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## CM announces plan to create micro tribal belts in 600 villages

# BTC admin flayed for poor execution of welfare schemes

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Aug 13:** Undeterred by heavy rain, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and State BJP President Dilip Saikia addressed a large gathering at the Vijay Sankalp Sabha in Kokrajhar's Chandra Para playground on Wednesday.

The rally, organised under the Bonorgaon constituency of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), was part of the party's push to strengthen its campaign ahead of the upcoming council polls.

Addressing the crowd, Sarma rejected claims that the BJP harbours anti-tribal sentiments.

He announced plans to establish Micro Tribal Belts and Blocks in 600 villages while assuring that the existing Tribal Belts and Blocks would remain intact.

"Even in our dreams, we don't think of breaking Tribal Belts," he declared.

The Chief Minister took aim at



the current BTC administration, accusing it of funneling government welfare benefits exclusively through Village Council Development Committees (VCDCs).

He pledged to reform VCDC policies to ensure that development initiatives reach all sections of society.

"There has been no proper im-

plementation of welfare schemes in BTR. Everything is being routed only through VCDCs," Sarma said, adding that a BJP-led council in Kokrajhar would deliver fair and inclusive growth.

Responding to questions from the media on the sidelines of the event, Sarma defended Saikia's recent remarks on the Sixth Schedule and tribal land protections, stressing that the BJP government remains committed to safeguarding tribal interests.

He also moved to dispel public concerns over reports of increased charges for cancer treatment, clarifying that patients would not face any additional costs.

On confusion surrounding the Ayushman Bharat and Ayushman Assam health card schemes, he reiterated that the state would bear all expenses.

Reports of patients being asked to pay ₹10,000 in advance were, he said, the result of a procedural mistake, and no such payment was required.

The rally was attended by Minister Ashok Singhal, senior BJP leaders from the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), and a large turnout of supporters.

Party leaders claimed the BJP's base in the region continues to grow. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Nine suspected Rohingyas detained in Cachar

**SILCHAR, Aug 13:** Nine suspected Rohingyas, including two women and five children, have been detained by Assam Police near the India-Bangladesh border in Cachar district, an officer said on Wednesday.

Cachar Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Numal Mahatta said the detainees were picked up from Katigora area on Tuesday evening following a tip-off from intelligence sources.

"They have been staying in India for many years. Recently, they travelled here with the intention of living in this area. They did not attempt to cross the border, but our team intercepted them before they could settle here," Mahatta told reporters.

Residents of Bishwanbharpur village in Katigora area near the border, however, had earlier claimed that they had spotted a group of unfamiliar people in a market and after questioning them, handed them over to the police on Tuesday night.

"They were speaking in a dialect similar to the Rohingya language. This is not the first time we

have seen unfamiliar faces here," a local resident said.

Similar incidents had been reported during the last year, leading to the detention and "pushback" of several illegal immigrants, he said.

The detained persons claimed they had entered India illegally around 20 years ago and had worked in different states, including Jammu and Kashmir and Telangana.

During interrogation, they said that they wanted to return to Bangladesh due to the recent crackdown on migrant workers and they had relatives there.

They also claimed that some middlemen had promised to help them cross the border.

The nine detained persons who claimed they were Rohingyas had travelled by train from Hyderabad and were taken by a middleman to a forest near the border where they stayed for the whole day without any food or water.

It was in the evening that they came out of the forest in search of food when they were spotted by the locals. A case has been registered (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Security tightened along Bangla border in Cachar

**SILCHAR, Aug 13:** Security has been tightened along the India-Bangladesh border in Assam's Cachar district to prevent possible infiltration attempts by extremist elements and to curb unauthorised cross-border trade, an official statement said on Wednesday.

Cachar District Commissioner Mridul Yadav, in an order, imposed strict restrictions on the movement and transportation of certain commodities along the border following intelligence inputs of likely illegal movement of people, commodities, and cattle through sensitive border pockets.

"This is a precautionary measure to ensure peace, stability, and security along the border and the administration is committed to preventing any unlawful activities that can endanger the district's law and order." (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

### HT BRIEFS

#### Road mishap

**GUWAHATI:** A couple was killed and their daughter critically injured when the vehicle in which they were travelling lost control and hit a divider near Khetri in Assam's Kamrup (Metro) district on Wednesday, police said. The family was on their way home to Raha in Nagaon district from Mangaldoi when the husband, who was driving, lost control and the vehicle skidded off the road to hit a divider. While the couple was killed on the spot, their critically injured daughter was shifted to a hospital in Guwahati. The deceased have been identified as Gajendra Mohan Dev Sharma, retired vice-principal of Raha College, and his wife Archana Devi, police said.

