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Cricket and football academy inaugurated in North Guwahati

Our goal is to create sporting talents: Himanta

GUWAHATI, Aug 16: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday said the state has good sports infrastructure but the ultimate goal is to create talent.

The CM made the remark after inaugurating a cricket and football academy in North Guwahati.

"Ultimately, we have to create talent and I am sure that both these academies will contribute in this direction," he added.

Sarma emphasised that effective utilisation of existing facilities could enable Assam to produce quality sportspersons and enhance its achievements in the field of sports.

The CM also noted that despite the scale of infrastructure development, the emergence of top-tier athletes from the state has been limited. He stressed that the core focus must shift towards athlete development.

The city's oldest club, Guwahati Town Club (GTC), has set up a state-of-the-art football academy and Assam Cricket Association (ACA) has also constructed a beautiful cricket academy in North Guwahati, he said. "Systematic training, guidance from national and international standard coaches, and regular monitoring, can lead to positive outcomes, thereby fulfilling the purpose of setting up the academies," he added.

'The highlight of the cricket academy is that there is a hall which can accommodate 10 pitches', he said.

There will be both national and international coaches to train the players, Sarma added.

'This is a beautiful addition to our sports infrastructure. I congratulate both ACA and GTC for these two landmark achievements', he said.

The cricket academy campus is equipped with 10 practice pitches, a main ground with five centre pitches, and one of the largest indoor cricket halls in the country featuring 10 pitches.

It also includes residential facilities for players, along with provisions for technical directors, coaches, and support staff.

Similarly, the football academy has been provided with two grounds, a 60-bed hostel, and a football pavilion, with future plans to make arrangements for indoor games. (PTI)

Assam, M'laya CMs discuss several issues in Guwahati

GUWAHATI, Aug 16: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma met his Meghalaya counterpart Conrad Sangma at his office here on Saturday and held discussions on various issues.

"Today, in Guwahati, I had an excellent discussion with the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Meghalaya Shri @Sangma-Conrad Ji," Sarma posted on X. "We discussed a wide gamut of issues to strengthen the mutual growth of both our sister states," he said.

Sarma, however, did not elaborate on the issues discussed by the chief ministers of the two neighbouring states.

The two CMs had last met on June 2 and agreed to erect border pillars in five among the six of the total 12 disputed areas, by Independence Day. The two states had signed an agreement in March 2022 to resolve the border dispute in six areas.

Border pillars were decided to be constructed in five areas and not in the sixth at Pilingata as there were some "difference of interpretation", because of which the deputy commissioners of both the states were scheduled *(CONTD. ON PAGE-2)*

Debabrata moves Shah for border management measures

GUWAHATI, Aug 16: Leader of Opposition in Assam assembly, Debabrata Saikia, on Saturday urged Union Home Minister Amit Shah to initiate measures for effective border management, following recurring "pushback" operations undertaken by the police along the state's boundary with Bangladesh.

In a letter to Shah, Saikia said that the state government has, on multiple occasions, acknowledged such operations and deportations of undocumented Bangladeshi nationals, which raises critical questions about the efficacy of the border management framework and the current coordination mechanisms.

According to official statements, a "new strategy of pushback" was announced on May 10 and since then intensive operations have taken place, despite the deployment of the BSF across the 267.5-km stretch of the Assam-Bangladesh border, which suggests that infiltration continues to be a serious challenge, he said.

'This situation raises several concerns, including a careful assessment of the effectiveness of BSF deployment and resource allocation in challenging geographical *(CONTD. ON PAGE-2)*

India welcomes Putin-Trump summit on Ukraine conflict; pitches for early return of peace

NEW DELHI, Aug 16: The world wants to see an early end to the conflict in Ukraine, India said on Saturday, welcoming the summit talks between US President Donald Trump and his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, in Alaska that ended without a ceasefire deal.

After an almost-three-hour meeting with the Russian president, Trump said "some great progress" has been made, but did not provide any details. It was the first US-Russia summit since Moscow launched its invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

"There's no deal until there's a deal," Trump said after the summit.

As leading world capitals analysed the Putin-Trump summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, thanking Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy for his Independence-Day greetings to India, wished

"our friends in Ukraine a future marked by peace, progress and prosperity".

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) welcomed the summit in Alaska and commended Putin and Trump for the initiative to bring peace to Ukraine.

"India welcomes the Summit meeting in Alaska between US President Donald Trump and President Vladimir Putin of Russia," the MEA said in a statement.

"Their leadership in the pursuit of peace is highly commendable," it added.

The MEA said India appreciates the progress made in the summit. "The way forward can only be through dialogue and diplomacy. The world wants to see an early end to the conflict in Ukraine," it said.

In a related development, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar spoke to his British counterpart, David Lammy, and discussed various aspects of the Ukraine conflict.

After the summit, Trump held a phone conversation with Zelenskyy. The Ukrainian president later said he will meet Trump in Washington DC on Monday.

In his message to Zelenskyy, Modi said: "I deeply value the joint commitment to forging even closer ties between India and Ukraine. *(CONTD. ON PAGE-2)*

Jagadish Bhuyan files cybercrime complaint over fake letter

GUWAHATI, Aug 16: Assam Jatiya Parishad general secretary Jagadish Bhuyan on Saturday filed a complaint with the cybercrime police station here alleging that a fake letter, bearing his false signature and addressed to Raijor Dal chief Akhil Gogoi, was circulated on social media to defame him.

In his complaint to the officer-in-charge of police station, Bhuyan said during his visit to Delhi along with a high-level party delegation on August 13, he had met Lok Sabha's leader of the opposition, Rahul Gandhi, and deputy leader Gaurav Gogoi to discuss the challenges in implementing the Assam Accord, 40 years after its signing, and to raise these concerns at the national level.

'During this period, a letter was circulated which falsely claimed that I had apologised to Akhil Gogoi for not informing him prior to my meetings with the aforementioned national leaders. The content of this forged letter is defamatory, intended to malign my reputation and discredit me in the eyes of the public', he said.

Bhuyan also attached the screenshots of the social media posts along with links to the accounts of persons who had posted it.

He also alleged that a person, identifying himself on his social media handles as a media panelist of the Assam BJP, had also posted this forged document on Friday but later deleted it.

'This act of creating and circulating a forged letter constitutes offences under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanita (BNS), 2023 and the Information Technology Act, 2000', the AJP leader added.

He urged the cybercrime authorities to investigate the matter urgently, identify the perpetrators, and take appropriate legal action to address this malicious act.

A police official said the complaint is being examined and necessary action will be taken after investigations. (PTI)

Next Gen GST precursor to eventual single tax slab GST: Sources

NEW DELHI, Aug 16: Describing the proposed GST tax reforms as 'Next Gen GST', senior government officials on Saturday said that the two-slab tax regime will eventually pave the way for a single sales/services tax rate, hopefully by 2047.

They said the proposed new GST regime, which slashes tax rates and assigns just two slabs of 5 per cent and 18 per cent, will boost the economy and also serve to mitigate tariff threats.

The proposed two-slab regime, if approved by the GST Council, will replace the current four slabs in the goods and services tax (GST) regime, doing away with the 12 per cent and 28 per cent slabs.

Calling it the "next Gen GST', one government official said "it is a game changer reform. In the pantheon of economic reforms seen in India, it's right up there." The officials spoke on condition of anonymity.

They said the new structure would mean that almost all of the common use items will move to the lower tax bracket, leading to price cuts, which in turn would boost consumption.

Terming the overhaul as "reformed and refined GST", a source said the Centre did not want a short-term solution in the tax rate rationalisation and with the Compensation Cess coming to an end, a Next Gen GST was necessary.

"Lower taxes means it will put more money in people's pockets. It will obviously lead to more consumption," the official said.

The Centre's proposal for a 5 and 18 per cent tax rate on merit and standard goods and a 40 per cent tax for sin goods, has been a "large canvas exercise" to ensure stability in tax rates, the officials said, explaining the rationale behind the exercise.

The changes that have come about after nearly six months of deliberations and dozens of meetings, have been conceived in a way so as to ensure that demand for tax tweaks do not come and also input tax credit (ITC) do not get accumulated in the system.

Once the Centre's proposal is accepted by the Group of Ministers (GoM) and is approved by the GST Council, it will end the flux of tax rates and ensure stability, the officials said. "What we have suggested is a 'Next Gen GST' keeping the needs of the middle class, poor, farmers, and MSMEs in mind. Also, it has been ensured that tax on daily use items are low," the *(CONTD. ON PAGE-2)*

Manipur Guv meets Naga outfit over India-Myanmar border fencing and scrapping of FMR

IMPHAL, Aug 16: Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla on Saturday held a meeting with the United Naga Council (UNC) on the fencing of the India-Myanmar border and scrapping of the Free Movement Regime (FMR), which the outfit is opposing.

In a statement, the Raj Bhavan said the UNC delegation shared their views and concerns on matters related to the FMR and border fencing, and requested the governor to take up the matter with the Centre.

"The governor gave a patient hearing to the delegation and informed them that the matter had already been taken up with the Ministry of Home Affairs. The governor appealed to the members of the Council to maintain peace and restraint while constructive dialogue continues," it added.

UNC president Ng Lorho said the apex body of all Naga outfits in the state was invited by the governor for the meeting. "The governor emphasised that, as the border issue falls in the Centre's domain, the involvement of central representatives in the talks is essential," Lorho said.

"He assured that he will facilitate a dialogue between the Government of India and the UNC very shortly. In the meantime, our stand against border fencing and the scrapping of FMR remains the same. Both parties agreed to reconvene for the next round of discussions within three days," he added.

Naga groups have been opposing the ongoing fencing works and scrapping of the Free Movement

Regime, stating that it would affect the community that has been divided by the border.

The FMR was implemented in 2018 as part of India's Act East policy. The decision to scrap it was announced in February 2024 to ensure internal security and maintain the demographic structure of the Northeastern states bordering Myanmar. In December last year, the government revised the guidelines on cross-border movement, allowing FMR to just 10 km.

Under the earlier FMR, every member of the hill tribes, who is either a citizen of India or a citizen of Myanmar and lives in any area within 16 km on either side of the border, could cross over on production of a border pass with one year's validity and could stay up to two weeks per visit. (PTI)

'Vajpayee steered India in difficult times to make it a force to reckon with'

GUWAHATI, Aug 16: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday paid tribute to former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his seventh death anniversary, and said he steered the country in difficult times to make it a force to reckon with.

From nuclear tests to network of highways to key connectivity plans and a push for 'Antyodaya', Vajpayee worked non-stop for the people of the country, Sarma said.

'Shraddheya Atal Ji was not just a leader, he was a father figure to all Indians. He steered the country in difficult times to make it a force to reckon with,' the CM said in a post on X. 'On his punyatithi today, I bow my head in reverence to the great soul, as his ideals continue to inspire us,' Sarma said.

The state unit of the BJP also paid tributes to the former PM at the party headquarters here. A poet and statesman, Vajpayee was prime minister for over six years between 1998 and 2004. (PTI)

Guwahati Traffic Police switch back to white uniform after 8 years

GUWAHATI, Aug 16: The Guwahati Traffic Police personnel have resumed wearing white uniform from Saturday, after a gap of eight years to ensure uniformity across the state and enhance operational efficiency, officials said.

The city traffic police force's uniform was changed to navy blue trousers and sky blue shirts in 2017 from the white ones that they had been wearing for decades.

The decision to move back to the white uniform was taken following a comprehensive review by the police department on functional requirements, field conditions, and feedback from stakeholders, including police personnel, road safety experts and members of the public, an official release said. *(CONTD. ON PAGE-2)*

Hospitality majors explore developing eco-tourism resorts in Andaman islands

'Pre-bid meeting was organised to provide a platform to potential investors'

PORT BLAIR, Aug 16: Top hospitality companies, including Tata group's IHCL and Hyatt Hotels Corp, have shown interest in developing eco-tourism resorts at four locations in Andamans, including the uninhabited Aves Island, which will be opened for tourism for the first time, officials said on Saturday.

The eco-tourism properties will be developed on a public-private partnership (PPP) basis at Neil Island, Aves Island, Long Island and Smith Island. Besides, the administration is also looking to redevelop the Megapode Resort in Port Blair, they said.

The Andaman & Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation Ltd (ANIIDCO) on July 28 invited bids for developing the resorts on a design, build, finance, operate and transfer basis, they added.

A virtual pre-bid meeting was held on August 14, and it was attended by officials of some of the biggest players of the sector, including The Leela, Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL), Club Mahindra, Hyatt Hotels Corp, Ambuja Neotia Hospitality, Chalet Hotels, Juniper Hotels, The Park, Polo Hotels Ltd and GVK Group, officials said.

"The pre-bid meeting was organised to provide a platform to the potential investors to share their suggestions and seek clarifications, if any. The discussions covered the entire project life cycle for all the proposed developments," ANIIDCO MD Chanchal Yadav said.

"The suggestions and queries raised by the participants were suitably clarified. Our aim is to transform the Andaman and Nicobar Islands into a global destination of sustainable and nature-led tourism. I am happy to share that we are planning site visits for the investors during the first week of September," she added.

The bidding will take place on September 15.

It is for the first time that the Aves Island, which is known for its acres of coconut plantation, will be opened for tourism.

After the resort comes up, the administration believes that Aves Island will become the most sought-after destination in the Andamans after Havelock Island. It is close to the Mayabunder town and has live and *(CONTD. ON PAGE-2)*

Dialysis fluid pouches found dumped on Bhogdoi river bank

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, Aug 16: The recovery of a large number of fluid pouches used in dialysis treatment from the bank of the Bhogdoi river at Rajotia on the outskirts of Jorhat on Saturday has caused widespread concern among residents.

According to sources, locals spotted the pouches, bearing medicine labels, lying on the riverbank in the morning and suspected that they had been dumped the previous night by unknown persons.

They immediately informed the Health Department.

Health officials later visited the site and collected more than 170 pouches, which are used for treating kidney patients. A department source said the packets were part of government supplies meant for public hospitals. The Health Department has ordered an inquiry to ascertain how the medicine pouches ended up dumped along the Bhogdoi riverbank.

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Prestigious 'Lokmat Global Economic Convention' to be held in London tomorrow

NAGPUR, Aug 16: The prestigious 'Lokmat Global Economic Convention' organised by Lokmat Media Group will be held on August 18 in London, with the focus being on discussions about India's progress towards becoming a USD 5 trillion economy.

This is the second year of this important event, with last year's convention having taken place in Singapore.

This year's convention will have in-depth discussions on India's economic policies, global trade roles, technology, infrastructure development and green energy, including four panel discussions with participation from globally renowned dignitaries.

The panels will cover topics such as the economy, industry, technology, environment, education and socio-political issues, a release from Lokmat Media Group said.

Experts, thinkers and leaders from around the world will share their views and experiences at the convention, which will assess India's economic capabilities through the digital economy and startup ecosystems.

Global entrepreneurs and leaders will come together to present new perspectives on India's economic future, the release said.

Additionally, individuals who have proven themselves through their achievements will be honoured. The release said renowned entrepreneurs, policymakers and leaders from across the globe will collaborate to present new visions for India's economic future.

"There will be deliberations on improvements in India's economic policies and advancements in the field of technology. The growth of entrepreneurship through the startup ecosystem and opportunities arising from the influence of digital technology will also be debated thoroughly," it said.

"The discussions at the 'Lokmat Global Economic Convention' will inspire new ideas and motivation to drive India's economic growth. This will strengthen India's position in the global economy and accelerate transformational thinking," the release added.

A key highlight of this event would the presentation of prestigious awards such as 'Kohinoor of India', 'Bharat Bhushan', 'Maharashtra Ratna', 'Global Sakhi' and 'Gujarat Ratna' to individuals for outstanding achievements in various fields.

These awards will recognise their work on a global platform and celebrate their contributions. Distinguished individuals from different sectors will be honoured on the world stage, the release said.

London was chosen for the 'Global Economic Convention' because the city is regarded as a major global economic centre where international trade, investment and strategic dialogues take place.

"Hence, London has been chosen as the venue for this important event. It is crucial for effectively showcasing India's economic progress on the global stage. The city also has a historic connection with India," the release said. (PTI)

Want GST 2.0 to be Good and Simple Tax not Growth Suppressing Tax: Cong

NEW DELHI, Aug 16: The Congress Saturday demanded an official discussion paper on GST 2.0 soon for a wider debate on it and said the reform should be towards a "Good and Simple Tax" in letter, spirit, and compliance, and not the "Growth Suppressing Tax" it has become.

The opposition party's assertion came a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that GST rates will be lowered by Diwali, bringing down prices of everyday use items, as his government looks to reform the eight-year-old regime that has been plagued by litigation and evasion.

Congress general secretary in-charge of communications, Jairam Ramesh, said that for well over a year and a half at least, the party has been calling for a radically transformed GST 2.0.

Noting that a transformed GST 2.0 was a key pledge in the Congress manifesto for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Ramesh on Friday said the prime minister seems to have finally woken up to the fact that economic growth will simply not accelerate unless this transformation takes place and increases private consumption and private investment.

"Over the last seven years, the spirit of GST has been vitiated by an increased number of rates and the granting of multiple exemptions. The structure also seems to have facilitated evasion. There must be a drastic reduction in the number of rates," he said in a statement.

The Congress leader said simplification of the rate structure is essential, but must be done in a manner that minimises revenue uncertainty to states and also eliminates the classification disputes that have become so common.

