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## Govt to bring down child marriage to zero by 2026: CM

Statewide form distribution for 'Nijut Moina Asoni 2.0' launched

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 6: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday asserted that his government is committed to bringing down the number of child marriages in the state to zero by 2026.

He said that the second edition of the 'Nijut Moina' scheme will enable the eradication of the menace.

"We have renewed our fight against child marriage with the launch of Nijut Moina 2.0, which will cover over 4 lakh girls in Assam, saving them from child marriage and giving wings to their educational dreams," Sarma said, while launching the second edition of the scheme here by distributing forms to girl students.

It marked a major step towards empowering girl students and eliminating child marriage across Assam.

The launch event was held at the Birinchi Kumar Barua Auditorium in Gauhati University, where the Chief Minister described the scheme as a "tool to eradicate child



marriage" and affirmed the government's commitment to bringing such marriages down to zero by 2026.

According to an official statement, the second phase of the scheme significantly expands its coverage, targeting around four lakh girl students enrolled in Higher Secondary (HS), Undergraduate (UG), Postgraduate (PG), and B.Ed programmes. Eligible students will receive monthly fi-

nancial assistance of ₹1,000 at the HS level, ₹1,250 at the UG level, and ₹2,500 at the PG level.

The scheme, Sarma said, is designed not just to offer monetary aid but to serve as a foundation for long-term social transformation through academic empowerment.

Under Nijut Moina 2.0, students in the first and second years of HS, UG, and PG programmes will be covered.

From next year, final-year under-

graduate students will also be included, with a goal of achieving 100% coverage of girl students.

The chief minister said the scheme will gradually extend to benefit up to ten lakh girls across the state.

While Nijut Moina 1.0 included only state universities and provincialised colleges, the expanded version will also include central universities such as Tezpur University and Assam University.

The scheme will now support students enrolled in self-financing courses as well, a move that Sarma described as necessary to ensure that no girl is left behind due to institutional affiliations or economic background.

Highlighting the inclusive nature of state-sponsored education initiatives, Sarma said that schemes such as Nijut Moina and Orunodoi are positively impacting students across all castes, tribes, and religions.

He underlined the government's efforts to open new avenues of opportunity (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## CM urges people not to take law into their hands but protest against encroachers

Govt setting up portal to apply for arms license

GUWAHATI, Aug 6: The Assam government is setting up a portal through which indigenous people living in "sensitive areas" can apply for arms licences, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Wednesday. The arms license will be granted after proper scrutiny and a multi-layered process, he said.

"A dedicated portal is coming up where indigenous people, who perceive a threat to their lives and reside in sensitive areas, can apply for Arms License," he said in a post on X, sharing a detailed guideline on who is eligible to apply and the process of application.

Those who are "original inhabitants or Indigenous Indian citizens of Assam", and "perceive a genuine threat to life and safety due to the vulnerability of the area of residence" are eligible to apply, the post said. People who (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

GUWAHATI, Aug 6: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday urged people not to take the law into their own hands but continue to protest against encroachers.

He asserted that the state government supports such protests and the "situation will turn worse if anyone attempts to harm the Assamese community", the chief minister said on the sidelines of a programme here.

Sarma was responding to questions regarding the recent call by several student and regional youth organisations asking Bengali-speaking Muslims to leave the districts of Sivasagar, Lakhimpur, Tinsukia, and Jorhat in Upper Assam.

Some incidents of assault have also been reported from these areas.

"People will protest if someone tries to destroy our culture and beliefs. We will have to firmly stand against such attempts, and this has to be stopped", he said.

Sarma said what was witnessed in the recent eviction drive at Urimghat in Golaghat district was "shocking, and I am going to show some more videos in a few days, which is even more alarm-

ing". "They (the encroachers) have illegally occupied thousands of bighas of land and converted it into fisheries, he said.

He said Lakhimpur, Jorhat and Sivasagar are historically significant places of the state and "if we do not raise our voice against such encroachments, then who will?"

"I firmly believe that our people must stand united and resist this lawfully. There will not be another opportunity after this, but it must be done within the boundaries of the law," Sarma said.

Nobody should take the law into their hands but protest and agitate against these issues, the CM said.

"Our responsibility is to stand firm and protest against these illegal elements because if Assamese people don't raise their voices, how can the law or police support us? Let us protest lawfully and leave the rest to the police," the CM said.

Opposition parties have alleged that the BJP-led state government's patronage is creating communal tension in Upper Assam and urged residents to avoid Hindu-Muslim conflicts instigated by (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## 2 maritime bills passed by both Houses of parl in a single day, first for shipping ministry

NEW DELHI, Aug 6: Two bills aimed at streamlining maritime governance with a modern and internationally compliant approach were given approval on a single day on Wednesday in both Houses of Parliament, amid continued protests by the Opposition.

While the Rajya Sabha passed a century-old colonial-era 'Carriage of Goods by Sea Bill, 2025', the Lok Sabha approved the 'Merchant Shipping Bill, 2024' amid the din.

Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal said it was a historic day as the parliament passed two important legislations - the Merchant Shipping Bill, 2024 and the Carriage of Goods Sea Bill, 2025 -- effectively endorsing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision to modernise India's mar-

itime sector, both policy and action wise.

"With the passage of the bills, the Modi government's push for India's modern shipping gets double endorsement from the Parliament," he said.

It was for the first time that the Ministry got parliamentary approval of two bills on the same day.

The bills will pave the way for a modern, efficient and globally aligned maritime policy framework in India, Sonowal said.

The landmark legislations designed to promote ease of doing business and make India's shipping sector future-ready, he said.

The Merchant Shipping Bill, 2024 is a progressive, future-ready legislation that replaces the outdated Merchant Shipping Act of 1958. The Bill marks a significant step towards aligning India's mar-

itime legal framework with global standards and strengthening the country's position as a trusted maritime trade hub.

Introducing the Merchant Shipping Bill, 2024 in the Lok Sabha, the minister, said that the Bill represents a decisive step towards positioning India as a global leader in maritime trade and governance.

"It is a progressive and advanced legislation, up to date with international maritime conventions and informed by the best practices of leading maritime nations," he said.

The Bill is a part of a series of major legal reforms undertaken over the past 11 years under the leadership of PM Modi, aimed at enabling robust growth in the shipping and maritime sectors.

These reforms have significantly enhanced (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Rescuers retrieve two bodies in Dharali amid bad weather; NDRF team reaches site

UTTARAKASHI (UTTARAKHAND), Aug 6: As the sun set over the flood-ravaged Himalayan village of Dharali with 190 people rescued and two bodies recovered on Wednesday, fears mounted for those still trapped under the massive river of sludge that buried scores of houses, trees and cars.

Four people are suspected to have been killed in the disaster that struck the ecologically fragile area on Tuesday afternoon.

Two bodies were recovered on Wednesday and 15 are missing, Disaster Management Secretary Vinod Kumar Suman said.

Two Chinook helicopters have reached Sahastradhara helipad in Dehradun in which 50 NDRF jawans are to be taken along with rescue equipment to ground zero. Five AN-32 helicopters of the IAF have also arrived at the helipad on the way to Dharali.

Tonnes of rubble lay on the site with the ITBP, Army and SDRF personnel rummaging through it for those trapped underneath amid continuing rain and road collapses.

Officials said the army's Ibex brigade which had helped in rescue operations in the Mana avalanche of February is preparing to take the help of ground pen-



UTTARAKHAND CLOUDBURST

etrating radars and sniffer dogs to search the missing. Two more NDRF teams are en route to Dharali but have been unable to get there because continuous landslides have blocked the Rishikesh-Uttarakashi highway.

According to Mohsen Shahedi, NDRF deputy inspector general (DIG) operations, two NDRF teams are to be airlifted from Dehradun, but they can't be moved as bad weather is preventing a successful sortie. Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Chief Minister Pushkar (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Bihar SIR cannot be discussed in House as matter before Supreme Court: Rijiju in Lok Sabha

NEW DELHI, Aug 6: Turning down the Opposition's demand for a discussion on electoral roll revision in Bihar, the government asserted in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday that matters pending before the judiciary cannot be discussed on the floor of the House.

As soon as the Lower House met again at 2 PM after two earlier adjournments, the opposition parties continued with the protests demanding a discussion on the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar by the Election Commission.

Speaking in the House, Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju stressed that rules of the Lok Sabha do not allow sub-judice matters to be discussed in the House. He also pointed out that the functioning of autonomous institutions such as the Election Commission cannot be discussed in Parliament.

Rijiju cited a 1998 ruling by then Lok Sabha speaker Bal Ram Jhakar that under the existing constitutional provisions, the House cannot comment upon the actions of the Election Commission. Jhakar, according to Rijiju, had said that he cannot break the rules by allowing a discussion on the functioning of the EC.

"The government has been very open to taking up discussion on any matter. However, any discussion in the Parliament has to be in accordance with constitutional provisions and also in accordance with

the rules as prescribed in the procedure and conduct of business in the Lok Sabha.

"On the issue of intensive revision of electoral rolls in Bihar for which they (opposition members) are disturbing the House from first day of the session, we all know that the matter is under consideration of the Supreme Court and as such it is sub-judice and a hence a discussion cannot be held on the subject," Rijiju said.

Over 10 petitions have been filed in the apex court against SIR including by opposition parties and NGO 'Association for Democratic Reforms', the lead petitioner.

Rijiju underlined that the issue relates to the functioning of the Election Commission of India, which is an autonomous body.

"In the past, it has been clearly established in this House itself that matters falling under the domain of the Election Commission of India cannot be discussed in this House," he said in the Lok Sabha.

"On 14 December 1988, when a member tried to raise the issue pertaining to the functioning of Election Commission, the then Lok Sabha speaker Bal Ram Jhakar had ruled in the following words - 'you know that I can comment upon the actions and decisions of the Election Commission, which is an autonomous body nor can they do it, you have to change the Constitution. I cannot allow, I cannot break (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Unfair, unjustified: India on Trump's additional tariff on Indian goods



NEW DELHI, Aug 6: India on Wednesday described the US action of levying 25 per cent additional tariff on Indian goods as "unfair, unjustified and unreasonable".

New Delhi's sharp reaction came shortly after US President Donald Trump signed an executive order imposing the fresh tariff citing India's continuing purchase of Russian crude oil notwithstanding the Western sanctions.

The new tariff is in addition to 25 per cent levies he has already announced. In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said India will take all actions necessary to protect its national interests.

"We reiterate that these actions are unfair, unjustified and unreasonable," it said. The MEA said the US has in recent days "targeted" India's oil imports from Russia.

"We have already made clear our

position on these issues, including the fact that our imports are based on market factors and done with the overall objective of ensuring the energy security of 1.4 billion people of India," it said.

"It is therefore extremely unfortunate that the US should choose to impose additional tariffs on India for actions that several other countries are also taking in their own national interest," it added. (PTI)

## Western Hoolock Gibbon is one of the 20 gibbon species found in Asia

## India's only ape Western Hoolock Gibbon under threat: Primatologist

GUWAHATI, Aug 6: The endangered Western Hoolock Gibbons, the only ape of India, are under threat with cases of local extinction already observed in fragmented forest patches in the northeast region, a primatologist said here on Wednesday.

Habitat loss due to encroachment, unregulated resource extraction, infrastructure development, tea plantations, shifting cultivation, hunting, and wildlife trafficking are threats to these primates, he said.

"There has been a steady decline in the population of Western Hoolock Gibbons with cases of local extinction observed in fragmented forest patches of the north-eastern region in India," primatologist Dilip Chetry said after returning from Antananarivo in Madagascar, where the 30th Congress of the International Primatological Society (IPS) was held recently.

He urged the central government to initiate a national-level Project



Gibbon, modelled on Project Tiger or Project Elephant, to ensure the long-term survival of India's only ape. He pointed out that the Western Hoolock Gibbon is one of the 20 gibbon species found in Asia, and its distribution spans eastern Bangladesh, northeastern India, and parts of Myanmar.

The population of the ape in India is restricted to the southern

bank of the Brahmaputra river and east of the Dibang river across seven states in the northeast region.

The primatologist, who is also the vice chair of the IUCN SSC Primate Specialist Group - South Asia, called for urgent conservation actions, including the restoration of degraded habitats, creation of ecological corridors, scientific research, capacity building for forest

staff, and community engagement. He also stressed the need to promote the Western Hoolock Gibbon as a flagship species to generate broader public and policy support for biodiversity conservation in the region.

Chetry urged the Centre to develop a dedicated 'Gibbon Conservation Action Plan' for each state in northeast India, leading towards a national action plan with dedicated budgetary support.

The Congress of the International Primatological Society, held from 20-25 July, brought together 657 registered delegates from 53 countries to evaluate the world's 25 most endangered primates for 2025-2027.

The Congress declared 25 most endangered primates of the world, which include six from Asia-Bangka Slow Loris, Sangihe Tarsier, Pig-tailed Langur, Myanmar Snub-nosed Monkey, Tapanuli Orangutan and Western Hoolock Gibbon, Chetry said. (PTI)

## Woman dies of burn injuries; husband arrested

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Aug 6: A woman identified as Meghali Saikia (42), mother of two, died of burn injuries in a suspected case of domestic violence at Bamparbatia Puhumora Chuburi in Tezpur on Wednesday morning.

She succumbed to her injuries at around 7:53 am while undergoing treatment at a private hospital.

Meghali was admitted to the hospital around 11 pm on Tuesday night after sustaining severe burn injuries.

Despite efforts by the medical team, she could not be saved.

Family members and relatives have alleged that Meghali had been a victim of regular domestic abuse by her husband, Jayanta Saikia.

According to sources, Meghali's daughter had earlier lodged a verbal complaint against Jayanta at the Lalmati police outpost on June 24.

Jayanta was detained the same night but was later released.

In an attempt to rescue Meghali from the fire, her brother-in-law Dipen Bora also sustained burn injuries.

He was initially admitted to Baptist Mission Hospital and later shifted to Tezpur Medical College Hospital for further treatment.

Police have arrested Jayanta Saikia and launched an investigation into the incident.

The death has triggered widespread outrage in the locality, with residents demanding a thorough and impartial inquiry into the case.

## Assam govt realises ₹ 7.5 cr from company for evading tax

LAKEHIMPUR, Aug 6: The Assam government on Wednesday realised ₹ 7.5 crore for tax evasion from a Haryana-based company involved in constructing a four-lane road from Dhemaji to Oyan in Arunachal Pradesh, an official said.

A 12-member team from Guwahati conducted an investigation into tax evasion allegations against Kaluwal Construction Private Limited over six days.

Investigations have so far revealed an estimated tax evasion of around ₹ 64 crore.

The company failed to provide adequate justification for several discrepancies identified in their GST profile during the verification process, the official said.

"As a result, immediate enforcement action was taken, leading to the recovery of ₹ 7.5 crore", he added.

Further investigations are underway to determine the full extent of the evasion. (PTI)



# RBI keeps interest rates unchanged amid uncertainty over Trump's tariffs

**MUMBAI, Aug 6:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) kept its policy interest rate unchanged on Wednesday as it appeared to have taken a wait-and-watch approach to assess the full unveiling of US President Donald Trump's trade policies as well as transmission of past rate cuts.

The six-member rate-setting panel, headed by RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra, held the repo rate at 5.5 per cent in a unanimous vote and decided to continue with a 'neutral' stance.

While on-track monsoon rains and the approaching festival season are expected to provide buoyancy to the economy, global trade challenges continue to linger, Malhotra said, announcing the decision of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

Trump last month slapped a 25 per cent duty on all Indian goods entering the US from August 7, and on Tuesday threatened to substantially hike the tariff for New Delhi's continued purchase of Russian oil.

"Over the medium-term also, the Indian economy holds bright prospects in the changing world order, drawing on its inherent strength, robust fundamentals, and comfortable buffers," he said. "Opportunities are there for the taking, and we are making all efforts to create enabling conditions through a multi-pronged yet cohesive approach to policy making."

The pause follows a 100 basis point (bps) cut in interest rate over three bi-monthly MPC meetings in 2025. The full transmission of the front-loaded 50 bps rate cut ef-



fect in June is still awaited.

While keeping the repo rate unchanged, RBI revised its inflation forecast lower by 60 bps to 3.1 per cent. Malhotra flagged a rise in headline inflation towards the end of the year. "CPI inflation is likely to edge up above 4 per cent in Q4:2025-26 and beyond, as unfavourable base effects, and demand side factors from policy actions come into play," he said.

With the target for inflation being kept above 4 per cent for the fourth quarter of the current fiscal year ending March 31, 2026 and the first quarter of next, and the forecast for GDP growth at 6.6 per cent for Q1 FY27, raises the bar for a further rate cut in the coming quarters, economists said.

The central bank kept the GDP growth forecast unchanged at 6.5 per cent for 2025-26 (FY26).

"Despite a challenging external environment, the Indian economy is navigating a steady growth path with price stability. Monetary policy has appropriately used the pol-

icy space created by the benign inflation outlook to support growth without compromising on the primary objective of price stability," he said.

Malhotra said transmission of recent interest rate cuts to the broader economy is underway.

"As the Indian economy strives to attain its rightful place in the global economy, stronger policy frameworks across domains, and not just limited to monetary policy, will be pivotal in its journey," he said. "We, on our part, will continue to be agile and proactive in providing a facilitative monetary policy based on incoming data and the evolution of the growth-inflation dynamics."

State Bank of India's Economic Research Department said the bar for a further rate cut in 2025 is now even higher.

"We may dub today's pause as the 'technical pause' as the inflation projections are hovering in the band of uncertainty (while below 3 per cent FY26 Q3, it may sharply

increase to 4.9 per cent in Q1 FY27). Under such a scenario (along with expectations of robust GDP growth), we believe that if RBI inflation projections for FY26 may remain correct then 5.5 per cent repo rate may be the terminal rate.

"However, if the inflation numbers undershot, a window will open up, but at most it will be at most a 25 bps," it said.

Tanvee Gupta Jain, Chief India Economist at UBS Securities, said, "For now, we add one 25 bps rate cut in the October meeting to our baseline, with risk of another if growth surprises lower, driven by US trade tariffs, or a step shift lower in global growth."

Dipti Deshpande, Principal Economist, Crisil Ltd, observed that the transmission of the already announced repo rate cuts to the credit markets (or to lending rates) remains a work in progress. Bank lending rates and deposit rates have not eased as much as the repo rate.

Also, while the Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation has eased more than expected, an upturn looms in the second half of this fiscal for three reasons: the upcoming festive season, easier monetary policy propping up demand, and an expected statistical uptick from the low base of last fiscal.

Upasna Bhardwaj, Chief Economist, Kotak Mahindra Bank, said, "With inflation likely to trend higher post the near-term favourable trends, the bar for rate cuts ahead is set very high. We can see some room for the last leg of easing only if growth momentum slows significantly." (PTI)

## Axis Bank launches industry-first 'Lock FD' feature

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Aug 6:** In a significant move aimed at enhancing the security of customer deposits, Axis Bank, one of India's largest private sector banks, has introduced an industry-first feature called 'Lock FD'. The feature is designed to protect customers' term deposits from digital fraud by disabling premature closure of Fixed Deposits (FDs) through digital channels.

According to an official statement issued by the bank, Lock FD allows customers to opt out of digital access for premature closure of their FDs. Once this feature is activated via the Axis Bank mobile app 'Open' or at any of the bank's branches, the option to close FDs through digital modes—such as Internet and Mobile Banking—gets disabled. To prematurely close a locked FD, customers will need to visit a branch in person, where identity verification protocols will be followed. This additional layer of security is expected to deter unauthorized or fraudulent attempts to siphon off funds.

The bank stated that the functionality is particularly beneficial for individuals who may be less familiar with digital platforms and therefore more vulnerable to online financial frauds.

By mandating in-branch verification for premature FD closures, the feature significantly reduces the risk of cybercriminals misusing digital banking credentials.

Speaking on the launch, Sameer Shetty, Group Executive - Digital Business, Transformation & Strategic Programs at Axis Bank, said, "At Axis Bank, we have been continuously investing in digital-first propositions that focus on secure and seamless banking experiences."

"Participants were awaiting the outcome of the MPC meeting, which was in line with expectations, as the policy rate remained unchanged and the neutral stance continued. As a result, there was no significant market reaction," Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

In Asian markets, Japan's Nikkei 225, Shanghai's SSE Composite index, and Hong Kong's Hang Seng closed in the positive territory, while South Korea's Kospi settled on a flat note.

The European markets are trading in the green territory. The US markets ended lower on Tuesday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude rose 1.61 per cent to USD 68.73 a barrel. Foreign Institutional Investors offloaded equities worth ₹ 22.48 crore while Domestic Institutional Investors purchased equities worth ₹ 3,840.39 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data. Sensex fell by 308.47 points to close at 80,710.25 and Nifty dipped 73.20 points to 24,649.55 on Tuesday. (PTI)

# Christian Basti's L Gopal Jewellers bags national honour

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Aug 6:** L Gopal Jewellers Pvt Ltd, a well-known jewellery house based in Christian Basti, Guwahati, has received national recognition from the Gems and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC).

The company's young director, Yogesh Soni, was honoured with the prestigious 'Forty Under 40' award at the recently concluded India International Jewellery Show (IJS) in Mumbai.

According to an official statement, Yogesh Soni was recognised for his innovative business practices and contributions to digital transformation within the gems and jewellery sector. He is the only entrepreneur from Northeast India to feature in this elite list of 40 leading jewellery professionals in the country under the age of 40.

Guided by Jagmohan Soni, the head of L Gopal Jewellers Pvt Ltd, Yogesh has spearheaded several forward-looking initiatives, including the introduction of the



Digital Gold Scheme. Launched last year, the scheme enables customers, particularly from middle-income groups, to invest in gold through small, regular monthly savings, thereby making the precious metal more accessible. L Gopal Jewellers Pvt. Ltd. is a prominent name in the jewellery retail segment in Northeast India.

The company is known for its design excellence and customer-focused innovations and continues to set new benchmarks in the regional jewellery industry.

*Contd. from Page 1...*

## Govt to bring down child

by significantly expanding the higher education network across the state. The chief minister observed that the educational landscape in Assam has undergone a dramatic transformation.