#### Court sentence

**KOKRAJHAR:** A court in Assam's Kokrajhar district has sentenced a man to life imprisonment for murdering a retired engineer of the state Agriculture Department in 2023. The court of District and Sessions Judge, Kokrajhar, Nirmali Talukdar on Tuesday sentenced Sambhu Kahar to life imprisonment for murdering Tapan Chakraborty and injuring his wife on November 29, 2023. The court also imposed a fine of ₹ 50,000 on the convict and failure to pay the amount would attract an additional six months in prison. Kahar had barged into Chakraborty's residence in Bidhanpally area in the heart of Kokrajhar town and attacked him and his wife, Madhumita Chakraborty, a retired headmistress of D N Himatsingka High School, with a sharp weapon. The couple was seriously injured in the incident. Chakraborty succumbed to his injuries at a private hospital in Bongaigaon, while his wife recovered following prolonged treatment.

## Ahead of Modi's likely trip to China, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang to visit India

**NEW DELHI, Aug 13:** Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi is set to visit India on Monday to hold border talks with NSA Ajit Doval, days ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's planned trip to China to attend the annual summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

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

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

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

It is learnt that Wang will also hold a separate meeting with External Af-



fairs Minister S Jaishankar. Modi is expected to travel to China later this month to attend the SCO summit.

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

Modi's visit to China is being planned amid efforts by the two sides to repair their bilateral ties which came under severe strain following the deadly clashes between Indian and Chinese troops in Galwan Valley in

June 2020.

The military standoff in eastern Ladakh began in May 2020 and the clashes at the Galwan Valley in June that year resulted in a severe strain in ties.

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

The decision to revive various dialogue mechanisms was taken at the meeting between Modi and Xi in Kazan on October 23, 2024.

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

The two sides also initiated a number of initiatives to rebuild the ties that included resumption of Kailash Mansarovar Yatra and New Delhi restarting issuance of tourist visas to Chinese (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## 81 new villages added to BTC final poll rolls

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Aug 13:** The Assam State Election Commission on Wednesday released the Final Photo Electoral Rolls for all 40 constituencies of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), marking a major milestone ahead of the upcoming council elections.

This year's rolls reflect a substantial expansion, incorporating 81 additional villages into the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) following the delimitation notification issued by the Assam government on June 25, 2025.

As per the updated figures, the BTR now has 26,58,477 registered voters — 13,23,673 male, 13,34,787 female, and 17 classified as "others."

A total of 3,279 polling stations will serve the electorate, although the number could change when the final list is published on August 18 after a rationalisation process.

The Final Electoral Rolls (without photographs) are available for public inspection at designated locations including Circle Officer and Block Development Officer offices, municipal bodies, town committees, sub-registry offices, police stations, tea garden offices, and Gaon Panchayat or Village Council Development Committee offices within



each constituency.

Voters can also check their details online via the OERMS portal and relevant district administration websites.

"Electors may verify their details using their EPIC number issued by the Election Commission of India (ECI) or by downloading the electoral roll for their respective polling stations from the citizen corner on the website," the Commission said in its statement.

In an effort to boost participation, the Commission announced that individuals whose names appear in the ECI's supplementary roll and who hold valid EPIC cards will be (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Sonowal launches 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign in Dibrugarh

**GUWAHATI, Aug 13:** Union Minister for Shipping, Ports and Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal, on Wednesday launched the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign in Assam's Dibrugarh town, ahead of the 79th Independence Day.

Sonowal, who represents the Dibrugarh Lok Sabha constituency, visited the residences of former BJP Dibrugarh district president and retired Dibrugarh University professor Dr Harendra Narayan Dutta, noted folk artist Ramchandra Sanchoi, and the founding president of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in Dibrugarh, Asim Dutta.

Sonowal exchanged greetings and presented each of them with the National Flag and urged them to join the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' (Tricolour in every house) campaign.

He also distributed the National Flag among students, encouraging them to embrace patriotism.

Earlier in the day, Sonowal paid tributes at the statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, honouring his contribution to India's freedom struggle.

In Guwahati, Assam Minister for forest and Environment Chandra Mohan Patowary attended the 'Tiranga Samaloy' programme, organised by the state government's Cultural Affairs Department to pay tributes to the valiant freedom fighters of India, as part of the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign.