"The GST compensation cess expires on March 31, 2026. This must be extended to offset any revenue uncertainty from the rationalisation of the rate structure."

Ramesh said the widespread concerns of MSMEs -- the major employment generators in the economy -- must be addressed meaningfully, he said, adding that apart from major procedural changes in GST, this will involve further increasing the thresholds that must apply to interstate supplies as well.

Sectoral issues that have surfaced, for instance, in textiles, tourism, exporters, handicrafts and agricultural inputs, must be tackled, he said.

In addition, states should be incentivised to move towards the introduction of state-level GST to cover electricity, alcohol, petroleum, and real estate as well, the Congress leader opined.

"The Indian National Congress demands an official discussion paper on GST 2.0 very soon so that there can be an informed and wider debate on this vital and pressing national issue.

"GST 2.0 should be truly a Good and Simple Tax (GST) in letter, spirit, and compliance, not like the Growth Suppressing Tax (GST) it has become," Ramesh said.

Soon after the prime minister's announcement from the ramparts of the Red Fort on the 79th Independence Day, the Union Finance Ministry said it has proposed that most goods and services be taxed in two slabs -- standard and merit -- and a select few items be charged special rates.

This is to replace the current goods and services tax (GST) structure, where sale of goods and rendering of services are taxed in four different brackets -- 5 per cent, 12 per cent, 18 per cent and 28 per cent -- with luxury and sin goods attracting a levy on top of the highest rate of 28 per cent.

"This Diwali, I am going to make it a double Diwali for you," Modi had said in his address to the nation.

Stating that over the past eight years, his government has undertaken major GST reforms, the prime minister said, "We have discussed with states and we are bringing next-generation GST reforms that will reduce the tax burden across the country."

"Tax on items for the common man will be reduced substantially. Our MSMEs will benefit hugely. Daily use items will become cheaper, which will also strengthen our economy," he had said.

GST, which subsumed a host of taxes and local levies, was rolled out on July 1, 2017. (PTI)

East Zone Regional Abilympics 2025 to be held in Guwahati on August 22–23

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 16: The East Zone Regional Abilympics 2025 will be held at Kalakshetra, Guwahati, on August 22–23.

According to an official statement, the event, organised by the National Abilympic Association of India (NAAI) in collaboration with Sarthak Educational Trust, is supported by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), TPCDT and IndusInd Bank.

This marks the final regional competition in Phase 2 of the Abilympics before the national-level event in Gurugram this November.

More than 100 persons with disabilities (PwDs) from Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, Mizoram, Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha are expected to participate.

Competitions will be held in a wide range of vocational skills, including photography, painting and decoration, crochet, engineering design, hairdressing and massage.

The event will be inaugurated by Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya, who will set the tone for two days of showcasing skills, inclusion and empowerment. Alongside the competitions, a Regional Conference on Disability Inclusion and Skilling will be organised on August 22. The conference will feature sessions on assistive technology innovations, policy and CSR partnerships, inclusive workplaces and change-maker stories of PwDs.

It will also highlight the synergy between Abilympics and nonprofits in strengthening the skills pipeline.

Dr Jitender Aggarwal, Secretary-General of NAAI and Founder & CEO of Sarthak Educational Trust, said the East Zone event will be the final opportunity in this phase for Divyangjan to showcase their talent, secure opportunities and step closer to representing India at the global stage in Finland in 2027.

He added that Sarthak aims to empower 10 million PwDs and enable over two lakh sustainable jobs by 2027.

Winners from Guwahati will qualify for the National Abilympics in Gurugram in November 2025, where Team India will be selected to participate in the 11th International Abilympics in Finland in 2027, widely regarded as the "Work Skill Olympics" for persons with disabilities.

ICAI Guwahati Branch marks 79th Independence Day

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 16: The Guwahati Branch of the Eastern India Regional Council (EIRC) of ICAI, along with the Guwahati Branch of EICASA, observed the 79th Independence Day with a series of events at ICAI Bhawan.

According to an official statement, the celebrations began with the National Flag hoisting by branch chairperson CA Raginee Goyal, in the presence of managing committee members, chartered accountants and students.

The gathering paid homage to the sacrifices of freedom fighters and reaffirmed their commitment to national service. A self-defence workshop was conducted by Pragya P Khanikar from 9:30 am to 10:30 am.

The session aimed to empower participants, particularly women, young members and children, with practical skills for safety and confidence.

At 10:30 am, a bike rally was flagged off from ICAI Bhawan, covering Khanapara, Bhangagarh and returning to the branch campus.

Participants carried the National Flag, spreading messages of patriotism, unity and road safety.

The rally made stops at Kar Bhawan, State Bank of India and the Assam Legislative Assembly to underscore the role of chartered accountants as partners in nation building. All riders and pillion passengers strictly followed safety protocols, including wearing helmets.

The event was attended by ICAI Guwahati Branch chairperson CA Raginee Goyal, vice chairperson CA Anjani Mundra, secretary CA Jay Prakash Gupta, treasurer CA Piyush Birmiwal, EICASA chairperson CA Vikash Kumar Choudhary, nominated member of EICASA CA Kumar Victor Saha, EICASA vice chairman Jaitra Pareek and other members of the managing committee.

According to the statement, the Independence Day celebration successfully brought together the ICAI fraternity in an atmosphere of pride and patriotic fervour.

Contd. from Page 1...

Assam, M'laya CMs discuss

to discuss the matter. Meghalaya was carved out of Assam as a separate state in 1972 and it had challenged the Assam Reorganisation Act, 1971, leading to disputes in 12 areas of the 884.9-km-long border between the two states. Sarma, on becoming Assam's chief minister in May 2021, had announced that his priority was to resolve long-standing boundary disputes with the neighbouring states.

Subsequently, three regional committees were set up in August 2021 to resolve the issues in a phased manner. The regional committees submitted their recommendations which were handed over to Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi by the two chief ministers, followed by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on March 29, 2022 to resolve disputes in six of the 12 areas.

According to the agreement, 36.79 sq km of the disputed area was taken up for settlement in the first phase, with Assam getting full control of 18.51 sq km and Meghalaya 18.28 sq km of land. (PTI)

Debabrata moves Shah for

terrain,' he said. The "consistent involvement of the Assam Police in direct pushbacks" points to "coordination gaps" between central and state security agencies, Saikia said. The conduct of state-level pushbacks, in some cases reportedly without Foreigners Tribunal processes, may create legal ambiguities and have possible diplomatic implications with Bangladesh, he said in the letter.

'In light of these developments, I request the ministry's intervention to ensure a robust and well-coordinated approach,' he said. A comprehensive review of BSF deployment and strategies, an enhanced coordination protocol between the BSF and Assam Police, and a focus on technology-based border surveillance and detection mechanisms would greatly strengthen operational effectiveness, the Congress leader said.

'Additionally, proactive diplomatic engagement with Bangladesh to address the root causes of infiltration is essential to maintain bilateral trust,' said Saikia.

Clear and uniform guidelines regarding jurisdiction and standard operating procedures for handling infiltrators would help align state-level actions with national policy, the letter added. (PTI)

India welcomes Putin-Trump

We earnestly wish our friends in Ukraine a future marked by peace, progress and prosperity." India has been consistently calling for ending the Russia-Ukraine conflict through dialogue and diplomacy.

In July last year, Modi travelled to Moscow and told Putin that a solution to the Ukraine conflict is not possible on the battlefield and peace efforts do not succeed in the midst of bombs and bullets. The next month, the prime minister visited the Ukrainian capital city of Kyiv and conveyed to Zelenskyy that both Ukraine and Russia should sit together, without wasting time, to end the war. The prime minister had said India was on the side of peace since the beginning of the conflict. (PTI)

Next Gen GST precursor

official told PTI. "Once the system is put in place and India becomes a developed nation, we can think about a single rate GST," said the official, adding that a single rate structure is suitable for developed countries where income and spending capacities are uniform. "The ultimate aim is to move to a single slab structure," the official said, adding that the time, however, is not right at present.

The official said that during the process of overhaul, every due process is being followed. The Centre has taken the steering role but is protecting constitutional obligations by sharing it with the Group of Ministers (GoM) on rate rationalisation.

"We have looked at every item, item by item and in some cases we have gone back and forth 3-4 times. Whether it is pesticide for use by farmers or pencils for students or some raw material or intermediaries for MSMEs, every item has been discussed threadbare and categorised in the merit or standard slab," the official added. As many as 99 per cent of the items in the 12 per cent category such as butter, fruit juices and dry fruits would move to 5 per cent tax rate. Similarly, electronic items like ACs, TVs, fridges, and washing machines as well as other goods like cement will be among the 90 per cent of the items that would move from 28 per cent to lower 18 per cent slab.

The move comes after US President Donald Trump slapped a 25 per cent tariff on all goods India exports to the US, and planned doubling of the levy to 50 per cent from August 27 to punish New Delhi for its oil purchases from Russia. The tariffs are likely to impact USD 40-billion of non-exempt Indian exports such as that of gems and jewellery, textiles and footwear.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Independence Day address to the nation on Friday emphasised that India should become self-reliant and consume what is made in India. The tax slabs that the Union Finance Ministry has proposed will go to a group of ministers from different states and after their concurrence will be placed before the all-powerful GST Council, which is headed by Union Finance Minister and comprises representatives of all states and UTs.

The Council is expected to meet next month to deliberate on the tax reform proposal. About 20 per cent of items, including packaged food and beverages, apparel and hotel accommodation currently are taxed at 12 per cent GST and accounts for 5-10 per cent of consumption and 5-6 per cent GST revenue. Moving them to a lower 5 per cent slab may lead to loss of revenue but the Central government is hopeful that a boost in consumption would be able to make up for the deficit in the next few months. (PTI)

Guwahati Traffic Police switch

The white uniform, long associated with traffic management in Guwahati, has historically symbolised approachability, visibility and a professional image on the roads, it said. Earlier, the uniform was changed as it was expected to be more comfortable, suitable to the city's climatic conditions and be more visible on the roads, the release added. (PTI)

Hospitality majors explore

dead coral flat beds along with a 2-km coastline, making it an ideal destination for campers, officials said.

A land parcel of 2.75 hectare is owned by the administration, which will be handed over to ANIIDCO on lease for the development of the project. The property will involve an investment of nearly ₹ 36 crore and have 50 rooms, they said. The proposed resort at Lalaji Bay in Long Island would cost about ₹ 391 and have 220 rooms. The one at Smith Island would be set up at a cost of ₹ 60 crore and have 70 rooms, while the property at Neil Island will be developed at ₹ 172 crore and have 120 rooms. (PTI)

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No.KAAC/TRN/Advertisement/2009-2010/26/1462 Dated 16/08/2025

NOTICE

Interview (Oral/Viva-voice) & Driving Test for engagement of 18(Eighteen) Nos of Driver (Contractual) where-8[Eight) Nos. HMV & 10(Ten) Nos. LMV Posts under Transport Department, KAAC, Diphu. The interview is to be held on 26 August, 2025 to 27th August, 2025 from 11:00 AM. till 5:00P.M.

Sl. No.	Roll No.	Date of Interview	Time	Venue
1.	1-100 (LMV)	26-08-2025	11.00 A.M.	Office of the E.E.(M), Transport Deptt. KAAC, Diphu
2.	101-169 (LMV)	27-08-2025	11.00 A.M.	Office of the E.E.(M), Transport Deptt. KAAC, Diphu
3.	1-28 (HMV)	27-08-2025	11.00 A.M.	Office of the E.E.(M), Transport Deptt. KAAC, Diphu

Therefore, all the candidates are hereby requested to collect their Admit Card from the Office of the Executive Engineer (Mechanical), KAAC Transport Deptt. Diphu from 18/08/2025 onwards. No, TA/DA will be provided by the Department in this regard.

In this connection, you are requested to publish the notification through your esteemed daily newspaper on 17/08/2025 or prior to the date of interview.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer (M)
Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council
Diphu

Memo No. KAAC/TRN/Advertisement/2009-2010/26/1407(A) Dtd.16/08/2025

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Assam celebrates 79th Independence Day with patriotic fervour, cultural programmes and developmental pledges

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 16: Assam joined the nation in celebrating the 79th Independence Day on Friday with vibrant programmes, flag hoistings, cultural showcases, felicitation of achievers and pledges towards development across the districts.

Government officials, ministers, political leaders, security forces, students and citizens participated in large numbers, reaffirming unity and patriotism.

In Kokrajhar, the central programme of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) was organised by the district administration at Govt. HS & MP School parade ground where BTR Chief Executive Member (CEM) Pramod Boro hoisted the National Flag.

He took the salute from contingents of police, NCC and students, besides paying homage at Swahid Bedi. Addressing the gathering, Boro highlighted the region's progress since the BTR Peace Accord, emphasising all-round development, corruption-free governance and community harmony.

He also mentioned initiatives like the Bodoland Happiness Mission and Community Vision Document. Awards were presented to meritorious students and achievers.

Similar celebrations were held in Udalguri, where Deputy CEM Gobinda Chandra Basumatary unfurled the Tricolour.

In Sivasagar, Finance and WCD Minister Ajanta Neog unfurled the flag at Boarding Field and took the salute from 18 contingents.

Paying tributes to Dr Bhupen Hazarika, she urged citizens to remain united against divisive forces.

In neighbouring Charaideo, power minister Jogen Mohan hoisted the flag at Sonari, announcing major initiatives including the upcoming Sonari Medical College.

Both districts witnessed cultural performances and patriotic songs.

In Silchar, Barak Valley Development Minister Kaushik Rai led the celebrations, highlighting rapid infrastructure

growth under CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, including the ₹24,000 crore Barapani–Panchgram Expressway, Barak Valley Secretariat and Dolu Greenfield Airport.

He also announced new healthcare projects, including a superspeciality hospital.

Floral tributes were paid at Gandhibagh Martyrs' Memorial, while sweets were distributed in hospitals and jails. Independence Day was also observed in Lakhipur and Dholai.

At Diphu in Karbi Anglong, the district administration felicitated journalist Kamrul Khan with the Progressive Farmers & Entrepreneur Award for his contributions to journalism, culture and sustainable agriculture.

Recognised for pioneering antibiotic-free poultry farming and promoting organic crops, Khan described his journey as an effort to inspire youth towards sustainable livelihoods.

The award was presented in the presence of KAAC CEM Tuliram Ronghang, Diphu MLA Bidyasing Engleng and MP Amarsing Tisso.

In Biswanath Chariali, Assam Rifles celebrated Independence Day at Battalion HQ, Lokra, with a ceremonial marchpast involving over 300 personnel.

The programme concluded with patriotic songs and interaction among troops.

The spirit of freedom was equally visible in Demow, where the newly formed co-district hosted its first Independence Day celebration at the Public Playground.

Co-District Commissioner Meenakshi Permey hoisted the National Flag, while police, NCC, Scouts and Guides took part in the parade. Families of freedom fighters and other dignitaries were felicitated.

In Margherita, Co-District Commissioner Pratibha Meshram unfurled the Tricolour, followed by cultural performances by students and prize distribution for parade winners.

In West Karbi Anglong, the Indian National Congress organised a Tiranga Yatra from Dongkamukam to Kheroni Road, led by district leaders including Augustine Enghee and ex-EMs Sing Teron and Ashok Teron.

The rally voiced opposition to alleged land policies, calling for protection of tribal lands.

Across the state, government offices, security forces, political parties and local organisations organised flag hoistings, cultural events and community outreach activities.

The celebrations echoed a common spirit — honouring sacrifices of freedom fighters while pledging to build a peaceful, inclusive and progressive Assam.

CEM Gorlosa highlighted district's devp initiatives

79th Independence Day celebrated in Dima Hasao

HT Correspondent

HAFLONG, Aug 16: The 79th Independence Day was celebrated with patriotic fervour across Dima Hasao district on Friday .

Chief Executive Member of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council, Debolal Gorlosa hoisted the national Tricolour at the N. L. Daulagupu Sports Complex in Haflong. He was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Munindra Nath Ngatey, ACS, and Superintendent of Police Mayank Kumar, IPS.

Addressing the gathering, CEM Gorlosa highlighted the district's development initiatives. He said that with the present pace of growth, Dima Hasao would soon be counted among developed districts.

Stressing on education as the foundation of prosperity, he announced sanctioning of funds for 17 new hostels to encourage students, particularly in rural areas, to pursue higher studies.

He also underlined efforts to engage youth in sports through construction of new stadiums and playgrounds and spoke of tourism as a promising sector for employment generation. Gorlosa said the council, with support from the Prime Minister and Assam Chief Minister, is prioritising improved road connectivity within the district and beyond. He also acknowledged social contributors who safeguard traditional values and promote community responsibility.

In Maibang subdivision, the Independence Day celebration saw large public participation. Sub-Divisional Officer Shymanta Rabi Bara, ACS, hoisted the national flag in the presence of SDPO Vaibhav Rawat, IPS, and local MAC member Monjoy Langthasa.

The programme featured a march past, cultural performances, and prize distribution for meritorious students.

Ahead of the celebrations, people across the district enthusiastically participated in the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign, displaying the national flag in their homes as a mark of unity and patriotism.

Tribute paid to Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his Punyatithi in Diphu

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 16: On the occasion of the Punyatithi of Bharat Ratna and former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Chief Executive Member (CEM) of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Tuliram Ronghang, paid tribute at the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Bhawan BJP-EKADC office here on Saturday.

