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## ED raids premises of ex-IAS officer Sewali Sharma, others

₹105-cr SCERT 'fraud' case in Assam: Raids conducted under PMLA

GUWAHATI, Aug 5: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday carried out searches against retired IAS officer Sewali Devi Sharma and others in an alleged ₹ 105 crore scam in the Assam State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT).

At least eight premises connected with Sharma, a former executive chairman-cum-director of the SCERT, and some of her alleged associates were raided under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the sources said.

The money laundering case stems from a May 2023 FIR filed by the state police on the directions of the Assam CM's Special Vigilance Cell. She was arrested by the state police from Rajasthan a few days after filing of the complaint.

Sharma was subsequently chargesheeted by police for alleged possession of disproportionate assets worth ₹ 5.7 crore, according to the sources.



The 1992-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer hailed from the Rajasthan cadre and was on deputation to Assam when alleged irregularities worth ₹ 105 crore took place during her tenure in the SCERT between 2017 and 2020.

Reports said she obtained bail in this case from the Supreme Court in March.

The former bureaucrat could not

be contacted immediately for a comment on the ED action.

Sharma, according to sources, served as the Executive Chairman-cum-Director of Open and Distance Learning Cell (ODL) of the SCERT and was responsible for the implementation of the National Council for Teacher Education's (NCTE) two-year Diploma in Elementary Education programme.

The state government had ap-

proved the creation of 59 institutions and the training of 27,897 teachers.

However, in comparison, the ex-IAS officer is alleged to have opened 347 study centres and enrolled 1,06,828 trainees to "collect more funds."

Sharma, the sources claimed, opened five bank accounts for the ODL Cell, where she was the "sole signatory" and this was in "violation" of government rules.

Of the ₹ 115 crore she received in fees from individuals, she allegedly spent more than ₹ 105 crore without obtaining financial sanction from the state government, the sources alleged.

The expenditure was incurred for supplies and execution of works without following the rules and procedures and payments were released without complete supply of materials, and no work was done, they claimed.

These contracts, as per ED's probe, were given to entities "owned (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

## Former J&K, M'laya Guv Satyapal Malik passes away

NEW DELHI, Aug 5: Former Jammu and Kashmir governor Satyapal Malik died on Tuesday at a hospital here after a prolonged illness, his personal staff said. He was 79.

Malik, who had also held the positions of governor of Goa, Bihar, Meghalaya, and Odisha, besides being a member of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha in his long political career, died at 1.12 pm at the Ram Manohar Lohia hospital here.

He was in the ICU of the hospital for a long time, getting treatment for various ailments, the staff said.

"It is with deep regret that we confirm the demise of Satyapal Malik, who had been receiving intensive care at our facility," the RML authorities said in a statement.

The patient had a longstanding history of diabetic kidney disease, hypertension, and other chronic health issues, including morbid obesity and obstructive sleep apnea, the said.

In his gubernatorial role at Jammu and Kashmir, Malik oversaw the abrogation of Article 370 and the bifurcation of the state into two Union Territories on August 5, 2019. Coincidentally, he took his last breath on (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

Houses buried, scores trapped and at least four killed

## Flashflood havoc in U'khand post cloudburst



UTTARKASHI, Aug 5: Disaster swept through the Himalayan village of Dharali on way to Gangotri on Tuesday with a massive cloudburst leading to flashfloods that barreled through homes, trees and cars, trapping 60-70 people and leaving at least four dead.

Dharali is the main stopover on way to Gangotri, the origin of the Ganges, and home to many hotels, restaurants and home stays.

At least half the village was buried under the fast flowing mudslide of slush, rubble and water, officials said as rescue personnel battled the elements in the ecologically fragile heights to contain the damage of the afternoon.

Contiguous buildings, including three and four-storey houses, fell

like a pack of cards as the surging waters washed over them. The devastating flashflood came in the wake of a cloudburst somewhere in the catchment area of the Kheer Ganga river.

And Dharali was not the only hit.

The raging waters flowed down two different sides of the same hill, one towards Dharali and the other towards the village of Sukki, said state Disaster Management Secretary Vinod Kumar Suman.

The rain continued through the afternoon and till evening, hampering rescue efforts.

Besides, landslides blocked 163 roads, including five national highways, seven state highways and two border (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

## HT BRIEFS

### AK-47 recovered

BOKAJAN: An AK-47 assault rifle along with six rounds of ammunition was recovered by villagers from the roadside at Lahorijan Kania Tokbi village on August 4. The villagers immediately informed the police, who took possession of the weapon. The village, located near the Assam-Nagaland border adjacent to Dimapur, lies close to National Highway 39—an area known for frequent instances of drug trafficking and gun running. Narcotics such as heroin, brown sugar, methamphetamine, and morphine are often smuggled through this corridor, along with illegal arms and foreign goods. The same route is also reportedly used for transporting stolen motorcycles, commercial vehicles, earthmovers, dumper trucks, and luxury cars into Dimapur.

### Drugs seized

GUWAHATI: Drugs with an estimated value of over ₹ 7 crore have been recovered in two separate operations and five people were arrested in Assam's Cachar district in connection with the seizures, chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said. Acting on specific information, the police conducted two operations in the district and seized 216 gms of heroin and 20,000 Yaba tablets along with two vehicles, the chief minister posted on 'X'. "₹ 7 crore worth of drugs, now in smokes! @assampolice stands firm - no place for narcotics!", Sarma said. Necessary legal procedures have already been initiated. Yaba tablets are banned in the country because they contain methamphetamine, a Schedule II substance under the Controlled Substances Act, and caffeine.

## India, Philippines announce strategic partnership; friends by choice, says PM

NEW DELHI, Aug 5: India and the Philippines are friends by choice and partners by destiny, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday as the two countries elevated their ties to the level of strategic partnership, with a greater thrust on increasing interaction among the armed forces.

The announcement of the strategic partnership was made after talks between Prime Minister Modi and visiting Philippines President Ferdinand R Marcos Jr here, and a day after the navies of the two countries conducted joint exercises off the Philippines coast.

"India and the Philippines are friends by choice and partners by destiny. From the Indian Ocean to the Pacific, we are united by

shared values. Ours is not just a friendship of the past, it is a promise to the future," Modi said with Marcos Jr by his side.

The two countries signed nine pacts, including on declaration and implementation of strategic partnership, terms of reference for talks among the armies, air forces and navies of the two countries and for cooperation on peaceful use of outer space.

The prime minister said the Philippines is an important partner in India's Act East Policy and 'MAHASAGAR' (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions) vision.

"We are committed to peace, security, prosperity and a rules-

based order in the Indo-Pacific region. We support freedom of navigation in accordance with international laws," Modi said.

"It is a matter of pleasure that today we have decided to elevate our relations to the status of a strategic partnership. A comprehensive action plan has also been formulated to translate the potential of this partnership into results," he said.

India and the Philippines are celebrating 75 years of establishment of diplomatic relations and the two leaders released a postage stamp to commemorate the occasion.

Modi also thanked the Philippine government for condemning the April (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

## Tribal belt and blocks to exist in future also: Himanta

### HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 5: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday stated that the 6th schedule areas along with tribal belts and blocks always existed in Assam and these will exist in coming days also.

He told reporters, "There will be no change in the status of the 6th schedule area as well as tribal belts and blocks. All these provisions will continue to exist in the future also and there must be no doubt in that. Tribal belts and blocks have existed since independence and there is no scope of controversy surrounding this system."

Sarma mentioned that like in Tirap tribal belt and blocks—the state government has ensured land rights for the indigenous people, the



same provision was implemented for Moran and Motak people also after consultation with tribal sangha.

"We have been working towards giving land rights to indigenous people living in tribal belts and blocks in Balipara, Dhemaji etc. areas. The tribal sangha has not also opposed our move and I want to make it very clear that the state gov-

ernment will take steps in Assam through dialogue and consultation," the Chief Minister added.

Meanwhile, in a poignant tribute to a defining moment in Assam's history, CM Sarma today announced that construction of a grand memorial dedicated to the martyrs of the Battle of Alabai is currently underway.

The monument will commemorate the 10,000 Ahom soldiers who laid down their lives on August 5, 1669, in a fierce battle against the Mughal forces near the Alabai Hills in North Guwahati.

Calling the battle "one of the most important chapters in the history of Assam," the Chief Minister took to social media platform X to underline (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

## Parl extends President's Rule in Manipur by six months



NEW DELHI, Aug 5: Parliament on Tuesday approved a statutory resolution to extend 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, amid ruckus over electoral rolls revision issue in Bihar.

Amid protests by Opposition

MPs, Chair Harivansh said it was a "constitutional obligation" to pass the resolution.

Moving the resolution for passage in the House, Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai said a rift was formed between two communities in Manipur due to a court order.

"A rift was created between two communities in Manipur due to a court order. Those who say it is communal violence are wrong..." Rai said amid uproar by Opposition MPs.

He also said it has been eight months since President's Rule was imposed in Manipur, adding only one incident of violence has been reported. Later, the Rajya Sabha approved the resolution with a voice vote. (PTI)

## Shah becomes India's longest serving Union Home Minister

NEW DELHI, Aug 5: From the abrogation of Article 370 to completely overhauling criminal laws and from setting a March 2026 deadline to eliminate the Naxal menace to ensuring the surrender of 10,000 militants in the Northeast, Amit Shah has achieved several milestones in his over six-year tenure as the Union Home Minister, the longest in history.

Known as the second most influential figure in the country after Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Shah has completed 2,258 days in office, surpassing L K Advani's 2,256 days as Union Home Minister.

He has been the pivotal force of Prime Minister Modi's government, giving new directions to the Ministry of Home Affairs in chart-



ing its course in maintaining internal security and peace across the country.

At the NDA parliamentary party meeting on Tuesday, the Prime Minister praised the Home Minister and noted that Shah has become the longest-serving incumbent in the MHA.

With 2,258 days in office, Shah has now surpassed Advani's tenure of 2,256 days as home min-

ister. Before Shah and Advani, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, India's first home minister, served for 1,218 days, sources said.

Sixty-year-old Shah's tenure has been marked by several historic decisions, including the abrogation of Article 370, which gave special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, the crackdown on terrorist and separatist organisations in Jammu and Kashmir and the strengthening of internal security.

It was Shah who piloted three criminal laws -- the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam -- which replaced the colonial era Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

## 'His dedication to people continues to inspire generations'

GUWAHATI, Aug 5: Remembering Assam's first CM Gopinath Bordoloi on his 75th death anniversary, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday said his unwavering dedication to people continues to inspire generations.

He said Bordoloi had opposed the Cabinet Mission's Grouping Plan, which threatened to merge Assam with Bengal.

"Today, on his punyathithi, we remember Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi, Assam's first Chief Minister and a towering figure of our state, whose unwavering dedication to our land and its people continues to inspire generations," Sarma posted on X. "His role in opposing the Cabinet (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

## 'Jio broadband service reaches over 3.65 lakh homes in Assam'

GUWAHATI, Aug 5: Reliance Jio's broadband services have reached over 3,65,920 homes in Assam—across urban centres, smaller towns, and expanding to semi-urban clusters, the company said on Tuesday.

JioAirFiber, the 5G-powered Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) service, added 7,709 new users in June alone, taking its total user base in Assam to 1,33,279, a company release said.

JioFiber, the company's wired broadband offering, increased from 2,27,198 subscribers in May to 2,32,741 in June, recording 5,543 new connections.

JioFiber continues to strengthen its presence in key markets through a robust and scalable fibre-optic network, the release said.

The increasing number of users reflects the growing demand for high-speed, dependable internet for daily use (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)

Book also documents the migration of other groups from mainland India and local tribes of Assam

## Book on Tai-Ahom migration released at Assam Women's University

### HT Correspondent

JORHAT, Aug 5: A book titled "Asom aru Ahom", chronicling the migration of the Tai Chans—later known as the Tai Ahoms in Assam—from a Chinese province in 220 BC to the establishment of the Ahom kingdom in 1838, was released at Assam Women's University here on Tuesday.

The book, authored by Dr Sumendra Nath Buragohain, a retired Principal Scientist of the Central Silk Board, was formally released by Prof Nirode Boruah, Vice-Chancellor of Majuli University of Culture and a noted educationist and historian.

The function was presided over by Kamal Jyoti Gogoi, former secretary of the erstwhile Assam Higher Secondary Education Council (AHSEC).

Prof Boruah, in his address, said



the book presents a comprehensive account of the Tai-Ahom migration and the founding of the Ahom kingdom by Swargadeo Chaolung Siu-Ka-Pha in the 13th century.

He added that the volume also sheds light on the tribes and communities present in the region during that period and would serve as a valuable resource for researchers

and scholars.

The event was organised by a committee constituted earlier this year to commemorate the 800th anniversary of Siu-Ka-Pha's arrival in Assam in 2028.

Speaking at the function, Dr Buragohain said the nearly 700-page book is the outcome of six years of research, including visits

to several Southeast Asian countries.

He said the narrative begins with the Tai Chans' migration from the Huang He valley in 220 BC, tracing their journey across modern-day countries before reaching Assam and establishing the Ahom kingdom.

The book also documents the migration of other groups from mainland India and local tribes of Assam.

The book is dedicated to the Ahom soldiers who laid down their lives in the Battle of Alabai against Mughal forces on August 5, 1669.

Its release coincided with the anniversary of the battle.

Among those present were Assam Women's University Vice-Chancellor Dr Ajanta Borgohain Rajkonwar, journalist Rajdeep Bailing (CONTD.ON PAGE-2)



# India-UK trade deal: India eyes three-fold surge in seafood exports

**AHMEDABAD, Aug 5:** Seafood exports from India to the United Kingdom would witness a three-fold jump in the coming years after the removal of duty on fisheries products under the India-UK free trade agreement, according to industry leaders.

Since Gujarat, having a coastline of nearly 2,300 kilometers, is one of the key states contributing to India's seafood exports, industry leaders believe that the increase in India's exports will also help Gujarat-based fishermen, exports and the entire ecosystem attached with this industry. Gujarat-based exporter Jagdish Fofandi said the relief in export duty would take India's seafood export to the UK from current levels of ₹ 1,000 crore to nearly ₹ 3,000 crore in three years.

At present, the UK levies 8.9 per cent export duty on Indian seafood products such as fish and shrimp, said Fofandi, former national president of Seafood Exporters Association of India (SEAI). "Now, after the signing of the trade agreement, there will be zero duty on such products exported to the UK from India. The UK imports seafood worth USD 5.4 billion from across the world every year.

"However, India's share in this basket is just 2.2 per cent, which



comes to ₹ 1,000 crore at present," said Fofandi. With the reduction in the duty, Indian seafood items will be cheaper by nearly 8 to 9 per cent for the buyers in the UK, making Indian products more competitive in comparison to other countries, said Fofandi, former vice president of Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA).

"We are assuming that in the next three years, there is a potential growth of 300 per cent. Thus, I am seeing that our export will go up from the current level of ₹ 1,000 crore to ₹ 3,000 crore. Since Gujarat is a major contributing state, this new market will certainly benefit our fishermen, exporters and

everyone associated with this business," said Fofandi. Shrimp constitutes 70 per cent of the total export basket of Indian seafood. However, it is facing stress from US and other markets at present, said Fofandi.

"Opening up of the UK market due to this trade deal, it will absorb some of the shock which other markets are creating to Indian exporters. This will particularly help the shrimp farming industry of south Gujarat," said Fofandi. While south Gujarat is more into shrimp farming, the coastline of Saurashtra region contributes in exporting fish caught from the sea, said Fofandi, adding that some varieties of fish exported from that region have be-

come popular among Indians and Chinese settled in the UK.

According to Ketan Suyani, Gujarat-based regional president of SEAI, this trade agreement will eventually help fishermen in getting better prices for the catch.

At present, Gujarat's fisheries export is roughly around ₹ 5,000 crore. Of these, entire Europe accounts for nearly 40 per cent while the remaining 60 per cent goes to the Gulf, China and other Far-east countries, said Suyani.

"This trade agreement will eventually benefit Gujarat fishermen because the demand for Indian seafood products will increase after the duty reduction. Fishermen will get better prices with the increase in export quantity," he said.

In July, India and the United Kingdom signed the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), a bilateral free trade agreement. CETA provides an unprecedented duty-free access to 99 per cent of India's exports to the UK, covering nearly 100 per cent of the trade value. This includes labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, leather, marine products, gems and jewellery, and toys as well as high-growth sectors like engineering goods, chemicals, and auto components. (PTI)

## Lauritz Knudsen hosts Technology Day in Guwahati

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Aug 5:** In a major boost to industrial technology adoption in the Northeast, Lauritz Knudsen Electrical & Automation hosted its flagship Technology Day in Guwahati on Tuesday as part of its ongoing 30-city Technology Tour under the Deep India campaign.

The event marked a significant milestone in the company's outreach efforts aimed at strengthening India's industrial ecosystem through smart, scalable, and localised solutions.

According to an official statement, the Guwahati leg of the tour witnessed enthusiastic participation from more than 200 delegates representing a wide range of sectors including oil and gas, manufacturing, infrastructure, and pharmaceuticals.

Participants included representatives of MSMEs, large corporates, policy experts, and solution partners from across the region, underscoring the growing demand for cutting-edge automation and electrical solutions in the Northeast.

Guwahati, which is emerging as the region's industrial and logistical nerve centre, has increasingly become a critical node in India's Act East policy and its broader ASEAN engagement.

With strong industrial clusters in oil and gas, cement, pharmaceuticals, and agro-based industries, the city is rapidly evolving into a key industrial and technological hub.

Lauritz Knudsen's leadership said that the company's advanced solutions are well-suited to support this transformation and meet the region's expanding infrastructure demands.



HDFC Bank urged users to verify messages via official websites, use trusted antivirus software, and download apps only from secure platforms.

The advisory also highlighted rising scams like "digital arrest" frauds and fake investment platforms, where fraudsters use fear or greed to manipulate targets—a tactic the bank termed the "GTH method" (Greed, Threat, Help).

Victims should immediately report frauds to their bank, call the national helpline 1930, and file a complaint at [www.cybercrime.gov.in](http://www.cybercrime.gov.in), the bank added.

## HDFC Bank warns against APK fraud; urges public to stay alert

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Aug 5:** HDFC Bank has issued an official advisory warning customers against APK (Android Package Kit) frauds, a growing cybercrime method where fraudsters gain remote access to victims' phones by tricking them into installing malicious files.

According to the bank, scammers often impersonate bank staff or government officials and send APK links under false pretenses like re-KYC, tax refunds, or traffic fine payments.

Once installed, the malware gives attackers full access to the victim's phone, allowing them to intercept calls and messages, and make unauthorised financial transactions.

The bank cited cases where fraudsters posed as RTO officials or bank employees, urging victims to download fake apps embedded with malware.

Victims are typically tricked into entering sensitive details like account numbers, card info, and OTPs, leading to immediate financial loss.

Customers have been advised not to click on suspicious links or install apps shared via SMS, email, or social media.

## PhonePe's Indus Appstore to come pre-installed on Alcatel smartphones

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Aug 5:** Indus Appstore, a native Android app marketplace developed by PhonePe, has entered a strategic partnership with French consumer tech brand Alcatel to bring its platform pre-installed on all Alcatel smartphones sold in India.

The collaboration, announced in an official statement, marks a significant push toward integrating localised digital ecosystems into mobile hardware.

Indus Appstore, which offers a catalogue of verified apps and games across 45 categories, will

now be directly accessible to Alcatel users from the first boot of their devices.

The platform supports 12 Indian languages, enables voice search in 10 of them, and features video-led app discovery to enhance user experience. NxtCell India, which holds exclusive brand rights to operate Alcatel in India and select global markets under TCL's authorisation, is spearheading the partnership. The move aligns with the Government of India's Make in India initiative, aiming to boost indigenous tech solutions.

Speaking on the tie-up, Priya M

Narasimhan, chief business officer of Indus Appstore, said the partnership would offer Alcatel users a fully localised, user-first digital experience while giving Indian developers a wider reach.

"We're thrilled to partner with Alcatel at the early stages of their India journey. This expands Indus Appstore's footprint while helping users discover relevant apps tailored for them," she said.

Atul Vivek, Chief Business Officer of NxtCell India, said the alliance would help deliver a differentiated, culturally relevant digital experience.

## Indian services sector growth hits 11-month high in July on sharp rise in exports, overall sales

**NEW DELHI, Aug 5:** The Indian services sector growth touched an 11 month high in July, supported by a pickup in new exports orders and sharp rise in overall sales, a monthly survey said on Tuesday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Services PMI Business Activity Index was at 60.5 in July, little-changed from 60.4 in June, and the rate of expansion was the best seen since August 2024.

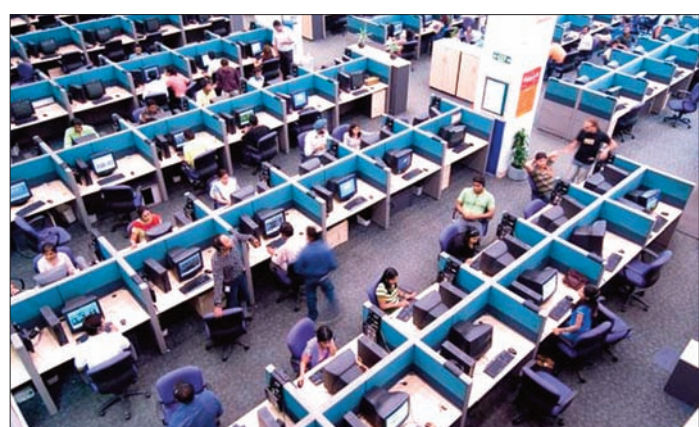
In the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"At 60.5, the services PMI indicated a strong growth momentum, led by a pick-up in new export orders," said Pranjal Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC.

Sustained increases in new business intakes were the main aspect behind output growth, the survey said, adding that Indian service providers also welcomed a stronger improvement in international demand for their services. "They reportedly secured new work from Asia, Canada, Europe, the UAE and the US," it said.

### NAME CHANGE

I have Changed my name from Sarif Uddin to Sharif Uddin by swearing a notarial affidavit at Srimanta Sankardevnagar Hojai (Assam)



Going ahead, service providers were on average optimistic about their expectations for output in the year ahead. Among the factors supporting business confidence were efficiency gains, marketing, tech innovation and a growing online presence, they said. On the price front, input costs and output charges rose at faster rates than in June. "The solid rise in output prices reflected greater cost burdens and demand strength," the survey said.

"On the price front, both input and output prices rose a tad faster than in June but this could change going forward as indicated by the recent CPI and WPI prints," Bhandari said.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) based retail inflation has remained below 4 per cent since February. It was at 2.1 per cent in

June. The wholesale price inflation (WPI) turned negative after a gap of 19 months, declining 0.13 per cent in June.

Meanwhile, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra-headed rate-setting panel on Monday started the three-day deliberations to decide the next bi-monthly monetary policy amid expectations of a pause in the rate easing cycle.

Governor Malhotra-headed six-member rate-setting panel -- the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) -- is scheduled to announce the next bi-monthly policy rate on Wednesday (August 6).

Experts were of the opinion that the Reserve Bank may go in for a status quo this time and wait for more macro data after the announcement by the US to impose a 25 per cent tariff on Indian im-

ports beginning August 7.

On the jobs front, Although the upturn added pressure on firms' capacity, hiring moderated. July's increase in employment was the slowest in 15 months.

"The rate of job creation was only slight, broadly converging to its long-run average. Fewer than 2 per cent of companies took on additional staff, with the vast majority indicating no change from June," the survey said.

Meanwhile, the HSBC India Composite PMI Output Index was up fractionally from 61.0 in June to 61.1 in July, indicating a sharp rate of expansion that was the quickest since April 2024.

Composite PMI indices are weighted averages of comparable manufacturing and services PMI indices. Weights reflect the relative size of the manufacturing and service sectors, according to official GDP data.

The PMI results for July revealed mixed signs regarding the performance of the Indian private sector.

"New orders and output expanded at quicker rates, while job creation receded and business optimism faded. Meanwhile, inflationary pressures gathered pace," the survey said.

The HSBC India Services PMI is compiled by S&P Global from responses to questionnaires sent to a panel of around 400 service sector companies. (PTI)

*Contd. from Page 1...*

## ED raids premises

or controlled" by associates or family members (son-in-law, daughter) of Sharma as well as to a chartered accountant named Sarang More, who was the auditor of the ODL Cell.

The contracts were awarded "without" advertisements or invitations for tenders, as stipulated by the government for each procurement of above Rs 5 lakh, sources alleged.