"The event brought together people from across Assam, uniting hearts in a shared spirit of patriotism and gratitude towards our freedom fighters," Patowary said. (PTI)

## US tariff impact not to last more than 6 months; pvt sector has to do more for India: CEA

**MUMBAI, Aug 13:** Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran on Wednesday said US tariffs-related challenges will dissipate in the next one or two quarters, and urged the private sector to do more as the country navigates through other longer-term challenges.

He attributed the growth slowdown in FY25, which saw a deceleration to 6.5 per cent from FY24's 9.2 per cent, to tight credit conditions and liquidity issues. The right agriculture policies can add 25 per cent to real GDP growth, Nageswaran added.

On the US tariffs, the CEA said it is the second and third order impacts, which will flow once sectors like gems and jewellery, shrimps and textiles have taken

the first order brunt, that will be "more difficult" to tackle.

The government is aware of the situation and conversations with the impacted sectors have already begun, Nageswaran said, adding that one will hear from the policymakers in the coming days and weeks but people have to be patient.

With speculation on whether US officials will visit India for trade talks later this month as reported, Nageswaran said the upcoming meet in Alaska between US President Donald Trump and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin is likely to influence the outcome.

Declining to spell out any details on the trade negotiations between India and the US, the

academic-turned-advisor said things are very fluid at the world stage right now with relations swinging from cooperation to stalemate, and spelled out his expectation of the impact of 50 per cent US tariff on Indian exports.

"I do believe that the current situation will ease out in a quarter or two. I don't think that from a long-term picture, the India impact will be that significant but in the short run, there will be some impact," he said.

He said no one can guess the exact reasons why President Donald Trump chose to slap the high tariffs on India, wondering if it's the fallout of Operation Sindoor or something even more strategic.

However, the CEA said the focus on (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Missing man found dead in Manipur forest

**CHURACHANDPUR/ IMPHAL, Aug 13:** Over two weeks after a 37-year-old-man from Assam went missing in Manipur's Churachandpur district, his body was recovered by villagers and police in a forest, officials said on Wednesday.

The body of Dugdha Hazarika, a labourer working under Bharat Infra Private Limited (BIPL) for the construction of NH-102, was recovered from a forest located between Suahzahau and Zabellei villages, around 17 km from Singnat police station, on Tuesday afternoon, they added.

According to officials, locals informed police about about the presence of a body lying in a forest, prompting both police and locals to deploy a search party. The body has (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Ministers discuss boosting trade, tech, connectivity, and digital cooperation under strategic partnership

# India, Singapore review ties

**NEW DELHI, Aug 13:** India and Singapore on Wednesday explored ways to further expand their bilateral cooperation in areas of advanced technology, trade, connectivity and digitisation during a meeting of their top ministers.

The deliberations took place at the third India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable (ISMR) in New Delhi.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Electronics and Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw held the ISMR with six Singaporean ministers.

The Singaporean delegation was led by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade and Industry Gan Kim Yong and comprised Na-



tional Security and Home Affairs Minister K Shanmugam, Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan, Digital Development and Information Minister Josephine Teo, Minister for Manpower Tan See Leng and Acting Minister for Transport Jef-

frey Siow.

"The ISMR had a productive interaction with the India Singapore Business Roundtable #ISBR delegation. Synergy between Government & Industry is key to unlocking the next phase of India-Singapore ties," Jaishankar said on X.

The inaugural ISMR was held in New Delhi in September 2022 and the second meeting was held in Singapore in August 2024.

India-Singapore relations were elevated to comprehensive strategic partnership during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the country in September last year.

Singapore is India's largest trading partner in ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations). It is the leading source of FDI, among the largest sources of external commercial borrowings and foreign portfolio investment.

Singapore was India's sixth-largest trading partner in the financial year 2024-25. India's imports from Singapore in 2024-25 were USD 21.2 billion, while the volume of exports (CONTD. ON

## CoRRP sticks to I-Day non cooperation; govt orders attendance

**KOHIMA, Aug 13:** Even as the Five Tribes Committee on Review of Reservation Policy (CoRRP) reaffirmed its call for non-participation in all state government functions, including Independence Day celebrations, the Nagaland government has issued strict directives for compulsory attendance of all government officers and staff at the event.

In a press release on Wednesday, the CoRRP said the decision of non-participation in the forthcoming Independence Day was "a step further" in its agitation against unresolved issues on which the state government has remained unresponsive.

It lauded the five apex tribal bodies — Angami Public Organisation, Ao Senden, Lotha Hoho, Rengma Hoho and Sumi Hoho — for endorsing the August 9 joint resolutions and issuing circulars to all their frontal units and subordinate bodies to abstain from state functions.