Ronghang, accompanied by MLA Darsing Ronghang, Executive Members, MACs, and senior party leaders, offered floral homage before the portrait of the late leader.

The programme was attended by Roland Killing, district BJP president of Karbi Anglong, along with party karyakartas and dignitaries.

Speakers at the gathering remembered Vajpayee as a visionary leader, poet, and orator whose contribution to democracy, development, and India's global stature remains unmatched. They recalled his role in strengthening unity, good governance, and national pride.

In his address, the CEM said Vajpayee's ideals and leadership continue to inspire generations to work selflessly for the progress of the nation.

NFR celebrates 79th Independence Day with focus on growth, safety and sustainability

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 16: Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) celebrated the 79th Independence Day across its jurisdiction with programmes highlighting achievements in connectivity, safety and sustainability. According to an official statement, the main event was held at the NFRSA complex in Maligaon, where General Manager Chetan Kumar Shrivastava hoisted the National Flag in the presence of railway officials, staff, and schoolchildren.

The ceremony featured a Guard of Honour by RPF contingents, the Territorial Army, Civil Defence, Bharat Scouts and Guides, and students. The NFR Construction Organisation also observed the day, with its General Manager, Arun Kumar Chaudhary, hoisting the flag at its headquarters. Similar celebrations were held at the five divisions of NFR — Tinsukia, Lumding, Rangiya, Alipurduar and Katihar.

In his address, Shrivastava outlined NFR's performance in the past year under the national vision of Viksit Bharat – 247 for 2047*. He commended railway staff for restoring services after landslides in the Jatinga Lumpur and Dihakho–Mupa sections during June and July. Stressing on safety measures, he noted the commissioning of Electronic Interlocking at 11 stations, interlocking of 11 level crossing gates, and completion of 22.29 route kilometres of Automatic Block Signalling.

Fire Detection Systems were installed at 17 stations and 1,450 LHB coaches, while drone technology was deployed for the first time to monitor landslide restoration in the Lumding–Badarpur section. He also said that no elephant casualties had been reported this year, attributing it to alert staff and AI-based Intrusion Detection Systems.

On the operational front, four new train services were introduced in 2024–25 along with 461 special train trips, providing 5.5 lakh additional berths. Passenger earnings rose by 11.85% and freight revenue grew by 7.87%. Freight operations were strengthened by commissioning new terminals at Nischintapur,

Infrastructure expansion included 1,043 route kilometres of electrification, new lines between Bairabi–Sairang and Araria–Galgalia, and the inauguration of Haibargaon station under the Amrit Bharat Stations Scheme.

In the healthcare sector, facilities were upgraded at Central Hospital, Maligaon, including renovated surgical and orthopaedic wards, upgraded cabins, a new PG Doctor's Hostel, and advanced medical equipment such as a Lasotronix Laser Diode System and a Kidney Dialysis Machine under PPP mode.

The RPF's contributions were also highlighted, with 738 runaway children rescued, 89 trafficking victims assisted, and 92 illegal immigrants and 78 touts apprehended. The NFR Women's Welfare Organisation (NFRWWO) distributed essentials to patients at Central Hospital and was appreciated for its role in welfare, education, and environmental conservation.

The celebrations concluded with a programme at Eco Park, Amingaon, where the RPF organised tree plantation drives, cultural programmes and awareness campaigns on environmental conservation and community engagement.

Special initiative under 'Adi Karmayogi' programme for 43 tribal villages in Tinsukia

HT Correspondent

MARGHERITA, Aug 16: A special initiative under the Central Government's 'Adi Karmayogi' programme has been prepared for the development of 43 tribal-dominated villages in Tinsukia district.

The announcement was made during the Independence Day celebration, identifying the villages across five development blocks in the district. Tinsukia Deputy Commissioner Swapneel Paul on Saturday informed that six District Master Trainers and five Block Master Trainers have been appointed for the programme.

They will provide training to officials and staff on various aspects of successful implementation.

The Central Government has designated the National Rural Development Fund, with Assam as a partner organisation, for the initiative.

The total tribal population in Tinsukia district is around 35,362. To ensure their progress, the 43 tribal-dominated villages have been identified under the campaign, with special measures being taken for development, Paul said.

A service centre will be set up in each village, where officials from various departments will visit to collect grievances and suggestions from the public and take prompt action on a priority basis.

As part of the national campaign launched on October 2, 2024, the Dharti Aaba Tribal Village Excellence Campaign had earlier been initiated.

79th Independence Day celebrated in Karbi Anglong with enthusiasm

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 16: The 79th Independence Day was celebrated with enthusiasm in Karbi Anglong district, in line with the rest of the country.

The district-level function was held at the playground of Diphu Government Boys' Higher Secondary School, where Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Tuliram Ronghang, hoisted the National Flag.

Attending the programme as Chief Guest, Ronghang extended greetings on Independence Day and paid tribute to the freedom fighters for their patriotism, dedication, and supreme sacrifice during the struggle for independence.

In his address, Ronghang highlighted various developmental schemes implemented by the government and shared details of ongoing works.

He urged the people to cooperate in building a new Karbi Anglong through the KAAC's schemes of inclusive and equitable development across its 26 constituencies.

The celebrations featured cultural performances, while individuals who made notable contributions in different fields were felicitated and presented with awards.

The Chief Guest also took the salute at the march past presented by police personnel, NCC cadets, and students from schools and colleges.

Earlier, Ronghang paid floral tribute to the statue of Mahatma Gandhi at Gandhi Park, Diphu, to mark the occasion.

'Adi Karmayogi Abhiyan' launched for tribal empowerment

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Aug 16: The Department of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, has launched an ambitious campaign titled Adi Karmayogi Abhiyan to ensure comprehensive development of marginalised tribal communities through participatory implementation of socio-economic security schemes. According to an official statement, the campaign also aims to empower government employees as pioneers through structured training and to prepare a vision plan for implementation by 2030 with the involvement of grassroots communities.

In its first phase, the initiative will cover 61,841 villages across 324 districts of the country, benefitting around 10.5 crore people in one lakh tribal villages.

Kokrajhar district has been included in the first phase. Nodal Officers and Trainer Officers have already been identified, and notifications issued.

Following state-level training, field-level activities will be undertaken with the support of Adi Karmayogis, who will collaborate with tribal leaders, pioneers, and young volunteers called Adi Sahyogis and Adi Sathis.

The campaign's implementation was also discussed at special Gaon Sabhas held in Kokrajhar district on Saturday.

Participants expressed interest in plans for setting up Adi Seva Kendras in villages to provide multiple government facilities at one place, holding weekly tribal service hours, and preparing rural action plans through partnerships.

ABSU condemns firing incident at New Roni village

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Aug 16: The All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) has strongly condemned the firing incident at New Roni village along the Assam–Nagaland border under Golaghat district, in which four persons sustained injuries on Friday. In a press statement issued on Saturday, the student body said that the injured have been identified as Prakash Boro, who was seriously injured, Dhanajay Khakhlary, Shibsard Basumatary, and Kuchal Muchahary.

The incident took place when Naga miscreants allegedly attacked individuals from the Sisupani area, following which the injured were admitted to Jorhat Medical College.

ABSU demanded the immediate arrest and stringent punishment of the culprits, while urging the Chief Ministers of Assam and Nagaland to ensure adequate security in the border areas.

It also appealed to residents along the border to maintain peace.

Sok Divas observed in Karbi Anglong

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 16: The Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) and the District Administration, along with all line departments, observed Sok Divas in their offices across Karbi Anglong district on Saturday to honor the memory of innocent lives lost in militant violence. The national flag was flown at half-mast, marking the tragic anniversary of the Dhemaji bomb blast that occurred 12 years ago during Independence Day celebrations, claiming the lives of children and others who had gathered in defiance of a militant boycott call. Officials and staff paid homage by observing a minute of silence for the victims. They also pledged to uphold the values of unity, dedication and responsibility in their service to the community, resolving to keep alive the memory of those lost as a guiding light in their public duty.

No. TE(Ex) Admn-1/2025/475

EDUCATIONAL NOTICE

A. Regarding 3rd round of counselling and upgradation round for admission into State Government Engineering Colleges of Assam through JLEE-2025 for the session 2025-26.

A 3rd round of counselling will be conducted for JLEE-2025 candidates on 19th August-2025. Allotted candidates must report to the Institution as detailed below for admission:

- Venue: Respective College (where allotted).
- Date: 21/08/2025
- Reporting time: 10.00 A.M to 11.30 A.M
- Admission time: 11.30 A.M afterwards.

B. Regarding Spot round of Counselling for admission into State Government Engineering Colleges of Assam through JLEE-2025 for the session 2025-26.

In partial modification to the schedule published in the guidelines, Directorate of Technical Education, Assam is pleased to announce that a Spot round of Counselling for provisional admission into State Government Engineering Colleges of Assam through JLEE-2025 will be conducted subject to the availability of vacancy in the respective institutes as per the schedule mentioned below :-

- Date of Counselling: - 26/08/2025 (Tentative)
- Reporting Time: 10.30 A.M to 12 Noon
- Admission Time: 12:30 PM onwards.
- Venue: Directorate of Technical Education, Kahilipara, Guwahati, Assam.

Note:- (1) Programme wise vacancy and name of participating colleges, eligibility criteria etc. will be notified in the website: **https://dte.assam.gov.in**
(2) All vacant seats will be filled up as per merit.
(3) Candidates who were allotted in the earlier rounds of counselling are not allowed to participate in the spot round of counselling.

Interested candidates having valid JLEE-2025 score may visit the website of the concerned college for detailed information or contact the Admission Co-ordinator.

Spot round is open for both registered and non-registered candidates. However, unregistered candidates who decides to participate in the spot round will have to pay the Non-refundable Registration Fee amount of Rs. 800/- (Rupees Eight Hundred) only in cash on the day of spot counselling.

Note:- As per Order eCF No. 500152/1 dated 5th June 2024, vacant seats at the time of the Spot Counselling round will be **de-reserved**.

All candidates appearing for Spot round must fulfil the eligibility criteria as per the information brochure for JLEE-2025 which is available in the website:- **https://dte.assam.gov.in**

Sd/-
Director of Technical Education, Assam,
Kahilipara: Guwahati-19.

DIPR /D/HLT/122/17-Aug-25

Digital platform marks milestone with reflections on media's role in social change and recognition of societal contributors

NE focus celebrates 9th anniversary with discussion, felicitation and cultural events

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 16: NE focus, a digital platform, marked its 9th anniversary on August 15 with a celebration that combined discussion, felicitation and cultural performances.

As part of the event, a discussion was held on "Social Change and the Role of Digital Media in Uniting Society."

Renowned writer and critic Mayur Bora, addressing the gathering, underlined the importance of digital media in bringing about transformation.

He stated that while change and transformation are different, digital platforms have a crucial role in achieving social transformation.

According to an official statement, Swapna Bezbaruah of Asomiya Pratidin also took part in the discussion,

highlighting the role of the younger generation in driving social change.

The anniversary celebration also included a felicitation ceremony, where Dr Sanjay Sharma, Anupam Gogoi, Geeta Bharali, Manikanchan Buragohain and Arjun Chetry were honoured for their contributions to society.

A cultural programme followed, featuring patriotic songs by local artistes, which reflected the region's rich cultural heritage.

Founded on August 15, 2016, Nefocus has been engaged in social awareness initiatives aimed at promoting development in Northeast India.

With a focus on positive news and constructive discussions, the platform has become a prominent voice in the region.

According to the statement, the 9th anniversary celebration was well received, with participants appreciating NE focus's role in promoting awareness and development.

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Editor's pick

Manipur's Path to peace amid ethnic strife

By: Satyabrat Borah

Manipur, a state in India's northeastern region, has long been a land of rich cultural diversity, natural beauty, and historical significance. Nestled between rolling hills and verdant valleys, it is home to a mosaic of communities, including the Meitei, Kuki-Zo, Naga, and other indigenous groups, each contributing to the state's vibrant tapestry. However, since May 2023, Manipur has been gripped by a devastating ethnic conflict that has fractured its social fabric, claimed over 260 lives, displaced thousands, and left the state in a state of prolonged turmoil. The imposition of President's Rule on February 13, 2025, following the resignation of Chief Minister N. Biren Singh, marked a significant turning point in the state's governance, reflecting the central government's attempt to address a crisis that has defied resolution. As of August 2025, with Parliament approving an extension of President's Rule for another six months until February 13, 2026, the question of how to heal Manipur remains urgent and complex, requiring a nuanced understanding of its challenges and a multifaceted approach to reconciliation and recovery.

The ethnic conflict in Manipur, primarily between the valley-based Meitei community and the hill-dwelling Kuki-Zo tribes, erupted in May 2023, sparked by a Manipur High Court order recommending the inclusion of Meiteis in the Scheduled Tribe category. This decision ignited tensions over economic benefits, job quotas, and land rights, as the Kuki-Zo and other tribal communities feared it would erode their protections and access to resources. The violence that followed was unprecedented in its scale and intensity, with clashes resulting in the deaths of at least 260 people, the displacement of over 60,000, and the looting of more than 6,000 police weapons. National Highways 2 and 37, critical lifelines connecting the Imphal valley to Nagaland and Assam, became inaccessible to Meitei residents due to their passage through Kuki-Zo-dominated areas, further isolating communities and crippling the state's economy. The unrest exposed deep-seated grievances, historical mistrust, and the fragility of Manipur's inter-community relations, which had previously coexisted, if uneasily, for decades.

The resignation of Chief Minister N. Biren Singh on February 9, 2025, was a pivotal moment. Singh, a Meitei leader, faced mounting pressure from within his own Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and from opposition groups due to his government's inability to curb the violence. His resignation came amid allegations, fueled by leaked audio tapes, that he had instigated the ethnic conflict, a charge that further eroded his credibility. The Supreme Court's observation of an "absolute breakdown of constitutional machinery" in Manipur underscored the gravity of the situation, prompting President Droupadi Murmu to impose President's Rule under Article 356 of the Indian Constitution on February 13, 2025. This move suspended the state's legislative assembly, transferred executive powers to the Governor, and placed Manipur under direct central control, with the Union Home Ministry overseeing governance. The decision was seen as an acknowledgment that the state government could no longer function in accordance with constitutional norms, but it also raised questions about the long-term implications of central intervention in a region marked by complex local dynamics.

President's Rule, while a constitutional mechanism to stabilize governance during crises, is not a panacea for Manipur's deep-rooted issues. Its imposition was necessitated by the BJP's failure to agree on a new Chief Ministerial candidate after Singh's resignation, as factionalism within the party and the lack of consensus among lawmakers stalled efforts to form a new government. Meetings involving BJP lawmakers, the party's northeast coordinator Sambit Patra, and Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla in February 2025 failed to produce a successor, and the looming constitutional deadline under Article 174, which mandates that the state assembly convene within six months of its last session, further complicated matters. By August 2025, the central government, led by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, moved to extend President's Rule for another six months, a decision approved by both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha despite opposition protests over unrelated issues. This extension reflects the Centre's view that stability remains elusive and that reconciliation between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities is a prerequisite for restoring an elected government.

The prolonged imposition of President's Rule has sparked mixed reactions. On one hand, it has allowed the central government to intensify security operations, with joint teams of Manipur Police, the Indian Army, Assam Rifles, and other forces conducting counter-insurgency drives across the state. In July 2025, ten militants from banned groups like the Kangleipak Communist Party and People's Liberation Army were arrested, and significant caches of weapons and ammunition were recovered. These efforts signal a commitment to restoring law and order, a critical step toward creating a safe environment for dialogue. The government has also expressed its intent to facilitate the return of displaced persons to their homes by the end of 2025, a goal that, if achieved, could mark a significant milestone in Manipur's recovery. However, the suspension of the state's legislative powers and the absence of an elected government have fueled discontent among Meitei and Naga MLAs, who have campaigned for the restoration of a "popular" government, arguing that central rule has not sufficiently addressed the crisis or restored normalcy.

Healing Manipur requires more than security measures or administrative interventions. The ethnic divide between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities is rooted in historical grievances, economic disparities, and competing claims to identity and resources. The Meiteis, who form the majority in the Imphal valley, have long sought greater political and economic inclusion, while the Kuki-Zo and other hill tribes guard their tribal status and land rights fiercely. The 2023 court order on reservations was merely a trigger, not the sole cause, of the conflict. Any meaningful resolution must address these underlying issues through inclusive dialogue involving all stakeholders—community leaders, civil society, and representatives of both the Meitei and Kuki-Zo groups. The absence of significant progress in such talks, even 26 months after the conflict began, is a glaring gap in the current approach. The central government's focus on security and governance, while necessary, must be complemented by a robust framework for reconciliation, perhaps through a neutral mediator or a truth and reconciliation commission tailored to Manipur's context. Economic revitalization is another critical aspect of healing Manipur. The conflict has devastated livelihoods, disrupted trade, and severed vital supply chains, particularly along National Highways 2 and 37. The displacement of over 60,000 people has created a humanitarian crisis, with many living in temporary shelters and lacking access to basic services. The government must prioritize rehabilitation programs, including financial assistance, skill development, and infrastructure rebuilding, to help displaced families rebuild their lives. Restoring access to highways and ensuring safe movement across ethnic boundaries will also be essential to reviving the state's economy and fostering inter-community trust. Furthermore, the recovery of looted weapons and the disarmament of militant groups are crucial to preventing further violence and creating a secure environment for economic recovery.