The state today boasts 25 medical colleges in various stages of operation, more than 25 universities, and nearly 400 general colleges. Institutions of national importance like IIT-Guwahati, AIIMS, IIIT, and the upcoming Swahid Kanaklata Baruah University are contributing to what he termed an "academic revolution."

Alongside these, the presence of Sainik Schools, Navodaya Vidyalayas, Kendriya Vidyalayas, and Adarsha Vidyalayas has enriched the learning ecosystem, placing Assam among the top ten states in terms of institutional presence relative to population density. Sarma also reiterated that girl students have a crucial role to play in building a "New Assam." He said the youth of the state are now more self-reliant, determined, and aspirational than ever, and girl students must be at the forefront of this transformation.

Referring to the battle against child marriage, the chief minister said, "We have renewed our tirade against child marriage. With the launch of Nijut Moina 2.0, four lakh girl students will save themselves from the scourge of child marriage while fulfilling their dreams of being academically empowered."

Applications distributed during the launch event are to be submitted to the respective institutions. The data will be uploaded through the SCERT, Darpan, and Samarth digital portals to ensure timely processing and transparency. The event was attended by education minister Ranaj Pegu, vice chancellor of Gauhati University Prof Nani Gopal Mahanta, secretary of school and higher education Narayan Konwar, and several other dignitaries. Ministers, MLAs, principals, and students from across the state also joined the central function virtually.

## Govt setting up

reside in vulnerable or remote areas, as notified by the district administration or assessed as such by authorised security agencies, are also eligible to apply, it added. The process of granting the license will include security assessment, verification and vetting, compliance with existing laws, non-transferability and periodic review along with monitoring and reporting, according to the post. The state cabinet on May 28 had decided that arms licences would be given to indigenous people living in "vulnerable and remote" areas to instil a sense of security in them. The CM had said some of these "vulnerable and remote areas" are Dhubri, Morigaon, Barpeta, Nagaon, South Salmara-Mankachar, Rupahi, Dhing and Jania. All of these places have large Muslim populations. Sarma had claimed that indigenous people living in such areas have been demanding an arms licence for safety purposes since the Assam Agitation period, which took place between 1979 and 1985. He had claimed that the Assamese people won't survive by doing agitation, but by taking "practical steps". (PTI)

## CM urges people not

some "misguided youths". The state government has carried out seven eviction drives since June this year affecting more than 50,000 people, and the CM had earlier said that all unauthorised occupation of forest land, village grazing reserve, professional grazing reserve, satras, namghars, and other public areas would be cleared in a phased manner. Most of the people displaced due to the eviction drive are Bengali-speaking Muslims who claim that their ancestors had moved and settled in the areas where drives were carried out after their land in the 'Char' or riverine areas was washed away due to erosion by the Brahmaputra. (PTI)

## Rescuers retrieve two bodies

Singh Dhami to get an update on the situation and assured him of the Centre's assistance. Modi also met MPs from Uttarakhand -- Anil Baluni, Mala Rajya Laxmi Shah, Trivendra Singh Rawat and Ajay Bhatt -- at the Parliament House and was briefed on the current situation and the ongoing rescue operations. Dhami did an aerial survey of the affected areas and met the kin of the missing people in Dharali assuring them of all support. "190 people have been rescued. All of them are safe and are in secure places," he told PTI Videos, adding, "The injured have been admitted to hospitals while some have been sent to the military camps and higher centres." Dharali is about 140 km from Dehradun and usually a five-hour drive.

"Today I will be staying in Uttarkashi to closely monitor the relief and rescue operations in Dharali. I am also continuously reviewing the rescue operation by holding meetings with the officials," Dhami also said in a Facebook post. "Rescue operations are being carried out with full readiness by SDRF, NDRF, Army, ITBP and the local administration," he said.

Landslides blocked arterial roads leading up to Dharali where dozens of people were trapped and many homes and cars swept away by the raging waters on Tuesday. Eleven Army personnel from the nearby camp in Harsil were among those missing. One of the persons whose body was retrieved was identified as that of 35-year-old Akash Panwar, the Uttarkashi Disaster Control Room said. A 28-member group of tourists, who are natives of Kerala, is also among the missing. "They said they were leaving from Uttarkashi to Gangotri around 8.30 am that day. The landslides occurred along that route. We have been unable to contact them since they left," a relative of one of the missing said. Dharali is the main stopover on the way to Gangotri, from where the Ganga originates, and is home to several hotels and home stays. (PTI)

## 2 maritime bills passed

efficiency, transparency, and global competitiveness. Highlighting the need for an updated framework, Sonowal noted that the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 had become bulky, fragmented, and outdated with 561 sections, failing to address contemporary maritime challenges or fully implement India's obligations under several key International Maritime Organization (IMO) conventions. "The Merchant Shipping Bill, 2024, with 16 parts and 325 clauses, modernises India's maritime legal framework by aligning with international conventions, enhancing safety at sea, improving emergency response, and ensuring environmental protection. It reduces compliance burdens, promotes Indian tonnage, and prioritises seafarer welfare and ship safety."

"The Bill aims to make India a globally respected maritime jurisdiction and unlock sustainable growth, investment, and innovation in the sector," Sarbananda Sonowal said. On the other hand, in the Rajya Sabha, the Carriage of Goods by Sea Bill, 2025, was passed that repealed a century-old Indian Carriage of Goods by Sea Act, 1925, culminating the parliamentary process as it was already passed by the Lok Sabha.

The new legislation is part of the government's broader effort to modernise India's legal framework by eliminating outdated colonial-era laws and aligning with global best practices to improve ease of doing business.

The bill adopts the Hague-Visby Rules, a globally accepted maritime standard also followed by countries like the United Kingdom. By replacing complexity with clarity, the legislation is expected to simplify maritime trade laws, reduce litigation risks, and enhance transparency and commercial efficiency in cargo movement by sea. The bill was introduced by Shantanu Thakur, Union Minister of State for Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW) in the Rajya Sabha.

Thakur said the repeal of this pre-Constitution era legislation and its replacement with a new legislation is a part of the greater initiative of this government to rid ourselves of all vestiges of colonial mindset and to ensure ease of understanding and ease of doing business through simple and rationalised laws.

"This Bill is not merely a statutory reform, it reflects a broader philosophy of governance led by Prime Minister Modi to replace complexity with clarity, outdated norms with modern standards, and colonial remnants with forward-looking laws that serve the interests of a resurgent India," he said. The bill is a key step in making India's maritime trade laws future-ready and compatible with international trade agreements, including the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with the UK. The legislation was passed by the Lok Sabha on March 28 this year. During the Rajya Sabha discussion, members raised issues including maritime security and smuggling risks, which the government assured were being addressed through statutory and operational safeguards. The bill received broad bipartisan support in both Houses of Parliament. (PTI)

## Bihar SIR cannot be

the rules'," Rijiju said. The minister asserted that this is a decision taken by a previous Lok Sabha and "we have to honour them". Rijiju urged the members to participate in the debates for the passage of key legislations. "I urge the members not to disrupt the House. There are important bills to be taken up. The Sports Bill is listed for today, but we will take it up later because we want discussions," he said.

Meanwhile, leaders of several opposition parties on Wednesday urged Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to refer the National Sports Governance Bill, 2025 and the National Anti-Doping (Amendment) Bill, 2025, to a joint committee of Parliament for further scrutiny. In a joint letter to the Speaker, the opposition leaders said there is a need for a broader consensus on the two significant bills, listed for consideration and passage in the House, considering their national importance. The opposition has been creating uproar in both houses of Parliament on their demand for a discussion on SIR, which they allege is aimed at disenfranchising a large number of voters. Sources in Opposition on Wednesday said that it has proposed allowing a discussion on "electoral reforms" as a "middle path" to end the deadlock in Parliament.

However, government sources indicated that the ruling side is unlikely to accede to any such debate.

On Wednesday, several MPs of the INDIA bloc parties held a protest in the Parliament House complex against SIR and demanded its rollback as well as a debate on it in both Houses of Parliament. Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra slammed the government, saying "they have become so weak that neither are they able to face" US President Donald Trump, "nor are they able to run Parliament". "It is a very simple thing, we are only asking for a discussion (on SIR). It is very easy for them to resolve this within five minutes. They should discuss it; what is the harm? Our viewpoint will come forth, their viewpoint will come forth, it will be over," the MP from Wayanad said as she participated in the protest and raised slogans against the government and SIR. (PTI)

## Trump doubles tariff on India to 50 pc for buying Russian oil

**WASHINGTON/NEW DELHI, Aug 6:** US President Donald Trump on Wednesday slapped an additional 25 per cent tariff on goods coming from India as penalty for New Delhi's continued purchase of Russian oil, a move that is likely to hit sectors such as textiles, marine and leather exports hard. Trump signed an executive order - Addressing Threats to the US by the Government of the Russian Federation - imposing the additional tariff over an above the 25 per cent levy which comes into effect from August 7.

After this order, the total tariff on Indian goods, barring a small exemption list, will be 50 per cent.

"The ad valorem duty imposed...shall be in addition to any other duties, fees, taxes, exactions, and charges applicable to such imports..." the order said.

While the initial duty becomes

effective on August 7, the additional levy will come into effect after 21 days or August 27.

"I find that the Government of India is currently directly or indirectly importing Russian Federation oil. Accordingly, and as consistent with applicable law, articles of India imported into the customs territory of the United States shall be subject to an additional ad valorem rate of duty of 25 percent," it said.

India buys about 88 per cent of its crude oil, which is converted into fuels like petrol and diesel, from overseas. Russian oil made up for hardly 0.2 per cent of all crude oil that India imported till 2021. After Moscow invaded Ukraine, Russian oil was available at a discount to international benchmarks due to western sanctions, and was quickly lapped up by Indian refiners. Russia is now

India's largest oil supplier.

In July, India imported about 5 million barrels of oil a day, of which 1.6 million came from Russia. After the new levy, India will attract the highest tariff of 50 per cent along with Brazil. After this, India's competitors will be much better placed in the US market as their duty is lower - Myanmar (40 per cent), Thailand and Cambodia (both 36 per cent), Bangladesh (35 per cent), Indonesia (32 per cent), China and Sri Lanka (both 30 per cent), Malaysia (25 per cent), Philippines and Vietnam (both 20 per cent). There was no immediate response from the Indian government on the fresh levy. The announcement comes at a time when a US team is scheduled to visit India from August 25 for the sixth round of negotiations for the proposed bilateral trade agreement (BTA). (PTI)

## Piaggio launches new Apé Elektrik models

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Aug 6:** Piaggio Vehicles Pvt. Ltd. (PVPL), a wholly owned subsidiary of the Italian auto major Piaggio Group and a leading manufacturer of small passenger and commercial vehicles in India, has announced the launch of its new electric three-wheeler passenger range under the Apé Elektrik brand.

The 2025 line-up features the all-new Apé E-City Ultra and an upgraded Apé E-City FX Maxx, aimed at strengthening last-mile urban mobility with cutting-edge electric vehicle technology.

According to an official statement, the Apé E-City Ultra sets a new benchmark in the segment with a certified range of 236 kilometres, peak power output of 9.55 kW, and a torque of 45 Nm. It also boasts a top speed of 55 kmph, 28% gradeability for inclined terrains, and a "Climb Assist Mode" for added torque during uphill drives. Built on a durable full-metal body and powered by a 10.2 kWh Lithium Ferrous Phosphate (LFP) battery, the vehicle is equipped with a 3 kW fast charger, helping reduce charging downtime.

The model comes with advanced 4G telematics fea-

tures, such as live tracking, geo-fencing, remote immobilisation, and a digital speedometer that provides real-time data on speed, battery levels, range, and system alerts. It carries a warranty of 5 years or 2,25,000 kilometres, highlighting the manufacturer's confidence in its durability and efficiency.

The Apé E-City FX Maxx, an already established model in the electric three-wheeler segment, has been introduced with significant upgrades. It now offers a certified range of 174 kilometres per charge, peak motor power of 7.4 kW, and 30 Nm of torque.

The vehicle features an 8.0 kWh battery built with prismatic cell technology, known for better energy balance and longer battery life. With 19% gradeability and smart energy monitoring systems, the FX Maxx is positioned as a reliable option for city-based daily use, especially in congested or high-traffic areas.

Speaking on the launch, Diego Graffi, Chairman and Managing Director of Piaggio Vehicles Pvt. Ltd., said that the Indian market is undergoing a critical transition towards electric mobility, with three-wheelers playing a key role.

## Sensex falls by 160 pts on sell-off in IT, healthcare shares as RBI keeps rate unchanged

**MUMBAI, Aug 6:** Falling for the second day, benchmark BSE Sensex declined by 160 points on Wednesday due to selling in IT and healthcare shares amid the RBI policy decision to keep the key interest rates unchanged.

The 30-share BSE Sensex fell 166.26 points or 0.21 per cent to settle at 80,543.99 with 18 of its constituents ending lower and 12 with gains. During the day, it declined 261.43 points or 0.32 per cent to hit a low of 80,448.82.

### NAME CORRECTION

I, Smt. Kliret Patorpi, daughter of Sri Hemari Pator of village Umchera, P.S., Hamren, West Karbi Anglong, has declared through an affidavit before the Notary, West Karbi Anglong on 27/12/2019 that my actual name is kliret Patorpi, but my name is wrongly mentioned on my Photo Voter Identity Card as Klirrit Patorpi. Henceforth I shall be known as Kliret Patorpi for all purposes.

The 50-share NSE Nifty dipped 75.35 points or 0.31 per cent to close at 24,574.20. In the intraday session, the index decreased 110.35 points or 0.44 per cent to hit a low of 24,539.20.

Among the Sensex firms, Sun Pharmaceuticals, Tech Mahindra, HCL Technologies, Infosys, Bajaj Finance, Eternal, Tata Consultancy Services, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Finserv, Tata Steel, ITC and L&T were the major laggards.

Asian Paints, Mahindra & Mahindra, BEL, Adani Ports, State Bank of India, Trent, HDFC Bank were among the gainers.

"Despite renewed trade tensions—stemming from the U.S.—the domestic market remained resilient, holding firm near the key support level of 24,500. The pharma sector underperformed, emerging as a notable casualty of the tariff warnings," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments, said.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) kept its policy interest rate unchanged on Wednesday, as poli-

cymakers weighed the risks posed by US President Donald Trump's trade policies and the uncertainties surrounding the potential for higher tariffs.

The RBI also retained the GDP growth projection for the current fiscal year at 6.5 per cent while lowering the inflation forecast to 3.1 per cent from 3.7 per cent.

The BSE smallcap gauge declined 1.14 per cent and the mid-cap index by 1 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, Focused IT fell by 1.78 per cent, followed by Healthcare (1.72 per cent), IT (1.64 per cent), Realty (1.55 per cent), Teck (1.20 per cent), Industrials and Capital Goods (0.83 per cent each), FMCG (0.80 per cent), Telecommunication (0.75 per cent) were among the laggards.

Bankex is the only gainer.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms eroded by ₹ 3,50,296.28 crore to ₹ 4,45,19,999.04 (USD 5.08 trillion) in two days of fall in the equity market.



## State's flagship girl child scheme sees enthusiastic response, with leaders, officials and institutions joining hands to boost education and empowerment

# Statewide rollout of 'Nijut Moina 2.0' sees overwhelming response across state

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Aug 6:** The Assam Government's flagship initiative Mukhya Mantrir Nijut Moina Asoni 2.0 witnessed enthusiastic participation across districts on Wednesday, with formal launch and application distribution ceremonies held simultaneously at colleges and universities throughout the state.

The scheme, which aims to empower girl students through direct financial assistance, was officially inaugurated by chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma at Gauhati University, with the central function live-streamed in all participating institutions.

In Tinsukia district, events were held across 12 colleges including Doomsdama College, Tinsukia College, and Digboi College.

Labour Minister Rupesh Gowala, Tinsukia MLA Sanjay Kishan, and other local dignitaries participated in the ceremonies.

The programme was marked by the ceremonial distribution of application forms and wide participation by college students and faculty.

According to officials, eligible female

students will receive monthly financial assistance ranging from ₹1,000 to ₹2,500 depending on their level of study.

In Nagaon, a similar programme was organised at Nagaon University where local MLA Rupak Sarma and senior district officials including Deputy Commissioner Debashish Sarma and Vice-Chancellor Dr Hitesh Deka graced the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, MLA Sarma described the scheme as a game-changer that would help reduce dropout rates and encourage girls to pursue higher education.

Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong also witnessed a robust launch.

In Diphu, the district administration hosted a live broadcast of the state-level launch at the Sarsing Teron Langkung Habe Multi-Purpose Sports Complex.

KAAC Chief Executive Member Tuliram Ronghang, along with several MLAs and executive members, attended the event.

As per an official data, 2,501 students from 23 schools and 1,683 students from 11 colleges in Karbi Anglong, and 633 students from 10 schools in West Karbi



Anglong have been identified as eligible beneficiaries.

In a parallel development, 338 new Karbi language and medium teachers received appointment letters, highlighting the government's sustained focus on educational upliftment in hill districts.

In Dima Hasao, Minister of Sports and Youth Welfare Nandita Gorlosa attended the launch at Maibang Degree College, while parallel programmes were held at

Haflong.

The minister emphasised the importance of the scheme in breaking social and economic barriers for girls.

Members of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council, senior bureaucrats, and local leaders were also present.

The initiative is expected to benefit thousands of students in the district by providing financial stability and promoting higher education among girls.

Ceremonial events were also held in Demow and Nitaipukhuri, where application forms were distributed at Demow College, Hemchandra Deva Goswami College, and Bir Lachit Borpuhan College.

Demow MLA Sushanta Borgohain, Zilla Parishad Chairman Anima Chungkrang, and Demow Municipal Board Chairperson Pallabita Baruah were among those present.

MLA Borgohain stated on social media that the scheme would play a vital role in preventing child marriage and ensuring academic continuity for over four lakh girls across the state.

In Hojai, the inauguration ceremony took place at Bharat Tirtha Bhavan, Rabindranath Thakur Vishwavidyalaya.

Hojai MLA Ramkrishna Ghosh, who attended as chief guest, described the scheme as a foundation for long-term societal progress.

University Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr Manabendra Dutta Choudhury praised the government's intervention as crucial for reducing dropout rates in backward regions like Hojai.

The scheme also officially commenced

in Margherita, Makum, Sadiya, Ledo, and Dirak-Kakopthar, among other locations, with extensive involvement of local MLAs, municipal leaders, and administrative officials.

Across these events, government officials reiterated that applications must be submitted online by September 4 through the designated portal.

The Nijut Moina Asoni 2.0 scheme is designed to support around 10 lakh girl students across Assam by offering monthly financial assistance of ₹1,000 for Class XI, ₹1,250 for first-year undergraduates, and ₹2,500 for postgraduate students, each for a period of 10 months.

Officials said the initiative aims to combat child marriage, encourage continued education, and create a generation of empowered women, especially from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

According to official sources, the successful and synchronised rollout of the scheme across all districts represents a significant step forward in the state's mission to ensure gender equity in education and improve academic outcomes for female students.

## 338 Karbi language and medium teachers regularised under KAAC

**HT Bureau**  
**DIPHU, Aug 6:** A total of 338 regularised Karbi Language Teachers (KLT) and Karbi Medium Teachers (KMT) under the Karbi Language Development Board (KLDB) of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) received their appointment letters from Chief Executive Member (CEM) Tuliram Ronghang at a ceremonial function held on Wednesday at the Sarsing Teron (Langkung Habe) Memorial Town Hall, Matipung. Following their regularisation, the KLTs and KMTs will now receive a monthly salary of ₹31,670 as per the pay scale of State government employees. The KLDB was formed in 2008 under KAAC with the objective of promoting the Karbi language.

One Karbi medium school was established in each of the 26 MAC constituencies in Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong.

Teachers were appointed to these schools, and in subsequent years, Karbi Language Teachers were introduced across government schools under the KAAC to teach the Karbi language. Addressing the gathering, CEM Tuliram Ronghang said the initiative aimed to enable children to receive foundational education in their mother tongue.

Initially, KLTs and KMTs were given a monthly honorarium of ₹2,000 from KAAC resources, which was later increased to ₹15,000.

Referring to teachers who could not be accommodated under the new regularisation plan, Ronghang said, "Not all the teachers could be taken in. There are a certain number of teachers left out in this new plan due to some obstacles. Do not be disheartened and I assure you that in the next EC meeting we will formulate ways to absorb all the teachers."

The function was attended by Deputy Chairman of KAAC Avijit Kroi; Executive Member in charge of Education, Richard Tokbi; EM Prabhat Ch. Taro; and Chairman of Assam Hills Small Industries Development Corporation Ltd., Ratan Teron.

## Abandoned vehicle with BJP flag found near Uriagaon, investigation underway

**HT Correspondent**  
**NAGAON, Aug 6:** A driverless vehicle parked for three days on the four-lane National Highway near Uriagaon in Nagaon has sparked public curiosity and concern.

The white WagonR, bearing registration number AS 01 EK 5700, was reported by local residents, following which police from the Itachali outpost reached the spot and recovered the vehicle.

During inspection, police found a BJP flag inside the car, a stick in the dicky, and a sticker on the number plate bearing the words "Government of Assam." Speculation is rife among locals about possible links to illicit activities, including drug trafficking or other criminal use. The presence of the political party flag and official-looking sticker has raised concerns about potential misuse of political symbols. According to sources, Nagaon police have launched a detailed investigation into the incident to ascertain the vehicle's origin and purpose.

## Weekly Wednesday market inaugurated at Bokajan

**HT Correspondent**  
**BOKAJAN, Aug 6:** Executive Member of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Madhurjya Dhekial Phukan, inaugurated a new weekly market at Bokajan Super Market, which will operate every Wednesday. The Wednesday Weekly Market is aimed at meeting the daily needs of residents in Bokajan and nearby areas.

It will offer a range of goods, including vegetables, meat, fish, rice, edible oil, and perishable items like clothing—minimising the need for residents to travel to Dimapur in Nagaland for shopping.

With the introduction of the new market, the existing Saturday Weekly Market at Amarajan by NH-39 will be discontinued.