Appealing to the public, especially youths and students, to express their resentment "through peaceful non-participation," the committee urged the government to avoid coercing or intimidating leaders of civil society organisations or the public to prevent any untoward incidents.

Following the CoRRP direction, its frontal organisa-

### NAGALAND RESERVATION ROW

tions, especially student bodies, have issued circulars directing that no institutions and students within their jurisdictions spread in at least six districts — Kohima, Dimapur, Mokokchung, Chumoukedima, Niuland and Wokha — should participate in Independence Day celebrations.

Meanwhile, the state government, through Home Commissioner Anoop Khinchi, has directed all officers and staff of departments located near the Nagaland Secretariat Complex to attend the Independence Day celebration at the Civil Secretariat Plaza.

He also said that the attendance sheets should be submitted to the Home Department.

The home commissioner has tasked the deputy commissioners of the respective districts with ensuring attendance of staff in their districts, while also asking the heads of departments to arrange for on-site attendance recording.

The push for a review of Nagaland's reservation policy intensified after the five tribal apex bodies under the banner of CoRRP submitted a joint memorandum to the state government recently.

They argued that the policy, which has been in place since 1977, no longer reflects (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Sensex climbs 304 pts, Nifty closes above 24,600 as steady US inflation fuels global rally

MUMBAI, Aug 13: Stock markets rebounded on Wednesday with benchmark Sensex closing higher by 304 points on buying in metal, auto and pharma shares as steady US inflation data propelled a sharp rally in global markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 304.32 points or 0.38 per cent to settle at 80,539.91. During the day, it jumped 448.15 points or 0.55 per cent to 80,683.74. The 50-share NSE Nifty edged up by 131.95 points or 0.54 per cent to 24,619.35.

Analysts said retail inflation slowing to an 8-year low of 1.55 per cent in July led to the positive trend in domestic equities.

"Indian equities experienced a broad-based optimism as CPI hit an eight-year low, boosting hopes for a revival in discretionary spending, led by autos and metals. Globally, sentiment improved on the extension of China's tariff deadline and easing oil prices.

"Despite uncertainties around Trump's trade stance and global risks, India's growth-inflation dynamics remain favourable for FY26 with risk to marginal downgrade based on tariff updates. India looks forward to the Trump-Putin meet dated 15th August," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.



Among Sensex firms, Bharat Electronics, Eternal, Mahindra & Mahindra, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Tata Motors and Power Grid were the gainers.

However, Adani Ports, ITC, UltraTech Cement and Titan were among the laggards. Retail inflation slowed to an 8-year low of 1.55 per cent in July, falling below the Reserve Bank's comfort zone for the first time since January 2019, helped by subdued prices of food items, according to government data released on Tuesday.

"Indian equities advanced on Wednesday, buoyed by easing do-

mestic retail inflation, positive global cues, and renewed hopes of a US Federal Reserve rate cut, Gaurav Garg, Analyst, Lemonn Markets Desk, said.

The BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.58 per cent and midcap index went up by 0.56 per cent. Among BSE sectoral indices, healthcare jumped 1.76 per cent, metal (1.22 per cent), auto (1.18 per cent), consumer discretionary (0.96 per cent), industrials (0.70 per cent) and financial services (0.45 per cent).

Oil & Gas and FMCG were the laggards.

Shares of Apollo Hospitals Enterprise Ltd spurred by nearly 8 per cent, emerging as lead gainer among Nifty50 shares after the healthcare services provider reported a 42 per cent jump in profit after tax to ₹ 433 crore in the June quarter.

Paytm shares closed higher by 3 per cent as Paytm Payments Services received the Reserve Bank of India's nod to operate as an online payment aggregator.

As many as 2,230 stocks advanced while 1,861 declined and 155 remained unchanged on the BSE. Among Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng settled sharply higher. European markets were trading in the green.

The US markets ended significantly higher on Tuesday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude dipped 0.36 per cent to USD 65.88 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹ 3,398.80 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data. Sensex dropped 368.49 points or 0.46 per cent to settle at 80,235.59 while Nifty went lower by 97.65 points or 0.40 per cent to 24,487.40 on Tuesday. (PTI)

## US tariffs not to impact India's growth: S&P

NEW DELHI, Aug 13: Trump tariffs will not have any impact on India's growth, as it is not a trade-oriented economy, and its sovereign ratings outlook will continue to remain positive, S&P Global Ratings Director YeeFarn Phua said on Wednesday.

In May last year, S&P had upgraded the outlook on India's sovereign rating of 'BBB-' to 'positive', citing robust economic growth.