The role of civil society and grassroots organizations cannot be overstated in Manipur's healing process. Local leaders, women's groups, and youth organizations have historically played a vital role in mediating conflicts and fostering dialogue in the Northeast. Empowering these groups to facilitate community-level reconciliation could help bridge the trust deficit between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities. Educational initiatives that promote mutual understanding and cultural exchange could also counter the narratives of division that have fueled the conflict. The central and state governments should partner with these organizations, providing them with resources and platforms to engage in peacebuilding efforts. The extension of President's Rule until February 2026 buys time for the central government to stabilize Manipur, but it also risks alienating local communities if it is perceived as a delay in restoring democratic governance. The BJP's efforts to form a new government, as evidenced by meetings of Meitei and Naga MLAs in May 2025, indicate a desire to return to elected rule, but the lack of consensus on leadership and the persistent ethnic divide make this challenging. The Centre must balance its security-focused approach with proactive steps toward political and social reconciliation. A clear roadmap for peace, involving dialogue, economic recovery, and community engagement, is essential to prevent Manipur from slipping further into division.

Healing Manipur is a daunting task, but it is not insurmountable. The state's people have shown resilience in the face of adversity, and their shared history of coexistence offers hope for a unified future. The central government, under President's Rule, has the opportunity to lay the groundwork for lasting peace by addressing the root causes of the conflict, fostering inclusive dialogue, and prioritizing the well-being of all communities. As Manipur navigates this critical juncture, the path to healing lies in restoring trust, rebuilding lives, and reaffirming the state's pluralistic identity. Only through collective effort and unwavering commitment can Manipur emerge from this crisis stronger and more united.

The Social Responsibility of Cinema

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

Since its inception, cinema has been a powerful cultural and social force, consistently playing a significant role in shaping societal values, ideals, and perspectives. Cinema is not merely a medium of entertainment; it is a potent social and cultural tool through which societal issues, values, and transformations are expressed. It does not only provide audiences with entertainment but also reflects, critiques, and offers new perspectives on society. Consequently, cinema carries a significant social responsibility, positioning it not only as an art form but also as an instrument for societal change. The concept of cinema's social responsibility has gained particular importance in today's era, as its influence now extends beyond the silver screen. In a society shaped by social media and various forms of entertainment, the role of cinema is no longer confined to providing amusement; it encompasses informing, educating, challenging, and inspiring social change.

Cinema has the potential to profoundly impact society. Through it, people learn to view the world around them anew. By portraying social issues, political instability, and cultural conflicts on screen, cinema raises awareness among audiences. Like any art form, cinema is inherently political, and through historical events, social issues, or the personal struggles of characters, it can influence public opinion and transform cultural history. It captures human triumphs, conflicts, and transformations. Early cinema, particularly during the silent film era, focused on universal themes such as love, the conflict between good and evil, and the hero's journey. However, these narratives often carried an underlying social commentary. Directors like Charlie Chaplin subtly critiqued the effects of industrialization through their films. In 'Modern Times' (1936), Chaplin depicted how technological advancements could dehumanize individuals in the workplace.

Cinema plays a crucial role in shaping cultural identity. It reflects national history, culture, and values. For instance, Bollywood films present Indian culture, traditions, and social values to global audiences. Similarly, Hollywood films promote the American dream, freedom, and democracy worldwide. Cinema also represents marginalized cultures and communities. For example, films like 'Coco' vividly showcase Mexican culture and traditions to global audiences. Through this, cinema honors cultural diversity and enriches global cultural identity.

As the film industry matured, its role in addressing social issues grew. Filmmakers began tackling sensitive topics such as racial discrimination, gender inequality, poverty, and war. In the 1950s, films like Elia Kazan's 'On the Waterfront' (1954) addressed issues like labor unions, corruption, and personal responsibility within a disorganized system. Marlon Brando's character reflected the internal moral conflict of a worker, highlighting the struggles of the post-war American working class.

In the 1960s and 1970s, as social unrest grew worldwide, cinema responded accordingly. The civil rights movement, feminist movement, and discontent with the Vietnam War transformed cinema into a medium of social protest. Films like Stanley Kramer's 'Guess Who's Coming to Dinner' (1967) tackled racial discrimination and interracial marriage. Meanwhile, films like 'Midnight Cowboy' (1969) and 'Easy Rider' (1969) depicted the struggles and frustrations of the youth of the 1960s. The 1970s saw the rise of anti-establishment films. Directors like Martin Scorsese and Francis Ford Coppola portrayed the psychological alienation and disillusionment of post-Vietnam America through their films. Scorsese's 'Taxi Driver' (1976) depicted the violent descent of a mentally unstable war veteran, representing the disillusionment of a generation disconnected from the American Dream.

Cinema also plays a vital role in fostering political awareness. It questions political corruption, the abuse of power, and social inequalities. For example, films like 'The Battle of Algiers' reflect struggles against colonial rule, compelling audiences to contemplate issues of political freedom and justice. Similarly, 'V for Vendetta' represents rebellion against authoritarian regimes, helping audiences understand the value of freedom and democracy. Cinema serves as a powerful medium for political discourse. By presenting complex political ideas in a simplified manner, it raises awareness among viewers. For instance, films like 'The Square' reflect political activism and discontent, urging audiences to consider the necessity of political change.

In the modern era, cinema has focused on issues like climate change, migration, and the global refugee crisis. Films like 'Slumdog Millionaire' (2008) and 'Parasite' (2019) portray the disparity between the rich and the poor. Streaming platforms have created new opportunities for social change by providing access to films from diverse cultures worldwide.

Cinema serves as a powerful medium for gender equality. It supports the rights and representation of women and the LGBTQ+ community. In the 1980s and 1990s, cinema began addressing issues like gender discrimination, sexuality, and identity. Films like Steven Spielberg's 'The Color Purple' (1985) depicted the struggles of an African-American woman. 'Wonder Woman' represents female empowerment, challenging traditional gender norms and offering new perspectives. Similarly, films like 'Philadelphia' (1993) highlighted discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community. 'Moonlight' reflects the lives and struggles of the LGBTQ+ community, raising awareness about their issues among audiences.

Moreover, the dominance of commercialism in the film industry often affects its social responsibility. Many films are produced for profit, leading to the neglect of social issues and responsibilities. As a result, some films reinforce conventional cultural narratives without challenging them for social change. Nevertheless, some filmmakers create films with a sense of social responsibility. They strive to raise awareness among audiences by reflecting social issues, political instability, and cultural conflicts. For example, films like 'The Social Dilemma' highlight the misuse of technology and its social impact, making audiences aware of the dangers of the digital world.

The social responsibility of cinema extends from its artistry to its obligation toward society. Cinema reflects, critiques, and calls for societal change. By presenting social issues, political instability, and cultural conflicts on screen, it raises awareness among audiences. Therefore, filmmakers must create films with an awareness of their social responsibility to bring about positive change in society. Cinema is not merely a medium of entertainment; it is a powerful social tool through which we can improve our society.

Cities, dogs and our responsibility

By: Dr. Priyanka Saurabh

The pet dog today is not just a household companion, but has become an important part of the urban lifestyle. Hundreds of dogs and their owners are seen walking on the footpaths, parks and streets in the cities in the morning and evening. This sight can be pleasant in itself, provided responsibility and discipline are also clearly visible along with it. Unfortunately, this aspect is still incomplete in the dog-keeping culture in India.

Keeping a dog is not just about taking care of it, but also about the mess it leaves behind in public places. In developed countries, it is normal for a dog owner to immediately take out a polythene bag and put it in the nearest dustbin if his pet poops somewhere. Many municipalities provide free bags and potty dustbins for this. In contrast, cleaning up dog poop in public places is still a rare sight in India. Many owners assume that the land belongs to everyone and it does not matter if we leave dirt on it. This thinking not only promotes unhygienic conditions, but also poses a danger to children, the elderly and pedestrians.

No matter how well trained a pet dog is, it is ultimately an animal and its behavior can be influenced by circumstances. This is why leashing is mandatory in public places in developed countries. People there do this not only out of fear of the law but also out of social habit. In India, this rule is often ignored. Many owners proudly say—"Our dog does not bite anyone." But an accident can occur if an unknown passerby gets scared, a child falls or a cyclist loses balance. Not wearing a leash is not only a violation of the rule but also negligence towards the safety of others.

In many countries, excessive barking by dogs is considered abnormal and emphasis is laid on training to control it. Barking should only happen in case of danger or abnormal situation, it is seen as noise pollution and antisocial behaviour. In India, on the contrary, barking by dogs day and night is considered normal. This is seen not only in pets but also in stray dogs. This affects the sleep, mental peace and safety of children and the elderly, but there is hardly any discussion on this.

In developed countries, there is a provision of heavy fines and legal action for dog bites, not wearing a leash or not cleaning garbage. There, the law is followed not only due to fear of punishment, but also due to social pressure-because breaking the rules is considered shameful. In India too, some municipal corporations have made such rules, but their enforcement is very lax. The provisions of fines often remain only on paper, and people do not take them seriously.

In foreign countries, 'public' means everyone and for everyone. In India, 'public' often means no one. This is the reason why taking care of public property and places is not considered a personal responsibility. The same mentality prevails in the case of keeping a dog. It is claimed that the pet is considered a part of the family, but there is laxity in taking responsibility for its dirt, safety and social behavior.

Pet dog's potty may contain many types of bacteria, parasites and pathogens, which are harmful to humans. Leaving it in public places is not only unhygienic but also a threat to health. The World Health Organization (WHO) report states that the risk of intestinal diseases in children increases manifold due to pet's waste in the open. In such a situation, it is not only a cleanliness issue but also a question of public health.

To solve this problem, changes are needed at all three levels—personal, social and administrative. First, people need to understand that keeping a pet is not just an emotional attachment, but also a responsibility. Through schools and community programs, children and adults can be taught proper behavior towards pets and public etiquette.

Second, municipalities have to play their role actively. It is necessary to provide pet potty dustbins and free bags in every park, footpath and public place. This will not only increase convenience but will also make people responsible.

Third, the law must be strictly enforced. Penalties and action must be ensured for not wearing a leash, not picking up potty, or letting an aggressive dog loose. The existence of rules is meaningful only if they are followed and prompt action is taken on violations. Fourth, good behaviour should be rewarded with public praise and encouragement, not just punishment. If a pet owner follows the rules, he or she should be made an example of. This will provide positive motivation and accelerate change.

Finally, it is important to promote dog training centres. A trained dog is safer not only for its owner but for the entire society. Training should include not only obeying commands but also controlling barking and aggressive behaviour.

The city belongs not just to humans but also to all the creatures that live in it—whether they are domesticated or stray. Having a pet dog is a pleasant experience, but it is complete only when we take its responsibilities seriously. It is our responsibility to ensure that the streets, parks and sidewalks are safe and clean for everyone. This means picking up the pet's mess, leashing it, controlling its barking and aggression, and taking care of the convenience of others should be part of our habit.

If we really want our cities to be livable, we have to accept this—the issue is not who owns the dog, the issue is who owns the city. When we accept this city as our own, then our dog will also become its responsible citizen.

The Rising Risk of Memory Loss Due to Air Pollution

By: Lalit Garg

A recent meta-study has revealed an alarming link between air pollution and deteriorating memory. Toxic particles in the air—especially fine dust and harmful gases such as nitrogen dioxide, primarily emitted from vehicles and industrial processes—are directly affecting our brains. This comprehensive research is based on 51 studies involving nearly 30 million individuals. The findings are particularly concerning for countries like India, where air pollution levels are among the highest in the world. If even wealthy and developed nations are struggling with the mental health impacts of pollution, India cannot afford complacency. Tackling air pollution must become our top priority.

The study warns that regular exposure to polluted air significantly increases the risk of dementia—a progressive condition that impairs memory and cognitive abilities. Globally, nearly 57.4 million people are already affected by dementia. Without urgent action to curb air pollution, this number could triple to 152.8 million by 2050. Notably, people exposed to polluted environments over long periods may experience a decline in brain function equivalent to aging by a decade. For example, a 50-year-old constantly breathing toxic air could show cognitive ability akin to that of a 60-year-old.

Published in The Lancet Planetary Health journal, the study found that each 10-microgram per cubic meter increase in PM2.5 (fine particulate matter) raises the risk of memory-related diseases by 17%. Even a single microgram increase in black carbon—sourced from vehicle exhaust and burning wood—raises the risk by 13%. These microscopic particles can bypass our respiratory and circulatory systems, reaching the brain and triggering inflammation and oxidative stress, ultimately damaging neurons.

The implications of this are far-reaching. Not only does polluted air affect lung and heart health, but it also impairs memory, concentration, learning, and emotional stability. Studies have shown that children living in high-pollution areas perform worse in school tests compared to those in cleaner environments. Adults exposed to polluted air often experience irritability, fatigue, and even depression. Their productivity and decision-making abilities may also suffer.

The impact of pollution-induced memory decline is not confined to individuals—it affects educational outcomes, workplace efficiency, and societal decision-making. Data indicates that people in high-PM areas score lower in verbal fluency, reasoning, learning, and memory tests—similar to losing an entire year of education. A recent study revealed how cognitive distraction in routine tasks, like grocery shopping, increases with pollution exposure. Older adults and less-educated individuals are particularly vulnerable, often losing the ability to perform everyday functions and becoming increasingly dependent on others.

Despite the rising threat, medical science currently offers no definitive cure for dementia. Existing treatments are limited and often ineffective, leaving patients to gradually lose their memory and independence. Dr. Kristian Bredal of Cambridge University, co-lead author of the study, emphasizes that dementia prevention is not solely a healthcare responsibility. Urban planning, transportation policies, and environmental regulations all play crucial roles in addressing this crisis.

Air pollution not only harms individual health but also distorts collective thinking, lifestyle choices, and environmental decisions. On a larger scale, it contributes to reduced educational achievement, lower productivity, higher healthcare burdens, and deepening economic inequalities. A separate study from Washington involving 1.2 million individuals showed that exposure to wildfire smoke, which increases PM2.5 levels, raised dementia risk by 18–21%. Another extensive review by Cambridge University (29 million people across 51 studies) confirmed that PM2.5 exposure increases dementia risk by 13–17%. The science is clear: these fine particles penetrate deep into the respiratory system and brain, disrupting brain function and accelerating mental decline.

Recent Chinese research has also linked PM and NOx exposure to reduced cognitive ability in middle-aged and older populations, especially impairing working memory. This is a growing crisis with implications not only for individuals but for society at large. We must acknowledge that air pollution is no longer just about coughing or respiratory illness—it is silently attacking our memory, cognitive functions, and mental health. If immediate and decisive actions are not taken, the situation will only worsen. Air pollution sets off harmful chemical reactions in the body that damage cells, proteins, and DNA—paving the way for neurological diseases like dementia. Encouragingly, the research suggests that reducing air pollution could offer long-term benefits across health, economic, social, and climate sectors. It would also ease the burden on patients, families, and caregivers. The question we must now ask ourselves is: how far are we willing to go to protect not just our lungs, but our minds?

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PATHARUGHAT UPRISING: The Jallianwala Bagh of Assam

By: Dr. Ratan Bhattacharjee

The Patharughat tragedy is a reminder that India's freedom struggle was not confined to the more prominent centers like Delhi, Punjab, or Bengal. Resistance took many forms—peasants in remote villages, tribal communities in forests, and laborers in plantations all fought in their own ways against colonial injustice. It also challenges the notion that violent repression by colonial authorities was an exception. Instead, events like Patharughat reveal a consistent pattern of authoritarian responses to peaceful dissent. When people think of colonial-era massacres in India, the 1919 Jallianwala Bagh tragedy in Punjab often dominates historical memory. During the late 19th century, the British introduced new land settlement policies. Traditionally, much of Assam's agricultural land was held under customary rights, where peasants paid a nominal tax to local chiefs or cultivated without heavy interference. Under colonial rule, however, land was surveyed, measured, and taxed systematically. Taxes were often increased without consideration for local productivity or climatic conditions. In the remote north-eastern corner of the country, the village of Patharughat in present-day Darrang district of Assam witnessed a chillingly similar episode of state brutality. On 28 January 1894, unarmed Assamese peasants protesting unjust British taxation were fired upon by colonial police and military forces, killing scores and wounding many more. This event—often referred to as the "Jallianwala Bagh of Assam"—was a pivotal yet underrepresented moment in India's freedom struggle.Colonial Expansion of Assam started for the interest of imperial power .After the British annexed Assam following the Treaty of Yandabo in 1826, the region was reorganized to serve imperial economic interests. Tea plantations, oil extraction, and timber became lucrative enterprises for the colonial state and European planters. While these ventures generated immense profits for the British, Assamese peasants bore the brunt of exploitative revenue systems.

In 1893, the British administration decided to sharply increase land revenue rates in Assam. The hike ranged from 40% to 70% in some areas. The policy was not only financially crippling but also culturally insensitive—local Assamese peasants saw it as an infringement on traditional agrarian rights. When villagers voiced their grievances, they were met with bureaucratic apathy. In a society where subsistence agriculture was the norm, such revenue hikes meant that many would be forced into debt, lose their land, or face starvation. Meetings began in villages across Darrang district, where peasants discussed the unfair tax policy. Patharughat emerged as a central meeting point for peasants to organize and present their case collectively. They decided to petition the British authorities to reconsider the revenue hike. The British government, however, viewed these assemblies with suspicion, fearing they might turn into rebellions. They sent officials, accompanied by armed police, to break up gatherings and enforce compliance.