Authorities stated that the decision was made to ease congestion and prevent traffic hazards along the highway. The inauguration was attended by KAAC Executive Member Surya Rongphar, Chairman of Bokajan Municipal Board Sardili Bey, former KAAC EM Jivan Chandra Pathak, and EM Madhurjya Dhekial Phukan.

## Tezpur College celebrates diamond jubilee with day-long festivities

**HT Correspondent**  
**TEZPUR, Aug 6:** Tezpur College, a premier institution of higher education in Sonitpur, marked its 60th Foundation Day recently with a vibrant day-long celebration featuring cultural, academic, and commemorative events.

The programme began with the hoisting of the college flag by Principal Dr Manoj Kumar Hazarika, in the presence of Tezpur MLA Prithiraj Rava, College Governing Body President Dr Swadhinata Mahanta, Kaliabor College Governing Body President Dr Sibarajan Mahanta, former Principal Dr Charu Saharia Nath, faculty members, alumni, and students.

This was followed by the college anthem and a welcome speech by Dr Hazarika, who highlighted key achievements during his eight-month tenure and called for united efforts from staff and faculty to ensure the college's continued progress.

In his address, MLA Prithiraj Rava commended the institution's contributions to higher education in Assam and reflected on its six-decade journey.

To mark the occasion, two important publications were released: the tri-monthly college bulletin The Heritage and a book titled Gender: Issues, Perspective and Empowerment, edited by Dr Kisholoy Choudhury and Dr Bhanupriya Daimari of the Political Science Department. Academic excellence was also recognised through the presentation of various awards.

The 'Best Reader Award', instituted in memory of late librarian Amulya Saikia, was presented by his sister Ranu Hazarika.

The 'Best Graduate of Arts Stream' award, instituted in memory of former Principal Jogendra Nath Choudhury, was handed over by his wife and retired faculty member Jeutikon Choudhury.

## Minister Ashok Singhal inaugurates hospital, reviews projects in Jorhat

**HT Correspondent**  
**JORHAT, Aug 6:** Minister of Health and Family Welfare and Irrigation, Ashok Singhal, conducted a day-long tour of Jorhat district on Wednesday to inspect irrigation projects, review healthcare infrastructure, inaugurate new facilities, and lay foundation stones for upcoming projects.

According to a district administration official, the Minister began his visit with an inspection of the irrigation project at Bahguri Saguri Naghering area. He later inaugurated the Na Borachuk Adarsha Hospital, where he reviewed various sections including the registration room, pharmacy, laboratory, outpatient department (OPD), and maternity ward. Speaking at the inauguration, Singhal said the hospital was part of the government's ongoing efforts to strengthen the healthcare system by ensuring quicker access

to medical services in rural and remote areas.

He later inspected Tipomia Ayushman Arogya Mandir in Titabar and Mahatma Gandhi Adarsha Hospital at Nakachari, near Mariani.

The Minister visited different wards and reviewed the treatment being provided to patients. He held discussions with hospital authorities, district administration, and Health department officials to assess the services and infrastructure.

Singhal also interacted with ASHA workers, urging them to improve healthcare delivery in tea garden areas.

The Minister then laid the foundation stone for a flow irrigation scheme at Chirakhati, which will be implemented under the State-Owned Priority Development (SOPD)-General head.

He also inaugurated two solar-powered medium deep tube well-

cum-drainage schemes at Natun Lunpuria and Purana Lunpuria villages, funded under NABARD's Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF), and three medium deep tube well schemes at Dianigaon, Bhuyankhat, and Boniya-gaon under SOPD and Scheduled Caste Sub-Plan (SCSP) funds.

Concluding his visit, Singhal held a review meeting at Titabar Sub-divisional Civil Hospital with hospital authorities and officials from the Jorhat and Titabar co-district administrations and Health department.

The meeting focused on key issues, especially maternal and child mortality, which the Minister said must be given top priority.

MLAs Hitendra Nath Goswami (Jorhat), Rupiyoti Kurmi (Mariani), and Bhaskar Jyoti Baruah (Titabar) attended various programmes during the Minister's tour.

## Cachar admin launches PDS reform pilot with focus on eKYC, transparency

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Aug 6:** In a bid to reform and modernise the Public Distribution System (PDS), the Cachar district administration has launched a preparatory drive for a pilot project aimed at streamlining ration delivery through Fair Price Shops (FPS) under a non-subsidised model from October 2025. The initiative, led by Deputy Commissioner Mridul Yadav, IAS, places strong emphasis on eKYC compliance, timely delivery, and citizen-friendly service.

According to an official statement, the plan aims to ensure hassle-free access to essentials such as Masur Dal, Sugar, and Salt for every household.

A coordination meeting was held in Silchar on Tuesday where DC Yadav laid out the framework for the upcoming rollout, calling on all stakeholders—including FPS operators and secretaries of Gaon Panchayat Samabai Samitis (GPSS)—to ensure operational readiness and accountability.

"The success of this initiative lies in our ability to streamline systems, eliminate errors, and prioritise citizen service over procedural delays," the DC stated, urging field functionaries to ensure fairness and accuracy at every stage.

A key concern addressed during the meeting was the widespread issue of eKYC mismatches between Aadhaar and Ration Card data, which has prevented thousands of beneficiaries from completing verification.

To resolve this, the administration has scheduled a training session for FPS operators on August 7 to equip them to assist beneficiaries in updating credentials and completing eKYC formalities.

## Sivasagar DC hosts peace meet amid social media tensions

**HT Correspondent**  
**SIVASAGAR, Aug 6:** In view of rising tensions triggered by negative and aggressive social media posts over alleged attempts by some youth organisations to expel members of the Miyan community from Lower Assam residing in the district, Sivasagar Deputy Com-

missioner Ayush Garg convened a peace meeting with leading citizens at Sukapha Bhawan on Wednesday.

Introducing the discussion, DC Garg said the administration is aware of the situation and is taking necessary steps to maintain peace. Superintendent of Police Subhrajyoti Bora added that the police have been placed on maximum alert to safeguard public order.

During the meeting, Bitupon Raidangia, president of the BJP Sivasagar district committee, stated that remaining silent in the name of peace while compromising future harmony would be a mistake.

## NBQS workshop under NFR records significant operational achievements in July 2025

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Aug 6:** The New Bongaigaon Workshop (NBQS) under the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) demonstrated exceptional performance in July 2025 across various operational and maintenance parameters.

According to an official statement, the workshop made remarkable strides in coach production, innovation, safety enhancement, environmental goals, and infrastructure development, reinforcing its role as a critical component of NFR's rolling stock ecosystem.

In the area of coach production and maintenance, NBQS out-turned a total of 78.5 coaches during the month. This figure includes 24 ICF (Non-AC), four ICF (AC), 20 LHB (Non-AC), and 14 LHB (AC) coaches—of which four were power cars—along with six DEMU trailer coaches and two DEMU driving power coaches. Additionally, two NMGHS coaches underwent Periodical Overhauling (POH), six NMGHS/NMGH coaches were converted, and one Intermediate Overhauling coach was also completed.

In wagon maintenance, a total of 134 wagons were out-turned, with 11 wagons temporarily detained due to the unavailability of Centre Buffer Coupling (CBC) yokes.



The workshop also recorded robust figures in dispatch activities. A total of 108 coach sets were dispatched in July, including 43 SS1 sets, 20 LHB Non-AC sets, 23 LHB AC sets, 52 ICF Non-AC sets, seven ICF AC sets, and six DEMU sets.

In terms of wheel dispatches, NBQS managed the shipment of 223 wheel pairs, comprising 72 pairs for BCN wagons, 105 for LHB coaches, 42 for ICF coaches, and four special category wheels.

Reinforcing its commitment to improving safety and technical standards, the workshop carried out several vital modifications.

Five wagons were upgraded to the twin pipe air brake system in July, bringing the cumulative total to 262. Notably, all wagons out-turned from NBQS are now fully compli-

ant with twin pipe brake systems.

The workshop also modified 27 wagons to reduce door height and implement door blocking, taking the total number of wagons with this safety enhancement to 384.

In terms of self-sufficiency and production efficiency, the workshop manufactured 35 in-house components required for ongoing projects.

It also ensured full compliance with newly introduced design modifications during Periodical Overhauling processes, underscoring its adaptability to evolving technical standards.

On the environmental front, NBQS made significant progress in waste management and cleanliness.

The workshop disposed of 326.384 metric tonnes of ferrous scrap and 37.193 metric tonnes of non-ferrous scrap during the month.

This efficient disposal supported broader scrap management goals while maintaining high cleanliness standards across the facility.

In the sphere of innovation, NBQS developed a safety valve test bench specifically for BTPN tank wagons.

This newly developed equipment facilitates precise testing of safety valves within a pressure range of 0.35 kg/cm² to 1.4 kg/cm²,

greatly enhancing testing accuracy and efficiency.

Moreover, a prototype model of the BTPN tank wagon's filling and discharge system was developed to assist staff and supervisors in operational knowledge sharing and hands-on learning.

Supporting the vision of the Principal Chief Mechanical Engineer of NFR, the workshop successfully out-turned Coach No. 125001 (LWFAC) using the unit exchange method.

The overhaul was comprehensive, involving the replacement of seat and berth reline, installation of new PVC flooring, vinyl wrapping, D-cal painting, and replacement of essential electrical and air brake components.

This initiative reflects a forward-looking approach to coach refurbishment, improving both passenger comfort and operational efficiency.

The New Bongaigaon Workshop continues to play a vital role in bolstering the mechanical and operational capabilities of the Northeast Frontier Railway.

Through its consistent output, safety upgrades, and drive for innovation, NBQS is contributing significantly to the overall performance, safety, and reliability of railway services across the region.



## QUOTE OF THE DAY

To advise is not to compel.  
—Anton Chekhov

## Pioneer of Adivasi movement

For Adivasis of India, Shibui Soren was their second Bhagwan (God) after their first Bhagwan Birsa Munda. In the initial years of his struggle for emancipation of adivasis from the grip of non-adviasis money lenders and landlord nexus, he followed the line of political reform. But soon he came to realise that the nature and content of the struggle ought to be changed and along with the independent Marxist-Leninist A K Ray and social activist Binod Behari Mahato he formed Jharkhand Mukti Morcha. He became the general secretary of JMM with Nirmal Mahato holding the charge of president. It was a deadly combination. It was his personal encounter with the exploitative mechanism and repression of the trader and money lenders of south Bihar, that inspired him to spearhead violent struggle against their tyranny and oppression. As a college student, he had seen brutal assassination of his father Sobaran Soren, a schoolteacher known for opposing exploitative money-lenders.

Shibu in association with A K Ray and Binod Behari Mahato launched a crusade against rampant use of liquor by the Adivasis. Economic fact sheets reveal that Adivasis virtually became paupers and victim of rural indebtedness and selling of land in the region for liquor. Shibu organised peoples' court and penalised the Adivasis who were prone to drinking. He also launched a protracted struggle for reclaiming the land from the usurpers. His rebellion trait was evident in his floating Santhal Navyuvak Sangh at the age of 18 years. From the beginning he focused and depended on the youths to spearhead the struggle against the money lenders and traders. In the 1960s, Soren had launched the 'Dhankati Andolan' to fight the practice of giving only one third of the harvested paddy to the adivasis, though the land belonged to them and rest two third to moneylenders simply for the reason that they had provided some monetary help. Soren mobilised the tribal youths and launched a protracted struggle which helped him become a household name.

His leadership during this period earned him the title 'Dishom Guru'—Guru of all ten directions—a symbol of reverence from the Santhal community. Rising popularity of Soren and intensifying impact of his struggle made the then Bihar government, which was already fighting the Naxalite movement in central and south Bihar, jittery and started working out modalities to finish the movement. Shibu Soren's political life spanned more than five decades, marked by struggles for tribal rights and formation of a new state, Jharkhand. Even in his death he continues to be the face of Adivasi identity, dignity, and self-rule.

## Encroachment-free Assam: Reclaiming land, restoring legacy



By: Hitesh Kalita

Assam has faced extensive encroachment with an estimated 10 lakh acres of forest, wetlands, tribal belts, grazing reserves and government land occupied by illegal settlers or "doubtful citizens". Since May 2021, total cleared over 1.19 lakh bighas and total area evicted over 30,000 acres across Assam under the strategic leadership of Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma. He framed the evictions as actions against attempts of "demographic invasion" by people of one religion, allegedly encroaching to gain political foothold. He pledged to remove evicted individuals from local electoral rolls, asserting that they retain residence elsewhere. Major Eviction Drives & Wildlife Revival happened in recent times and district-wise retrenchment includes major recoveries in Sonitpur, Darrang, Lakhimpur, Hojai and Goalpara, among others. Recently, 495 acres of encroached wetland of Hasila Beel (Goalpara) was cleared in June 2025 with no reported incidents.

In Urimghat (Golaghat), encroachers allegedly held up to 300–400 bighas each. Nearly 70% left voluntarily. The drive aims to take total reclaimed land to 1.5 lakh bighas. HCM Dr. Sarma reaffirmed a zero-tolerance policy, mandating eviction of all non-tribal settlers on forest land except those legally covered under the Forest Rights Act, 2006. Authorities are mobilizing bulldozers and security forces in the Rengma Reserve forest belt near the Assam–Nagaland border; up to 3,300 acres reclaimed in Urimghat so far. The All Rengma Welfare Organisation (ARWO) appreciated the Urimghat evictions urging the government to formally recognize Rengma ancestral rights and secure the recovered forest lands permanently.

The Gorukhuti Multipurpose Agriculture Project which was developed on 25,000 acres cleared in Darrang. This project has become a model of land use and turned out to be successful utilization of such lands. In its fourth year it has generated ₹5 crore in revenue and ₹7.6 crore in deposits via farming, livestock and handloom units. Plans are underway for an agricultural science institute for youth training in organic farming. Union Home Minister Amit Shah will inaugurate a land-lease cooperative model in late August 2025, allotting vacant government land across panchayats to cooperatives for agriculture and dairy aiming to prevent future encroachments through productive use.

Over 50,000 individuals were displaced in various drive operations including more than 3,300 acres in the Golaghat–Urimghat Rengma Reserve Forest area alone.

Dr. Sarma has enforced a strict policy that non-tribals on forest land must be evicted except those formally recognized under the Forest Rights Act, 2006. Evictions have extended beyond forests to wetlands, VGRs/PGRs, Satra and namghar lands and general government property. Deputy Commissioners are conducting a statewide forest-encroachment survey. It is estimated that reclaiming all encroached land might take at least a decade. Reclaimed areas are being restored ecologically and allocated to local indigenous communities.

The Chief Minister has vowed an intensified campaign in the coming weeks emphasizing his "addictive commitment" to reclaim land for the indigenous Assamese people drawing historical parallels to former CM Bishnuram Medhi. Specific drives are planned for continued reserves like Rakhyasini and Hasila Beel along with continued surveys and intensified action in high-risk areas like Dhubri, Goalpara, Lakhimpur and Golaghat. Cooperative lease-based usage of reclaimed lands will be scaled across villages via a model championed by Union leadership, aiming for socio-economic development while minimizing encroachment. Dr. Sarma made the eviction of illegal encroachments a flagship policy pillar with a projected 10-year roadmap in place. His anti-encroachment agenda combines administrative force with ecological and demographic objectives. The program underscores zero tolerance, legal rigor and land use redevelopment—with an eye on protecting indigenous identities and territorial sovereignty.

# ASER 2024 report and Assam's education system

The education landscape in Assam presents a complex scenario, where hope coexists with deep concerns. The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2024 reaffirms that while there has been some progress in expanding educational access in the state, much remains to be done to improve the quality of education. In essence, this report serves as a clear mirror reflecting the challenges within Assam's education system, highlighting issues such as the lack of foundational skills among children, educational deficiencies, inadequate teacher training, and structural weaknesses. This educational crisis underscores an urgent call for systemic reforms and active societal participation to pave the way for an educational renaissance in the state.

Assam's educational history is long and diverse. From the Brahmaputra Valley to the hilly tribal regions, the state's geographical expanse and cultural richness have profoundly influenced the nature of education. From colonial times to the present post-independence era, continuous efforts have been made to expand educational opportunities in Assam. Various educational policies adopted over time, including the Right to Education Act, have aimed to ensure educational access for all children. The ASER 2024 data also indicates significant progress in pre-primary enrollment rates in Assam, with approximately 90% of three-year-old children now enrolled in pre-primary programs—a positive shift compared to previous years. This advancement is undoubtedly driven by increasing parental awareness of the importance of education and the successful implementation of government policies. However, the reality behind these enrollment figures is more complex. While access to education has expanded, the assurance of quality learning outcomes remains elusive. Even though children are attending school, the critical question of what they are actually learning exposes the core weaknesses of Assam's education system. This learning crisis highlights the urgent need for an educational revival in the state, one that prioritizes qualitative improvements over mere quantitative gains.

One of the most alarming aspects of Assam's education system is the consistently poor performance of children in foundational reading and numeracy skills. Only 18.3% of third-grade students can read a second-grade-level text, and in government schools, this figure drops to a mere 13.2%. The situation in numeracy is equally concerning, with only 29.5% of third-graders able to perform two-digit subtraction, and in government schools, this percentage falls to 22.3%. These foundational skills are the bedrock of education, and failure to acquire them at an early stage makes a child's learning journey increasingly complex and inaccessible. Even in fifth grade, only 32.8% of government school students can read a second-grade-level text. In terms of numeracy, the proficiency of fifth and eighth graders in handling fractions is also worrisome, with only about one-third of students able to solve simple fraction problems. These statistics paint a grim picture of children's cognitive struggles, where their potential is stifled by a system that prioritizes quantitative metrics like enrollment over qualitative aspects such as learning outcomes and retention. At the root of this issue lie inadequate teacher training, a curriculum misaligned with local contexts, and outdated teaching methods. In many rural schools, a single teacher is tasked with instructing multiple grades, which adversely affects the quality of education. This situation underscores the urgent need for enhancing teacher capacity and transforming teaching methodologies. Without addressing these structural flaws, children's learning potential will remain limited, and the dream of an educational renaissance in Assam will remain unfulfilled.

The concerning trend of declining enrollment in primary education further exacerbates



bates the educational crisis in Assam. While other parts of India have seen a slight increase in government school enrollment, Assam exhibits a starkly opposite trend. In rural Assam, enrollment in government schools has significantly declined. Enrollment of boys in grades one to five dropped from 72% in 2022 to 69% in 2024, while for girls, it decreased from 73.7% to 71.6%. This downward trend persists in higher grades as well. This shift signals a growing erosion of public trust in government schools, leading parents to increasingly favor private schools, perceived as offering better educational prospects. However, the performance of students in Assam's private schools, while marginally better, is still far from satisfactory. This situation highlights the structural nature of the education crisis. Merely switching to private schools does not address the root issues; what is needed is a focus on improving the quality of education and enhancing the learning environment. Strengthening the infrastructure of government schools, providing teacher training, and reforming curricula can help restore public trust. The declining enrollment is driven by the lack of quality education, inadequate teacher training, and weak infrastructure. By transforming government schools into centers of excellence, a new dynamism can be created in the education sector, unlocking children's learning potential and transforming the state's educational landscape.

Progress in pre-primary education is a promising aspect of Assam's education system. Growing parental awareness of the importance of early childhood education has led to a significant increase in enrollment rates for children aged three to five. Approximately 90% of three-year-olds are now enrolled in pre-primary programs, aligning with the National Education Policy's emphasis on early education. Government policies and community-based initiatives have played a crucial role in this achievement. However, sustaining this progress is critical. The quality of pre-primary programs, teacher training, and the learning environment require greater attention. The early years are vital for children's cognitive development, and increased investment in the quality of education during this phase is essential. If the foundation of early education is weak, the learning crisis in subsequent grades will become even more complex. To translate this early progress into meaningful outcomes, curriculum reforms, teacher training, and improvements in the learning environment are necessary. Assam must seize this opportunity by taking targeted steps to enhance the quality of early education, ensuring a strong foundation for children's learning and securing

their future potential. The expansion of digital access is another promising dimension in Assam's education sector. Smartphone availability has increased even in rural areas, with approximately 90% of students' households now owning a smartphone. About 85% of children aged 14–16 feel comfortable using digital devices. In the post-pandemic world, the importance of blended learning approaches has grown, and digital access has opened new possibilities for education. However, Assam's public education system has yet to fully tap into this potential. Schools continue to rely on traditional teaching methods, lacking the infrastructure or teacher capacity needed to leverage digital learning effectively. The digital divide is no longer just about access but about the ability to transform that access into effective learning tools. Assam must prioritize this area by taking steps to integrate digital learning into classrooms. Collaborations with ed-tech innovators, community-based organizations, and educational institutions can develop digital solutions tailored to Assam's linguistic and cultural contexts. These solutions can complement learning, address children's learning gaps, and provide diagnostic tools for teachers. By leveraging digital access, Assam has a golden opportunity to enhance the quality of its education system and unlock children's learning potential.

Improving teacher quality and teaching methodologies is a critical factor in addressing Assam's education crisis. The state struggles with a shortage of qualified teachers in science and mathematics. In many rural schools, a single teacher is responsible for teaching multiple grades, which impacts the quality of education. Teacher training programs lack sufficient scope and regularity, and many teachers are unfamiliar with modern teaching methods. Under the National Education Policy, programs have been initiated to ensure foundational literacy and numeracy in early grades, but their effective implementation is yet to be fully realized. Enhancing teacher capacity and transforming teaching methodologies can address this issue. Providing teachers with regular training, access to modern teaching tools, and opportunities for professional development can improve the quality of education. Simultaneously, improving teachers' working conditions and boosting their morale is essential. Enhancing teacher quality is an indispensable step in reforming Assam's education system. By strengthening teacher capacity, learning outcomes can be improved, and the dynamism of the state's education system can be transformed.

Gender disparity remains a significant challenge in Assam's education sector. ASER 2024 data reveals that girls lag behind boys in mathematical proficiency in higher grades. While enrollment rates for girls in early grades have increased, this gap reemerges in higher grades. Social norms, early marriage, and the burden of household responsibilities limit girls' time and focus on education. Addressing this requires gender-sensitive teaching approaches and targeted interventions for adolescent girls. While the government has adopted several policies to promote girls' education, these have not yet translated into improved learning outcomes. Increasing social awareness and family support for girls' education is crucial. Gender-sensitive teaching methods can foster girls' interest in learning and boost their confidence. To achieve gender equity in Assam's education system, special emphasis on this aspect is necessary.

