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# Air India crash report hints at cockpit confusion

**Preliminary probe finds no aircraft fault ● Pilots heard questioning each other as Dreamliner lost thrust**

**NEW DELHI, July 12:** Seconds before Air India flight 171 crashed while ascending from Ahmedabad, the fuel control switches of both its engines were cut off, a preliminary investigation report said on Saturday, suggesting a catastrophic pilot error in the cockpit of the Boeing 787 Dreamliner.

The Airlines Pilots Association of India disagreed with the report, saying the investigation is "shrouded in secrecy," appears to be biased against the pilot and has come to a conclusion hastily.

A 15-page preliminary investigation report into the disaster revealed fuel-control switches of the two engines moved from the "run" to the "cutoff" position, within the space of one second, leading to immediate loss of altitude.

In the cockpit voice recording, one pilot is heard asking the other why he cut off the fuel. The other denied having done so.

The report by Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AIB), released early on Saturday, neither concluded any reason for the switches moving nor apportioned explicit blame for the crash.

It also did not identify the pilots in the voice recording. But it also said no fault was found in the aircraft, leaving only the possibility of pilot error as the cause.

At the controls was First Officer Clive Kunder, 32, while Sumeet Sabharwal, a veteran with 30 years of experience at Air India, was the senior cockpit occupant in command monitoring the flight.

The report, however, referenced a 2018 airworthiness bulletin by the US Federal Aviation Administration that said fuel switches had been installed on Boeing 737s, a smaller model, "with the locking feature disengaged".

The locking mechanism was similar on various Boeing aero-



plane models, including certain 787s, it said. Air India did not carry out inspections recommended in the 2018 FAA advisory on fuel control switch safety, as the bulletin was classified as "non-mandatory", the report said.

It wasn't immediately clear if this had any link to the accident.

The report provided the first detailed account of the fateful 32 seconds between takeoff in Ahmedabad and the crash into a medical college hostel just outside the airport perimeter, killing all but one of the 242 onboard and another 19 on the ground in the deadliest aviation accident in a decade.

The report did not provide any clues to why and by whom the two fuel switches were moved to a cut-off position as the plane nosed into the air, starving the two engines of the thrust needed for the lift. It ruled out any bird hit or fuel contamination.

According to a chronology laid out in the report, both fuel cutoff switches moved from RUN to CUTOFF, one second apart, almost immediately after takeoff. Ram Air Turbine (RAT) pump was deployed to supply hydraulic power as both engines fell below the minimum idle rate.

About 10 seconds later, Engine 1 fuel cutoff switch moved to its so-called RUN position, followed by Engine 2 four seconds later. The pilots managed to relight both engines, but only Engine 1 recovered while Engine 2 failed to build up enough power again to reverse deceleration. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## CM Sarma inaugurates India's first aqua tech park at Sonapur Milestone for Atmanirbhar Assam



**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, July 12:** Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday inaugurated India's first Aqua Tech Park at Bagibari in Sonapur, marking a major milestone in the state's journey towards self-reliance in the fisheries sector.

According to an official statement, the Aqua Tech Park is the result of a collaborative effort between Kolong-Kopili, NABARD, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), the Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (CIFA), the Fishery Department and the Selco Foundation.

The facility is designed to be a knowledge hub for modern and sustainable fishery practices, with demonstrations of aquaponics, biofloc systems, ornamental fish breeding, and other advanced technologies aimed at empowering fish farmers.

Addressing the gathering at the inaugural event, chief minister Sarma lauded the initiative and said that the Aqua Tech Park will serve as a catalyst in enhancing fish production while boosting the income of farmers across the state.

He said that despite being rich in water resources, Assam has remained dependent on other states such as Andhra Pradesh to meet its fish consumption needs.

He credited Kolong-Kopili for its longstanding efforts over the past 17 years to transform the sector by introducing innovative practices and providing training to

entrepreneurs and fish farmers. The chief minister recalled that in 2021, with the support of ICAR and CIFA, Kolong-Kopili established an Aqua Culture School, which significantly contributed to natural farming, fish fry production, and integrated agricultural systems.

He expressed optimism that the newly inaugurated Aqua Tech Park will become a model for fisheries development and a boon for farmers across Assam.

He further stated that Assam has doubled its fish production between 2019 and 2024, reaching 4.99 lakh metric tonnes, and has now become the fourth largest fish-producing state in India.

Sarma informed that the state government has initiated an ₹800 crore project supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to implement the Sustainable Wetland and Integrated Fisheries Transformation Project.

Additionally, a ₹250 crore JICA-aided project has helped in the expansion and execution of several schemes under the fisheries sector.

He also said that the state has introduced 10 fishery cluster development projects with a total financial outlay of ₹8 crore during the current financial year, combining traditional practices with cutting-edge technology.

Highlighting ongoing government schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana and the SWIFT initiative, the chief minister (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Centre eases SO2 emission norms, exempts large number of coal plants

**NEW DELHI, July 12:** The central government has once again extended the deadline for coal-based thermal power plants to comply with sulphur dioxide emission norms and has fully exempted those located away from critically polluted areas or cities with a population of over one million.

In a notification dated July 11, the environment ministry said the compliance deadline for Category A plants, located within a 10-km radius of the National Capital Region or cities with a population of over one million, has been extended from December 2024 to December 2027.

Category B plants, situated within a 10-km radius of critically polluted areas or non-attainment cities, will now be assessed on a case-by-case basis instead of adhering to the earlier 2025 deadline.

Category C plants -- all others

not falling under Category A or B -- have been completely exempted from the sulphur dioxide norms, provided they meet the prescribed stack height criteria. These plants were earlier required to comply by December 2026.

Flue gas desulphurization units are installed in coal-fired power plants to control sulphur dioxide emissions, a major air pollutant. SO2 converts into fine particulate matter (PM2.5), which can penetrate deep into the lungs and cause a range of diseases, leading to millions of deaths each year.

The ministry said it had received numerous representations seeking exemption or relaxation in the timelines of the emission standards due to factors such as the "limited availability of technology providers, its techno-economic feasibility, negative impact of the Covid (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Modi to launch ₹8,000 cr projects from Darrang on Sept 8 Chief Minister inspects medical college site

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, July 12:** In a major step toward bolstering healthcare and infrastructure development in Assam, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday visited the proposed site for a medical college and hospital at Punia in Darrang district.

The Chief Minister's visit comes ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's proposed trip to the state on September 8, during which projects worth nearly ₹8,000 crore are expected to be formally launched from the same location.

Addressing the media after inspecting the site, Sarma said the Prime Minister is likely to lay the foundation stone for the new medical college in Darrang during his visit.

In addition to the healthcare project, the Prime Minister is ex-

pected to inaugurate the Narengi-Kurua bridge over the Brahmaputra and the ambitious Guwahati Ring Road project from the Punia venue.

All three initiatives form part of a broader package of development works lined up for the region.

The chief minister underscored the significance of the new medical college for Darrang, noting that the district, formerly a subdivision of Sonitpur, has long been without such vital infrastructure.

With Darrang now functioning as a full-fledged district, it is poised to receive major institutional investments similar to those in Sonitpur, he said.

Sarma also announced that the government is considering setting up another medical college in neighbouring Udalguri district.

He urged the local community to

extend full cooperation to ensure smooth execution of the upcoming projects and stressed the need for timely completion.

In a nod to environmental concerns, he directed officials to avoid cutting down large trees at the proposed site, recommending instead that they be relocated and replanted.

Providing a tentative outline of the Prime Minister's schedule, Sarma said Modi would arrive in Mangaldoi on the afternoon of September 8, following a programme in Numaligarh.

He is also scheduled to participate in the birth centenary celebrations of Bharat Ratna Dr. Bhupen Hazarika on the same day.

The chief minister was accompanied during the visit by Member of Parliament and Assam BJP President (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Sitharaman underscores need for balancing ecological preservation with development



**SHILLONG, July 12:** Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday underscored the need to balance ecological preservation with the aspirations of development, particularly in regions like Meghalaya.

Speaking at an interactive session in Shillong, she acknowledged that the climate crisis has intensified to the point where even the best meteorological tools cannot predict weather patterns accurately.

"Extreme weather events have be-

come the norm. Flash floods and intense rains, which used to be spread across months, are now occurring in a single day, causing immense damage to people and property," the Finance minister said.

Pointing to the changing dynamics in rural and forested regions, she emphasised the necessity of modern infrastructure. "We need optical fiber for connectivity, and global exposure through digital tools so that artisans and farmers can (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## ISRO successfully completes development of SMPS for Gaganyaan

**BENGALURU, July 12:** ISRO on Saturday said it has successfully completed the development of Service Module Propulsion System (SMPS) for Gaganyaan Mission with the completion of the qualification test programme.

A full duration hot test of SMPS for 350 seconds was conducted to validate the integrated performance of the SMPS for flight off-nominal mission profile of the Service Module based mission abort on Friday.

Gaganyaan mission is India's first human spaceflight mission in the making. "The overall performance of the propulsion system during the hot test was normal as per pre-test predictions," ISRO said in a statement.

According to the space agency, "The Service Module (SM) of Gaganyaan is a regulated bi-propellant based propulsion system that caters to the requirements of the Orbital Module for orbit circularisation, on-orbit control, de-boost manoeuvring and Service Module based abort during the ascent phase."

The Liquid Apogee Motor (LAM) engines provide the main propulsive force during the orbit circularisation and de-boost phases, while the Reaction Control System (RCS) thrusters ensure precise attitude control, it added.

"A System Demonstration Model (SDM) test bed was realised emulating the fluid circuit of the SMPS, encompassing the propellant tank feed system, helium pressurisation system, flight-qualified thrusters, and control components," ISRO said. It added that the SDM for SMPS has undergone 25 tests under nominal and off-nominal conditions for a cumulative duration of 14,331s for various Gaganyaan mission scenarios and human rating requirements. The space agency said the Gaganyaan Service Module Propulsion System is designed, developed, and realised by Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC) and the tests were carried out at ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC), Mahendragiri in Tamil Nadu. (PTI)

## Forest land cleared during eviction drive in Goalpara



**GOALPARA, July 12:** An eviction drive to clear encroachment of around 135 hectares of land in the Paikan Reserve Forest in Assam's Goalpara district was conducted smoothly on Saturday, an official said.

Goalpara District Commissioner (DC) Khanindra Choudhury told PTI that the operation concluded peacefully. "The structures were dismantled. It went off peacefully," he said. As many as 40 excavators were pressed into action, along with heavy security deployment to ensure peaceful eviction operation.

A forest department officer said, "Our target was to recover the forest area under encroachment and we have done it." "Our first step was to clear the encroachment. Now, we will go to the plantation to recover the land," he said.

Police officers said "preventive measures" were taken for peaceful conduct of the eviction operation and it went off smoothly.

Local reports claimed that an affected person allegedly tried to commit suicide but was saved with swift medical assistance.

The Goalpara DC had said on Friday that about 95 per cent of alleged illegal settlers have already moved out from the area, dismantling their establishments.

The eviction drive, which was scheduled to be carried out on Friday, was postponed by a day, keeping in mind the Friday prayers in the Muslim-majority area, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had said.

Goalpara Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Tejas Mariswamy had said earlier that the eviction drive would clear encroachment on around 135 hectares in the Paikan Reserve Forest of the Krishnai Range.

"There are 1,080 families who have encroached on forest land, and we had asked them to vacate the area in November-December last year. We again served them notices last month to vacate the area by July 10," he had said.

Since 2023, the administration has cleared encroachments on 650 hectares of land across four forest ranges. "Of this, human habitation was in 200 hectares and farming was done in the remaining 450 hectares," Mariswamy had said.

Encroachments on nearly 1,160 acres, affecting close to 1,100 families, in Charuwa Bakra, Chirakuta and Santoshpur villages under the Chapar circle in neighbouring Dhubri district were cleared during a drive on Tuesday. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Over 51,000 Youth Receive Government Jobs at Rozgar Mela

## PM Modi, Sonowal Highlights Employment and Development Initiatives

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, July 12:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday addressed the Rozgar Mela via videoconferencing and distributed more than 51,000 appointment letters to newly recruited youth in various government departments and organisations.

The Prime Minister congratulated the appointees and described their induction as the beginning of a journey of national service under the guiding principle of "Citizen First."

The event was joined from Guwahati by Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal, who also handed over appointment letters to select candidates from Assam.

According to an official statement, the Prime Minister under-

lined that the Rozgar Mela was part of the government's broader effort to provide meaningful employment and that lakhs of youth had already received appointments through such events.

Highlighting India's strengths, he said the world acknowledges the country's two great assets — demography and democracy — with the largest youth population and the largest democratic system in the world.

He emphasised that these are key to India's future, and that converting youth potential into productive national capital is a top priority for the government.

The Prime Minister cited his recent visit to five countries and said that India's youth power was a strong and recurring theme across discussions. He pointed out that

agreements signed during the tour, covering sectors like defence, digital technology, energy, and pharmaceuticals, would create long-term opportunities for Indian youth both at home and abroad.

Discussing the changing nature of employment, the Prime Minister said that innovation, startups, and research are driving the future of jobs. He expressed pride in the growing ecosystem in India that empowers young people to innovate and dream big.

He also announced that the government has approved a new Employment Linked Incentive Scheme, under which ₹15,000 will be provided to each young person securing their first job in the private sector. The scheme, with a budget of ₹1 lakh crore, is expected to generate around 3.5 crore



new jobs. Focusing on the manufacturing sector, the Prime Minister noted

that it has become a strong driver of job creation. Electronics manufacturing alone

has reached ₹11 lakh crore, marking a fivefold increase in the last eleven years.

The country has grown from just a handful of mobile phone units to nearly 300 such facilities, providing employment to lakhs of people.

He also highlighted India's rise in defence production, now exceeding ₹1.25 lakh crore, and its leadership in locomotive manufacturing. He added that the automobile sector has attracted \$40 billion in FDI over the past five years.

The Prime Minister also referred to a recent report by the International Labour Organization, stating that more than 90 crore Indians have benefited from welfare schemes over the past decade.

He explained that these schemes have not only improved living standards but also created employ-

ment, especially in rural India.

Under schemes like PM Awas Yojana, over four crore houses have been built and three crore more are under construction.

Similarly, Swachh Bharat's 12 crore toilets and Ujjwala Yojana's 10 crore LPG connections have created jobs across plumbing, bottling, and delivery sectors.

He further mentioned that the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana is helping households reduce electricity costs while generating employment for technicians and solar manufacturers.

Initiatives like Namu Drone Didi have trained rural women as drone pilots. So far, 1.5 crore women have become Lakhpati Didis, under schemes like Bank Sakhi, Krishi Sakhi, and Pashu Sakhi. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



## New RE policy to attract ₹ 1.5 lakh crore investment, generate jobs: Bihar Energy Secy

**NEW DELHI, July 12:** Bihar's new renewable energy policy has the potential not only to attract investments worth ₹ 1.5 lakh crore but also generate huge employment opportunities across the state, Bihar's Energy Secretary Manoj Kumar Singh said.

Launched earlier this week, the policy for 'Promotion of Bihar New and Renewable Energy Sources 2025' aims to harness 23.96 gigawatt (GW) of renewable energy and 6.1 GW of storage by FY 2029-30 through non-conventional sources and energy storage potential of the state.

Other key objectives of the policy are promoting new and efficient techniques for development of RE and storage projects, increasing awareness for RE integration, and maximizing stakeholder participation for RE development among others.

Sharing his views with PTI, the secretary said, "This is one of the most progressive policies in the country. Bihar will not only lead in



the clean energy sphere but also make significant contributions to India's commitment towards Net Zero. Besides becoming one of the most attractive investment destinations, it will generate huge employment opportunities as the next renewable hub of the country."

Singh said Bihar is offering one of the most attractive policy regimes in the country and assures

investors of policy support which will help them with good returns for their investments in the state.

When asked about the expected investments and job opportunities, the official said the policy has potential to attract investments of "₹ 1,50,000 crore and generate 1,25,000 jobs."

Replying to another question on the benefits for investors, the sec-

retary said the policy introduces a highly competitive suite of incentives designed to attract investors and developers from across the country. These include a streamlined single-window clearance system to fast-track project approvals and comprehensive financial benefits such as 100 per cent reimbursement of SGST, land conversion fees, and stamp duty on lease or transfer of land. The policy also grants a 100 per cent waiver on electricity duty for 15 years and provides long-term open access for 25 years along with full exemption from transmission and wheeling charges. State utilities will bear the cost of transmission and distribution infrastructure up to 10 kilometers, with shared responsibility beyond that point.

"I urge national and international investors to invest in the state and avail the benefits of the policy. The entire policy is in the public domain. The government will fully support the investors to address their concerns," he added. (PTI)

### ICAI Guwahati branch hosts seminar on financial statements

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, July 12:** The Guwahati Branch of the Eastern India Regional Council (EIRC) of The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), under the aegis of the Accounting Standards Board of ICAI, organised a regional seminar on "Financial Statements of Non-Corporate Entities" in Nagaon, Assam.

According to an official statement, the event witnessed enthusiastic participation from Chartered Accountants across the region, including professionals from Tezpur and Biswanath Chariali. The seminar commenced with a welcome address by Branch Chairperson CA Raginee Goyal, who set the tone for the day's deliberations by providing the contextual background and outlining the relevance of financial reporting standards for non-corporate entities.

She highlighted the increasing importance of accurate and standardised financial disclosures in ensuring transparency, consistency, and compliance in financial reporting beyond the corporate sector. The technical sessions featured addresses by two eminent speakers.

CA Bisworanjan Sutar delivered an engaging presentation on the applicability of accounting standards to non-corporate entities.

He provided clarity on various classification criteria, compliance requirements, and verification procedures essential for accurate financial reporting in these entities. His session was well-received for its practical approach and clear articulation of concepts that are often overlooked in mainstream accounting discussions.

In a subsequent session, CA Anil Kumar Agarwala delved into the ICAI's Guidance Note on Financial Statements of Non-Corporate Entities and its practical application.

He elaborated on the overall presentation framework and highlighted critical areas such as disclosure practices, cash flow reporting, and common challenges encountered in the preparation of financial statements for partnerships, proprietorships, and similar non-corporate structures.

Using real-world examples and case studies, Agarwala provided participants with tools to improve professional judgment and accuracy in their accounting practices.

## Vikaas Goenka champions retail growth, job creation and youth skilling in the NE

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, July 12:** The retail landscape of Guwahati witnessed a significant transformation on Thursday with the launch of Northeast India's largest Westside store, sprawling across 33,000 square feet on Zoo Narengi Road.

The project, part of a larger vision for the region's commercial growth, has been spearheaded by renowned real estate consultant Vikaas Goenka.

According to an official statement, the launch marks another milestone in Goenka's continued efforts to drive organised retail and infrastructure development across Assam and the wider Northeast.

Goenka, a prominent figure in the region's real estate and retail expansion journey, has played an instrumental role in bringing several high-profile brands to the region over the years.

From national names like Tanishq, Zudio, Croma and Caratlane to international food chains such as KFC and Domino's, and fashion labels like Louis Philippe, his portfolio reflects an extensive influence in facilitating business footprints in all northeastern states.

With the opening of the new Westside outlet, Goenka has once again underlined his ability to transform potential into tangible growth for both brands and communities. The official statement also revealed that Goenka's vision extends well beyond retail expansion.

Plans are underway to introduce international apparel giants like H&M and Zara to the region, along with major hospitality brands such as Taj Hotels, Marriott, and Lemon Tree.

In a push to diversify entertainment and wellness infrastructure, Goenka also intends to bring amusement parks and leading hospital chains to the Northeast, creating broader social and economic impact.

Yet, the core of Goenka's mission lies in his commitment to inclusive development.

"I will leave no stone unturned for the all-round development of my motherland," he stated, reaffirming his dedication to Assam and



the Northeast. His approach focuses not only on infrastructure but also on meaningful employment and entrepreneurship.

As part of this agenda, Goenka is set to launch the 'Pro Realtor Academy' this August—a skill development initiative aimed at grooming young professionals for successful careers in the real estate sector.

The academy is expected to combine industry-specific training with mentorship and placement support, empowering youth with practical pathways to employment.

With each project, Goenka has consistently emphasised local engagement, encouraging partnerships with regional suppliers and service providers.

This model, he believes, creates a ripple effect—stimulating the local economy, nurturing business ecosystems, and generating jobs across multiple tiers.

The launch of the flagship Westside outlet and the announcement of the upcoming real estate academy together mark a bold new chapter in Goenka's journey.

As Northeast India steadily positions itself as an emerging hub of commerce and opportunity, the role of individuals like Vikaas Goenka is proving pivotal—not only in shaping the skylines of its cities, but in scripting the region's future as a centre of sustainable growth, innovation, and inclusive prosperity.

## Air India crash report points

*Contd. from Page 1...*

One of the pilots issued a "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday" distress call, but before air traffic controllers could get a response about what had gone wrong, the plane crashed just outside the Ahmedabad airport boundary having grazed some trees before plunging into a hostel packed with students.

The time between the takeoff and the crash was only 32 seconds. The preliminary report recommended no action for now for the operators of Boeing 787-8 planes. In a statement, Air India said that it "stands in solidarity with the families and those affected" and "[continues] to mourn the loss" of those killed in the accident. Air India said it was "working closely with stakeholders, including regulators" and "continue to fully cooperate with the AAI and other authorities as their investigation progresses." On its part, Boeing said: "Our thoughts remain with the loved ones of the passengers and crew on board Air India Flight 171, as well as everyone affected on the ground in Ahmedabad. We continue to support the investigation and our customers."