On 28 January 1984 , hundreds of peasants gathered at Patharughat for a public meeting. The atmosphere was tense but non-violent. Elders, farmers, and community leaders assembled to voice their opposition to the increased taxation. Instead of engaging in dialogue, the colonial officers—led by the then Deputy Commissioner and other officials—ordered the crowd to disperse. When the peasants refused, insisting on a peaceful hearing, the authorities resorted to force. First, the crowd was lathicharged (beaten with sticks), injuring many. Then, without warning, police opened fire on the unarmed gathering. Eyewitness accounts suggest that the firing continued until the ammunition was nearly exhausted. While official British records claim 15 deaths , local oral histories and nationalist accounts place the toll at over 100 dead and several hundred injured. Today historians find parallel with Jallianwala Bagh.

The Patharughat tragedy predates the Jallianwala Bagh massacre by 25 years, yet the parallels are striking: First we see the causes are almost same. In Pathurghat the protest was against land revenue hike and in Jallianwala Bagh the Protest was against Rowlatt Act. Secondly in both the cases gathering of the people was that of peaceful unarmed protestors. In Assam they were peasants , in Jallianwalab Bagh they were common people. While in Assam open lathicharge and firing took many lives, in Jallinwala Bagh too open firing occurred. In Assam 100 and more people died, in Jallianwala Bagh 379 people were dead. Only difference is that people widely remember Jallianwala Bagh massacre and in Assam the Patharughat Masacre is largely forgotten. In both cases, the British used excessive force against civilians, targeting gatherings that posed no immediate military threat. The difference lies in historical memory—Jallianwala Bagh became a symbol of national outrage, while Patharughat remained confined to regional narratives. Following the massacre, the British administration tried to frame the incident as a necessary act to "quell disorder." They insisted that the peasants were aggressive and refused to disperse, leaving the authorities "no choice" but to fire. This narrative, however, ignored the systemic economic exploitation that had provoked the protest in the first place. Families of the victims received no compensation, and no British officer was punished for the killings. Instead, the government tightened surveillance over the region, keeping a close watch on village assemblies.

Though the uprising was brutally crushed, it ignited a spirit of resistance in Assam. Local ballads, poems, and oral histories began to commemorate the martyrs of Patharughat. Villagers started to see British taxation not as an inevitable burden but as an unjust imposition that could be challenged. The massacre also sowed seeds for later political mobilization in Assam. Leaders from the region began to connect local grievances with the broader Indian nationalist movement. In the decades that followed, Assam became more actively involved in the freedom struggle—supporting the Non-Cooperation Movement, Civil Disobedience Movement, and Quit India Movement. For decades, the Patharughat Uprising remained absent from mainstream Indian history books.

However, local communities kept the memory alive through oral traditions and annual observances. In recent years, efforts have been made to give the event national recognition: Finally a Memorial has been erected and every year on 28 January Assam observes Krishak Swahid Diwas (Peasants' Martyrs Day) to pay tribute to the victims. Assamese historians and writers have produced works documenting the event, linking it to the broader struggle against colonial exploitation. We have learnt from Patharughat Uprising a few lessons. First , economic exploitation can breed resistance. The uprising was fundamentally about survival—when livelihoods are threatened by unjust economic policies, communities will resist, even against overwhelming odds. Secondly, Colonial violence was systemic and the British state's response to dissent was often violent and punitive, aimed at creating fear rather than addressing legitimate grievances. Thirdly it make the fact clear that Patharughat is less known than Jallianwala Bagh which reflects how history is shaped by regional, linguistic, and political narratives. Fourthly , it is now clearly understood how grassroot struggles matter so greatly.

National movements are built on countless local struggles. Recognizing them ensures a more inclusive understanding of history. The Patharughat Uprising of 1984 stands as a testament to the courage of ordinary Assamese peasants who faced bullets for defending their right to a fair livelihood. It is a chapter in India's freedom movement that deserves greater visibility—not just as "Assam's Jallianwala Bagh," but as a unique story of resilience and sacrifice. Remembering Patharughat especially on Independence Day is not only an act of historical justice but also a way to honor the many unsung heroes who shaped India's path to independence. Their struggle reminds us that freedom was not a gift—it was won through countless acts of courage, often in the face of brutal repression.

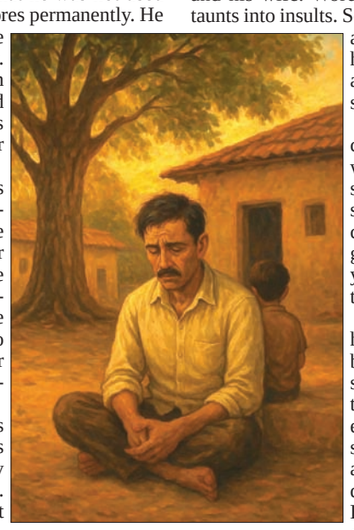
(The writer of the article, APJ Abdul Kalam Awardee Poet and Writer Dr. Ratan Bhattacharjee is a former Affiliate Faculty of Virginia Commonwealth University USA .Email profratanbhattacharjee@gmail.com)

Shadow of sacrifice

By: Dr Satyawan Saurabh

The old Peepal tree stood silently in the courtyard of the house. The past years spent playing in its shade seemed locked in an old box. The walls of this house had seen so many stories - of laughter, of tears, of sacrifice and neglect.

The elder son had taken the burden of the house on his shoulders since he was just in the sixth grade. The father's nature was such that he was not used to helping out in household chores permanently. He had no big dreams, no desiezre to progress through hard work. At an age when other children are busy with their studies and sports, he completed his studies as well as that of his younger brother by giving tuitions.



He raised as much money as he could for his sisters' education. Clothes, books, fees - he was there for every need. After marriage, his wife also became an equal partner in this responsibility. She not only took care of her household, but also taught her sisters-in-law at their homes and took them to coaching classes with her.

For the small and big needs of the house, the elder brother's salary and his wife's money were used for the household. Even his wife's fixed deposit was used for household expenses. Even when his wife got a job, her entire salary was used for the development of the house.

After many years, the elder brother became stable in his job. He dreamt of having a house – got a new house built, bought an old car so that household chores could be done easily. But the younger brother mostly used the car. Even when his wife was pregnant, the younger brother would go by car and Bhabhi would go to work by bus. The elder brother himself would go to work with someone else.

The younger brother had already got a job before the elder brother's son was born. But instead of taking up responsibilities or paying off the old debt of the house, he kept on enjoying his own comforts.

Once or twice the elder son also told the parents to pay attention to the needs of the younger son but not to give wings to his desires. But the parents did not think that the elder son has been carrying the burden of the family for years and has given everything for the house.

The elder brother and Bhabhi always thought and sought something better for the younger one than for themselves - from clothes to education and facilities, they always fulfilled the younger one's needs first. But the parents and the younger one's desires never had patience; whatever they wanted, they wanted it immediately, even if it meant sacrificing the elder one's sacrifice and hard work.

The elder brother and his wife both used to work and the child used to grow up in the lap of the father. Even at this time, neither the mother-in-law, father-in-law, nor the sisters nor the younger brother came forward to help.

After some time, the younger brother got married. His wife was also employed. Instead of paying off the home loan, both of them bought a new car. Whereas the money that the elder brother's wife had received from her parents for the car was also spent in expanding this house.

The most painful thing was that even after giving everything for the sisters' education and needs for years, they still sided with the younger brother. As if all the sacrifices and hard work of the elder brother had become meaningless like an old cloth.

Now the atmosphere of the house had changed. The ego had increased between the younger brother and his wife. Words had turned into taunts, and taunts into insults. Sometimes the younger brother's anger would reach the point of hand. Even the mother-in-law and father-in-law would remain silent on this.

The elder brother was now confined to his small world with his son and wife. But a strange silence had settled inside him - a silence that only he could understand, who has given everything for others for years and has received only distance in return.

The sadness was not that the hard work was not rewarded, but that the people for whom he spent every moment of his life turned their back on him. The elder sister sacrificed for his sisters' education, taught them at his home, but they too stood quietly by the younger one. Even after the birth of the elder's son, no one took care of him - neither grandmother, nor aunts, nor uncles and aunts.

The wheel of time kept turning, but one truth remained constant - the teenager who had started managing the house from the sixth grade did not back down from his duty even today. Only now he had given up hope.

One night, after years of suppressed pain, he said to his wife –

"Maybe it was our mistake… we thought that blood relation is the greatest. But in reality, it is understanding and respect that keep relationships alive."

The wife just held his hand. There was no complaint in her tearful eyes, there was just determination -

"Now we will teach our son that humanity comes first, relationships come later."

The wind was blowing in the courtyard. The temple bells were ringing in the distance. The house was the same, the people were the same, but the elder brother had changed from within. He had realized that sacrifice does not always result in gratitude - sometimes it just results in silence and distance.

One evening, when the leaves of the Peepal tree rustled in the courtyard of the house, the elder brother was sitting quietly with his son in his lap. The son innocently asked -

"Papa, why are you always so quiet?"

The elder one gave a light smile, but the pain inside was evident in his eyes. He just said this -

"Sometimes son, silence is the greatest strength."

The Peepal tree had become even more still that evening. As if it had also made a promise that it would always cherish the shadow of the sacrifice of this house - even if people forget, that story would remain alive in every rustle of the wind.

Tolstoy and the Search for Eternal Truth

By: Satyabrat Borah

Leo Tolstoy's relentless pursuit of life's meaning resonates deeply with the human condition, a quest that transcends time, culture, and geography. His exploration of existential questions such as what is the purpose of life or how do we find meaning in the face of inevitable death? is not only a cornerstone of his literary legacy but also a mirror to the struggles faced by individuals across the world, including in India, where questions of purpose and mortality are woven into the fabric of our spiritual and cultural ethos. Tolstoy's novels, "War and Peace" and "Anna Karenina" and his personal philosophical journey, particularly his reimagining of Christianity, offer profound insights into the human search for meaning. For an Indian reader, his reflections strike a chord, as they echo the timeless inquiries of our own philosophical traditions, from the Upanishads to the teachings of modern thinkers like Tagore and Gandhi.

Tolstoy's life was marked by an unyielding quest to understand the purpose of existence. Born into Russian aristocracy, he achieved fame and success as a writer, yet these accomplishments left him unfulfilled. By his late forties, Tolstoy faced a profound existential crisis, a period he described as a confrontation with the void of meaninglessness. The inevitability of death haunted him: if all human efforts end in oblivion, what is the point of living? This question, raw and universal, is one that Indians, steeped in a culture that grapples with the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, can readily relate to. In our villages, where life is often lived close to the rhythms of nature, and in our bustling cities, where modern ambitions clash with ancient wisdom, the search for meaning in the face of mortality is a constant undercurrent.

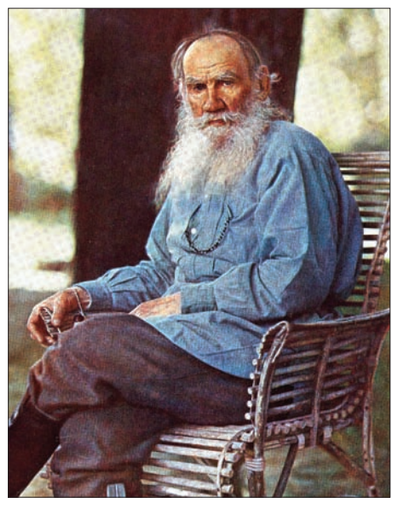
In War and Peace, Tolstoy channels this existential inquiry through Pierre Bezukhov, a character who embodies the restless search for purpose. Pierre's journey takes him through wealth, war, and philosophical musings, as he grapples with the same questions that tormented Tolstoy. Is happiness found in material success? In love? In intellectual pursuits? Pierre's disillusionment with the superficiality of high society and the chaos of war leads him to a simpler, more grounded understanding of life. He finds solace in the ordinary like in family, in community, in the quiet dignity of living authentically. This resonates deeply with the Indian ethos, where the concept of santosha (contentment) is celebrated in both spiritual texts and everyday life. Whether it's the farmer in a Punjab village finding joy in a bountiful harvest or the urban professional seeking balance amidst chaos, the Indian experience often mirrors Pierre's realization that true meaning lies in simplicity and connection.

Similarly, Anna Karenina explores the tension between societal expectations and personal fulfillment, with its titular character's tragic arc serving as a cautionary tale. Anna's pursuit of love outside the confines of her marriage leads to her alienation and eventual despair, culminating in her tragic death. Her story is a stark reminder of the consequences of seeking meaning in fleeting passions or societal approval. In contrast, Levin, another central character, finds purpose in the rhythms of rural life, family, and faith. His journey reflects Tolstoy's own belief that meaning is found not in grand achievements but in the quiet moments of human connection and self-reflection. For Indians, this duality is familiar. Our society, with its emphasis on familial duty and spiritual grounding, often urges us to look beyond material pursuits. The festivals we celebrate such as Diwali, Holi or Durga Puja remind us of the importance of community, love, and the eternal over the ephemeral.

Tolstoy's personal quest for meaning led him to reexamine Christianity, not as a set of rigid dogmas but as a philosophy of love, compassion, and simplicity. He rejected the ornate rituals of the Russian Orthodox Church, advocating instead for a life of humility and service to others. This resonates with India's own spiritual traditions, particularly the teachings of figures like Gandhi, who emphasized ahimsa (non-violence) and seva (selfless service) as paths to a meaningful life. Tolstoy's influence on Gandhi is well-documented; the latter drew inspiration from Tolstoy's writings, particularly "The Kingdom of God Is Within You", in shaping his philosophy of non-violent resistance. For an Indian audience, Tolstoy's ideas feel like an extension of our own cultural values, where the pursuit of inner peace and service to humanity are seen as antidotes to existential despair.

Death, a central theme in Tolstoy's work, is portrayed with unparalleled depth and sensitivity. In his novel "The Death of Ivan Ilyich" Tolstoy confronts the terror and inevitability of mortality head-on. Ivan, a successful judge, faces a terminal illness that forces him to reevaluate his life. He realizes that his pursuit of status and wealth was misguided, and in his final moments, he finds peace in accepting his mortality and embracing compassion. This narrative strikes a universal chord, but it is particularly poignant in the Indian context, where death is not just an end but part of a larger cosmic cycle. Our rituals, from the cremation ceremonies along the Ganges to the prayers offered during shraddha, reflect an acceptance of death as an integral part of life. Yet, like Ivan, we often grapple with the fear of meaninglessness, wondering if our lives have amounted to something worthwhile.

Tolstoy's reflections on death and meaning challenge the modern obsession with transcending mortality through technology or material success. In today's world, where claims of technological immortality abound, Tolstoy's insistence on confronting our mortality feels both radical and grounding. In India, where ancient wisdom coexists with rapid modernization, this tension is palpable.



The allure of wealth and technological progress often overshadows the quieter, more profound truths found in our spiritual heritage. Tolstoy's life and work remind us that the pursuit of meaning is not about defying death but about living authentically in its shadow. This aligns with the Indian philosophy of dharma, which encourages us to live in harmony with our purpose, regardless of life's impermanence.

For the Indian reader, Tolstoy's search for meaning feels like a conversation with our own cultural soul. Our festivals, our family bonds, our spiritual practices all echo his belief that life's purpose is found in love, simplicity, and connection. In the villages of Assam or the bustling streets of Mumbai, we see people finding joy in small moments: a shared meal during Eid, a dance during Bihu, or a quiet prayer at a temple. These moments, though fleeting, are where life's meaning resides. Tolstoy's realization that external achievements cannot fill the void of existential questioning mirrors the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita, where Krishna advises Arjuna to focus on his duty without attachment to outcomes.

Tolstoy's legacy is a reminder that the search for meaning is a deeply personal yet universally shared journey. His characters like Pierre, Levin, Ivan reflect the struggles of every individual who has ever pondered the purpose of their existence. In India, where the weight of tradition and the pull of modernity coexist, Tolstoy's insights offer a timeless guide. They urge us to look inward, to find meaning in the connections we forge and the lives we touch, rather than in the fleeting allure of wealth or status. As we navigate the complexities of modern life, Tolstoy's voice, resonant and clear, reminds us that death may be inevitable, but a life lived with purpose, love and simplicity is its own triumph.

In a world that often seeks to deny mortality, Tolstoy's courage in facing it head-on is a call to embrace life fully, flaws and all. For Indians, this message is both a reflection of our heritage and a challenge to live authentically in a rapidly changing world. Whether through the lens of our ancient scriptures or the quiet wisdom of our daily lives, Tolstoy's search for meaning reminds us that the answers we seek are often closer than we think—within ourselves, in our relationships, and in the fleeting beauty of the present moment.

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'Vote chori' is not just an election issue but a decisive battle to protect democracy, says Gandhi

Rahul to escalate campaign against 'vote chori' with 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' from Bihar's Sasaram

SASARAM (BIHAR), Aug 16: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will embark on a 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' across Bihar from here on Sunday, with his party asserting it will fight for the "one man, one vote" principle and not accept the Election Commission becoming a "compartment" of the BJP's "so-called double engine".

The leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha, along with the RJD's Tejashwi Yadav and other Mahagathbandhan leaders, will undertake the 16-day and 1,300 km yatra from Sasaram that will conclude with a rally in Patna on September 1.

"Whenever Rahul Gandhi ji has set out for a yatra, the democracy of this country has turned a page. 'Voter Rights Yatra' will be a historic march. It will prove to be a milestone in the history of our democracy," the Congress' media and publicity department head, Pawan Khera, said at a press conference at Indira Bhawan in New Delhi.

"We will not accept that the Election Commission becomes a compartment of this so-called 'double engine'. We are fighting against this and will continue to do so in the future," he added.

The party has been protesting against the special intensive revision of electoral rolls, alleging the EC's exercise is aimed at "disenfranchising voters" in Bihar ahead of the assembly elections due later this year.

The Congress urged the people of Bihar to join the yatra for their rights and entitlements so that democracy can get a direction from Bihar.

"The yatra, starting in Bihar from August 17, is a journey to make people aware because the conspirators will not be deterred and they will try to steal votes," Khera said. "The yatra will conclude with a huge rally in Patna on September 1, and the people of the INDIA bloc will participate in it."

He added that the yatra has been planned to fight for the right of 'one person-one vote'. "It is possible to breathe freely in independent India because we have the power to vote. Rahul Gandhi has started a struggle so that every citizen of the country can breathe freely," Kehra said.

"The way the game of adding and deducting fake votes was going on, the BJP people have been caught red-handed," he claimed, adding that "now, even ordinary citizens are giving evidence of vote theft. When our INDIA bloc colleagues and social workers appealed together, the Supreme Court also had to intervene."

"This conspiracy was not just to snatch votes. It was a conspiracy to snatch your and our identity. Today, the right to vote is being snatched from the Dalits, the deprived, the oppressed, the exploited, the minorities; tomorrow their participation will be snatched," Khera alleged.

He claimed that a conspiracy was being hatched to attack the poor, against which the people of the country have raised their voice.

The Yatra will pass through Aurangabad, Gaya, Nawada, Nalanda, Sheikhpura, Lakhisarai, Munger, Bhagalpur, Katihar, Purnea, Araria, Supaul, Madhubani, Darbhanga, Sitamarhi, East Champaran, West Champaran, Gopalganj, Siwan, Chapra and Ara.

At a press briefing in Patna, Congress MP Akhilesh Prasad Singh said that when the Election Commission announced the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in Bihar, the leaders of the INDIA bloc went to meet poll panel officials, who had stated that 20 per cent of the voters in Bihar would lose their franchise.

"We demanded a discussion on this issue in the House, but the BJP government did not consider it necessary. When the new draft list came out after SIR in Bihar, many irregularities were revealed. When we are asking for answers on this, the BLO (block-level officer) has no answer," he claimed.

"In such a situation, we have decided that the Congress will start a 'Voter Awareness Campaign'. In this, we will go to all districts of Bihar and make people aware, so that they are not deprived of their rights," Singh said.

He also said that Rahul Gandhi is fighting to save the Constitution.

"Rahul Gandhi is the voice of the poor, deprived, women, farmers, and labourers of the country. We request the people of Bihar to take part in this journey and help us in foiling the plans of the Election Commission-BJP," Singh added.

Gandhi on Thursday said, "We are waging a direct fight against 'vote chori' from Bihar with the 'Voter Adhikar Yatra." He asserted that his party will ensure a clean voters' list across the country.

"'Vote chori' is not just an election issue but a decisive battle to protect democracy, the Constitution and the principle of 'one man, one vote'," he had said. The Congress on Tuesday claimed that "vote chori" was a "do-or-die" issue for it, and announced a roadmap to take its allegations to the people through various activities. *(PTI)*

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi to pay 2-day visit to India from Monday: MEA

NEW DELHI, Aug 16: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi will pay a two-day visit to India beginning Monday to hold border talks with National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) announced on Saturday.

Wang's visit comes days ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's planned trip to China to attend the annual summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

The Chinese foreign minister is visiting India primarily to hold the next round of Special Representatives' (SR) dialogue on the boundary question.

Wang and Doval are the designated special representatives for the boundary talks.

"At the invitation of National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, Member of the Politburo of the Communist Party of China and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi will visit India on August 18 and 19," the MEA said in a statement.

"During his visit, he will hold the 24th round of the Special Representatives' (SR) talks on the India-China boundary question with India's SR, NSA Doval," it added.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will also hold bilateral talks with his Chinese counterpart.

Doval travelled to China in December last year and held the SR talks with Wang, weeks after Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping decided to revive various dialogue mechanisms between the two sides at a meeting in the Russian city of Kazan.

Modi is expected to travel to China later this month to attend the SCO summit.

According to the plan, the prime minister will embark on a visit to Japan around August 29 and after concluding the trip, will travel to the northern Chinese city of Tianjin for the summit to be held on August 31 and September 1.

Modi's visit to China is being planned amid efforts by the two neighbouring countries to repair their bilateral ties, which came under severe strain following the deadly clashes between Indian and Chinese troops in the Galwan valley in June 2020.

The military standoff in eastern Ladakh began in May 2020 and the Galwan valley clashes in June resulted in a severe strain in the bilateral ties.

The face-off effectively ended following the completion of the disengagement process from the last two friction points of Demchok and Depsang under an agreement finalised on October 21 last year. The decision to revive various dialogue mechanisms was taken at a meeting between Modi and Xi in Kazan on October 23, 2024.

The Modi-Xi meeting came two days after India and China firmed up the disengagement pact for Depsang and Demchok.

The two sides also initiated a number of initiatives to rebuild the ties, including the resumption of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra and New Delhi restarting the issuance of tourist visas to Chinese nationals. Both sides are also discussing the modalities to resume direct flight services between the two countries.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Jaishankar visited China in the last two months to attend SCO meetings. China is the current chair of the SCO. *(PTI)*

Shubhanshu Shukla to return to India on Sunday, to meet PM Modi

NEW DELHI, Aug 16: Astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla is set to return to India on Sunday after his historic visit to the International Space Station (ISS) and is eager to share his experiences with friends and colleagues back home as ISRO eyes its maiden human spaceflight in 2027.

Shukla, who has been in the US, training for the Axiom-4 mission to ISS for the past one year, is expected to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and travel to his hometown Lucknow soon after.

He is expected to be back in the capital to participate in the National Space Day celebrations on August 22-23.

Shukla posted on Instagram a smiling photograph of himself sitting in an aeroplane, and said in its caption that he was filled with mixed emotions as he left the US and could not wait to return to India to share his experiences with everyone back home.

"As I sit on the plane to come back to India, I have a mix of emotions running through my heart. I feel sad leaving a fantastic group of people behind who were my friends and family for the past one year during this mission. I am also excited about meeting all my friends, family and everyone in the country for the first time post mission. I guess this is what life is -- everything all at once," Shukla said in the post.

"Having received incredible love and support from everyone during and after the mission, I can't wait to come back to India to share my experiences with all of you. Goodbyes are hard but we need to keep moving in life. As my commander Peggy Whitson fondly says, 'the only constant in spaceflight is change'. I believe that applies to life as well," he said.

Shukla also added, "I guess at the end of the day -'Yun hi chala chal rahi - jeevan gaadi hai samay pahiya'," recalling the song from the Bollywood movie Swades that was on his playlist just before he embarked on the Axiom-4 mission to the ISS on June 25 from the US.

Shukla and his backup astronaut Prashanth Nair participated in the Independence Day celebrations at the Indian Consulate in Houston on Friday.

Addressing the 79th Independence Day celebrations at the Red Fort, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said India was developing its own space station and recalled that Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla has returned from a space mission. *(PTI)*

NCERT special module says Jinnah, Congress, Mountbatten 'culprits' of India's partition

NEW DELHI, Aug 16: A special module released by the NCERT to mark "Partition Horrors Remembrance Day" has held Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the Congress and then Viceroy Lord Mountbatten responsible for India's partition.

The module has also noted that post-Partition, Kashmir emerged as a new problem, which had never existed in India before and created a challenge for the country's foreign policy.

It has also flagged that some countries keep giving aid to Pakistan and exert pressure on India in the name of the Kashmir issue.

"India's Partition happened due to wrong ideas. The party of Indian Muslims, the Muslim League, held a conference in Lahore in 1940. Its leader, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, said that Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs, and literatures," the module said.

In a section titled "culprits of Partition", the NCERT module said, "Ultimately, on August 15, 1947, India was divided. But this was not the doing of any one person. There were three elements responsible for the Partition of India: Jinnah, who demanded it; second, the Congress, which accepted it; and third, Mountbatten, who implemented it. But Mountbatten proved to be guilty of a major blunder."

"He preponed the date for the transfer of power from June 1948 to August 1947. He persuaded everyone to agree to this. Because of this, complete preparations could not be made before the Partition. The demarcation of the Partition boundaries was also done hastily. For that, Sir Cyril Radcliffe was given only five weeks.

In Punjab, even two days after 15 August 1947, millions of people did not know whether they were in India or in Pakistan. Such haste was a great act of carelessness," it said.

While the module blames Jinnah, it also quotes him saying he never thought it would happen or that he would see Pakistan in his lifetime.

"Later, even Jinnah admitted that he had not expected Partition to happen. He told his aide, 'I never thought it would happen. I never expected to see Pakistan in my lifetime'," it said.

The module quotes Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel as saying that the situation in India had become explosive. "India had become a battlefield, and it was better to partition the country than to have a civil war."

It cites Mahatma Gandhi's stance, noting that he opposed Partition but would not resist the Congress' decision through violence. The text states: "He said that he could not be a party to the Partition, but he would not stop Congress from accepting it with violence."

NCERT has published two separate modules -- one for Classes 6 to 8 (middle stage) and another for Classes 9 to 12 (secondary stage). These are supplementary resources in English and Hindi, not part of regular textbooks, and are meant to be used through projects, posters, discussions and debates.

Both modules open with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 2021 message announcing the observance of Partition Horrors Remembrance Day.

Quoting the prime minister's post on X (formerly Twitter), the book mentions, "Partition's pains can never be forgotten. Millions of our sisters and brothers were displaced, and many lost their lives due to mindless hate and violence. In memory of the struggles and sacrifices of our people, 14th August will be observed as Partition Horrors Remembrance Day." *(PTI)*

Low-lying areas inundated, local train services hit

Heavy rains batter parts of Mumbai, suburbs

MUMBAI, Aug 16: Heavy downpour pummelled Mumbai and its suburbs, with some parts recording more than 200 mm rainfall in the wee hours of Saturday, inundating low-lying areas and affecting the movement of local trains.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a red alert, forecasting heavy to very heavy rainfall in the metropolis for two days. Incessant rain continued to lash parts of the city in the morning with occasional heavy spells.

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has appealed to citizens not to step out unnecessarily.

Two people were killed and as many others sustained injuries in a landslide amid rains in the Vikhroli Parksite area in the eastern suburbs.

The downpour began around 1 am and continued into the early hours of the day, causing waterlogging in low-lying areas of the western and eastern suburbs, including Vikhroli, Ghatkopar, Bhandup, Chunabhatti, Aarey, Andheri, Kings Circle, Malad, and Goregaon, among others.

The suburban train services were also severely affected due to waterlogging on tracks at several locations on the Central and Western Railway lines.

On the Central Railway line, tracks were submerged at Matunga, Sion, Kurla, Vidyavihar, Ghatkopar, and Bhandup on the main line, and Wadala, Chunabhatti, Tilak Nagar and Kurla on the Harbour Line.

Passengers have complained that Harbour Line services continue to be badly affected.

Tracks were also inundated on the stretch between Dadar and Mahim stations on the Western Railway.

"The water receded around 8 am and the train traffic slowly returned to normalcy," said Swapnil Nila, chief public relations officer of Central Railway, adding that the trains were running 15-20 minutes late around 11.30 am.

A spokesperson from Western Railway said that suburban services on the network were running about 15 minutes late.

According to railway officials, most government and private officers and establishments in the city have declared a holiday for the Dahi Handi festivities, and the suburban services were not crowded.

A spokesperson from the Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) said that bus operations were also affected, as several buses were diverted from waterlogged areas in Sion, Kings Circle, Aarey Colony, and Malad Subway, among others.

Civic officials said pumping operations were underway in multiple areas, and response teams had been deployed to address complaints of waterlogging and tree falls. Municipal Commissioner and administrator Bhushan Gagrani visited the disaster management emergency control room at the civic headquarters and gave necessary instructions to officials, a BMC spokesperson said.

According to the IMD, several parts of Mumbai recorded more than 200 mm of rainfall between 8.30 am on Friday and 5.30 am on Saturday.

Vikhroli, in the eastern suburbs, recorded the highest rainfall at 248.5 mm, followed by Santacruz with 232.5 mm, Sion with 221 mm, and Juhu with 208 mm.

The intensity of rainfall was higher in the suburbs compared to south Mumbai, where Colaba recorded just 70 mm of rainfall during this period.

The IMD had on Friday issued an orange alert for Mumbai for two days, predicting heavy to very heavy rainfall. However, the department updated it to a red alert in the wee hours of Saturday.

"Warnings are updated as early strengthening of synoptic situations," said Shubhangi Bhute, an IMD official, adding that in the coming days, the entire west coast is likely to receive heavy to very heavy rainfall with isolated extremely heavy spells. *(PTI)*

UP: Mob attacks two men on suspicion of theft in Etah

ETAH (UP), Aug 16: An angry mob allegedly attacked two men here on suspicion of theft and later caused a ruckus at a police station where the victims were taken after being rescued, officials said on Saturday. The incident occurred in the Nayagaon police station area late on Friday night.

Fahim, one of the two attacked by the mob, said he and his relative Firoz were returning from a 'Chehlum' procession when a group of men stopped them.

They were mistaken for thieves and beaten with sticks, he said.

"We kept telling them we were not thieves but the mob didn't listen to us," he added.

A patrolling team arrived at the scene, rescued the two men, and took them to the police station.

Soon a large crowd gathered outside the police station and demanded that the two men be handed over to them.

When their demand was turned down, the crowd pelted stones that damaged a police vehicle. *(PTI)*

ELECTRICAL WORKS

E-Tender Notice No. TSK/Elect/207; dated: 13-08-2025. Works tender through E-Tendering System are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **SN.1. Brief Description of Item:** Operation and Maintenance of HT& LT OH line, Electrical assets, Sub-Stations, Sub Station operation at North and South Bank and Manning with Operation and maintenance of DG sets at 33/11KV Railway Power House at South Bank of Bogibeel Bridge for a period of 365 Days (1 Year). **(Tender No. LV-T-14-TSK-915)**. Tender Value: ₹36,17,611.20; Earnest Money: ₹72,400.00. **E-tenders will be closed at** 13:00 hrs. on 03-09-2025 and **Opened** at 15:00 hrs. on 03-09-2025. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto **13.00** hrs on **03-09-2025** in website **http://www.ireps.gov.in**.

DRM (Elect.)/Tinsukia
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"Serving Customers with a smile"

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Aruna Dekaraja , legally wedded spouse of No 4380885H LNK Kirtartha Dekaraja resident of Vill:-Niz Jarabari Gaon, P.O.- Deb - Narikali, Teh: Jarabari, Dist.- Nagaon, State- Assam, PIN - 782426 have changed my name from Aruna Dekaraja to Aruna Hira Vide Affidavit No. 1456/07 Date 23 JUL 25 before Pranjal Kr. Das Notary public Dist :- Morigaon (Assam).

NAME CORRECTION

I, Sumodhar Saikia, S/O Late Bipin Saikia, Hindu, R/O Choladhara, Jorhat, Assam, do hereby solemnly declare before the Notary, Kamrup(M) dated. 12.08.2025, that my actual and correct name is Sumodhar Saikia which is recorded in my official documents. However, in my Aadhaar Card it has been recorded as Sumodhur Saikia. I hereby declare that Sumodhar Saikia and Sumodhur Saikia refer to the same person, i.e., myself.

PROVISION OF MILK STALL & PROVISION OF CATERING SERVICES

E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **SN.1; Tender No.:** C-LMG-08-2025; **Dated: 13-08-2025. Name of work:** Provision of Milk Stall at General Minor Unit No. GHYMS-1 at PF -1 between pillars 16-17 of Guwahati railway station A-1 Class for a period of 05 (five) years. **Advertised Value :** ₹13,20,000/-; **Earnest Money:** ₹1,37,300/-. **E-Tender will be closed at** 11:00 hrs. on 05-09-2025. **SN.2; Tender No.:** C-LMG-09-2025; **Dated: 13-08-2025. Name of work:** Provision of Catering Services at General Minor Unit (Women) GHYTS-13 at PF 1 between pillars 14-15 of Guwahati Station of A-1 Class for a period of 05 (five) years. **Advertised Value :** ₹13,20,000/-; **Earnest Money:** ₹1,37,300/-. **E-Tender will be closed at** 11:00 hrs. on 05-09-2025. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available in website **www.ireps.gov.in**.