The state government's Gunotsav initiative has played a significant role in assessing schools' academic and infrastructural aspects. However, its success depends on active societal participation. Strengthening the role of School Management Committees and involving parents as stakeholders in their children's education can foster a culture of accountability. Active community involvement can make school monitoring more effective and cultivate a sense of public ownership in education. This engagement can enhance the quality of education and enable schools to operate in greater alignment with local contexts. Meanwhile, Assam's geographical and cultural diversity complicates the issue of educational equity. Children in flood-prone areas, tribal communities, and tea garden worker families face unique barriers. Linguistic diversity also impacts the learning process, as the lack of instruction in local languages in tribal areas limits children's learning potential. Developing curricula and teaching methods aligned with local cultures can address this issue. Making the education system more inclusive and responsive to local contexts is essential. Such reforms can make the learning pathway more accessible and relevant for children.

In conclusion, the future of Assam's education system hinges on the decisions taken today. The learning crisis must be viewed not merely as an educational issue but as a social and economic imperative. The failure to acquire foundational skills limits children's future potential. Effective use of data, teacher capacity building, and infrastructure improvements can address this crisis. Increasing public investment in education and encouraging community participation are essential. Assam's children need not only to attend school but to receive an education that equips them with knowledge, skills, and opportunities to dream. The ASER 2024 data offers a roadmap for this transformation, and its success depends on the collective efforts of all stakeholders.

## DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

## The struggle for India's Independence: An appraisal

(CONTD FROM YESTERDAY ISSUE)

By: Diganta Barooah

organizing protests and demonstrations, boycotting British goods and institutions, leading prayer meetings, and more. In addition to bringing the people of India together behind the cause of an independent country, his protest methods inspired future civil rights leaders around the world, including Martin Luther King Jr and Nelson Mandela. The first major movement Gandhi led was in response to violence after the Rowlatt Act was passed in 1919. The Rowlatt Act took away many civil rights of Indian people. After the British began firing on a crowd at a peaceful protest against the act, Gandhi organized a large-scale protest campaign, the Non-Cooperation Movement, in response. As part of the campaign, he organized a boycott of cloth goods made in Britain and famously weaved his own cloth. The spinning wheel became a symbol of independent India. Gandhi continued to lead major protests into the next decade, gathering more support from the Indian people. In 1930, the Indian National Congress declared independence from England, which was ignored by the British government. In response, Gandhi organized the Salt Satyagraha, in which Gandhi led followers on a long march to the sea and made his own salt from seawater in defiance of the law. This was a symbolic act protesting the British sale and control of salt, as well as commenting on India's ability to provide for itself. Gandhi was arrested and thrown in jail in 1930 because of these actions, but jailing Gandhi did not put a stop to the protests. Sarojini Naidu, a famous female poet, led a non-violent takeover of the Dharasana Salt Works, a British-owned salt company, after Gandhi was arrested.

Subhas Chandra Bose and his Indian National Army

Running parallel to the activities of Gandhi, Nehru, and the other nationalist leaders was the career of Subhas Chandra Bose, an individual with a biography worthy of Shakespearean tragedy. Commonly known as Netaji ("Respected Leader"), he was at times an ally and at other times an adversary of Gandhi. Dedicated to the independence movement from a young age, he advocated for broad industrialization, in contrast with Gandhi's preference for cottage industries, and favored a militant approach to the independence struggle, as opposed to Gandhi's insistence on nonviolence. During World War II, Bose sought alliances with Germany and Japan. Desperate for military support, he believed that they could aid India in driving the British out. In 1943, with Japanese aid and assistance, he proclaimed the establishment of a provisional independent Indian government and formed a trained army of about 40,000 troops in Japanese-occupied Southeast Asia, which he called the "Indian National Army" (Azad Hind Fauj). Alongside Japanese troops, his forces advanced to Rangoon (now Yangon) and thence overland into India, reaching Indian soil on March 18, 1944, and moving into Kohima and the plains of Imphal. In a stubborn battle, the mixed Indian and Japanese forces, lacking Japanese air support, were defeated and forced to retreat; the Indian National Army nevertheless for some time succeeded in maintaining its identity as a liberation army, based in Burma (now Myanmar) and later broader Southeast Asia. With the defeat of Japan, however, Bose's fortunes ended. A few days after Japan's announced surrender in August 1945, Bose, fleeing Southeast Asia, reportedly died in a Japanese hospital in Taiwan as a result of burn injuries from a plane crash.

India Achieves Independence

During World War II, India's industry was growing while England was suffering losses

from the war, and by the end, the British lacked resources to hold onto their colonies. They began losing power politically as well as economically. Indian leaders began setting up parallel governments, where, in certain areas, Indians had their own rulers and laws alongside the British ones. In 1942, Gandhi organized the Quit India Movement, a large push to get the British to agree to leave India. Many British officers and policemen responded to the protests of the Quit India Movement with violence. In response, Indians destroyed bridges and railroad tracks and sometimes reacted with physical fighting. Unlike previous situations where Gandhi chastised Indians for not using passive resistance, Gandhi did not condemn the non-peaceful actions of the protesters and instead blamed the British for having not given up control. After World War II, several different factors came together at the same time for India to gain independence. Because of the war, Britain had depleted resources, and it seemed unlikely that it would be able to continue controlling India. In 1946, the Royal Navy in India went on strike due to poor working conditions and low pay. There was also violence and fighting between Hindus and Muslims, which further strained British control. On August 15th, 1947, India became an independent country. Pakistan also became an independent country and cites its independence day as August 14th. At the time, leaders in the British, Hindu, and Muslim communities thought that if they divided British-controlled land into a Hindu-led country and a Muslim-led country, it would stop the violence. Though the partition of India and Pakistan led to violence between the two groups, independence was at last achieved after generations of resistance and advocacy by Indians.

The promulgation of the Indian constitution

The dominion of India was reborn on January 26, 1950, as a sovereign democratic re-

public and a union of states. That day is celebrated annually as Republic Day, a national holiday commemorating the adoption of India's constitution on January 26, 1950. The constitution was crafted under the chairmanship of Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar and resolved to secure for its citizens liberty, equality, and fraternity. With universal adult franchise, India's electorate was the world's largest, but the traditional feudal roots of most of its illiterate populace were deep, just as their religious caste beliefs were to remain far more powerful than more recent exotic ideas, such as secular statehood. Elections were to be held, however, at least every five years, and the major model of government followed by India's constitution was that of British parliamentary rule, with a lower House of the People (Lok Sabha), in which an elected prime minister and a cabinet sat, and an upper Council of States (Rajya Sabha). Nehru led his ruling Congress Party from New Delhi's Lok Sabha until his death in 1964. The nominal head of India's republic, however, was a president, who was indirectly elected. India's first two presidents were Hindu Brahmins, Rajendra Prasad and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the latter a distinguished Sanskrit scholar who had lectured at the University of Oxford. Presidential powers were mostly ceremonial, except for brief periods of "emergency" rule, when the nation's security was believed to be in great danger and normal constitutional procedures and civil rights were feared to be too cumbersome or threatening.

## Conclusion

The Independence Day of India, which is celebrated religiously throughout the Country on the 15th of August every year, holds tremendous ground in the list of national days, since it reminds every Indian about the dawn of a new beginning, the beginning of an era of deliverance from the clutches of British colonialism of more than 200 years.



# Historic climate change ruling from the International Court of Justice: What it means for Africa

By: Zunaida Moosa Wadiwala

The International Court of Justice, the world's highest court, handed down an advisory opinion on July 23, 2025, stating that climate change "imperils all forms of life". This followed a case brought by Vanuatu, a tiny South Pacific island nation threatened by rising sea levels, supported by 131 other countries — the biggest case the court had ever heard. The opinion sets out what all governments need to do to limit greenhouse gas emissions and prevent further global warming. Climate law specialist Zunaida Moosa Wadiwala explains how the advisory opinion sets a powerful precedent for global climate accountability.

**What did the International Court of Justice find?**

The court's advisory opinion confirmed that states have binding obligations under international law to protect the climate from human-caused climate change.

Judge Dire Tladi, also the first ever South African judge at the International Court of Justice, described this as one of the most consequential matters ever brought before the court. He emphasised that climate change is an existential crisis that potentially threatens the future of humanity.

Unanimously, the court issued the opinion that States have binding legal obligations to prevent further global warming. These obligations are grounded in climate treaties, international human rights law and customary international law. They are also grounded in global agreements to protect specific parts of the environment (like the Ozone Convention, Biodiversity Convention, Desertification Convention, and the United Nations law of the sea).

The advisory opinion said governments must take appropriate measures to prevent environmental harm. This means that states are obliged to implement programmes to adapt their countries to climate change. They also need to show that they are reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The court also stated that breaching these obligations is an internationally wrongful act. As such, the government responsible will have to stop the harmful conduct. They'll also need to guarantee that they'll never repeat the wrongful act and make full reparation to whoever was affected.

The advisory opinion is poised to reshape international climate litigation and domestic policy.

**Is this a victory for African nations who pro-**



**vided evidence?**

Yes, Kenya, Ghana, Madagascar, South Africa, Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Mauritius, Burkina Faso, and Egypt made submissions about climate change damage. The Court accepted their arguments that developing countries have contributed minimally to greenhouse gas emissions globally, yet suffer the effects of climate change more than developed nations. The advisory opinion also highlighted that a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is necessary if people are to enjoy their rights to access to water, food and housing. These were key issues raised by African States.

The court also specifically responded to the arguments of African nations by affirming that developed countries must support developing States to adapt to climate change. Developed States are obliged to provide financial support, make new adaptation technologies available and assist vulnerable nations to build capacity to cope with global warming.

The Court endorsed a rights-based approach, particularly the rights to life, health and a clean, sustainable environment and said climate change obligations are erga omnes (a responsibility for all States). This also vindicates African nations longstanding calls for climate justice, legal clarity and recognition of the unequal burden they bear.

**Will it help African countries sue for reparations for climate damage they didn't cause?**

Yes, African countries now have tools to pursue reparations for climate-related harm. They will need to establish causation between the wrongful act of one or more states and damage suffered. In other words, they will need to prove that the damage was factually and legally caused by a certain country or countries.

One challenge in enforcing this is that the International Court of Justice does not issue binding judgements in advisory opinions. So, to claim reparations, African states would need to initiate contentious proceedings in the court against high-

emitting countries. The consent of the countries concerned, indicating their acceptance of the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice is required.

Given the global and cumulative nature of emissions, causation and damages are complex. It could be difficult to prove that specific damages, such as floods, mudslides, drought and heatwaves, are caused by one or more specific countries.

Another option for affected countries is domestic or transnational climate litigation. This means that countries affected by climate-caused disasters could sue fossil fuel companies in foreign courts.

The International Court of Justice advisory opinion is strong backing for arguments based on the law of delict (tort). This is where a wrongful act causes damage for which the person harmed can claim compensation. The opinion also backs arguments that greenhouse gas emissions amount legally to nuisance (interference with the use and enjoyments of another's property) and/or unjust

enrichment (when one person unfairly benefits at the expense of another).

What does this mean for African countries still exploring for — and using — fossil fuels?

The advisory opinion is very specific on how fossil fuels like gas, oil and coal must be approached. It says that if a State continues fossil fuel extraction, and fails to take appropriate climate action, it may be violating international law. Continuing to produce and consume fuels, giving out licences to mining companies to explore for fossil fuels and subsidising the fossil fuel industry may also violate international law.

Within the context of State responsibility, this has serious legal implications for the 48 African countries who are still involved in these fossil fuel activities.

The advisory opinion has placed these countries at a crossroads. They cannot advocate for climate justice abroad whilst expanding fossil fuels at home. A State could also be held responsible for not passing regulations to limit emissions caused by private companies under its jurisdiction.

This is a step forward. For example, in South African climate cases that have already been ruled on, they mainly relied on procedural, constitutional or climate risk-based legal strategies. In other words, they argued that communities had not been consulted properly before a coal mine licence was granted, or that the mine would interfere with the human right to water. But now, fossil fuel activities themselves are restricted.

In South Africa, this is aligned with the Climate Change Act. This new law, passed in 2024, phases down and phases out human caused greenhouse gas emissions. It sets out how South Africa should transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy. Zunaida Moosa Wadiwala, PhD candidate in international climate law and litigation and Sessional Lecturer- University of the Witwatersrand, University of the Witwatersrand

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Final summary: ICJ declared that states have binding legal duties to combat climate change, urging global accountability. It emphasised support for vulnerable nations, especially in Africa, and warned that fossil fuel expansion may breach international law. The ruling empowers countries to seek reparations for climate-related harm and reinforces environmental rights. (Courtesy: DowntoEarth)

## Swept away by glacial flood, Sikkim dam is being rebuilt – but lives downstream remain shattered

CONTD. FROM PREVIOUS ISSUE

By: Vaishnavi Rathore

In some particularly risky patches, a rivulet flowed down the mountain slope and under a bridge across which vehicles passed – locals call the stream "lanthey khola", or "trouble-some stream" in Nepali, because the patch has seen multiple landslides.

By the time we reached Naga, our driver refused to go beyond the village's playground because the road had turned to slush – we could see a few bikers ahead, revving their bikes, skidding and falling as they rode over it.

Adjacent to the muddy road was a string of houses that had been reduced to rubble. One such house was Karma Lepcha's. While the October 2023 flood did not cause any damage to their home, the next year, it collapsed in the landslide. At first, she, her husband and younger daughter moved in with a relative in the same village. But soon after, that house also collapsed as a result of continued landsliding. Then, Karma's family and the other relatives moved to a school turned into a relief centre for similar victims.

"But even this school has cracks now, when it rains the water comes through the ceiling," said Karma, who asked to be identified with a pseudonym, as we sat in the school's courtyard. Karma has shifted her elder daughter to a school in the larger town of Mangan, where she lives with a relative. "It's hard for the children to see and bear with this situation," she said.

While the after-effects have been particularly devastating in Naga, other parts of the region also faced difficulties the following year. In West Bengal's low-lying areas, the height of the Teesta's riverbed rose after silt and debris carried by the river during the flood from upstream settled in it, and along its banks.

When the 2024 monsoon came, Teesta overflowed its usual levels again, and carried masses of this silt and sand, and water, into Melli, Teesta Bazaar and Rangpo.

This was evident near Nawang Doma Bhutia's house in Melli, next to a bridge across the Teesta. The level of the water at the time was low, leaving a pillar of a bridge exposed. It had marks on it to indicate the river level, which showed that the debris that had gathered at its base had itself reached as high as 226 metres – according to the Central Water Commission, if the Teesta flows beyond 227 metres above mean sea level here, the water level is considered dangerous. "Before 2023, the river flowed much, much below," said Bhutia, an observation many residents repeated in the towns of Teesta Bazaar and Rangpo. "This area was ours," Bhutia explained, pointing to what used to be her backyard, where she planted flowers. During the monsoon last year, she said, the river flooded the area. "Now it's the river's," she said with a chuckle.

These days, when it rains, she noted, "I don't sleep through the night. I keep watching the river and where it is flowing."

Bhutia's neighbours' homes, too, bear the marks of the second bout of flooding – doorways had traces of river sand, and sandbags had been placed across them to prevent water from coming in. "We see that there is relief that is quickly provided to communities at times of disaster," said Stephen Lepcha, a community



mobiliser with Anugyalaya Darjeeling Diocese Social Service Society, which has been helping communities prepare evacuation maps, and supplied them equipment such as ropes, helmets and life jackets. Stephen added, "What is lacking is a conversation about the future of these communities to more such disasters."

Families in West Bengal rued the fact that the state provided them with less compensation than the government of Sikkim paid to affected families: in West Bengal, an impacted family received Rs 75,000, while in Sikkim, the amount was Rs 1.5 lakh. "What can 75,000 do?" said Vijayata Dorje, who was staying in a relief centre in Teesta Bazaar. "One cannot even make a toilet with that much money."

A few kilometres upstream in Melli, 22-year-old Leboon Thapa explained that he spent the compensation money he received on medical care for his family. "We could not have found a new plot of land in that money, anyway," he said. He looked longingly towards some houses across the Teesta – the portion of Melli that fell on Sikkim's side. "It's just a difference of a river, but they got so much more compensation," he said. Affected communities are also seeking other solutions that could help alleviate the problems they are facing. One of these solutions is to clear debris that has accumulated on and along the riverbed, raising water levels. "Because of this debris, the river's flow is obstructed in the monsoon," said Bhutia. The West Bengal government acknowledged the problem and its irrigation department has identified 32 sites further downstream from Melli, from which they plan to remove this sand and silt.

Some argue that the government should continue giving permits and leases to resume sand mining activities in the river, which had been suspended after October 2023. "If the sand mining restarts, it will make us safe since the labour can then clear out the debris and sell it," Melli's Ansari. Residents of Melli are also considering another, unconventional, method to try and protect themselves against floods: asking a company building a train route through the town to dump construction debris

on houses along the river bank and cover them completely, to form a kind of raised embankment beyond which residents can relocate.

Leboon's home is currently completely covered with the debris, and not a sign of its existence remains. His neighbour Roshan Rai's home is still standing – with marks of silt and damaged walls visible on it. Rai continues to live in this house, and is expecting debris to be dumped over his home in the next two months. "Then till the time the muck settles and we rebuild our home, we will stay in Melli's relief centre," Rai said. In all these towns near the river, like Teesta Bazaar, Melli and Rangpo, locals have also demanded a "protection wall" along the river, which they believe can stop the flow of the river in case of a flash flood. Experts however are unsure of the extent to which such a structure will help. For it to be efficient, "it would require huge amounts of concrete, it will be an engineering challenge", said Mandal, the glacial geomorphologist. It would also be challenging to build on a slope, as well as prohibitively expensive, he added. "The ideal mitigation would be for the people to move away from the river," he said.

In Naga, panchayat officials took the initiative to find 13.5 acres of land in the higher slopes of the mountain, to rehabilitate the 140 families whose homes have collapsed or are currently sliding. "Talks with the district administration are currently underway," an official involved in the discussion said. But most populations in the area remain vulnerable. Just a week after we left, heavy rains, floods and landslides hit North Sikkim. More than 1,000 tourists were stuck in Chungthang and had to be rescued and taken to Gangtok. In late May and early June too, the state found itself grappling with a similar situation after heavy rains triggered more landslides. "In the meanwhile, the company has started constructing a new tunnel and is doing some blasting for the dam construction," said Takchi Lachungpa, a resident of Chungthang. "We can see containers coming in with heavy machinery and construction material. The dam is being rebuilt." (Courtesy: Scroll.in)

## Burning, Drowning, Breaking: The planet is crying and what we must do

By: Hashika Vishvini

If the Earth had a voice, it'd be screaming right now. In recent weeks, headlines from across India and the world have painted a disturbing picture. Devastating floods in Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, and Assam; landslides in the Himalayas; forest fires in Canada, Greece, and parts of the United States; and record-breaking heatwaves sweeping across continents — all point toward one undeniable reality: climate change is no longer a distant threat. It is a lived experience, disrupting lives, economies, and ecosystems in real time.

The climate crisis is no longer theoretical or only scientific. It has become a humanitarian, developmental, and existential emergency. The frequency and intensity of natural disasters have increased sharply, making it clear that what we are witnessing is not a series of isolated incidents but symptoms of a deeper systemic breakdown.

**India's Vulnerability: A Nation on the Frontline**  
India is among the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world. In 2025 alone, cities and rural communities alike have faced severe environmental disruptions. In Delhi, flash floods inundated residential neighbourhoods and paralysed public infrastructure. Mumbai saw waterlogging on a massive scale, with local trains — the city's lifeline — suspended. Assam and Bihar continue to battle annual flood cycles that affect millions, displacing families and damaging crops.

Further north, in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, heavy monsoon rains triggered devastating landslides that killed dozens, destroyed critical roadways, and cut off entire regions from aid. The consequences of unplanned urbanisation, reckless deforestation, and fragile hill development policies are now manifesting in the form of geological disasters that local communities are ill-equipped to withstand. And yet, these events are not anomalies. They are part of a growing pattern of climate-induced extreme weather that is overwhelming disaster management systems and pushing communities into chronic vulnerability.

**Globally, the Crisis Mirrors Ours**  
India's climate instability mirrors global developments. In July 2025, Canada experienced its worst wildfire season in history, with millions of hectares of forest reduced to ash and thousands forced to evacuate. In southern Europe, Greece and Italy struggled to contain wildfires amid temperatures that soared past 45°C. In contrast, parts of China and the United States experienced record-breaking floods, with urban drainage systems collapsing under unprecedented rainfall.

These climate disasters are not just environmental — they are deeply economic and political. The impact on global supply chains, food security, public health, and migration is becoming increasingly severe. According to the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, economic losses due to climate-related disasters have more than tripled over the past decade. The consequences are no longer limited to the Global South; they are truly global.

**Scientific Consensus: The Climate Crisis Is Human-Induced**

There is near-unanimous agreement in the scientific community that the current climate emergency is anthropogenic, caused by human activity. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has repeatedly warned that global warming driven by greenhouse gas emissions is intensifying the planet's natural systems in unpredictable and dangerous ways.

Rising sea surface temperatures fuel stronger storms and cyclones. Melting glaciers and retreating snowlines in the Himalayas make the region more prone to landslides and glacial lake outburst floods. Meanwhile, deforestation, excessive groundwater extraction, and urban sprawl have degraded natural ecosystems that once served as buffers against climate volatility.

The consequences are compounded by poor govern-

nance, inadequate infrastructure, and socioeconomic inequalities, particularly in developing nations. Those least responsible for the crisis, often low-income and indigenous communities, bear the highest costs.

**The Urgency of Climate Adaptation and Mitigation**

It is no longer sufficient to talk only about reducing emissions. Adaptation — building resilience to withstand climate shocks — is now as critical as mitigation. India must urgently strengthen its disaster preparedness systems. Urban planning must be climate-resilient, with investments in green infrastructure such as floodplains, wetlands, urban forests, and sustainable drainage systems. In mountainous regions, land-use policies must be rigorously enforced to prevent construction in ecologically sensitive zones.