Except for two parties, none had any experience in executing work orders awarded to them and payments were made "without" the required receipts or verification of actual supply, the ED claimed. (PTI)

## Former J&K, M'laya Guv

the sixth anniversary of the Centre's move. Malik attracted a lot of controversy after alleging that he was offered a bribe to clear files of two major projects in Jammu and Kashmir and questioned the BJP-led central government over issues related to farmers and the Pulwama terror attack, among others.

The CBI, which took over the probe into the two issues flagged by Malik, had filed a charge sheet against him in May this year in one of the cases about the Rs 2200-crore Kiru hydropower project.

According to the hospital statement, Malik was admitted to the hospital on May 11 at 12.04 pm with a complicated urinary tract infection. He subsequently developed refractory septic shock secondary to urinary tract infection, hospital-acquired pneumonia and multi-organ dysfunction.

"Despite all appropriate and aggressive medical interventions, including multiple antibiotics and cytosorb 2 sessions, including ventilatory support and critical care management, his condition continued to deteriorate," it said.

"He also developed disseminated intravascular coagulation (DIC) and acute kidney injury on chronic kidney disease, needing multiple hemodialysis sessions. Malik sadly passed away on 5 August 2025 at 1:12 pm," the statement said. (PTI)

## Flashflood havoc in

roads across the state, further impeding rescue and preventing personnel from getting to the far-flung area, about 140 km from the state capital Dehradun and usually a five-hour drive.

An army team from the nearest location of Harail was immediately rushed to the spot to launch rescue operations but teams from other places found it difficult to reach due to bad weather and disrupted roads, Suman said.

According to initial reports, at least four people have died, Uttarkashi District Magistrate Prashant Arya told reporters in Dehradun before rushing to the spot.

There was no official confirmation on the number of people who went missing after the flashflood but it is likely to be high as the sudden rush of floodwaters gave people no time to run towards safety.

Uttarakhand Principal Secretary R K Sudhanshu said 40 to 50 buildings are damaged. He added that helicopters could not be pressed into service either because of bad weather.

As darkness fell, announcements were made asking people to move to safer ground.

Locals said a large portion of the Dharali market was washed away.

Rajesh Panwar, an eyewitness to the horror of nature's relentless fury, told PTI that about 20-25 hotels and homestays may have been washed away.

A 16-member Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) team reached Dharali from its 12th battalion stationed at Matli in Uttarakhand while another unit of the same strength was also asked to rush to the disaster site, officials said. The team of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) is yet to reach the area. (PTI)

## Tribal belt and blocks

the government's commitment to preserving the legacy of the Ahom dynasty, which ruled Assam for six centuries and fiercely resisted Mughal expansion.

"Our government has taken steps to build an Alabai memorial in tribute to the 10,000 martyrs, and the work on this monument is now in full swing," Sarma posted. "We will continue to focus on preserving and dignifying every chapter of Ahom history," he added.

The Battle of Alabai, though less widely chronicled in mainstream historical narratives, holds immense significance in the collective memory of Assamese people. The proposed memorial is expected to serve not only as a site of remembrance but also as an educational landmark highlighting the region's valiant resistance to imperial forces.

## India, Philippines announce

22 Pahalgam terror attack, which claimed 26 lives, and for standing with India in the fight against terrorism. The prime minister said the enhanced defence relations between the two countries are a symbol of deep mutual trust.

"As maritime nations, maritime cooperation between the two countries is both natural and essential. We have been working together in humanitarian aid, disaster relief, search and rescue," Modi said.

He said under the development partnership, India will increase the number of Quick Impact Projects in the Philippines and will also cooperate in the development of sovereign data cloud infrastructure.

"Today, when the President is in India, three ships of the Indian Navy are participating in a naval exercise in the Philippines for the first time," Modi said.

The prime minister said the trade between the two countries was increasing in a sustained manner and crossed USD 3 billion.

"To further strengthen trade ties, it is our priority to review the India-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement at the earliest. We have also decided to work towards a bilateral Preferential Trade Agreement," he said.

Modi said Indian companies are active in the sectors of information and digital technology, health, automobiles, infrastructure, and minerals. In the sector of science and technology, joint research is going on in areas from virology to artificial intelligence and additive manufacturing, he added.

The prime minister said the science and technology cooperation plan between the two countries will add momentum to this partnership. (PTI)

## Shah becomes India's longest

Act of 1872, respectively. The new laws came into effect on July 1, 2024. As a home minister, he has set a March 31, 2026, deadline to end the problem of Naxals and has achieved great success so far by freeing large areas from the clutches of the red ultras.

Shah has banned all constituents of the Jammu and Kashmir-based separatist conglomerate Hurriyat Conference and many of its leaders are now languishing in jail for suspected terror links.

He has also launched a campaign against narcotics and their trade, with over 10 lakh kg of contraband, with a street value of ₹ 11,961 crore, that was seized during a special drive being destroyed.

In the Northeast, Shah has signed 12 peace agreements with different insurgent groups, thus ensuring the surrender of over 10,000 militants with arms and ammunition. (PTI)

## 'His dedication to

Mission's Grouping Plan which threatened to merge Assam with Bengal, potentially leading to our state's inclusion in East Pakistan, led to safeguarding our sovereignty and integrating us firmly into independent India," he added.

The CM stated that as the state observes Lok Kalyan Diwas, everyone must adhere to the ideals set by Boro-doloi and serve the people with utmost dedication. (PTI)

## 'Jio broadband service

across work, learning, entertainment, and digital services, it said. This growth is being driven by increasing internet usage across the state, with people relying on broadband for a wide range of needs—from attending virtual classes and working remotely to streaming content, accessing government services, and using digital payments. (PTI)

## Peace established in

'mutual understanding'. 'I have been touring across the BTR during the last three days, and there is a tremendous level of support from people of all ages. I believe that BJP will show good results in the forthcoming council polls', he said.

Elections to the 40-member Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) is expected to be held in September this year, and the BJP has decided to contest the polls independently.

The United Peoples' Party Liberal (UPPL), BJP and Gana Suraksha Party (GSP) are alliance partners in administering the current council.

Asked if the BJP was planning to form the next council on its own strength, Sarma said that the formation of the government in BTR was not a matter of discussion now.

"We have to now make a decision on how many seats to contest in the polls, and this will be taken by August 20.

Regarding talks of the Pramod Boro-led UPPL and Hagrama Mohilary headed Bodoland People's Front (BPF) will unite for the forthcoming polls, the chief minister said that the BJP welcomes it

"If this happens, it will help us (the state government) to talk to one party on any matter", he added.

On the possibility of its other alliance partner AGP contesting the polls, Sarma said that the regional party should put up candidates if there is a chance of its winning the seat, and not just to defeat the BJP.

In the last council polls held in December 2020, the UPPL had won 12 seats, BJP nine and GSP one seat while the Bodoland Peoples' Front (BPF), which had headed the council for the previous three terms, emerged as the single largest party with 17 seats and Congress secured one seat with its elected member later joining the BJP.

The lone Congress member, Sajal Kumar Sinha, joined the BJP on Monday and was subsequently expelled from the Congress.

The BPF was then BJP's alliance partner in the state government, but the ruling party decided to join hands with the UPPL and the GSP to jointly form the council

The council polls were held after a fresh Bodo Accord was signed in New Delhi on January 27, 2020 by the leaders of all four factions of the NDFB, then All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) chief Pramod Bodo, Mohilary and then chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal. (PTI)

## Book on Tai-Ahom migration

Baruah, Rajkumar Alok Narayan Singha of the Ahom royal family, writer and academic Dr Debabrata Sharma, AWU Registrar Tapan Gohain, scientist Dr Ramesh Boruah, and Inspector of Schools Buli Gogoi Bhuyan.

Earlier, Indrajit Bezbaruah, working president of the organising committee, delivered the welcome address, and general secretary Jayanta Pator outlined the aims and objectives of the programme.



# State LoP Debabrata Saikia writes to Gauhati HC for suo motu cognisance

**GUWAHATI, Aug 5:** Leader of the Opposition in Assam Assembly, Debabrata Saikia, on Tuesday urged the Gauhati High Court Chief Justice to take suo motu cognisance over alleged violations of statutory laws related to the financial health of the state.

In a letter to the Chief Justice of Gauhati High Court, Justice Ashutosh Kumar, the Congress leader alleged violations of the Assam Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (AFRBM) Act, 2005 and related constitutional mandates by the state government, leading to an escalating state debt crisis.

"These violations, explicitly acknowledged in the state's own annual budget reports, have precipitated an unsustainable debt crisis, estimated at ₹ 1,84,463 crore as of July 2025, with a debt-to-Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) ratio of 25.2 per cent," he added.

Saikia stated that the crisis threatens the economic stability, public welfare and constitutional rights of Assam's citizens, necessitating urgent judicial intervention to enforce fiscal discipline and protect public interest.

"The Government of Assam's annual budget reports for 2021-22 to 2024-25 admit deviations from AFRBM targets, including excessive fiscal deficits and failure to maintain a revenue surplus," the letter stressed.

These admissions, corroborated by adverse findings from the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and PRS India, reveal a pattern of fiscal mismanagement, including understatement of deficits, misclassification of expenditures, underutilisation of funds and reliance on costly cash transfer schemes, it added.

"Such practices infringe upon fundamental rights under Articles



14, 19 and 21 of the Constitution of India and violate constitutional mandates under Articles 202, 266 and 293, warranting suo motu cognisance by the honourable court under Article 226 of the Constitution," Saikia said.

The AFRBM Act, 2005, mandates a fiscal deficit not exceeding 3 per cent of GSDP (with flexibility of up to 3.5 per cent for specific reforms) and a revenue surplus, but the state has consistently breached these targets, he alleged.

The LoP pointed out that Assam's fiscal deficit stood at 4.29 per cent, 4.83 per cent, 6.5 per cent, 5.2 per cent and 3.88 per cent for 2019-20, 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 fiscal respectively, the letter mentioned.

"These violations, admitted in the state's own financial statements, are compounded by systemic irregularities highlighted in CAG reports, which point to potential fraud and corruption.

He also highlighted the debt scenario. The LoP said that the state's outstanding liabilities have surged by 107.34 per cent from ₹ 59,425.61 crore in 2018-19 to ₹ 1,23,214.80 crore in 2022-23 as

per the CAG's State Finances Audit Report for FY'23.

"By July 2025, the debt is estimated at Rs 1,84,463 crore, based on fiscal deficit trends and net borrowings (PRS India, Assam Budget Analysis 2024-25). The debt-to-GSDP ratio has risen from 19.21 per cent in 2018-19 to 25.2 per cent in 2024-25, approaching the AFRBM Act's 28.5 per cent ceiling," Saikia said.

The annual growth rate of outstanding liabilities (23.32 per cent in 2022-23) have significantly outpaced GSDP growth (12.27 per cent annually), indicating unsustainable borrowing practices, he added.

The letter also stressed that the composition of Assam's debt underscores the reliance on market borrowings, which accounted for 81.98 per cent of total borrowing in 2022-23, with central government loans, international loans, and public account liabilities constituting the remaining portion.

"The RBI's 'State Finances: A Study of Budgets' (2023-24) notes that Assam's debt-to-GSDP ratio exceeds the 15th Finance Commission's recommendation of 20 per

cent limit with interest payments consuming 8 per cent of revenue receipts (₹ 9,112 crore in 2023-24) severely limiting development spending," it added.

Saikia also claimed that the CAG reports from 2021-22 and 2022-23 revealed systemic irregularities that violated the AFRBM Act and suggested potential fraud and corruption.

"These findings indicate cosmetic accounting practices such as inflated budget projections and misclassifications, which obscure financial realities and facilitate potential misappropriation. The non-submission of utilisation certificates for ₹ 37,991.70 crore in 2022-23 further raises concerns about accountability," he added.

The LoP further said that the Assam government's cash transfer schemes exacerbate the fiscal crisis as these schemes, lacking transparent cost-benefit analyses, were declared without vote-on-account and are in violation of Article 203, 204, 205 and 266 of the Indian Constitution.

"Every time the Cabinet of Assam sits for a meeting, schemes in the form of cash handouts and freebies are declared by the Government of Assam to electorally induce the voters at the cost of the state exchequer.

"Further, taking financial decisions as cabinet decisions, beyond emergency provisions, violates the Constitution of India safeguarding the separation of powers of legislative and executive," he added.

Asserting that the judiciary's intervention is essential to uphold statutory and constitutional mandates to safeguard taxpayers' interests and prevent further fiscal deterioration, Saikia requested the High Court to issue an interim stay on the announcement and implementation of new freebie or cash transfer schemes not included in the annual budget. (PTI)

## BJP-AGP alliance forms Nagaon Zila Parishad

*Gitanjali Hazarika elected president, Jayashree Mandal vice president*

**HT Correspondent**

**NAGAON, Aug 5:** The first meeting of the newly elected 27-member Nagaon Zila Parishad was held on Tuesday at the conference hall of the Nagaon Deputy Commissioner's office under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Debashish Sarma.

The meeting began with the oath-taking ceremony of the elected members.

The BJP-AGP alliance, having secured a majority with 14 seats, officially formed the new Zila Parishad for the next five-year term.

The Congress secured 13 seats and will assume the role of opposition. Gitanjali Hazarika of the BJP, representing the Uriagaon Zila Parishad constituency, was elected as president, while Jayashree Mandal of the AGP, from the Ambagan constituency, was elected vice president.

The post of president was reserved for a woman, while the vice president's post was reserved for a Scheduled Caste (Open) candidate. Deputy Commissioner Debashish Sarma marked the occasion by performing Dr Bhupen Hazarika's iconic song "Manuhe Manuhar Babe", urging the newly elected members to work with the spirit of unity and service embedded in the song's message.

The meeting was attended by Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Keshab Mahanta, MLAs Rupak Sharma, Jitu Goswami, Shashi Kanta Das, Nurul Huda, and Sibamoni Bora, as well as Manoj Kumar Sikaria, CEO of Nagaon Zila Parishad; Pankaj Nagbanshi, Additional Deputy Commissioner; Shekharan Phukan, Election Officer; Pulok Biswas, Circle Officer of Rupahi Revenue Circle; Roben Kumar Barman, BDO of Bagoriguri Development Block; Sweta Padma Sarma, BDO of Kathiatoli Development Block; and other officials and staff of the District Election Office and Nagaon Zila Parishad.

Speaking to the media, Minister Keshab Mahanta congratulated the newly elected president, vice president, and members.

He urged the Parishad to focus on the district's holistic development, calling for swift action, transparency, and accountability in strengthening the Panchayati Raj system.

## UPPL celebrates 10<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day as 'Sankalpa Divas' in Kokrajhar

*Party reiterates commitment to inclusive growth; ready to face BTC polls, says Boro*



**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, Aug 5:** The United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) marked its 10th Foundation Day with a day-long celebration titled Sankalpa Divas at Dotma in Kokrajhar on Tuesday.

The centrally organised event witnessed the participation of party leaders, members, and supporters from across the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR).

UPPL president and Chief Executive Member (CEM) of BTR, Pramod Boro, hoisted the party flag to begin the celebrations. Assam Cabinet Minister and UPPL founder president, Urkhao Gwa Brahma, paid floral tributes to martyrs who contributed to the party's journey.

CEM Pramod Boro also offered tributes at the Thulungapuri Samadhi of Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma.

Addressing the gathering, Boro stated that UPPL had steadily grown over the past decade with the people's support and remained committed to the values of peace, equality, justice, and progress.

He reaffirmed the party's resolve to build an inclusive and harmonious BTR where all communities thrive with dignity and opportunity.

"The government of BTR has been rendering dedicated services since its inception and will continue working for the development of all communities in the region," Boro said, adding that the party draws strength from the faith of the people.

Responding to recent remarks by BPF chief Hagrama Mohilary regarding a potential end to the BJP-BPF alliance and contesting all 40 BTC seats, Boro asserted that the UPPL is fully prepared for the upcoming BTC elections.

He added that during his tenure, Mohilary did not attend alliance meetings or BTCLA sessions, despite repeated invitations.

UPPL general secretary Raju Narzary criticised political campaigns based on religious polarisation, stating that UPPL had never allowed communal targeting during elections.

He also accused BJP leader Dilip Saikia of failing to address core issues such as the Sixth Schedule and the rights of people living in Tribal Belts and Blocks during his campaign.

Other senior leaders present at the event included UPPL general secretary Madhab Chandra Chetry, MP Joyanta Basumatary, and MLAs Lawrence Idlary and Jiran Basumatary.

## TU hosts National Space Day celebrations in collaboration with NESAC

**HT Correspondent**

**TEZPUR, Aug 5:** The Department of Physics, Tezpur University, in collaboration with the North Eastern Space Applications Centre (NESAC), celebrated National Space Day on campus on Tuesday as part of a nationwide series of programmes marking the second National Space Day.

The Government of India declared August 23 as National Space Day following the successful soft-landing of the Chandrayaan-3 Vikram lander on the Moon's South Polar Region on August 23, 2023.

The Department of Space is observing the occasion across the country with a range of outreach activities during July and August 2024.

Dr Koteswar Rao C, Scientist at the U R Rao Satellite Centre (URSC), Bengaluru, was present as the guest of honour.

He delivered a lecture on Indian Moon Missions, highlighting India's progress in lunar exploration.

Dr Arup Borgohain, Scientist-SF at NESAC, spoke on Societal Applications of Space Technology, discussing how space-based technologies contribute to development and governance.

Prof R R Hoque, Dean of Academic Affairs, underlined the role of science education and technological innovation in achieving India's developmental goals.

Prof G A Ahmed, Coordinator of the National Space Day Celebration Committee, outlined the university's initiatives to enhance space awareness among students.

The day-long programme included popular science lectures, a quiz competition on space technology, a space exhibition, and an audio-visual show, aimed at fostering student engagement and interest in space science.

Around 200 students from various schools and colleges across the region participated in the event.

Tezpur University Vice Chancellor Prof Shambhu Nath Singh congratulated the organisers for their role in promoting space science in the region.

## Month-long internship on Manuscriptology concludes at Dhing College

**HT Bureau**

**NAGAON, Aug 5:** A month-long internship programme on Manuscript and Manuscriptology, organised by the Society for Srimanta Sankaradeva (SSS) in collaboration with Dhing College, concluded on August 2 with an exhibition of traditional manuscript paintings created by the participating students.

The exhibition was inaugurated by Nagaon Deputy Commissioner Debashish Sarma through the ceremonial lighting of a lamp.

A total of 38 students participated in the internship, and their artworks were showcased during the event.

The programme was attended by several dignitaries, including noted film director Rajen Rajkhowa as chief guest, and SSS president Dr Sanjib Kr Borkakoti. Dhing College Principal Dr Biman Hazarika welcomed the guests.

The internship was guided by traditional artists Mridu Moucham Bora and Papu Das, supported by Ankur Jyoti Nath, Jonmoni Das, Jammoni Das, and Harshita Shivam.

Dhing College is among the pioneering institutions in Assam to offer internship programmes in Manuscriptology for undergraduate students.

The Society for Srimanta Sankaradeva plans to extend similar programmes to other colleges across the state.

Since its inception in 2011, the SSS has been conducting regular workshops on Aharya of Bhaoana, mask-making, manuscript painting, and related cultural practices.

## BTC launches aid scheme for mothers of Bodoland martyrs

*BTC launches ₹12,000 annual aid scheme for mothers of Bodoland martyrs under Happiness Mission*

**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, Aug 5:** In a significant step towards inclusive governance and restorative justice, the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) has launched a dedicated welfare initiative titled "Welfare Scheme for the Surviving Mothers of Bodoland Martyrs".

The scheme, part of the broader Bodoland Happiness Mission, is designed to provide long-term financial and emotional support to the surviving mothers of individuals who laid down their lives during the Bodoland Movement.

The Bodoland Movement, a prolonged and emotional struggle for identity, recognition, and self-determination, witnessed many lives lost in pursuit of the region's aspirations.

While these sacrifices became the foundation of the present autonomous governance framework, the surviving family members—particularly the mothers of those who died—have long remained on the margins, their personal grief overshadowed by the larger historical narrative.

In launching the new scheme, the BTC administration has sought to correct that silence and acknowledge the sacrifices of these mothers in a tangible and meaningful way.

Many of them are now elderly, widowed, and enduring financial difficulties, often without sufficient access to healthcare, social

welfare benefits, or community support.

"Welfare Scheme for the Surviving Mothers of Bodoland Martyrs" has been crafted as a tribute not only to their personal loss but to their role in the making of modern Bodoland.

As per the scheme guidelines, each eligible mother will receive an annual financial assistance of ₹12,000 for a period of ten years.

The amount will be directly credited to the beneficiaries' bank accounts to ensure dignity, financial independence, and minimal bureaucratic hurdles.

Alongside monetary support, the scheme also grants them priority access to government-run healthcare programmes and welfare services, with an emphasis on their physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

To ensure effective implementation, a special task force operating under the Bodoland Happiness Mission will be responsible for identifying and verifying eligible beneficiaries.

The task force will work in close coordination with local bodies and use existing government data where available.

Importantly, priority will be extended to mothers who have not received any form of ex-gratia assistance from either the Government of Assam or BTC in the past.

The BTC administration has also committed to a high degree of

transparency in the execution of this scheme.

A dedicated digital portal is being developed to facilitate beneficiary registration, grievance redressal, and real-time monitoring of fund disbursements.

This technology-backed approach aims to reduce delays, minimise corruption, and ensure that benefits reach the intended recipients without procedural bottlenecks.

To assess the impact and maintain accountability, the scheme will be monitored through an evaluation framework involving third-party audits and beneficiary feedback mechanisms.

Regular policy reviews will be undertaken to ensure that the scheme adapts to evolving ground realities and remains responsive to the needs of the beneficiaries.

With the launch of "Welfare Scheme for the Surviving Mothers of Bodoland Martyrs," the BTC Government has sought not only to deliver long-overdue support but to symbolically transform the narrative around sacrifice and loss.

By placing empathy at the heart of governance, the council aims to reaffirm its commitment to justice, care, and collective healing—ensuring that the grief of the martyrs' families is met with dignity and that their contributions to Bodoland's journey are forever honoured.

## IRCS Dima Hasao presents annual report to DC Munindra Nath Ngatey

**HT Correspondent**

**HAFLONG, Aug 5:** The Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS), Dima Hasao District Branch, met with the newly appointed Deputy Commissioner of Dima Hasao, Munindra Nath Ngatey, to discuss the organisation's ongoing humanitarian efforts and outline its focus areas for the coming year.

Deputy Commissioner Ngatey, who also serves as the ex-officio President of the district branch of the IRCS, was briefed by Chairman Pauramduing Jeme and Secretary Nirmal Singh during the meeting, which took place in Haflong.

In the meeting, the IRCS leadership presented the minutes of its recent Annual General Meeting and submitted the annual activity report for review.

The report detailed the district branch's sustained involvement in disaster relief and emergency response operations throughout the year.

Secretary Singh emphasized the organisation's readiness and swift mobilisation during house fires, natural disasters, and severe cold waves, operating closely with the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) to deliver critical support to affected families.

According to the official statement, relief materials including tarpaulin sheets, hygiene kits, mosquito nets, utensil sets, and blankets were distributed as part of emergency response operations.

The efforts were aimed at both immediate relief and longer-term recovery for communities impacted by calamities.

## Sonitpur observes Lok Kalyan Divas 2025

**HT Correspondent**

**TEZPUR, Aug 5:** The Sonitpur District Administration observed Lok Kalyan Divas 2025 on Tuesday, commemorating the 75th death anniversary of Bharat Ratna Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi, Assam's first chief minister and a key architect of modern Assam.

The event, held at Conference Hall-II of the District Commissioner's Office, was part of state-wide observances. Tezpur MLA Prithiraj Rava attended as chief guest and delivered a commemorative address highlighting Bordoloi's patriotism, his leadership in preserving Assam's integrity, and his enduring popularity as a people's leader.

District Commissioner Ananda Kumar Das, ACS, in his welcome speech, urged government employees to draw inspiration from



Bordoloi's ideals and commitment to public service.

Sharing personal experiences from his administrative journey, he emphasised the need for sincerity and a sense of responsibility, stating that one's work reflects one's identity.

Noted science writer and educa-

tionist Dr Ramesh Chandra Goswami also addressed the gathering, stressing the values of honesty, dedication, and diligence in public service.

He noted that such qualities enhance governance and set examples for others to follow.

As part of the programme, the

District Level Lok Sewa Puraskar 2025 was conferred on three government employees of Sonitpur district in recognition of their exemplary service.

The recipients were Rupak Hazarika, Room Bearer at the Office of the Deputy Commissioner; Tankeswar Ojha, Physical Instructor at the Office of the District Sports Officer; and Bapdhan Das, Jarikarak at the Office of the Superintendent of Taxes (Recovery), Tezpur.