The US National Transportation Safety Board noted that there were no recommended actions in the report aimed at operators of Boeing 787 jets or the GE engines. The ill-fated flight was commanded by Sumeet Sabharwal, 56, a veteran with 30 years of experience at Air India. He had logged 15,638 flying hours, including 8,596 on the Boeing 787. He was also an Air India instructor. His co-pilot was Clive Kunder, 32, who had 3,403 hours of total experience, with 1,128 hours on the Dreamliner. Kunder was the pilot flying, while Sabharwal was the pilot monitoring. The crew had passed pre-flight breathalyser tests and were seen at the gate on CCTV before they took off, the report adds. The June 12 accident was India's worst aviation disaster in almost three decades and the industry's deadliest in 11 years, as well as the first fatal accident involving a Boeing Dreamliner. The investigation was conducted with assistance from the UK's Air Accident Investigation Branch and the US National Transportation Safety Board.

Aviation experts have said it is difficult for pilots to inadvertently move the fuel switches, as there is a little mechanical gate built into the switch. Switches need to be lifted up over this little gate to shut off supply. They also asked why the report made no reference to cockpit camera footage. Fuel switches are devices that regulate the flow of fuel into the engine of an aeroplane. Pilots use them to start or shut down engines on the ground or during a flight in case of an engine failure. They are spring-loaded to remain in position. To change fuel supply, a pilot has to first pull the switch up and then move it from RUN to CUTOFF or vice versa.

"The aircraft achieved the maximum recorded airspeed of 180 Knots IAS at about 08:08:42 UTC (13.38 IST) and immediately thereafter, the Engine 1 and Engine 2 fuel cutoff switches transitioned from RUN to CUTOFF position one after another with a time gap of 01 sec," the report said. (PTI)

## Centre eases SO2 emission norms,

pandemic on supply chain, price escalation due to high demand and low supplies, low Sulphur dioxide concentration in ambient air and heavy burden on consumer due to increase in electricity prices etc". It added that it had also received an "explicit recommendation" from the Ministry of Power in this regard.

According to the notification, several studies were conducted by research institutions regarding the effectiveness and rationale behind the SO2 standards and their role in the overall ambient air pollution of the region. The ministry said consultations were held with the industry, the Ministry of Power, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), scientific institutions and other stakeholders regarding the emission standards and their timeline. It added that a committee was constituted in the CPCB to "examine the issue in totality, assess the available study reports, other relevant materials and other related factors and make a recommendation on applicability of these standards and its timeline".

The CPCB, after detailed analysis, submitted its recommendation based on its study on the National Ambient Air Quality Standards of SO2 across most regions of the country; resource conservation in terms of avoiding additional consumption of water, auxiliary power and limestone; and the increase in carbon footprint or carbon dioxide emissions due to operation of the deployed control measures and mining and transportation of limestone required for these measures.

It also considered the techno-economic feasibility of implementing such control measures in all coal or lignite-based thermal power plants and the application of the precautionary principle for control and abatement of air pollution in densely populated and other air pollution-sensitive areas, the ministry said. (PTI)

## Modi to launch ₹8,000 cr projects

Dilip Saikia, MLAs Paramananda Rajbongshi, Diganta Kalita, and Basanta Das, Chairman of the Assam Fisheries Development Corporation Gurujyoti Das, the District Commissioner, and other senior officials.

## Milestone for Atmanirbhar Assam

said these projects are contributing to a rejuvenated and nationally competitive fisheries sector in Assam. He cited inspiring examples of entrepreneurs and fish farmers from various districts including Nalbari, Barpeta, Sonitpur, Cachar, Tamulpur, Jorhat and Golaghat who have successfully built careers through fisheries.

Urging the youth to seize the opportunities available in this promising sector, Sarma noted that under the Mukhyamantri Atmanirbhar Asom Abhiyan, the state government is providing ₹5 lakh to each graduate of Raha Fishery College and ₹2 lakh to fishery farmers. He further announced that beginning in September, one lakh youth in the state will be given financial assistance under the scheme to build self-reliant livelihoods. The event was also addressed by Fisheries Minister Krishnendu Paul, Dispur MLA Atul Bora, NABARD Regional Office Assam Chief General Manager Loken Das, Vice Chairman of Assam Fisheries Development Corporation Nabarun Medhi, and Director of Fisheries Gauri Shankar Das.

Director of Kolong-Kopli, Jyotish Talukdar, delivered the welcome address. The official statement noted that the presence of these dignitaries underscored the collective commitment of the government and partner organisations in transforming Assam into a hub for sustainable and innovative fishery practices.

## Sitharaman underscores need

market their products. This implies expanding into areas that have remained green for millennia," she said. Sitharaman stressed that decisions about development in ecologically sensitive regions should be locally driven. "It is not for me to say from elsewhere that a region should remain untouched. People living there must decide how much development they are comfortable with, and where to draw the line," she said. She posed a critical question: "If development is denied entirely, will people who have remained unchanged for generations, and now aspire to a better life, be content?". She added that this debate is central not just in India, but across the globe. Highlighting the urgency of the issue, the Union Finance minister said that the next global climate summit will be held in a remote area on the edge of the Amazon rainforest in Brazil—underscoring how the world is now bringing the conversation of climate and development directly to the most fragile ecosystems.

"This is a deeply critical discussion," Sitharaman said, adding that "I'm glad it began here this morning." The Union Finance minister also emphasised the importance of collaboration between citizens, industry, and policymakers. She said dialogues are essential for crafting effective and locally relevant development strategies and reaffirmed the Centre's unwavering commitment to inclusive, participatory, and region-specific governance during a stakeholder interaction held here. Sitharaman said the Union government is actively working to simplify tax frameworks and enhance the accessibility of financial systems to ensure broader participation and transparency. She urged stakeholders to continue engaging constructively and advised that "sector-specific proposals and regional concerns be routed through the concerned ministries and the Ministry for Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) for timely evaluation and follow-up action."

"The government remains committed to participatory policy-making and we are continuously working to make financial systems more accessible and efficient for all stakeholders," she assured. The Union Finance minister felicitated Rimifil Shylla and Wanjoipin, two of Meghalaya's top women taxpayers, applauding their commendable contributions to the nation's tax system. During the interaction, stakeholders shared a wide range of observations and suggestions with the Finance minister.

They highlighted the need for a balanced approach to development that respects environmental sustainability. Suggestions were made to enhance support for institutions involved in research and development and to give greater policy focus to the hospitality sector. Participants urged for the inclusion of local industries under the Targeted Champion Sector Scheme and advocated for better access to credit and markets for startups and MSMEs, particularly those rooted in the Northeast. They also stressed the importance of central investment in infrastructure to accelerate regional industrial growth.

Additionally, concerns were raised over high logistics costs resulting from the region's geographical challenges, with calls for rationalised transport subsidies to improve competitiveness. Sitharaman in her replies, reiterated the Centre's resolve to work in close partnership with state governments and local stakeholders to realise a shared vision for a prosperous, sustainable, and innovation-driven Northeast. The Union Finance minister is on a four-day visit to Meghalaya from Thursday. (PTI)

## Forest land cleared during

The anti-encroachment exercise was undertaken to hand over land to the Adani Group for setting up a power plant. Alleged encroachers had earlier damaged excavators and tried to attack police personnel during the eviction drive, prompting security forces to resort to a baton charge to disperse the mob.

Last month, Sarma had visited the site for the proposed power plant, and announced that a 3,400-MW thermal power facility would be established there. Sarma, during a press conference in Guwahati on Thursday, had asserted that eviction drives would continue in the state, with over 25,000 acres of land having been cleared of encroachment in the last four years. "We will have another eviction drive on Saturday in Goalpara. The Gauhati High Court has asked us to clear forest land. It said that we should provide drinking water and other essential items to the evicted people," he added. The Congress, however, has criticised the eviction drives and asserted that all Indian citizens, who have been evicted from land during the BJP rule, will be compensated if the opposition party comes to power in the state. (PTI)

## PM Modi, Sonowal Highlight

The PM SVANidhi and PM Vishwakarma schemes have supported street vendors and traditional artisans respectively with training, tools, and credit. Emphasising the scale of change, the Prime Minister said that 25 crore Indians have come out of poverty in the last decade. Citing praise from the World Bank, he said that India is now counted among the most equitable nations in the world.

Calling the current era a "Mahayagya" of development, he urged the new appointees to contribute actively to the mission of employment generation and poverty alleviation. He concluded by invoking the value of "Nagrik Devo Bhava" and extended his best wishes to all new recruits for a bright future in public service.

In Guwahati, Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal joined the Rozgar Mela and handed over appointment letters to 241 candidates selected for various government organisations including the Indian Railways, Department of Posts, Border Security Force (BSF), Punjab National Bank, United Bank of India, AIIMS, NIT, Oil India Limited, Northeast Police Academy, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

In his address, the Union Minister said that under Prime Minister Modi's leadership, India has created new opportunities in startups, manufacturing, defence, and digital innovation.

He urged appointees to rise beyond employment and become true partners in nation-building. He said that policies like Make in India and Skill India are not just addressing today's needs but preparing the workforce for future challenges. He called upon young professionals to see themselves as stakeholders in shaping the nation's future and said that their efforts will help India emerge as a global example of inclusive development, progress, and unity.

## Range Rover SV Black unveiled: Sensory floor technology

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, July 12:** The Range Rover SV has long epitomised the pinnacle of refinement, craftsmanship and customisation in the world of luxury SUVs.

Now, in a significant evolution of this legacy, Range Rover has officially announced the launch of the visually commanding Range Rover SV Black—set to join the SV Serenity and SV Intrepid derivatives in late 2025.

The development was confirmed through an official statement which detailed both the aesthetic upgrades and advanced sensory technologies embedded in the new model range.

The Range Rover SV Black offers a distinctive 'dipped in black' visual theme that elevates the



model's elegant styling to a darker, more commanding presence.

Alongside it, SV Serenity continues to emphasise purity and grace, while SV Intrepid leans into boldness and dynamism.

However, the SV Black takes centre stage in 2025 with a suite of innovations that integrate luxury with high-end sensory experience, notably the introduction of pioneering Rear Body-And-Soul-Seat (BASS) and Sensory Floor technology.

For the first time, Range Rover SV models will come standard with Body and Soul Seats, a wellness-centric feature that integrates audio resonance with physical feedback for immersive relaxation.

What sets the updated line-up apart, however, is the debut of Sensory Floor technology, a world-first innovation that extends haptic feedback to the vehicle's floor, transforming the driving and riding experience into a full-body sensory event. This system uses AI-opti-

mised synchronisation between the floor-mounted transducers, embedded seat feedback and the Meridian Signature Surround Sound system to produce a palpable, harmonic wave through the cabin.

Whether it is to feel every beat of a music track or to enter a meditative state through one of the six wellness modes—ranging from 'Calm' to 'Invigorating'—the technology aims to lower stress, enhance mental clarity, and amplify the luxury factor for occupants.

The feature is available as standard on all long-wheelbase Range Rover SV models and reflects the brand's commitment to wellness and cutting-edge in-car experience.

The lush deep-pile carpets are designed to be experienced barefoot, encouraging deeper connection with the vehicle's ambient rhythms.

Further elevating the brand's sustainability agenda, Range Rover has also announced the in-

roduction of industry-first Pirelli P Zero tyres with more than 70% sustainable material content.

These specially developed tyres, to be available on selected 22-inch wheels by late 2025, incorporate innovative materials such as silica extracted from rice husks, recycled steel, FSC®-certified natural rubber, and bio-based resins, combining performance with a smaller environmental footprint.

A visual standout, the SV Black is defined by its Narvik Gloss Black exterior finish, including polished black mesh grille, gloss black bonnet lettering, darkened grille oval, and striking 23-inch black alloy wheels.

For the first time, the brake calipers feature darker branding, and the black ceramic SV roundel at the rear further reinforces the vehicle's elite SV identity.

Inside, the cabin is an ode to tactile sophistication.

Near-Aniline Ebony leather, characterised by a silky texture and graduated perforations, pairs with single-panel seat covers to offer seamless visual lines. Black birch veneer and satin black ceramic gear shifter enhance the rich, moody tone, while Moonlight Chrome details add a subtle metallic elegance throughout the interior. The Range Rover SV Black will be available for order in late 2025 in standard five-seat wheelbase and four- or five-seat long wheelbase variants, all powered by the refined 615PS V8 powertrain.

The model will make its public debut at the Goodwood Festival of Speed in the UK from July 10 to 13, 2025, where it will be showcased alongside the newly announced Range Rover Sport SV Black.

### NAME CHANGE

I, Kiyalikta Moungkang Changed my name to "CHOW KYALIKTA MOUNGKANG" in my adhar Card and in Some other relevant documents, vide affidavit dated on 12-July 2025 Sworn before notary public: Namsai Dist! Namsai (AP)

### NAME CHANGE

I have changed my name Mohammed Jamal Uddin to Jamal Uddin and father name change Mohammed Nashir Uddin to Nasir Uddin and mother name Reshma Khatun to Reshma Begum by swearing a notarial affidavit at Srimanta Sankardevnagar Hojai (Assam)



*Empowering tribes, bridging gaps*

## DAJGUA camps deliver governance to remote corners of Cachar

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, July 12:** In a significant stride toward inclusive development and last-mile service delivery, the Cachar district administration has successfully concluded a widespread campaign of awareness and welfare camps under the Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DAJGUA).

Conducted from June 17 to 28 across six development blocks and the Silchar municipal area, the initiative brought essential government benefits directly to the doorsteps of tribal communities, many of whom reside in some of the district's most geographically and administratively remote areas.

According to an official statement, the campaign began in the Lakhimpur Development Block—Cachar's lone Aspirational Block—where five camps were organised in the villages of Lakhicherra, Lakhinagar, Kapkhal, Ramgaizang, and Diger Fulatal.

These camps witnessed the participation of over 500 residents, with nearly 370 individuals from the Hmar, Ranjibangshi, Barman, and Rommei communities availing of direct benefits.

Departments including Health, Agriculture, Veterinary, Fisheries, and Panchayat & Rural Development worked in close coordination, while the Bharat Sevashram Sangha extended logistical support.



A wide array of services was delivered at these camps, including Aadhaar enrolment, Ayushman Bharat and PM-Kisan registration, sickle cell disease screening, disbursement of pensions, and facilitation of MGNREGA-related assistance.

On June 23 and 24, the Rajabazar Development Block hosted two additional camps at Joypur Pt-III and Pt-IV.

Targeted primarily at the Barman (Dimas Kachari) population, these camps facilitated services such as caste certificate issuance, ration card distribution, Kisan Credit Card registration, Mudra loan facilitation, and Ayushman Bharat enrolment.

Nearly 300 residents were reached during this leg of the campaign.

Subsequent camps followed in Tapang, Narsingpur, Kalain, and Udharband blocks.

Notable among them were the camps at Sabaspur Naga Punjee in Tapang, which saw participation from the Naga community; Choto Salganga in Narsingpur, where Khasia and Riang tribal residents availed of numerous welfare schemes; and Damcherra Khasia Punjee in Kalain and Nayagram in Udharband, which ensured representation even from smaller Khasi and Barman habitations.

Silchar town too joined the initiative with two special urban camps held at Gandhi Bhawan.

Organised under the aegis of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and co-ordinated by the Regional Office

of Information & Public Relations, Barak Valley Zone, the events featured high-level participation.

Sushil Bading, Under-Secretary at the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, reiterated the Centre's commitment to tribal development.

Unhale Ashish Vidyadhar, IAS, Commissioner of Silchar Municipal Corporation, District Development Commissioner Narsing Bey, and Zilla Parishad CEO P K Borah were among the officials who addressed the gatherings.

The urban leg of the campaign also included an engaging street play at Gandhi Bagh Park, aimed at spreading awareness through cultural performance.

Altogether, 13 camps—11 in rural development blocks and two in Silchar—were conducted as part of the DAJGUA initiative.

The official statement emphasised that the campaign achieved high saturation in terms of service coverage and eligibility fulfillment.

It stands as a testament to the district administration's unwavering commitment to inclusive governance, ensuring that no tribal household remains outside the fold of development.

By reaching the unreached with compassion and administrative resolve, the Cachar district administration has demonstrated how governance can be made accessible, participatory, and impactful—irrespective of terrain or remoteness.

## Minor leak reported from kitchen floor in Jaysagar

**HT Correspondent**

**SIVASAGAR, July 12:** A leak resembling crude oil from the kitchen floor of a residence in Jonaki Nagar, Jaysagar created a stir among locals on Saturday morning, prompting swift response from local authorities and the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC).

The incident occurred at the home of Krishna Das, who reported that his family had been experiencing a persistent foul odour and signs of underground leakage for several months.

The situation attracted attention after a visible seepage of a crude-like substance appeared on the floor, raising concerns over a possible oil leak.

Local police arrived at the scene soon after being informed.

Simultaneously, ONGC's Assam Asset dispatched a technical team to inspect the location and determine the nature and source of the leak.

In an official statement issued later in the day, ONGC clarified that the incident involved a minor leak of effluent water containing traces of floating oil.

The seepage was observed at Jonaki Nagar, Rudrasagar, Sivasagar, specifically in the area between Group Gathering Station 2 (GGS-2) and Group Gathering Station 3 (GGS-3).

The ONGC team promptly isolated the leak upon arrival and initiated repair work.

According to the statement, the area has been secured and all standard safety protocols have been implemented on site.

"There is no threat to public safety or the environment. ONGC remains committed to ensuring public safety," the release stated.

Repair efforts are currently ongoing.

Authorities have assured residents that there is no cause for alarm, and the situation is under control.

## AAMSU stages protest against eviction drives

**HT Correspondent**

**GOSHAIGAON, July 12:** The All Assam Minority Students' Union (AAMSU) on Saturday staged a protest demonstration in Gossaigaon under the banner of its West Kokrajhar district unit, opposing the ongoing eviction drives being carried out in various parts of the state.

The demonstration was held in front of the AAMSU district office at Serfarguri and drew the participation of a large number of student activists and local residents.

The protesters attempted to march towards the Sub-Divisional Officer's (SDO) office to submit a memorandum.

However, the march was stopped by the police, leading to sharp criticism from AAMSU leaders who decried the move as an infringement on their democratic right to protest.

During the gathering, AAMSU's Central Organising Secretary Mazharul Islam addressed the crowd and criticised the ongoing eviction measures in various districts, calling them unjust and demanding adequate rehabilitation for the families affected.

Islam also alleged that the state government was engaging in re-



pressive tactics and called for policy changes that would safeguard the rights of the displaced.

The protest programme also saw the participation of other senior district leaders, including Organising Secretary Zakir Hussain.

In his remarks, Hussain criticised the eviction drives, raising concerns about their humanitarian impact and alleging that they have disproportionately affected minority communities.

He reiterated AAMSU's demand for proper resettlement and assistance for those displaced.

The union further alleged that the ongoing evictions had resulted in loss of lives and urged the state

government to acknowledge the severity of the situation.

Protesters called for immediate action from the administration to address the crisis and prevent further displacement without adequate legal and humanitarian safeguards.

The demonstration forms part of a broader campaign by AAMSU and other organisations raising concerns over eviction policies in Assam.

The union has announced that it will continue its democratic agitation until concrete steps are taken by the government to address the grievances of the affected families.

## Over 10 Kg opium seized in major drug trafficking bust, 2 arrested

**HT Correspondent**

**KHERONI, July 12:** In a decisive move against inter-state narcotics smuggling, Khatkhathi Police on Saturday seized 10.937 kilograms of opium and ₹1,10,000 in cash from a white Toyota Fortuner bearing registration number CH 04 L 0888 during a routine naka checking operation.

The action marks a major success in the ongoing crackdown on illegal drug trafficking across Assam.

The operation resulted in the arrest of two individuals—Daljit Singh and Harjit Singh—both residents of Punjab.

The duo was allegedly attempting to transport the contraband through the inter-state border, pointing to the involvement of a wider and well-

organised drug trafficking network with operations extending beyond regional limits.

Police officials stated that the narcotics were meticulously packed and concealed within the vehicle in an attempt to evade detection.

Preliminary investigations have revealed that the opium was sourced from a northeastern state and was being trafficked to Punjab for further distribution.

The successful interception is part of a broader and sustained effort by Assam Police to combat the rise in drug smuggling activities.

Surveillance and checking mechanisms have been significantly enhanced, particularly along vulnerable border areas, as part of this anti-narcotics drive.

The two accused are currently in custody and are being interrogated.

Investigating officers are working to trace the full extent of the trafficking network and identify additional links and operatives involved in the illicit trade.

Authorities have reiterated their firm commitment to eradicating drug trafficking and have urged the public to cooperate by reporting suspicious activities. Further developments in the investigation are awaited.

## Karbi Anglong launches intensive prevention drive amid rising JE and AES cases

**HT Bureau**

**DIPHU, July 12:** In response to the detection of Japanese Encephalitis (JE) and Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) cases in various parts of Karbi Anglong, the District Health Society under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) has initiated a district-wide prevention drive to contain the spread of these vector-borne diseases.

According to an official statement, the health department has launched a series of coordinated efforts on a war footing to address the emerging public health threat.

As part of the containment strategy, Thermal Fogging operations have been carried out in areas where JE cases have been confirmed, with the National Centre

for Vector Borne Disease Control (NCVBDC) team leading the drive. The fogging is being executed in high-risk localities and monitored by Multi-Purpose Workers (MPWs), Surveillance Workers (SWs), and Surveillance Inspectors (SIs) to ensure maximum area coverage and effectiveness in mosquito control.

To complement the vector-control measures, leaflet distribution campaigns have been launched in and around Diphu and Manja, disseminating vital information on the symptoms, transmission, and prevention of JE and AES.

These leaflets are aimed at equipping the public with essential knowledge to recognise early warning signs and adopt preventive practices.

The district health authorities have also stepped up awareness generation activities, urging residents to take precautionary measures such as maintaining hygienic surroundings, eliminating sources of stagnant water, using mosquito repellents and nets, and seeking prompt medical attention if symptoms such as high fever, vomiting, seizures, or loss of consciousness are observed. The District Administration and Health Department are jointly monitoring the situation and have assured that all necessary steps are being taken to safeguard public health.