On the mitigation front, rapid decarbonization of the energy sector is non-negotiable. While India has made commendable progress in expanding renewable energy capacity, coal continues to dominate the national grid. A just energy transition — one that prioritises equity, access, and sustainability — is essential.

Agriculture, another major emitter, must also evolve. Promoting climate-smart practices, supporting regenerative farming, and preserving traditional knowledge systems can help reduce emissions while safeguarding food security.

**The Role of Youth: From Protest to Policy**

Young people have emerged as some of the most active voices in the global climate movement. In India, youth-led campaigns have raised awareness, challenged unsustainable development projects, and mobilised public opinion. But more than awareness, the present moment calls for involvement in governance and policy-making. Youth must engage with institutions — municipal councils, school boards, state governments — not just as protestors but as contributors to climate solutions. Careers in climate science, environmental law, urban planning, public health, and sustainable finance are no longer niche; they are vital.

There is also an urgent need for climate education across all levels — schools, colleges, and vocational institutions. Understanding how climate change intersects with water, health, gender, and employment is essential to creating holistic solutions.

**The Political Responsibility**

Climate action cannot be left to civil society alone. It must be led by political will. Governments — at the central, state, and municipal levels — must prioritise climate resilience in budgeting, legislation, and planning.

This includes enforcing environmental regulations, holding corporations accountable for emissions and deforestation, investing in early warning systems, and phasing out fossil fuel subsidies in favour of renewable energy support.

India's climate policies must reflect not just ambition, but urgency. Delaying action today will only increase the cost — human, ecological, and economic — tomorrow.

**Conclusion: A Tipping Point, or a Turning Point?**

The world is approaching a tipping point. But it can still choose a turning point.

The extreme weather events we are witnessing — floods, landslides, wildfires — are not mere tragedies. They are warnings. If ignored, they will become the new normal. But if heeded, they can also become a catalyst for transformation — a wake-up call that forces governments, industries, and societies to reimagine development through the lens of sustainability.

For India, and for the global community, the time for half-measures is over. Climate action must be immediate, integrated, and inclusive. Young people — informed, mobilised, and courageous — have the power to hold the line. Not just for themselves, but for future generations who will inherit the world we shape today. (Courtesy: Youth Ki Awaaz)



## Trump envoy Witkoff meets Putin ahead of Russia-Ukraine peace deadline, the Kremlin says

MOSCOW, Aug 6: Russian President Vladimir Putin held talks with US President Donald Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff in Moscow on Wednesday, the Kremlin said, days before the White House's deadline for Russia to reach a peace deal with Ukraine or potentially face severe economic penalties that could also hit countries buying its oil.

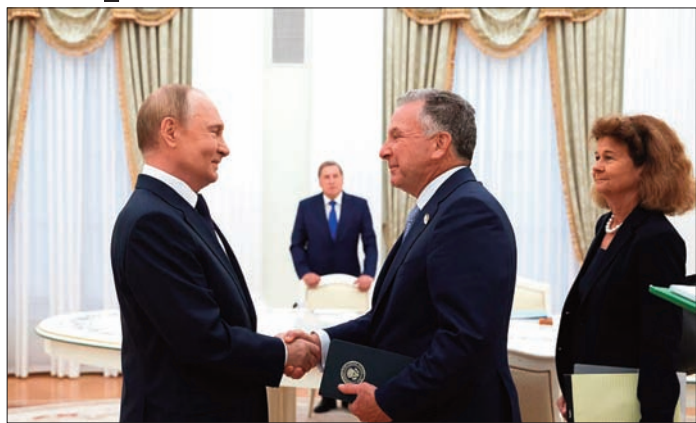
The meeting between Putin and Witkoff lasted about three hours. Neither side gave an immediate readout of the talks.

Earlier, Witkoff took an early morning stroll through Zaryadye Park, a stone's throw from the Kremlin, with Kirill Dmitriev, the Russian president's envoy for investment and economic cooperation, footage aired by TASS showed.

Dmitriev played a key role in three rounds of direct talks between delegations from Russia and Ukraine in Istanbul in recent months, as well as discussions between Russian and US officials. The negotiations made no progress on ending the three-year war following Russia's invasion of its neighbour.

Trump's deadline for Putin ends on Friday. Washington has threatened "severe tariffs" and other economic penalties if the killing doesn't stop.

Trump has expressed increasing frustration with Putin over Russia's escalating strikes on civilian



areas of Ukraine, intended to erode morale and public appetite for the war. The intensified attacks have occurred even as Trump has urged the Russian leader in recent months to relent.

Overnight from Tuesday to Wednesday, Russian forces hit a recreational center in Ukraine's southern Zaporizhzhia region, killing two people and injuring 12, including two children, regional Gov Ivan Fedorov said Wednesday.

Russian forces launched at least four strikes on the area and initially attacked with powerful glide bombs.

"There is zero military sense in this strike. Only cruelty to intimidate," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a post on Telegram.

Russia also struck the Ukrainian

power grid and facilities for heating and cooking gas, Zelenskyy said, as Ukraine makes preparations for winter.

Western analysts and Ukrainian officials say Putin is stalling for time and avoiding serious negotiations while Russian forces push to capture more Ukraine land. A Russian offensive that started in the spring and is expected to continue through the fall is advancing faster than last year's push but is making only slow and costly gains and has been unable to take any major cities.

The situation on the front line is critical for Ukrainian forces but defenses are not about to collapse, analysts say.

On Tuesday, Trump said "we'll see what happens" regarding his threat to slap tariffs on nations that buy Russian oil, which could in-

crease import taxes dramatically on China and India.

"We have a meeting with Russia tomorrow," Trump said. "We're going to see what happens. We'll make that determination at that time." The president said that he has not publicly committed to a specific tariff rate.

Stepping up diplomatic and economic pressure on the Kremlin risks stoking international tensions amid worsening Russia-US relations.

The Washington-based Centre for European Policy Analysis warned in an assessment this week that there are "clear signs that the Kremlin is preparing for a broader confrontation with NATO," including a military build-up along Russia's western flank with alliance countries in recent years.

Putin has strengthened Russia's military ties with China, North Korea and Iran. NATO, meanwhile, said Tuesday it has started coordinating regular deliveries of large Western weapons packages to Ukraine. European allies and Canada are buying most of the equipment they plan to transport from the United States. The Trump administration is not donating any arms to Ukraine.

Putin has given no hint that he might be ready to make concessions. Instead, the Russian leader and senior Kremlin officials have talked up the country's military strength. (AP)

## Pakistan will not develop closer ties with US at the cost of China: Chinese experts

BEIJING, Aug 6: As US President Donald Trump has ramped up his country's ties with Pakistan, China's all-weather ally, Chinese strategic experts say Islamabad understands the limits given his strategy to contain Beijing's global influence.

Last month, Pakistan's army chief, General Asim Munir, made his first official visit to China since assuming office as field marshal. His visit came shortly after a rare five-day trip to Washington, where he attended a private luncheon with Trump. That meeting culminated in Trump's announcement of enhanced US-Pakistan cooperation in various fields, including an oil deal.

According to a recent "Economist" article, the outcome of General Munir's US visit marks a shift in American foreign policy, with implications not only for India but also China and the Middle East.

During his time in Beijing, General Munir met with Vice President Han Zheng, Foreign Minister Wang Yi and senior members of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), though not with President Xi Jinping. This contrasts with his predecessor, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, who met Xi during his 2018 trip to China.

While official readouts from Munir's meetings emphasised diplomatic niceties and reiterated strong bilateral ties, Beijing's perception of the Trump-Munir rapport remains unclear -- especially given Trump's overt strategy to curb China's rise as a global power.

Beijing has its concerns considering the decades-long investment fostering an all-weather relationship with Pakistan.

Two Chinese senior strategic experts PTI spoke to outlined for the first time China's view on the emerging new Washington-Islamabad strategic paradigm in the broader context of Trump's geopolitical strategy.

"Pakistan will not develop its relations with the US at the cost of its relation with China," Hu Shisheng, Director of the Institute for South Asian Studies at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, said. "Pakistan will not be that easily hooked by Trump," Hu, regarded as an expert on South Asian



politics, said. Jesse Wang, a research fellow at Huaxia South Asia Economic and Cultural Exchange Centre of China, said "on the surface, Trump's candy to Pakistan looks like a disturbance to China, but actually, cannot affect the structural stability of the Sino-Pak relationship". "The US intervention has created short-term geopolitical noise but is unlikely to shake the foundation of China-Pakistan dependence," he said.

"For Pakistan, 'make profits both ways' economically is a rational choice, but its security and infrastructure lifelines are tied to China closely, and the strategic balance has not tilted," Wang said.

Both argue that China-Pakistan ties are structurally far deeper for Islamabad to breakaway to forge another similar relationship.

Historically, Pakistan's ties with the US and China have largely unfolded in parallel over long periods without cancelling each other out, Hu said, in an apparent reference to Pakistan joining the American war against the then Soviet Union's occupation of Afghanistan in 1979 and the Afghan war thereafter.

"The China-Pakistan relationship is a unique bilateral bond that has withstood the test of time," he said.

"Of course, the Trump team expects to see Pakistan getting away from China but Pakistan will not buy the story," he said. "Pakistan's strategic value or bargaining position with the US depends on Pakistan's close relations with China," Hu said. (PTI)

## Trump says VP Vance 'most likely' his MAGA heir

NEW YORK, Aug 6: President Donald Trump has suggested that Vice President J D Vance is "most likely" the heir apparent to his Make America Great Again (MAGA) movement, while Secretary of State Marco Rubio can also join him in "some form".

"Well, I think most likely. In all fairness, he's the vice president," Trump said on Tuesday while answering a question on his "heir apparent" to MAGA.

Trump, who assumed office over six months ago, said that it is "too early" to talk about successors, but Vance is certainly "doing a great job, and he would be probably favourite at this point," CNN reported.

However, Trump was quick to add that Rubio can also "get together with JD in some form."

Trump had earlier declined to offer any endorsement for a 2028 successor.

Trump said in February that Vance was "very capable" but that it was too early to name him as the leading candidate, the report added.

Vance, 40, is a former Marine and served as Ohio Senator from 2023 to 2025. He has carved out a sizable role in the second Trump administration for himself, the report said.

Rubio, in an interview with Fox News last month, brushed off talks of his presidential ambitions for 2028 and said that he is focused on his current job, Time.com reported.

However, he did not completely rule it out, adding, "you never know what the future holds."

Rubio and Vance competed for the Vice President's post but now work closely to promote Trump's policies. "Marco is incredibly competent and reliable, and he's also one of my closest friends in the administration," Vance told CNN last month. (PTI)

## Pak to repatriate over 1.3 million Afghans with PoR cards from Sept 1

ISLAMABAD, Aug 6: The Pakistan government has decided to repatriate over 1.3 million Afghan refugees holding Proof of Registration cards from September 1, a media report said on Wednesday.

The efforts to send back Afghan refugees began in 2023 when the government announced to expel all illegal aliens. According to government sources, so far about 800,000 Afghan citizens have been repatriated.

The Dawn newspaper reported that the federal government has informed the provinces that the formal repatriation and deportation of over 1.3 million Afghan refugees holding Proof of Registration (PoR) cards will begin on September 1. The decision follows the Interior Ministry's announcement on July 31 that PoR cardholders -- the last category of Afghans legally residing in Pakistan without visas -- became unlawful residents after their cards expired on June 30. A letter from the Interior Ministry, dated August 4, was sent to the chief secretaries and police chiefs of the four provinces, as well as Pakistan-occupied

Kashmir's Gilgit-Baltistan, regarding the implementation of the ongoing Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan (IFRP). "It has been decided that the voluntary return of PoR cardholders shall commence forthwith, while the formal repatriation and deportation process will take effect from September 1, 2025," the letter said.

Besides, the ministry said that repatriation of illegal foreign nationals, including Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) holders, would continue as per the earlier decision under the IFRP.

In the letter, the authorities in PoK were instructed to provide databases of PoR cardholders to provincial, divisional and district committees.

The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) will facilitate the deregistration of returning Afghans at transit areas and border terminals, with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) supporting repatriation at designated border crossings, it said.

The ministry also directed provincial governments and relevant agencies to map all PoR cardholders and devise ac-

tion plans for repatriation. It called for designated transit areas for deportees, along with transportation and financial arrangements.

Official sources told Dawn that Pakistani authorities had informed their Afghan counterparts earlier in March this year that PoR cards would not be extended beyond June 30, 2025.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), over 1.3 million Afghans were living in Pakistan as of June 30, 2025. Of this, over half (717,945) were in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, while 326,584 resided in Balochistan, 195,188 in Punjab, 75,510 in Sindh, and 43,154 in Islamabad.

In 2004-05, the Pakistan government, with assistance from the UNHCR, issued PoR cards to Afghan refugees, and in 2016, Afghan Citizenship Cards (ACC) were introduced through an amendment to the Foreigners Act 1946.

Meanwhile, the UNHCR, in a statement, expressed concern over Pakistan's intention to forcibly return Afghan refugees holding PoR cards. (PTI)

## US: 4 die in crash of medical transport plane on Navajo Nation in northern Arizona

CHINLE (US), Aug 6: A small medical transport plane crashed and caught fire Tuesday on the Navajo Nation in northern Arizona, killing four people, the tribe said in a statement.

A Beechcraft King Air 300 from the CSI Aviation company left Albuquerque, New Mexico, with two pilots and two health care providers, according to the Federal Aviation Administration and CSI Aviation. It crashed in the early afternoon near the airport in Chinle, about 300 miles (483 kilometres) northeast of Phoenix.

"They were trying to land there and unfortunately something went wrong," district Police Commander Emmett Yazzie said.

The crew was planning pick up a patient who needed critical care from the federal Indian Health Service hospital in Chinle, said Sharen Sandoval, director of the Navajo Department of Emergency Management. She said the plan was to return to Albuquerque. The patient's location and condition were not known Tuesday evening.

Tribal authorities began receiving reports at 12:44 pm of

black smoke at the airport, Sandoval said. The cause of the crash wasn't known, the tribe said. The National Transportation Safety Board and the FAA are investigating.

CSI Aviation officials "with great sadness" confirmed the deaths in an emailed statement and extended condolences to the families, friends and loved ones of the people killed. Their names haven't been released. The company is cooperating with the investigation, according to the statement.

Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren said in a social media post that he was heartbroken to learn of the crash. "These were people who dedicated their lives to saving others, and their loss is felt deeply across the Navajo Nation," he said.

Medical transports by air from the Navajo Nation are common because most hospitals are small and do not offer advanced or trauma care. The Chinle airport is one of a handful of airports that the tribe owns and operates on the vast 27,000 square-mile (70,000 square-kilometer) reservation that stretches into Arizona, New Mexico and Utah -- the largest land base of any Native American tribe. (AP)

do not need nuclear weapons."

Wednesday's anniversary comes at a time that possession of nuclear weapons for deterrence is increasingly supported by the international community, including Japan. US President Donald Trump's remark justifying Washington's attack in June on Iran by comparing it to the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the mild response from the Japanese government, disappointed the survivors.

"It is ridiculous," said Kosei Mito, a 79-year-old former high school teacher who was exposed to radiation in his mother's womb. "I do not think we can get rid of nuclear weapons as long as it was justified by the assailant."

Japan's government has rejected the survivors' desperate request to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons or attend its meeting as observers because it is under the protection of the US nuclear umbrella.

Past prime ministers have stressed Japan's status as the world's only country to have suffered nuclear attacks and have said Japan is determined to pursue peace, but survivors say it is a hollow promise. (AP)

## UK PM Keir Starmer unveils fund to lure youth away from screens into 'real world'

LONDON, Aug 6: British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Wednesday unveiled a GBP 8 million youth services package to lure young people away from screens and reconnect with the world around them through real-world outdoor activities.

The Building Creative Futures fund covers greater access for schoolchildren to extra-curricular activities such as sport, art and music, debating or volunteering to support wellbeing and essential skills in addition to a regular school day. A 'Better Youth Spaces' programme is planned to improve youth club infrastructure, including new gym equipment and climbing walls, in areas with the highest levels of child poverty.

"Growing up today is hard for young people. As they navigate their way through the online world, too often

they find themselves isolated at home and disconnected from their communities," said Starmer. "As a government, we have a duty to act on this worrying trend. Today's investment is about offering a better alternative: transformative, real-world opportunities that will have an impact in communities across the country, so young people can discover something new, find their spark and develop the confidence and life skills that no algorithm can teach," he said.

"Through our Plan for Change, we're backing parents by not only protecting our young people online, but giving them the support and opportunities they deserve so no child falls through the cracks," he added. Other aspects covered under this funding package will include a Local Youth Transformation pilot -- an GBP 8 million pro-

gramme to support local authorities to deliver a high-quality out-of-school offer. It will provide the tools, guidance, and funding to assess, improve, and invest in impactful local youth offers. Over a million additional hours of youth work in areas with high rates of anti-social behaviour is planned as part of a joint investment with the National Lottery Community Fund. And, under the Uniformed Youth Fund, thousands of new places will be created in youth organisations like the Scouts, Guides and Volunteer Police Cadets in areas with unmet demand for such activities. "We know that strong local youth services are the bedrock of thriving communities that give our young people safe spaces to learn, grow and reach their potential," said UK Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy. (PTI)

### NOTIFICATION

Dated Dispur November, 2024

DoHUA Ecf No. 393727 / 169 – In exercise of the powers conferred by the Sub-Section (2) and (3) of Section 10 of the Assam Town and Country Planning Act, 1959 (as amended) read with Rule 6 of the Assam Town & Country Planning (Publication of Master Plan and Zoning Regulation) Rules, 1962, the Governor of Assam is pleased to publish the following notice regarding the publication of the Final Master Plan for Lanka.

#### Notice for publication of the Final Master Plan for Lanka

- It is notified that the Final Master Plan for Lanka is prepared by the Directorate of Town & Country Planning, Government of Assam and adopted by the State Government under sub section (2) and (3) of Section 10 of the Assam Town & Country Planning Act, 1959 (as amended) read with Section 6 of the Assam Town and Country Planning (Amendment) Rule, 1962 for the area described in the schedule below, is hereby published.
- The Final Master Plan for Lanka with all relevant papers and maps may be inspected free of cost during the office hours at the office of Director, Town & Country Planning, Dispur, Guwahati-6, the Deputy Director, Town & Country Planning, Dist Office –Nagaon, the Circle Office , Lanka Revenue Circle, office of the Chairman, Lanka Municipal Board, Lanka. Copies of the Final Master Plan for Lanka are available at the office of the Deputy Director, Town & Country Planning, Dist Office – Nagaon for sale on payment.

#### SCHEDULE

##### A. Situation and area:

District	: Hojai
Sub-division	: Hojai
State	: Assam.
Master Plan Area	: 31.05 Sq. Km.
Municipal Board Area	: 10.21 Sq. Km.

Apart from the Lanka Municipal Board Area, Lanka Master Plan area covers 7 (Seven) Nos. of nearby villages. The villages included in the Final Master Plan for Lanka with Mouzas/ Revenue Circle etc. are as follows: -

Sl. No.	Villages	Mouza	Revenue Circle	G.P.	C.D. Block
1	1. Panjabi Basti	Lanka	Lanka	Lankabheta	Dhal pukhuri
	2. Pub Bhalukmari			Bhalukmari	Dhal pukhuri
	3. Chambaia			Padum pukhuri	Dhal pukhuri
	4. Panch Bandar			Lankabheta	Dhal pukhuri
	5. Rani Pukhuri			Rani puldhuri	Udali
	6. Uttar Bhalubhandar (Part)			Bhalukmari	Dhal pukhuri
2	7. Pipul Puldhuri No.1	Kaki		Rani puldhuri	Udali

##### B. Description of boundaries:

NORTH	: Bor-pukhuri
SOUTH	: Lalungdubi Dhar Gaon
EAST	: Udali Gaon
WEST	: Paechim Baluhander

DIPR/D/HLT/106/7-Aug-25

Sd/-  
Commissioner & Secretary to the Govt. of Assam  
Department of Housing & Urban Affairs

## Hiroshima marks 80 years since atomic bombing as aging survivors frustrated by growing nuke threat

HIROSHIMA, Aug 6: Hiroshima on Wednesday marked the 80th anniversary of the US atomic bombing of the western Japanese city, with many aging survivors expressing frustration about growing support among global leaders for nuclear weapons possession for deterrence.

With the number of survivors rapidly declining and their average age now exceeding 86, the anniversary is considered the last milestone event for many of them.

"We do not have much time left, while we face greater nuclear threat than ever," Nihon Hidankyo, a Japanese grassroots organisation of survivors that won the Nobel Peace Prize last year for its pursuit of nuclear abolishment, said in a statement. "Our biggest challenge now is to change nuclear weapons states that give us cold shoulders even just a little."

The bombing of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, destroyed the city, killing 140,000 people. A second bomb dropped three days later on Nagasaki killed 70,000 more. Japan surrendered on August 15, ending World War II and Japan's nearly half-century of aggres-



sion in Asia.

Representatives from a record 120 countries and regions, including Russia and Belarus, were expected to attend and observe a minute of silence with the sound of a peace bell at 8:15 am, the time when a US B-29 dropped the bomb on the city.

Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui, Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba and other officials laid flowers at the cenotaph. Survivors and their families were expected to start paying tribute to the

victims at the peace memorial park around sunrise, hours before the official ceremony.

Kazuo Miyoshi, a 74-year-old retiree, came to pay tribute to his grandfather and two cousins who died in the bombing and prayed that the "mistake" will never be repeated as the cenotaph inscription says. He said nuclear threats have escalated so much recently that "I just hope the situation will not worsen", a setback from the goal to abolish nuclear weapons. "We



# Tawang District prepares for three-phase Har Ghar Tiranga celebrations

*District officials call for mass public involvement, school activities, and digital participation to celebrate national pride*

**HT Correspondent**  
**TAWANG, Aug 6:** In alignment with the nationwide call for celebrating the spirit of patriotism under the Har Ghar Tiranga (HGT) campaign, the Tawang district administration has geared up for a series of events to mark the occasion in three distinct phases between August 2 and August 15, 2025.