The programme was attended by District Development Commissioner Lakhinandan Saharia, CEO of Sonitpur Zila Parishad Karabi Saikia Karan, Additional Deputy Commissioner Kabita Kakati Konwar, Chairperson of Tezpur Municipal Board Ramen Tamuli, and other departmental heads, officials, dignitaries, and staff of the district administration.

## NFR highlights preventive healthcare initiatives

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Aug 5:** In a bid to promote preventive healthcare and strengthen medical services across its jurisdiction, the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has rolled out a series of health awareness initiatives at its network of hospitals.

These efforts, anchored by the Central Hospital in Maligaon, reflect NFR's continued commitment to the well-being of its employees, their families, and the broader community it serves.

As part of its comprehensive approach to healthcare, NFR has made substantial investments in upgrading its medical infrastructure.

Its hospitals are now equipped with advanced diagnostic tools, modern Operation Theatres (OTs), and Intensive Care Units (ICUs), which have significantly improved patient care by enabling faster and more accurate diagnoses and better treatment outcomes. Last week, Central Hospital Maligaon led the way with a series of public health campaigns centred around Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) Day, Basic Life Support (BLS) training, and the launch of World Breastfeeding Week.

These programmes were designed not only to spread awareness about critical health issues but also to build capacity among healthcare professionals and educate the public on simple, life-saving practices.

ORS Day was observed with the theme "Simple solution for a healthier future – sip smart, stay strong, say Yes to ORS."

## Debajani Deka Education Trust hosts book critique on Indian Army narratives

**HT Correspondent**

**MORIGAOON, Aug 5:** The Debajani Deka Education Trust, a leading literary and socio-cultural organisation based in Morigaon, organised a book critique programme on Sunday evening at Nipun Pam, Baghara. The event focused on two books authored by women writers that highlight the experiences and contributions of the Indian Army from the 1962 Indo-China war to the 1999 Kargil conflict.

The featured works were "Bharatiya Sena Bahini Aru Lekhikar Biyaktigata Abhigayata" (Indian Army and the Writer's Personal Experience) by Sandhyarani Dutta Kakati, and "Tolilong to Kargil" by Ami Barthakur. Both books aim to underline the Indian Army's role, dedication, and importance to the nation.



## QUOTE OF THE DAY

*When ambition ends, happiness begins.*  
—Thomas Merton

## All eyes on Mint Street

As the Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) begins its three-day deliberation which will end on August 6, all eyes are on Mint Street. Will the central bank pull the trigger on another rate cut, or will it stick to a cautious pause? The stakes are unusually high this time—not merely for inflation or GDP numbers but for the credibility of India's monetary stance amid an increasingly unpredictable global and domestic landscape. There are no easy answers, but doing nothing may be the costliest option of all. India is witnessing its lowest inflation in over six years. Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation fell to 2.1% in June 2025, marking the eighth consecutive month it undershot the 4% target and the fifth time it undershot even the lower threshold of 2%. Disinflation is not just a vegetable story; cereals, pulses, and proteins have also cooled off sharply. Further, the inflation outlook for the rest of FY26 is benign. Forecasts peg average CPI inflation at 2.7%–3.1%, significantly lower than the RBI's estimate of 3.7%. Even the FY27 projection, thanks to a revised CPI basket that may lower food weight and boost e-commerce weightage, suggests headline inflation staying below 4%.

This macro backdrop screams for accommodation. Yet, the RBI has maintained a conservative pause since April, despite frontloading 100 bps of rate cuts earlier in the year. The argument has been incomplete transmission, global volatility, and concern over the rupee amid a hawkish Fed. Steady, but softening India posted a robust 7.4% GDP growth in Q4 FY25, but the growth engine is visibly sputtering in Q1 FY26. High-frequency indicators point to deceleration in manufacturing, utilities, and mining. The output gap remains negative, nominal GDP is weakening due to low deflators, and rural income growth—though stable—isn't robust enough to carry the recovery alone. Urban consumption presents a mixed picture: credit card spending is up, but new card issuance and personal loan growth are the weakest in three years. Tractor sales are strong, yet passenger vehicle sales are down. Corporate investment remains government-led; private capex is hesitant. In this context, delaying rate cuts would mean letting growth slip further just as inflation provides space to act.

Another pressing variable is the U.S.-India tariff dispute. With the Trump administration imposing a 25% reciprocal tariff on Indian exports, and uncertainty looming over additional penalties related to crude oil imports from Russia, the trade war could shave off 30–40 bps from India's FY26 GDP.

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

*"Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance. It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity."*

....The ambition of the greatest man of our generation [Mahatma Gandhi] has been to wipe every tear from every eye. That may be beyond us, but so long as there are tears and suffering, so long our work will not be over. And so we have to labor and to work, and work hard, to give reality to our dreams. Those dreams are for India, but they are also for the world."

—The famous 'Tryst With The Destiny' speech by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the First Prime Minister of India on the eve of India's Independence

Indian Independence Movement, an anti-colonial struggle spanning approximately a century, aimed at ending British rule over the Indian subcontinent. It ended in a bittersweet victory, as the people of the subcontinent won freedom and independence, yet were painfully divided into two nations: India and Pakistan. Nonetheless, midnight on August 14–15, 1947, was a triumph and a landmark moment in the returning of dignity to the peoples of Asia following the colonial period. The movement was more than political; it was a renaissance, and an inspiration for oppressed nations around the world.

Shortly before the stroke of midnight on August 14, India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, made a famous speech entitled "A Tryst with Destiny": India's independence from England was the result of many generations of resistance, culminating in a series of large-scale independence movements from 1919 to the early 1940s led by Mahatma Gandhi. In the 1600s, India was ruled by the Mughal empire, which had been in control for hundreds of years. India was made up of smaller city-states and had established trade routes and a long history of art and culture. However, there were colonial powers like England, Portugal and the Netherlands that were tak-

ing control of pockets of land. Companies from those countries were using trade to gain power. One of the most prominent companies was the East India Company from Britain, which at one time controlled half of the world's trade. It recruited its own army and began seizing control of India region by region. Sometimes it took control through military force, such as through winning the Battle of Plassey in 1757. Other times it gained power through economic dominance. For a time, the British government allowed the East India Company a lot of leverage in taking over regions in India because England was benefiting financially. However, when decades of unrest and resistance by Indians against the East India Company eventually resulted in Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, the British government dissolved the East India Company but kept control of its land. This is how Britain took over large portions of what is now modern-day India.

## The Battle of Plassey

The Battle of Plassey in 1757, part of the larger Seven Years' War between Britain and France, was a turning point in the British conquest of India. The East India Company had increasingly solidified its position and was now regarded by native rulers as a serious threat. The nawab (ruler) of Bengal, Siraj al-Dawlah, favoring an alliance with the French, had previously attacked company trading posts. With the help of some of the nawab's own generals, the British were able to defeat and depose the nawab at the Battle of Plassey and appointed their own administration in Bengal. This crucial victory marked the transformation of the British East India Company from a mere mercantile presence into a military and political power in India. The company would go on to consolidate its power over the Indian subcontinent through a series of military campaigns. It established its dominance in Bengal and Bihar with the Battle of Buxar (1764), in southern India with Tipu Sultan's defeat in the fourth Mysore War (1799), and in the Punjab following the second Sikh war (1848–49).

## The Sepoy Mutiny and the British Raj

One of the first united actions that Indians took against British control was the Sepoy Mutiny. Indians were angered by the increasing pressure to convert to Christianity by the British, and they were also growing concerned about attempts to Westernize their country. When Hindu and Muslim soldiers were seemingly forced to use guns and

ammunition with animal products, which is against both religions, a rebellion was sparked. The fighting spread through northern and central India over the course of several months, uniting groups of Indians in a common cause. There was a lot of violence and death on both sides, and the conflict stretched on for more than a year. The rebellion ended on June 19, 1858 when the British recaptured a town called Gwalior and fighting ended. This victory marked the beginning of the British Raj (meaning "rule") in India, but modern Indians note this mutiny was an early example of nationalistic action taken by Indians. Throughout the end of the 19th century and into the 20th, India generated large amounts of wealth for England, with people referring to it as "the jewel in the crown" because of its valuable natural resources and industry. Despite this, conditions for Indians under British rule grew worse and worse over the same time period. Poverty in India increased from about 23 percent to more than 50 percent from 1810 to the 1950s. The death rate increased, and the life expectancy of the average Indian was less than 22 years. Resistance to British rule rose due to these conditions, and Indians advocated for more representation and control over the local government. A British man named Allan Octavian Hume brought together a group of Indians to serve on the Indian National Congress in 1885. Hume purposely chose Indians that were Western-educated because he hoped that they would be more agreeable to British rule, culture, and politics. Despite being supportive of British rule at the beginning, the Indian National Congress would slowly become a nationalist entity, and later members would be strong supporters of an independent India. One of these leaders was Mahatma Gandhi.

## Formation of the Indian National Congress

On December 28, 1885, the Indian National Congress (Congress Party) was formed, marking the inception of the first major nationalist movement to emerge in the British Empire outside Britain. Led largely by Allan Octavian Hume, a retired British civil servant sympathetic to the cause of Indian freedom, the Congress Party was initially established as a platform for educated Indians to discuss political issues and advocate for a greater role in governance. The first meeting was held in Bombay (now Mumbai), drawing 72 delegates from across the Indian subcontinent. These initial delegates were largely Western-educated and from elite backgrounds and fo-

cused on moderate reforms rather than outright independence. By the early 20th century, the Indian National Congress began to shift from moderate to more "extremist" stances, under the influence of leaders such as Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal, and Annie Besant. The concept of swadeshi ("of our own country"), or prioritizing indigenous goods over British imports, gained prominence, symbolizing a growing spirit of economic self-sufficiency and resistance against imperial exploitation. By 1907 a clear delineation existed between the moderates, led by Gopal Krishna Gokhale, and the extremists.

## Formation of the All-India Muslim League

The All-India Muslim League, the first political party for Muslims in India, was founded in Dhaka (now the capital of Bangladesh) on December 30, 1906. This development was driven by the increasing dissatisfaction among Indian Muslims with the Indian National Congress, which many perceived as primarily representing Hindu interests. The party was heavily influenced by the visionary Indian Muslim leader Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, who had died in 1898, and was founded by leaders including Mian Muhammad Shafi, Nawab Waqar-ul-Mulk, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, Syed Ameer Ali, Mualana Mohammad Ali Jauhar, and Sir Sultan Mohammed Shah (the league's first president, also known as Aga Khan III). Sir Muhammad Iqbal would emerge as a key voice within a few years of the party's founding. The league aimed to safeguard the rights of Indian Muslims and initially espoused loyalty to the British raj as a means to achieve greater civil rights and counterbalance the dominance of the Congress Party. The Muslim League would eventually lay the groundwork for modern Pakistan. Mohammed Ali Jinnah, who joined the league in 1913, would later transform the political party into a mass movement for Muslim autonomy.

## Gandhi and the Modern Indian Independence Movement

Mahatma Gandhi was born in India and went to law school in England. He also worked as a lawyer in South Africa. He returned to India in 1915 as a strong supporter of Indian nationalism, and he joined the Indian National Congress to advocate for Indian self-rule. He used many forms of nonviolent resistance, also called passive resistance, to draw attention to the cause of self-rule and gain support. These methods included writing speeches and letters, leading marches, (CONTD. ON NEXT ISSUE)

## India opting for restraint and caution in dealing with Trump's 25 per cent tariffs

By: Kalyani Shankar

India's hopes for reduced export tariffs to the United States were dashed on Wednesday when the Trump administration announced a 25% levy and an unspecified penalty for buying arms and crude oil from Russia. The Narendra Modi government is responding cautiously, as the full impact of these penalties remains unclear.

Concerns have been raised about the impact of India's exports on the economy and stock market. On July 30, Trump announced a 25% tariff on imports from India, stating, "While India is our friend, we have done little business with them because their tariffs are among the highest globally, and they have challenging non-tariff trade barriers."

Experts warn that the 25% tariffs could reduce India's growth in 2025–26, potentially reducing it by up to 40 basis points. Additional penalties might further damage the economic outlook.

The statistics show that in 2025, India sold \$10.5 billion in pharmaceuticals and \$14.6 billion in smartphones to the United States. Trump did not include these critical sectors in the new tariffs starting on August 1. In that same year, India had a trade surplus of \$41 billion with the United States. This surplus was \$35.32 billion in 2023–24 and \$27.7 billion in 2023. Trump's surprise announcement has drawn strong reactions from opposition leaders. The Congress party stated on X, "The country is now bearing the costs of Modi's 'friendship'." Critics are questioning Trump's support for high tariffs despite calling Modi his friend.

The reasons were evident: the influence of Russia, trade with India, and India's firm stance during trade negotiations. This aggressive behaviour also comes from geopolitical frustration.

Media reports suggest that Trump is frustrated with the restrictions in Indian markets, which have influenced his decision. The US has long complained about high tariffs on American goods. Although Trump initially saw India as a key trade priority, slow progress has led to frustration in Washington. New Delhi's cautious approach has resulted in only limited concessions. This move aims to pressure New Delhi into meeting US demands, especially after the US secured favourable trade deals with major partners like Japan, the UK, and the EU, just two days before the timeline.

India's top exports include smartphones, pharmaceuticals, gems, textiles, industrial machinery, jewellery, and seafood—all of which are now under threat. In the 2024–25 fiscal year, the United States was India's largest trading partner, with bilateral trade reaching USD 186 billion. The US accounted for 18% of India's exports and 6.22% of its imports. Tariff changes could significantly affect both economies.

Trump commented on social media, "It's about India's relationship with Russia, stating, "They can drag their weak economies down together. We do very little business with India due to its high tariffs, and neither does the USA. Let's keep it that way." New Delhi does not have many options. They are: deeper diplomatic engagement, look for new trade partners, and leveraging economy. The Modi government decided to source goods from various countries including Russia to protect national interests and stabilise Indian economy. Trump is open to negotiating with India but has imposed a trade penalty linked to its BRICS membership. Back-channel talks are underway, and experts believe solutions to open the agriculture and dairy sectors could emerge.

New Delhi is trying to manage the situation. Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal told Parliament that the government will take action to support farmers, workers, and small business owners. He is open to discussions about these issues. Not everything is black and white. Estimates from ICRA, Nomura, and ANZ suggest that the GDP impact will be modest, as India exports about \$87 billion in goods to the US annually, accounting for only 2 to 3% of its total GDP.

Trump commented reports that India might stop buying Russian oil as "a good step" amid US pressure. Indian officials clarified that Indian oil companies continue to import Russian oil due to pricing and logistics. Halting these imports could endanger India's energy security and lead to wider geopolitical consequences. New Delhi acknowledges changes in its relationship with Russia but remains confident that the partnership will continue to grow. Despite the challenges, there is some hope on the horizon as a US delegation is set to visit India on August 25 for the next round of negotiations regarding the proposed bilateral trade agreement between the two countries. The Trump administration is seeking deeper market access. (IPA Service)

## Trump plan to end free elections in 2026 midterm and 2028 Presidential revealed

By: Mark Gruenberg

The Trump administration and its radical right foot-soldiers in the federal government and in the states are undertaking a comprehensive scheme to undermine future state and federal elections, in effect rigging the rolls to keep themselves in power no matter what the voters decide. So far, other than the report itself, by the Brennan Center for Law and Justice at New York University, there's been little—or little-noticed—response.

The comprehensive scheme is detailed in a combination of a Trump executive order on March 25 and the notorious SAVE Act, a GOP voter repression law that would disenfranchise at least 21 million people, most of them women—the voters most likely to oppose the Trump-right-wing-corporate agenda.

Detailed and footnoted protests were aired by the Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW) to the GOP-run House Administration Committee and by the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights—whose members include the AFL-CIO—to the GOP-run Senate Rules and Administration Committee. And states have gone to court to try to block Trump, the Brennan Center adds.

"A president has no right to rewrite the country's election rules or regulate federal elections on his own," the center's report says. "As a federal court recently put it, 'The Constitution vests none of these powers in the president.' In issuing the order, the president claimed extraordinary unilateral authority to regulate federal elections and usurp the powers of Congress, the states, and the (U.S.) Elections Administration Commission, an independent, bipartisan federal agency."

Protecting U.S. elections, at all levels, from partisan manipulation, is now and has been for more than a century, important to workers, union, and non-union. One, as AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler often points out, is that the GOP Trump regime views organized labor as a key roadblock to its partisan and repressive agenda. And the best way to crush labor is to crush workers' right to vote.

And, second, and just as important, restricting who can vote, and who cannot, centralizes power in the hands not just of Trump but of the corporate interests that back him and who turn a blind eye—or worse—to repression both at the workplace and at the ballot box.

After all, paraphrasing the late UAW President Walter Reuther, what is won at the bargaining table can be taken away by the stroke of a pen. The elements in the right wing's coordinated attempt to entrench itself in power go far beyond what Trump tried in the aftermath of the 2020 presidential election. Trump lost it to Democratic nominee Joe Biden, and knew it. But he tried to overturn the results in lawsuits and other intimidation in selected swing states—and went 0-for-62 in court cases.

When that failed, he turned to aiding and abetting the Jan. 6, 2021, Trumpite invasion, insurrection, and attempted coup

d'état at the U.S. Capitol.

But now the Trump right-wing playbook to undermine and rig coming elections is much more extensive and much more under the radar, the Brennan Center reports. It includes: Attempting to rewrite election rules to burden voters and usurp control of election systems. Targeting or threatening to target election officials and others who keep elections free and fair. Federal officials, at the Justice Department, had an important role in countering disinformation and combating racial discrimination.

This federal protection for fair elections may no longer exist. Supporting people who undermine election administration by putting them on state and local elections boards. Retreating from the federal role of protecting voters and the election process by defunding agencies Congress established to safeguard the vote and ensuring the Federal Elections Commission, already hobbled by a years-long deadlock, remains toothless. Giving a "go" signal to future violence to overturn elections, by Trump's pardons of the January 6 insurrectionists.

The Brennan report leaves out one tactic of Trump, the MAGAites and the right-wing: Stacking state and local elections boards. An attempt occurred in Nevada, a swing state in 2020 and 2024. And after the four-member, evenly split Wayne County, Mich. (Detroit) elections board voted 3–1 to certify Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden's margin there in 2020, Michigan MAGAites forced the Republican commissioner who voted for certification out of office.

"Why do we conclude this represents a concerted strategy? Among other things, President Trump tried to do this before," the Brennan Center points out. "He was the first president to try to overturn the results of a presidential election and used federal power to do so."

"Institutions and key officials blocked him. These internal checks, however, are now gone, and many public officials will likely carry out the president's will. "This campaign to undermine elections runs afoul of the U.S. Constitution. Only Congress and the states can set election rules. The executive branch, especially the Department of Justice (DOJ), is charged with enforcing federal laws. But neither the president nor the DOJ has the authority to set rules governing elections or to supervise" state elections procedures.

Yet Trump is trying just that. And, as CREW and the Brennan Center point out, the misnamed SAVE Act, a key goal of the House's ruling right-wing Republicans, would aid and abet that campaign. Other specifics include:

Attempting to impose a "Show Your Papers" requirement on voters. Trump, in a March 25 executive order, and the GOP congressional majority, in the SAVE Act, say doing so would prevent "voter fraud," which even Trump's last Attorney General in his first term, Bill Barr, called nonexistent. But "show your papers" mandates, using a citizenship document to even register to vote, "would undermine voting and disrupt election administration in multiple respects."



Estimates are that the mandate, the SAVE Act, or both, would disenfranchise at least 21 million voters nationwide. Most of them would be women, whose names on their initial voter registrations are different from the name they now use. Force the states to re-certify all their voting machines, buy new ones, or both. That would cost billions of dollars. It's also one step removed from Trump's demand for hand counts of all elections. The certification would be done by federally approved firms and methods, and only one has been okayed by the federal Elections Administration Commission, on July 7, 2025.

There are also bans on unauthorized access to voting machines and equipment. The result of violating them is to toss the machines—and the votes they count—out. Tina Peters, former county clerk in rural "red" Mesa County, Colo., is now serving a 9-year term in prison for allowing Trumpite election deniers access to her county's machines after the 2020 balloting. She was convicted last year.

There is a plan for retaliation against opponents of the right-wing's voter rigging. The targets include state and local elections officials, non-partisan groups such as the League of Women Voters, civic groups that mobilize voters "and other individuals and entities that protect elections and the rule of law," the Brennan Center reports.

That kind of retaliation could target both unions and their get-out-the-vote drives and groups such as the Poor People's Campaign, which registers and mobilizes poor and low-wealth people—the very voters least likely to participate, but also the most likely to oppose the Trumpite, right-wing and corporate hegemony.

The Brennan Center reports likely targets for "law enforcement" type retaliation would include individual voters, election officials, "perceived political adversaries, and journalists." The last two groups of targets have been GOP targets before: On Richard Nixon's enemies list. Labour leaders—AFSCME President Jerry Wurf and UAW President Leonard Woodcock—were on it, too.

Trump's FBI Director Kash Patel "stated 'We're going to come after the people in the media who lied about American citizens, who helped Joe Biden rig presidential elections—we're going to come after you,'" the Brennan Center adds.

The Brennan Center reports three active task forces leading that retaliation: The Justice Department's "Weaponization Working Group, the New Jersey U.S. Attorney's Office Election Integrity Task Force, and the Washington, D.C., Attor-

ney's Office Special Unit.

Letting DOGE—Trump's so-called Department of Government Efficiency—access sensitive private and personal voter registration files, just as it did with other agencies, including the Labour Department and the National Labour Relations Board. And the threat isn't only from DOGE's misuse of the files. The Brennan Center adds that when DOGE grabbed the NLRB's files, its security was so lax that foreign hackers immediately invaded them.

"The administration could abuse voter file access to claim fraud and erode public trust in elections," the Brennan Center warns. "It could also pressure state officials to target groups of voters and carry out unwarranted voter purges. Any disclosure of sensitive personal information puts individuals and groups at risk of being intimidated or doxed. And mishandling voter file data could expose U.S. elections to political and foreign interference."

As regards intimidating election officials, after what happened in 2020 to the two African-American women in Georgia at the hands of Trump consigliere Rudy Giuliani—one a ballot counter, the other her mother—local elections officials are scared and defecting in droves.

"Criminal investigations and prosecutions would impose a severe personal and financial toll on election officials or non-profit employees for simply doing their jobs to help keep elections free and fair. But beyond that, the harms that stem from targeting the officials and civil society groups that make our elections work are manifold," the Brennan Center report says.

"Even if the administration never charges any officials, the threat alone of criminal investigation or prosecution will likely exacerbate the exodus of election officials. In 2024 33% of local election officials knew at least one colleague who resigned in part due to fear for their safety, of increased threats, or of intimidation; 21% stated they were unlikely to continue serving in their role for the 2026 midterms. In 2025, 59% of officials reported fear of political interference in their ability to do their jobs. And 46% were very or somewhat concerned about potential politically motivated investigations of themselves and their families."

The Brennan Center reports "federal and state law prohibit anyone, including federal officials, from intimidating voters and those, like election officials or civic engagement organizations, who assist or encourage them to vote. And though voters rarely do so, they are able to sue DOJ officials under anti-intimidation law in federal court."

"The Constitution establishes a system of checks and balances to ensure free and fair elections. The power to regulate elections lies in the hands of states and Congress. Courts and advocates complement this system to uphold the Constitution and federal law," the Brennan Center declares. "U.S. election infrastructure leaves no room for the president to insert himself. Yet that is exactly what he purports to do." (IPA Service)



# Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, India's first woman cabinet minister, left a rich legacy

By: Qurban Ali

A patriot, eminent parliamentarian, firm believer in non-violence and selfless and dedicated worker for the cause of the emancipation of women and weaker sections of society, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur has left an indelible imprint on national life and polity.

Rajkumari Dame Bibiji Amrit Kaur (née Ahluwalia) was a freedom fighter and politician, and the first woman member of the Indian cabinet after independence. Following her long lasting association with the independence movement, she was appointed the first health minister of India in 1947 and remained in office until 1957. She also held the charge of the sports ministry and urban development ministry, and was instrumental in setting up the National Institute of Sports, Patiala. During her tenure, Kaur ushered in several health-care reforms in India and is widely remembered for her contributions to the sector and her advocacy of women's rights. Kaur was also a member of the Constituent Assembly, the body that framed the Constitution of India.

Kaur, the only daughter among eight children of Raja Harnam Singh of the Kapurthala State of Punjab, was born in Lucknow on February 2, 1889. Her mother, Rani Harnam Singh, was the daughter of Golak Nath Chatterjee from Bengal. Although Kaur had inherited Christianity as her religion from her father, she had a deep reverence for all other faiths as well.