Residents have been asked to remain vigilant and support the ongoing preventive efforts to contain the spread of JE and AES in the district.

## IHRC urges Coal India to resume operations in Northeastern coalfields

**HT Correspondent**

**MARGHERITA, July 12:** The Tinsukia District Committee of the International Human Rights Council has called for the immediate resumption of mining operations by Coal India Limited (CIL) in the Northeastern Coalfields (NEC) located at Margherita in Assam's Tinsukia district.

The appeal was made through a press statement issued on Saturday by the committee's General Secretary, L Ratan Singh.

According to the official statement, the council stressed the historic and ongoing economic importance of the region, particularly highlighting the contributions of the coal, tea, and oil sectors in Upper Assam.

Singh noted that since the colonial period, Tinsukia district has played a pivotal role in addressing economic, social, and employment-related challenges in the region, owing to its rich reserves of natural resources including coal, oil, gas, and globally acclaimed tea plantations.

The statement emphasised that the suspension of mining operations by Coal India Limited has exacerbated unemployment and economic stagnation in the district.

The committee announced that it would soon submit formal memorandums to the Ministry of Coal, the President of India, and the Prime Minister, urging them to initiate appropriate measures for the revival of official mining operations under Coal India.

The council has also set a seven-day timeframe for the resumption of mining activities, stating that the matter requires urgent intervention.

Reiterating the economic potential of the region, the International Human Rights Council stated that the resumption of formal coal mining would not only help in mitigating rising unemployment but also reaffirm the government's commitment to responsible resource management and regional development.

The appeal marks a renewed public call for institutional support and operational revival of one of Upper Assam's key industrial sectors.

## 20-day drama workshop begins at Khelmati High School

**HT Correspondent**

**TEZPUR, July 12:** A 20-day drama workshop for school students of the greater Bahbari-Bandarmari area was formally inaugurated at Khelmati High School, continuing the annual tradition of promoting theatre among young learners.

Organised by the Bahbari Kalaguru Branch of Asam Natya Sammilan, the training programme aims to nurture stagecraft, creativity, and self-expression among local youth.

According to information provided by the organisers, the workshop was inaugurated on July 10 by noted social worker and Secretary of Baan Theater, Jitumoni Deva Choudhury.

The brief ceremony was attended by a host of distinguished personalities associated with theatre and education, including Ambu Ram Narzary, a life member of Asam Natya Sammilan; former Assistant Headmaster of Khelmati High School, Nareswar Boro; social workers Prasanna Kumar Rava and Kamal Nath; and playwright Sidheswar Rava.

President and Secretary of the Bahbari Kalaguru Branch, Puspakanta Koch and Durlav Nath, along with the two appointed drama coaches—Jitumoni Kalita and Bishnu Das—were also present at the event. The ceremony began with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp by Ambu Ram Narzary, setting the tone for the intensive workshop that will see the participation of around 50 students.

In his inaugural address, Jitumoni Deva Choudhury highlighted the significance of drama in personal development and societal engagement. He encouraged the young participants to grasp the fundamentals of acting, stage presence, and performance techniques, noting that theatre education could contribute to both professional growth and responsible citizenship.

The training programme is part of a broader initiative by Asam Natya Sammilan, the region's largest drama organisation, to foster artistic talent across Assam.

## Crackdown on illegal vehicle modifications in Cachar intensifies



**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, July 12:** In a coordinated effort to reinforce road safety and enforce vehicular compliance, the Cachar District Administration, in collaboration with the District Transport Office and Assam Police, has intensified its ongoing crackdown on unauthorised vehicle modifications.

Launched in May, the enforcement drive has gained significant momentum, with officials warning that the campaign will continue through the end of July 2025.

According to an official statement, the initiative is aimed at curbing a growing trend of illegal alterations to vehicles—modifications that violate legal provisions and pose serious risks to public safety. District Commissioner Mridul Yadav, who is leading the campaign from the front, has underscored the administration's zero-tolerance stance.

"Public safety is paramount," Yadav said, adding that such modifications are not only unlawful but endanger the lives of drivers, passengers, and pedestrians alike.

District Transport Officer (DTO) of Cachar, Ramesh Shyam, is overseeing the enforcement operations on the ground. As per the latest figures shared in the official release, at least 30 vehicles have been penalised for violations so far, with e-challans issued and fines totalling ₹1,50,000 collected.

"Our teams are vigilant," DTO Shyam stated, "and we are committed to ensuring that vehicle owners comply with all prescribed norms.

These illegal alterations may appear trivial to some, but they represent serious safety hazards."

The joint enforcement squads have been conducting rigorous checks across the district—from busy market zones to interior rural roads.

Vehicles found with structural changes, unauthorised lighting systems, pressure horns, or exhaust modifications have been pulled over, and their owners warned or penalised under relevant provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act.

Officials have clarified that the campaign is not intended to inconvenience the public but to instil a culture of lawful and responsible vehicle usage.

"The drive is preventive, not just punitive," DTO Shyam reiterated. "Our goal is to protect lives, and we urge all vehicle owners to follow the rules to avoid facing stricter penalties." The administration has also appealed to the public for co-operation, noting that community support is essential to building a safer road environment.

As the campaign enters its final fortnight, authorities have affirmed that surveillance and enforcement will continue with full intensity.

The message from Cachar's leadership is unequivocal: the district's roads will not be allowed to devolve into zones of indiscipline.

With sustained vigilance and a firm administrative resolve, the crackdown aims to restore order, reduce accidents, and ensure that every road user adheres to the rule of law.

## Cachar district administration honours four artists with pension and 'Barxik Silpi Sanman'

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, July 12:** In a solemn ceremony dedicated to celebrating artistic excellence and cultural heritage, the Cachar District Administration recently felicitated four distinguished artists with Artist Pensions and the Barxik Silpi Sanman for the financial year 2024-25. The event was held at the office of the Deputy Commissioner, bringing together local cultural officials and veteran contributors to the arts.

According to an official statement, Cachar Deputy Commissioner Mridul Yadav, IAS, personally presented the honours to the recipients, acknowledging their sustained dedication to preserving and enriching the district's cultural fabric.

The ceremony was attended by Assistant Commissioner and in-



charge of the District Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DDIPR), Barak Valley Zone, Deepa Das, ACS; Cultural Development Officer Snehangshu Shekhar Roy; and Assistant Nazir Bikash Dutta, among others.

This year's Artist Pension (Regular) was conferred upon Rabindra Lal Roy in recognition of his life-

long service to the arts.

The 'Barxik Silpi Sanman', awarded annually to select artists for their outstanding contributions, was presented to Nripen Kumar Das, Nandini Chakraborty, and Bimalendu Sinha. In his address, DC Yadav lauded the honourees for their invaluable contributions to society.

He remarked that the creative

pursuits of artists like these not only help preserve the unique cultural identity of Cachar but also serve as a source of inspiration for the younger generation.

He further emphasised the role of the arts in fostering social cohesion and emotional enrichment, and reiterated the administration's commitment to recognising and supporting artists across genres.

The felicitation ceremony, marked by respect and appreciation, served as a reminder of the district's rich cultural legacy and the importance of honouring those who continue to shape it.

The District Administration affirmed that such gestures are part of its broader initiative to promote cultural continuity and provide institutional support to artists and cultural practitioners throughout Cachar.



**By: Dr. Ratan Bhattacharjee**

*(The author of this article is International Tagore Awardee Dr.Ratan Bhattacharjee a former Affiliate Faculty Virginia Commonwealth University who is ,a multilingual poet and columnist Email [profratanbhattacharjee@gmail.com](mailto:profratanbhattacharjee@gmail.com))*

**DEGREE OF THOUGHT**  
**By: Dipak Kurmi**

Until that reckoning occurs, the American project will remain what it has long been: a paradox wrapped in a flag, promising liberty while dealing in domination. Its democracy, such as it is, must not be preserved as sacred scripture — it must be reimagined as a living contradiction in need of radical transformation. *(the writer can be reached at dipakkurmigbld@gmail.com)*



# The Heritage and Culture of Jamugurihat

The very word “Jamugurihat” refers to a vast region encompassing the three mauzas of Barabaghia, Chilabandha, and Murhadol, located in the historically renowned, fertile land along the Jiyabharali River, rich with the treasures of education, literature, and culture. The history of this region, its historical landmarks, various institutions and organizations established in different villages, the intermingling of languages and cultures of diverse communities, culinary traditions, and religious customs have consistently occupied a significant place in various spheres of the state. In reality, every region has its past, with roads, educational institutions, hospitals, temples, mosques, churches, and their histories. In the fields of art, culture, literature, and education, there are always a few individuals who lead and shape the region’s identity. These are the lifeblood of a region, its defining characteristics and uniqueness. With this perspective in mind, this article attempts to present a comprehensive discussion of the Jamugurihat region.

The name “Jamugurihat” is not profoundly ancient. The region derives its name from a marketplace or “hat” that was held under a massive jamun (Indian blackberry) tree situated in the heart of the area. Al-



Mahatma Gandhi’s call during the 1921 Non-Cooperation Movement, many students left schools and colleges, and individuals abandoned government jobs and positions like village headman. Joynath Gaonburha was the first to relinquish his government-appointed village headman position. In 1931, Kirtiprasad Bhattacharya from Nandikeshwar village set out to join Gandhi’s Dandi Salt March. In protest against the 1930 Cunningham Circular, numerous

ious parts of Jamugurihat. Some of the schools founded during this time include: Dhekerigaon Lower Primary School in 1921, Khadaisuk Lower Primary School and Purva Barabaghia Lower Primary School in 1925, Madhav Girls’ Primary School in 1929, Cheunisuk Lower Primary School and Bamunbari Lower Primary School in 1930, Ghiladhari Lower Primary School, Naharbari Lower Primary School, Gamiripal

large number of schools indicates that even before India’s independence movement, students in the Jamugurihat region were highly enthusiastic about education, and the region’s intellectuals were dedicated to advancing education. In fact, during the Ahom era, measures were taken to provide education in the Jamugurihat region. Several Sanskrit tols (schools) were established during that time. A person named Ashradha Sharma provided Sanskrit education at his home, and in 1922,



Girls’ Middle School in 1936, and Bakola Middle School in 1939. These schools, established before independence, along with those founded later, including over 250 primary, middle, high, higher secondary schools, and colleges, have significantly enriched the educational landscape of the region from that time to the present. Parallel to the spread of education, from the early 20th century, Jamugurihat saw the beginnings of a beautiful tradition of literary activities and book publications. Poems by Ghan Kalita, Kali Prasad Bora, Padma Bora, Upen Kataki, and

gawati’s \*Awanti Kumari\*, \*Singhasan\*, and \*Singhal Keshari\* (translated), and Deben Chakki’s \*Ajamilar Baikuntha Labh\* were published in \*Abahan\* magazine and gained immense popularity through performances. In essence, Jamugurihat is a treasure trove of culture. The heritage-rich Baresaharia Bhaona Mahotsav is a golden monument of not only Jamugurihat but also Assam and Assamese culture. Celebrated every five to six years since 1797, this Baresaharia Bhaona Mahotsav has now earned recognition as the country’s

mutual understanding, harmony, and unity among the villages of Jamugurihat have been an inspiration for all of Assam since ancient times. No social or political event has ever led to tension or division in Jamugurihat. From the independence movement to the oil refinery movement, language movement, medium movement, and the Assam identity movement starting in 1979, the people of Jamugurihat have wholeheartedly contributed to their success. During the Assam identity movement, eight young martyrs from Jamugurihat sacrificed their lives, many were injured, and numerous individuals faced imprisonment. Yet, without succumbing to emotional impulses, people from various communities, religions, and ethnic groups united harmoniously, making significant contributions to the success of these movements, vividly reflecting the region’s impeccable unity.

The field of Jamugurihat’s folk culture is also brimming with rich cultural treasures, untouched by any weeds of discord. In a word, the predominantly rural Jamugurihat can be called the cradle of folk culture. Traditional Assamese village practices such as bongceet, bihunam, ainam, dhainam, biyanam, and the use of tamulpaan (betel nut and leaf) continue to thrive in a



*Jamugurihat’s role in India’s independence movement was no less significant. With the mantra “Do or Die,” people from all sections of society in the region actively participated in every phase of the independence struggle. In response to Mahatma Gandhi’s call during the 1921 Non-Cooperation Movement, many students left schools and colleges, and individuals abandoned government jobs and positions like village headman. Joynath Gaonburha was the first to relinquish his government-appointed village headman position. In 1931, Kirtiprasad Bhattacharya from Nandikeshwar village set out to join Gandhi’s Dandi Salt March. In protest against the 1930 Cunningham Circular, numerous students from the region abandoned their studies to join the Congress.*

the Madhav Pradeep Sanskrit Tol was founded. In 1890, the Murhadol Primary School and in 1894, the Ghiladhari Primary School were established to fa-

others were regularly published in magazines like \*Abahan\*, \*Jayanti\*, and \*Bahi\*. In the fourth decade of the 20th century, Dandiram Das from

largest single cultural event, where 21 to 22 bhaonas (traditional Assamese plays) are performed simultaneously on a lotus-shaped stage, creating an

though the region was historically known as “Nandikeshwar,” during the British era, it was more commonly referred to as “Ghiladhari.” In earlier times, this region was under the rule of King Bana, followed by successive reigns of Arimatta, Shalastambha, Pala, Jitari, Kachari, Chutia, and Bhuyan dynasties, as recorded in historical chronicles. The story of King Arimatta’s atonement for patricide, associated with landmarks like the Pithaguri Dou and Shukna Pukhuri in Kusumtola, keeps the region vibrant with historical significance. Similarly, the Kachari Pukhuri in Nandikeshwar testifies to the Kachari rule, while the Hukai Pukhuri in Pachigao bears witness to the reign of Hukai Bhuyan of the Bhuyan dynasty. Although various dynasties ruled at different times, the six-century-long Ahom era holds the most significant historical value and importance for the region. The “Chamdhar Garh,” constructed along the eastern bank of the Bharali River at the western boundary of Jamugurihat, enhances the region’s historical significance. Built around 1635 during the reign of Swargadeo Pratap Singha, this garh (fort) stretched from the Brahmaputra River to the foothills of Daffa and was used as a military outpost and fortress to counter frequent Mughal invasions. Thus, Chamdhar served as a primary military base and residential area for officers and dignitaries. Additionally, the Gohai Kamal Ali, constructed under the orders of Koch King Naranarayan by Gohai Kamal, son of Chilarai, from Koch Bihar to Narayanpur, passes through the heart of Jamugurihat and is locally referred to as “Kabirar Ali” (the poet’s road). The presence of doul (temples), than-satras (Vaishnavite monasteries), temples, numerous large royal ponds, and the Kusumtola Bori collectively underscore the region’s profound historical importance.

Jamugurihat’s role in India’s independence movement was no less significant. With the mantra “Do or Die,” people from all sections of society in the region actively participated in every phase of the independence struggle. In response to

students from the region abandoned their studies to join the Congress. The Naduar High School was established as a national school. In 1932, picketing was organized to protest the Salt Law, and in 1939, Mahatma Gandhi’s individual satyagraha against World War II was conducted in Jamugurihat as well. Madan Shaikia was the region’s first satyagrahi. The satyagraha, launched nationwide with the mantra “Do not aid the British with money or men,” opposed the British government’s attempt to involve India as a cooperative nation in the war. In 1942, Jamugurihat set a remarkable precedent during the Quit India Movement. Men, women, students—everyone left their homes to participate in rallies and processions. Many were imprisoned, faced heavy fines, and endured police atrocities. Thus, Jamugurihat made an immense contribution to India’s freedom struggle.

It is heartening to note that from the late 19th century through the period of the independence movement, several schools were established in var-

Lower Primary School, and Rangachakua Lower Primary School in 1932, Amdara Lower Primary School and Chaibari Lower Primary School in 1934, Chamdhar Panigaon Lower Primary School, Basudev Lower Primary School, and Tupia Panchgaon Lower Primary School in 1935, Jorji Girls’ Lower Primary School, Sarubhaghia Lower Primary School, and Tarajan Lower Primary School in 1936, Bari Barphalia Lower Primary School in 1937, No. 1 Marisuti Lower Primary School and Majgaon Lower Primary School in 1938, Nabil Lower Primary School in 1940, Gederijan Lower Primary School in 1943, and Jamuguri Girls’ Lower Primary School, Nij Chilabandha Lower Primary School, Panchgaon Lower Primary School, and Dipatola Lower Primary School in 1946. Prior to these, the Jamuguri Lower Basic School (now Jamuguri Adarsha Primary School) was established in 1902, Murhadol Panchgaon Lower Primary School in 1911, and Pachigao Lower Primary School in 1918. The establishment of such a



cilitate education. In addition to primary schools, the Jamuguri M.E. School (now Jamuguri Higher Secondary School) was founded in 1925, Chilabandha

Murhadol village published two books, \*Sukanya Sundari\* and \*Dharmattatva\*, initiating a tradition of book publication in the region. Subsequently, Golok Chandra Borai’s \*Sut Jatir Parichay\*, Jagaram Boruah’s \*Sri Sri Gopaldevor Bargit\*, Anand Chandra Goswami’s \*Bhakutkoot\*, and Golok Chandra Bardoloi’s health-related book, among others published until independence, enriched the region’s literary culture. Similarly, from the late 19th century to the early 20th century, many plays were written for performances in namghars (Vaishnavite prayer halls), and these plays were staged in various village namghars.

In the second decade of the 20th century, inspired by Western drama troupes, more than 30 village-based drama groups emerged in different parts of Jamugurihat. Alongside this, the region’s dramatic literature was enriched with numerous full-length and one-act plays. During this time, plays like Ghanakanta Kalita’s \*Babrubahan\* and \*Simanta Keshari\*, Shonitkonwar Gajen Boruah’s \*Khanikar\*, \*Lakshan Barjan\*, and \*Chor\* (translated), Ganesh Bardoloi’s \*Taru Bhaskar\*, Golok Sharma’s \*Kan\* and \*Ashok\*, Lalit Bha-

aesthetically captivating atmosphere. The Bokakhesa Bhaona, celebrated annually for over 265 years in Patlarsuk village near the Jamugurihat hub, and the Kaliya Daman Bhaona, observed for over 220 years in Kochgaon without interruption, along with the stage Bihu initiated in 1935, the open Bihu at Barpukhuripar since 1965, and various other stage and open Bihu celebrations, have naturally contributed to keeping the region’s cultural heritage vibrant. Until the 1960s, the “Baghbheta” festival, where villagers collectively used nets made of morapat (a type of plant) to trap wild tigers, was a significant cultural practice symbolizing unity, fondly remembered with pride by the region’s people. The annual worship of Ai Bharali, performed by the riverside communities along the Jiyabharali since the time of Swargadeo Pratap Singha, is another prominent tradition. The namghars in every village of the greater Jamugurihat region, the festivals, bhaonas, and other events celebrated in these namghars, along with mosques, churches, temples, and the ceremonies held there, have further strengthened the region’s unity. Surrounded by over 300 small and large villages, the

beautiful, melodious form in the region. Similarly, the language, speech, and forms of address used by the people of Jamugurihat reflect their commitment to preserving their culture. In short, the region’s residents consistently demonstrate their enthusiasm for living a cohesive life, adhering to Assamese customs and ideals. Every village in Jamugurihat is well-organized, each boasting a beautifully constructed namghar that catches the eye. These aesthetically pleasing namghars seem to highlight another unique feature of the Jamugurihat region.

The regular performance of bhaonas, the unparalleled creations of the two great gurus, along with the meticulous practice and presentation of associated elements like songs, dialogues, verses, and rituals, demonstrate the conscious efforts of the Jamugurihat community to pass down the fragrance of Shankari culture from one generation to the next. This reflects their high cultural consciousness and sense of responsibility. The social systems and norms in each village contribute to uniting the people and fostering a disciplined lifestyle. This is the heritage and distinctive characteristic of Jamugurihat.





## Russia warns US, South Korea, Japan against forming security alliance targeting North Korea

SEOUL, July 12: Russia's foreign minister on Saturday warned the US, South Korea and Japan against forming a security partnership targeting North Korea as he visited his country's ally for talks on further solidifying their booming military and other cooperation.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov spoke at North Korea's eastern Wonsan city, where he met the country's leader, Kim Jong Un, and conveyed greetings from President Vladimir Putin.

Relations between Russia and North Korea have been flourishing in recent years, with North Korea supplying troops and ammunition to support Russia's war against Ukraine in return for military and economic assistance. That has raised concerns among South Korea, the US and others that Russia might also transfer to North Korea sensitive technologies that can increase the danger of its nuclear and missile programmes.

Speaking with reporters after a meeting with his North Korean counterpart Choe Son Hui, Lavrov accused the US, South Korea and Japan of what he called their military buildups around North Korea.



"We warn against exploiting these ties to build alliances directed against anyone, including North Korea and, of course, Russia," he said, according to Russia's state Tass news agency.

The US, South Korea and Japan have been expanding or restoring their trilateral military exercises in response to North Korea's advancing nuclear program. On Friday, the three countries held a joint air drill involving US nuclear-capable bombers near the Korean Peninsula, as their top military officers met in Seoul and urged North

Korea to cease all unlawful activities that threaten regional security. North Korea views major US-led military drills as invasion rehearsals. It has long argued that it's forced to develop nuclear weapons to defend itself from US military threats.

Lavrov said Russia understands North Korea's decision to seek nuclear weapons.

"The technologies used by North Korea are the result of the work of its own scientists. We respect North Korea's aspirations and understand the reasons why it

is pursuing nuclear development," Lavrov said, according to Tass.

During their meeting, Choe reiterated that North Korea "unconditionally" supports Russia's fight against Ukraine, as Lavrov repeated Russia's gratitude for the contribution that North Korean troops made in efforts to repel a Ukrainian incursion into Russia's Kursk border region.

Wonsan city, the meeting venue, is where North Korea recently opened a mammoth beach resort that it says can accommodate nearly 20,000 people.