Sr. DCM, Lumding
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"Serving Customers with a smile"

No.GDB/6th-FC/206/2022-23/250 *Dated:-11/08/2025*

TENDER No-28, FOR BIDS (IFB)

Selected tenders affixing Non-refundable court fee stamp of RS.8.25 (Rupees Eight & Twenty Five Paisa) only with at validity period of 180 (One Hundred Eighty) days which will subsequently to be covered and drawn up in the printed F-2 form are invited from the intending Registered Contractors of all categories of the Assam PWD (Bldg. & Roads) for submitting tender for the work below. The tenders will be received by the undersigned up to 2;30 PM 11-08-2025 to 31-08-2025 and will be opened on the date 31-08-2025 at 2:30 PM.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Tender Value	Earnest money 1% forST/SC/OBC/MOBC & 2% for GNL	Cost of tender document	Time of completion
1	Sand gravelling from chandan Boro house to Dipak Basumatary house at Sarangpara, under 6th-FC fund for the year 2024-25 durung 2025-26 (1nd-Inst)	8,00,000.00	Rs 8,000/- & Rs. 16,000'/-	Rs 300/-	3(Three month)
2	Const. of Rcc slab culvert at pachim Lahapara village, under 6th-FC fund for the year 2024-25 durung 2025-26 (1st-Inst)	7,00,000.00	Rs 7,000/- & Rs. 14,000'/-	Rs 300/-	3(Three month)

Detailed NIT may be seen in all working days in the Office of the undersigned. Tender paper will be issued to the contractor or their authorized agent up to 11;30 AM in all working days from 11-08-2025 to 31-08-2025 in the office of the undersigned on payment in the form of Banker Cheque/Bank Draft/ Demand draft duly pledged in favour of the BDO, Goreswar Development Block.

IPR(BTC)/C/2025-26/2623

Sd/- Block Development Officer
Goreswar Development Block

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Arunachal Pradesh celebrates 79th Independence Day with patriotic fervour across state

HT Bureau

NAMSAI, Aug 16: The 79th Independence Day was celebrated across Arunachal Pradesh with patriotic fervour, vibrant cultural displays and a collective resolve to uphold the ideals of unity and nation-building.

From Raj Bhavan in Itanagar to the remote heights of Tawang and the disciplined parade grounds of Rayang Military Station, the Tricolour unfurled proudly in an atmosphere charged with national pride and remembrance of the sacrifices that won India her freedom.

According to official statements, the Governor of Arunachal Pradesh, Lt General KT Parnaik (Retd), unfurled the National Flag at Raj Bhavan, Itanagar, and took the salute at the Guard of Honour presented by the Echo Company of the 33rd Battalion of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police attached to Raj Bhavan.

Extending heartfelt greetings to the people of the state, the Governor described Independence Day as a solemn reminder of the supreme sacrifices made by countless sons and daughters of India.

He paid rich tributes to freedom fighters, including Matmur Jamoh, Moje Riba and Moji Riba, while emphasising that their legacy continues to inspire generations to uphold justice, equality and unity.

The Governor called upon the people to embrace the vision of Viksit Bharat, stressing that true patriotism lies not only in celebration but in responsible action towards a self-reliant and prosperous India. He appealed to citizens to imbibe the spirit of "Nation First" in their daily lives and pledged support to initiatives promoting cleanliness and dignity for all.

Staff members of Raj Bhavan who excelled in the 'Swachh Ghar' competition were felicitated, with prizes awarded to Phurpa Zomba, Ranjumoni Borah and Monju Damin.

Adding to the spirit of festivity, the Governor, along with the First Lady Anagha Parnaik, distributed sweets to schoolchildren and officials, reinforcing the message of fraternity and unity.

In the evening, the Governor and the First Lady attended the 'At Home' reception hosted by chief minister Pema Khandu at his official residence in Niti Vihar, Itanagar.

The reception, attended by former Chief Ministers, senior leaders, officials, corporators, cultural performers and people from different walks of life, provided a platform for camaraderie and collective celebration.

Traditional performances by local artists showcasing Arunachal Pradesh's rich heritage added colour to the occasion, drawing enthusiastic applause and highlighting the fusion of cultural pride with patriotic spirit.

At Rayang Military Station, the Armed Forces marked Independence Day with military precision and solemnity. Officers, Junior Commissioned Officers, jawans, civilian staff and their families came together for a flag hoisting ceremony at first light.

The unfurling of the National Flag, bathed in the golden rays of the morning sun, was accompanied by the National Anthem, echoing across the parade ground as a symbol of resilience and sacrifice.

The ceremony reflected the ethos of the Armed Forces—unity, discipline and devotion to the nation—culminating in informal interactions between troops and their families that underscored the strong bonds within the military community.

In Tawang, the General Parade Ground witnessed one of the largest Independence Day gatherings in the state. Local MLA Namgey Tsering unfurled the National Flag in the presence of Deputy Commissioner Namgyal Angmo, Superintendent of Police Dr DW Thongon, monastic leaders, public representatives, women's organisations, Army officers, SSB and ITBP personnel, as well as contingents from schools and youth organisations.

The march past by contingents of the Army, Police, Scouts, Guides and schoolchildren received resounding applause, reflecting the spirit of discipline and patriotism.

Addressing the gathering, MLA Tsering paid tributes to freedom fighters and remembered the sacrifices of unsung heroes of the 1962 Indo-China War.

He also recalled the contributions of past leaders towards the development of Tawang, before outlining his current developmental initiatives.

The MLA called on unemployed youth to skill themselves and actively participate in nation-building, while also commending institutions such as Dorjee Khandu Government College and the district police for their efforts in education and law enforcement.

He further felicitated successful candidates of the APPSCCE Mains Examination from his constituency with a cash prize of ₹1.5 lakh each from his personal resources, aiming to inspire academic excellence.

The day also witnessed the final match of the Merag Lama Lodroe Gyatso Independence Day Cup at the Gyalwa Tsangyang Gyatso High Altitude Sports Stadium, where Monyul FC defeated the All Monpa Students' Union Football Team 3–1 in front of an enthusiastic crowd, adding to the festive spirit.

Similar celebrations were held in Lungla and Jang Sub-Divisions, where local leaders unfurled the Tricolour and addressed gatherings of officials and citizens.

Across Arunachal Pradesh, from the Governor's residence to district headquarters, military stations and village grounds, the 79th Independence Day celebrations stood as a testimony to the state's vibrant unity, rich cultural traditions and unwavering pride in the nation's journey.

The diverse range of programmes—from solemn flag hoistings and guard of honour ceremonies to cultural showcases, community gatherings and sporting events—reflected not only the patriotic zeal of the people but also their collective aspirations for peace, progress and prosperity.

The official statements noted that the inclusive celebrations highlighted the deep connection between the ideals of freedom and the responsibilities of nation-building, serving as a reminder of the enduring sacrifices of the past and the promise of a stronger and united India.

DyCM hoists Tricolour at Chongkham, inaugurates handloom unit

Mein highlights Arunachal's strides in infrastructure, education, healthcare and hydropower while calling for collective effort towards a Viksit Bharat

HT Correspondent

CHONGKHAM, Aug 16: Deputy Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, Chowna Mein, celebrated the 79th Independence Day in his home constituency, Chongkham, with a ceremonial hoisting of the National Flag at Pali Vidyapeeth Ground amidst an enthusiastic gathering of school children, public leaders, government officials and people from different walks of life.

According to an official statement, Mein paid homage to India's freedom fighters and remembered Arunachal Pradesh's unsung heroes who resisted colonial rule.

He also lauded the contributions of soldiers, farmers, teachers, doctors, nurses, engineers, workers and every citizen whose collective efforts, he said, strengthened Arunachal Pradesh and the nation.

Reflecting on India's progress, Mein highlighted that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the country has emerged as the world's fourth-largest economy.

He reiterated the national vision of achieving Viksit Bharat by 2047 and urged collective effort towards realising this goal.

The Deputy Chief Minister outlined significant achievements of Arunachal Pradesh, including its recognition as a Front Runner State in the SDG India Index 2023–24, a 100% adjusted net enrolment rate in elementary education, and being ranked as the best-performing State in law and order by India Today.

He also highlighted Siluk's national recognition as a zero-waste model village and Jairampur's selection as the cleanest town under Swachh Survekshan.

Mein emphasised ongoing connectivity projects such as the Frontier Highway and major bridges, along with expansion of health infrastructure through new medical colleges in Pasighat, Namsai and West Kameng, and the upgradation of TRIHMS into a postgraduate and super-speciality institute.

Declaring 2025–2035 as the Decade of Hydropower, he announced that 1.2 GW projects are operational, 4.8 GW are under construction, and mega projects including the Dibang Multipurpose Project are underway.

These, he informed, would bring investments worth ₹2 lakh crore to the State, while generating ₹4,000 crore in free power, ₹750 crore in Local Area Development Funds (LADF) and ₹2,000 crore in annual dividends to the State exchequer.

The Deputy Chief Minister also spoke about Mission Shikshit Arunachal, aimed at transforming education, and several initiatives to empower youth and women through entrepreneurship.

Referring to Namsai's progress under the Aspirational District Programme, he called for collective efforts to elevate it into an "inspirational district."

He announced that a Model Degree College at Piyong and a Medical College under PPP mode would soon be established in Namsai.

He also underlined the government's commitment to preserving local heritage, adding that the Tai-Khamti language would be introduced as a third language in all schools and Buddhist temples in the district from Classes 1 to 8.

Urging citizens to work together for a Viksit Arunachal, Mein appealed for public participation in cleanliness drives, preservation of biodiversity, and active involvement in the Ek Ped Ke Naam and Nadi Utsav initiatives.

He further called for the protection of wildlife through the prohibition of illegal hunting and fishing.

As part of the celebration, meritorious students, dedicated citizens and participants were felicitated for their contributions to society.

The Deputy Chief Minister inaugurated exhibition stalls set up by Self Help Groups (SHGs) and government departments, showcasing Arunachal's cultural heritage, sustainable farming practices, handicrafts and innovative projects.

On the occasion, he also launched KAT YEIN, a packaged drinking water brand from Momong village, developed through a convergence model by the Arunachal State Rural Livelihoods Mission (ArSLM) in collaboration with the Village Sanitation and Water Committee (VSWC), Momong.

Funded under SOR by the Zilla Parishad Member of 5–Chongkham Zilla Parishad, the initiative seeks to promote rural entrepreneurship, community ownership and sustainable income generation.

Revenue will be shared among ArSLM, the Panchayat and the VSWC to ensure economic benefits remain within the community.

The programme was attended by Inspector General of Police (Eastern Range) PN Khrimey, ADC Chongkham Kretkam Tikhak, ZPM Jenia Namchoom, PRI members, Gaon Burahs, SHGs, members of community-based organisations and government officials.

Later in the day, Mein inaugurated a Handloom Unit at The Prodigal Daughters Sisterhood Rehabilitation Centre in Chongkham, run by the Angulimala Welfare Society and funded by the ZPM Chongkham.

The initiative aims to empower women recovering from abuse and addiction by providing sustainable livelihood opportunities.

Interacting with the inmates, the Deputy Chief Minister encouraged them to return to the mainstream as responsible citizens and to embrace a new life with hope, dignity and determination.

He said life is defined not by its beginnings but by the courage to overcome challenges and transform them into success stories.

The celebrations at Chongkham thus combined patriotic fervour with a strong focus on community empowerment, education, and sustainable development.

Keyi Panyor district establishes Department of School Education

HT Correspondent

YACHULI, Aug 16: In what is being described as a landmark achievement for the region, the Keyi Panyor district has officially established its own Department of School Education, fulfilling a long-cherished aspiration of the newly created district and marking an important step towards the upliftment of educators and community development.

According to an official statement, the newly created office of the District Deputy Director of School Education (DDSE) at Yachuli celebrated its first Independence Day on Friday with the hoisting of the National Flag on its premises.

The ceremony was led by the newly appointed DDSE, Koj Tajang, and witnessed the participation of teachers from across the district.

Their collective presence was described as a powerful show of unity and determination to strengthen the educational foundation of Keyi Panyor.

Speaking on the occasion, DDSE Koj Tajang said the establishment of the department was not merely an administrative milestone but the beginning of a new era for education in the district.

The achievement, he noted, was made possible through the visionary leadership of the MLA of the 16th Yachuli Assembly constituency and the steadfast support of the district administration.

The official statement further highlighted that the new department, guided by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, will focus on driving quality improvements, expanding access to education, and promoting innovative teaching methods.

It will serve as the central hub for policy implementation, coordination and decision-making, ensuring that schools — including those in the most remote areas of the district — receive timely support and guidance.

Educators present at the event pledged their commitment to measurable progress in line with the mission and vision of the NEP 2020.

Plans are already underway to introduce new initiatives aimed at uplifting teaching standards, modernising learning environments and creating equal opportunities for every child in the district.

The celebrations concluded with renewed enthusiasm among teachers and officials, who described the moment as symbolic of both India's independence and the district's newfound autonomy in shaping its educational destiny. As the Tricolour fluttered above the new DDSE headquarters, it served as a reminder of collective aspirations and the shared responsibility of building a stronger, more inclusive education system in Keyi Panyor.

Governor extends Janmashtami greetings

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Aug 16: The Governor of Arunachal Pradesh, Lt General KT Parnaik, (Retd), has extended his greetings to the people of the state on the occasion of Janmashtami.

According to an official statement, the Governor expressed hope that the blessed occasion would inspire all to follow Lord Shri Krishna's eternal message of Karma, right conduct and purposeful action in the pursuit of life's goals.

In his message, the Governor said that Janmashtami marks the divine birth of Yogiraj Lord Shri Krishna, the eighth incarnation of Lord Vishnu, who was born to Devaki and Vasudev to free the people of Mathura from the tyranny of King Kansa.

He stated that the sacred festival is a timeless reminder of humanity's collective effort to overcome injustice and oppression.

The Governor further recalled Lord Krishna's immortal discourse in the Bhagavad Gita, which guided Arjun to understand his duty, rise above doubt, and act with courage and conviction.

Conveying his wishes on the occasion, the Governor said Janmashtami should inspire all to imbibe Lord Krishna's message of compassion, righteousness and harmony, and work together for a just and inclusive society.

Kaso launches 'Tithi Bhojan' for children in Capital Complex

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Aug 16: Advisor to the Minister of Urban Affairs and Itanagar Capital Complex MLA Techi Kaso on Saturday participated in a week-long food distribution programme for schoolchildren under the Tithi Bhojan initiative at Government Upper Primary School, Amarjyoti, Chimpu.

Speaking on the occasion, Kaso said that he felt privileged to spend time with the young students, describing them as the future of the state.

He appealed to well-off individuals to come forward voluntarily to support children by sponsoring food and other essentials on special occasions like birthdays, anniversaries, and other celebrations. Kaso informed that the Tithi Bhojan initiative, first introduced in Gujarat, has now been started in the Capital Complex as well. He said that he had recently sponsored healthy food and fruits for schoolchildren after consultations with the education department and administration to ensure proper implementation. "I have initiated this programme in four schools so far, covering nearly 1,300 students," Kaso stated, while urging others to join the effort and share their happiness with young learners.

The programme was coordinated by BEO (PM Poshan) Directorate of Elementary Education, Taniang Kumo, along with the Headmaster of Government Upper Primary School Amarjyoti, Tasung Palon. PM Poshan Superintendent Phool Kumari Tanga also highlighted the importance of the Tithi Bhojan initiative and urged students to maintain cleanliness during food distribution.

On the occasion, SMC member Nichi Fachang submitted a two-point memorandum seeking a new borewell and the construction of a boundary wall for the school.

I-Day Eye Camp brings relief to villagers in Tuting subdivision

HT Correspondent

TUTING, Aug 16: This year's Independence Day in Tuting subdivision of Arunachal Pradesh was marked not only by traditional celebrations but also by a unique initiative of service aimed at improving the lives of people in remote areas.

An eye care camp was organised in the subdivision, bringing much-needed medical assistance to local communities and symbolising the spirit of solidarity between citizens and soldiers.

According to an official statement, the camp was held in collaboration with Bright Vision, with the objective of extending essential eye care to tribal communities in the region.

A total of 130 villagers received free eye check-ups, while spectacles were distributed to those in need. Patients diagnosed with more serious conditions were referred to advanced medical facilities for specialised treatment.

The Indian Army played a key role in the success of the initiative.

From coordinating with medical teams and arranging venues to extending logistical and administrative support, the Army ensured that professional eye care reached villagers who often remain outside the easy access of healthcare services.

In an area where availability of specialised treatment is a challenge, the intervention was timely and impactful. For the local population, the camp meant more than routine medical aid.

Villagers expressed gratitude to the Army for facilitating the outreach on Independence Day, describing it as a gesture of care, inclusion and reassurance that their needs were being recognised.

The initiative, they said, strengthened the bond between the armed forces and the community, while also adding a deeper meaning to the national celebration.

The official statement noted that the eye camp restored sight for many and offered hope to all, serving as a living example of unity and service.

It highlighted that Independence Day celebrations are not only about ceremonial displays of patriotism but also about touching lives, addressing real challenges and reinforcing trust between the nation's institutions and its people.

The camp concluded with a renewed sense of connection and collective resolve, reminding all present that true freedom lies in building a stronger, healthier and more inclusive society.

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DURAND CUP: UPBEAT EAST BENGAL READY TO STOP BAGAN JUGGERNAUT

KOLKATA, Aug 16: An upbeat East Bengal would be aiming to buck the trend of Mohun Bagan's supreme dominance in Kolkata derby in recent years when the arch-rivals square off in the Durand Cup quarter-final on Sunday.

In the last two seasons, the famed Kolkata derby in Durand Cup has always been in the news.