Like any aristocratic children of that time, Kaur had her early schooling abroad in the Sherborne School, Dorsetshire, UK, where she was sent at quite an early age. Later, she was sent to Oxford for higher education, where she excelled. She also took a keen interest in sports, especially hockey, cricket and tennis, and won several championships.

She could speak Italian and French fluently and could play the piano and the violin proficiently. She was recognised as a connoisseur of things cultural and aesthetic. After completing her education in England, she returned to India in 1918 at the age of 20.



Gandhi's disciple

After her return to India from England, Kaur became interested in the Indian independence movement. She was drawn to the thoughts and vision of M.K. Gandhi, whom she met in Bombay in 1919. Soon Kaur became one of his closest disciples. She worked as Gandhi's secretary for 16 years, and their correspondence was subsequently published as a volume of letters titled Letters to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.

She was so impressed by the views, ideas and magnetic personality of Gandhi that she later remarked: "There was a quiet strength, an earnestness and deep humility about him that went straight to my young heart .... I feel I have owed allegiance to him and to his cause from that time on."

Gandhi too used to confide in her, as is evident from one of his letters in which he had written, "My special function from childhood .... has been to make woman realise her dignity. I was once a slave holder myself but Ba proved an unwilling slave and thus opened my eyes to my mission. Her

task was finished. Now I am in search of a woman who would realise her mission," and asked: "Are you that woman, will you be one?"

It was no wonder, therefore, that the Gandhian era produced so many women leaders of eminence. Kaur was among the privileged few who had, for many years, enjoyed and shared Gandhi's close confidence.

Having joined politics, she took an active part in the salt campaign and was arrested in Bombay. As a true patriot, she condemned the 'Communal Award' given by Ramsay Macdonald when he was premier in 1932, regarding the political rights of major and minor communities in India.

As a representative of the Indian National Congress, in 1937 she went on a mission of goodwill to Bannu, North-West Frontier Province (now in Pakistan). The British authorities charged her with sedition on July 16, 1937 and imprisoned her. During the 'Quit India' Movement in 1942, she led many processions and in one of them, was subjected to ruthless lathi charge in Simla. Subsequently, she was arrested and jailed. The hardships

of the jail, which she had to undergo, were, however, too much for her. She was therefore put under house arrest in Simla.

The British authorities appointed her as a member of the Advisory Board of Education, but she resigned from the position following her involvement with the Quit India Movement in 1942. She was imprisoned by the authorities for her actions during the time.

## As a parliamentarian and minister

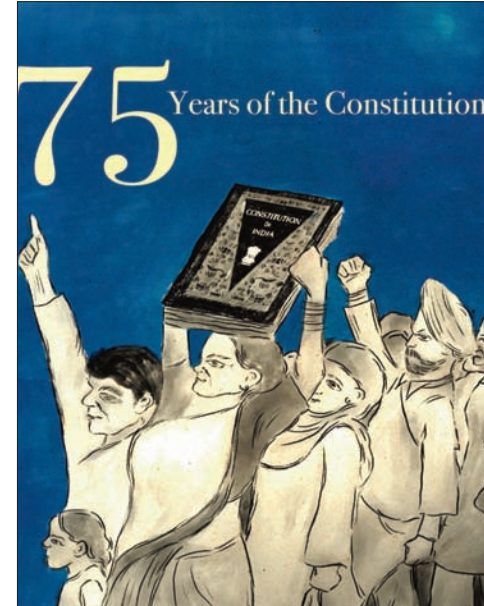
Kaur was a member of the Constituent Assembly of India (1946-50), the Provisional Parliament (1950-52), Lok Sabha (1952-57) and Rajya Sabha (1957-62). A dedicated parliamentarian, Kaur always showed a keen interest in the business of the House. For parliamentary debates and discussions, she used to come fully prepared. Her speeches in the parliament not only gave a new direction to the Indian polity and made it richer but also provided food for thought.

After India became independent, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru invited her to become a member of his Council of Ministers. She thus acquired the distinction of being the first woman member of the Indian Cabinet after independence and held the portfolio of health from August 15, 1947 to April 17, 1957.

During her time health minister, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in New Delhi — one of the best in Asia — came into existence. While piloting the AIIMS Bill in Lok Sabha on February 18, 1956, she had observed:

"It has been one of my cherished dreams that for postgraduate study and for the maintenance of high standards of medical education in our country, we should have an Institute of this nature in India which would enable our young men and women to have their background with the necessary experience that we would like to have of work in villages and the impetus that we would like to give to them to do research in the various spheres of medical education .... This is a pure, honest attempt to bring to this country good standards of medical education and to make them available to all."

She also took keen interest in a variety of issues



and legislative measures such as Sterilisation of the Unfit Bill, B.C.G. Vaccination Campaign, Report of Jaundice Enquiry Committee, Food situation, Countess of Dufferin's Fund Bill, 1957 and Annual Reports of Employees' State Insurance Corporation, and so on.

The suggestions made and solutions given by her on these issues were largely accepted by the House.

During this period, several important bills relating to her ministry such as The Indian Medical Council Bill, Indian Red Cross Society (Amendment) Bill, Government Premises (Eviction) Amendment Bill, Prevention of Food Adulteration Bill, 1954, Delhi (Control of Building Operation) Bill, 1955, Delhi Municipal Corporation Bill, 1957, Orphanages and Other Charitable Homes Bill, 1959, Children Bill, 1959, Lady Harding Medical College and Hospital Bill, 1959, Geneva Convention Bill, 1960, Drugs (Amendment) Bill, 1961 etc., were discussed at length and later passed by parliament.

Kaur co-founded the All India Women's Conference in 1927. She was later appointed its secretary in 1930, and president in 1933.

Kaur died in New Delhi on 6 February 1964. Although she was, at the time of her death, a practising Christian, she was cremated according to family customs and her funeral was presided over by the SGPC. Kaur had never married, and had no children. (Courtesy:thewire)

## Modern women are leaving their husbands as soon as they get a job

By: Dr. Privanka Saurabh

There was a time when the relationship of husband and wife was a symbol of sacrifice, love and mutual dedication. Marriage was not just a social contract, but was considered a deep emotional and spiritual journey. But today's modernity, education and the so-called "rights consciousness" have thrown this sacred relationship into the furnace of selfishness. Today, there is concern over the rapidly increasing number of cases in the country where a husband works hard for years, does labour work and educates his wife, gives wings to her dreams, and as soon as she gets a government job - she asks the same husband: "Who are you?"

This question is not being asked of a man alone, this question is being asked of the entire sacrifice that was made to maintain a relationship. This question is also on the system that gave the right to education but did not teach responsibility. This question is also on the law, which gave protection to women but did not try to teach them the morality of maintaining relationships. Along with modern education, another ideology has taken deep roots in the society - "put yourself first", "relationships are burden", "freedom means being free from any bondage". This thinking is teaching, especially women, that marriage, husband, family are just a social formality that can be discarded if needed. And when education, law and a section of the society promote this thinking, the result is - homes break, trust shatters and men's sacrifice becomes a joke.

A poor husband who carried bricks, worked as a daily wage labourer to educate his wife, filled her form, paid her fees, dropped her off at the examination centre, distributed sweets to her after she got selected - when the same husband stands at the door, the wife says - "I don't need you anymore." This sentence is not just words, it is the death of the struggle in which relationships breathed. This is the face of modernity, which shines but is hollow from within. If a wife rejects her husband without any reason, without any harassment, just because he has got a job, then this is neither empowerment nor freedom - this is a social crime. This is the murder of those values which are the foundation of Indian society. It is important to make it clear here that we are not talking about those women who are really harassed, exploited or who need protection. We are talking about those cases where a wife leaves her husband by misusing the law and rights only because she has become financially independent.

The protection that the law has given to women is necessary and should be there, but that protection is sacred only as long as it is used and not misused. Today, the number of such incidents is increasing in society where women have sent not only their husbands but also their families to jail by making false allegations, harassed them mentally and ruined them financially. Is this the family face of "New India"?

When a girl says, "Now I earn, I don't need anyone", it is not inde-

pendence, it is narcissism. Does self-reliance mean abandoning relationships? Does the value of love and sacrifice become zero as soon as one gets a job? Why is it not explained that a strong woman is one who keeps her nest safe even during her flight, and not burns it as soon as she flies away?

The purpose of education is not only to get a job but also to bring maturity in thinking. Unfortunately, today's education has not given this maturity but in many cases has given rise to self-centred thinking. If self-reliance turns into selfishness, then it becomes a threat to the society. If a woman runs away from her relationships after studies, then it raises a question mark on that education, on that thinking and on that law which allows her to do this. Many times, when a wife leaves her husband, society remains silent. Women consider it their right, and men do not even have a say. If a husband says, "I educated her, raised her, made her career", he is told, "She did not do you any favour, she is independent now." But when a woman moves forward by sacrificing her husband, does that sacrifice not have any value? Doesn't she have any emotional recognition?

This mindset has now reached the courts. There are thousands of cases pending in the courts where men are fighting for their marital rights, yearning to meet their children, and carrying the burden of a relationship that exists only on paper for years. They can neither get a divorce, nor start a new life, and neither does society understand their suffering.

In many cases, educated women have extramarital affairs, distance themselves from their husbands, and then hide behind legal protection. When someone questions such matters, he is called "anti-women", "narrow-minded" or "patriarchal". But does a society not have the right to listen to the voice of a man who protects relationships?

If this mindset continues, the institution of marriage will be hollowed out in the coming years. Men will fear marriage, families will break, and walls of mistrust will be erected in society. Women must understand that they are not only responsible for getting a job, but also for maintaining relationships. When a husband pays your fees, gets you coaching, encourages you, then he is not just a husband, but a guide, a helper, a mentor. And when you leave him after achieving success, you reject not just a person, but a trust. This society can no longer tolerate false cases, superficial freedom and relationships broken in the name of selfishness. Now the time has come to add moral values to education, bring balance in laws, and give the message to the society that empowerment does not mean running away from responsibility, but fulfilling it honestly.

In relationships, duties are as important as rights. True empowerment is that which does not break relationships, but strengthens them. Because if a wife asks her husband as soon as he gets a job - "Who are you?" - then it is not only the husband's defeat, but the entire society's defeat.

## India's forest guardians embrace women warriors of climate resilience

By: Satendra Singh

On July 20, 2025, the Indian Forest Service (IFS) Association made a historic decision by electing an all-female executive committee for the first time since its establishment. This news, prominently featured by The Pioneer on July 21, marks a significant milestone for gender representation within India's esteemed All India Services and underscores the pressing need for governance that is both responsive to climate issues and inclusive of gender perspectives. In an era where the world grapples with disasters stemming from climate change — such as flash floods, cloudbursts, extreme weather events, wildfires, rising sea levels, and prolonged droughts — the role of the Indian Forest Service is becoming increasingly vital.

As the primary stewards of India's natural resources, forest officers bear the responsibility not only of safeguarding our forests and biodiversity but also of addressing and alleviating the effects of climate change, environmental degradation, and pollution. This transition in leadership, which highlights the role of women, occurs at a time when the global community calls for a more compassionate, inclusive, and resilient approach to climate management.

### Climate Change and Women: A Crisis of Injustice

Climate change does not impact all genders uniformly. The consequences are particularly severe for those who are already vulnerable, with women, especially in countries like India, bearing the brunt of its effects. From having to travel longer distances to fetch water due to drought, facing increased risks of displacement during floods, to being the last to receive food aid during famines or relief efforts, women often suffer in silence. Even though women are largely underrepresented in key decision-making roles, they contribute the least to global carbon emissions. It is a commonly overlooked truth that the majority of choices and consumption patterns affecting the climate are driven by men, while women are more likely to suffer the consequences — a disparity that is not only environmental but also fundamentally social and ethical. This situation necessitates a dedicated effort towards climate justice, not just on a global level but also from a gender perspective.

Acknowledging this disparity is the first step. Addressing it through inclusive governance is the path forward — and this is where women officers in the Indian Forest Service can have a substantial influence.

### Women IFS Officers: Pioneers in Climate Resilience

The Indian Forest Service holds a unique position within India's administrative structure. It directly tackles critical elements of environmental security — including forest conservation, biodiversity protection, water resource management, climate resilience, afforestation, and forest fire management.

A newly established all-female executive committee now at the helm of the IFS Association instils renewed hope that the issues faced by women in climate-sensitive sectors will receive increased attention. These officers bring not only their knowledge and hands-on experience but also a level of empathy that is often lacking in top-down policy formulation. Women forest officers understand — both instinctively and through personal experience — the specific vulnerabilities that climate change poses to women.

For instance, in regions like Odisha, Uttarakhand, Assam, and Rajasthan, where women predominantly manage domestic water needs and livelihoods related to forests, climate variability and extreme weather conditions exacerbate their difficulties. Deforestation, wildfires, erratic rainfall, and diminishing springs impact their health, nutrition, time availability, and safety. Enhancing the representation of women in leadership positions within the Indian Forest Service (IFS) can contribute to reforming forest and climate policies that specifically acknowledge and address these vulnerabilities.

### Government Initiatives: Progress, Yet Gaps Persist

India has achieved significant advancements in

nature conservation and climate-related initiatives. The National Mission for a Green India, the National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change (NAFCC), and the Compensatory Afforestation Programme are commendable efforts. Additionally, the Van Dhan Yojana, along with the National Agroforestry Policy, merges forest-dependent livelihoods with conservation initiatives. At the community level, Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs) and Eco-Development Committees (EDCs) promote participatory governance. These are often influenced or led by local women, who serve as traditional custodians of knowledge concerning biodiversity and sustainable practices. Nevertheless, their viewpoints are rarely included in comprehensive climate strategies or state action plans that address climate change.

This is where an increased representation of women in decision-making positions within the IFS can have a profound effect — by linking grassroots knowledge with policy frameworks. Their participation can incorporate gender considerations into forestry operations, climate risk assessments, and the development of adaptation strategies.

### A Remarkable Accomplishment

This pioneering all-female committee is set to not only alter the leadership dynamics within the IFS but also serve as a beacon of inspiration for aspiring young women across India. An increasing number of girls will now aspire to join this prestigious All India Service, viewing it as a chance to make meaningful contributions to both the environment and society.

The Indian Forest Service has evolved beyond the traditional perception of merely managing remote forests. It now plays a crucial role in shaping India's climate resilience strategy, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and guiding the nation towards a greener and more inclusive future. As more talented and passionate young women opt for this career path, the service will benefit from enhanced diversity, innovative ideas, and greater effectiveness.

### Echoes from the Top: A Vision Aligned with National Leadership

Prime Minister Shree Narendra Modi has consistently emphasised the importance of development driven by women and environmental stewardship. At the COP26 Summit in Glasgow in 2021, he remarked: "We need to ensure that our daughters are entitled to a clean environment just like our sons."

He also mentioned in his "Mann Ki Baat" speech: "Women play a crucial role in environmental conservation and must be at the forefront of our initiatives to protect nature."

These words are not just symbolic; they set the tone for national initiatives that recognise women's contributions to sustainable development. The newly established women-led IFS Association committee embodies this principle, highlighting that women are not simply victims of climate change but rather significant agents of climate action.

### Path Ahead: Collaborative Climate Leadership for a Sustainable India

The establishment of an all-female executive committee represents not only a milestone in gender equality but also provides a strategic advantage for India. As the country faces recurring disasters such as the Sikkim cloudburst, Himachal and Uttarakhand landslides, Kerala floods, and escalating coastal threats in regions like Odisha and Tamil Nadu, the IFS must respond to climate challenges with agility and insight.

When empowered, women officers can execute comprehensive strategies for forest governance, promote community-oriented climate adaptation, ensure the collection of gender-disaggregated data, and advocate for eco-sensitive development planning that aligns conservation efforts with community welfare.

This transition also serves as a call to action — to provide enhanced training, support, and leadership opportunities for women in the forest and environmental sectors. The Government and training organisations must improve programs that cultivate skills in gender-sensitive climate planning and disaster risk reduction. (Courtesy: ThePioneer)

## Hair care habits to prevent hair thinning

By: Shahnaz Hussain

Hair loss is most commonly caused by genetics, lifestyle, diet, stress, environmental damage and hormonal changes, among others and becomes more common in men and women with age. Most healthy people lose between 50 and 100 single hairs per day. When you start to shed more strands — and fewer or none grow back — the condition is considered alopecia (hair loss).

Every strand of hair on your head has a lifespan between about 3 to 5 years. Hair shedding is part of a natural balance — some hairs fall out while others grow in. Hair loss occurs when your hair's growth cycle is disrupted. This can cause shedding, bald spots and thinning hair.

And like most other things in life, we only think of treating this problem when it's out of control, rather than preventing the issue before it becomes too serious.

However, unless the cause is medical or genetic, managing hair fall is simply a matter of following healthy habits. Some are as simple as eating a healthy diet, managing stress levels and blow drying less. A healthy diet can help your hair stay strong and shiny. What you eat can also keep you from losing your locks. If you're not getting certain nutrients from food, you might see the effects in your hair. On that note, here are easy-to-do, practical steps all women can follow to manage their hair health and prevent hair thinning. Take a look!

### 1. Take Care of Your Nutrition. Your hair reflects your overall health.

A balanced diet is the first step to healthier hair. If you're not getting enough nutrients, your hair will show it. Your strands need all types of nutrients to grow thick and strong. While vitamins don't necessarily promote hair growth, some mineral and vitamin deficiencies can cause hair loss. Include iron-rich foods like spinach and lentils to prevent hair thinning. Biotin sources like eggs and nuts for stronger strands.

Include fish, dairy, eggs, beans, lentils, nuts, and seeds to avoid hair thinning. Vitamin B12, Folic Acid, and Biotin are types of vitamin B associated with good hair. These are essential in maintaining healthy follicles, which help in hair growth and decrease shedding.

Because trace minerals like iron, magnesium, zinc, and biotin also affect hair, it's a good idea to take a daily multivitamin.

Hydrating fluids like coconut water nourish your hair from within.

2. Quit Smoking—Smoking affects the hair follicles in multiple ways. If you are exposed to cigarette smoke, unsafe chemicals can settle on your hair and scalp. These chemicals can damage the hair shaft by making your hair dry and more prone to breakage.

Smoking is a serious factor in developing androgenetic alopecia. It is a common type of hair loss in both men and women (also known as pattern baldness). Smoking can trigger inflammation in the scalp, which can

damage hair follicles and further contribute to the problem of hair loss.

Nicotine and other injurious substances in cigarettes can induce vasoconstriction. It narrows your blood vessels, which can reduce blood flow. This impacts the blood supply to your scalp and eliminates the vital nutrients and oxygen to your hair follicles.

When a person quits smoking, it is possible to undo some of the damage caused by the harmful effects of smoking, but the same cannot be said for those who have developed male pattern baldness. If smoking has caused androgenetic alopecia, then it can only be slowed down with dermatological treatments.

3. Use a Derma Roller—This simple tool is gaining fame for its ability to boost hair growth, tackle hair thinning, or just give hair a little extra oomph. It's considered a minimally invasive procedure with a fairly speedy recovery time, especially with shorter needles.

When you roll this small gadget featuring a roller covered in very fine needles over your scalp, these needles create tiny pinpricks in the skin that increase blood circulation in the scalp. More blood means more nutrients and oxygen, which are like superfoods for your hair follicles.

This increased blood flow can wake up dormant hair follicles, giving them the nudge they need to start growing hair again.

Over time, the improved scalp health and increased nutrient delivery can lead to thicker, fuller hair. It's like giving your hair a natural volume boost from within. If you're new to derma rolling, begin with a 10-minute home session once a week and gradually increase the frequency if your skin tolerates it well.

### 4. Detangle Hair—Respective of long, luscious locks or short hair, a hair knot mess is experienced by almost everyone.

It is not an easy task to remove a hair knot without destroying your hair. But it is not impossible either. Some tips about detangling include brushing your hair before washing if you have hair that gets tangled easily, and using a small amount of shampoo on the strands when compared to the scalp. Get your hair trimmed every 4-6 weeks. Split ends cause tangles, making your hair look damaged and dry. Apply conditioner and comb your hair to detangle and spread out the conditioner evenly. But be gentle because wet hair is more prone to shedding. Hair knots are often difficult to detangle. But products like hair oil, hair mask or even hair conditioner can make it easier to remove the knots.

It is especially important to detangle curly hair. The tight curls and coils can easily become intertwined, making it essential to detangle to prevent breakage. By detangling your hair before washing or styling, you can ensure that your curls stay intact and undamaged.

The author is an internationally famous beauty expert and is called the herbal queen of India.



## Trump says he will raise tariffs on India 'very substantially' in next 24 hours

**NEW YORK/MOSCOW, Aug 5:** US President Donald Trump on Tuesday said India has not been a good trading partner and announced that he will raise the tariffs on New Delhi "very substantially" over the next 24 hours because it is buying Russian oil.

"With India, what people don't like to say about India, they're the highest tariff nation. They have the highest tariff of anybody. We do very, very little business with India because their tariffs are so high," Trump said in an interview with CNBC Squawk Box.

"India has not been a good trading partner, because they do a lot of business with us, but we don't do business with them. So we settled on 25% (tariff), but I think I'm going to raise that very substantially over the next 24 hours, because they're buying Russian oil. They're fuelling the war machine. And if they're going to do that, then I'm not going to be happy," he added. When asked about the trade deal with India that seemed imminent, Trump said the "sticking point" with India is that its tariffs are too high.

"Now I will say this, India went from the highest tariffs ever, they will give us zero tariffs... But that's not good enough, because of what they're doing with oil."

A day earlier, Trump said he will "substantially" raise US tariffs on India, accusing the country of buy-



ing massive amounts of Russian oil and selling it for big profits.

Hours later, India mounted an unusually sharp counterattack on the US and the European Union for their "unjustified and unreasonable" targeting of New Delhi for its procurement of Russian crude oil.

Firmly rejecting the criticism, India pointed out the double standards in targeting it on the issue and said both the US and the EU are continuing their trade relations with Russia.

"Unlike our case, such trade is not even a vital national compulsion," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement.

The Europe-Russia trade includes not just energy, but also fertilisers, mining products, chemicals, iron and steel, and machinery and transport equipment,

the MEA said. "Where the US is concerned, it continues to import from Russia uranium hexafluoride for its nuclear industry, palladium for its EV industry, fertilisers as well as chemicals," it added.

"In this background, the targeting of India is unjustified and unreasonable. Like any major economy, India will take all necessary measures to safeguard its national interests and economic security," the MEA said.

On Tuesday, Russia defended India's right to select trade partners, saying sovereign countries have the right to select their partners in trade and economic cooperation based on their interests.

"We believe that sovereign countries must have and do have the right to choose their trade partners, the partners in trade and eco-

nomics cooperation, on their own and independently determine those modes of trade and economic cooperation that suit the interests of a country in question," Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists, commenting on the US' threats regarding India.

On Monday, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova accused the US administration of continuing a neocolonial policy against the nations of the Global South to maintain American hegemony. "Sanctions and restrictions are a regrettable reality of today's historical stage, which affects the entire world," Zakharova said in a statement. "Washington cannot come to terms with the loss of hegemony in the emerging multipolar world order and continues to pursue a neocolonial policy in an attempt to maintain its position, using politicised levers of economic pressure against those who refuse to follow in its wake in the international arena," she added. On August 1, Trump signed an Executive Order titled 'Further Modifying The Reciprocal Tariff Rates', raising tariffs for over five dozen countries, including a steep 25 per cent for India.

The executive order, however, did not mention the "penalty" that Trump had said India will have to pay because of its purchases of Russian military equipment and energy. (AP)

## NATO to coordinate regular, large-scale arm deliveries to Ukraine

**BRUSSELS, Aug 5:** NATO has started coordinating regular deliveries of large weapons packages to Ukraine after the Netherlands said it would provide air defence equipment, ammunition and other military aid worth 500 million euros (USD 578 million).

Sweden also announced Tuesday it would contribute USD 275 million to a joint effort along with its Nordic neighbours Denmark and Norway to provide USD 500 million worth of air defences, anti-tank weapons, ammunition and spare parts.

Two deliveries of equipment, most of it bought in the United States, are expected this month, although the Nordic package is expected to arrive in September. The equipment is supplied based on Ukraine's priority needs on the battlefield. NATO allies then locate the weapons and ammunition and send them on.

"Packages will be prepared rapidly and issued on a regular basis," NATO said Monday.

Air defence systems are in greatest need. The United Nations has said that Russia's relentless pounding of urban areas behind the front line has killed more than 12,000 Ukrainian civilians.

Russia's bigger army is also making slow but costly progress along the 1,000-kilometre front line. Currently, it is waging an operation to take the eastern city of Pokrovsk, a logistical hub whose fall could allow it to drive deeper into Ukraine.