On August 6, US President Donald Trump announced an additional 25 per cent tariff on all Indian imports, on top of an existing 25 per cent duty, taking the total to 50 per cent from August 27. The White House said the measure responds to India's continued purchase of Russian oil.

Replying to a query on whether the tariff imposition poses downside risks to the positive outlook on India, YeeFarn said, "I don't think the tariffs imposed on India will have an impact in terms of economic growth, largely because India is not a very trade-oriented economy. And if you look at India's exposure to the US in terms of exports to GDP, it is just about 2 per cent".

S&P estimates India's GDP growth in the current fiscal year at 6.5 per cent, the same as it was in the previous financial year. YeeFarn further said major sectors, like pharmaceuticals and consumer electronics, which export to the US, are exempted from tariffs.

"Over the longer term, we don't think this (higher tariffs) will be a big hit (on India's economy), and therefore, the positive outlook on India remains," YeeFarn said at a Webinar on Asia-Pacific Sovereign Ratings.

To a query on whether US tariffs would impact investment flows into India, he said the 'China plus one' strategy has played out for businesses over the last few years, and companies are setting up businesses in India mainly to cater to domestic demand.

"Many (businesses) are going there not because they are looking to export just to the US. Many of them are going there because of the huge domestic market as well. An emerging middle class is getting larger... So, even for those who are looking to invest more in India and looking to export, it might not necessarily be the US market," YeeFarn said. In 2021-25, the US was India's largest trading partner. The US accounts for about 18 per cent of India's total goods exports, 6.22 per cent in imports, and 10.73 per cent in bilateral trade.

With America, India had a trade surplus (the difference between imports and exports) of USD 35.32 billion in goods in 2023-24. It was USD 41 billion in 2024-25. In 2024-25, bilateral trade between India and the US reached USD 186 billion. India exported goods worth USD 86.5 billion while imports stood at USD 45.3 billion. (PTI)

## Rupee rises 16 paise against US dollar

MUMBAI, Aug 13: The rupee appreciated 16 paise to close at 87.47 against the US dollar on Wednesday, as a weak greenback and a positive momentum in domestic equity markets enthused investors.

Forex traders said weak crude oil prices and cooling domestic inflation supported the rupee, but uncertainties over trade tariffs and persistent foreign fund outflows capped the sharp upside for the domestic unit.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 87.63, and oscillated between an intraday low of 87.72 and a high of 87.38 against the American currency.

The rupee finally settled at 87.47, higher by 16 paise over its previous close.

On Tuesday, the rupee appreciated 12 paise to close at 87.63 against the US dollar.

"The rupee experienced its biggest one-day appreciation since July 3, driven by a decline in the US dollar. The dollar weakened amid expectations of a September interest rate cut from the Federal Reserve, following a decline in US inflation," Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities, said.

"Further bolstering the rupee's performance were several domestic and regional factors, including gains in Indian equities and other Asian currencies, a fall in crude oil prices, and a fall in the domestic Consumer Price Index (CPI)."

Meanwhile, Brent crude prices fell 0.54 per cent to USD 65.76 per barrel in futures trade. (PTI)

## Senco Gold Q1FY'26 consolidated net profit surges to ₹ 104.6 crore

KOLKATA, Aug 13: Senco Gold Ltd's consolidated net profit more than doubled to ₹ 104.6 crore for the quarter ended June from ₹ 51.3 crore in the corresponding period a year ago, driven by robust retail sales and operational efficiency.

Revenue from operations in the quarter rose 30 per cent to ₹ 1,826.2 crore from ₹ 1,403.8 crore, marking the company's "highest-ever first-quarter topline", it said. Same-store sales growth stood at 19.6 per cent, while the non-East markets contributed 17.5 per cent of retail turnover.

EBITDA jumped 68.8 per cent year-on-year to ₹183.5 crore, with the margin improving to 10.1 per cent from 7.7 per cent, aided by an improved product mix and tight cost control, the company said in a statement. During the quarter, Senco Gold added 10 new showrooms – five company-owned, one franchisee-owned company-operated, and four franchisee-owned franchisee-operated – taking its total network to 186 stores across 17 states and the UAE. MD & CEO Suvankar Sen said festive demand during 'Akshay Tritiya' and 'Poila Baishakh', along with the launch of over 11,400 new designs, helped the company deliver "record" Q1 performance. (PTI)

### AFFIDAVIT

I, Smt. Mira Rani Purkayastha, aged about 59 years, D/p late Hrishikesh and W/o late Subrata Roy a permanent resident of Diphu town, near Diphu Club, P.O. & P.S., Diphu, district Karbi Anglong, that in my pension book and bank passbook vide PPO No.S/FP/67766 and account No. 3212000100073300 of Punjab National Bank Lumding Branch, has inadvertently written my name as "Mira Rani Purkayastha Roy" instead of my actual name Mira Rani Purkayastha.