According to an official statement, a high-level coordination meeting was convened under the chairmanship of Sangey Norbu, Administrative Circle Officer and in-charge Deputy Commissioner of Tawang, to finalise preparations and ensure wide-scale participation in the campaign.

The meeting brought together key officials and stakeholders to discuss the roadmap for executing the HGT initiative in a well-organised and inclusive manner.

As per the directives issued by the Government of India, the HGT campaign in Tawang district will be conducted in three phases.

Phase I runs from August 2 to August 8, followed by Phase II from August 9 to August 12.

The campaign will culminate during

the third phase, scheduled from August 13 to August 15, coinciding with the Independence Day celebrations.

A host of community-centric and student-focused activities have been planned to reinforce the message of patriotism, civic responsibility, and pride in the national flag.

Events such as letter writing to Indian soldiers by school students, artistic Tiranga-themed decorations on school walls, exhibitions showcasing the significance of the Har Ghar Tiranga initiative, national flag-themed quiz competitions, postcard writing campaigns, and creative contests like Tiranga Rangoli and Rakhi-making will be held across educational institutions and public spaces.

Additionally, a Janbhagidari Yatra (community participation rally) will be organised under the banner of HGT to encourage mass engagement.

During the meeting, the Deputy Director of School Education (DDSE) Tawang, Hridhar Phuntsok, instructed all school principals to take proactive steps to integrate the campaign's activities into their academic schedules.

He emphasised the importance of



student involvement in fostering a strong emotional connection with the national flag and the values it repre-

sents. Sonam Tsering, Nodal Officer for HGT and District Art and Culture Of-

ficer, also addressed the gathering and called upon all departments, educational institutions, civil society organi-

sations, and the public to participate wholeheartedly.

He noted that collective involvement would not only ensure the success of the campaign but also reflect the district's unwavering commitment to national unity and pride.

Citizens have been encouraged to participate in the digital dimension of the campaign as well by uploading selfies with the national flag to the official HGT website.

This symbolic gesture, officials said, is aimed at uniting the nation under the shared spirit of patriotism and reinforcing a culture of visible and vibrant civic participation.

The Har Ghar Tiranga campaign, an initiative under the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav banner, continues to serve as a nationwide movement to promote respect for the Tiranga while strengthening the values of unity, nationhood, and democratic engagement.

With a strong emphasis on community participation and youth engagement, Tawang district's efforts stand poised to make this year's HGT celebrations both impactful and memorable.

## Nine arrested, 63 stolen vehicles recovered in crackdown

**HT Correspondent**  
**ITANAGAR, Aug 6:** In a major breakthrough in the ongoing investigation into a large-scale vehicle theft racket, the Itanagar Capital Police have arrested four more individuals, including two key masterminds behind the criminal network.

According to an official statement issued by the Superintendent of Police (SP), Itanagar, the arrests were made in connection with Itanagar Police Station Case No 102/2025, bringing the total number of arrested persons in the case to nine.

The latest arrests were accompanied by the recovery of six more stolen vehicles, comprising four Toyota Fortuners and two Hyundai Cretas.

With this fresh seizure, the total number of vehicles recovered so far in the case has risen to 63.

Of these, 57 had already been recovered in earlier operations carried out by the Capital Police in recent weeks.

The SP, Jumar Basar, informed that necessary procedures are currently underway to facilitate the return of the recovered vehicles to their rightful owners.

In addition, the concerned police departments in other states and jurisdictions, where related theft cases may have been registered, are being officially notified to aid in the ongoing investigation



and cross-verification of the stolen vehicles.

Reaffirming the Capital Police's commitment to curbing organized vehicle theft, SP Basar commended the investigation teams for their diligence and co-operation with inter-state agencies.

He reiterated the importance of continued vigilance by both law enforcement and the public in preventing such crimes.

Addressing the media, SP Basar urged residents of the Capital Region to remain cautious and alert against criminal elements involved in vehicle theft and resale rackets.

He advised vehicle owners who suspect their vehicles may be linked to the case to visit the near-

est police station for verification and necessary action.

As part of preventive measures, the SP also strongly recommended the use of High Security Registration Plates (HSRP) on all vehicles.

He noted that HSRPs significantly improve vehicle traceability and act as a deterrent to theft, as they are tamper-proof and come with unique identification features that assist in prompt recovery when a crime is committed.

The Itanagar Capital Police have intensified surveillance and intelligence-based operations to dismantle the wider network involved in the racket.

With ongoing investigations and close coordination with law

enforcement agencies across state lines, authorities expect more arrests and recoveries in the coming days.

The case has garnered attention across the region due to the scale of operations and the number of high-end vehicles involved.

The public has been lauded for its cooperation so far, and police have urged citizens to continue supporting law enforcement efforts by reporting suspicious activities related to vehicle sales or registrations.

The successful progress in Case No 102/2025 represents a significant step toward breaking the backbone of organised vehicle theft rings operating across north-eastern India, the police said.

## Awareness and Technology Demonstration Programme held for tribal yak herders

*According to an official statement, the programme was designed to benefit the traditional Brokpa community engaged in yak rearing in the remote trans-Himalayan region*

**HT Correspondent**  
**MAGO, Aug 6:** A farmers' awareness-cum-technology demonstration programme aimed at supporting and empowering tribal yak herders was successfully organised on Wednesday at the high-altitude Chuna Grazing Ground in Mago.

The initiative was jointly conducted by the ICAR-National Research Centre on Yak (NRC-Yak), Dirang, in collaboration with the Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary, Tawang, and the Indian Army under the aegis of the Baisakhi Brigade.

According to an official statement, the programme was designed to benefit the traditional Brokpa community engaged in yak rearing in the remote trans-Himalayan region.

The event was attended by several dignitaries and officials, including ADC Jang Hakraso Kri, Brigadier Rahul Mishra, Commander of the Baisakhi Brigade, the Commanding Officer of Mago Battalion, Assistant Commissioner of Tingbu Thutan Wangchu, District Veterinary Officer Tawang Dr Avang Tamin, and Principal Scientist from NRC-Yak Dr Dinamani Medhi.

Senior scientists from NRC-Yak, departmental officials, and

villagers from Mago and Luguthang also participated in the day-long programme.

A total of 125 Brokpas took part in the programme, gaining access to important technical knowledge and essential supplies necessary for improving yak husbandry practices in one of the most challenging terrains of Arunachal Pradesh.

During the technical session, Dr Dinamani Medhi delivered detailed presentations on several key issues affecting yak herders, including the importance of value addition in yak-based products, vaccination protocols, and nutrient management practices.

He also elaborated on the benefits of adopting semi-intensive yak rearing systems, especially in high-altitude regions where mobility is constrained by terrain and weather.

Special attention was given to awareness on critical diseases such as Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD), Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Black Quarter (BQ), Hemorrhagic Septicemia (HS), and common parasitic infections that often pose threats to livestock in the region.

As part of its outreach support, the NRC-Yak distributed a range of essential items to the herders.

These included animal feed and mineral salt supplements, protective tarpaulins, gumboots, veteri-

nary medicines, and solar lights, all aimed at improving the resilience and productivity of yak herding in the region's harsh climatic conditions.

Officials also collected field samples for the Single Nucleotide Polymorphism (SNP) project, an ongoing genetic research initiative aimed at enhancing the breeding and conservation of yaks through molecular tools.

The programme highlighted the importance of convergence between scientific research, veterinary outreach, and defence support in advancing the welfare of tribal communities that rely heavily on traditional yak herding for their livelihood.

The collaborative nature of the initiative underscored the shared commitment of NRC-Yak, the Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services, and the Indian Army in reaching underserved populations in remote high-altitude regions.

This effort not only marks a significant step towards technological empowerment and disease prevention for Brokpa herders but also aligns with broader goals of livelihood security, sustainable animal husbandry, and the preservation of traditional practices in ecologically fragile zones.

## Governor congratulates Kabak Yano on Mount Kilimanjaro summit



**HT Correspondent**  
**ITANAGAR, Aug 6:** The Governor of Arunachal Pradesh, Lt

General KT Parnaik has congratulated Kabak Yano on successfully summiting Mount

Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak and one of the world's Seven Summits.

According to an official statement, the Governor expressed deep pride in her achievement, calling it a shining example of courage, perseverance, and the indomitable spirit of the people of Arunachal Pradesh.

Yano, who previously scaled Mount Everest, reached the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro at 10:27 AM (African Time) on August 4, 2025. At 5,895 meters (19,340 feet), the iconic snow-capped peak in Tanzania is not only the tallest mountain in Africa but also the highest free-standing mountain in the world.

The Governor, who had flagged off Ms. Yano's expedition on July 28, commended her determination and resilience, stating that her feat would serve as an inspiration to many, especially the youth of Arunachal Pradesh.

He remarked that Yano's accomplishment is a powerful reminder that no summit is beyond reach for those who pursue their dreams with grit and dedication.

The Governor's message lauded Yano not only for her mountaineering excellence but also for upholding the values of discipline and perseverance that continue to bring pride to the state.

## Body of missing youth retrieved from Parang River in Sagalee after four-day search operation

**HT Correspondent**  
**SAGALEE, Aug 6:** After an intensive four-day search operation, the body of 22-year-old Taming Dirang, who had gone missing while fishing in the Parang River, was recovered on Wednesday, officials from the Papum Pare district police confirmed.

According to an official statement, all legal formalities were completed before the body was handed over to the bereaved family for last rites.

Dirang, a resident of Gangtung village under Sagalee police station, had gone missing on the morning of August 3. The matter came to light when a missing report was lodged the same day by his relative Nabam Takam Hina, son of (L) Nabam Epa of the same village.

According to the official complaint, Dirang had left home at around 7 AM on August 3 to go fishing in the Parang River but failed to return.

Following the report, the Sagalee Police Station immediately launched a search and rescue operation, led by Officer-in-Charge SI Joram Takap and assisted by police personnel, the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), and local villagers. The entire operation was conducted under the supervision of Papum Pare Superintendent of Police Taru Gusar.

Despite the prompt and sustained efforts of the police, rescue teams, and community volunteers, the missing youth remained untraceable for three days. Local residents, relatives, and well-wishers of the deceased continued to support the search operations throughout.

The breakthrough came on August 6, when the body of the missing youth was finally retrieved from the Parang River. Police officials confirmed that all legal and procedural formalities were duly observed following the recovery.

"As per preliminary observations, it appears to be a suspected case of drowning. However, further investigations are ongoing to ascertain the exact cause of death," the police said in the official statement.

A case of unnatural death (UD) has been registered under Sagalee Police Station Case No. 04/25 U/S 194 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023.

Following the completion of inquest procedures, the body was handed over to the family members for conducting the last rites.

Police officials expressed condolences to the bereaved family and appreciated the efforts and cooperation extended by the villagers and volunteers who participated in the search operation.

The incident has left the local community in shock, with residents mourning the tragic loss of a young life.

## New computer lab inaugurated at DNGC

**HT Correspondent**  
**ITANAGAR, Aug 6:** In a significant step toward strengthening digital literacy and technological empowerment in Arunachal Pradesh, the third Computer Lab under the NIELIT DNGC Study Centre was formally inaugurated today at Dera Natung Government College (DNGC), Itanagar.

The initiative, undertaken by the National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT), aims to provide advanced computer education and practical training to students in emerging fields such as Artificial Intelligence and other digital technologies.

According to an official statement, the inauguration ceremony was held in the presence of the

Principal of DNGC, Dr MQ Khan, who graced the occasion as the chief guest.

In his address following the ribbon-cutting and formal inauguration of the facility, Dr Khan dedicated the new computer lab to the student community, underscoring the importance of preparing young learners for the rapidly evolving digital world.

Lauding the efforts of NIELIT for establishing the centre and expanding its digital outreach in the region, Dr Khan stated that the lab would not only provide students with access to technological resources but also empower them to acquire essential skills that are increasingly becoming prerequisites in both academia and industry.

He urged students to seize the

opportunity with seriousness and commitment, especially in domains like Artificial Intelligence, where the potential for future employment and innovation is immense.

Dr Khan further emphasized that the presence of such a facility within the college campus was a major step forward in making advanced technology education more accessible to students of the region, removing barriers to learning and ensuring that no aspiring learner is left behind in the digital age.

The programme also featured a welcome and keynote address by RK Bigensana Singh, Director In-charge of NIELIT Itanagar.

In his remarks, Singh elaborated on the overarching mission of NIELIT to enhance digital competence across India's north-

eastern states.

He highlighted that the organisation's ongoing efforts to partner with educational institutions like DNGC are rooted in the belief that localised access to cutting-edge training will build the foundation for a skilled and self-reliant generation.

He provided insights into various certification courses and capacity-building programmes offered by NIELIT, tailored to meet the demands of industries driven by emerging technologies.

Stressing the need for continuous upskilling, Singh encouraged students to make optimal use of the new lab and engage proactively with courses that focus on Artificial Intelligence, programming, cyber-security, and data analytics.







# NHIDCL MD to arrive August 10 Thadou, Meitei groups hold talks

Centre steps in after CM's push on Tripura NH woes

## HT Correspondent

**AGARTALA, Aug 6:** Prompted by sustained intervention from Tripura chief minister Manik Saha, the Centre has begun taking action to address the worsening condition of the National Highway stretch between Kamalpur (Dhalai district) and Khowai district.

According to an official from the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), the 12-kilometre road—considered a vital alternative route in the state—gained renewed attention after Saha formally wrote to Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, on May 10, urging urgent repairs due to its severely deteriorated condition.

"In response to the Chief Minister's letter, the Union Minister informed in a written communication on July 22 that a



team from the Central Road Research Institute (CRRI) had inspected the highway from June 23 to 27. A comprehensive technical report based on that inspection is expected to be submitted to the Ministry by August 15," the official said.

Further, acting on the Union Minister's directives, the Managing Director of the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL), Krishna Kumar, is scheduled to visit Tripura on August 10.

During his visit, Kumar will assess the condition and progress of several national highway projects across the state, including the Kamalpur-Khowai stretch.

The official noted that chief minister Saha has continuously flagged the issue—both through formal communications and direct telephonic discussions with the Union Minister.

To expedite the repair work, he has also directed the state's Public Works Department (PWD) Secretary, Kiran Gite, to maintain close coordination with central agencies.

"The state government is hopeful that this high-level intervention will lead to swift and tangible improvements to this critical stretch, which serves as a key transport corridor for both commuters and economic activities in the region," the official added.



**IMPHAL, Aug 6:** In a significant step towards restoring peace in Manipur, a civil society organisation representing the Thadou tribe held a closed-door meeting with prominent Meitei-based civil groups in Imphal on Wednesday, officials said.

More than 13 representatives of the Thadou Inpi Manipur (TIM) met members of the Coordination Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI), Arambai Tengol, All Manipur United Clubs Organisation

(AMUCO), and other organisations at a hotel here to discuss a community understanding programme, they added.

TIM described the meeting as a 'Roadmap to Peace: Covenant of Coexistence on Community Understanding'.

While researchers claim that Thadou is the largest sub-tribe of the Kuki community, TIM asserts that they are a distinct tribe and not part of the Kuki group.

The meeting between TIM and Meitei groups in Imphal is the first since violence broke out in the state in May 2023. Thadou Inpi Manipur had previously held meetings with Meitei groups in Delhi.

A statement by TIM said, "A major source of confusion between Thadou tribe and those identifying it as a Kuki tribe arises from the similarities in attire and cultural expressions. However, it is crucial to understand that the Thadou tribe is a distinct indigenous identity, while the Kuki nomenclature, as used today, has become a politicised and ideological label. The nomenclature Kuki is not a genuine ethnic identity."

"This is a defining moment in our shared history. Let us stand united in truth. The path to lasting peace in Manipur begins with clarity of identity, rejection of extremism, and a renewed commitment to coexistence," it said. (PTI)

## Authorities notify land acquisition process for ₹ 23,000 crore Shillong-Silchar greenfield corridor



**SHILLONG, Aug 6:** Authorities in Meghalaya have notified the land acquisition process for the construction of the ₹ 23,000 crore Shillong-Silchar high-speed corridor, a greenfield project aimed at improving road infrastructure in the Northeast and enhancing connectivity with Barak Valley in Assam, officials said on Wednesday.

The land acquisition process spans four districts - Ri-Bhoi, East Khasi Hills, West Jaintia Hills, and East Jaintia Hills - through which the 166.8-km four-lane ex-

pressway will pass. Of the total length, 144.8 km falls within Meghalaya, they said. In East Khasi Hills, seven villages have been formally notified. These are Mawsiatkhnam, Lumkseh, Lumdiensai, Nonghali, Mawpdang (Mawkanu), Diengpasoh (Jarait), and Mawryngkneng (Mawiong Sung).

In Ri-Bhoi district, around 17 villages have been identified, and authorities have already begun issuing notifications and compensation-related advisories.

In West Jaintia Hills, 13 villages have

reportedly been identified for the project. These include Larnai, Thadmuseum, Sohphoh, Nongkhroh, Kdohkule, Wahajer, Mukhla Umlangshor, Mukhla Sohshrieh, Mukhla Nongrim, Mookaswan, Nongbah, Pasyih, and Thadmuthlong.

The highest number of notified villages is in East Jaintia Hills, where the district administration has issued acquisition notices for 34 villages, including Tuber Shohshrieh, Wapung Shnong, Lad Rymbai Datsimpein, Khliehriat East, Borghat, Umkiang, and Ratacherra.

The National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd (NHIDCL) is executing the ₹ 22,864-crore project, which received cabinet approval in April 2024.

Once completed, the high-speed corridor is expected to cut down travel time drastically between Shillong and Silchar and boost interstate trade and tourism.

District authorities have warned against fresh constructions along the notified route, stating that any structures built after the cut-off date will not be eligible for compensation. (PTI)

## Three detained after elderly man killed, wife injured in dacoity attempt

### HT Correspondent

**AGARTALA, Aug 6:** Tripura Police on Wednesday have arrested three suspects in connection with a brutal dacoity attempt that left an elderly couple grievously injured with sharp weapons on Tuesday late night.

The incident resulted in the death of the 80-year-old man, while his wife is currently undergoing treatment.

According to police sources, a gang of thieves broke into the couple's residence late on Tuesday night, tied up the house owner, and attacked both with sharp weapons. The man, identified as Ranjan Das (80), succumbed to his injuries on the spot, while his wife, Namita Das (70), was critically injured.

The incident took place in the Shri Durga Sangha area under the Grantali Gram Panchayat in Melaghar, Sepahijala district.

Police from Sonamura Police Station, including the Sub-Divisional Police Officer, rushed to the scene upon receiving information on Wednesday morning.

The house was cordoned off, and a

thorough investigation was launched.

Local residents were left shocked and distressed after waking up to the news of the violent crime. According to neighbors, the elderly couple had been living alone.

Their three sons—one a TSR jawan and the other two engaged in business in Agartala—reside separately.

"We have detained three persons in connection with the incident. The investigation is ongoing," said Tapas Das, Officer-in-Charge of Sonamura Police Station.

Former Union Minister and local MP Pratima Bhoomik visited the grieving family following the incident. She condemned the crime and expressed deep concern over the deteriorating law and order situation.

"This is a deeply disturbing incident. Society must stand united against such heinous acts," Bhoomik said.

She also urged the families of those involved to cooperate in ensuring justice is served and to work towards guiding the accused towards the right path.

## Govt official's body found near Pelga falls

**TURA, Aug 6:** The body of an agriculture department officer who went missing after being swept away by strong currents while picnicking near the banks of Ganol river was recovered by police from a location near Pelga falls in Meghalaya's West Garo Hills district on Wednesday, officials said.

Teseng M Sangma, a district agriculture officer posted in Ampti, went missing on Sunday evening (August 3) while attempting to cross the Ganol river, which was in spate due to heavy rainfall.

A massive search operation was launched by the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), the Special Response Team (SRT), police personnel and local volunteers since Sunday evening.

The search continued for three days and ended with the recovery of his body downstream on Wednesday morning. Family members have appealed to the public not to circulate images of the deceased on social media. (PTI)

## There is need for popular govt in Manipur: Biren Singh

**IMPHAL, Aug 6:** There is a need for a popular government in Manipur, former chief minister N Biren Singh said on Wednesday.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a programme, Singh said he was forced to resign due to the situation in the state.

"We all know how President's Rule came to be imposed in the state.... There is a need for a popular government, and it should come. I have stood for popular government from the very beginning. Due to the situation, I was forced to resign. You all know it," he said.

"I understand people are facing hardship, and I wish for the presence of a popular government as well. In my opinion, in a popular government, the people and the administrators can go hand in hand more comfortably," he

added.

Addressing a programme earlier in the day at Heingang in Imphal East district, the BJP leader said that while the people of Assam have wholeheartedly supported the eviction drive in that state, the action taken by his government in Manipur against encroachment did not receive that much support.

"When I evicted a section of encroachers along the national highway, I was called communal. It would have been better if I had been given some support, as the eviction drives were for the people and the state, and not for myself. Then again, I am blamed for evicting encroachers from reserved forests, and asked why I waged a campaign to eradicate drugs," he said. (PTI)

## Two militants among four held

**IMPHAL, Aug 6:** Security forces arrested two arms smugglers and two militants belonging to proscribed outfits from Manipur's Imphal West and East districts, police said on Wednesday. A 41-year-old active cadre of the banned Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup was apprehended from his residence at Phumlou Keiroi Maning in Imphal West district on Tuesday, a senior officer said.

The militant was involved in recruiting cadres for the outlawed organisation, he said.

A 33-year-old member of the proscribed Kangleipak Communist Party (MFL) was also arrested from a rented house at Lamphel in Imphal West district on Tuesday for allegedly being involved in extortion activities, the officer said. Security forces apprehended two persons on Monday from different locations in Imphal East district for their alleged involvement in the smuggling and sales of arms, he

said. One 9 mm pistol and ammunition were recovered from their possession, the officer added. Security forces have been conducting search operations in Manipur since ethnic violence broke out two years ago.

More than 260 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic strife between Meiteis and Kuki-Zo groups since May 2023.