European allies and Canada are buying most of the equipment they plan to send from the United States, which has greater stocks of ready military materiel, as well as more effective weapons. The Trump administration is not giving any arms to Ukraine.

The new deliveries will come on top of other pledges of military equipment. The Kiel Institute, which tracks support to Ukraine, estimates that as of June, European countries had provided 72 billion euros (USD 83 billion) worth of military aid since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022, compared to USD 65 billion in US aid.

Dutch Defence Minister Ruben Brekelmans said that "American air defence systems and munitions, in



particular, are crucial for Ukraine to defend itself." Announcing the deliveries Monday, he said Russia's attacks are "pure terror, intended to break Ukraine."

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy expressed his gratitude to the Netherlands, posting on social media that "Ukraine, and thus the whole of Europe, will be better protected from Russian terror."

He said the deliveries are coming "at a time when Russia is trying to scale up its strikes. This will definitely help protect the lives of our people!"

Germany said Friday it will deliver two more Patriot air defence systems to Ukraine in the coming days. It agreed to the move after securing assurances that the US will prioritise the delivery of new Patriots to Germany to backfill its stocks. These weapon systems are only made in the US.

As an organisation, NATO provides only non-lethal assistance to Ukraine like uniforms, tents, medical supplies and logistics support. The 32-nation military alliance has mostly sought to protect NATO territory from possible Russian attack and avoid being dragged into a war against a nuclear power.

But its support role has expanded since US President Donald Trump took office in January, even as his administration insists European allies must now take care of their own security and that of their war-ravaged neighbour. (AB)

## Pak polls body disqualifies 9 lawmakers of Imran's party

**ISLAMABAD, Aug 5:** Pakistan's top election body on Tuesday disqualified nine lawmakers of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's party, including leaders of the opposition in both chambers of the parliament, after their conviction in the May 9 riot case.

Supporters of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supreme Khan resorted to a spree of uncontrolled violence on May 9, 2023, vandalising military installations and state-owned buildings, after his arrest in Islamabad.

Cases were launched against several top leaders of the party, including Khan, and dozens of workers, soon after the incident.

In one of the cases, an anti-terrorism court in Faisalabad last week convicted over 100 leaders and workers to jail terms of up to 10 years. Those adjudged guilty included opposition leader in the National Assembly Omar Ayub Khan and opposition leader in the Senate Shibli Faraz.

Members of parliament Zartaj Gul, Hamid Raza, Sheikh Rashid Shafique, Kanwal Shauzab, Farah Agha, Rai Haider Kharral and Muhammad Ahmad Chattha were also found guilty.

All nine were sentenced to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment.

As per the constitution, a convict cannot become a member of the parliament under Article 63(1h).

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), acting on the court judgment, issued a notification to disqualify the members of parliament as well as members of the Punjab provincial assembly.

Earlier, the ECP had disqualified lawmakers Abdul Latif, Ejaz Chaudhry, Mohammad Ahmed Chatta and Ahmad Khan after their convictions by separate courts in Lahore and Sargodha. (PTI)

## Thousands attend rally in B'desh to mark 1st anniversary of 'July Uprising'

**DHAKA, Aug 5:** Thousands of people in Bangladesh on Tuesday joined a rally in Dhaka, marking the first anniversary of last year's student-led protest movement, dubbed the "July Uprising", that toppled longtime prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

Interim government chief Muhammad Yunus read out the "July Declaration" on the occasion in front of the Jatiya Sangsad or the Parliament complex, saying the Uprising Day should serve as a reminder that the struggle for a better future continues.

"The people of Bangladesh express their desire that the student-people uprising of 2024 will get proper state and constitutional recognition and that the July declaration will feature in the schedule of the reformed constitution as framed by the government formed through the next national election," Yunus said, reading from the declaration.

The Yunus-led interim government wanted to give constitutional recognition to the student-led uprising. This recognition is known as the July Declaration. The over 1,000-word declaration described in detail the activities of the ousted "fascist" regime, adding that "therefore the people of Bangladesh express a strong desire" to bring the former rulers under trial for crimes of enforced disappearance and murder, individual and mass killings, and crimes against humanity.

"This document of declaration is written to reflect the aspirations of the people of Bangladesh at the event of the victory in the mass uprising of August 5, 2024," Yunus said.

Security forces enforced a strict vigil throughout the capital, with armoured vehicles patrolling the streets apparently to deter any attempt by Hasina's now-banned Awami League party to disrupt the day's events that included rallies, concerts, and prayer sessions.

However, apart from scattered political rallies, the streets of the capital were quiet amid inclement weather marked by incessant rains.

According to political analysts, the anniversary came as Hasina, now on self-exile in India, faces trial on charges like crimes against humanity while most of her colleagues in the cabinet and in her Awami League party are in jail or on the run at home and abroad.

But political analysts said Bangladesh is far from political stability, a year after the bloody uprising that claimed hundreds of lives.

They said that despite the bloodshed, the prospect for a better Bangladesh with a liberal democracy, political tolerance, and religious and communal harmony remained a challenge.

"The hope of the thousands who braved lethal violence a year ago when they opposed Sheikh Hasina's abusive rule to build a rights-respecting democracy remains unfulfilled," New York-based rights group Human Rights Watch said in a statement on the eve of the anniversary.

Yunus was installed as Chief Adviser of the interim government on August 8 last year, three days after the ouster of the 16-year-long Awami League regime, when Hasina left the country in an air force helicopter escorted by army troops.

Recently, he vowed democratic reform amid pressure for the swift transition and expressed his plans to unveil the July Declaration to recognise the uprising. But the declaration came two days after the National Citizen Party (NCP), a major SAD offshoot that emerged this year apparently with his blessings, came up with their manifesto for "New Bangladesh".

The manifesto called for the formation of a "Second Republic" and the adoption of a new constitution, scrapping the post-independence 1972 constitution. (PTI)

## Frequent disasters expose climate risks to infrastructure in South Asia

**KATHMANDU, Aug 5:** Floods that damaged hydropower dams in Nepal and destroyed the main bridge connecting the country to China show the vulnerability of infrastructure and need for smart rebuilding in a region bearing the brunt of a warming planet, experts say.

The flooding of the Bhotekoshi River on July 8 also killed nine people and damaged an inland container depot that was being built to support increasing trade between the two countries. The 10 damaged hydropower facilities, including three under construction, have a combined capacity that could power 600,000 South Asian homes.

Another smaller flood in the area on July 30 damaged roads and structures, but caused less overall destruction. Nepal's location in the Himalayan mountains makes it especially vulnerable to heavy rains, floods and landslides because the area is warming up faster than the rest of the world due to human-caused climate change. Climate experts say the increasing frequency of extreme weather has changed the playbook for assessing infrastructure risks while also increasing the need for smart rebuilding plans.

"The statistics of the past no longer apply for the future," said John Pomeroy, a hydrologist at the University of Saskatchewan in Canada. "The risk that goes into building a bridge or other infrastructure is generally based on historical observations of past risk, but this is no longer useful because future risk is different and often much higher."

While damage estimates from the July floods in the Rasuwa region are still being calculated, past construction costs give a sense of the financial toll. The Sino-Nepal Friendship Bridge alone, for example, took USD 68 million to rebuild after it was destroyed by a 2015 earthquake that ravaged Nepal.

The latest disaster has also stoked fears of long-lasting economic damage in a region north of the capital city Kathmandu that spent years rebuilding after the 2015 quake. Nepali government officials estimate that USD 724 million worth of trade with China is conducted over the bridge each year, and that has come to a standstill.

"Thank God there was not much damage to local villages, but the container depot and bridges have been completely destroyed. This has severely affected workers, hotel operators, labourers and truck drivers who rely on cross-border trade for their livelihoods," said Kaami Tsering, a local government official, in a phone interview with The Associated Press.

Among those affected is Urken Tamang, a 50-year-old parking attendant at the depot who has been out of work for several weeks. A small tea shop he runs nearby with his family has also suffered.

"We have been unlucky," said Tamang, a former farmer who sold his land and changed jobs when work on the depot began. He added: "The whole area was severely damaged by the 2015 earthquake, and just when life was slowly returning to normal, this devastating flood struck." (AP)

### GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, P.W.D. (R&B), DIPHU CIRCLE-1, DIPHU

No. C/S-10,133/2024/1063

Dated: 04/08/0025

### PRESS NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Superintending Engineer PWD(R&B), Diphu Circle-1, Diphu, on behalf of Governor of Assam invites sealed tender for the work "Construction of ICBP road from Dhentaghat Bazar to Dhenta Engti under AAP for the year 2024-25," under Dokmoka Road Division at the estimated amount of Rs. 94,92,000.00 from class-1 (A,B,C) contractors of PWD(R&B), Hills, Assam, Diphu & Class-II Contractors of PWD(R&B), Diphu Circle-1, Diphu. Details may be seen at the office of the undersigned from 05.08.2025 to 2.00 PM of 25.08.2025 during office hours. The last Date/Time for receipt of tender will be upto 3.00 PM on 25.08.2025.

Sd/-  
Superintending Engineer, P.W.D(R&B)  
Diphu Circle-1, Diphu

Memo No. C/S-10,133/202M/1063 (A)

Dated: 04/08/2025

### GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE JOINT DIRECTOR, HANDLOOM & TEXTILES, (HILLS) DIPHU, ASSAM.

### Action Plan for "Har Ghar Tiranga" campaign 2025

1. Awareness program will be held on 11th National Handloom Day among the Officers and staffs as well as weavers and Weaving Co-operative Societies to encourage tri-color weaves and products.
2. Every staff will display the Nation Flag or tri-color weaves in front of their house as well as in their activities.
3. Field staff will encourage the weavers to weaves in tri-colors in their looms
4. A selfie point will install with tri-color weaves at office campus.

Sd/-  
Joint Director  
Handloom & Textiles (Hills), Diphu

### GOVT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER: BAITHALANGSO DIVISION (IRRIGATION) HAMREN (Temporary Campus at Hongkram, West Karbi Anglong, Pin-782450)

NO. EE/BDI/T/1/Part-IV/2025-26/.....

Date:

### PRESS NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Executive Engineer, Baithalangso Division (Irrigation), Hamren on behalf of Governor of Assam invites the percentage basis rates from registered contractor of class-I, II & III category for Execution of different schemes in separate Groups, under Baithalangso Division (Irrigation) Hamren, (Temporary Campus at Hongkram) under the administrative control of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu for the year 2025-26. Detail particulars may be seen in office of the undersigned during office hours from 02.08.2025 to 16.08.2025.

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer  
Baithalangso Division (Irrigation)  
Hamren

Memo No.EE/BDI/T-I/ Part-IV/2025-26/1416-A

Date: 02/08/2025



# I&B Ministry convenes national conference of I&PR Secretaries

Centre pushes for single-window film clearance, mobile cinemas, and stronger Centre-State media coordination

**HT Correspondent**

**ITANAGAR, Aug 5:** In a major initiative to strengthen India's media and entertainment sector, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on Tuesday held a national conference of Information and Public Relations Secretaries from states and Union Territories at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting, Dr L. Murugan, was the chief guest. Addressing the gathering, he underscored the pivotal role of states and UTs in building a modern, inclusive and efficient media and entertainment ecosystem.

Dr Murugan highlighted key initiatives such as the Press Sewa Portal, India Cine Hub, WAVES Bazaar, and International Film Festivals, calling them part of a larger effort to promote the "orange economy."

These reforms, he said, reflect the government's commitment to empowering content creators and making India a media-friendly nation.

Secretary, I&B, Sanjay Jaju, who presided over the conference, said content creation in India has seen exponential growth.

He pointed to the rapid expansion of regional and vernacular media and said it presents both opportunity and challenge for effective public communication.



He stressed the importance of the conference in fostering collaboration and strengthening the sector's contribution to the national economy.

Deliberations during the day focused on several key areas, including the full-scale implementation of the Press Sewa Portal under the Press and Registration of Periodicals Act, 2023.

States and UTs were urged to expedite the Act's notification and ensure timely application processing through their respective District Magistrates or Collectors.

The India Cine Hub, relaunched in June 2024, also featured prominently.

'Creative Minds of Tomorrow' (CMOT) initiative during film festivals like IFFI.

The role of WAVES Bazaar, a round-the-year marketplace for the media and entertainment industry, was highlighted as a platform for cross-regional partnerships, cultural promotion, and academic collaboration.

In line with the Prime Minister's focus on the "concert economy," the conference discussed using sports infrastructure for live entertainment events.

States were urged to onboard live event clearances onto the India Cine Hub portal, appoint nodal officers, streamline security protocols, and provide venue specifications.

The event concluded with a presentation by Dharendra Ojha, Principal Director General, Press Information Bureau, who called for better coordination in information dissemination between the Centre and States.

Senior officials including commissioners, secretaries, directors, deputy directors, field publicity officers, and delegates from PIB, Doordarshan, and All India Radio attended the conference.

Representing Arunachal Pradesh was Chow Bilaseng Namchoom, who participated on behalf of Secretary, IPR, Nyali Ete.

## Launch of online billing system comes as part of the government's ongoing efforts to build an inclusive digital infrastructure

# CM launches digital water bill payment system in Itanagar, plans statewide rollout



**ITANAGAR, Aug 5:** In a move to enhance citizen convenience and streamline public service delivery, Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Tuesday launched a "pilot project for online water revenue payment" in the Itanagar Capital Region.

The initiative marks a key step toward digitising essential services across the state.

"For the people in Itanagar Capital Region, paying a water bill no longer means taking half a day off work or standing in a long queue. Now, it's just a few taps on a phone, a few clicks on a

screen," Khandu said in a post on X.

The new system enables residents to pay their water bills online, removing the need for physical visits to government offices and significantly cutting down wait times.

The pilot project is being implemented under the Public Health Engineering & Water Supply Department.

Khandu was joined at the launch by state home minister Mama Natung, who is also the PHE&WS minister, and advisor to the minister Pani Taram.

Describing the initiative as a citizen-first reform, Khandu remarked that the project reflects his government's broader commitment to transparency, efficiency, and digital empowerment.

"This is not just about Itanagar, it is part of a larger vision to bring digital systems for water connections, billing, and grievance redressal to every district headquarters in Arunachal Pradesh," the chief minister wrote in another social media post.

Khandu stressed that every citizen, regardless of location, should have equal access to hassle-free public services.

"Whether you live in the hills of Tawang or the plains of Namsai, you deserve public services that are fast, transparent, and hassle-free," he added.

The state government plans to gradually scale up the system to all district headquarters, aiming for a robust, user-friendly digital platform for water utility management.

The launch of the online billing system comes as part of the government's ongoing efforts to build an inclusive digital infrastructure and bring essential services closer to people across even the most remote corners of the state. (PTI)

## Police complaint filed over dilapidated highway in Arunachal



**ITANAGAR, Aug 5:** A youth organisation in Arunachal Pradesh has filed a police complaint against the National Highway and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd (NHIDCL), alleging misappropriation of funds and gross negligence in the construction of Likabali-Bam Road, which is a part of NH-13. The NH-13 connects Likabali in Lower Siang district to Mechukha in Shi-Yomi district.

In the complaint, filed at the Basar police station in Leparada district, the Galo Youth Organisation (GYO) said the road, which connects seven districts, was in an abysmal condition.

"This road is not only crucial for the daily lives of the people residing in these districts but also plays a vital role in defence and tourism," it said. "The construction fails to meet all-weather road standards for double-lane roads," it claimed.

The GYO alleged that culverts, breast walls, bridges, retaining walls, drains and parapet walls constructed as a part of the road do not adhere to required quality standards and ratios.

It also accused the NHIDCL of not deploying men and machinery to clear the road promptly in the event of roadblocks due to landslides, thereby causing undue delays and hardships to travellers, including those seeking medical attention. It also wrote to the deputy commissioners of West Siang, Leparada and Lower Siang districts over the issue.

When contacted, PWD (Highways) Assistant Engineer Gemar Padu said the civil works of the viaduct of the highway are complete.

"We have been waiting for the last two months for a crane to put the girder beam," he said.

The youth organisation also filed an FIR at Likabali police station in Lower Siang district against "illegal earth cutting and environmental destruction" at Siji Village quarry. Lower Siang's Deputy Commissioner Rujim Rakshap said the grievances of the organisation are genuine.

He said the district administration has been trying its best to provide a permanent solution. "The Lower Siang district administration recently convened a meeting with NHIDCL authorities to get an update on the matter," he said.

Rakshap said the preparation of the detailed project report (DPR) for the Siji block point is in its final stage, and the re-carpeting work of the Likabali-Bam Road will start soon. The NHIDCL could not be reached for a comment. (PTI)

## VKV Ramsing inaugurates academic session with hostel facility

**HT Correspondent**

**RAMSING, Aug 5:** A momentous chapter in the educational journey of Upper Siang unfolded recently with the formal commencement of academic classes along with hostel facilities at Vivekananda Kendra Vidyalaya (VKV), Ramsing (Pit-tung).

The inaugural ceremony was marked by traditional rituals, community participation, and spirited addresses from dignitaries and public representatives, all celebrating the operationalisation of VKV Ramsing after years of anticipation.

The event was graced by Hanumantha Rao Ji, All India Vice President of Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari, as the chief guest, and Sujatha Nayak Ji, secretary of the VKV Arunachal Pradesh Trust, Dibrugarh, as the guest of honour.

The ceremony commenced with a traditional Bhumi Pujan performed by the Donyi Polo Yelam Kebang team, led by priest Takong Mingki.

This was followed by a tree plantation drive within the school campus, organised by the Department of Forest and Environment, Yingkiang, symbolising the ideals of growth, sustainability, and harmony with nature.

Addressing the gathering, Hanumantha Rao highlighted the historical association of VKVs with Arunachal Pradesh, tracing it back to the establishment of the first VKV in 1977. He emphasised that VKVs have evolved not only as centres of academic excellence but as institutions that nurture cultural values, patriotism, and holistic character among students.

Lauding the collective efforts that led to the realisation of VKV Ramsing, he specifically acknowledged



the role of the Deputy Commissioner and community leaders, stating that studying in a VKV is indeed a matter of pride and honour.

Guest of honour Sujatha Didi described VKV Ramsing as the 45th VKV in the state and said its inauguration marks a new chapter for education in Upper Siang.

She underlined the indispensable role of dedicated teachers in shaping future citizens and stressed the need for value-based, holistic education.

MLA and advisor to the chief minister of Arunachal Pradesh, Alo Libang, described the day as "historic and a dream come true" for the residents of Ramsing and the entire Upper Siang district.

Recalling the early challenges of establishing a VKV in the area, he expressed deep gratitude to all stakeholders, including the land donors from Rotgo Banggo and the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) contractors, for their support in making the long-cherished dream a reality.

Deputy Commissioner Talo Jerang provided an account of the steps taken to make the school func-

tional. He noted that although the school infrastructure had been completed in 2017, it had remained unused for years.

It was only in the last two months, through a concerted effort by the District Administration, community leaders, Heads of Departments, and local well-wishers, that the school was finally readied for operation.

He expressed joy over the collective achievement and shared that boys from Classes III to V have already begun classes at Ramsing.

He added that the remaining classes, from VI to X, will be shifted from the temporary campus at Yingkiang to Ramsing by October or November, while Classes Nursery to II will continue at Yingkiang for now.

He also acknowledged the generous contributions of the community, noting that 571 individuals came forward to support the school, enabling the procurement of over 200 pieces of furniture from locally raised funds.

He further directed the DDSE to conduct monthly inspections and ensure continuous logistical support

to the new institution.

Zilla Parishad Chairperson Lum-geng Litin also addressed the gathering and congratulated the entire team involved in the successful operationalisation of VKV Ramsing.

He stressed the vital role of community engagement in transforming education in remote regions and expressed hope that the school would become a centre of academic excellence for future generations.

Dr R Karkare, principal of VKV Ramsing, expressed gratitude to the district administration and pledged to make the school one of the best-performing VKVs in the state.

Lobo Apang, a retired teacher and member of the school committee, spoke about the background and vision behind establishing VKV Ramsing and its relevance to the community.

Earlier in the programme, organising committee chairman Dunge Apang welcomed the dignitaries and attendees.

The vote of thanks was delivered by Shri Kabir Apang, retired APCS officer, who called the event a milestone for education in Upper Siang.

He extended heartfelt thanks to MLA Alo Libang, Deputy Commissioner Talo Jerang, and all individuals and organisations whose support helped bring the school to life. The grand ceremony witnessed the presence of all Heads of Departments, PRI members, Gaon Burahs, local leaders, officials from the BRO, VKV staff, and members of various Self Help Groups (SHGs), underscoring the strong community ownership of the initiative.

Located amidst scenic natural surroundings near the Siang River, VKV Ramsing is spread across an 8-acre campus and is well-connected by road.

## IMC signs MoU with ASEZ to boost youth-led environmental action in Itanagar

**HT Correspondent**

**ITANAGAR, Aug 5:** In a significant move to promote community-driven ecological restoration, the Itanagar Municipal Corporation (IMC) and ASEZ (Save the Earth from A to Z) have entered into a formal agreement to collaborate on environmental issues through youth-led volunteerism.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed today in the presence of Mayor Tamme Phassang and representatives from ASEZ Itanagar, marking a new chapter in participatory environmental governance in the capital.

The partnership comes at a time when cities across the globe are grappling with challenges such as ecosystem degradation, rising pollution levels, climate change, and biodiversity loss.

The MoU aims to channel the energy and commitment of university students into structured, impactful actions that address these urgent ecological concerns. Mayor Tamme Phassang, speaking at the signing ceremony, described the agreement as a turning point for environmental awareness in the city. He praised the enthusiasm of the young volunteers and underlined the role of collective responsibility in building a cleaner and greener Itanagar.

"Young minds brimming with zeal took a remarkable step today. As Mayor, Team IMC officially joined hands with Team ASEZ to promote awareness on cleanliness across our city. This inspiring collaboration stands as a shining example of Jan Bhagidari—where youth lead from the front. Let us all come forward and be part of this movement towards a cleaner, greener future," he said.

## Doctor bids adieu to public health service after 28 years

**HT Correspondent**

**NAHARILAGUN, Aug 5:** After a distinguished career spanning nearly three decades, Dr Lob-sang Jampa, the State Epidemiologist of Arunachal Pradesh, retired on July 31, leaving behind a legacy widely acknowledged as transformative for the state's public health infrastructure. A farewell ceremony in his honour was held at the Directorate of Health Services (DHS) in Naharilagan, where colleagues, dignitaries, and officials came together to celebrate his extraordinary service.

The ceremony was attended by Director of Health Services Dr Marbom Basar, Dr Komling Perme, and other senior officials of the Directorate.

Recalling his contributions with deep admiration, speakers described Dr Jampa as a pioneer and referred to him as the "Father of Public Health" in Arunachal Pradesh—a title that reflects both his groundbreaking work and the enduring impact he leaves behind.

Dr Jampa's professional journey in the health sector stretched over 28 years and three months, marked by unwavering commitment and visionary leadership.

Appointed as State Epidemiologist in 1999, he led the state's response to several major health crises, including the Avian Influenza outbreak of 2005, the Swine Flu episodes, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

His ability to coordinate response strategies, manage containment protocols, and raise public awareness earned him wide appreciation across government and medical circles.

His reputation for hands-on fieldwork was well established during the early 2000s, when he led disease surveillance and outbreak investigations in remote and inaccessible regions such as Parsiparlo, Sunpora, and Menchuka.

His dedication to reaching the state's most underserved areas, often in the absence of proper road connectivity, stood as a testament to his commitment.

For his outstanding contributions, he was awarded the State Gold Medal on August 15, 2015. In addition to his role in emergency health response, Dr Jampa was instrumental in systemic reforms.

He played a prominent role in advocating for the enhancement of the retirement age for government doctors to 62 years—a long-standing demand that was ultimately realised.

He worked closely on this matter with fellow senior doctors Dr Alok Yirang and Dr Pekka Ringu during the tenure of Satya Gopal, the then Development Commissioner.

Dr Jampa also contributed significantly to academic and scientific research in the state.

Under his leadership, multiple studies supported by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) were successfully conducted.



These included studies on Herpes Simplex and Hepatitis B screening in Anjaw district, the India Diabetes Study (2012 and its 2022-2023 follow-up), and research into Paragonimiasis—

a little-known lung fluke disease prevalent in the region.

A firm believer in building robust public health infrastructure, Dr Jampa facilitated land acquisition for critical projects, including space for patients in Vellore and for the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) at Hollongi.

He oversaw the construction of a boundary wall to protect the NCDC site and spearheaded the setting up of the Health Emergency Operation Centre (HEOC) at TRIHMS in conformity with International Health Regulations (IHR) 2005.

Among his most forward-thinking contributions was his work in laying the foundation for the Public Health Cadre in Arunachal Pradesh.