Both the names "Mira Rani Purkayastha" and "Mira Rani Purkayastha Roy" are the same and single person and not a different individual i.e. myself.

That, I swear this affidavit before the Executive Magistrate, district Karbi Anglong, Assam, declaring from today my name shall be recorded only as Mira "Rani Purkayastha" for all purposes.

## Yezdi unveils 2025 Roadster 'Born Out of Line'

MUMBAI, Aug 13: Jawa Yezdi Motorcycles has announced the launch of the Yezdi Roadster 2025, describing it as the latest addition to the Yezdi brand and "Born Out of Line", with prices starting at ₹2.09 lakh. According to an official statement, the model is designed as a performance classic built on Yezdi's philosophy of individuality, featuring a bold silhouette, sculpted fuel tank, wider rear tyres, and the brand's signature twin-barrel exhausts. The motorcycle offers six factory-backed custom combinations and over 20 plug-and-play accessories, including modular seating options, customisable handlebars, visors, and crash guards. Premium design details such as the Faravahar insignia on the tank highlight the brand's Parsi heritage. Powering the Roadster is an all-new 350 Alpha2 liquid-cooled engine producing 29PS and 30Nm, paired with a first-in-segment six-speed gearbox and assist-and-slipper clutch. Touring-oriented features include a 12.5-litre fuel tank with a claimed range of over 350 km, centre-forward footpegs for comfort.

## Banks to clear cheques within few hours from Oct 4: RBI

MUMBAI, Aug 13: The RBI will introduce a new mechanism from October 4 for clearance of cheques within hours of being presented to banks, reducing the current time period of up to two working days.

Cheques will be scanned, presented, and passed in a few hours and on a continuous basis during business hours. The clearing cycle will be reduced from the present T+1 days to a few hours.

Cheque Truncation System (CTS) currently processes cheques with a clearing cycle of up to two working days.

To improve the efficiency of cheque clearing and reduce settlement risk for participants, and to enhance customer experience, the RBI has decided to transition CTS from the current approach of batch processing to continuous clearing with 'on-realisation-settlement'.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued a circular for introduction of Continuous Clearing and Settlement on Realisation in CTS.

"It has been decided to transition CTS to continuous clearing and settlement on realisation in two phases. Phase 1 shall be implemented on October 4, 2025 and Phase 2 on January 3, 2026," it said.

There will be a single presentation session from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

Cheques received by the branches shall be scanned and sent to the clearing house by the banks immediately and continuously during the presentation session, RBI said.

"For every cheque presented, the drawee bank shall generate either positive confirmation (for ho-

noured cheques) or negative confirmation (for dishonoured cheques)," it said.

During Phase 1 (from October 4, 2025 to January 2, 2026), drawee banks will be required to confirm (positively/negatively) cheques presented on them, latest by the end of the confirmation session (7:00 PM), else those will be deemed to have been approved and included for settlement.

In Phase 2 (from January 3, 2026), the item expiry time of cheques shall be changed to T+3 clear hours.

Giving an example, the RBI said the cheques received by drawee banks between 10:00 AM and 11:00 AM will have to be confirmed positively or negatively by them by 2:00 PM (3 hours from 11:00 AM).

Cheques for which confirmation is not provided by the drawee bank in the prescribed 3 hours shall be treated as deemed approved and included for settlement at 2:00 PM.

RBI further said that on completion of settlement, the clearing house will release the information of positive and negative confirmations to the presenting bank.

"The presenting bank shall process the same and release the payment to the customers immediately, but not later than 1 hour from successful settlement, subject to usual safeguards," it said.

RBI directed banks to make their customers adequately aware of the changes in the cheque clearing process.

Banks have also been asked to be in readiness to participate in continuous clearing in CTS on the prescribed dates. (PTI)



Contd. from Page 1...

## BTC admin flayed for

with even regional forces such as the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) and Bodoland People's Front (BPF) recognising its rising political influence.

## Nine suspected Rohingyas

against the group and they will be deported as per the directions of higher authorities, Mahatta said. (PTI)

## Security tightened along Bangla

Yadav said. He said the measure had been taken due to apprehension of activities that could disrupt peace and security in the region. According to the order, no person is permitted to move within a one-kilometre belt along the border in Cachar district between sunset and sunrise.

