pant has been one of India's most consistent performers in this series with scores of 134 and 118 in the first Test at Headingley, followed by a knock of 65 at Edgbaston and then a fighting half-century at Lord's.

"Pant has given so much in this series. Twin hundreds at Leeds, cartwheeling celebrations, throwing his bat looking to hit to the legside, and now a fifty on one leg effectively," said former England captain Michael Atherton on 'Sky Sports'.

"He was batting for the cause and that is one of the most remarkable things."

Cricket has seen moments like this before -- West Indies great Malcolm Marshall once batted at Leeds in 1984 with his left hand in plaster for a broken thumb to help a teammate reach a hundred before dismantling England's batting with his bowling hand.

Anil Kumble famously bowled with broken jaw and head wrapped in bandages and dismissed Brian Lara in Antigua in 2002. (PTI)

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