The proposed cadre represents a significant structural reform aimed at improving governance and operational efficiency in the health sector.

Dr Jampa also played a critical role in implementing flagship health initiatives.

Under his guidance, 12 District Dialysis Units were established across the state under the Pradhan Mantri National Dialysis Programme (PMNDP), with three more units currently in progress.

He was also responsible for rolling out the Chief Minister Organ Transplant Scheme (CMOTS) in 2018, under which over 200 successful kidney transplants have been conducted

so far.

In his tenure, he provided direct supervision and guidance to a wide array of national programmes including the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NP-NCDC), Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), Health and Wellness Centres (HWC), National Programme on Climate Change and Human Health (NP-CHH), National Rabies Control Programme (NRCPP), and the National Viral Hepatitis Control Programme, among others.

Colleagues and juniors remembered Dr Jampa as a man of vision and humility, known for his tireless work ethic and willingness to mentor the next generation of public health professionals.

His deep sense of duty, meticulous approach to health governance, and humane outlook made him a respected figure across institutions and communities.

As he retires upon attaining the age of superannuation at 62, the Department of Health Services expressed its deep gratitude to Dr Jampa for his invaluable contributions and extended warm wishes for a peaceful and fulfilling life ahead.

His departure marks the end of a remarkable chapter in the history of public health in Arunachal Pradesh—one that will continue to inspire future generations of health workers in the state.



# Satyapal Malik's political journey: From loyalist to controversial critic

**NEW DELHI, Aug 5:** Veteran politician Satyapal Malik's five-decade-long political career spanned across multiple political parties and included several high-profile gubernatorial appointments before he transitioned into an outspoken critic of the very establishment he had served.

He served as the governor of four states -- Bihar (2017), Jammu and Kashmir (2018), Goa (2019), and Meghalaya (2020). But his most impactful assignment commenced in August 2018, when he was named the governor of Jammu and Kashmir.

The tenure saw two significant events -- the 2019 Pulwama attack in which 40 CRPF personnel lost their lives, and the August 5, 2019 revocation of Article 370 and the division of the erstwhile state into two Union Territories--

Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. Malik was the last governor of the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Malik, 79, who had been hospitalised for some time, passed away in a Delhi hospital on Tuesday, which marks the sixth anniversary of Article 370 revocation.

Though he rose to prominence as a loyalist in the BJP, his recent years have been characterised by his vociferous condemnation of the central government's policies, reworking his public image from that of a seasoned administrator to that of a vocal dissident.

From J-K, he had been relocated to Goa, where his relationship with the state government soured as he was openly critical of its COVID-19 response and accused it of corruption. His term in Goa came to an abrupt halt and



he was posted to Meghalaya, his final assignment. On retirement from governorship, he publicly confronted the central govern-

ment over crucial matters, which included a contention that the Pulwama attack was an outcome of governmental indifference, and vocally backed the farmers' protests against the three central laws, contending that the government had not listened to them.

During his last days of life, Malik was also named in the CBI chargesheets filed in May this year in connection with the alleged corruption in the Rs 2,200 crore Kuru Hydro power project. He strongly refuted the charges from his hospital bed, calling it "political vendetta".

Malik was born on July 24, 1946, in the Baghat district of Uttar Pradesh.

His political journey started as a student leader with socialist ideology but his career was later characterised by party hopping as he switched from the Bharatiya Kranti Dal (BKD) to the Con-

gress, then the Janata Dal and finally the BJP.

The Jat leader was first elected to the Uttar Pradesh Assembly in 1974 on Charan Singh's BKD party.

Malik was elected twice to the Rajya Sabha -- from 1980 to 1986 and then from 1986 to 1989 -- before he decided to contest the Lok Sabha elections on the Janata Dal ticket. He won from the Aligarh parliamentary seat.

The then VP Singh government appointed him as the Union Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs and Tourism.

After the fall of the VP Singh government and the subsequent turmoil in the Janata Dal, Malik switched to the BJP, where he became a party vice-president and also acted as in-charge of its Kisan Morcha (farmers' cell). (PTI)

## Modi lauds alliance's journey, praises Shah Ruling NDA felicitates PM on Op Sindoor

**NEW DELHI, Aug 5:** In his first address to NDAMPs in over a year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday emphasised its collective identity as a natural and organic alliance, asserting that its journey since its foundation in 1998 is dotted with successes and has many more achievements in store.

He said members of the BJP and its allies should together, as part of the ruling combine, participate vigorously in various programmes irrespective of their own strength in various regions.

At an NDA parliamentary party meeting, which was last held on July 2, 2024, Modi was on Tuesday felicitated for his "exceptional leadership" in marshalling India's response following the Pahalgam terror attack, and a resolution showered praise on the armed forces as well for their "unmatched courage" and "unwavering commitment" during Operation Sindoor and Operation Mahadev.

In his address, Modi noted that Home Minister Amit Shah has become the longest-serving incumbent in his ministry, overtaking BJP veteran L K Advani, a co-founder of the grouping in 1998.

"It is just the beginning," he said, adding that there is a long way to go, triggering some buzz among MPs about the implication of the statement.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju later told reporters that the prime minister spoke in the context of the NDA's long and successful journey and that it will notch up



many more achievements.

Shah has been at the helm since the Modi 2.0 government took over in 2019, and his stint is of six years and 65 days so far. His tenure has been marked by some of the highlights of the government, including the abrogation of Article 370 and the successful anti-naxal operation. The prime minister said the Opposition must be regretting its decision to seek a debate on the terror strike and India's military response, according to sources.

Modi recalled that he had begun his reply in the Lok Sabha with the assertion that he would present the "stand of Bharat" and praised the points made by the speakers from the National Democratic Alliance.

Modi also took a swipe at Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, a day after the former Congress president was pulled up by the Supreme Court for his claim of China encroaching on Indian land under the current government.

Gandhi makes childish and un-

substantiated comments about Indian territory and security, and the court has served him a lesson, Modi said.

The sources said Modi spoke about upcoming events like Tiranga Yatra, which the BJP annually celebrates in the run-up to Independence Day, and National Space Day, which falls on August 23. He told the MPs that they should participate in them enthusiastically as NDA members.

At places, the BJP may not be as strong as some of its allies but everyone should join ranks as NDA members, he said.

The sources present in the meeting said the broader message of the prime minister, who is also the leader of the NDA, was about maintaining cohesion and coordination in the alliance.

Leaders of allies joined the BJP leadership in the front row during the meeting.

The BJP and its allies are in power in 19 out of 28 states, and are

gearing up to fight the assembly polls in Bihar.

Modi noted that August 5 was a historic day as Article 370, which gave special rights to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, was abrogated on this day in 2019. The ground-breaking ceremony of the Ram temple in Ayodhya was also held on this day in 2020.

The NDA government has followed the Constitution in its true spirit, he said.

The MPs of the BJP-led ruling alliance met here in their only second such meeting during Parliament's sessions since the government was formed in June 2024.

The NDA resolution paid tributes to 26 civilians who lost their lives in the April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam by terrorists linked to Pakistan.

Praising Modi, it said, "The NDA Parliamentary Party lauds the exceptional leadership displayed by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi during these times. His unwavering resolve, visionary statesmanship and resolute command have not only steered the nation with purpose but also ignited a renewed spirit of unity and pride in the hearts of all Indians."

After Operation Sindoor, Modi ensured that 59 MPs from different parties visited 32 countries to present India's point of view, one of the most comprehensive global outreach ever launched by India to highlight how it has been a victim of terror, it said. (PTI)

## INDIA bloc's EC march rescheduled to August 11

**NEW DELHI, Aug 5:** The Opposition's march to the Election Commission of India headquarters against the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in Bihar has been rescheduled to August 11, a source said on Tuesday.

The march, earlier scheduled to be held on August 8, was rescheduled after the death of former Jharkhand chief minister Shibu Soren.

The schedule of the dinner meeting of the INDIA bloc leaders remains the same, and will be held on the evening of August 7 at Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi's new residence - 5, Sunehri Bagh road.

Popularly known as Guruji, Shibu Soren died at a private hospital in Delhi on Monday.

Several Opposition leaders are visiting Ranchi on Tuesday to pay their last respects to the leader credited with leading the agitation for the formation of the state of Jharkhand.

Following his death, a protest that the Congress was to hold in Bengaluru on Tuesday was postponed to August 8. That protest is to be led by Rahul Gandhi. The Congress is protesting against what it calls large-scale manipulation of electoral rolls in Bengaluru's Mahadevapura constituency in the 2023 Assembly polls.

At a meeting of the INDIA bloc parties on Tuesday morning, Opposition leaders agreed that SIR remains the key issue for the Monsoon Session, and they will continue protests inside, as well as outside, the House, pressing for a debate on the issue. (PTI)

## BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari's convoy attacked in Bengal's Cooch Behar



**COOCH BEHAR (WB), Aug 5:** The convoy of Leader of Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly, Suwendu Adhikari, allegedly came under attack from TMC workers during a protest programme in Cooch Behar on Tuesday, triggering tension in the Khagrabari area of the district.

Bulletproof glasses of the vehicle in which Adhikari and former Union minister Nisith Pramanik were seated were smashed. At least one police escort vehicle had its window panes shattered.

The TMC, however, dubbed the charges a "well-scripted drama".

Armed with a Calcutta High Court order, Adhikari travelled to the north Bengal district to lead a BJP rally and demonstration outside the office of the Cooch Behar Superintendent of Police, to protest alleged brutalities unleashed on BJP workers, and submit a memorandum.

Trinamool Congress workers had put up simultaneous pickets to protest the alleged "harassment of Bengalis in BJP-ruled states" and "attempts to implement NRC through backdoors in Bengal" in 19 locations of the districts, most of which were along the route through which Adhikari's convoy passed.

Adhikari faced 'go-back' and 'thief' slogans near the Ghoksadanga area, with black flags dotting the way to his destination at Cooch Behar town.

According to BJP leaders, a mob, holding TMC party flags and black flags, gathered at the Khagrabari crossing around 12.35 pm when Adhikari's convoy was passing through the area.

"The TMC assembled Rongiyas who infiltrated this region and made them carry out the attack," Adhikari alleged.

"They tried to smash the car in which I was moving with rods and

sticks and, after they failed, shattered the bulletproof glasses with heavy stones," he claimed.

Stating that he was alive because of the bulletproof vehicle, the BJP leader said that he would go against the SP for the law and order breakdown with the full force of the law.

"I had taken necessary steps of informing the police and the administration before coming here, since this programme has the sanction of the high court, and because I had a hunch that something like this could happen. Now the SP will face the music," Adhikari said.

Former Union minister Nisith Pramanik alleged that the attack was led by Udayan Guha, minister of the North Bengal Development department.

"Guha was present at a local religious institution and instructed the mob to carry out the attack. It was an attempt on our lives," Pramanik claimed.

"This is a clear indicator that the TMC is fast losing popular support in Cooch Behar. They manipulated votes to win the 2024 general elections here. But they will be white-washed in the 2026 state polls," he added.

The TMC, however, claimed that no TMC workers were involved in the vandalism and the attack was a "result of the internal feud within the BJP".

"The TMC workers held spontaneous protests today against Adhikari. But no attack on the BJP leaders was carried out from our side," said Partha Pratim Ray, former MP and TMC's Cooch Behar district president.

"The BJP orchestrated this violence on their own to settle internal scores and grab media footage," he alleged.

It is yet to be confirmed whether anyone was injured in the incident. (PTI)

## PM offers condolences to families affected by floods in Uttarkashi

**NEW DELHI, Aug 5:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said he was praying for the well-being of those hit by flash floods in Uttarkashi's Dharali, and assured his full help. "I express my condolences to the people affected by this tragedy in Dharali, Uttarkashi. Along with this, I pray for the well-being of all the victims. I have spoken to Chief Minister Pushkar Dhami ji and obtained information about the situation," Modi wrote on X. He said relief and rescue teams are at work.

"No stone is being left unturned in providing assistance to the people," the PM said. A cloudburst caused flash floods in the high-altitude villages of Dharali on Tuesday, killing at least four people, and sweeping away several houses in its train. (PTI)

## Anil Ambani appears before ED in bank loan 'fraud' linked PMLA case

**NEW DELHI, Aug 5:** Reliance Group Chairman Anil Ambani on Tuesday appeared before the Enforcement Directorate here for questioning in a money laundering case linked to alleged multiple bank loan fraud cases worth crores of rupees against his group companies.

The businessman reached the office of the central probe agency in central Delhi in an EV vehicle around 10:50 am.

The statement of the 66-year-old businessman is being recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), official sources said.

The summons come after the agency conducted searches at 35 premises of 50 companies and 25 people, including executives of his business group, in Mumbai on July 24.

The ED has notified a Look Out Circular (LOC), as per standard operating procedure in large bank 'fraud' cases, against Ambani even as some executives of his group have also been summoned to appear for questioning during the week as part of this probe.

In a related case, the ED had recently arrested Partha Sarathi Biswal, the MD of a Odisha-based company, for allegedly providing a

fake bank guarantee of ₹ 68 crore for a Anil Ambani Group company.

Biswal may be confronted with Ambani during the latter's questioning, the sources said.

The action against Ambani pertains to alleged financial irregularities and collective loan "diversion" pegged at more than ₹ 17,000 crore by multiple group companies of Anil Ambani, including Reliance Infrastructure (R Infra).

The first allegation pertains to "illegal" loan diversion of around ₹ 3,000 crore, given by the Yes Bank to the group companies of Ambani between 2017 and 2019.

The ED suspects, the sources said, that just before the loan was granted, Yes Bank promoters "received" money in their companies.

The agency is investigating this nexus of "bribe" and the loan.

The sources said the ED is also probing allegations of "gross violations" in Yes Bank loan approvals to these companies, including charges such as backdated credit approval memorandums and investments proposed without any due diligence/credit analysis in violation of the bank's credit policy. (PTI)

## Army shares old news clip highlighting role played by US in arming Pakistan

**NEW DELHI, Aug 5:** In the backdrop of mounting US criticism of India's purchase of crude oil from Russia, the Indian Army on Tuesday posted a news clip of August 1971 which highlighted the role played by the US in arming Pakistan "since 1954".

The news clip was shared in a post by the Eastern Command on X.

"#IndianArmy #EasternCommand #Vijay-Varsh #LiberationOfBangladesh #MediaHighlights 'This Day That Year' Build Up of War-05 Aug 1971 #KnowFacts.

US Arms Worth \$2 Billion Shipped to Pakistan Since '54," it said.

The news, published few months before the Indo-Pak War of 1971 that led to creation of Bangladesh, talks about the role US had played in arming Pakistan the preceding nearly two decades.

"US Arms Worth \$2 Billion Shipped to Pakistan Since '54," the headline says.

The report quotes V C Shukla, then minister for defence production, who had told the Rajya Sabha about the estimated valuation of the arms



supplied for that period.

The social media post comes amid mounting criticism by Washington on New Delhi's purchase of crude oil from Russia.

India on Monday mounted an unusually sharp counterattack on the US and the European Union for their "unjustified and unreasonable" targeting of New Delhi for its procurement of Russian crude oil.

New Delhi's response came hours after US President Donald Trump asserted that Washington will substantially raise tariffs on goods from India over its energy ties with Russia.

Firmly rejecting the criticism, India pointed

out the double standards in targeting it on the issue and said both the US and the EU are continuing their trade relations with Russia.

"Unlike our case, such trade is not even a vital national compulsion," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

The Europe-Russia trade includes not just energy, but also fertilisers, mining products, chemicals, iron and steel, and machinery and transport equipment, the MEA said in a late-evening statement.

"Where the US is concerned, it continues to import from Russia uranium hexafluoride for its nuclear industry, palladium for its EV industry, fertilizers as well as chemicals," it added.

"In this background, the targeting of India is unjustified and unreasonable. Like any major economy, India will take all necessary measures to safeguard its national interests and economic security," the MEA said.

It said India has been "targeted" by the US and the EU for importing oil from Russia after the commencement of the Ukraine conflict. (PTI)

## Bus services hit as transport workers begin strike across Karnataka, passengers stranded

**BENGALURU, Aug 5:** Employees of Karnataka's state-owned transport corporations began an indefinite strike on Tuesday morning, severely affecting public bus services across the state and leaving passengers in the lurch.

However, Bengaluru city is not affected by the strike, according to the transport department. The Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation operates 99.8 per cent bus services, the department said.

Details shared by the department showed

that the Kalyana Karnataka region, comprising Raichur, Ballari, Koppal, Yadgir, Kalaburagi and Bidar was worst hit with only 29.8 per cent government bus operations.

It shows that there was 59.4 per cent bus operations by the North West Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NW-KRTC) and 43.9 per cent by the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC). The unions went ahead with the strike despite a court stay, pressing demands including wage revision.

Buses remained parked at depots and only

a few were seen running, as some staff chose not to participate in the strike. Some buses in rural areas operated as a few drivers opted to work for the convenience of students to ferry them to their schools, said sources in the transport department.

Due to disruption in bus services, attendance in schools, colleges and offices was thin in many parts of the state.

The transport corporations are learned to have roped in trainee bus drivers to manage the situation. Also, the private buses were also

allowed to ply from the government bus terminals. Initially, bus services were affected in Bengaluru but gradually the services improved in the city, Transport officials said.

Bus stands in major cities like Chikkamagaluru, Raichur, Chitradurga, Hubballi, Dharwad, Belagavi, Mangaluru, Mysuru, Tumakuru, Hassan, Madikeri, Shivamogga, and Kalaburagi saw heavy passenger rush, with thousands stranded and struggling to find alternate ways to reach their destinations. (PTI)

## India to host three-day WHO-IRCH workshop from today

**NEW DELHI, Aug 5:** India will host the WHO-International Regulatory Cooperation for Herbal Medicines (IRCH) workshop from August 6 at Hotel Fortune District Centre in Ghaziabad.

The three-day workshop is being organised by the Ministry of Ayush in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and supported by the Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine and Homoeopathy (PCIM&H), the Ayush ministry said in a statement.

The international workshop will bring together global experts and regulators to strengthen capacity in the regulation of herbal medicines, the statement said.



The event will be inaugurated by Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary, Ministry of Ayush, and Dr. Kim Sungchol, Chairperson, WHO-IRCH.

Physical participation from countries including Bhutan, Brunei, Cuba, Ghana, Indonesia, Japan, Nepal, Paraguay, Poland, Sri Lanka, Uganda, and Zimbabwe is expected, while Brazil,

Egypt, and the USA will join virtually.

The workshop will serve as a platform for international cooperation and technical exchange, addressing five key objectives: fostering collaboration, enhancing safety and efficacy mechanisms, supporting regulatory convergence, and empowering traditional medicine systems

globally, the statement said.

Among the highlights are reviews of WHO-IRCH Working Groups 1 and 3 focusing on safety, regulation, efficacy, and intended use of herbal medicines' alongside sessions on pre-clinical research, regulatory frameworks, and safety case studies, including a focused discussion on Ashwagandha (Withania somnifera).

Participants will benefit from hands-on training in herbal drug identification, heavy metal analysis, and chemo-profiling using HPTLC technology at PCIM&H laboratories.

The workshop will also introduce the Ayush Suraksha (Pharmacovigilance) Programme,

aimed at strengthening safety monitoring of traditional medicines, the statement said.

To provide deeper exposure to India's integrative health ecosystem, the delegates will undertake visits to PCIM&H, the National Institute of Unani Medicine (NIUM), Ghaziabad, and the All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), New Delhi.

With participation from regulatory authorities and experts across continents, the workshop is expected to contribute significantly towards harmonizing global standards and promoting the safe, effective integration of traditional medicine into mainstream public health, the statement said. (PTI)



# CPI(M) poised for comeback in Tripura, says LoP Jitendra Chaudhury

**HT Correspondent**  
AGARTALA, Aug 5: In a scathing critique of both the ruling BJP and its ally Tipra Motha Party, Leader of the Opposition Jitendra Chaudhury on Tuesday asserted that the CPI(M) has regained significant ground in Tripura and is firmly on the path to reclaiming power.

Speaking to reporters, Chaudhury, who also serves as the CPI(M) state committee secretary, said the real strength of political parties is reflected in public support at the grassroots, not through alliances formed in Delhi.

"One should not measure political strength by who they are having tea with in the capital. It's the people on the ground who decide," Chaudhury remarked, taking a veiled dig at the growing ties between the BJP and Tipra Motha founder Pradyot Manikya Debbarma.



Referring to Debbarma's recent warning to approach the Supreme Court over the delay in village council elections, Chaudhury questioned the sincerity of the BJP-Tipra Motha alliance.

"Pradyot threatens legal action while being in alliance with the BJP. Who are they trying to mislead? This exposes their double-deal. Unlike them, CPI(M) has remained consistent and committed to the people," he said.

Chaudhury also accused the BJP of insulting the linguistic and cultural identities of both indigenous and Bengali communities in the state.

"Calling Bengali a Bangladeshi language is an affront to our heritage. Amit Malviya from the BJP IT Cell even went as far as to say Bengali isn't a language. This shows the BJP's true face — communal and divisive," he added.

He further claimed that internal rifts have emerged between the BJP and Tipra Motha, with both sides trying to protect their own political relevance at the expense of development.

"For a period, misinformation sidelined the CPI(M), but that phase is over. People now see through the rhetoric. We have regained the people's trust, and there is no doubt CPI(M) will return to power," Chaudhury concluded confidently.

# Manipur awaits new chapter of unity, development: Biren Singh



**IMPHAL, Aug 5:** Former Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh on Tuesday said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the northeastern state awaits a new chapter of unity, stability and development.

He congratulated Shah on the historic milestone of becoming the longest-serving union home minister in

the country.

Singh, in a post on X, said, "A grateful salute to Amit Shah ji on a historic milestone. Amit Shah has become the longest-serving Union Home Minister in the history of independent India. His tenure has now surpassed that of stalwarts like Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel ji and Shri LK Advani ji. This is not just a record. It is a reflection of trust, vision and unmatched commitment to the nation."

Recalling that Manipur received "tireless support from Shah in the campaign to eradicate drugs menace from the state, Singh also said, "the Manipur People's Army, long unwilling to engage in peace talks, agreed to come to the table for the first time during his tenure".

Singh also said under Shah's leadership, talks with the militant outfit Zeliangrong United Front began and opened "new possibilities for reconciliation".

Singh continued that Shah's decision to "fence the entire Northeast stretch of the India-Myanmar border is a historic step", and that work has already begun on the ground, addressing a long-pending demand of the people of Manipur and the region.

Singh also said, "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Shah, I believe a new chapter of unity, stability and development awaits Manipur." (PTI)

# Rio reviews sports initiatives in Nagaland



**HT Correspondent**  
DIMAPUR, Aug 5: Nagaland chief minister Neiphiu Rio, who is also the president of the Nagaland Olympic Association (NOA), reviewed the ongoing sports initiatives in the state.

Chairing a meeting at the NOA Office in Kohima last evening, Rio also discussed key upcoming sporting events with NOA officials

that will shape the future of sports in the Northeast region.

During the meeting, discussions were held regarding the 39th National Games, which will be hosted by Meghalaya in February 2027.

Nagaland has formally proposed to co-host the wrestling discipline of the event, showcasing its growing expertise and structure in combat sports.

Rio further reviewed plans for the next edition of the North East Games, which was scheduled for October 2025 but has now been postponed to early 2026. The event will be hosted by Tripura.

Preparedness to host the UWW Alysh Belt Wrestling & Naga Wrestling World Championship, scheduled from November 15 to November 23 this year and the 1st edition of Dr. T. Ao Junior (Girls) National Football Championship in Nagaland was also discussed in detail.

Rio also inspected the NOA gym facility in Kohima later, which is nearing completion. The facility is expected to be operational soon.

Rio expressed his continued commitment to strengthening Nagaland's sports ecosystem and positioning the state as a key contributor to national and international sporting events.

# Nagaland MP raises rail project issue in Parl

**HT Correspondent**  
DIMAPUR, Aug 5: Nagaland's lone Lok Sabha MP S Supongmeren Jamir raised the long-pending Dimapur-Tizit new railway line project issue in the state during the ongoing Parliament session on Tuesday.

Raising the issue through a written submission under Rule 377, Jamir highlighted that the project was taken up by the railways ministry (NER) in 2013-14, a Nagaland Pradesh Congress Committee release said.

The project was planned to cover 257 kilometers, with an estimated cost of Rs 4,27,000 crore.

He said despite the passing of more than a decade, the financial progress of the project remained at "zero." Jamir urged the railways minister to take immediate steps and ensure the early implementation of the project.

Meanwhile, the MP also joined the protest led by the INDIA bloc in Delhi against special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in poll-bound Bihar, standing in solidarity with the people.