In his comments at the start of his meeting with Choe, Lavrov said that "I am sure that Russian tourists will be increasingly eager to come here. We will do everything we can to facilitate this, creating conditions for this, including air travel," according to the Russian Foreign Ministry. The Wonsan-Kalma tourist zone is at the centre of Kim's push to boost tourism as a way to improve his country's troubled economy. However, prospects for the tourist complex aren't clear, as North Korea appears unlikely to fully reopen its borders and embrace Western tourists anytime soon. (AP)

## Jaishankar to visit China to attend SCO FM's meeting

BEIJING, July 12: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will travel to China to participate in the foreign ministers' meeting of the SCO bloc in the Chinese city of Tianjin next week, an official announcement here said on Saturday.

The Meeting of the Council of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the SCO will be held in Tianjin on July 15, a statement by a spokesperson of the Chinese Foreign Ministry here said on Saturday.

In addition to attending the SCO meeting, Jaishankar will also pay a visit to China, the spokesperson said, without specifying it.

At the invitation of the member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, foreign ministers of other SCO member states and heads of the bloc's permanent bodies will attend the meeting, the statement said.

The ministers will exchange views on SCO cooperation in various fields and major international and regional issues, it said.

The SCO comprises 10 member states - China, Russia, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Belarus.

A host of issues between the two countries, including the current normalisation process between the two countries, China's stoppage of the key rare earth metals required to manufacture a host of products, including automobiles, are expected to figure in the talks.

Earlier, reports said that Jaishankar will visit Beijing on July 13 for talks with Wang.

Jaishankar's visit follows the recent visits of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval to China.

It would be Jaishankar's first visit to China after the ties between the two countries came under severe strain following the 2020 military standoff along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh.

Wang may also visit India this month to hold a fresh round of talks with NSA Doval under the framework of Special Representatives (SR) dialogue on the boundary dispute, it is learnt. Both Wang and Doval are the designated SRs of the boundary mechanism.

Both countries held 23 rounds of talks under the SRs mechanism to resolve the vexed boundary dispute spanning 3,488 km, but without success.

Defence Minister Singh travelled to the Chinese port city of Qingdao last month to participate in the SCO defence ministers' conference.

China is the current chair of the SCO, and it is hosting the meetings of the grouping in that capacity.

During his talks with Chinese Defence Minister Gen Dong Jun on June 26, Singh proposed that India



and China should solve the "complex issues" under a structured roadmap comprising steps to de-escalate tensions along the frontiers and rejuvenate the existing mechanism to demarcate the borders.

Singh and Dong held bilateral talks on the sidelines of a conclave of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) with a focus on maintaining peace and tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Singh had also emphasised the need to create "good neighbourly conditions" to achieve the best mutual benefits and called for "taking action on the ground" to bridge the "trust deficit" resulting from the 2020 eastern Ladakh border standoff, according to an Indian readout on the meeting on June 27.

Reacting to Singh's statement, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning had said the boundary question is complicated, and it takes time to settle it.

The military standoff between China and India in eastern Ladakh began in May 2020, and a deadly clash at the Galwan Valley in June that year resulted in a severe strain in ties between the two neighbours.

The face-off effectively ended following completion of the disengagement process from the last two friction points of Demchok and Depsang under an agreement finalised on October 21.

China and India are currently in the process of normalising relations.

The decision to revive the SR mechanism and other such dialogue formats was taken at a meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Kazan, Russia, on October 23.

The Modi-Xi meeting came two days after India and China signed a disengagement pact for Depsang and Demchok.

In the last few months, India and China have initiated a number of measures to repair the bilateral ties.

Recently, the two sides resumed the Kailash Manasarovar Yatra after a gap of nearly five years. (PTI)

## Pak, Russia sign agreement to revive Pak Steel Mills project

ISLAMABAD, July 12: Pakistan and Russia have signed an agreement to restore and modernise the Pakistan Steel Mills project, marking a new chapter in cooperation between the two countries, according to media reports.

China was also in the race for getting the contract for the Pakistan Steel Mills (PSM) project that was originally built with Soviet assistance. The agreement to revive the PSM in Karachi was signed at the Pakistan Embassy in Moscow on Friday, state-run Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) reported.

The project aims to restart and expand steel production, marking a new chapter in bilateral cooperation, the APP said.

Special Assistant to Prime Minister Haroon Akhtar Khan, who is currently on a visit to Russia, said, "Reviving the PSM with Russia's support reflects our shared history and commitment to a stronger industrial future." The PSM was originally built with assistance from the former Soviet Union in 1971, and had remained a lasting symbol of Pakistan-Russia ties, a statement issued by Press Information Department said.

The PSM had started crumbling in 2008, with thousands of new appointments and global recession among the factors for the downfall. The Express Tribune newspaper reported. The steel mill recorded a loss of PKR 16.9 billion in 2008-09, which jumped to PKR 118.7 billion in five years.

Successive governments of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), which had been in power from 2008 to 2018, had failed to efficiently run this industrial behemoth. Later, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government led by Imran Khan launched an initiative to revive it, triggering a race between China and Russia to get the contract.

Initially, the PTI government was tilted towards China and had started negotiations with a Chinese firm but the talks could not materialise. The Russians, on the other hand, had claimed that since the project had been built by them, therefore, they were best suited to revive the sick unit. (PTI)

## Zardari to continue as president, army chief never sought presidency: Pak PM

ISLAMABAD, July 12: Strongly dismissing rumours that Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari may be forced to step down and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir aspired to assume the presidency, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said such claims were "mere speculations". "Field Marshal Asim Munir has never expressed any desire to become the president, nor is there any such plan in the offing," Sharif told The News on Friday.

Sharif said Zardari, Munir, and he shared a relationship built on mutual respect and a common goal — the progress and prosperity of Pakistan. The clarification comes after Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, in a statement on X on Thursday, denounced the "malicious campaign" targeting Zardari, Sharif and Munir.

"We are fully aware of who is behind the malicious campaign," said Naqvi, who is considered close to the top military leadership.

"I have categorically stated there has been no discussion, nor does any such idea exist, about the president being asked to resign or the COAS aspiring to assume the presidency," he added. Naqvi alleged the involvement of hostile foreign elements in the campaign and said: "To those involved in this narrative, do whatever you wish in collaboration with hostile foreign agencies. As for us, we will do whatever is necessary to make Pakistan strong again, InshAllah." (PTI)

## Judge orders Trump administration to halt indiscriminate immigration stops, arrests in California

LOS ANGELES, July 12: A federal judge on Friday ordered the Trump administration to halt indiscriminate immigration stops and arrests in seven California counties, including Los Angeles.

Immigrant advocacy groups filed the lawsuit last week accusing President Donald Trump's administration of systematically targeting brown-skinned people in Southern California during its ongoing immigration crackdown. The plaintiffs include three detained immigrants and two U.S. citizens, one of who held despite showing agents his identification.

The filing in U.S. District Court asked a judge to block the administration from using what they call unconstitutional tactics in immigration raids. Immigrant advocates accuse immigration officials of detaining someone based on their race, carrying out warrantless arrests, and denying detainees access to legal counsel at a holding facility in downtown LA.

Tricia McLaughlin, assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, said in an email that "any claims that individuals have been targeted by law enforcement because of their skin color are disgusting and categorically FALSE."

McLaughlin said "enforcement operations are highly targeted, and officers do their due diligence" before making arrests.

Judge Maame E. Frimpong also issued a separate order barring the federal government from restricting attorney access at a Los Angeles

immigration detention facility.

Frimpong issued the orders the day after a hearing during which advocacy groups argued that the government was violating the Fourth and Fifth amendments of the constitution.

Immigrants and Latino communities across Southern California have been on edge for weeks since the Trump administration stepped up arrests at car washes, Home Depot parking lots, immigration courts and a range of businesses. Tens of thousands of people have participated in rallies in the region over the raids and the subsequent deployment of the National Guard and Marines.

The order also applies to Ventura County, where busloads of workers were detained Thursday while the court hearing was underway after federal agents descended on a cannabis farm, leading to clashes with protesters and multiple injuries.

According to the American Civil Liberties Union, the recent wave of immigration enforcement has been driven by an "arbitrary arrest quota" and based on "broad stereotypes based on race or ethnicity."

When detaining the three day laborers who are plaintiffs in the lawsuit, all immigration agents knew about them is that they were Latino and were dressed in construction work clothes, the filing said. It goes on to describe raids at swap meets and Home Depots where witnesses say federal agents grabbed anyone who "looked Hispanic." (AP)

## Cambodian sites of Khmer Rouge brutality added to UNESCO heritage list

PHNOM PENH (CAMBODIA), July 12: Three locations used by Cambodia's brutal Khmer Rouge regime as torture and execution sites 50 years ago have been added by UNESCO to its World Heritage List.

The three locations were inscribed to the list by the United Nations cultural agency Friday during the 47th Session of the World Heritage Committee in Paris. The inscription coincided with the 50th anniversary of the rise to power by the communist Khmer Rouge government, which caused the deaths of an estimated 1.7 million Cambodians through starvation, torture and mass executions during a four-year reign from 1975 to 1979.

UNESCO's World Heritage List lists sites considered important to humanity and includes the Great Wall of China, the Pyramids of Giza in Egypt, the Taj Mahal in India and Cambodia's Angkor archaeological complex. The three sites listed Friday include two notorious prisons and an execution site immortalised in a Hollywood film.

Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, located in the capital Phnom Penh, is the site of a former high school used by the Khmer Rouge as a notorious prison. Better known as S-21, about 15,000 people were imprisoned and tortured there.

The M-13 prison, located in rural Kampong Chhnang province in central Cambodia, also was regarded as one of the main prisons of the early Khmer Rouge.

Choeung Ek, located about 15 kilometres south of the capital, was used as an execution site and mass



grave. The story of the atrocities committed there are the focus of the 1984 film "The Killing Fields," based on the experiences of New York Times photojournalist Dith Pran and correspondent Sydney Schanberg.

The Khmer Rouge captured Phnom Penh on April 17, 1975, and immediately herded almost all the city's residents into the countryside, where they were forced to toil in harsh conditions until 1979, when the regime was driven from power by an invasion from neighbouring Vietnam.

In September 2022, the UN-backed Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, better known as the Khmer Rouge tribunal, concluded its work compiling cases against Khmer Rouge leaders. The tribunal cost USD 337 million over 16 years but convicted just three men. Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet issued a message Friday directing people to beat drums simultaneously across the country Sunday morning to mark the UNESCO listing.

"May this inscription serve as a lasting reminder that peace must always be defended," Hun Manet said in a video message posted online. "From the darkest chapters of history, we can draw strength to build a better future for humanity."

Youk Chhang, executive director of the Documentation Center of Cambodia in Phnom Penh, said the country is "still grappling with the painful legacies of genocide, torture, and mass atrocity." But naming the three sites to the UNESCO list will play a role in educating younger generations of Cambodians and others worldwide.

"Though they were the landscape of violence, they too will and can contribute to heal the wounds inflicted during that era that have yet to heal," he said. The UNESCO inscription was Cambodia's first nomination for a modern and non-classical archaeological site and is among the first in the world to be submitted as a site associated with recent conflict, Cambodia's Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts said in a statement Friday. (AP)

## UK's oldest man and WWII veteran, Donald Rose, dies at 110

LONDON, July 12: Britain's oldest World War II veteran, Donald Rose, has died at the age of 110.

Rose participated in the D-Day landings on June 6, 1944, and was part of the division that liberated the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in northern Germany.

In a statement Friday, the leader of the Erewash Borough Council in the north of England, James Dawson, announced Rose's death, calling him a "war hero."

"Erewash was privileged to count him as a resident," he added. In May, Rose joined 45 other veterans as guests of honour at a tea party celebration hosted by the Royal British Legion at the National Memorial Arboretum, to mark 80 years since Victory in Europe Day.

Rose, who was born on Christmas Eve in 1914 following the outbreak of hostilities in World War I, said at the event that he did not celebrate VE Day at the time.

"When I heard that the armistice had been signed 80 years ago, I was in Germany at Belsen and, like most active soldiers, I didn't get to celebrate at that time," he said. "We just did what we thought was right and it was a relief when it was over."

Originally from the village of Westcott, southwest of London, Rose joined the army aged 23 and served in North Africa, Italy and France, according to the Royal British Legion. He received a number of medals and was awarded France's highest honor, the Legion d'Honneur.

Rose is also believed to have been the UK's oldest man. (AP)

## Authorities say about 200 immigrants arrested in raids on 2 Southern California farms

CAMARILLO (US), July 12: Federal immigration authorities said Friday they arrested about 200 immigrants suspected of being in the country illegally in raids a day earlier on two California cannabis farm sites. Protesters engaged in a tense standoff with authorities during an operation at one of the farms.

The Department of Homeland Security said in a statement that authorities executed criminal search warrants in Carpinteria and Camarillo, California, on Thursday. They arrested immigrants suspected of being in the country illegally, and there were also at least 10 immigrant children on site, the statement said.

Four U.S. citizens were arrested for "assaulting or resisting officers," the department said. Authorities were offering a \$50,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of one person suspected of firing a gun at federal agents. One worker who called family to say he was hiding from authorities was on life support after falling and suffering significant injuries.

During the raid, crowds of people gathered outside Glass House Farms in Camarillo to seek information about their relatives and protest immigration enforcement. Authorities clad in military-style helmets and uniforms faced off with the demonstrators. Acrid green and white billowing smoke then forced community members to retreat.

Glass House, a licensed California cannabis grower, said in a statement that immigration agents had valid warrants. The company said workers were detained, and it is helping provide them with legal representation. The farm also grows tomatoes and cucumbers.

"Glass House has never knowingly violated applicable hiring practices and does not and has never employed minors," the statement said. It is legal to grow and sell cannabis in California with proper licensing.

The state's Department of Cannabis Control said they "observed no minors on the premises" during a site visit to the farm in May 2025. After receiving another



complaint, the department opened an active investigation, according to a department spokesperson.

**Worker gravely injured**

At least 12 people were injured during the raid and protest, said Andrew Dowd, a spokesperson for the Ventura County Fire Department. Eight were taken to St. John's Regional Medical Center and the Ventura County Medical Center, and four were treated at the scene and released. Dowd said he did not have information on the extent of the injuries of those hospitalized. On Friday, about two

dozen people waited outside the farm to retrieve the cars of loved ones and speak to managers. Relatives of Jaime Alanis, who has picked tomatoes at the farm for 10 years, said he called his wife in Mexico during the raid to tell her immigration agents had arrived and that he was hiding with others inside the farm.

"The next thing we heard was that he was in the hospital with broken hands, ribs and a broken neck," Juan Duran, Alanis' brother-in-law, said in Spanish. It was not immediately clear

how Alanis was injured. A doctor at Ventura County Medical Center told the family that those who brought Alanis to the hospital said he had fallen from the roof of a building.

Alanis had a broken neck, fractured skull and a rupture in an artery that pumps blood to the brain, said his niece Yesenia, who didn't want to share her last name for fear of reprisal. He is on life support, she said.

"They told us he won't make it and to say goodbye," Yesenia said, crying. The hospital did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

**Confrontation with authorities**

Relatives and advocates headed to the farm about 50 miles (80 kilometers) northwest of downtown Los Angeles to try to find out what was going on, and began protesting outside.

Federal authorities formed a line blocking the road leading through farm fields to the company's greenhouses. Protesters were seen shouting at agents wearing camouflage gear, helmets and gas masks.

The billowing smoke drove protesters to retreat. It wasn't clear why authorities threw the canisters or if they released chemicals such as tear gas.

Ventura County fire authorities responding to a 911 call of people having trouble breathing said three people were taken to nearby hospitals. At the farm, agents arrested workers and removed them by bus. Others, including U.S. citizens, were detained at the site for hours while agents investigated.

The incident came as federal immigration agents have ramped up arrests in Southern California at car washes, farms and Home Depot parking lots, stoking widespread fear among immigrant communities.

**Federal investigations**

The Department of Homeland Security said in a statement Friday that the investigation into immigration and potential child labor violations at the farm is ongoing. No further details of the allegations were provided.

The agency said hundreds of demonstrators attempted to disrupt

the operations, leading to the arrest of four Americans.

"We will prosecute to the fullest extent of the law anyone who assaults or doxes federal law enforcement," Assistant Secretary Tricia McLaughlin said in a statement.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection were both part of the operation, the statement said.

**Family members search for answers**

The mother of an American worker said her son was held at the worksite for 11 hours and told her agents took workers' cellphones to prevent them from calling family or filming and forced them to erase cellphone video of agents at the site. The woman said her son told her agents marked the men's hands with ink to distinguish their immigration status. She spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because she feared reprisals from the government.

United Farm Workers said in statement that some U.S. citizens are not yet accounted for. (AP)



# Khandu thanks people of Riga for agreeing to pre-feasibility report on Siang project

*Riga nod fuels dam debate as Arunachal government hails 'national interest', protesters plan fresh stir*



**ITANAGAR, July 12:** Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu has thanked the people of Riga village in Siang district for their consent and support in signing the MoU for the Pre-Feasibility Report of the proposed Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP).

A meeting was held between Khandu and representatives of Riga village led by Panchayati Raj

and Rural Development Minister Ojing Tasing in Itanagar on Friday evening.

Khandu wrote on X, "Heartfelt thanks to the people of Riga for their consent and support in signing the MoU for the Pre-Feasibility Report of the proposed Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP), a step taken in the larger national interest."

"Your trust inspires us. We re-

main firmly committed to fulfilling all developmental aspirations of the community," he wrote.

The chief minister said, "As one of the largest Adi villages in the Siang belt, Riga holds a vital place in our collective journey toward progress and prosperity."

Talking to PTI, Panchayati Raj and Rural Development Minister Ojing Tasing said, "Yes, people have given their consent for a PFR

for the Siang project."

Since the proposal to set up a mega-dam on the Siang first came up in 2017, the proposal drew opposition from residents.

The project, with an estimated installed capacity of 11,000 MW, has been facing opposition from local communities, since the proposal first came up in 2017, due to concerns about displacement, livelihood loss, and environmental impacts.

Till recently, people were against the PFR survey. Now the state government has taken another route - engage in dialogue - highlighting the project's benefit and promise to hear the concerns of the people affected by the project.

The Siang Indigenous Farmers Forum, which is leading the movement against the dam project, claimed that it is meaningless, as people from 27 affected villages are "against" the project.

"Only 25 per cent of Riga is affected", SIFF president Lamok Padun said.

He accused the state government of pushing for the project by forcing BJP workers from Riga village to agree to sign for the MoU.

Padun disclosed that SIFF will hold a rally in protest against the development at Geku in Upper Siang district on July 14. (PTI)

# Migrant youth lynched for sexually assaulting girls, curfew imposed in Roing



**ITANAGAR, July 12:** Curfew was imposed in Roing town in Arunachal Pradesh's Lower Dibang Valley district as tensions flared after a migrant youth from neighbouring Assam was lynched by a mob for allegedly sexually assaulting several girls, police said.

The 19-year-old man, identified as Riya-Ul Kurim from Bongaigaon, was taken into police custody on Friday after it came to light that he had allegedly sexually assaulted several girls of a school.

The parents of the girls, who filed a complaint with the school authorities, had nabbed the youth and thrashed him before police rescued him and took him into custody.

However, a mob barged into the police station, dragged the youth outside and beat him up. As he was rescued and taken to the hospital, they followed him and thrashed him again, ultimately leading to his death.

The youth used to work at a construction site near the school, police said.

So far, eight minor girls -- aged between six and nine -- have undergone medical examinations.

Lower Dibang Valley Superintendent of Police Ringu Ngupok said the boarders of a hostel of the school were allegedly sexually assaulted over the course of a week by the youth.

The hostel lacked basic safety infrastructure as there were no grills on the windows and no functional locks on the sliding doors, leaving the children exposed and vulnerable, another senior police officer involved in the investigation said.

The accused had unhindered access to the hostel premises. The absence of secure barriers and proper oversight made it easy for him to approach the girls at night, he added.

"A parent-teacher meeting was convened around 6.30 pm on Thursday. Around 8.30 pm, we received information that the parents and relatives of the victims had begun assaulting all the labourers working at the construction site. As tensions escalated, Kurim fled the scene and went missing. We rescued all 17 labourers and later released them after recording their statements," the SP said.

On Friday, Kurim was traced to a nearby colony by the victims'

parents and local youths. He was thrashed before the police intervened and took him into custody, he said.

However, the mob followed, barged into the police station, forcibly removed the youth from custody, and assaulted him -- ignoring repeated appeals for calm from the police and even the local MLA, the SP said.

He was rushed to the hospital in a critical condition, but the mob followed again and beat him up. He succumbed to his injuries shortly thereafter.

A post-mortem examination was also conducted in front of a judicial magistrate at Roing district hospital.

Police have registered multiple cases related to child sexual abuse, and mob lynching, among others. Investigations are also underway against the school and hostel management for gross negligence and failure to ensure the safety of the children.

A curfew has also been imposed in Roing town and additional security forces have been deployed to maintain law and order.

"The situation in Roing remains tense but is under control. The school's hostel has been shut down indefinitely by the district administration and parents have been instructed to withdraw their children and enrol them in nearby government or recognised private schools," the SP said.

A team from the Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (AP-SCPCR), led by chairperson Ratan Anya and member Nguarang Achung, is also currently in Roing to conduct an independent inquiry into the matter. (PTI)

## 2 Mountain Division GOC meets Governor

**HT Correspondent**

**ITANAGAR, July 12:** Major General VS Deshpande, General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the 2 Mountain Division, called on the Governor of Arunachal Pradesh, Lt General KT Parnaik, PVSM, UYSM, YSM (Retd), at Raj Bhavan, Itanagar, on Saturday.

The meeting focused on critical issues pertaining to national security, strategic border management, and ongoing developmental efforts in the frontier state.