The Centre had on February 13 imposed the President's rule in Manipur after Chief Minister N Biren Singh resigned. The state assembly, which has a tenure till 2027, has been put under suspended animation. Parliament on Tuesday approved a statutory resolution to extend the President's rule in Manipur for another six months beyond August 13.

The resolution, which was passed by the Lok Sabha last week, was approved by the Rajya Sabha. (PTI)

## NH-10 to remain suspended till 9 am tomorrow: Official

**GANGTOK, Aug 6:** Traffic movement on a key section of NH-10 — from Coronation Bridge to Chitrey — will remain suspended until 9 am on August 8, officials said on Wednesday. The road was already closed from August 3 to 6, and the shutdown has now been extended due to safety concerns, they added.

A notification by the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd (NHIDCL) said under Section 33 of the National Highway (Land and Traffic) Act, 2002, the stretch is being temporarily shut as it aims to ensure the safety of all vehicles plying on the affected section of NH-10, which runs from Sevoke to Rangpo.

The notification said that during this period, traffic for all classes of vehicles will remain suspended.

The NHIDCL has urged the public to cooperate and make alternative arrangements during the closure window. (PTI)

### ERECTION OF SAFETY FENCING ALONG THE TRACK AND ROAD

E-Tender Notice No. SCL-Engg-64

2025; Dated: 01-08-2025. E-tenders are

invited by the undersigned for the following work:

Item: Erection of Safety Fencing along the track and road at identified locations in the sections Arunachal-Jiribam, Badarpur Jn.-Silchar, Chandranathpur-Badarpur Jn. & Katakhal Jn.-Bhairabi to prevent vehicles from trespassing and dashing with trains under the jurisdiction of ADEN/Badarpur Ghat. Tender Value: ₹2,35,63,781/-; Earnest Money: ₹2,67,800/-; E-tenders will be closed at 15:00 hrs. on 25-08-2025 and opened at 15:00 hrs. on 26-08-2025. The complete information with tender documents of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. of 25-08-2025 in website <http://www.irops.gov.in>.

DRM/W, Lumding

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY

"Serving Customers with a smile"

### ENGINEERING WORKS IN LUMDING DIVISION

Tender Notice No.: LMG/Engg/52 of 2025, Dated: 31-07-2025. E-Tender are

invited by the undersigned for the following work:

Brief Description of Item: "Repairs to 120 nos. Quarters including with provision of individual overhead tank for supply of water in colonies of south portion under the jurisdiction of SSE/Works/South/Lumding". Tender Value: ₹2,96,59,636.05/-; Earnest Money: ₹2,98,300/-; Date & time of closing of tender at 15:00 hrs. on 27-08-2025 and opening at 15:00 hrs. on 28-08-2025. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. on 27-08-2025 in the website [www.irops.gov.in](http://www.irops.gov.in).

DRM (W), Lumding

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY

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## Under Advantage Assam 2.0 Version Govt. of Assam Signed MoU for support In Heath Sector for Gates Foundation

Advertisement for various Contractual posts under the Project titled "Technical Assistance for MNH outcomes in Assam (Improving MNH services of Assam through Technical Support)", Gates Foundation (GF) funded Project at Gauhati Medical College under Government of Assam.

Sl no	Post Name	No of Post	Minimum Qualification	Monthly Remuneration (INR)
1	Project Manager	ONE	MBBS with MD (O&G, Pediatrics and Com Medicine) or MBBS with MPH having minimum 10 years experience	200000-218505/-
2	Data Analyst (M&E)	ONE	Masters or Higher Qualification in Health Informatics, Data Science, Information Technology or Any relevant subjects with minimum 10 years post qualification experience in Public Health Data Management	100000-125718/-
3	Documentation Expert	ONE	Masters in Public Health, Social work(MSW) or Social Sciences with minimum 10 years Public Health Experience	125000-148981/-
4	Quality Consultant	ONE	Masters in Public Health, Hospital Management or Healthcare Management with minimum 10 years experience in Quality Assessment & Strengthening of Public Health Facility	125000-148981/-
5	Heath System Strengthening Expert	ONE	MBBS with Master in Public Health with minimum 7 years post Qualification experience	125000-148981/-
6	Nursing Consultant	ONE	M Sc Nursing in Community health Nursing/O&G/Child health with minimum 7 years experience in Public Health Program	80000-99316/-
7	District Nodal Consultant	TWELVE(12) One each at 1. Dhubri, 2. Bongaigaon, 3. Barpeta, 4. Kamrup, 5. Nagaon, 6. Karbi Anglong, 7. Cachar, 8. Lakhimpur, 9. Sonitpur, 10. Dibrugarh, 11. Sivasagar, 12. Jorhat	MBBS with Masters in Public Health with minimum 5 years post qualification Experience in Health Sector Project	100000/-124148/-

Email your CV (mentioning the Post applied for and Contact number) at [TAMNHGMC@GMAIL.COM](mailto:TAMNHGMC@GMAIL.COM) on or before 20th August 2025. Preliminary Shortlisted candidate list for in person interview along with dates will be notified at the official website of Gauhati Medical College <https://gmchassam.gov.in/>. TOR of the Post Advertised is available at the website <https://gmchassam.gov.in/>

Sd/-

Principal Cum Chief Superintendent  
Gauhati Medical College & Hospital  
Guwahati-32

DIPR /D/HLT/1047-Aug-25

No.SEL/NT/1/19/2024-25/342

Date 06/08/2025

### SHORT TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tender in prescribed format Eventually to be drawn in APWD "F2" Form affixing non refundable court fee stamp of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees eight and paise twenty five) only for each group separately are here by invited from the eligible registered contractors of Irrigation Department of Assam for the following works under Barama Chapaguri Division (Irrigation), Mushalpur, Baksa, BTR, Assam and will be received upto 1.00 PM on 14/08/2025 in the office of the undersigned which will be opened on the same date and place at 2.00 PM in presence of the intending tenderers or their authorized agents which may like to be present.

However in the event of closure of opening / receiving of tender due to some unavoidable reason the next office working day will be considered for the purpose

The name of works of the schemes and the tender value are shown in the group list as mentioned below.

Group No.	Name of Works	Tender Amount (Rs. In Lakh)
1	Reshaping & strengthening of MRD2 canal from Ch. 0- 3020 m and Regulator Gate repairing of Dekadong FIS under M&R for the year 2025-26.	19.00 L
2	Strengthening of MR Canal and Bed cutting of Dekadong FIS (Ch. 7000 m to 8000 m) under M&R for the year 2025-26.	18.00 L

Time of Completion: - 30 days from the date of issue of work order

Earnest money: - 2% of tendered value ( 1% in case of ST/SC/OBC/UGE)

Detail tender papers with terms and conditions may be obtained in request from the office of the undersigned on payment of Rs.100.00 (Rupees one hundred) only for each group in the form of IPO/ Demand draft duly pledge to the Superintending Engineer Kokrajhar Circle (Irrigation), Kokrajhar from 10-00 AM on 07/08/2025

N.B.: - 1) In view of the Drought-like Situation in Assam, Govt. has approved the relaxation of Bid submission time period to 7 (Seven) days, in accordance with Section 10 of the Assam Public Procurement Rules, 2020 vide Govt. Letter E-271932/127 Dt. 28-07-2025.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer,  
Kokrajhar Circle (Irrigation),  
Kokrajhar, BTR

IPR(BTC)/C/2025-26/2407

### Attention! Attention!

The Commissioner of Taxes, Assam calls upon all unregistered businesses and service providers who have crossed the threshold turnover limit under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Act to obtain GST registration without delay.

#### ❖ Threshold Limits in Assam:

- For Supply of Goods: ₹40 lakhs
- For Supply of Services: ₹20 lakhs

Businesses crossing the above limits are legally required to register under GST.

#### ❖ Key Benefits of GST Registration:

- Easier Access to Loans & Credit: GST compliance boosts your business credibility with financial institutions.
- Input Tax Credit (ITC): Reduce your effective tax burden through credit on purchases and expenses.
- Bid for Government Tenders: Registered businesses can participate in public procurement processes.

#### ❖ Composition Scheme for Small Taxpayers: A Simple Way to Comply

To make compliance easier for small businesses, GST offers Composition Scheme, which allows eligible taxpayers to pay GST at a fixed lower rate and file simplified returns.

Commissionerate of Taxes, Assam is committed to supporting taxpayer awareness and easing compliance. Take advantage of GST registration and composition schemes to grow confidently and legally.

For details or assistance, contact your nearest jurisdictional State GST Office or visit [www.gst.gov.in](http://www.gst.gov.in)

Commissioner of Taxes, Assam  
Dispur, Guwahati

Issued in public interest by the Office of the Commissioner of Taxes, Assam

DIPR /D/HLT/1077-Aug-25



## 'In Search Of The Sky' to premiere at Toronto Int'l Film Festival 2025



**NEW DELHI, Aug 6:** Director Jitank Singh Gurjar's debut Braj language feature "In Search Of The Sky" is the only Indian film among 55 global titles to be selected at the Toronto International Film Festival's centrepiece programme.

Some notable movies in the category include Richard Linklater's "Blue Moon", Thai filmmaker Ratchapoom Boonbunchachoke's "A Useful Ghost" and Shih-Ching Tsou's "Left-Handed Girl".

Gurjar, who was first noticed with his acclaimed short "Basaan", said his new film is an attempt to explore how the mentally challenged are perceived and how they live perpetually on the brink of societal dejection.

"In Search of the Sky ('Vimukt') is a truly independent film, deeply rooted in the rural sentiments of India and we are ecstatic to learn that our film is getting its world premiere at such a prestigious film festival like the Toronto International Film Festival at their 50th anniversary. This is a big push in the right direction for our film and it motivated me to tell more of such stories and to stay true to them," he said.

Pooja Vishal Sharma, who wrote the story and produced by Canvas Creations in association with Summit Studios and Rihla Films, the Braj language film explores the lives of a poverty-stricken elderly couple who

travels to Maha Kumbh with their mentally challenged son in the hope to cure him. The film stars local theatre actors Nikhil Yadav, Raghvendra Bhadoriya, and Meghna Agarwal.

"This humble, fiercely indie film was born out of a strong vision which got stitched together with sweat, tears and endless devotion of a small and tireless team. To see it soar is a quiet, beautiful miracle. Placing films like these alongside industry giants is deeply moving and motivating for all of us and I hope it inspires other such indie filmmakers too," the writer said.

Shelly Sharma, the cinematographer, creative director and executive producer of the film, said the TIFF selection is beyond her dreams.

"Ours is a simple story told with utmost honesty without any backing from an established production house or a starcast. This is a truly empowering moment for all of the independent filmmaking community in India and we are excited to see where this journey will take us." The centrepiece programme honours and celebrates global cinematic achievements, inviting audiences to immerse themselves in a dynamic array of contemporary films.

The Toronto International Film Festival is scheduled to run from September 4 to 14. (PTI)

## MATT SMITH TO PLAY VILLAIN IN SHAWN LEVY'S 'STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER'



**LOS ANGELES, Aug 6:** From the fantastical realm of "House of the Dragon", Matt Smith has now taken a detour to space by joining the Shawn Levy-directed film, "Star Wars: Starfighter".

Smith will be joining Ryan Gosling and Mia Goth, in the movie that promises to explore the "Star Wars" universe five years after "Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker". While he will play the antagonist, specific details about his role have been kept hidden, reported Variety.

The English actor had revealed in 2021 that he was part of "The Rise of Skywalker" but his scenes ended up on the chopping board.

Smith has had a prosperous career, especially as the Eleventh Doctor in the beloved long-running British sci-fi television series "Doctor Who". Additionally, Smith starred in Netflix's "The Crown", for which he received an Emmy nomination. He now plays Daemon Targaryen in the "Game of Thrones" prequel "House of the Dragon".

Levy recently directed "Deadpool & Wolverine", which broke box office records for the highest grossing R-rated film. Levy has explored science fiction before in his Netflix film "The Adam Project". He also directed the eight episodes of the streamer's popular sci-fi series "Stranger Things" across four seasons. "Star Wars: Starfighter" is set to release on May 28, 2027. (PTI)

## Bengali movie 'Ahana' in official section of Indian Film Festival of Melbourne

**KOLKATA, Aug 6:** 'Ahana' (The Light Within), the debut Bengali feature movie by short film director Promita Bhowmik, has been officially selected in the prestigious 'Indian Film Festival of Melbourne' 2025.\*\*

After receiving the news from the festival directorate, Bhowmik said on Wednesday that she is honoured.

"I am very happy to know that my film will now reach the Australian audience. Hope 'Ahana' will be loved by the viewers in a globally recognised platform like IFFM," she said.

The IFFM 2025 will showcase a variety of Indian cinema, including feature films, documentaries and short films from August 14-24.

The film is slated to be screened on August 24 in the IFFM, the festival directorate posted on its website.

'Ahana' has a woman protagonist who challenges patriarchy.

Ahana had also been selected in the competition section of the 'Best Film Category' of Washington DC South Asian Film Festival 2025, Indo German Film Week 2025 (Competition Section), Kolkata International Film Festival 2024 (Competition Section - Bengali Panorama), Dada Saheb Phalke Film Festival 2025 (Competition Section), Indian Film Festival of Ireland 2025, and others.

It got the 'Honourable Jury Mention Award' in the 'Dada Saheb Phalke Film Festival' 2025.

Apart from versatile actor Sudipta Chakraborty as Ahana, the film has names like Joy Sengupta in the cast.

Ace director Goutam Ghosh's 'Parikrama' (in English/Hindi/Italian), Suman Ghosh's Bengali film 'Puratawn' (The Ancient), Razid Season's 'Eljah' are among the films having Bengal connection to be screened in the festival.

The film will be released in theatres on September 5. (PTI)

## Ramy Youssef leaves Will Ferrell's Netflix project over creative differences

**LOS ANGELES, Aug 6:** Actor-comedian Ramy Youssef has exited Will Ferrell's untitled Netflix golf comedy over creative differences.

Executive producers Josh Rabinowitz and Andy Campagna have also left the project, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

Youssef was also an executive producer on the untitled Netflix comedy, which would see Ferrell as a golfing legend. The show was under Youssef's production banner Cairo Cowboy during this period. The banner has since dropped the show, but continues to have other Netflix shows under its belt, including an upcoming show by Steve Way who is Youssef's long-time collaborator.

Production of the untitled show will now be under Gloria Sanchez productions, with four producers joining after Youssef, Rabinowitz and Campagna's exit.

Molly Shannon, Ferrell's fellow former "Saturday Night Live", has joined the series as a cast member. Shannon recently starred in "Only Murders in the Building" and the comedy show "The Other Two".

Ferrell has had a long career, spanning "Saturday Night Live" and several comedy roles, such as in "Step Brothers", "Anchorman" and Greta Gerwig's "Barbie".

Youssef, a seasoned stand-up-comedian and writer, is best known for "Ramy", an acclaimed show which explores the Muslim-American experience. More recently, Youssef featured in the Oscar-nominated Yorgos Lanthimos film "Poor Things" and Jesse Armstrong's "Mountainhead". (PTI)

## Fun to explore the idea of what could be: Anthony Mackie on 'Twisted Metal'

**NEW DELHI, Aug 6:** He has played Captain America and now he is John Doe, a milkman with amnesia in the post-apocalyptic United States in his new show "Twisted Metal". Anthony Mackie says the idea of seeing the world in a different reality is fun.

Developed by Michael Jonathan Smith, "Twisted Metal" is based on the popular video game of the same name and is set in a dystopian America where civilization has collapsed and society is divided into violent city-states. The show started in 2023 and returned with its second chapter on August 1.

Asked whether speculative nature of stories in modern shows and movies makes him anxious, Mackie said he rather looks at it as an opportunity.

"When I was a kid, watching

Star Wars was the exact same thing. It was the idea of 'Wow, in the future we could actually live on different planets and have robots, lightsabers and all this stuff, I could be a Jedi.' So it's just the idea of seeing the world in reality in a different phase and format and just how that affects us moving forward," Mackie told PTI in an interview. Dystopia is a concept that has been explored in many Hollywood films be it Stanley Kubrick's classic "A Clockwork Orange", the more recent totalitarian regime shown in "The Hunger Games", the post-apocalyptic wasteland of "Mad Max: Fury Road" or the artificial intelligence takeover in "The Matrix". "There's so much potential and opportunity. It's just about what we do with it. I think that's what our show

kind of encompasses," he said about exploring the concept in fiction. In "Twisted Metal", Mackie's John Doe is given a mission to traverse the desolate United States to deliver a mysterious package with unknown contents. He faces a life-altering opportunity but must confront ruthless marauders in deadly and destructive vehicles to secure a chance at a better future.

Mackie's journey in movies began with 2003's indie movie "Brother to Brother", followed by supporting parts in "Million Dollar Baby", "Half Nelson", "Eagle Eye", "Real Steel" and "Gangster Squad".

He was noticed for his performance as filmmaker Kathryn Bigelow's 2008's war drama "The Hurt Locker" and was later cast as Wilson in "Captain America: Winter Sol-

dier", a role he has now played in multiple Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) titles.

Reflecting on his career of over two decades, Mackie, 46, said he seeks roles that challenge him. "There's a modicum of reasons that fit into the fold of a career. My first movie was a movie called 'Brother to Brother', which nobody saw but it was so important to me because I wanted to learn and grow from that character as a human being."

"Just like now I learn and grow so much from the characters I play, like Sam Wilson, who has made me so much of a better dad and a better human being."

Mackie said John Doe, the wisecracking, resourceful delivery driver from action-comedy series "Twisted Metal", has also taught him a lot.

"(He) has made me so much more inquisitive and optimistic about the potential and the world that I live in and seeing everything for the first time and enjoying it for that first time and the spontaneity of just existing in the moment," he added.

For Mackie, acting isn't just about performance, it's also about immersing fully into a character. "It's always about the idea of allowing those characters to affect you and allowing those characters to be who they actually are from the page to real life and giving them the freedom to be that," the 46-year-old actor said.

"Twisted Metal" season two, which currently streams on SonyLIV, also stars Stephanie Beatriz, Joe Seoana, Will Arnett, Thomas Haden Church, and Anthony Carrigan. (PTI)





## Chennai Grand Masters postponed to Aug 7 after fire at tournament venue



**CHENNAI, Aug 6:** (PTI) The Chennai Grand Masters chess tournament, featuring some well-established Indian and international names, has been postponed to Thursday after a fire broke out at the event's venue, the Hyatt Regency hotel.

The third edition of the competition was scheduled to start on Wednesday.

"Fire at Hotel Hyatt Regency last night, the venue of the Chennai GM. All the players are safe and shifted to another hotel nearby. Tournament postponed by a day," wrote Indian GM and tournament director Srinath Narayanan on his X handle.

The players were eventually brought back to the hotel, but the tournament will begin a day later after a fresh round of safety checks. "Close to midnight there was an emergency in the Hotel Hyatt Regency in Chennai. Due to an electric fire on the ninth floor, the entire hotel became smoky and everyone had to evacuate the hotel before it became difficult to breathe," ChessBase India reported.

The organisers informed PTI that the timing of the matches will remain the same, but a rest day has now been removed from the schedule.

The timings will be the same, and the tournament will end on August 15 itself. There was a rest day in between, and that is no longer part of the schedule," they said. The Chennai Grand Masters, which carries a prize money of Rs one crore, has in its roster an impressive array of players such as India No.1 Arjun Erigaisi, seasoned Vidit Gujrathi and Anish Giri from the Netherlands.

World No. 5 Erigaisi will open his campaign against American prodigy Awonder Liang.

The highly-anticipated clash between two Indian grandmasters -- Erigaisi and Gujrathi -- is set for Round 8 on August 14.

The tournament, which was played over seven rounds in the previous two editions, will see participation from 19 Grandmasters and offer crucial FIDE Circuit points. The points will be vital for securing a spot in the 2026 Candidates Tournament, a case in point being reigning world champion D Gukesh, who entered the Candidates last year on the back of his strong showing here. (PTI)

## Like Bumrah, Siraj's workload will need attention to keep him injury-free: RP Singh

**NEW DELHI, Aug 6:** Mohammed Siraj is in the same league as premier pacer Jasprit Bumrah and it is important to manage his workload carefully to keep him injury-free, said former Indian fast bowler RP Singh.

Siraj bowled 185.3 overs in the recently-concluded five-match Test series in England and finished as the highest wicket-taker with 23 wickets, emerging as the most utilised bowler in the series.

The 31-year-old from Hyderabad claimed nine wickets, including a five-wicket haul in the second innings of the fifth Test, playing a key role in India's six-run victory that helped the visitors level the series 2-2.

"Workload management will be crucial to prevent Siraj from getting injured in the future," Singh said in an interview with PTI-Bhasha. "Fast bowlers are at higher risk of injury when they play too many matches in a short time. His workload should be managed just like we did with Bumrah."

Citing Jasprit Bumrah's example, Singh said: "It's because of better workload management, Bumrah bowled brilliantly in both ODI and T20 World Cups."

"Siraj is also in the same league. To protect him from injuries, we need to seriously focus on his workload, sooner or later."

Singh, who played 82 matches for India including 14 Tests, praised Siraj for his lion-hearted performance during the England tour. "Siraj was the only bowler who played all five Tests and bowled with full energy and inten-

## POSITIVE CRICKET DOESN'T MEAN RECKLESS CRICKET CHAPPELL CRITICISES ENGLAND'S 'BAZBALL' PHILOSOPHY

**NEW DELHI, Aug 6:** "Positive cricket doesn't mean reckless cricket," said Australian great Greg Chappell, lambasting England's 'Bazball' philosophy during the high-intensity drawn Test series against India.

In his column for ESPN-Cricinfo, Chappell, while lavishing praise on the young Indian team for being fearless, criticised the Englishmen, particularly Harry Brook, for failing to read situations which required perseverance instead of flashy stroke-play.

"England's own journey in this series presents a cautionary subplot - one embodied by the brilliant but mercurial Harry Brook, whose virtues I have extolled publicly before," Chappell, a former India head coach, said.

"He has time, range, confidence, and that rare gift of making batting look effortless. But cricket, particularly Test cricket, is not just about shot-making. It's about judgement. About recognising when the moment demands attack - and when it demands restraint," he added.