During the last edition, the arch rivals didn't meet due to protests on the streets of Kolkata after a lady doctor was raped and killed inside the premises of RG Kar Medical College. This year, questions were raised over the draw of the quarter-finals after both teams, despite topping their respective groups, were pitted against each other.

Following the knockout draw virtually, Mohun Bagan secretary Srinjoy Bose posted a different set of fixtures on Facebook, which showed Mohun Bagan facing Jamshedpur in Jamshedpur and East Bengal taking on Diamond Harbour FC in Kolkata which was later deleted.

The Durand Cup organising committee announced the fixtures on August 12, pairing East Bengal with Mohun Bagan in Kolkata and Jamshedpur FC against Diamond Harbour FC (both on Sunday), while defending champions North-East United take on Bodoland FC in Kokrajhar and Shillong Lajong face Indian Navy in Shillong (both on Saturday). But within an hour, the organisers confirmed the block-buster Kolkata Derby for the quarterfinals, altering the fixtures and fuelling speculation about the integrity of the process.

That debate is now behind, and all eyes will be on the action as both teams prepare to battle for the Derby bragging rights.

While Mohun Bagan have traditionally dominated the derby at the top level, East Bengal claimed the bragging rights in their last meeting in a thrilling 3-2 win in the Calcutta Football League Premier Division last month, albeit with their developmental squads.

At full strength, the script has always been different. Mohun Bagan have beaten East Bengal four times in a row at the top-tier level and last lost to them in the Super Cup on January 19, 2024 (1-3). In the Durand Cup, the Mariners defeated East Bengal 1-0 in 2023 final to claim a record 17th title, though the Red-and-Golds had edged them 1-0 in the group stage of the same edition.

However, Mohun Bagan are yet to lose to East Bengal in the top-tier Indian Super League, from 10 matches with the Mariners winning nine of them.

In the CFL, however, East Bengal remain unbeaten in derbies for over a decade -- their last loss was in January 2014.

"We are not thinking about past results. Our team also has experience. Derby is always about the given day, always the present day matters. Past results won't have any bearing. Derby is always 50-50," said Souvik Chakrabarti the designated derby skipper for East Bengal on the eve of the match.

Such is the stake that 10 national-team players -- seven from Mohun Bagan and three from East Bengal -- have not joined the senior camp ahead of the derby.

Mohun Bagan have held back Anirudh Thapa, Deepak Tangri, Lalengmawia (Apuia), Liston Colaco, Manvir Singh, Sahal Abdul Samad and Vishal Kaith.

East Bengal have retained Anwar Ali, Jeakson Singh and Naorem Mahesh Singh.

East Bengal head coach Oscar Bruzón was respectful of Mohun Bagan but sounded confident.

"Mohun Bagan have a lot of quality players, lot of respect for them. They are champions for a reason. We know that tomorrow is going to be a tough game for both sides," he said, before adding: "Our team is much stronger than what it was last year. "This is probably the biggest Asian rivalry -- a game of emotions, passion and involvement. What we can control is what we can do on the pitch, keeping all the external factors outside. If we can control the small things, hopefully we can bring cheer to the fans."

East Bengal meanwhile face a setback with their star Palestinian recruit Mohammed Rashid, who has shored up their defensive midfield, ruled out after returning home following his father's demise. Rashid has flown back home.

In his absence, Miguel Ferreira and Hamid Yahdad will be tasked with controlling the midfield. Yahdad has been in fine form, scoring in back-to-back matches, while Mumbai City recruit Bipin Singh has also impressed with two goals.

Both teams advanced comfortably from the group stages. East Bengal scored 12 goals and conceded only once against South United, Namdhari FC and Indian Air Force, while Mohun Bagan netted 12 and conceded twice against tougher opposition in Mohammedan Sporting, newly-promoted I-League side Diamond Harbour FC and BSF FC.

The Mariners have retained their core from the past two seasons and strengthened further with the signing of Tekcham Abhishek Singh among others.

Kick-off: 7pm IST. (PTI)

Confident Jamshedpur FC face fearless Diamond Harbour in battle for semifinal

JAMSHEDPUR, Aug 16: A confident home side Jamshedpur FC will face debutants Diamond Harbour FC in the third quarterfinal of the Durand Cup here on Sunday.

Jamshedpur FC qualified for the quarterfinals as winners of Group C while Diamond Harbour FC squeezed through as one of the best second-placed teams.

Under interim head coach Steven Dias, who stepped up following Khalid Jamil's elevation to the national team, Jamshedpur are not just tactically sharp but also deeply motivated.

"We face Diamond Harbour FC for the first time, and we know they are a strong side and were unbeaten in 23 matches. We must stay cautious and focused," Dias said.

Jamshedpur enter the contest on the back of a flawless group stage campaign, with a 3-2 win over Tribhuvan Army FC, 1-0 win over Indian Army Football Team and a 2-0 victory over 1 Ladakh FC.

Diamond Harbour FC started the group stage campaign with a 2-1 victory over Kolkata giants Mohammedan SC before running riot against Border Security Force with a 8-1 victory but suffered a 1-5 defeat to Mohun Bagan.

In the end, a goal difference of +4 was enough for the debutants to occupy their place in this knockout fixture.

The team from Diamond Harbour have been a revelation this season, arriving at the Durand Cup with an unbeaten run that stretched to 23 consecutive matches across competitions.

"We didn't get the desired result in our last match, but that is part of football. What matters is that we learn from our mistakes, stay focused, and give our full concentration to the next game," head coach Kibu Vicuna said.

"We know it will be a tough challenge against JFC, who are an ISL team with quality players. However, we are determined not to let our journey end in the quarter-finals."

Jamshedpur FC will rely on their balanced Indian group which consists of their experienced captain Pronay Haldar and Ashutosh Mehta, youngsters like Praful Kumar Y V, Vincy Baretto, Nikhil Barla, Ritwik Das and Mohammad Sanan.

With Japanese attacker Rei Tachikawa also joining the squad, they look to finish the job in style.

Diamond Harbour start striker Clayton Silva is doubtful for this important match due to injury.

But they have an able backup in the experienced Luka Majcen, who has already scored four goals in the tournament and will be ably supported by Jobby Justin and Girik Khosla and also have the experienced Halicharan Narzary and Naro Hari Shrestha, who can be called up when needed.

The defence, led by Spaniard Mikel Kortazar and Melroy Assisi, will be up for the task against Jamshedpur and will be aware of the setpiece-heavy attacking of the home side.

Kickoff: 4pm IST. (PTI)

St. Louis Rapid and Blitz: Gukesh ends tied 6th; Aronian wins title

ST. LOUIS (USA), Aug 16: World champion GM D Gukesh finished tied sixth as Levon Aronian of USA convincingly won the St. Louis Rapid and Blitz that concluded here.

Gukesh raised visions of a great comeback on the final day of the event as he raced to 3.5 points from his first four games.

Conceding a draw to Aronian in the first game, the Indian accounted for Americans Shankland, Wesley So and Uzbek Grandmaster Nodirbek Abdusattorov before losing steam.

In the last five games, Gukesh drew three and lost two games to end his overall campaign on 18 points.

Aronian started the day with two points lead and won the event two rounds to spare scoring 24.5 points. Fabiano Caruana of United States finished a distant second on 21.5 points, a half point more than the French Maxime Vachier-Lagrave who finished third.

Abdusattorov ended fourth on 20.5 while Wesley So finished on 19 to finish fifth ahead of Gukesh and Liem Le Quang of Vietnam.

For Aronian, this was the second back-to-back title after the 42 years old had won the Freestyle Grand slam at Las Vegas also quite easily in the end. The winner got USD 40,000 out of a total pool of USD 175,000. (PTI)

Chhetri missing in list of 35 probables named by new coach Jamil for CAFA Nations Cup

NEW DELHI, Aug 16: Talismanic striker Sunil Chhetri has been left out of the 35 probables named by newly-appointed Indian football team head coach Khalid Jamil for the upcoming CAFA Nations Cup in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. It's unlikely that he was dropped on the basis of his form in the four matches he played after coming back from his international retirement.

However, it's also not known whether Chhetri himself requested not to consider him for the tournament, to be held later this month, or if he was rested as his Indian Super League (ISL) side Bengaluru FC is yet to start pre-season training.

Bengaluru FC recently suspended salaries for its first-team players and staff, including that of Chhetri, due to uncertainty surrounding the ISL's future.

However, Jamil's list of probables includes other Bengaluru FC players like goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu, defenders Chinglensana Singh, Rahul Bheke, Roshan Singh Naorem, and midfieler Suresh Singh.

All India Football Federation (AIFF) officials are not willing to comment on the matter, saying "the question should be asked to the head coach".

The 41-year-old Chhetri took international retirement after playing against Kuwait in June last year but made a return for national duty in the match against Maldives in March this year following a request from the then India head coach Manolo Marquez to help the team in the Asian Cup qualifiers third round.

Chhetri has played four matches since then and scored once -- in the team's 3-0 win over Maldives.

India drew Bangladesh 0-0 and lost to Hong Kong 0-1 in the Asian Cup qualifiers, leaving the country in a difficult position to qualify for

the continental showpiece in 2027.

In between India lost 0-2 to Thailand in an international friendly match. Marquez quit after the string of poor performance of the team.

The players will begin training in Bengaluru from Saturday with 22 players having reported to the camp so far.

The remaining 13 other players are expected to join the camp after completing their Durand Cup engagements with their respective clubs.

Out of the remaining 13, seven -- Anirudh Thapa, Deepak Tangri, Lalengmawia Ralte, Liston Colaco, Manvir Singh, Sahal Abdul Samad, Vishal Kaith -- are from Mohun Bagan, three -- Anwar Ali, Jeakson Singh, Naorem Mahesh Singh -- are from East Bengal and one -- Jithin MS -- from NorthEast United.

Placed in Group B of the CAFA Nations Cup, India face co-host Tajikistan on August 29, Iran on September 1 and Afghanistan on September 4.

The third-place match and the final will be played on September 8 in Hisor and Tashkent (Uzbekistan), respectively.

The AIFF has urged all the clubs to release national team players for the tournament, so that the national team can prepare for the upcoming Asian Cup Qualifiers match against Singapore (home and away) in October. (PTI)

India's young boxers to participate in Int'l Youth Gala in China

NEW DELHI, Aug 16: India will be represented by a 59-member strong contingent in the third 'Belt and Road' International Youth Boxing Gala U17-U19-U23 international training camp and tournament, scheduled to be held in Urumqi, Xinjiang province, China from August 15 to 30.

The squad, comprising 20 boys and 20 girls, supported by 12 coaches, six support staff, and one referee and judge, had already reached China.

Organised by the Chinese Boxing Federation and the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Government, the event begins with a training camp from August 17 to 25 in Urumqi, followed by the competition phase from August 26 to 29 in Urumqi and Yili.

Only U-17 boys and girls are representing India at this edition.

The boxers were selected from the sixth U-17 junior boys and girls National Boxing Championships 2025, with gold and silver medallists in the Asian Youth Games weight categories and gold medallists in the Non-Asian Youth Games weight categories making the cut.

Boxers will compete across multiple divisions. U17 boys and girls will contest in 13 weight categories -– 46kg, 48kg, 50kg, 52kg, 54kg, 57kg, 60kg, 63kg, 66kg, 70kg, 75kg, 80kg, and +80kg.

Participation in this international training camp and competition is expected to provide India's young boxers with valuable exposure and experience against strong global opponents.

In recent months, Indian junior boxers have delivered standout performances at international competitions, most notably at the Asian U15 and U17 Championships earlier this year, where the team secured 43 medals and finished second overall. (PTI)

USA qualify for U19 Men's Cricket World Cup

DUBAI, Aug 16: The United States team, led by wicketkeeper-batter Arjun Mahesh, has become the 16th and final side to secure a place in the U19 Men's Cricket World Cup, to be jointly hosted by Zimbabwe and Namibia next year.

The team locked their spot in the global event with a game in hand by emphatically beating Canada, Bermuda and Argentina in the double round-robin Qualifier played in Rydal, Georgia.

USA set the tone with a 65-run win over Canada, followed by big victories against Bermuda and Argentina putting them in the driver's seat at the halfway stage of the competition. Their bowlers then came up with some more dominating performances to beat Bermuda and Argentina in the return leg to garner 10 points, which was enough to seal them the World Cup berth.

Top-order batter Amrinder Singh Gill scored 199 runs in three innings, while the spin-bowling duo of Ansh Rai and Sahir Bhatia grabbed seven scalps each. (PTI)

One lesson I've reflected upon is to convert my starts: Karun Nair on England series

BENGALURU, Aug 16: The underwhelming Test series against England might have been "frustrating" for Karun Nair at that time, but the India batter says it has also strengthened his resolve to "convert" the starts when the next opportunity comes his way.

Nair, who went to England with a truckload of domestic runs under his belt, returned from the Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy with 205 runs from eight innings at an average of 25.62, including the top-score of 57 at the Oval.

But he had scores of 40, 31, 26 and 21 in some of the other innings, indicating a palpable lack of conversion of good starts.

So, what happened against England? "Nothing like that. It was not like I was trying to prove anything. You know, it sometimes happens that you get starts in most of the games and then you find a way to get out. So, it was just that case for me in England," Nair told PTI.

But the top-order batter is now determined for a course correction. "I was batting really well throughout the series and I was getting starts in most games. I got to 30s and 40s. But I was just not able to convert it, which was frustrating for me more than anyone else. You know, I was reflecting on that, for me, to understand why that was happening and why I was getting out in 30s, 40s.

"You know, the one lesson which I have reflected upon is, you know, making sure that I convert the start that I get. I've spoken to a lot of people about it and they've given me some suggestions. I'm going to work on it very soon, so that, whenever I get a start next time, I can convert it," he noted.

But Nair is chuffed to be part of the team that drew the five-match series 2-2 at the end of a duel of titanic proportions.

"It was an amazing series. For me, to be part of this amazing team was a proud feeling because not many teams have gone to England and levelled the series in five test matches. So, I'm really proud to be part of this amazing team. I'm looking forward to, you know, making more memories with this team," he said.

Nair has little doubt this new crop of players will do well in the ongoing World Test Championship cycle (2025-27), beginning with the series against England.

"Yes, we have made a great start. We played really well throughout the series. But it's all about, you know, continuing this momentum and doing all the right things that we did against England.

"And improving on all the things that we need to improve on. So, we as players are trying to improve day by day as well and, hopefully, you know, we can do well in the current cycle," he added.

Nair also believes that in skipper Shubman Gill and head coach Gautam Gambhir, India has the right combination to guide the team in the transition phase, and cited the recent series against England as a pointer to that.

"You know, the best part was that the messaging was clear (from Gill and Gambhir), and the communication to the team was always clear from them. We showed that we never give up and our attitude was to always keep fighting. And that was exactly the messaging that was given to us. And we all bought into that.

"And, you could see that attitude from the players and from the team out there during the series. Like I said, it's just a start and I am sure that we are only going to improve on that. And hopefully, we can also work on the lessons that we have learned from the series," he added.

India will embrace the home season soon with assignments against the West Indies and South Africa, but Nair wants to focus on his preparations rather than worrying about selection matters.

"I am not looking too far ahead. I am just taking it day by day. Trying to, you know, work on everything that I can work on and on the learnings from the last series. And then, you know, as the time comes, we will know more about what's going to happen. (PTI)

Former Australian cricketer, captain and coach Bob Simpson dies at age 89

SYDNEY, Aug 16: Bob Simpson, a former player, captain and coach and one of the most influential figures in Australian cricket, has died at the age of 89. Cricket Australia on Saturday confirmed the death of Simpson, who represented Australia in 62 tests and two one-day internationals between 1957 and 1978.

Simpson scored 4,869 test runs, including 10 centuries and 27 half-centuries, and took 71 wickets, while captaining Australia in 39 tests.

Born in the inner-city Sydney suburb of Marrickville, the third son of immigrant parents from Scotland, Simpson was just 16 when he made his first-class debut for New South Wales state against Victoria.

"I was a naturally ambitious person anyway and never had any doubts I could go further," Simpson said. "It sounds cocky but I always believed in my own talents." He coached Australia from 1986 to 1996 and under his firm and steady guidance, Australia won the 1987 World Cup, four Ashes campaigns and in 1995 the Frank Worrell Trophy, ending a 17-year drought against the West Indies.

Cricket Australia said the Australian team will pay tribute to Simpson with a moment's silence before Saturday night's one-day international against South Africa at Cairns in northern Australia and will also wear black armbands.

Simpson made his test debut against South Africa in Johannesburg in 1957, and his first century came in an Ashes test at Old Trafford in Manchester in 1964, when Simpson went on to score 311. He is one of only seven Australians to make a triple-century.

He was also one of the greatest slip-fielders, taking 110 catches. Australia Prime Minister Anthony Albanese was among the first to pay tribute to Simpson.

"Bob Simpson's extraordinary service to Australian cricket spanned generations. As a player, captain and then era-defining coach, he set the highest standards for himself and the champions he led," Albanese wrote on X. "He will be long remembered by the game he loved. May he rest in peace."

Simpson was inducted into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame in 2013. "As a brilliant opening batter, incredible slips fielder and handy spin bowler, Bob was a mainstay of a very strong Australian team in the 1960s, and he became a leader across the game as Australian and New South Wales captain and as a coach," Cricket Australia chairman Mike Baird said in a statement. (AP)

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