According to an official statement, the discussion between the two senior officers covered a range of topics, including the overall security scenario along the international border, the progress of the Government of India's Vibrant Village Programme, and the Indian Army's Sadbhavana initiatives.

These initiatives aim to strengthen the socio-economic fabric of remote communities in Arunachal Pradesh by fostering goodwill and improving access to basic infrastructure and services.

During the interaction, Governor Parnaik expressed his appreciation for the 2 Mountain Division's continued vigilance and professionalism in safeguarding Arunachal Pradesh's sensitive border areas.

Acknowledging the operational challenges faced by troops deployed in difficult terrain, he praised their commitment to maintaining peace and security in the region.

The Governor also commended the Indian Army's efforts under the Sadbhavana programme, which has played a pivotal role in delivering people-centric projects such as the construction of schools, community halls, medical outreach programmes, and skill development initiatives in remote villages.

## WCD minister Dasanglu Pul meets union minister Jitendra Singh

**HT Bureau**

**NAMSAL, July 12:** Arunachal Pradesh Women and Child Development Minister Dasanglu Pul met Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, Jitendra Singh, in the national capital on Friday to discuss a set of key proposals focused on biodiversity conservation, scientific innovation, and the promotion of a sustainable bioeconomy in the state.

According to an official statement, the meeting centered on Pul's proposal to establish India's first Ex-Situ Germplasm Bank in Arunachal Pradesh, a landmark initiative aimed at preserving rare, endangered, and economically important plant species native to the region. The bank, if approved, would serve as a crucial national repository for safeguarding genetic diversity in the face of environmental and anthropogenic threats.

Minister Pul also put forward the proposal to set up an Eastern Arunachal Regional Centre for Bioresource Management and Development.

Designed to leverage the region's immense ecological wealth, the centre would focus on the sustainable utilisation, conservation, and scientific management of bioresources while offering capacity-building opportunities to local communities. Underscoring the role of biotechnology and entrepreneurship in rural and tribal development, Pul further proposed the establishment of a Bio-NEST Biocubator at Roing.

The incubator would act as a launchpad for biotech startups, fostering innovation, research collaboration, and value-added enterprise in sectors such as herbal medicine, agriculture, and environmental



technology.

The minister also appealed to Singh for the expeditious release of core grant support to the Arunachal Pradesh State Council for Science & Technology (APSCS&T), citing urgent staffing issues and institutional development needs.

She emphasised that timely assistance would ensure uninterrupted scientific activities and strengthen research infrastructure across the state.

"Our state is home to an incredible range of biodiversity, and we must act now to preserve it while building a strong foundation for scientific research and innovation," said Pul. "These proposals are designed not just to conserve, but to convert our natural wealth into economic opportunity for local communities," she added.

Responding to the proposals, Jitendra Singh reaffirmed the Government of India's commitment to inclusive and sustainable development in the Northeastern region.

He praised the vision and forward-looking approach of the

Arunachal Pradesh government in integrating science and technology with environmental conservation and livelihood generation.

"The development of the Northeast has been one of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's highest priorities," Dr Singh said. "The transformation since 2014 is evident—what was once a region struggling with connectivity is now witnessing unprecedented infrastructural, technological, and human resource growth."

He assured full support from the Ministry of Science and Technology, noting that the proposed projects align well with the Centre's long-term vision of empowering border and tribal states through innovation, research, and green economic development.

The meeting concluded on a positive note, with both ministers agreeing to maintain close coordination for the timely implementation of strategic science and biodiversity-related projects in Arunachal Pradesh.

## BJP Papum Pare felicitates Deepak Nabam for decades of selfless social service

**HT Correspondent**

**DOIMUKH, July 12:** In a heartfelt recognition of unwavering dedication to humanitarian service, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Papum Pare district unit, during the Guru Purnima Utsav at Doimukh felicitated social worker Deepak Nabam for his selfless and sustained contribution to the cause of humanity and the downtrodden.

According to an official statement, the felicitation was held as part of a party-wide initiative to honour individuals who have committed themselves to social service and the upliftment of the underprivileged.

Speaking to the media, BJP Papum Pare district president Nguarang Logi stated, "The party's direction is clear—to acknowledge and appreciate those who work tirelessly in the service of mankind. Among many such individuals, we found that Deepak Nabam's contribution to society stands out. He has been working for decades, helping the needy and bringing hope to countless lives."

Lauding Nabam's work, Logi said that service to humanity transcends all barriers of religion, caste, and tribe.

"True leaders are those who lead with compassion and commitment. Service to mankind is the greatest virtue, and such work is ultimately rewarded by the divine," he added.

Nguarang Logi also noted that Deepak Nabam's efforts were recently mentioned in the Prime Minister's Mann Ki Baat address, a recognition that further high-



lights the impact of his work.

"We are honoured to felicitate him today in line with the party's ethos of acknowledging grassroots change-makers," Logi stated.

Deepak Nabam, Chairman of Deepak Nabam Living Home, expressed his gratitude to the people of the state for their continued support in his journey of service.

Addressing the gathering, he said, "Though I face many challenges in managing the responsibilities, I remain committed to my cause. This has been the purpose of my life—for decades, my family and I have been fully engaged in helping those in need."

He added that he currently oversees two centres for the care and rehabilitation of the underprivi-

leged—one at Senki Park in Itanagar and another at Sopo in Doimukh Circle.

Appealing for community support, he urged social workers, community leaders, and well-wishers to come forward and extend their cooperation in continuing the humanitarian mission.

The function was also attended by BJP Papum Pare district vice president Panaye Matang, district general secretary Techi Takia, district coordinator Techi Tempo, and district Mahila Morcha president Tana Mariam, among others.

They praised Deepak Nabam's unwavering spirit and called for collective support to further the cause of compassion and social service.

## CM reaffirms commitment to health sector reforms in Arunachal

**NAMSAL, July 12:** Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Saturday said health and education are the top two priorities of his government.

Speaking at a function after inaugurating the newly built Maternal and Child Health (MCH) wing of Namsai District Hospital, he reaffirmed the government's commitment to address the manpower shortages in the health sector.

He said over 1,000 posts have already been created in the health department and are under various stages of recruitment, while further gap analysis is ongoing to fill critical vacancies.

The CM also disclosed that a new medical college under Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode is coming up at Namsai, with Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein holding discussions with top institutions to ensure a high-quality facility for the region.

"The government wants a first-class medical college to be established at Namsai so that the aspirations of the youths of the eastern districts of the state could be fulfilled," Khandu said.

The chief minister's visit marked the formal opening of the MCH wing, which was sanctioned under the National Health Mission during 2022-23 at an estimated cost



of ₹ 12 crore.

Constructed over 28,356 sq ft by the Namsai Rural Works Division, the facility was completed in June this year. The main district hospital was earlier built at a cost of ₹ 24 crore under the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) scheme.

During his tour of the hospital, Khandu distributed fruit baskets to patients and appreciated the efforts of the medical staff.

"In the last three years, we have overcome the shortage of manpower in the state's health sector but challenges still per-

sist. The department is aware of the situation and doing its best to overcome the challenges," he said, calling on health workers to continue supporting the department's efforts.

Khandu acknowledged that districts like Namsai—with a population of over one lakh—still face gaps in manpower including specialist doctors, GDMOs, nurses, and support staff. He added that rationalisation of postings is being carried out, especially in remote areas, to ensure equitable distribution of personnel.

"Arunachal is a vast state that shares international borders with Tibet, Myanmar and Bhutan. PHCs and CHCs in remote areas also face shortages, but the government is addressing these through transfers and targeted recruitment," he said.

He reiterated that the government has been supporting both the health and education sectors in a focused way, adding: "Health protects the people and education leads them toward development. These two remain our top priorities."

The chief minister also commended the Namsai District Hospital staff for their dedication, noting that the hospital has become a critical hub for healthcare services across multiple districts. (PTI)

## 1st AP Veteran Rapid and Blitz Chess Championship kicks off in Itanagar

**HT correspondent**

**ITANAGAR, July 12:** The 1st Arunachal Pradesh Veteran Rapid and Blitz Chess Championship-2025 got underway in the state capital with the participation of several seasoned chess players from across the state.

The two-day tournament is being held at the NEFA Chess Club in Itanagar.

According to an official statement, the inaugural ceremony was attended by a large number of veteran players, chess enthusiasts and office bearers of the chess community.

All Arunachal Pradesh Chess Association (AAPCA) president K Konia graced the event as the chief guest and formally declared the tournament open during a brief function held at the venue.

The championship is being organised by the AAPCA under the aegis of the All India Chess Federation (AICF).

The event aims to provide a competitive platform for veteran players while promoting the culture of strategic and intellectual sport among the senior chess community of Arunachal Pradesh.

AAPCA secretary Tamchi Kache, senior players of the state, and executive members from the AICF were among those present during the inaugural ceremony.

Organisers stated that the championship will be conducted in both Rapid and Blitz formats, offering participants an opportunity to showcase their skills in fast-paced, high-stakes games.

The tournament marks a significant milestone for the chess fraternity of Arunachal Pradesh, as it is the first time a dedicated veteran event is being held at this scale under the official recognition of national chess authorities.



# Amit Shah slams LDF, UDF, alleges regimes led by them followed 'appeasement politics'

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,

July 12: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday slammed both the ruling CPI(M)-led LDF and the opposition Congress-led UDF alleging the regimes steered by them only created corruption, followed appeasement politics and made Kerala a safe haven for "anti-national forces", like the Popular Front of India (PFI).

Addressing party workers here, Shah said only the BJP-led NDA can bring development to the state and not the LDF or the UDF.

"Viksit Bharat" is not possible without the development of strong southern states and the route to 'Viksit Bharat' is only through 'Viksit Keralam', he said. "Therefore, from now, the basic aim of the BJP will be a Viksit Keralam," he underlined, asserting that without the saffron party there will be no development in Kerala.

In support of his claim, he said the Modi government has dedicated projects, like Vizhinjam port, worth thousands of crores of rupees to the state, connected 11 districts through two Vande Bharat trains and in-



creased the Railway budget for Kerala from ₹ 372 crore in the year 2004 to the current ₹ 3,700 crore.

He claimed that the Modi government has spent many times more money on Kerala than the past Congress governments and said he will release the detailed figures of the same through the party's state committee office.

The top BJP leader said it was more important for the BJP to ensure that its state office here becomes the "centre of Viksit Keralam" than having a Chief Minister. He also unveiled the logo of

the party's Viksit Keralam mission. During his speech, he hit out at the CPI(M)-headed LDF and the Congress-led UDF alleging their successive governments only created corruption, followed appeasement politics and made Kerala a safe haven for "anti-national forces", like the Popular Front of India (PFI). The union government in 2022 declared PFI, along with its associates and affiliates, as unlawful.

Shah said the Kerala government had all the powers to impose a ban on the PFI and questioned why it did not do so. "When that organisa-

tion spread to various other parts of the country, it was Prime Minister Narendra Modi who took the decision to ban it and ensured that its top leaders were arrested," the Union Home Minister said, addressing a large gathering of party workers and supporters at the ward-level leadership meeting held at the Putharikandam maidan here.

He said the CPI(M) and Congress term the BJP a north-Indian party, but it formed governments in eastern states like Assam and Tripura which were strongholds of opposition parties and similarly, his party will come to power in Tamil Nadu as well.

In Kerala, the BJP-led NDA's vote share has increased since 2014 and it will be fighting the 2026 Assembly polls in the state with the intention of forming a government, he said. He urged the party workers present at the meeting to ensure that the BJP-led NDA gets more than 25 per cent votes in the upcoming local body elections in Kerala.

"If you want true change, vote for the BJP-led NDA. Only it can create Viksit Keralam," he said and

urged the party workers to devote their time to strengthening the NDA and making Viksit Keralam a reality.

He further said that while the BJP and CPI(M) were both cadre-based parties, a major difference between them was that the saffron party worked for development of the state and not its cadres. "However, for the CPI(M), development of the cadres comes ahead of the development of the state," he claimed. He further alleged that the track record of the LDF and UDF was that of corrupt governance.

The union minister said that during the LDF rule, there were several financial scandals, like "cooperative bank scam, AI camera scam, Life Mission scam, K-FON scam, PPE-kit scheme and the one that irritates Vijayanji -- the state-sponsored gold smuggling which is the biggest scam in India." He said that the UDF was no less, as during its rule too there were several scams, like Solar scam and Palarivattom scam, but there were no such financial scandals during the Modi government's 11 year administration. (PTI)

## Indian legal system facing unique challenges, says CJI Gavai

HYDERABAD, July 12: The Indian legal system has been facing unique challenges and delays in trials can sometimes go on for decades, Chief Justice of India BR Gavai said on Saturday.

Delivering the convocation address at Nalsar University of Law, Hyderabad near here, Justice Gavai advised students to go abroad for studies on scholarships and not put pressure on family finances.

"Our country and legal system are facing unique challenges. Delays in trials can sometimes go for decades. We have seen cases where someone has been found innocent after spending years in jail as an undertrial. Our best talent can help us resolve the problems that we are facing," he said.

The Chief Justice quoted J.S. Rakoff, a senior federal district judge in the United States in this connection. The American judge in his book, "Why the Innocent Plead Guilty and the Guilty Go Free: And Other Paradoxes of Our Broken Legal System," had made the following remark. "Even though I conclude that our legal system is in bad need of fixing, I remain cautiously optimistic that my fellow (citizens) will rise to the challenge." This comment of the American judge was quoted by CJI Gavai.

Further, the Chief Justice advised the passing out graduates to seek mentors for the sake of integrity and not for their power. On the "pressure to pursue a master's degree abroad", Justice Gavai said: "A foreign degree alone is not a stamp of your worth. Don't take this decision in the reflex of thought or under your peer pressure. What happens next? Years of debt, anxiety, career decisions made under financial burden."

He cited examples of some young graduates or lawyers taking loans of as much as ₹ 50-70 lakh for foreign education. In fact, a small portion of a big amount like ₹ 50-₹ 70 lakh can be used as an investment to start independent practice or build an office chamber. The young lawyers can go abroad for studies at a later stage in life when they are stable, he said.

The growing trend of going abroad also reflects a structural issue, signalling a lack of confidence in the state of postgraduate legal education and research in our country, Justice Gavai said.

Many who study abroad come back with renewed passion and fresh perspectives, but when they return, they often find institutions unwellcoming, under-resourced or close to new ideas. There are few structured pathways for postdoctoral research, limited funding for early career scholars and opaque hiring processes that discourage even the most committed.

"This must change if we want to keep our best minds or bring them back. We must build nurturing academic environments, offer transparent and merit-based opportunities, and most importantly, restore dignity and purpose to legal research and training in India," he said.

On issues of mental pressure faced by legal professionals, he said the working hours are long, expectations are high and the culture sometimes is "ruthless".

"You will feel pressure, not just to succeed but also to appear to be successful. Many hide their struggles. I urge not to," he said.

It is not just enough to celebrate India's legal legacy; its future should be taken care of. The future depends on how researchers, young faculty and lawyers and scholars are treated.

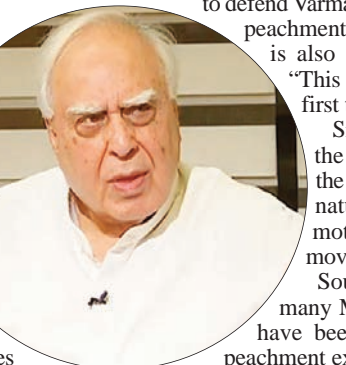
Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and Supreme Court Judge, Justice PS Narasimha also participated, while acting Chief Justice of Telangana High Court, Justice Sujoy Paul presided. (PTI)

## Oppn must tell govt -- no support in Varma matter till inquiry set up against Yadav: Sibal

NEW DELHI, July 12: The opposition must not support any move by the government to impeach Justice Yashwant Varma till an inquiry is set up under impeachment proceedings against Justice Shekhar Yadav for his "communal" remarks, Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal said on Saturday.

In an interview with PTI, Sibal contended that the case of Varma, who is embroiled in a row following the discovery of burnt wads of currency at his residence after a fire incident, was not one of corruption and so the parties thinking that they should support action against the judge as it is graft matter should review their position.

The Independent Rajya Sabha MP claimed there could be two motives of the government in moving ahead with bringing an impeachment motion against Varma -- they are unhappy with him because he is "one of the most independent High Court judges" and alternatively they may be thinking that this is a "great opportunity to put pressure



on the courts" and try to bring another form of the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC). "I think the institution has broad enough shoulders to withstand such moves of the government," he said.

Asked if the situation arises would he be ready to defend Varma in Parliament during impeachment proceedings, Sibal, who is also a senior advocate, said, "This is just an academic issue, first the judge has to ask me."

Sibal's remarks come amid the government beginning the exercise of collecting signatures of MPs to move a motion in Parliament to remove Justice Varma.

Sources said signatures of many MPs from the Lok Sabha have been collected for the impeachment exercise, an indication that the motion may be moved in the Lower House. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju has said that a motion to remove Varma will be brought in Parliament's next session, beginning from July 21.

Slamming the government for moving ahead

with collecting signatures, Sibal said, "First of all, what has the government got to do with this? Under the Constitution, either 100 members of the Lok Sabha or 50 members of the Rajya Sabha can move a motion for impeachment. The Constitution process dehors the government."

The fact that the government is collecting signatures means that it is interested as an entity to move the motion and impeach him, whereas the Constitutional process dehors the government, he said. "I am a bit surprised but this is what happens when you have governments moving impeachment motions. Obviously, they don't want the judge for reasons that they know best," Sibal told PTI.

Asked what would be his message to opposition parties, Sibal said this is not an issue of parties at all and even the government is erroneously moving through by collecting signatures.

"It has nothing to do with the government, it has nothing to do with opposition parties. It is something to do with members of Parliament. If the opposition parties give a diktat, fifty MPs will sign. And if a government gives a diktat, a hundred will sign. But the question is, this itself is constitutionally impermissible," he contended. (PTI)

## I have done no wrong being targeted politically: Rohit Pawar

PUNE, July 12: After the Enforcement Directorate (ED) named him as an accused in the alleged Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank (MSCB) scam, NCP (SP) MLA Rohit Pawar on Saturday claimed he has not done anything wrong and that he was being targeted with political motives.

Pawar said he was being singled out despite 97 others being named in the FIR, and added that since the matter is now in the court, he will fight out the case legally and win it.

The ED named Pawar, who represents the Karjat-Jamkhed assembly constituency in Ahilyanagar district, as an accused in the chargesheet, submitted in a special court in Mumbai recently, in the alleged MSCB scam.

The MSCB money laundering case stems from an August 2019 FIR of the Mumbai police's Economic Offences Wing (EOW), alleging fraudulent sale of SSKs (Sahakari Sakhar Kharkhana or cooperative sugar mills) by the then officers and directors of the MSCB at throwaway prices to their relatives/private persons without following the due procedure.

The Kannad SSK in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar was purchased by Baramati Agro Ltd, which is a company of Pawar.

The probe agency has alleged that MSCB, in order to recover an outstanding loan of Rs 80.56 crore of Kannad SSK Limited took possession of all its assets on July 13, 2009 under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act.

The MSCB then conducted an auction on August 30, 2012 of Kannad SSK by fixing a "very low" reserve price based on a questionable valuation report. Apart from Baramati Agro, two other parties entered the bidding process. The bidder with the highest bid was technically disqualified on flimsy grounds, whereas the other bidder was already a close business associate of Baramati Agro with no financial capacity or experience of running a sugar unit, the ED said. (PTI)

## 6 dead, 8 injured in building collapse in Delhi; rescue operation underway

NEW DELHI, July 12: Six people, including a two-year-old girl, died and eight sustained injuries when a four-storey building collapsed in the Welcome area of northeast Delhi on Saturday morning, an official said. The bodies of the owner of the building, his wife, two sons and two others were retrieved from the debris and sent to GTB Hospital, he said.

Eight people have been hospitalised, while attempts are underway to rescue those still trapped under the rubble. Multiple agencies, including the NDRF, have been deployed for rescue operations, the official said.

A senior police officer said, "Around 7.04 am on Saturday, we received information regarding the collapse of a four-storey building near Idgha, Welcome. When the police team reached the spot, they found that three storeys of the building had collapsed."

"So far, eight injured persons have been rescued -- seven have been shifted to JPC Hospital and one to GTB Hospital for treatment. All the listed missing persons have been rescued; how-

ever, the rescue operation is still ongoing," he added. Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (Northeast) Sandeep Lamba said, "The owner of the building, Matloob, lived in the building with his family members. The ground floor and first floor were unoccupied. The building opposite also sustained damage."

Matloob, 50, his wife Rabia, 46, and two sons -- Javed, 23, and Abdulla, 15 -- died in the incident. Two more, including Zubia, 27, and her two-year-old daughter Fozia, also perished.

The injured included Matloob's two other sons -- Parvez, 32, his wife Siza, and their one-year-old son Ahmad, 21, and Naved, 19.

Govind, 60, his brother Ravi Kashyap, 27, and their wives Deepa, 56, and Jyoti, 27, who lived in the opposite building, were also hospitalised with injuries. Anees Ahmad Ansari, another person from the opposite building, said he too sustained minor injuries in the incident.

"As the building collapsed, the rubble hit our building, and I also got injured. Everyone, including locals, is busy trying to rescue the fam-

ily. We hope that they are safe," he said.

The building collapsed when locals were out on their morning walks, many of whom acted as first responders and began trying to rescue those trapped before fire officials arrived at the spot. Seven fire tenders rushed to the site at Gali No. 5 at Janta Colony close to Idgha road in Seelampur for rescue operations. Delhi Fire Service chief Atul Garg said.

Asma, who lives in the neighbourhood, told PTI, "Around 7 am, I was in my house when I heard a loud noise and there was dust all over. When I came down, I saw that our neighbour's home had collapsed."

"We don't know how many are trapped, but a family of 10 people lives there," she said.