# Pradyot calls for Torch Rally on August 9, demands village council polls

**HT Correspondent**  
AGARTALA, Aug 5: Tipra Motha Party founder and royal scion of Tripura Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma on Tuesday had demanded immediate Village Council (VC) elections in the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC), calling the delay a denial of constitutional rights.

Speaking ahead of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, Pradyot urged people to celebrate their identity by wearing traditional attire and cooking indigenous meals on August 9.

But this year's celebration will also carry a political message.

Tipra Motha has announced torchlight (Homchang) rallies across the state on August 9 evening to press for VC polls, which are yet to be scheduled by the State Election Commission.

"You can belong to any party, but not holding elections in the villages is a denial of your rights," Pradyot said.

The Village Councils, which come under the Sixth Schedule, are important for local governance and tribal self-rule.

A central event will be held at Khumlung at 3 PM on August 9, followed by torch rallies at 6 PM in all block headquarters, led by Tipra Motha's local units.

"This is not just a party issue. This is about the voice of the people being silenced," Pradyot added.



# Heavy rain likely in parts of Meghalaya

**SHILLONG, Aug 5:** Heavy rain is likely in parts of Meghalaya over the next five days, officials said on Tuesday.

South West Khasi Hills and East Khasi Hills districts are likely to witness intense spells of rain on August 7 and 8, they said.

The State Disaster Management Authority urged residents to remain alert and avoid venturing near rivers and other water bodies during the period.

People living in vulnerable areas, especially near rivers, steep slopes and low-lying regions, must take necessary precautions and follow safety advisories, it said.

District administrations have also been asked to remain prepared for any eventuality arising out of the inclement weather. (PTI)

# Sikkim CS holds meeting on Census 2027

**GANGTOK, Aug 5:** A state-level meeting on the first phase of Census 2027 was held under the chairmanship of Sikkim Chief Secretary R Telang here on Tuesday, an official statement said.

The Sikkim government had constituted a high-level state census coordination committee under the chairmanship of chief secretary with senior officials to ensure effective inter-departmental coordination and successful execution of all phases of the census.

Director of Census Operations, Sikkim, Karma R Bonpo, presented a detailed overview of the upcoming census process in the meeting. He also highlighted the use of mobile applications for data collection, digital layout mapping, data security protocols, pre-test operations, and the drafting of the District Census Handbook (DCHB).

The chief secretary stressed the importance of meticulous planning and flawless execution of the census process. He underlined that the quality of data collected will directly influence the implementation and funding of future centrally sponsored schemes in the state. He urged all departments and officials involved to approach the task with seriousness and strive for accuracy at every stage, the statement said.

The meeting highlighted Sikkim's proactive stance in gearing up for Census 2027, which will be the first fully digital census and will also include a caste census—a significant shift in the data landscape of the country.

The meeting was attended by heads of departments, district collectors, representatives from all districts, senior officials from the Directorate of Census Operations, and officials from various departments of the state government, it said. (PTI)

# Child marriage remains concern in Tripura, Sepahijala tops with 103 cases in 3 months

**AGARTALA, Aug 5:** Tripura's Sepahijala district has reported the highest number of child marriages in the state, with 103 cases recorded between April and June this year, an official said on Tuesday.

Amid rising concern over the issue, the district administration has also successfully foiled 101 attempted child marriages during the same period under its flagship 'Mission Sankalp' initiative, aimed at curbing the social menace.

South Tripura district ranked second with 43 child marriage cases. Dhalai, an aspirational district, reported 33 child marriages and thwarted 31 such attempts.

Tripura ranks third in the country in terms of child marriage cases, as per the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) report.

Describing child marriage as one of the most serious social challenges in Tripura, Director of the Social Welfare and Social Education Department Tapan Kumar Das said the issue has taken a critical shape in the northeastern state.

"Economic backwardness is the root cause. Illiteracy, lack of social support, and influence of social media are also contributing factors," he said, citing departmental findings.

Das said that in many rural areas, girls are still considered a burden, and many parents are reluctant to educate their daughters.

"Poverty, inequality and elopement are other major drivers of child marriage in the state," he said.

In a bid to address the problem, the Social Welfare Department has taken multiple measures in coordination with district administrations.

"One such initiative is 'Balika Manch', a school-level committee formed in most schools, involving both teachers and students. If a girl student remains absent for several days, her classmates are encouraged to report it to the committee. The matter is then looked into and, if necessary, referred to the panchayat," Das said.

Under the Centre's 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' scheme, substantial funds have been allocated to conduct awareness campaigns on the harmful effects of child marriage, he said.

"We release funds to districts to hold various programmes on child marriage and related issues. While coordinated efforts have led to improvements, a lot still remains to be done," he added.

Sepahijala's District Magistrate Siddharth Shiv Jaiswal, who has been at the forefront of anti-child marriage initiatives, said 'Mission Sankalp' is specifically designed to address child marriage, teenage pregnancy and substance abuse among youth. (PTI)

## NOTICE

**No.E-686728/19 Dated. 05-08-2025.** It is for the information of all the Teachers and Head of Institutions under the Department of School Education, Govt. of Assam that the last date of online application and self nomination for **"State Award to Teachers 2025"** has been extended up to **10-08-2025, 05:00 PM.** All the willing teachers are requested to visit the web portal i.e <http://shikshak.assam.gov.in> and submit applications on or before **10-08-2025.** All relevant information is available in the web portal.

Sd/-  
Director  
Secondary Education, Assam  
Kahilipara, Guwahati-19  
**DIPR /D/HLT/103/6-Aug-25**

**No.SEKI/NIT-1/16/2024-25/326**

## NOTICE FOR CANCELLATION OF NIT

It is for general information to all concern that the Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) Vide No. SEKI/NIT-1/15/2024-25/320, Dt. 31/07/2025 for the various M&R works of Suklai Serfang Goreswar Division (Irrigation), Goreswar has been Cancelled due to Administrative Reason. The re-tender for the said works will be floated very soon. The undersigned felt deep regret for the inconvenience.

Sd/-  
Superintending Engineer,  
Kokrajhar Circle (Irrigation), Kokrajhar  
**IPR(BTC)/C/2025-26/2361**

## ENGINEERING WORKS AT LUMDING DIVISION

**E-Tender Notice No. LMG/Engg/51 of 2025, Dated: 30-07-2025.** E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work: **SN.1, Brief Description of Item:** Renovation of office of the DRM (P) section and officer's chamber at Lumding under the jurisdiction of ADEN/III/Lumding. **Tender Value:** ₹94,99,966.56; **Earnest Money:** ₹1,90,000.00. 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.rrps.gov.in>. **DRM/Works, Lumding**  
**NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY**  
"Serving Customers with a smile"

**Date 05/08/2025**

# Meghalaya govt to spend ₹ 240 cr over 3 yrs to make state floriculture hub: CM

**SHILLONG, Aug 5:** Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma on Tuesday said his government will spend ₹ 240 crore over the next three years to transform Meghalaya into a floriculture hub.

Addressing a gathering during his visit to Mawkriah village in East Khasi Hills district, Sangma said the aim of the project is to make floriculture a high-value, climate-resilient and sustainable livelihood option for farmers in the state.

The 'Floriculture Mission 1.0' aims to benefit over 3,000 farmers, with each receiving ₹ 7 lakh subsidy for inputs, infrastructure and training. Nearly 500 farmers have already availed benefits of the scheme.

"This is the highest investment any government has made in floriculture in Meghalaya," Sangma said, adding that the government expects direct profit generation of ₹ 600 crore from the initiative in the coming years. The scheme will focus on cultivating high-value flowers such as orchids, dendrobium, cymbidium, vanda and phalaenopsis and oriental lily, which are in demand in domestic and international markets.

"Region-specific flower clusters are being developed using scientific cultivation techniques," Sangma said.

"We are building on the state's natural strengths and innovating with improved



systems," he added.

The state has engaged two service providers, Darjeeling Gardens and North Bengal Floritech, to provide technical expertise, quality planting materials, infrastructure support and assured market linkage under a three-year buyback arrangement, officials said.

Meghalaya's unique agroclimatic conditions, with a blend of tropical and temperate elements, are ideally suited for growing exotic flowers, they said.

Sangma said the floriculture mission is part of a broader strategy by the state gov-

ernment.

He cited the success of the Lakadong Turmeric Mission, as a part of which production increased from 1,000 ton to over 20,000 ton through SHG-led processing units, market linkages and targeted investments.

"Meghalaya's agriculture vision is rooted in identifying our core strengths and scaling them," he said.

"We aim to double farmers' incomes, diversify rural livelihoods and make agriculture a cornerstone of sustainable development," he added. (PTI)

**No.SEKI/NIT-1/17/2024-25/327**

## 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 Suklai Serfang Goreswar Division (Irrigation), Goreswar and will be received upto 1.00 PM on 13/08/2025 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 Schemes	Name of Works	Tender Amount (Rs. In Lakh)
1	Puthimari FIS at Deuchunga	Repairing and strengthening of earthwork in canal	9.00 L
2	Sonajuli FIS	Improvement of embankment at U/S of head works	7.00 L
3	Repairing of 4 nos. of gate Dalangdia FIS	Repairing of 4 nos. of gate	5.00 L
4	Strengthening of both side afflux bund from ch.0.00 to 20.00m Dalangdia FIS	Strengthening of both side afflux bund from ch.0.00 to 20.00m	7.00 L
5	Lantha FIS	Repairing at main canal from ch.200m to 300m	5.00 L
6	Bengiman FIS	Boulder protection work (D/S)	7.00 L
7	Milanpur FIS	Silt clearance at U/S of Head work	5.00 L
8	Kachidong FIS	Reconstruction of guard wall	9.00 L
9	Godhapara FIS	Improvement of downstream afflux bund, extension of RCC canal etc.	5.50 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 pledged to the Superintending Engineer Kokrajhar Circle (Irrigation), Kokrajhar from 12-00 noon on 06/08/2025

**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 Dtd. 28-07-2025.

**2 :-** The Schemes are not sanctioned till date by the competent authority. In the event of Non Sanctioned of the schemes the tender may be cancelled and no claim what so ever on this account shall be entertained from the tenderers.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer  
Kokrajhar Circle (Irrigation),  
Kokrajhar, BTC  
**IPR(BTC)/C/2025-26/2363**



**MUMBAI, Aug 5:** Film-maker-actor Farhan Akhtar on Tuesday said though he does not know much about what went into the AI-altered re-release of "Raanjhanaa", his loyalty will always be with the creator of the film.

Both director Anand L Rai and Dhanush, who made his Hindi cinema debut with the 2013 movie, have spoken out against production banner Eros International's decision to create an alternate "happy ending" for the movie through the help of artificial intelligence.

Akhtar was asked about the controversy during the teaser launch of his upcoming film "120 Bahadur".

"I will always stand with the creator of the film and (if) the creator of the film was unhappy about his or her work being changed, I will always support the creator. So that's where my loyalty lies. The rest of the fine print of what happened there, I have no (idea), but that's all I can say," Akhtar told reporters here.

Excel entertainment's Ritesh Sidhwani echoed Akhtar's thoughts.

"I absolutely agree to the fact that you can't do it without the consent (of the filmmaker)," Sidhwani said. He also added that AI should be used smartly to the film's advantage.

Akhtar will be essaying the role of Param Vir Chakra awardee Major Shaitan Singh Bhati in "120 Bahadur". The war drama is directed by Razneesh Ghai and produced by Sidhwani and Akhtar via their Excel Entertainment and Amit Chandra of Trigger Happy Studios.

The film is based on the real life incident of 120 Indian soldiers who fought off over 3000 Chinese in the 1962 battle of Rezang La.

Akhtar, whose 2004 film

## I WILL ALWAYS STAND WITH THE CREATOR OF THE FILM: FARHAN AKHTAR ON 'RAANJHANAA' ROW



"Lakshya" was loosely based on the Kargil War, said the intent of "120 Bahadur" is to inspire "more writers, filmmakers and directors to look into India's glorious past.

"We have incredible moments of bravery, courage and decisions taken in some tremendous adversity that now make us the country we are today," he added.

Ghai said he "grew up with the story" and it took him eight years to work to fine tune it. The film also stars Jinkya Ramesh Deo, Ejaz Khan, Vivian Bathena, Ankith Siwach and Rashii Khanna in pivotal roles. "120 Bahadur" is set to release in theatres on November 21. (PTI)

## 'The Substance' was like entering the eye of the storm: Margaret Qualley



**LOS ANGELES, Aug 5:** "The Substance" actor Margaret Qualley says her role in the body horror drama film made her confront "generations of trauma".

Qualley, who is the daughter of actor Andie MacDowell and former model Paul Qualley, starred alongside Demi Moore in the film.

Directed by French filmmaker Coralie Fargeat, the 2024 film revolves around Elisabeth Sparkle (Moore), a fitness icon who is laid off from her TV show when she turns 50. A desperate Sparkle turns to the Substance, a black market product that helps her spawn a younger version, called Sue, portrayed by Qualley. But they must alternate their existence in the world. Qualley said boarding the film was like "entering the eye of the storm" for her. "It was like entering the eye of the storm. It was like dealing with all of my s\*\*t, my mom's s\*\*t, generations of trauma. It was a nightmare, being this idyllic, youthful fembot. No one thinks of themselves like that. The movie is not a good touchstone for what femininity is — it is quite masculine in a lot of ways," she told Cosmopolitan in an interview.

The actor praised her co-star, Moore, and called her a special person.

"The thing I'll take home with me, for sure, is Demi Moore. She's such a special person. She's strong and she's wise, but she's also incredibly soft and porous. I learned so much from her. She's become one of my dearest friends," Qualley said.

"The Substance" had its premiere at the Cannes Film Festival in 2024, where it won the award for the best screenplay and received an 11-minute standing ovation.

Qualley is currently gearing up for the release of her upcoming film "Honey Don't!". The comedy film is directed by Ethan Coen and is slated to hit the big screen on August 22. (PTI)

## It'll be nice to have some validation: Rupali Ganguly bats for National Awards for TV artists



**NEW DELHI, Aug 5:** "Anupamaa" star Rupali Ganguly says the government should recognise TV stars through an award as they work just as hard to contribute to the entertainment industry. Ganguly, one of the biggest stars on the small screen, said TV stars, despite their hard work, don't get the recognition they deserve.

"There are National Awards for everyone from film stars to content creators. But there's nothing for TV artists," she said at an event. "When a film star works continuously, it makes headlines. But no one talked about how we, the TV artists, worked non-stop from 6 am to 6 pm during the pandemic. I request the government to consider us also. We work very hard and it'll be nice to have some validation," the star told celebrity photographer Viral Bhayani's account. Ganguly also praised Smriti Irani for her return to television with the reboot of "Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi". "I am very proud that Smriti ji returned to TV, it's such a big validation. Her comeback will make a lot of difference, and it will bring all the eyes back to television," she said. Ganguly has had a successful career in television and is known among her fans for playing Monisha Sarabhai on "Sarabhai vs Sarabhai", hit show "Parvarish – Kuchh Khattee Kuchh Meethi" and now as the titular character in "Anupamaa", which is one of the most watched shows on TV for five years. (PTI)

## Filmmaker Mohit Suri's 'Saiyaara' crosses ₹ 500 crore mark at global box office

**NEW DELHI, Aug 5:** Filmmaker Mohit Suri's romance drama "Saiyaara", featuring newcomers Ahaan Panday and Aneet Padma, has amassed over ₹500 crores at the global box office, the makers said on Tuesday. According to production banner Yash Raj Films, "Saiyaara" has become the "highest grossing love story in the history of Indian cinema".

"With Saiyaara, Mohit Suri hit his first 500 crore worldwide blockbuster and Ahaan-Aneet became the first debutants in the history of Indian cinema to enter the coveted ₹500 crore club when it comes to worldwide collections! Total overseas collection is now at a monstrous ₹507 crore gross in 18 days," the banner said in a statement.

"Saiyaara", which released in theatres on July 18, follows Krish, played by Pandey, an ambitious musician, and Vaani, played by Padma, a shy lyricist recovering from heartbreak.

"As a company, we share this historic success with the captain of the ship, Mohit Suri who has given this generation a defining love story they can call their own, the incredible debutants Ahaan & Aneet who made the world feel love on screen through their brilliant acting, Aditya Chopra for his unwavering guidance, the entire cast and crew of Saiyaara and everyone at YRF for their invaluable contribution towards making this film into a global phenomenon," said YRF CEO Akshaye Widhani. Calling the movie a "pure love story", Widhani said the film's success proves that the romance genre gets the most love from audiences if offered the right story. "We are humbled with this success story and it fuels us to look for the next film that can break-out and make India proud globally. It's deeply encouraging to see young audiences lead the way in embracing this film, disproving doubts about their theatrical participation. Thank you to every viewer, everywhere, for making Saiyaara the defining love story of our time," he added. "Saiyaar" also stars Geeta Agarwal, Rajesh Kumar, Varun Badola and Shaad Randhawa in key roles. (PTI)

## Working hours have to be respectful: Rubina Dilaik, Abhinav Shukla on gruelling schedules in TV

**MUMBAI, Aug 5:** Actors Rubina Dilaik and husband Abhinav Shukla believe that there is a need to introduce respectful working hours in television.

Dilaik is a well-known name in the television industry and has been a part of shows such as "Chotti Bahu" and "Saas Bina Sasural". She was also the winner of the popular reality show "Bigg Boss" season 14.

While Shukla has featured in shows like "Silsila Badalte Rishton Ka", "Chhoti Bahu" and "Diya Aur Baati Hum".

"This (working hours) has been a struggle even when I was new to the industry, but very rarely are we heard. If we voice our concern about it, then it becomes news... But working hours have to be respectful," she told PTI in an interview.

The debate around the need for regulated working hours began following reports that Deepika Padukone's exited Sandeep Reddy Vanga's film after a disagreement over her demand for an eight-hour shift.

Dilaik said there were days when she worked for over 17 hours in the industry.

"I'm not saying this because I'm an actor. If I become a producer, I shall ensure that my people work within eight hours. I'll create a system wherein we do meaningful and good work within eight hours, and it's a win-win thing for everyone."

"Having said that, I've been working for 17 hours. I'm not saying that the producer or the network should lose money. Everyone should get time to rest because

their creativity will flourish. Having said that, Deepika Padukone has not made an unrealistic demand," she added.

Shukla said there are many professions that require extra hours but it's wrong if one is forced to do it and doesn't get paid for it.

"You cannot bind someone saying, 'You work for eight hours only'. A police officer, a traffic cop or a doctor works for more than 16 to 18 hours, even pilots and our jawans work for long hours. So, till the time it is not being forced, and you're doing it because you've agreed to, then there's no harm in it. If someone forces you and even doesn't pay you, then it's wrong," he said.

Both Dilaik and Shukla are currently starring in Pati Patni Aur Panga. The reality show features famous couples and it premiered on August 2 on Colors TV and JioCinema.

Dilaik, who has also been a part of other reality shows like Bigg Boss, Khattron Ke Khiladi, Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa, and Laughter Chefs, said she has always been authentic in front of the camera.

"I don't have to create a facade or act differently, or think about what will be the impact if I say or do a certain thing; I don't do any of it, I'm authentic, and so is our relationship," she said.

"However, it's not necessary that in reality shows, it's the actual reality, but there are a lot of things that are manoeuvred. For instance, if the audience has liked a certain thing, we get feedback, and then things are enhanced, moulded," Dilaik added. (PTI)





# GAMBHIR-AGARKAR EFFECT: BCCI UNLIKELY TO ALLOW STARS TO PICK AND CHOOSE GAMES GOING FORWARD

**NEW DELHI, Aug 5:** Gautam Gambhir has always been against the mega-star culture prevailing in Indian cricket but Mohammed Siraj's Herculean effort throughout the English summer has definitely given the Indian head coach a real shot in the arm.

The creditable 2-2 series draw in England will certainly empower Gambhir and chairman of selectors Ajit Agarkar to crack the whip and usher in a uniform team culture where certain individuals who would not be treated more than equals as it happened in recent years. It is understood that the selection committee, Gambhir and the decision makers in the Indian cricket board are all on the same page with regards to putting an end to players picking and choosing games and series in the pretext of workload management.

"There have been discussions and the message will be sent across to the centrally contracted players, especially those who are all format



regulars that this culture of picking and choosing games won't be entertained in near future," a senior BCCI official privy to current happenings told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

"It doesn't mean that workload management will be thrown out of the window but a more objective approach is expected in near future. Obviously, fast bowlers' workload needs to be managed but it can't be accepted that in the name of workload management, people will miss crucial matches."

Siraj, who sent down 185.3 overs across five Tests, not to forget the hours of fielding and also overs bowled in the nets during the last six weeks is a shining example of what peak fitness looks like. More importantly, the performance of Siraj, Prasadhi Krishna and Akash Deep has proved that even the biggest of stars are dispensable and no one is bigger than the team.

Even England skipper Ben Stokes despite multiple issues

bowled marathon spells till the end of the fourth Test raising debates whether workload has become an "overrated concept" used for convenience.

Former India skipper Sunil Gavaskar ripped apart the over-usage of workload management.

"When you are playing for your country, forget the aches and the pains. On the border, do you think that the jawans are complaining about cold? What did Rishabh Pant show you? He came out to bat with a fracture. That is what you expect from the players. Playing cricket for India is an honour," Gavaskar told 'India Today'. "You are representing 140 crore people and that is what we saw in Mohammed Siraj. I think Siraj bowled his heart out, and he debunked forever this business of workload. For five Test matches, non-stop he has bowled 7-8 over spells, because the captain wanted him and the country expected of him," added the former skipper. (PTI)

## Mboko reaches semifinals in Montreal and will face Rybakina



**MONTREAL, Aug 5:** Canadian teenager Victoria Mboko advanced to her first career WTA Tour semifinal with a 6-4, 6-2 win victory over Spain's Jessica Bouzas Maneiro on Monday night at the National Bank Open.

Two days after ousting No. 1 seed Coco Gauff in just 62 minutes, there was no letdown for the 18-year-old from Toronto.

After taking a back-and-forth — and error-filled — first set, Mboko was broken in a sluggish start to the second set but broke back in the fourth and sixth games to take a 4-2 advantage.

Mboko is the first Canadian to reach the WTA 1000 event's semifinals since Bianca Andreescu's title run in 2019. She's also the youngest woman to reach the semis since Belinda Bencic's 2015 win in Toronto.

Mboko will face Elena Rybakina, who led Marta Kostyuk 6-1, 2-1 when the Ukrainian was forced to stop playing because of an apparent arm injury.

Rybakina, the No. 9 seed from Kazakhstan, converted three of her 10 break-point chances in the quarterfinal matchup at IGA Stadium. The players shook hands at the 54-minute mark before the 24th-seeded Kostyuk exited the court in tears.

After the third game, Kostyuk's trainers wrapped her forearm in medical tape.

In a breakthrough year, Mboko has surged from outside the top 300 to a career-high No. 85. That number is projected to climb to at least No. 55, according to WTA live rankings.

After two injury-plagued years, Mboko — who had shown promise as a junior — opened the season with a 22-match win streak and captured five titles on the lower-tier ITF Tour.

She then qualified for her first Grand Slam main draw at the French Open, reaching the third round, before stunning 25th-seeded Magdalena Frech in the first round at Wimbledon.

And the upsets keep coming. In Montreal, Mboko has rattled off wins over 79th-ranked Kimberly Birrell, No. 23 seed Sofia Kenin, 39th-ranked Marie Bouzkova and Gauff, who is ranked No. 2.

Her latest victory boosted her record to 25-8 against higher-ranked players and 51-9 in all competitions.

In the other quarterfinals Tuesday, No. 6 seed Madison Keys — the highest-seeded player remaining — faces No. 16 Clara Tauson, and former No. 1-ranked Naomi Osaka meets No. 10 seed Elina Svitolina.

The tournament final is Thursday. (AP)

## Indian Army FT edge past 10-men Tribhuvan Army FC 1-0

**JAMSHEDPUR, Aug 5:** P. Christopher Kamei's solitary first half strike powered Indian Army FT to a 1-0 win over 10-men Tribhuvan Army FC in a Group C fixture of the Durand Cup here on Tuesday.

Tribhuvan Army FC thus finished their Durand Cup campaign with one point from three matches while Indian Army has three points from two matches.

Tribhuvan Army started the match on the front foot controlling the possession and pace of the game and created the first real chance of the game with Gagan-deep Singh palming away Gillespye Jung Karki's header to safety. Indian Army started to settle into their rhythm and showed more control in possession and created chances of their own, taking the lead in the 21st minute.

Wangden Tamang found Kamei on the edge of the box with a cross from the left wing who controlled the ball with his left foot and with a precise low shot, the experienced midfielder found the

bottom corner past the diving goalkeeper.