Similar restrictions apply to movement on Surma River and its high banks during night hours, with special curbs placed on boat operations. Fishing will only be allowed for local residents who must seek permission from the Katigorah circle officer, in coordination with the lessee concerned, and with copies endorsed to the district magistrate and the 170th battalion of the BSF stationed at Dholchera.

The order also prohibits the transportation of specific essential commodities, including sugar, rice, wheat, edible oil, kerosene oil, and salt during night hours, within a five-kilometre belt of the border with Bangladesh. Limited exemptions may be granted for verified purposes, but only after scrutiny by the circle officer and local supply officials, with relevant authorities duly informed, it said.

Government employees on official duty in the border areas are exempt from these restrictions. The order has come into force immediately and will remain effective for two months unless modified earlier, the statement added. (PTI)

## 81 new villages

allowed to submit claims for inclusion in the BTC electoral roll until the last date for filing nominations. This applies to those eligible as per the ECI's current summary revision.

Officials said the updated roll would be an essential reference for voters and political parties as campaigning gathers momentum, adding that expanded coverage and digital access are expected to improve transparency, representation, and voter engagement across the BTR.

## Ahead of Modi's likely

national. Both sides are also discussing modalities to resume direct flight services between the two countries. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar visited China in the last two months to attend SCO meetings. China is the current chair of the SCO. (PTI)

## US tariff impact not

tariff-related issues should not blind us to more "important challenges", including the impact of artificial intelligence, reliance on one country for critical minerals, and their processing and strengthening of supply chains. He exhorted the private sector to do more "as we navigate these longer-term challenges, promising that public policy will play the facilitator's role". "Private sector also has a lot of thinking to do, given the massive strategic challenges we face in the coming years... the private sector also has to think about the long-term rather than the next quarter, which is what might have led to many of the challenges we are currently beginning to face," he said in the comments aimed at India Inc.

He, however, did not elaborate on the subject any further. Stating that the government has allocated money towards the research purposes, he said it is now for the private sector to up their investments in the area.

The Indian youth is staring at both physical and health health issues arising from excess screen use, consumption of ultra processed food, etc, which is leading to anxieties and even suicidal thoughts among people, the CEA said, seeking the private sector's help to tackle the challenge.

He welcomed the capital expenditure put in by the private sector in FY26 and data to be released in February next year will attest to the same. The consumption story is "quite healthy", the CEA said, pointing to the data on UPI usage. Specifically on urban consumption, he rued that there is no proper data source to capture services consumption, and added that drawing from listed companies' earnings may also not be the right measure as consumption is moving to the unlisted space.

The overall resource mobilisation in the economy is not showing any slackening, the CEA said, asking all to look at banks credit growth, commercial paper issuances, and IPO fundraising together.

On China, Nageswaran said "we also need to understand the security dimension and look at the USD 100 billion trade deficit beyond just the number". As a solution, there is a need to diversify the sources of imports and the CEA stressed that the private sector will have a role to play there.

Without naming China, he said only one country supplies critical minerals, which are essential for semi-conductors, artificial intelligence tech, and added that the supply is "critically unstable".

"We cannot go from crude oil import dependence to critical minerals and ladders import dependence. Understand that crude oil (sources) at least is more diversified," he said.

"Indian policy makers must choose between accepting permanent strategic dependence on adversaries or committing the resources necessary for genuine support to independence," Nageswaran said. Stating that AI will cause labour displacement, Nageswaran pitched for caution in AI adoption and added that "we will have to choose the areas in which we allow AI to be deployed and harnessed, and also the speed with which we do so". There is a need to create at least 80 lakh new jobs per annum in the next 10-12 years, he added. (PTI)

## Missing man found

been brought to Churachandpur district hospital morgue. Investigation is underway to determine the cause of death, police added. (PTI)

## CoRRP sticks to I-Day

the current socio-economic and educational realities of the various communities in the state. The committee has held at least two phases of agitation – on May 29 and July 9 – in the form of protest rallies across multiple district headquarters (Dimapur, Kohima, Mokokchung, Wokha, Tseminyu, Zunheboto, Chümokedima, Niuland). Initially, 25 per cent reservation was allocated for seven tribes in non-technical and non-gazetted posts for a period of 10 years. These tribes were designated as 'backward' based on educational and economic disadvantages, and limited representation in state services.