Northeast Delhi MP Manoj Tiwari in a post on X said, "A tragic incident has occurred in the JJ Cluster area of Welcome, located in the Seelampur Assembly segment of our Lok Sabha constituency, where a three-storey building has collapsed. The NDRF has reached the spot and is engaged in the rescue operation." (PTI)

## Events like Pareeksha pe Charcha can't whitewash stark indices on state of education: Kharge

NEW DELHI, July 12: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday highlighted a government survey that showed poor learning outcomes among school students and questioned the Prime Minister's flagship events such as Pareeksha pe Charcha and Exam Warriors.

He said such buzzwords and self-publicity events cannot whitewash the stark indices depicting the real state of education in India and accused the government of apathy.

"Buzz words and self-publicity events like 'Pareeksha pe Charcha' and 'Exam Warriors' cannot whitewash these STARK indices depicting the REAL state of education in India! Rank apathy leading to falling learning outcomes. Modi government remains apathetic to our future," Kharge wrote in an X post. In the post, the Congress chief also attached a video on the outcome of the survey -- Performance Assessment, Review and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development (PARAKH) Rashtriya Sarvekshan 2024 -- carried out by the Ministry of Education.

The video claimed that the "national learning crisis is worse than the pre-Covid era" and pointed to failures in the foundation course, and widening learning gaps in the middle and secondary levels.

"Education neglected," the video alleged, claiming that "Now we know the ill effects of reducing the education spending by half".

The PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan, formerly known as the National Achievement Survey, was conducted on December 4 last year, covering 21,15,022 students from both government and private schools in Grades 3, 6 and 9 across 74,229 schools in 781 districts, spanning 36 states and Union Territories. (PTI)

## Stay cautious against those who try to divide Hindus and Sikhs: Adityanath in Lucknow



LUCKNOW, July 12: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday claimed attempts were being made to drive a wedge between the Hindus and Sikhs, and urged the people to be wary of such actions.

He also claimed that the now-behind bars Chhangur Baba of Balrampur had fixed rates for religious conversions, leading to transactions to the tune of ₹ 100 crore. Adityanath made the remarks at the flagging-off of UP-Delhi Sandesh Yatra, being held to mark the 350th martyrdom day of Guru Teg Bahadur. He hosted the yatis at his official residence here.

The Sandesh Yatra will start from Lucknow and culminate at Chandni Chowk Sheeshganj Gurudwara in Delhi, the UP government said in a statement.

Adityanath said that some cases of conversion have come to the fore

in Pilibhit also, and asked the people to be a "little cautious" of religious conversions.

"You must have seen what kind of conspiracy is going on. We have recently taken a big action in Balrampur. You must have seen that he had fixed the rates. That is, how to take forward the programme of conversion."

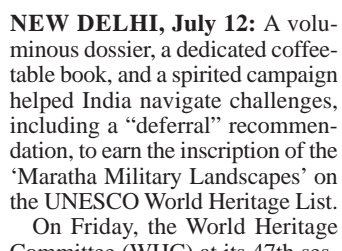
"He had fixed the rates for converting Hindus, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Sikhs, other OBC castes, Scheduled Castes and (Scheduled) Tribes. Money was coming in from abroad. Just think, transactions worth more than Rs 100 crore have been received in his 40 accounts so far," the chief minister said.

He said that he had dispatched a team to the district to conduct 'ghar wapsi' (returning to original faith) of the converted.

Adityanath said that some forces are trying to change the nature of the country in a planned manner and conspiring to break the religious harmony.

The UP Anti-Terrorism Squad on July 6 arrested Jalaluddin alias Chhangur Baba and Neetu alias Nasreen, both natives of Madhupur in Balrampur district, for allegedly running a massive conversion racket. (PTI)

## Wasn't easy to get Maratha Landscapes inscribed, so victory sweeter: India's envoy to UNESCO



NEW DELHI, July 12: A voluminous dossier, a dedicated coffee-table book, and a spirited campaign helped India navigate challenges, including a "deferral" recommendation, to earn the inscription of the 'Maratha Military Landscapes' on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

On Friday, the World Heritage Committee (WHC) at its 47th session held in Paris, inscribed India's serial nomination consisting of 12 forts, representing extraordinary fortification and military system envisioned by the Maratha rulers, on the coveted list.

While the journey from the nomination to the inscription wasn't easy for Team India, sustained efforts led to a crowning triumph at UNESCO.

Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India to UNESCO, Vishal V Sharma, delivered the statement on New Delhi's behalf after the inscription was announced.

"This is a historic day, not only for India, but especially for Marathi people all over the world. The rich cultural heritage of the Marathas has been honoured by the recognition of its Outstanding Universal Value by the international community," he said.



In a telephonic interview with PTI shortly after delivering the remarks at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, Sharma shared India's success story and what it took to earn the prestigious recognition.

"It was excellent teamwork, but it was not very easy to get the Maratha Military Landscapes inscribed," he recalled.

"I thank the government of Maharashtra, the Indian Culture Ministry, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), and the Ministry of External Affairs. We had to do co-ordination with 20 different countries, and it's an excellent example of teamwork," Sharma told PTI

over the phone.

Sharma said the Indian nomination had received a "deferral recommendation" by the advisory body, ICOMOS. A deferral recommendation means the advisory body does not want it to be inscribed.

The Paris-based International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) is one of the key advisory bodies to UNESCO, and its experts visit the nominated sites.

He said Team India "pointed out the mistakes, factual errors from the advisory body's side".

"It's a technical argument, like you fight it in a court... So, on a

video conference with members of 20 countries, we explained to them the technicalities and why it deserves to be on the World Heritage List. We presented our case... and we won the case, so that's why the victory is even sweeter," Sharma said.

The proposal was sent to the WHC in January 2024, and the inscription comes after a "rigorous 18-month-long process" involving several technical meetings with the advisory bodies and a visit by the ICOMOS mission to review the sites, the culture ministry said in a statement on Friday.

The nomination for the UNESCO tag was for the 2024-25 cycle.

The 'Maratha Military Landscapes' was developed between the 17th and 19th centuries. The 12 components of the inscribed property are - Salher Fort, Shivneri Fort, Lohgad, Khanderi Fort, Raigad, Rajgad, Pratapgad, Suvarnadurg, Panhala Fort, Vijay Durg, Sindhudurg in Maharashtra and Gingee Fort in Tamil Nadu.

These components, distributed across diverse geographical and physiographic regions, showcase the strategic military powers of the Maratha rule, the Indian officials

had earlier said.

There are more than 390 forts in Maharashtra, out of which only 12 forts were selected under the Maratha Military Landscapes of India; of these, eight forts are protected by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), the ministry earlier said.

Sharma said the advisory body was "primarily concerned" as to what the criteria for selection were, and why not more forts.

"Then we had to justify that there was a hierarchy of system, primary, secondary and tertiary forts. And, these 12 were the main ones, and then we explained to various other Member States," he said.

The Indian envoy to UNESCO also said, "There isn't much awareness" about the forts in western and southern parts of India vis-a-vis those in Rajasthan. "So, we took this opportunity to promote Maharashtra and Maharashtra tourism also", among the international community.

And, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's royal seal 'Raj Mudra' was circulated to explain to them the philosophy of the Marathas -- the well-being of the people, he added. (PTI)



'What took 75 years is now happening in just a few years'

## Union minister Rijiju distributes over 100 appointments at Rozgar Mela



**DIMAPUR, July 12:** Over 100 appointment letters were distributed among young job seekers during a Rozgar Mela held in Nagaland's Dimapur on Saturday. "107 appointment letters were handed over physically and 239 more were shared via email, thanks to the dedicated Lunding Division of Northeast Frontier Railway," Rijiju, the Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Minority Affairs, posted on X after attending the mela. "Rozgar Mela isn't just recruitment, it's nation-building," he said, while encouraging all the new recruits to step forward with pride. Congratulating them, he said, "Your journey is vital to building a Viksit

stating, "Whether you are in civil service or uniform, you are serving the country. Every role contributes to Atmanirbhar Bharat."

Highlighting the Northeast's transformation, he said villages across Nagaland -- from Mon to Phek, Kiphire to Kohima -- are now seeing improved roads, electricity, mobile connectivity, and drinking water.

"What took 75 years is now happening in just a few years," he remarked.

He stressed the importance of peace and stability for economic development, warning that "no investor will come where there is violence and unrest".

Connecting the employment initiative to India's centenary development goals, Rijiju said, "We have had 77 years as a developing country. Now, we have 23 years to become a developed nation by 2047 -- and that requires collective effort."

Describing the Northeast as a potential growth engine, he said states like Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, and Nagaland must rise together to drive India's future prosperity.

Nagaland Deputy Chief Minister Y Patton, who also attended the event, called the Rozgar Mela a "significant initiative" that gives hope and direction to the youth. "It's heartening to see so many young people stepping forward to serve the nation," he added.

The programme also witnessed the presence of Rajya Sabha MP S Phangnon Konyak, MLAs and Advisors Kazheto Kinimi and Imkongmar Longkumer, along with senior officials from the Railways, Labour Ministry, ESIC, Bank of Baroda, and security forces. (PTI)

Bharat."

Addressing the gathering, Rijiju announced that over 51,000 appointment letters are being issued across India, covering various government departments such as Railways, Postal Services, Banks, Education, Labour & Employment, and Home Affairs. He called the Rozgar Mela a reflection of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for youth empowerment and faster recruitment.

"Earlier, recruitment processes took five to seven years. Today, Rozgar Mela are held every 3-4 months to fill sanctioned posts without delay," he said.

Rijiju urged the new appointees to view their jobs as a form of nation-building.

## Unruly elements backed by BJP MP attacking opposition': Tripura Congress MLA

**HT Correspondent**

**AGARTALA, July 12:** Tripura Congress MLA Gopal Chandra Roy on Saturday alleged that opposition party workers are repeatedly coming under attack from unruly elements backed by a sitting Member of Parliament.

He also demanded the immediate rollback of increased power tariffs and house tax imposed by the state government.

Participating in a door-to-door campaign opposing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Mann Ki Baat programme, Roy questioned the state government's contradictory stance on smart meters.

"If smart meters are truly beneficial for the public, then why is the BJP opposing their implementation? Why shouldn't such measures be introduced in Tripura as well?" he asked.

Criticising the rising financial burden on citizens, the MLA said, "The govern-

ment has hiked electricity tariffs and house taxes while imposing several other levies on the common people. We demand a complete rollback of these anti-people decisions. The government must convene an all-party meeting and take decisions through consensus."

Roy also urged chief minister Manik Saha to take strict action against those responsible for attacks on opposition members.

"We are repeatedly facing attacks. One MP accused us of working with unruly elements—but can he name even one? The reality is that those truly indulging in hoodlomanism are closely linked to the same MP who lost the 2023 election. The person who called us unruly is, in fact, behaving in the most unruly manner," Roy asserted.

He further said the Congress would continue its protest across the state until the government addresses their demands and ensures the safety of political workers.

## 8 militants arrested in Manipur

**IMPHAL, July 12:** Security forces arrested eight militants belonging to various proscribed outfits from three districts of Manipur, police said on Saturday. An active cadre of the banned PREPAK (VC-Red Army) was apprehended from Maharabi in Imphal West district on Friday, while two members of SOREPA were arrested from Umathel area in Kakching, they said.

The other arrests include three active cadres of KCP (PWG) from different parts of Imphal West on Thursday, and two members of the proscribed KCP (Taibanganba) from Phumlou Mamang Leikai in Imphal West and Keibi Khullen village in Imphal East district on Friday, a police officer said.

Further investigation is underway, he added. (PTI)

## Six Bangladesh nationals, two Indian touts arrested in Tripura

**AGARTALA, July 12:** Six Bangladeshi nationals and two Indian touts have been arrested in Tripura for crossing over the international border illegally, police said on Saturday.

BSF personnel who were conducting routine checking in North Tripura's Inter-state bus terminal at Dharmanagar on Friday evening detained four suspected Bangladeshi nationals and two Indian citizens who guided them to reach Dharmanagar.

All six persons were handed over to the police authority by the BSF for taking necessary legal action.

"During preliminary interrogation, it was revealed that out of six persons, four are Bangladeshi citizens. Two others who allegedly guided the Bangladesh citizens to

reach Dharmanagar were also detained," said the Officer in Charge (OC), Dharmanagar police station, Srikantha Bardhan said. "Four Bangladesh nationals were arrested for entering India without valid documents and the remaining two were arrested for helping the infiltrators. Now, they are in judicial remand for 14 days," Bardhan stated.

In another incident, two more Bangladeshis who were on their way from Sidhai in West Tripura to Khowai, in a vehicle, were arrested from Belfung locality under Sidhai police station, a police officer said.

He said they were forwarded before a local court seeking judicial custody and an investigation into the case has been initiated. (PTI)

## Raton Engti takes charge as KADCC president, vows to strengthen congress in Karbi Anglong



**HT Bureau**

**DIPHU, July 12:** Raton Engti was formally welcomed as the new president of the Karbi Anglong District Congress Committee (KADCC) in a ceremony held at the KADCC conference hall on Saturday.

His appointment comes following a directive from the All India Congress Committee (AICC), which recently reorganised district-level leadership positions.

The post had remained vacant after the passing of former Hills Area Development (HAD) Minister and KADCC president Sum Ronghang.

In the interim, former Executive Member of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Bidyasing Rongpi, had held the position in-charge.

The AICC has named Raton Engti as president of the KADCC and Augustine Enghee as president of the West Karbi

Anglong District Congress Committee.

In addition, Ashok Teron has been appointed general secretary, and Purnima Ronghangpi secretary.

Former MP Biresing Engti, Jagat Sing Engti, and Bidyasing Rongpi have been included as members of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC).

Engti's arrival was marked with an enthusiastic motor rally starting from Manja, where party members and workers gathered with private cars, three-wheelers, and two-wheelers to escort the newly appointed president.

The rally culminated in a formal felicitation ceremony at the KADCC office, where Engti was honoured by party leaders and supporters.

In his first address as KADCC president, Engti extended his gratitude to AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, and deputy leader of the opposition and

APCC president Gaurav Gogoi for entrusting him with the responsibility.

He assured party members that he would devote his time and efforts to strengthening the party and called for collective cooperation, stating that the party's resurgence would be a shared responsibility.

Engti launched a scathing critique of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), alleging that the recent visit of APCC president Gaurav Gogoi to Karbi Anglong on July 4 and 5 had unsettled the BJP leadership in the district. Describing Gogoi's tour as politically significant, Engti said it had exposed the misdeeds and corruption of the BJP-led administration.

He accused the ruling party of engaging in smear campaigns against Congress leaders and misusing students for political protests.

He also highlighted the poor state of education in the district under the current administration, pointing to the declining pass percentages in matriculation and higher secondary results.

Addressing the gathering, KADCC president in-charge Bidyasing Rongpi thanked all party members for their support during his interim tenure and expressed confidence in Engti's leadership.

The felicitation programme was also attended by APCC general secretary Bitupon Saikia and executive member Shrawan Dekaraja, who were present as observers.

Engti informed party workers that party MP Rockybul Hussain is scheduled to visit Diphu on July 14 to review organisational activities.

## Guv visits RCRS during Karbi Anglong tour, calls for branding Karbi coffee

**HT Bureau**

**DIPHU, July 12:** Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya concluded his two-day visit to Karbi Anglong on Friday, during which he interacted with beneficiaries of various government schemes, inspected infrastructure projects, and visited several key central and state government establishments.

As part of the itinerary, the Governor visited the Regional Coffee Research Station (RCRS) located at 5th Mile along the Diphu-Manja Road.

During his visit to the station, he took stock of the coffee garden maintained by the RCRS, inquired about its production output, ongoing training programmes, and the overall economic prospects of coffee cultivation in the region. The Deputy Director (Research) of RCRS, Dr Atiqur Rahman Bora, briefed the Governor on the research and training activities being undertaken by the Coffee Board in the Northeastern Region.

He also outlined the coffee development initiatives currently in progress under the board's mandate.

The Governor appreciated the Coffee

Board's role in promoting sustainable development in the region and urged greater focus on research, marketing, and value addition.

He emphasised the need to develop Karbi Anglong coffee as a distinct and high-value brand, stating that it deserves both national and international recognition similar to Assam tea.

Dr Bora noted that this was the first time a sitting Governor had visited the RCRS since its establishment in 1985.

He expressed confidence that the visit would bring much-needed visibility to the region's coffee sector and help highlight its potential in premium markets. Bora said the Governor's message regarding branding and marketing would be a strong motivator for stakeholders across the value chain.

Governor Acharya was accompanied during the visit by Executive Members of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) D. Uphing Maslai and Titutoma Hasnu, MLAs Bidyasing Englang and Rupsing Teron, District Commissioner Nerola Phangchopi, and several other departmental officials.

## Weaving training workshop to begin

**HT Correspondent**

**DEMOW, July 12:** A week-long Weaving Training Workshop will be organised under the patronage of the Demow Regional Students Union at the Handloom Cluster Project in Demow Konwar Dehingia from July 14 to July 19, 2025.

The training sessions will commence daily from 9 AM onwards during the workshop period.

The initiative aims to promote traditional handloom skills and provide hands-on training to interested participants from the region.

Organisers have encouraged individuals keen on learning the craft to register their names and have made contact numbers—9127421688 and 910111817—available for queries and enrolment.

## JICA team reviews progress of upcoming medical college hospital at NIMSR Kohima

**KOHIMA, July 12:** A delegation from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) visited Nagaland from July 7 to July 9 to review the progress of the "Project for the Establishment of the Medical College Hospital at Nagaland Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (NIMSR), Kohima."

The project is being implemented by the Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Nagaland, with financial assistance under the Official Development Assistance (ODA) Loan Agreement No. ID-P322, signed between JICA and the Government of India on February 20, 2024, an official statement said recently.

During their visit, the JICA team held detailed discussions with officials from the Department of Health & Family Welfare, Government of Nagaland, the statement also said.

Representatives from the Project Management Consultant (PMC) were also present at the meeting.

The delegation visited the proposed project construction site at NIMSR, Kohima, and reviewed preparatory activities for implementation, as construction work is yet to be initiated, the statement added.

The visit reflects JICA's dedication to partnering with the Government of Nagaland in building resilient healthcare systems and advancing medical education infrastructure to serve the people of the state more effectively, the statement further added. (NNN)

## Tripura exported 73.15 MT pineapple to Gulf nations in last seven years: Agriculture Minister

**HT Correspondent**

**AGARTALA, July 12:** Tripura's Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister Ratan Lal Nath on Saturday informed that to boost the income of pineapple cultivators, the department is planning to set up a new fruit processing centre under the PPP model in Nalkata under North District of the state which shares interstate border with Assam.

He also stated that in the last seven years, the department has exported 73.15 metric tonnes (MT) of pineapple to Dubai, Oman, and Qatar.

Minister Nath said this while addressing the Pineapple Festival at Geetanjali Auditorium in Kumarghat of Unakoti District.

The Minister also informed that the state government is working to obtain the GI tag for Sidol Shutki (fermented fish), Sabri banana, and several other products. "After our government came, we declared Queen pineapple as the state fruit. Queen pineapple already has a GI tag nobody can copy it. Our main aim is to ex-



pand the production and market of pineapple. We need to produce it more, and for that, such events are being organised. We have also organised buyers and sellers meet on organic products, which was held for the first time for various items like pineapple, bird's eye chilli, and ginger—all of which are organic," he said.

The Minister stated that in the state, 3.65 lakh kani of land is used for fruit cultivation, of which 74,000 kani is used for pineapple.

"Of this, Kew variety is cultivated in 53,700 kani of land in Dhalai, Unakoti, and North Districts, while Queen variety

is cultivated in 22,000 kani. After our government came to power in 2018, the price of pineapple was around ₹ 8 to ₹ 9. Now, it has increased to around Rs 40 or more. Our main aim is to help farmers and increase their income. The Union DoNER Ministry is working to make Queen pineapple a global brand. We have held meetings with Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia twice and are planning to undertake a scheme worth ₹ 132 crore," said the minister.

The Agriculture Minister also informed that from 2018 to 2025, a total of 73.15 MT of pineapple was exported to Dubai, Oman, and Qatar.

In addition 4.40 MT of jackfruit were exported to America, and 30 MT of ginger and 17 MT of betel leaf were exported to Bangladesh.

"Our main aim is to strengthen the farmers so that the economy of our state grows," he added.

"We are also going to take a decision to set up a fruit processing factory under the PPP model in Nalkata," he informed.

## Underground cadre arrested

**IMPHAL, July 12:** A joint team of the Special Commando Unit, Khabesoi, and the 16th Assam Rifles arrested a suspected active cadre of the banned outfit PREPAK (VC-Red Army) during routine frisking and checking near Maharabi, under Sekmai Police Station, around 10:30 am on Friday, police said. The operation was led by Subedar L. Bebekanda Singh, Officer-in-Charge of the Special Commando Unit. The team noticed a man approaching on foot from Sekmai towards Imphal in a suspicious manner near an oil pump and detained him for verification, the police also said. Upon spot verification, the individual identified himself as Chingakhom Sanjoy Singh alias Eremba Singh (42), a resident of Kadangband Part-2 Awang Leikai, Manipur, the police added. A money bag, Aadhaar card, and PAN card were recovered from his possession.

During further questioning, he reportedly confessed to being an active member of the proscribed outfit PREPAK (Red Army).

He claimed to have joined the organisation on March 15, 2024, through one Thoudam Bisharup, and underwent 45 days of basic military training at Sangkai Training Centre in Myanmar, as part of the 185th training batch. (NNN)

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Retail Portfolio Management at HDFC Bank Ltd, 1st Floor, I-Think Techno Campus, Kanjurmarg (East), Mumbai - 400042.

**SALE INTIMATION AND PUBLIC NOTICE FOR SALE OF SECURITIES PLEDGED TO HDFC BANK LTD.**

The below mentioned Borrowers of HDFC Bank Ltd. (the "Bank") are hereby notified regarding the sale of securities pledged to the Bank, for availing credit facilities in the nature of Loan/Overdraft/Against Securities.