England were 301/3 in pursuit of 374 when the 26-year-old Brook's dismissal triggered a collapse on the fourth day of the fifth Test in London that the home side lost by six runs on Monday. With that result, India tied the series at 2-2.

"Brook's dismissal at The Oval, with the game finely poised, was symptomatic of the conundrum that is facing the England setup. The 'Bazball' philosophy - of fearless, attacking cricket - has revitalised their Test side. But it



cannot become an excuse to avoid doing the hard yards.

"...all England needed was for one batter to hold his nerve. To absorb pressure. Brook went for the glory shot - and perished," he pointed out.

"There's nothing wrong with positivity. But positive cricket doesn't mean reckless cricket. It means confident, calculated risk-taking."

Chappell said a more restrained approach in challenging match situations would help Brook establish himself as a worthy successor to Joe Root, England's

most prolific run-getter.

"Brook is emerging, and he will learn. But to become the match-winner England need, he must embrace the grind along with the glamour. Root didn't become England's most prolific batter by always playing pretty strokes.

"He earned it with grit. Brook will need to do the same if he is to fulfil his vast potential," he said.

Giving his overall assessment of the series, Chappell said the showdown will be long remembered for not just the result but also the "theatre" it created.

## Son Heung-min signs with MLS' Los Angeles FC after a decade at Tottenham

**LOS ANGELES, Aug 6:** Son Heung-min agreed to a contract with Los Angeles FC on Tuesday, finalizing his move to Major League Soccer after a decade at Tottenham Hotspur.

The 33-year-old South Korean superstar forward is joining LAFC three days after he formally announced his decision to leave Tottenham.

Son attended LAFC's Leagues Cup match against Tigres at BMO Stadium on Tuesday night, watching from a luxury suite. LAFC will formally introduce Son at a news conference Wednesday.

LAFC, a deep-pocketed club with significant team success in its first eight seasons of existence, reportedly paid a transfer fee of more than \$20 million, which could end up being the most ever for an MLS move. Son was a beloved presence at Spurs, scoring 173 goals in 454 competitive appearances for the North London club while rising to

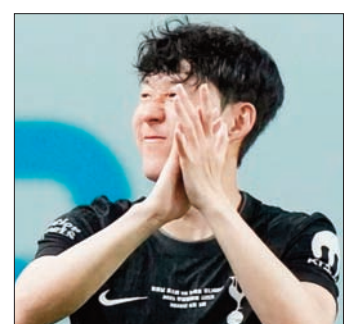
global prominence with his combination of speed, playmaking skill and finishing acumen.

The captain was given a memorable farewell last week in Seoul during Tottenham's exhibition match against Newcastle, getting a guard of honor from both teams and tearfully exiting in the second half while nearly 65,000 fans roared.

But South Korea's most popular athlete -- and almost certainly the greatest Asian soccer player in history -- has chosen an auspicious stage for the next chapter of his groundbreaking career.

Los Angeles has the world's largest ethnic Korean population outside Korea, with the city's vibrant Koreatown district sitting just a couple of miles from LAFC's BMO Stadium.

LAFC is undoubtedly hoping to market Son as a soccer counterpart to the Dodgers' Shohei Ohtani, albeit on a smaller scale. Ohtani, the three-time MLB MVP from Japan



who is on a trajectory to become the greatest Asian player in baseball history, draws fans from across the Pacific Rim to Dodger Stadium while attracting millions in sponsorships and partnerships for the Dodgers.

Son's move to California also puts him in position to make an impact on and off the field at the World Cup, which will be held across North America in 2026. Son, the captain of his national team, already has said he will play in his

fourth World Cup.

After leading Tottenham to its first European trophy in decades by winning the Europa League in May in a fitting cap to his English career, Son will go straight into the MLS Cup race when suits up for his new club. LAFC currently sits sixth in the Western Conference at 10-6-6, but with multiple games in hand on every team in front of it because of its participation in the Club World Cup. Son's seven Premier League goals last season were his fewest since his Tottenham debut, but he still appears to have the pace and skill necessary to be a difference-maker at any level. He also turned 33 only a month ago, putting him on the younger end of the global stars recently arriving in MLS.

Lionel Messi and Marco Reus were 35 and Luis Suárez was 37 when they went stateside in recent years, while Olivier Giroud and Lloris were both 37 when they joined LAFC last year. (AP)

## ITBP hold Punjab FC to a goal-less draw

**KOKRAJHAR, Aug 6:** ITBP held Punjab FC to a goalless draw in a Group D match of the 134th Durand Cup football tournament at the SAI Stadium here on Wednesday.

Punjab FC were wasteful in front of goal, failing to convert their chances as ITBP showcased resilient defending to secure a hard earned point. Both teams have four points from two matches and will now face Bodoland FC in their remaining group stage matches.

Panagiotis Dilmeris made three changes to the Punjab starting line up, bringing in Ricky Shabong, Leon Augustine and new signing Bijoy Varghese in place of Ninthoinganba Meetei, Vinit Rai and Pramveer Singh while ITBP head coach Surojit Kumar Prodhani maintained the same starting eleven from the first match.

Punjab FC created two chances in the opening exchanges of the match with Ricky Shabong's effort from outside the box being blocked by the defence.

Moments later, Vishal Yadav failed to divert a low cross after Muhammed Suhail found the young striker at the end of a mazy run. Vishal and Suhail were energetic throughout the first half, troubling the defence with their speed and dribbling.

Both youngsters swapped positions mid half with Vishal playing from the left wing. The 17 year old came close twice with his left-footed efforts from outside the box, but failed to trouble the goalkeeper.

Leon Augustine found himself free inside the box at the end of a looping cross but his header did not

have the power to trouble Ughes Lama in goal.

The Shers were playing free flowing football but the decision making in the final third lacked precision with most of their efforts coming through long range shots as both teams went into the break with the scores level.

Dilmeris introduced Princeton Rebello and Konsam Sanathoi Singh at half time to inject some energy into the game and the former went into the thick of action from the right wing, delivering dangerous crosses.

The substitute failed to put the finishing touches to Manglenhang Kipgen pass after he was one-on-one with the goalkeeper at the far post. ITBP were also resilient in their own box, defending in numbers along with goalkeeper Ughes Lama who was solid under the post.

Punjab dodged a bullet midway through the second half when goalkeeper Ravi Kumar was closed down by Seiminthang Haokip, but luckily the ball deflected for a corner.

Pradipta Biswas could not then keep his header down from the resultant corner, which the defender repeated again minutes later from another corner kick.

The Shers pushed hard to score but a combination of poor decision making and some resilient defending along with commanding goalkeeping denied them the decisive goal.

Punjab kept on pushing hard for the goal in injury time but ITBP defended in numbers to deny the ISL side. (PTI)

## Osaka powers into semifinals in Montreal, will face Clara Tauson

**MONTREAL, Aug 6:** Naomi Osaka powered into her first National Bank Open semifinal, beating No. 10 seed Elina Svitolina 6-2, 6-2.

Osaka advanced to face No. 16 seed Clara Tauson, who eliminated sixth-seeded Madison Keys 6-1, 6-4 in the first quarterfinal of the night.

Osaka, the four-time Grand Slam champion who reached No. 1 in the rankings, continued her best performance in a WTA 1000 tournament since reaching the final in Miami in 2022. She stepped away from tennis for 15 months toward the end of that season and had daughter Shai in July 2023.

The native of Japan is seeking her eighth career title and her first since the 2021 Australian Open.

Canadian teenager Victoria Mboko takes on ninth seed Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan in the other semifinal Wednesday. Mboko, who's playing in her first main draw at the National Bank

Open, will rise into the WTA's top 50 after beginning the year outside the top 300.

The 18-year-old from Toronto has defeated five higher-ranked opponents en route to the semifinals, including top seed Coco Gauff in the fourth round.

Tauson dedicated her victory to her grandfather, Peter, during an on-court interview at IGA Stadium. "I really wanted to win for him today," she told the crowd before breaking down in tears. "I really wanted to come out here and show my best tennis for him, and hopefully he's watching."

Tauson said she only found out about her grandfather's death on Monday, a day after she eliminated Wimbledon champion and No. 3-ranked Iga Swiatek 7-6 (1), 6-3.

She spoke of him as one of the biggest supporters of her career.

"He used to coach me a little bit playing tennis and drove me to almost every single practice from my school," the 22-year-old native of Denmark said. (AP)

## Kashmiri kayaker Bilquis Mir meets Mandaviya, Khadse to discuss future of water sports

**NEW DELHI, Aug 6:** From an accidental kayaker to being a jury member at the Olympics, Kashmiri trailblazer Bilquis Mir has come a long way and it was another moment of pride for her when Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya and Minister of State for Sports Raksha Nikhil Khadse met her to discuss the sport's future.

The 38-year-old, who served as a jury member for kayaking and canoeing during the Paris Olympics last year, met the two ministers here on Tuesday and apprised them about the growth of water sports in the country.

"I can see that the contribution of sportspersons is acknowledged more outside Jammu and Kashmir and this was clear from the attention and respect I got during my meeting with the two respected ministers," Mir told PTI.

She said the Sports Minister even asked her to prepare a roadmap for kayaking and canoeing and groom teams too.

"It was heartening to know that the Union sports ministry is keen on these water sports which in total have 16 medals in Olympics," she said.

Her meeting with the two ministers comes at a time when Kashmir's iconic Dal lake is gearing up to host the inaugural Khelo India Water Sports Festival from August 21 to 23.

After the interaction, Khadse, while stressing on the transformative potential of sports, lauded



Mir for her inspiring journey and deep commitment to grassroots development.

"Seeing her brought back the realisation that bright champions win not only medals but they take others to new heights, innovate fresh pathways, and demonstrate what is possible when dreams are cultivated and not only envisioned," Khadse said, referring to Mir's career as a kayaker, coach and mentor. Mir's is a tale of overcoming barriers and achieving new milestones in Kashmir when terrorism was at its peak. She started her journey on the waters of Dal Lake, where she honed her kayaking skills after being introduced to the sport accidentally while out with a friend.

Between 1998 and 2006, she dominated the national stage,

winning more than 25 medals and became the first from her state to compete for India in the ICF Sprint World Cup in Hungary, where she progressed to the semifinals -- a first for Indian water sports. She was also the national coach for the women's kayaking and canoeing team at the London Olympics in 2012.

"What touched me most was how much she identifies with the grassroots. As Nehru Park's Water Sports Director in Srinagar, she has coached over 3,000 sportspersons, of whom over 300 are girls. Her proteges have returned more than 120 national medals, and her work has made an otherwise sleepy lakeside centre a centre of excellence," the minister said in her post.

She said Mir's journey serves

as inspiration for aspiring athletes across the nation, demonstrating that with the right mix of passion, hard work, and support, it is possible to achieve not only personal greatness but pave the way for others to follow.

Khadse said the Narendra Modi-led central government was doing its bit for the growth of sports with initiatives like Khelo India. Mir's journey was, however, not free of obstacles as for more than two years, she was involved in a legal fight after the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) lodged an FIR against her in 2023. The FIR, which was recently revoked by the Jammu and Kashmir High Court, accused her of failing to complete a mandatory technical qualification for her position as a Physical Education Teacher. The High Court indicted the authorities and described the case as a "witch hunt" initiated by "vested interests". In a curtly-worded order, the court said it was alarmed at the ACB's actions, observing that "criminalising non-acquisition of a technical qualification" by a sportsperson who had brought laurels to the nation "speaks volumes about the way in which we are treating our sporting heroes."

The court also lamented that instead of honouring meritorious people, the powers-that-be were "leaving no stone unturned in harassing such meritorious people." (PTI)

## Taylor Fritz and Ben Shelton set up all-American semifinal in Toronto

**TORONTO, Aug 6:** Taylor Fritz and Ben Shelton won in the quarterfinals of the National Bank Open, setting up the first all-American semifinal in an ATP Masters 1000 tournament in 15 years.

The second-seeded Fritz beat No. 6 seed Andrey Rublev 6-3, 7-6 (4). He hit 20 aces, including one that finished off the match.

Shelton, the No. 4 seed, then beat No. 9 Alex de Minaur of Australia 6-3, 6-4. The 22-year-old reached the semifinals of an ATP Masters 1000 tournament for the first time.

The matchup Wednesday between Fritz and Shelton will be the first time since Andy Roddick beat Mardy Fish at Cincinnati in 2010 that two American met in an ATP Masters 1000 semifinal.

Wednesday's other semifinal will see top-seeded Alexander Zverev of Germany, the 2017 tournament winner in Montreal, take on No. 11 Karen Khachanov of Russia. The final is Thursday.

Fritz came out firing in hazy and breezy conditions with three aces to win the first game. He then broke Rublev in securing the match's first eight points.

The 27-year-old American, who sits fourth in the ATP Tour rankings and lost last year's U.S. Open final to No. 1 Jannik Sinner, fired two more aces to go up 4-1 before serving out the set. (AP)



## Pacer Siraj attains career-best 15<sup>th</sup> position in ICC rankings following The Oval show



**DUBAI, Aug 6:** India pacer Mohammed Siraj has attained a career-best 15th position in the latest ICC Test rankings following his match-winning performance in the fifth and final Test against England at The Oval.

Siraj jumped 12 spots following his nine wickets in the match, including a five-for, as India defeated the hosts by six runs in a thriller to draw the series 2-2.

With England requiring 35 runs on the last day with four wickets in hand, a charged up Siraj, who was adjudged 'Player of the Match', accounted for three batters including the last dismissal of Gus Atkinson, to earn India a remarkable win.

Siraj's best ICC ranking so far had been a 16th position that he reached in January last year.

India's pace spearhead Jasprit

Bumrah, who played three Tests to manage his workload, continues to lead the charts with 889 points.

Prasidh Krishna also attained a career-best 59th position after he along with Siraj became only the second India pair to take four or more wickets each in both innings of a Test, a feat earlier accomplished by spinners Bishan Bedi and Erapalli Prasanna against Australia in Delhi in 1969.

India opener Yashasvi Jaiswal returned to the top-5 in the Test batting rankings following his second century in the series at The Oval.

Jaiswal rose three spots and is on 792 points, while the only other India batter in the top-10 is Rishabh Pant, who has slipped one spot to eighth as he could not play the fifth Test due to a foot injury.

Charismatic England batter Joe Root has firmed up his position at the top with his third century in as many matches, while Harry Brook's 98-ball 111 has helped him claw back to second position.

In the bowling department, England fast bowlers Atkinson and Josh Tongue have also attained career-best positions after finishing with eight wickets each in the match. Atkinson is in the top-10 for the first time, while Tongue is up 14 places to 46th. (PTI)

### Siraj arrives in Hyderabad, adoring fans show up to welcome England series hero

**HYDERABAD, Aug 6:** India pacer Mohammed Siraj on Wednesday landed in his hometown Hyderabad after a stellar performance in the intensely-contested drawn Test series against England and enthusiastic fans made a beeline to welcome him.

Siraj was the leading wicket-taker in the five-match series. He played all the five games and bowled a mammoth 185.3 overs.

The 31-year-old, along with team's fielding coach T Dilip, first landed at Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport terminal from London before heading to his home base. He was dressed in dapper black casuals and a small group of fans gave him a joyous welcome.

There were requests for selfies and autographs but Siraj quickly trooped into a car and left for the domestic terminal to catch the connecting flight to Hyderabad, where he was once again greeted by a group of adoring fans.

"We have not spoken to him yet. But we will certainly plan something (felicitation) for him, as he could be in the city for a while now. It's a matter of pride for all of us that he did so well for the country in the series against England," a Hyderabad Cricket Association official told PTI.

Siraj's most definitive effort came on the fifth day of the final Test at the Oval, when his singular grit helped India bowl out England for 367 in a chase of 374.

Siraj took five wickets in the innings to complete a match-haul of nine wickets.

The six-run win, the slimmest in India's Test history, earned the visitors a highly admirable 2-2 draw in the series. (PTI)

## India winning without Bumrah is just coincidence, his quality is exceptional: Tendulkar

**MUMBAI, Aug 6:** Batting great Sachin Tendulkar feels that India winning two Tests against England in Jasprit Bumrah's absence was a mere "coincidence" and the talismanic pace spearhead's quality remains "exceptional and unbelievable".

Bumrah played three of the just-concluded five-Test series in which a relatively inexperienced India eked out a creditable 2-2 draw. The two games that India won did not feature Bumrah due to a pre-decided workload management plan.

Tendulkar said India emerging victorious at Birmingham and The Oval in Bumrah's absence was a matter of chance. He went on to highlight Bumrah's performances in the three Tests he played, fetching 14 wickets in all.

"Bumrah started off really well, got five wickets in the (first innings of the) first Test. He did not play the second Test, but (played in) the third and the fourth. Again, in (one of) those two Tests, he got (a) five wickets (haul)," Tendulkar said in his video analysis of the series on 'Reddit'.

"Of three Test that he played, he picked up five wickets twice. I know that people are discussing a number of things, that we won those Tests in which he did not play. To me, that is just a coincidence.



"The quality of Bumrah is exceptional. What he has been able to do is just unbelievable so far. He has been a consistent performer without any doubt (and) I would put him right at the top with anyone else," he added.

In Bumrah's absence Mohammed Siraj brought his A game to the table and snared 23 wickets, playing in all five matches and bowling a total of 185.3 overs.

However, Bumrah remains miles ahead in absolute numbers with 219 wickets in 48 Tests as compared to 123 in 41 matches by Siraj.

Bumrah's planned absence, in the must-win fifth and final Test, did raise some questions about the handling of his

workload but the team management made it clear that the premier pacer could not have been risked.

Tendulkar lavished praise on all-rounder Washington Sundar, who made crucial contributions throughout to help the team's cause.

"Whenever he has played, he has contributed. Even if you look at the second Test match, in the fourth innings he bowled a crucial ball to Ben Stokes just before lunch on Day Five. He got him out. To me, that was one of the turning points," Tendulkar said.

"In the last Test, when it was time to hit out, he smacked 53 runs. He accelerated brilliantly.

"Where it was needed to occupy the crease, he was able to do that in the fourth Test and where it was about pressing the accelerator hard, he was able to do that in the fifth Test as well. Well done, Washi...I really enjoyed it," he added.

The Mumbai maestro also offered his take on the tense exchange that followed India's refusal to accept the draw offered by England captain Ben Stokes during the Manchester Test.

Tendulkar felt Ravindra Jadeja and Washington had every right to get to their hundreds and India's decision to continue was totally in "right spirit" despite a draw being the only possible result. (PTI)

## Shubman Gill among nominees for ICC's Player of the Month award

**DUBAI, Aug 6:** India captain Shubman Gill was on Wednesday named among the three nominees for ICC's Player of the Month award for July along with South Africa's Waan Mulder and England skipper Ben Stokes. Gill led India remarkably in the recently-concluded Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy against England as his young side emerged with a hard-fought 2-2 draw, a series in which the 25-year-old rewrote batting records.

Gill scored 754 runs in the series against England with four centuries, including a double ton at 75.40 to break legendary Sunil Gavaskar's record (732) for the high-

est run tally for an Indian captain in a five-Test series. Gill's returns are now also the second-best behind Sir Donald Bradman (810 runs) in the all-time list for captains.

"Shubman Gill had a sensational month, amassing 567 runs at an impeccable average of 94.50 in three Tests during India's gripping series in England," the ICC wrote on its website.

"He played a starring role in India's record-breaking win at Edgbaston, where he scored a monumental 269 in the first innings followed by 161 in the second. His combined 430 runs across the two innings is the second highest tally, next only to

Graham Gooch's 456," it added.

The ICC said Gill carried the baton from "all-time great" Virat Kohli at No.4.

"His consistency at No. 4, carrying on the baton from all-time great Virat Kohli, provided stability and flair in equal measure, and combined with his extraordinary captaincy in his debut series," it said.

In his maiden outing as South Africa captain, Mulder struck a mammoth 367 not out against Zimbabwe but declared his team's innings when he could have broken legendary Brian Lara's record for highest individual total of 400 not out against England in 2004. (PTI)

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Government of Assam



Cooperation Department

### Award/Financial Assistance to eligible Cooperatives of Assam for the year 2025-26

#### Categories

- A. Gaon panchayat Samabai Samities for Non PDS business.
- B. Woman Cooperative Societies.
- C. i) Dairy Cooperatives for Installation/Opening of Milk Parlour ii) Purchase of Mini Milk Cary Van (3 wheeler).
- D. Other Coop Societies.
- i) Traditional items, ii) Implementation of NCCF, iii) Implementation of NAFED, iv) implementation of BBSSL Scheme, v) Installation and Operationalization of 9 Bolt Mustard Oil Mill, vi) Doing business on Fertilizer/Pesticides, vii) Establishment of Rice Mill, viii) Agriculture/Organic Farming Societies for purchase of Power Tiller, ix) Fishery Cooperatives for purchase of Fishing Boat & Net, x) MPACS, MFISHERY & MDAIRY as Working Capital, xi) Tourism Cooperative as Revolving Fund, xii) Small Industry Cooperatives as Working Capital, xiii) GPSS for opening of Petrol Pump.
- E. Award for the best performing Co-operative Societies (Utkrista Manprapta Samabai Samitee Bota Achani) Category-i) State level ii) Zonal level iii) District level iv) Primary level- a) GPSS b) Primary level Woman Co-operative c) Primary level dairy cooperative d) others e) consumers

#### General Eligibility

- a) The beneficiary should be a Cooperative Society duly registered under Assam Cooperative Societies Act, 2007.
- b) The Co-operative Society should have got their accounts audited regularly for the financial years 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-2025.
- c) The societies should be holding AGM and /or Election regularly for the last 3(three) years.

Eligible state level cooperatives societies can also apply

The above schemes are only applicable to the cooperative societies of the general area.

The Eligibility criteria and online application form is available on [www.farcs.assam.gov.in](http://www.farcs.assam.gov.in)

For detailed information please check the guidelines available in the portal

DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION IS FROM 07 August, 2025 TO 27 August, 2025

Submission of online application does not guarantee selection.

Please contact the concerned office of the District Deputy Registrar/Assistant Registrar of Cooperative Societies for further details.

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