Troubles mounted for the side from Nepal as they were reduced to 10 men in the 29th minute as goalkeeper Bikash Kuthu was shown a straight red card for a reckless foul on Liton Shil outside the penalty box while trying to stop the striker who ran free from the defence and had also rounded the keeper.

The resultant free kick taken by the goal scorer Kamei hit the crossbar.

The Nepali Army side showed character even with a man down as they continued to press forward in search of the equaliser.

The forwards were able to find some good positions in the danger area but they were denied by a combination of some solid defending as the scores remained the same into the break.

In the end, Christopher Kamei's first half strike was enough to secure their first win of the tournament and secure three points. (PTI)

## Top-seeded Zverev beats defending champ Popyrin to reach semifinals in Toronto

**TORONTO, Aug 5:** Top-seeded Alexander Zverev rallied to defeat No. 18 Alexei Popyrin of Australia 6-7 (8), 6-4, 6-3 on Monday to reach the semifinals of the National Bank Open.

Zverev, the 2017 tournament champion, will face either No. 11 seed Karen Khachanov of Russia or No. 26 Alex Michelsen of the U.S.

Zverev, a German who is ranked No. 3, advanced to his 75th ATP Tour semifinal. He is looking for his 25th tournament title and eighth in an ATP 1000 Masters tournament.

The other quarterfinals are Tuesday. Second-seeded Taylor Fritz will take on No. 6 Andrey Rublev of Russia, while No. 4 Ben Shelton is slated to meet No. 9 Alex de Minaur of Australia. Both semifinals go Wednesday ahead of Thursday's title match.

Popyrin took the first set when his gentle backhand volley after a



long rally grazed the top of the net and dropped for the winning point — much to the delight of his fans, including one with an inflatable yellow kangaroo.

Zverev responded by immediately firing a ball completely out of Sobey's Stadium in frustration,

but quickly regrouped to go up 2-0 in the second set.

Popyrin grabbed a break of his own before holding serve at 4-4.

Zverev, who won the Canadian title in Montreal eight years ago when he defeated childhood idol Roger Federer, took a 5-4 lead and

then again broke his opponent to even the match.

Ousted at the quarterfinal stage of last year's tournament, Zverev got another break to go up 2-0 in the third set before serving out the match.

The 28-year-old, who lost to top-ranked Jannik Sinner in the final at this year's Australian Open and made the French Open quarters, improved to 4-0 all-time against Popyrin, including a third-round victory at the Paris Olympics.

Zverev has two tournament wins on clay this year, and is the highest-ranked player competing in a Toronto field lacking some significant star power after Sinner, No. 2 Carlos Alcaraz, No. 5 Jack Draper and No. 6 Novak Djokovic all skipped the hard-court event.

The 25-year-old Popyrin, ranked No. 26, had his nine-match winning streak in Canada snapped. (AP)

## Ahmedabad to host AFC U17 Asian Cup 2026 Qualifiers in November

**NEW DELHI, Aug 5:** India will be one among the seven hosts in the AFC U-17 Asian Cup football qualifiers, scheduled to be played from November 22 to 30.

The Arena in Ahmedabad will be the venue for all matches. The draw for the qualifiers will take place on August 7.

The 38 Countries participating in the qualifiers will be drawn into seven groups (three groups of six teams and four groups of five teams each).

The group winners will qualify for the AFC U17 Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2026, joining nine participating AFC teams in the FIFA U17 World Cup Qatar 2025, who have already directly qualified for the tournament.

AIFF President Kalyan Chaubey said: "It is a matter of great pride for India to be among the hosts of the AFC U17 Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2026 Qualifiers, and I am particularly pleased to see Ahmedabad take



centre stage.

"I sincerely hope that India qualifies for the AFC U17 Asian Cup, which serves as the gateway to the FIFA U17 World Cup, and take another important step forward in Indian football's long-term development pathway."

Gujarat sports minister Harsh Sanghavi said: "It's an opportunity for the state to showcase its love for the beautiful game, its world-class

hospitality, and our rising football culture.

Hosting a prestigious event such as this will position Ahmedabad on the Asian football map."

The 38 teams competing in the qualifiers have been divided into six pots based on the seeding and pot allocation principle, which takes into account the team's performance in the last three tournaments (2025, 2023, and 2018).

While India are in Pot 2, they will be placed in an additional Hosts Pot for the purpose of the draw to ensure all hosts are drawn in separate groups. China PR, Vietnam, Thailand, Myanmar, Kyrgyz Republic, and Jordan are the other six hosts that cannot be drawn into India's group.

Pots for the AFC U17 Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2026 Qualifiers Draw:

Pot 1: Australia, Yemen, IR Iran, Oman, Thailand

Pot 2: Afghanistan, Malaysia, Iraq, Bangladesh, Laos, Kuwait

Pot 3: Singapore, Bahrain, Philippines, Turkmenistan, Palestine

Pot 4: Syria, Mongolia, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Chinese Taipei, Brunei Darussalam

Pot 5: Nepal, Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Maldives, Timor-Leste, Lebanon

Pot 6: Macau, Sri Lanka, Pakistan

Hosts Pot: China PR, Vietnam, Thailand, India, Myanmar, Kyrgyz Republic, Jordan. (PTI)

## After muted celebrations, Indian players head home in batches

**LONDON, Aug 5:** A famous series levelling win at The Oval called for a major celebration but the Indian squad members opted for quiet downtime before leaving for home on Tuesday morning.

A chunk of the India squad members, including Mohammed Siraj, boarded an Emirates flight less than 24 hours after a dramatic finish to the fifth and final Test of a long and gruelling series.

The team members will landed in Dubai on Tuesday evening before taking a connecting to flight their respective home cities in India. Siraj, the architect of the victory, will take the next available flight to Hyderabad after landing in Dubai. Arshdeep Singh and Shardul Thakur were among the ones to head back home.

Some of the players have chosen to stay back in the country for

a well-deserved break.

Roughly four hours after the nail biting finish, some of the squad members including Arshdeep and Prasadhi Krishna were seen spending time with their families in the heart of London.

Kuldeep, who like Arshdeep did not get a game in the series, was seen hanging around with former India player Piyush Chawla.

Jasprit Bumrah, who did not play the series decider due to workload management, was released from the squad during the game. "There were no celebrations last night. It has been a long and hectic series. The players spent time on their own or with families. Most of the players are heading back to India, some are heading elsewhere," said a BCCI source. (PTI)

## Olympic medal changed my life but I have already forgotten it: Aman Shehrawat

**LUCKNOW, Aug 5:** The Paris Olympics success took a lot of burden off Aman Shehrawat's shoulders but the young wrestler says he has already forgotten his bronze-medal feat, as sitting on past laurels won't let him chase bigger dreams.

Orphaned at a tender age, life has not been a bed of roses for the Bihari-born wrestler. His paternal uncle supported him wholeheartedly but family responsibilities did weigh on Aman's mind.

His bronze-winning show in Paris last year brought recognition and money that made his life easy, as Aman carried on the country's tradition of bringing home a medal in wrestling from every Olympic Games since 2008.

"The Olympic medal changed my life 90 per cent. No one knew me before. I was not noticed anywhere, but after the Paris success, people began to know me, respect me. I felt I did something for the country and the hard work of 10-15 years has paid off," Aman

told PTI after winning the 57kg selection trials for the World Championships.

"An Olympic medal is God's blessing. I was not even expected to win. Expectations were higher from the women wrestlers. Ye to prasad hi hai bhagwaan ka (This is God's gift)."

"It motivated me as well. People are now expecting gold from me. I have already forgotten my bronze medals; I can't settle for that and say I have achieved enough. Now I am preparing for gold."

Elaborating how success at the highest level had changed his life, the soft-spoken wrestler said, "I can buy whatever I want now."

"There was pressure that in future I need to get my younger sister educated and get her married. Now I can practice with a free mind; I don't need to worry about money."

"It's not that we were not taken care of. My uncle has always supported us, but you do think about the responsibility of being an elder



brother."

As an individual, Aman hasn't changed much. Rather he is now more cautious about making decisions, being an Olympic medallist.

He attributed his absence from the mat for a considerable time to several reasons, including injury.

Aman has competed in only two

tournaments since the Paris Games. He consciously missed the senior Asian Championship.

"After the Olympics, I thought I will train abroad but things do not always go as you expect. Then I got injured also."

"The fear of losing after winning an Olympic medal also weighed on

## Arjun Erigaisi face stiff challenge from Gujrathi, Giri

**CHENNAI, Aug 5:** India No. 1 Arjun Erigaisi will face tough competition from seasoned compatriot Vidit Gujrathi and Netherland's top player Anish Giri during the expanded third edition of the Chennai Grandmasters chess tournament, starting here from Monday.

The event, which carries a winner's purse of Rs 1 crore, will be competed for the first time over nine rounds in classical round robin format across Masters and Challengers segments. The tournament, which was played over seven rounds in the previous two editions, will see participation from 19 Grandmasters and will offer crucial FIDE Circuit points. The points will be vital for securing a spot in the 2026 Candidates Tournament, just like it helped eventual world champion D Gukesh to enter the Candidates.

Erigaisi, who has broken into the elite 2800 FIDE rating club, will also face strong challenge from promising Nihal Sarin and Germany's 20-year-old Vincent Keymer, who was Gukesh's second during last year's World Champi-

onship. But his toughest competitor will be Giri, who brings a wealth of experience and a super-solid style that makes him one of the tournament favourites.

Apart from the established names, India's Pranav V and Karthikeyan Murali too are capable of effecting some stunning results.

As for the format, the latest edition marks a significant expansion, growing into a 20-player event split into two distinct 10-player sections: the Masters and the Challengers.

This new structure provides a direct pathway for rising stars to compete at the highest level, with the Challengers winner earning a guaranteed spot in the 2026 Masters.

Meanwhile, the Challengers section features some equally exciting talents in D Harika, who was a part of the gold winning women's team at the 45th Chess Olympiad last year. R Vaishali, Harshvardhan GB, Abhimanyu Puranik experienced Grandmaster Adhiban Baskaran, who is known for his aggressive style, will also be in contention. (PTI)



# An English Summer to Remember: Team in transition passes trial by fire

**LONDON, Aug 5:** Not much was expected out of Shubman Gill and his team when they landed in England roughly two months ago. Five fiercely fought Tests later, the relatively inexperienced bunch not only exceeded expectations, it also gave a fine blueprint for the future.

In the words of two captains, Gill and his rival number Ben Stokes, 2-2 is probably a fair result after a 45-day slugfest. The two games that India lost, the series-opener at Leeds and the third Test at Lord's, could have easily gone the other way around but those are the learnings that the players would take back home.

The times Gill and his men looked down and out, specifically Lord's, Old Trafford and The Oval, they refused to give up and on two occasions made a gladiatorial comeback that would aptly sum up the spirit of this team.

PTI looks back at the iconic moments of the series and the contributions of the players who came of age during the series or are returning home wiser.

Young leaders would dream of what Gill managed to achieve in his first series as Test captain. Having not done well in English conditions during past outings, there was a major question mark over his

abilities as a batter, not to forget as captain.

Gill needed to earn the respect of the dressing room and he did that with a stellar 147 in his first innings of the tour.

Having made a few technical and mental adjustments, Gill took his game to the next level and what followed was a double hundred and a hundred in the emphatic win at Edgbaston.

Gill had his issues against the incoming ball but he found a way to deal with them. After the low returns at Lord's, Gill came up with his most significant knock of the tour -- a match saving 103 in Manchester. In the end, he aggregated a staggering 754 runs in 10 innings.

Gill came of age as a batter but as captain, he knows he remains a work in progress.

On Monday, he was lauded for keeping the fielders in the deep with England nine down and 17 runs away from the target. He also kept it simple by not taking the new ball when the old one was aiding Mohammed Siraj and Prasidh Krishna.

Mohammed Siraj, the only fast bowler on either side to play in all five Tests, fittingly took the final wicket of the series at The Oval and ended up as the leading



wicket taker with 23 scalps. With the peerless Jasprit Bumrah not around for two Tests due to workload management, Siraj rose to the occasion. Like opposition captain Ben Stokes, he put his hand up when a few extra overs needed to be bowled to maintain pressure.

Questions over Bumrah's fitness will remain and his future in the longest format is unclear. But trust Siraj to be around to nurture the new crop of pacers.

In the words of bowling coach Morne Morkel, India need a batch of five to six fast bowlers to be ready for the physi-

cally punishing assignments of England and Australia.

Jadeja's exploits flew under the radar when the likes of Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma were around. With the superstars now retired, Jadeja had to make up for the inexperience in the batting department.

With 516 runs in the middle order including five fifties and a rearguard hundred at Old Trafford, the 36-year-old ended up having a series to remember.

In case of a collapse, Jadeja stood in the middle like a rock, averaging the

highest among the Indian batters with four not outs in the series.

The series will be remembered for its highly competitive nature. The first two Tests were played in a relatively incident-free environment but with stakes getting higher, on-field tensions between the two team added to the spice.

The most significant of those moments was Jasprit Bumrah's final over at Lord's on day three.

Captain Shubman Gill asking Zak Crawley to grow some \*\*\*\* and the whole team sarcastically clapping at the England opener for delaying the proceedings will forever be talked about in the context of India-England rivalry.

On-field tensions became the norm after that incident including at Old Trafford where Stokes showed his frustration at India choosing to bat in the mandatory last 15 overs of the day despite draw being the only possible result.

What also lifted the profile of the series was the iconic acts of heroism from Rishabh Pant and Chris Woakes.

While Pant came out to bat with a fractured foot to add crucial runs in the first innings in Manchester, Woakes, already ruled out of the game due to a shoulder

injury, came out to bat on day five of the final Test with the series on the line.

His left hand was tied with a sling and he was in no position to bat but he was still out there fighting for his team, summing up the intensely competitive environment of the series.

The most assured batter on either side of the dressing room was undoubtedly K L Rahul. In majority of his innings, he put up a masterclass of batting in English conditions. He played the ball late and close to his body, frustrating the bowlers with his water tight technique.

Besides Gill and Jadeja, he was the other Indian batter to tally more than 500 runs in the series including two hundreds.

In the lower-order, the poise of Washington Sundar stood out and he also made a telling contribution with his off-spin in Manchester. India remained firm on having batting till eight and Washington ensured the team did not have to move from its chosen path.

His gutsy hundred alongside Jadeja to save the game at Old Trafford sealed his place in the eleven for the foreseeable future and at The Oval, he showed he can seamlessly shift to attacking when required. (PTI)

## Young Indian brigade's summer explosion in England narrows the path of seniors Kohli, Rohit

**BENGALURU, Aug 5:** India holding England to a 2-2 draw in the fiercely-fought Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy was a celebration of a new crop of cricketers' self-belief and fearlessness to put their body on the line for the country and the team.

Mohammed Siraj bowled close to 200 overs, dragging his knackered body through five Tests, Washington Sundar never took a backward step, Yashasvi Jaiswal contributed when it mattered the most, Akash Deep and Prasidh Krishna were all heart and Sai Sudharsan gave fleeting glimpses of his long-term utility.

But this coming of age effort has another dimension to it.

Where does it leave the venerable seniors such as Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, who have retired from T20Is and ODIs, and Jasprit Bumrah, whose injury-prone body needs careful handling?

Kohli is 36 and Rohit is 38, and they will possibly be seen in action next during the away three-match ODI series against Australia, followed by another three one-dayers at home against South Africa.

Thereafter they have a chance to appear in six ODIs against New Zealand (home) and England (away) between January-July 2026.

But is that a good enough build up to keep them ready for the 50-over World Cup in 2027 in South Africa?

Will the distinguished duo have the desire to continue that long on



the back of just one format and the IPL?

"Yes, it will be discussed soon. We still have more than two years for the next World Cup (November 2027). Both Kohli and Rohit will be pushing 40 by then, so, there has to be a clear plan ahead for the big event as our last win was in 2011. We also need to try out a few youngsters in time," a source indicated to PTI.

Though they went out of the T20Is basking in the glory of a World Cup win in 2024, both Kohli and Rohit had to make a rather silent retirement from Tests.

So, will the former captains be allowed to choose a place and time on their own to move out or will they be phased out with future in mind?

"Look, both Kohli and Rohit have made huge contributions to

white ball cricket for the team and the sport in general. They have achieved almost everything.

"So, I don't think nobody's going to force their hand, but there will be some honest and professional conversations before the next ODI cycle starts to see where they stand mentally and physically. It depends on that," he added.

The other issue is the lack of match time for Kohli and Rohit as they have not appeared in any matches since the Champions Trophy in March early this year, and there are no domestic white ball competitions prior to the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20s in November followed by the Vijay Hazare Trophy in December.

As per the existing BCCI diktat, a player cannot skip domestic matches when he is fully fit, and a non-compliance can lead to omis-

sion from national squads.

Even though the stature that Kohli and Rohit enjoy might just give them an exemption, if it comes to that.

But Bumrah offers a different case, as the physios have laid out a certain roadmap for his international future which saw him playing only in three Tests in England.

Many feel that the time has come to chalk out a definite plan on how to utilise the premier pacer.

"There is no question on the value that he brings to the side. But the management and board need to discuss how to use him -- as an all format bowler or should he be asked to concentrate only on one or two formats," a former player, who has seen Bumrah from close quarters, told PTI.

"Siraj, Akash Deep and Prasidh have shown us that they can win Tests for India. Let's back them fully. We have two important tournaments (T20 and ODI WC) coming our way, and we need Bumrah ready for them. For home matches (vs West Indies, SA), we have Washi and Kuldeep along with Jadeja, and Bumrah's role will not be that big here.

"So, if you ask me, he should be asked to focus more on white ball formats for now as there are enough T20s and one-dayers for him to play in the next two years. Yeah, IPL too is there. It's better to have him play all matches in one format rather than him playing a few matches in all formats. It adds value to the team," he noted. (PTI)

## I hope workload management disappears from Indian cricket dictionary: Gavaskar after Siraj heroics

**LONDON, Aug 5:** Mohammed Siraj has "debunked forever this business of workload", said India batting great Sunil Gavaskar, questioning the concept by asserting that playing for the country should be enough to "forget the aches", something that soldiers guarding the nation are doing routinely.

Siraj played all five Tests of the just-concluded drawn series against England and bowled 185.3 overs in total, picking up 23 wickets in all. However, pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah was available for only three of the games, skipping the must-win fifth Test at The Oval as part of his workload management.

Gavaskar, however, made it clear that his criticism was not directed at Bumrah, saying that his was a case of "injury management" more than anything else.

"When you are playing for your country, forget the aches and the pains. On the border, do you think that the jawans are complaining about cold?"



What did Rishabh Pant show you? He came out to bat with a fracture. That is what you expect from the players. Playing cricket for India is an honour," Gavaskar told 'India Today'.

"You are representing 140 crore people and that is what we saw in Mohammed Siraj. I think Siraj bowled his heart out, and he debunked forever this business of workload.

"For five Test matches, non-stop he has bowled 7-8 over spells, because the captain wanted him and the country expected of him," added the former skipper.

The 76-year-old said workload management cannot come in the way of fielding the best available team.

"If you are going to succumb to people who are talking about workload, then you are never going to have your best players on the field for your country," he said.

"I hope that the word 'workload' goes out of the Indian cricket dictionary. I've been saying that for a long time... And I think that is the one thing that we all should keep in mind that this workload is only a mental thing, not so much a physical thing," he added. (PTI)

## Test of skill and nerves: List of closely-fought series - From Gabba to Centurion to Mumbai



**NEW DELHI, Aug 5:** After 25 days of entrancing Test cricket, India and England shared the Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy 2-2, adding another glossy page to the long-list of intensely-fought rubbers.

But it wasn't the first time that things went right down to the wire in the game's oldest format and left fans asking for more even after a lengthy series that lasted well over a month.

PTI collates a few memorable show-downs in the last decade and half that had the quintessential crests and troughs of Test cricket.

Possibly, one of the best series in the history of the sport where India towered over several obstacles, including injuries to key players, to etch a 2-1 victory over Australia.

From the all-time low of 36/9 in Adelaide to the three-wicket Gabba heist, India, led by stand-in skipper Ajinkya Rahane, quietly pulled the rug from under the feet of unsuspecting Aussies in their own backyard.

This series, perhaps, marked the beginning of India's power run through Test cricket for the next decade under a new captain, Virat Kohli. Sri Lanka shocked India by 63 runs at Galle despite the latter

taking a substantial 192-run lead.

But India imbibed Kohli's never-say-die attitude in the next two games in Colombo (at the P Sara Oval and SSC), winning them by 278 and 117 runs respectively to bag the series 2-1.

It was the last Test series where the famed trio of Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid and VVS Laxman made a collective impact.

After an innings and 25-run drubbing at Centurion, India came back strongly to win the Durban Test by 85 runs where Laxman made a 96 against the rampaging duo of Dale Steyn and Morne Morkel, a performance that will stand the test of time.

In the final Test at Cape Town, India had a full Day 5 to survive and they did it through Gautam Gambhir (68 off 184 balls), Dravid (31, 112 balls), Tendulkar (14 not out off 91 balls) and Laxman (32 not out off 67 balls).

Proteas spinner Paul Harris conceded just 29 runs off 30 overs with 19 maidens.

The four-match series appeared to be travelling on the familiar route once India hammered England by nine wickets at Ahmedabad.

But inspired by Kevin Pietersen's hun-

dred that was touched by genius, England under Alistair Cook stunned India by 10 wickets at Mumbai before eking out a seven-wicket victory at the Eden Gardens.

On a Nagpur flatbed, England easily drew the fourth Test to win the series 2-1, leaving India shattered. Joe Root made his debut in that Test.

It was a battle between new age pacers from South Africa and Australia. South Africa had Kagiso Rabada and Vernon Philander, while the Aussies showcased Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood.

The Proteas pacers had more fire in them as they scythed through opposition for wins at Perth and Hobart before the home side pulled one back in the day-night Test in Adelaide.

It was Australia's first home series defeat after 2008.

Once New Zealand set foot in Abu Dhabi, predictions were on for a 3-0 whitewash against a spin-heavy Pakistan. But the Kiwis won the first Test by a slender margin of four runs, and Pakistan replied with an innings at 16-run victory at Dubai.

But in Abu Dhabi, the Kiwis found an unlikely hero in off-spinner William Somerville, who had played just six Tests in his short career at that stage. His seven-wicket match haul powered the visitors to a 123-run win and sealed the series 2-1 in their favour.

The series was held behind closed doors during the COVID-19 pandemic but it was a classic where the two teams traded blows like two snarling boxers.

After a rather mundane draw at Nottingham, it came alive with India's 151-run win at the Lord's, after which England retorted with an innings and 76-run drubbing at Leeds.

India won the fourth Test at the Oval by 157 runs before the tour was suspended in September 2021 due to members of the visiting team testing positive for COVID. (PTI)

## England panicked, they just needed one partnership: Vaughan

**LONDON, Aug 5:** Former captain Michael Vaughan feels England panicked on the final day of the fifth Test against India in the absence of inspirational skipper Ben Stokes, with only 35 runs needed to win and four wickets in hand. England eventually lost the match by six runs as India made a stunning comeback to draw the five-match series 2-2 on Monday.

"...Ben Stokes in that team, England would've won this Test match. He plays such a big role in this team, the mentality... England did panic (on the fifth morning). They just needed one partnership. They panicked in the way that they can with the way that they play, they play with a huge amount of aggressiveness. Yesterday (Sunday) afternoon, the Harry Brook dismissal did cause that collapse, but it's the way Eng-

land play," Vaughan told BBC's Test Match Special.

Stokes, who played a pivotal role for England with both bat and ball, missed the fifth Test due to a shoulder injury, while pacers Jofra Archer and Brydon Carse were rested. Vaughan said the thrilling series against India should be a perfect preparation for England for the this year's Ashes in Australia, starting in November. "It's been a tremendous five matches for England. You've got to be realistic, this week they were down to 10 men, lost one of their bowlers early, and not got Ben Stokes. You're looking at the team going to Australia and I think there's more pieces in place. "We'll arrive in Perth for that first Test and know the top seven. It's just a matter of the bowling attack and getting that

right. Clearly Ben Stokes is going to have to get fit. With Ben Stokes in the England side they can beat anybody. Without him, they can lose to anybody," Vaughan said.

England looked on course for a historic win with Harry Brook and Joe Root taking the home team to 301 for three on the fourth day before Brook was caught by Mohammed Siraj off the bowling of Akash Deep. England then lost two more wickets, including Root before the end of the fourth day's play. "Harry Brook had that thought process that he wanted to hit 30 or 40 quick runs. What Harry needs to learn is in an Ashes series, in a similar situation, just win. I love the way he plays, his approach. At times, he's a genius. He plays the game in a fashion not many have ever played," Vaughan said. (PTI)

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