Due to persistent default by the Borrowers in making repayment of the outstanding dues as per agreed loan terms, the below loan accounts are in delinquent status. The Bank has issued multiple notices to these Borrowers, including the final sale notice on the below-mentioned date whereby, Bank had invoked the pledge and provided 7 days' time to the Borrower to repay the entire outstanding dues in the below accounts, failing which, Bank would be at liberty to sell the pledged securities without issuing further notice in this regard. The Borrowers have neglected and failed to make due repayments, therefore, Bank in exercise of its rights under the loan agreement as a pledgee has decided to sell / dispose off the Securities on or after **21<sup>st</sup> July 2025** for recovering the dues owed by the Borrowers to the Bank. The Borrowers are, also, notified that, if at any time, the value of the pledged securities falls further due to volatility in the stock market to create further deficiency in the margin requirement then Bank shall at its discretion sell the pledged security within one (1) calendar day, without any further notice in this regard. The Borrower(s) shall remain liable to the Bank for repayment of any remaining outstanding amount, post adjustment of the proceeds from sale of pledged securities.

Sr. No.	Loan Account Number	Borrower's Name	Outstanding Amount as on 10 <sup>th</sup> July 2025	Date of Sale Notice
1	XXXXXXXXXX6934	JAMES K SANGMA	44,90,881.82	11.07.2025
2	XXXXXXXXXX8282	KARAN SABHERWAL	1,10,423.72	11.07.2025

Date : 13.07.2025  
Place : MEGHALAYA

Sd/-  
HDFC BANK LTD.

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM  
**OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER (PHE)**  
**KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL::DIPHU**

No. Addl. CPHE/DIP/TF-8/2025-26/

Dated: - /2025

**EXTENSION OF NIT No. 3 of 2025-26**

In continuation to our earlier Tender Notice No. 2025\_KAAC\_44909\_1 for Water Supply project at Rengbonghom Sevashram Vidya Niketan Phuloni, Karbi Anglong is hereby extended till **14/07/2025** at 2:00 PM.

The Technical bid shall be opened on **14/07/2025** at 3:00 PM.

All other terms and conditions of the Bid-document will remain unchanged.

Sd/-  
Additional Chief Engineer (PHE)  
Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu

Memo. No. Addl. CPHE/DIP/TF-8/2025-26/697-701

Dated: - 10/07/2025



# I thought we'll be lucky to have her in 'Heads of State': Ilya Naishuller on Priyanka Chopra Jonas



**NEW DELHI, July 12:** Priyanka Chopra Jonas was a joy to work with and the only choice for the female lead in "Heads of State", says filmmaker Ilya Naishuller about his latest action-comedy, which features the Indian actor with John Cena and Idris Elba. The Russia-born musician-filmmaker, best known for directing Bob Odenkirk in action thriller "Nobody" as well as sci-fi film "Hardcore Henry", said as soon as they thought about approaching Priyanka for the role of Noel Bisset, an MI6 agent, everything "made total sense". "She's the only actress I talked to for this movie, I'll be honest. I was just like, 'If the call goes, we'll be lucky to have her'. And I remember she charmed me in about 45 seconds flat over a Zoom call. "She's wearing a big, homely sweater and just chilling on her couch. And we started talking, and I immediately understood we have quite a bit in common," Naishuller told PTI in an interview. The director said he could see parallels be-

tween his journey in Hollywood with the way Priyanka, an already established star in India, made a space for herself in the US. "She went from being so big in India to being like, 'You know what? I want to risk it and see what happens. I want to go out there and be ambitious and try to crack America'. It is a very difficult thing to do. It always is, no matter how big you are at home, and the fact that she went there and started that path, I was like, I deeply respect that and I admire that. It's courage," he said. Naishuller said while he felt good about their shared "commonalities", he realised that he was charmed by her presence. "I just realised either she is playing the charm or she is that charming and that's her. And both things work, because one proves that she's a great actress, as I already knew, or she can be a great fun person to hang around with... And when we got to work, I was like, 'That was her.' She is that charming, fantastically warm person." The filmmaker said Priyanka was always prepared and curious throughout the shooting of the movie that revolves around a newly-elected US President (Cena) and his more seasoned British counterpart, played by Elba. They don't get along well but have to unite to fight a com-

mon enemy that wants to derail an important summit. They find an ally in Priyanka's Bisset. "Every time we finish a scene and there's a re-light, she'd pull up an apple box, sit right and be like, 'How's it going? What are you guys doing?' And that's the kind of vibe I really enjoy. So to balance out Idris Elba and John Cena, she had to be there. She was always like, 'Well, I'm a little bit of a third wheel'. I'm like 'It's a tricycle'." Naishuller said grew up on Jackie Chan movies and wanted to bring the same energy to "Heads of State", currently streaming on Prime Video. "If you surround violence with comedy, the violence becomes punchier and you don't need to do that much to elicit a good chuckle. And it's the first time I've been trying to go for a movie that is outright trying to make you laugh because 'Nobody' was very reserved. "There's a lot of chaos in this movie... I'm just trying to understand how to fit all that together... This is the first movie where I had to cut jokes. We had too many good jokes... When the bullets are flying, our guys are terrified, and that's actually funnier than them taking bullets over here and just saying wise lines. It's a ridiculous movie, but I wanted a grounded ridiculous movie, if that makes sense." (PTI)

# Will not blame anybody, need to solve it together: Ajay Devgn on Diljit Dosanjh controversy

**MUMBAI, July 12:** When there are two differing points of view, you need to sit down and resolve issues through conversation, actor Ajay Devgn said on Friday while responding to the controversy surrounding Diljit Dosanjh's film "Sardar Ji 3", which has drawn criticism for featuring Pakistani star Hania Aamir.

The Punjabi film courted a huge controversy last month after Dosanjh shared the trailer of "Sardar Ji 3", which made its debut in overseas territories on June 27 and skipped release in India.

Many social media users have called for a ban on Dosanjh, while politicians and trade unions like the All Indian Cine Workers Association (AICWA) and the Federation of Western India Cine Employees (FWICE) have criticised the Punjabi actor-musician for collaborating with Aamir in the wake of the Pahal-gam terror attack.

"I don't know where the trolling comes from (or) what is right and what is wrong. I'm not in his shoes to comment on that. He would've had his problems, and people are thinking from their point of view. "So, when you've two different points of view, then you can sit and solve it out together. I'll not blame anybody or say that, this is right or wrong; they need a conversation," Devgn told reporters at the trailer launch press conference of "Son of Sardar 2".

At the event, Devgn was also

asked about the ongoing language row in Maharashtra. The controversy started after the Maharashtra government made it compulsory for state-run primary schools to teach Hindi as a third language, apart from English and Marathi.

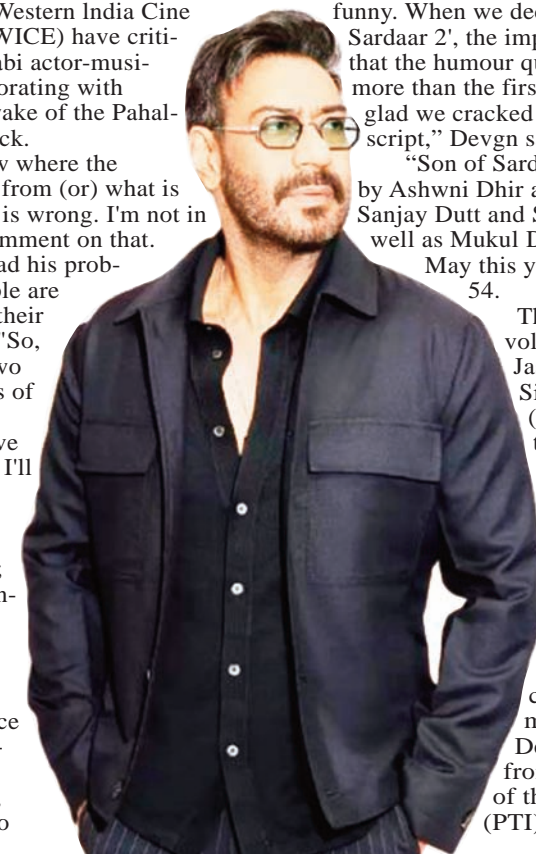
"The only answer I'll give you about the language thing which is going on is 'Aata Maaji Sataki'," Devgn said, referring to the popular dialogue from his hit "Singham" franchise.

The "Raid 2" actor said he is thrilled about returning to the comedy genre after six years with "Son of Sardar 2".

"I didn't realise I'm doing comedy after six years, but it was a lot of fun doing this film. The script was very funny. When we decided to do 'Son of Sardar 2', the important thing was that the humour quotient had to be more than the first part, and we are glad we cracked that kind of a script," Devgn said.

"Son of Sardar" was helmed by Ashwini Dhir and starred Devgn, Sanjay Dutt and Sonakshi Sinha as well as Mukul Dev, who died in May this year at the age of 54.

The first part revolved around Jaswinder "Jassi" Singh Randhawa (Devgn), who returns to his village in Punjab after spending years in London to sell ancestral property. But things take an unexpected turn. In the trailer of the upcoming sequel, Devgn's character is seen mimicking Sunny Deol's character from "Border" in one of the sequences. (PTI)



# Daunting task to play Sri Sri Ravi Shankar: Vikrant Massey on 'White'

**MUMBAI, July 12:** Actor Vikrant Massey says he is nervous about playing the role of spiritual guru Sri Sri Ravi Shankar in an upcoming biopic, tentatively titled "White".

The "12th Fail" star said it is a tragedy that people don't know his contribution towards peace and the film will focus on that chapter in his life.

"To play Gurudev, Sri Sri

Ravi Shankar, is a daunting task. I'm very nervous, and that chapter in his life is so phenomenal, but it's also a tragedy that a lot of people don't know about his contributions, not just to the art of living but through philanthropy.

"His peace methods, how he's impacted the world on a larger scale, to tell that chapter of his life is daunting, to play him, he's a living legend.

I'm very nervous, but I'll give it a try. I hope I'm able to pull it off," Massey told PTI in an interview. As per media reports, the movie will be helmed by Siddharth Anand and will go on floors in August. Massey is also thrilled about collaborating with filmmaker Rajkumar Hirani on his upcoming home production OTT series. The show, reportedly a cybercrime drama, also stars Arshad Warsi.

"I owe him a lot; not a lot of people know that I got '12th Fail' because of him. He was the one who recommended my name to Vinod sir (Vidhu Vinod Chopra, director of '12th Fail') and he said, 'You should meet this guy, he's the right fit for Manoj Kumar Sharma'. So, I owe him a lot," Massey said. "He is a genius at work. Though he was not directing, I was privy to those narrations

during those reading sessions with him on set, his advice, and a lot of what I am as an actor or how I manoeuvre myself within the fraternity, is because of him. I've learned a lot," the actor added.

Massey's latest work is the recently released film, "Aankhon ki Gustakhiyan", which marks the acting debut of Shanaya Kapoor, daughter of actor Sanjay Kapoor and Maheep Kapoor. (PTI)

# SS Rajamouli makes cameo in popular video game 'Death Stranding 2'

**MUMBAI, July 12:** Filmmaker S S Rajamouli has forayed into the world of gaming with a cameo in "Death Stranding 2: On the Beach", the highly anticipated title from acclaimed Japanese video game creator Hideo Kojima.

The director, best known for mega-blockbusters like "Baahubali" franchise and "RRR", revealed that his likeness for the game during a visit to Japan to promote his last directorial "RRR" in 2022.

Kojima later confirmed the cameo through a social media post, sharing behind-the-scenes images of Rajamouli's visit to Kojima Productions.

"Director S S Rajamouli visited KJP!!! We have scanned him. 'RRR'," Kojima posted on X (formerly Twitter).

Rajamouli said he was unaware of how the scan would be used, but was excited to see the final result.

"When we were in Japan for 'RRR' promotions, I visited Kojima-san's office. He scanned me there, and honestly, I had no idea how or where he'd use it," the filmmaker said in a statement.

"I just sensed something magical was in the making. To now see myself featured in 'Death Stranding 2' is a true honour. Kojima-san is a visionary, and I'm humbled to be even a small part of his extraordinary world," he added.

Rajamouli's "RRR", a period action drama starring Ram Charan and Jr NTR, enjoyed remarkable success in Japan, receiving widespread acclaim from audiences and critics alike.

"Death Stranding 2: On the Beach", slated for release worldwide later this year, is the sequel to the 2019 video game "Death Stranding", and is expected to feature an ensemble of global talent.

Kojima is celebrated for his genre-defining work on titles like "Metal Gear", "Snatcher", and "Zone of the Enders".

"Death Stranding 2: On the Beach" will feature returning cast members Norman Reedus, Léa Seydoux, and Troy Baker, with new additions like Elle Fanning and George Miller joining the universe. (PTI)

# Venice Film Festival to screen 4K restored version of Bimal Roy's 'Do Bigha Zamin'

**MUMBAI, July 12:** The 2025 edition of the Venice Film Festival is set to showcase a 4K restored version of "Do Bigha Zamin", the 1953 classic directed by acclaimed filmmaker Bimal Roy. The announcement coincides with the legendary filmmaker's 116th birth anniversary.

Presented under the Venice Classics section, "Do Bigha Zamin", titled "Two Acres of Land" in English, has been selected among a distinguished lineup of restored cinematic masterpieces, which also includes "Matador" by Pedro Almodovar, "Roma Ore 11" by Giuseppe De Santis, "Przypadek" by Krzysztof Kieslowski and "Lolita" by Stanley Kubrick.

The screening will be presented by Roy's children -- Rinki Roy Bhattacharya, Aparajita Roy Sinha, and Joy Bimal Roy -- along with Shivendra Singh Dungarpur, director of the Film Heritage Foundation.

The restoration is a collaborative effort between the Film Heritage Foundation, The Criterion Collection, and Janus Films.

Acclaimed lyricist and filmmaker Gulzar welcomed the announcement, calling the film "historic." "It's amazing that 'Do Bigha Zamin' is restored and will be shown in Venice. This film is historic as it changed the way films were made in India. After Chetan Anand's 'Neecha Nagar' which won an award at the Cannes Film Festival, this was the second Indian film to win at the Cannes Film Festival and receive international recognition. "The most important element is that all his films right from the Bengali ones which he made and

the Hindi films which he made, all these films were based on literature. Not many people know that 'Do Bigha Zamin' is from a poem by Rabindranath Tagore, which was also called 'Do Bigha Zamin'. The script was done by Salil Choudhury," Gulzar said, recalling the time when he started working with Roy's 1961 production "Kabuliwala".

The cinema icon said he has fond memories of the time. "People would say that Bimal-da was like a married print. In those days, the picture and sound negatives were separate and when they were brought together optically to make the release print, it would be called a married print. Bimal-da would shoot two shifts in a day -- 7 am to 2 pm and 2 pm to 10 pm and would then sit in the editing room working till late night at Mohan Studios. People would say that he is married to films. Bimal Roy was the coolest director I have ever seen. I learnt not only filmmaking from him, but the art of patience and stamina," he added.

Starring Balraj Sahni and Nirupa Roy, "Do Bigha Zamin" is considered an important film in the early parallel cinema of India.

The film, which captured the plight of a poor farmer struggling with industrialisation, was based on Rabindranath Tagore's Bengali poem "Dui Bigha Jomi" and "Rickshawalla", a short story written by composer Salil Choudhury.

Dungarpur said he was introduced to the works of Bimal Roy when he was working under Gulzar.

"When I was working as an assistant to Gulzar-

heb, he would often speak about his guru Bimal Roy. This spurred me to watch all his films right from the time he was a cameraman on P C Barua's 'Devdas' to his first Bengali film as a director 'Udayar Pathy' to 'Do Bigha Zamin'.

"In his films I was struck by the poetic visuals, the silences, the deep humanism and compassion that he showed in the social themes of his films that highlighted the plight of the marginalized, the issues of migrant labour, and the urban-rural divide that are still so relevant today. For me 'Do Bigha Zamin' changed the face of Indian cinema that brought filmmakers out of the studio to begin shooting on the streets," he said.

Dungarpur said he is glad to collaborate with The Criterion Collection and Janus Films to restore other classics of Bimal Roy such as "Devdas", "Madhumati" and "Bandini".

The family of Bimal Roy said the premiere of "Do Bigha Zamin" at the Venice Film Festival is a "dream come true for us".

"This would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of Shivendra Singh Dungarpur of Film Heritage Foundation and Fumiko Takagi of the Criterion Collection. Our heartfelt thanks to both of them for their unwavering dedication to restoring and celebrating cinema. 'Do Bigha Zamin' is especially fitting for this prestigious platform, as it holds a unique connection with Italian cinema," Rinki Roy Bhattacharya, Aparajita Roy Sinha, and Joy Bimal Roy said in a joint statement. (PTI)



## Crystal Palace demoted by UEFA from Europa League

GENEVA, July 12: Crystal Palace chairman Steve Parish says the decision to cut the club from the Europa League is "a bad day for football" and "a terrible injustice."

UEFA demoted Crystal Palace to the third-tier Conference League on Friday because of the English cup winner's ownership ties to French club Lyon through American businessman John Textor.

Textor's 43% minority stake in Palace — even though he had limited decision-making influence there — while he owned Lyon outright, conflicted with UEFA rules on multi-club ownership designed to protect the integrity of its competitions.

"We're devastated," Parish told Sky Sports. "It's a bad day for football. It's a terrible injustice. We've been locked out of a European competition on the most ridiculous technicality. Supporters of all clubs should be devastated for us."

"Everyone knows we're not part of a multi-club setup. We don't share any staff. I think we've shown John had no influence over our club. This is a ludicrous decision. We will ask the appeal court to listen to our argument." UEFA said its club finance panel accepted Lyon's entry into the second-tier Europa League instead. Lyon qualified on merit by placing sixth in Ligue 1 this season but its entry was in jeopardy because of persistent financial turmoil.

The decision follows the financially troubled club being reprieved this week from demotion to Ligue 2.

UEFA's decision came after several weeks of uncertainty for the south London club which has taken the shine off the first qualification for European competitions in its history. Palace beat Manchester City in the FA Cup final in May.

Palace said it will challenge the UEFA ruling at the Court of Arbitration for Sport. A fast-track case would need to be held within about one month before Conference League qualifying playoffs. Textor has been an increasingly controversial figure in global soccer, also owning Brazilian club Botafogo and Belgium's Molenbeek while being linked with a failed bid to buy Everton.

He has reportedly agreed on a deal to sell his Palace stake to Woody Johnson, the New York Jets owner and former U.S. Ambassador to Britain in the first Trump administration. Nottingham Forest should now step up into the Europa League from the Conference League, which is potentially worth 20 million euros (dollars) more in UEFA prize money. (AP)

## Djokovic says he definitely plans to play at Wimbledon at least one more time

LONDON, July 12: Novak Djokovic wanted to make this much clear after losing to Janik Sinner in the Wimbledon semifinals Friday: This was not a farewell performance. Djokovic intends to compete again at the All England Club.

"I'm not planning to finish my Wimbledon career today," the 38-year-old Djokovic said. "I'm planning to come back definitely — at least one more time."

His 6-3, 6-3, 6-4 defeat at Centre Court against the No. 1-ranked Sinner put an end to Djokovic's latest attempt to tie Roger Federer's men's record of eight championships at Wimbledon and to claim an unprecedented 25th Grand Slam title overall.

Djokovic was not fully able to compete at his best level, two days after taking what he described as a "nasty" and "awkward" fall in the last game of his quarterfinal victory.

"I don't want to talk in details about my injury and just whine about not managing to play my best," Djokovic said Friday. "I do feel disappointed that I just wasn't able to move as well as I thought or hoped that I would."

He was visited by a trainer before the third set for treatment on his upper left leg, won the next three games and was a point from a 4-0 lead, but lost six of the last seven games. "We all saw, especially in the third set, that he was a bit injured," said Sinner, who will meet No. 2 Carlos Alcaraz in Sunday's final. "He's been in a very difficult situation."

Before this fortnight, Djokovic

## Unbeaten Spain overcome Italy, both advance to quarterfinals



BERN (SWITZERLAND), July 12: Tournament favourite Spain came from behind to beat Italy 3-1 and sweep through Group B at the Women's European Championship on Friday.

Italy lost but also advanced to the quarterfinals.

Italy had the audacity to take a 10th-minute lead against the 2023 World Cup champion on defender Elisabetta Oliviero's shot, soon after captain Elena Linari struck the crossbar with a header.

Spain levelled within four minutes, led from the 49th, and added Esther González's tournament-leading fourth goal in stoppage time.

Still, Spain had enough problems in defense handling the Italians, who had 13 attempts on goal, to give host Switzerland

some hope for their quarterfinal in one week.

Italy finished runner-up to Spain in the group because Portugal, which was third in the standings at the start of play, lost to Belgium 2-1 when needing a lopsided win.

Norway awaits Italy in the first quarterfinal on Wednesday in Geneva, and it will be Spain-Switzerland two days later in Bern.

Spain's first two goals were created by the skipping feet and dribbling runs of winger Athenea del Castillo.

She levelled in the 14th, finishing a move she started with a right-foot shot curled into the top corner.

After Del Castillo's driving run across the face of the Italian defense in the 49th, the ball sat

up for Patri Guijarro to snap a shot low into the bottom corner.

Spain gave a first start at Euro 2025 to Aitana Bonmatí, two weeks since the two-time Ballon d'Or winner was hospitalized by viral meningitis.

By scoring three goals on Friday, after a 5-0 win against Portugal and 6-2 against Belgium, Spain tied England's tournament record of 14 in a group set at Euro 2022. England went on to win the title.

Spain rested some regular starters ahead of the quarterfinals including both defenders who are one yellow card away from a suspension, Laia Aleixandri and Ona Batlle.

Teenage star Vicky López, González and Clàudia Pina also were rested, making space for Bonmatí to get more game time

before the knockout stage.

Spain gifted Italy its short-lived lead when a heavy touch by forward Mariona Caldentey in her own penalty area simply teed up the ball for Oliviero.

The Italian right back had time and space to pick her spot for a shot that beat goalkeeper Adriana Nancrales.

Spain was level within four minutes. Alexia Putellas' third assist — tying the tournament lead — was a smart back-heel flick returning the ball into the path of hard-running del Castillo.

Spain might have fallen behind again before halftime but a likely penalty award for handball by captain Irene Paredes was not given. A two-minute VAR review spotted an earlier offside in the Italy play. (AP)

## India U20 women all set for first friendly against Uzbekistan in Tashkent

TASHKENT, July 12: The Indian U-20 women's football team will take on Uzbekistan in the first of the two friendly matches at the Do'stik Stadium here on Sunday.

The Young Tigresses, who had been training at the Padukone-Dravid Centre for Sports Excellence in Bengaluru, landed in the Uzbek capital on Friday morning and had a gym session in the evening.

On Saturday evening, they had their official training session before the first game. India are using these friendly games to prepare for the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers next month, where they will face Indonesia, Turkmenistan and hosts Myanmar.

Head coach Joakim Alexandersson said, "We wanted to face a strong opponent to get an idea of what awaits us in the Asian qualifiers. We also want to assess how all players perform their roles in such games, especially as we get closer to finalising the squad for the qualifiers. "These matches also help us gain valuable experience, not just on the pitch, but also from travelling and adapting to different conditions."

"The weather in Tashkent is quite similar to Bengaluru so far, so no issues on that front. The hotel, accommodation and food are also fine."

India U20 women travelled with a squad of 24 players, which saw a last-minute change



as Anika Devi Sharubam replaced goalkeeper Melody Chanu Keisham due to the latter being ill.

Uzbekistan, led by head coach Vladimir Panov, are also preparing as hosts of Group G of the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers, where they will take on Bahrain, Northern Mar-

iana Islands and Jordan.

The Central Asian nation also hosted the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup 2024 but lost all games and finished at the bottom of Group A.

Uzbekistan U20's 23-member squad for these friendlies against India includes four players who travelled to Bengaluru in May with the senior team for the two FIFA friendlies against India.

For India, there are two such players - goalkeeper Monalisa Devi Moirangthem and defender Shubhangi Singh, who were in the two matchday squads against the Uzbekistan senior team as the Blue Tigresses lost 0-1 on both occasions. (PTI)

## Italy and Burns find new identity together in 2026 T20WC Qualification

BENGALURU, July 12: Joe Burns' career was heading nowhere when Queensland omitted him from the contracted players' list in April 2024. It was a body blow for the Australian as he was mourning the tragic death of his brother in February that year.

In an emotional Instagram post, Burns admitted that it was a "daily battle that I often lose."

But then sports often gives tiny escape routes to the truly committed ones, and for Burns it came in the shape of his link to Italy through his mother's heritage.

It was a godsend for both Burns and Italy, who qualified for their maiden ICC World Cup by making the cut for next year's T20 showpiece India and Sri Lanka on Friday.

"I don't think words will ever describe emotions to this team and to this country. Sacrifice, dedication and commitment to a dream - we have walked this path into the unknown together to tour the first World Cup," Burns wrote on his Instagram wall shortly after the team's qualification.

Burns' emotions were not in the least bit exaggerated. The opportunity had allowed him to continue his association with top-flight cricket, and given Italy the services of a world-class professional who had considerable experience in international and the highly-competitive Australian domestic cricket.

Italy did not hesitate to appoint Burns as their skipper in their push to qualify for the ICC T20 World Cup 2026 via the European sub-regional Qualifiers.



In the group stage, the team was clubbed with France, Isle of Man, Luxembourg and Turkey.

It was a massive dream for a team that played its maiden T20 International in 2019 against Germany. Clearly, there was a lack of pedigree and resources but they dared to dream.

They made an early charge with a 77-run win over Luxembourg in Rome and followed that up with a five-wicket victory over France and a seven-wicket drubbing of Isle of Man.

The nine-wicket win over Turkey propelled them to the final against Romania which they won by a massive 160-run margin in June 2024.

Burns left an indelible mark in that victory with a 108 off 55 balls. It powered Italy to the ICC European Qualifiers where they were grouped with Netherlands, Scotland, Jersey and Guernsey.

The began with a facile seven-

wicket win over Guernsey and outclassed Scotland by 12 runs.

An abandoned match against Jersey gave them a point which, coupled with a superior net run rate, allowed Italy to tide over the nine-wicket defeat against Netherlands in the last league match on Friday and qualify for the ICC showpiece to be jointly hosted by India and Sri Lanka.

It was a moment of catharsis for Italy and Burns. The Azzurris have some delicate cricket connections as AC Milan Cricket and Football clubs were founded by an Englishman — Herbert Kilpin — in 1899. Former Italian and Inter Milan forward Cristian Vieri was a cricket lover during his school days in Australia, and often spoke enthusiastically about the sport.

But now, Italian cricket has an identity of its own.

Burns' mention of walking together in his instagram post was not a mere fancy tribute. This Ital-

## Conscious of importance of ISL but we respect law of the land: AIFF

NEW DELHI, July 12: The All India Football Federation on Saturday said it was "conscious" of Indian Super League's importance to the football ecosystem but it also had to respect the law of the land, a day after ISL announced it had put the 2025-26 season on hold due to uncertainty surrounding the renewal of the Master Rights Agreement (MRA) between the event organisers and the governing body.

The current MRA between the Football Sports Development Limited (FSDL), which organises the ISL, and the AIFF is scheduled to expire on December 8 this year, by which time the top tier competition would be into its third month.

On Friday, FSDL had said that in absence of a confirmed contractual framework beyond December, they find themselves unable to "effectively plan, organise, or commercialise the 2025-26 ISL season" and were putting the ISL season on hold.

AIFF issued a statement in response to FSDL's decision, saying it will do everything possible to ensure the continuity of the League within the framework of the law.

"The AIFF is conscious of the importance of the ISL not only to the football structure in the country, but also to all the clubs, players, support staff, officials and fans, and a l s o recognises the challenges and difficulties posed due to its disruption. At the same time, AIFF respects the law of the land and the direction of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India," said the sport's governing body in a statement.

Following a directive from the Supreme Court, the AIFF has been asked not to negotiate new terms of the MRA with FSDL, the apex governing body's commercial partner running the ISL, until a final judgment is delivered in the AIFF draft constitution case.

AIFF said its negotiations with FSDL had started in a timely manner and proposals were also exchanged by the parties involved, but following the Apex Court's order, the discussions were in "abeyance".

"As per the Master Rights Agreement, the All India Football Federation had, in a timely manner, first initiated the process

of requesting negotiations on the terms of a potential renewal with FSDL on November 21, 2024. Thereafter, senior representatives of the AIFF and FSDL convened meetings on February 5, 2025, in New Delhi and subsequently on March 5, 2025, in Mumbai, to discuss the terms of potential renewal of the Master Rights Agreement.

"Following these deliberations, a proposal was submitted by FSDL on March 5, 2025, to which, AIFF responded with a counter-proposal on April 21, 2025. Soon after, the AIFF was advised by its legal counsel that during a hearing on April 26, 2025, the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India made an observation that the renewal of the Master Rights Agreement should not be done until its order."

"Consequently, based on legal advice, discussions between the AIFF and FSDL, renewal discussions have been in abeyance pending further directions from the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India."

AIFF, however, assured that the interest of all the stakeholders will be guarded and the sport will not suffer.

"The AIFF and its stakeholders will take all possible steps, and do all things within their power, to ensure continuity of the ISL in the best interests of Indian football. We request the understanding of all stakeholders in the interim," it added.

FSDL is also the commercial partner of AIFF and had signed a 15-year MRA in 2010.

According to the MRA, FSDL pays the AIFF a sum of Rs 50 crore annually and in turn gets the rights to broadcast, manage and commercialise Indian football, including the national team. The sum from the FSDL supports the federation's operations and development initiatives. The FSDL had earlier told the ISL club owners verbally that the next edition would not start until there was clarity on the MRA. The PTI had earlier reported that the FSDL is also planning to make a new holding company which operates the ISL, with participating clubs (60 per cent), FSDL (26 per cent) and AIFF (14 per cent) as shareholders. (PTI)

## La Liga president rejects Courtois' plea to delay Real Madrid's 25-26 opener for more rest time

NEW YORK, July 12: Spanish league president Javier Tebas rejected Real Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois' plea to postpone the team's 2025-26 opener to give players time to rest following the expanded Club World Cup.

Real Madrid was eliminated with a 4-0 semifinal loss to Paris Saint-Germain on Wednesday and will have a 41-day offseason before their La Liga opener against Osasuna on Aug. 19.

Tebas said the decision not to move the opener was made by the Spanish Football Federation and La Liga agreed with it. He said players were to have 21 days off and 21 days of preseason training.

"I believe that they will have 20 days to rest instead of 21 and no other leagues like the Premier League for Chelsea or the French Ligue 1 for PSG are changing the games," he said through a translator during a Friday interview with The Associated Press.

"So I don't believe that we should change the calendar for that reason, especially thinking that it's a matter of one day." Real Madrid played 68 competitive matches in a season that started Aug. 18: 38 in the league, 14 in the Champions League, six each in the Copa del Rey and the Club World Cup, two in the Spanish Super Cup and one apiece in the European Super Cup and Intercontinental Cup. (AP)





## Alcaraz will face Jannik Sinner at Wimbledon in a rematch of the French Open final



**LONDON, July 12:** First, Carlos Alcaraz did his part to set up The Grand Slam Rematch The Tennis World Wanted, barely averting a fifth set and getting past Taylor Fritz 6-4, 5-7, 6-3, 7-6 (6) in the semifinals Friday to move within a victory of a third consecutive Wimbledon championship.

Then it was Jannik Sinner's turn keep up his end of the bargain, and he overwhelmed a not-fully-fit Novak Djokovic 6-3, 6-3, 6-4 to get to the final at the All England Club for the first time.

So get ready for Sunday: No. 1 Sinner vs. No. 2 Alcaraz for the title on the grass courts of Wimbledon, exactly five weeks after their riveting and remarkable final on the red clay of the French Open.

Sinner grabbed a two-set lead in that one, then held a trio of match points, before Alcaraz came all the way back to win after 5 hours, 29 minutes filled with brilliance from both.

Asked to reflect on what happened in Paris, Alcaraz began by saying, "Probably the best," then cut himself off.

"I mean, probably," no. It was the best match that I have ever played so far. I'm not surprised he just pushed me to the limit. I expect that on Sunday — just to be in the limit, to be on the line. Just going to be a great day, a great final. I'm just excited about it," Alcaraz said, speaking for anybody who might have paid any attention to that classic at Roland-Garros.

"I just hope not to be 5 1/2 hours on court again," he added with a smile. "If I have to, I will. But I think it's going to be great."

Who wouldn't expect this one to be?

"Hopefully it's going to be a good match, like the last one," Sinner said. "I don't know if it'll get better, because I don't think it's possible."

Sinner, a 23-year-old Italian, and Alcaraz, a 22-year-old Spaniard, are far and away the leaders of men's tennis — and are at the height of their powers right now. This will be the seventh straight major tournament won by one or the other.

Alcaraz is 5-0 in Grand Slam fi-

nals. Sinner owns three major trophies.

"The things we are doing right now are great for tennis," Alcaraz said.

He takes a career-best 24-match winning streak into Sunday. Sinner will be in his fourth Grand Slam final in a row, after winning the U.S. Open last September and the Australian Open in January.

Alcaraz leads their head-to-head matchup 8-4, taking the last five.

He doesn't think what happened in their most recent meeting will have a carryover effect on Sinner this time.

"He's going to be better physically. He's going to be better mentally. He's going to be prepared on Sunday to give his 100%," said Alcaraz, who trailed the fifth-seeded Fritz 6-4 in the fourth-set tiebreaker before winning the next four points to end it.

Sinner and Alcaraz have taken over the sport as the so-called Big Three of Djokovic, Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal ceded center stage.

Federer and Nadal are retired. For the 38-year-old Djokovic, who was diminished two days after a "nasty" and "awkward" fall in the last game of his quarterfinal victory, his lopsided loss brought an end to his latest bid for an eighth Wimbledon title and an unprecedented 25th major trophy.

Djokovic said he definitely plans to come back for at least one more appearance at Wimbledon. He had reached the last six finals, winning four and finishing as the runner-up to Alcaraz in 2023 and 2024.

With five-time Wimbledon champion Bjorn Borg and celebrities such as Anna Wintour and Leonardo DiCaprio looking on Friday, Alcaraz produced his usual brand of magic, marking some shots against U.S. Open runner-up Fritz with a shout of "Vamos!" or a raised index finger.

The temperature topped 85 degrees Fahrenheit (30 degrees Celsius), with no clouds interrupting the blue sky overhead to offer protection from the sun. For the second consecutive day, spectators had trouble in the heat. (AP)

## Rahul close in on ton, Pant run-out for 74 as India reach 248/3

**LONDON, July 12:** Rishabh Pant overcame pain in his left index finger to score an entertaining half-century before getting run out at the stroke of lunch, leaving India at 248 for four on day three of the second Test against England here on Saturday.

With K L Rahul (98 not out, 171 balls) closing in on his 10th Test hundred and second at Lord's, Pant (74 off 112) attempted an avoidable quick single in the last over of the session but Ben Stokes pulled off a brilliant direct hit running in from cover to give his team something in a session controlled by the opposition. The partnership between Rahul and Pant yielded 141 runs off 198 balls.

Pant, batting through pain due to the finger injury he suffered while keeping on day one, made his intentions clear even against the express pace of Jofra Archer.

Archer gave Pant freebie on the leg-side to start the day's proceedings before the southpaw stepped out of the crease for a slash on the off-side. Barring those two fours, Pant and Rahul chose to be watchful for the first 30 minutes, collecting just 14 runs in seven overs. While Indian batters didn't score too many in that phase, England bowlers also didn't seem penetrative with Archer bowling too many bouncers that were left alone by Rahul, who shielded Pant from the speedster more because of latter's injury.

After this phase, runs began to flow when Rahul perfected a punch off the back foot.

Like England had planned for Shubman Gill, the wicket-keeper



was brought close to the stumps in an attempt to deter Pant from leaving his crease. The move worked briefly until Pant decided to step up on the offensive.

In between breaks, Pant was nursing his injured finger with the help of physio.

Resuming the day at 145 for

three, India reached 197 for three in the first hour of play. England had requested for a ball change after the opening hour and the request was approved by the umpires.

Rahul had punished Brydon Carse for three successive fours to get a move on his innings. If one

looked at the statistics, Rahul's false shot percentage has been a mere 12 percent in the whole series so far.

Pant on other hand pulled Ben Stokes over fine leg to bring up his half-century. His second six of the innings was a six down the ground off Shoaib Bashir. (PTI)

## Jyoti shines as India win silver and bronze at Archery World Cup Stage 4



**MADRID, July 12:** Jyothi Surekha Vennam stayed on course for a hat-trick of medals as India secured two podium finishes at the Archery World Cup Stage 4 here on Saturday with the women's compound team settling for silver and the mixed team clinching bronze.

Notwithstanding the medal-winning show, the performance exposed Indian archers' struggles under pressure in crunch situations.

The trio of Jyothi, Parneet Kaur and 16-year-old debutant Prithika Pradeep,

who had topped the qualification round with a total of 2116 points, looked well on course for gold and justify their top-billing when they led 170-169 after the third end.

However, they faltered under pressure at the decisive moment, eventually going down 225-227 to Chinese Taipei.

Later, in the mixed team event, the top-seeded Indian pair of Jyothi and Rishabh Yadav, who had shattered the qualifying world record with a total of 1431 points on the opening day, out-

witted 10th-seeded El Salvador duo of Paola Corado and Douglas Vladimir Nolasco 156-153 to claim bronze.

The Indian pair had fallen short of expectations in the semifinals on Friday, losing to 12th-seeded Netherlands 152-155.

In the women's compound team event, both teams were locked at 57- all after the first end, but the Indians raised their game in the second, dropping just two points to take the end 58-56 and open up a slender 115-113 lead. They still held a narrow advantage despite losing the third end by a point (55-56) after an untimely arrow found the 8-ring.

The gold was well within reach, the Indians simply could not close it out in the fourth and final end.

A wayward 7 in the final-end proved costly, while Chinese Taipei's trio of Huang I-Jou, Chen Yi-Hsuan and Chiu Yu-Erh held their composure to shoot a match-winning 58.

The Indians, in contrast, could muster only 55 -- an underwhelming effort at a stage where consistency and nerves matter most. (PTI)

## Steeplechaser Sable fails to finish in Monaco Diamond League

**MONACO, July 12:** Indian steeplechaser Avinash Sable failed to finish the 3000m race after suffering a nasty fall while the country's latest sprint sensation Animesh Kujur continued his growing stature on the international circuit by ending a creditable fourth, in the Under-23 200m event at the Monaco Diamond League here.

Olympian and national record holder Sable was expecting a top-5 finish in his favourite event but suffered an injury following a nasty fall quite early in the race.

Sable, 30, who has already qualified for the Tokyo World Championships in September, has not hit his best form this year, finishing 13th and eighth in his previous two Diamond League appearances. Soufiane el Bakkali of Morocco won the race in a time of 8:01.18 seconds while Ryuji Miura of Japan was second clocking 8:03.43 in a field of 19 runners. Kenya's Edmund Serim was third (8:04.00 seconds).

Meanwhile, Kujur came up with another inspired showing in the Under-23 200m event, clocking 20.55 seconds.

Running against a top field, the 22-year-old from Chhattisgarh held his own as Australian teen prodigy Gout Gout blazed to the top spot with 20.10s.

Botswana's Busang Collen Kebinahshipi (20.28s) and South Africa's Naeem Jack (20.42s) completed the top three finishes. Kujur, who holds the Indian national record in the 200m at 20.32s, has emerged as one of the country's brightest sprint hopes in recent months.

Just last weekend, he smashed the national 100m record with a 10.18s dash at the Dromia International Sprint and Relays Meet in Greece, eclipsing the previous mark held by his relay teammate Gurindervir Singh. (PTI)

## Third-year Major League Cricket league hopes to keep growing the sport in US

**OAKLAND (USA), July 12:** Australian cricket legend Adam Gilchrist had barely made it inside the Coliseum entrance when dozens of fans swarmed him, and he obliged every request for photos and autographs.

Major League Cricket's week-long stop in the Bay Area last month had top officials in the sport thrilled with how the old Oakland Coliseum provides an ideal spot for the sport to thrive — even for major international competitions like World Cup and exhibition matches ahead of the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, when the sport makes its return for the first time in 100 years.

"I've been really pleased with the way it's been received," Gilchrist said. "Clearly, the South Asian community up to India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, that region, it's a religion there. And given the diaspora here and the number of South Asians in the community, I figured that they would have a keen following. It's great to see new faces to cricket."

Attendance for the opening weekend totaled more than 25,000 as the third-year, six-team league kicked off its season with great support in the Bay Area. Then, cricket scored another major victory June 29 in Dallas when the Texas Super Kings against MI New York drew a sellout of more than 6,100 with a standing-room only crowd at Grand Prairie Stadium — the largest regular-season attendance at that venue. It was the second-highest total for the sport at that venue behind the 2023 Championship Final.

And new Major League Cricket CEO Johnny Grave is committed to keep



growing cricket in the U.S. just a few months into his tenure, which has included a move from Antigua in the West Indies to Dallas. He dreams of the day when all ages and skill sets are involved.

Curtly Ambrose, who retired 25 years ago, coaches at the highest levels at home in Antigua. He is hopeful cricket will catch on as a popular sport in the U.S. — and is encouraged by the support in the San Francisco area.

"Very, very unique because where I come from there are always traditional cricket stadiums. This is different, baseball stadium, drop-in surfaces. That is something that doesn't happen in cricket normally but the support is good and I have a feeling that this will get bigger and better."

In a city that has lost its three major professional sports teams over the past

five years, cricket's Oakland stop certainly brought a festival-like atmosphere to the Coliseum — devoid of baseball for the first time since 1968 after the Athletics relocated to West Sacramento ahead of a planned move to Las Vegas.

The dual-sport Coliseum — where the Oakland Roots soccer team now plays — is already a planned site for training and exhibitions ahead of the Olympics for nations looking to practice and get acclimated on U.S. soil.

"It's probably really the best cricket facility almost in the Americas because it's so iconic, so historic and so well located in terms of the wider Bay Area where there are all these cricket fans," said Grave, who had initially hoped to bring cricket to the venue several years ago but couldn't make it work with the A's. (AP)

## Vaughan wants teams to bowl full quota of overs on all five days of Tests

**LONDON, July 12:** After seeing just 75 overs being bowled on day 2 of the third Test between Ben Stokes' side and India at Lord's, an exasperated former England captain Michael Vaughan wanted teams to mandatorily bowl full quota of 90 overs on all five days of a match.

India bowled 83 overs on day 1 of the Test, while less than 75 overs could be squeezed in on day 2, leaving a combined shortfall of nearly 23 overs over two days.

Vaughan said penalising the teams for slow over-rate was not good enough as the players were "quite rich" and won't be affected by the fines imposed on them.

"I don't think fines work. I think these lads (cricketers) are quite rich. I don't think the cash is going to affect them," opined Vaughan, who played 82 Tests and scored more than 7,500 runs across formats, on BBC Sport.

He was at a loss to understand how teams were unable to complete the full quota of overs on the first four days when they managed all 90 overs on the fifth and final day.

"(It's) been a problem for Test match cricket for a while. I know it's hot. I know we've had a few injuries. But when we get to the fifth day, we have to bowl the 90 overs. I've no idea why on day one, two, three and four we can see the game played at a snail's pace," he said. (PTI)



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