Over the years, the reservation increased to 37 per cent, comprising 25 per cent for seven Eastern Nagaland Backward Tribes and 12 per cent for four other backward tribes of the state. (PTI)

## India, Singapore review ties

to the country was USD 14.4 billion. Over the past 10 years, Singapore's annual investments in India ranged between USD 10 billion and USD 15 billion. (PTI)

## GOVT. OF ASSAM, OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL, DIPHU GOVERNMENT COLLEGE, DIPHU, KARBI ANGLONG DISTRICT:: ASSAM

Website: [diphugovermentcollege.com](http://diphugovermentcollege.com).

Email: [diphugovtc@gmail.com](mailto:diphugovtc@gmail.com)

No.DGC/VI-54/2025-26/320

Dated Diphu the 13th August, 2025

### NOTICE

It is hereby notified that TDC 20, 4 & 6th Semester (Non-CBCS) Examination, 2024 will be held w.e.f. 26-08-2025 to 03-09-2025. All concerned may refer the Exam Schedule on the Notice Board for more information. Further, candidates are asked to collect the Hall Ticket one day before the commencement of the exam

Sd/-

Principal i/c,

Diphu Govt. College, Diphu.

Memo. No.DGC/VI-54/2025-26/320

Dated Diphu the 13<sup>th</sup> August, 2025,

## New administrative unit to bring services closer to Rangapara residents, cut travel to Tezpur Pijush Hazarika inaugurates co-district commissioner's office at Rangapara

**HT Correspondent**

**TEZPUR, Aug 13:** Minister for Water Resources and Information & Public Relations Pijush Hazarika on Wednesday inaugurated the office of the Co-District Commissioner at Rangapara in Sonitpur district, stating that the initiative would bring administrative services closer to the public.

According to an official statement, speaking at the event in the presence of Rangapara MLA Krishna Kamal Tanti, Sonitpur Deputy Commissioner Ananda Kumar Das, Superintendent of Police Barun Purakayastha, the Co-District Commissioner, and other dignitaries, Hazarika said the creation of Co-Districts was a step by the State Government under the leadership of chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to strengthen governance through infrastructure development and timely policy implementation.



The Minister said residents of Rangapara would no longer have to travel to the DC's office in Tezpur for administrative work, reducing both time and travel costs. He highlighted various schemes, including Orunodoi, Mukhyamantri Mahila Udyamita Ab-

hiyaan, and Nijut Moina, which he said have brought transformation in multiple sectors.

Hazarika stated that government recruitment is now conducted purely on merit, with corruption and irregularities in the Assam Public Service Commission

(APSC) eliminated.

He pointed to improvements in road infrastructure in Rangapara and across the State, as well as the establishment of 16 medical colleges and an All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), with plans to further increase medical seats.

He also noted that 1,000 kilometres of new embankments have been constructed in the past five years, which he claimed has significantly reduced flooding.

The government, he said, aims to completely eliminate the problem, alongside measures to remove illegal encroachments from government land to protect the identity of indigenous communities.

According to the statement, 39 Co-Districts were inaugurated in the first phase on October 4 and 5, 2024, and 10 more in the second phase on August 12 and 13, 2025, bringing the total to 49.

## Assam Assembly Youth Immersion Program held at Bodoland University

*In his inaugural address, BTR CEM Pramod Boro urged the youth to actively engage in nation-building, highlighting that their energy, ideas and participation are crucial for a better future*

**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, Aug 13:** The Assam Legislative Assembly on Tuesday organised a Youth Immersion Program at the Jhwajao Nileswar Brahma Auditorium, Bodoland University, Kokrajhar, with enthusiastic participation from youths across various regions.

The initiative aims to help young people and students understand the functioning of the legislative system and inspire them to contribute to nation-building.

Several distinguished dignitaries attended the event, including Assam Legislative Assembly Speaker Biswajit Daimary, Deputy Speaker Dr Numal Momin, Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) Chief Executive Member (CEM) Pramod Boro, Deputy CEM Gobinda Chandra Basumatary, BTC Legislative Assembly Speaker Kaitiram Boro, the Vice Chancellors of Bodoland University and Kokrajhar University, Mem-

ber of Parliament Joyanta Basumatary, and MLA Lawrence Islay.

The programme commenced with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp. Speaker Daimary provided students with a detailed explanation of the legislative process, breaking down parliamentary procedures into simple terms. He emphasised that the Assembly's functioning is a dynamic process in which informed debates and consensus-building shape the laws and policies governing the state and the nation.

In his inaugural address, BTR CEM Pramod Boro urged the youth to actively engage in nation-building, highlighting that their energy, ideas and participation are crucial for a better future.

He added that the BTR government is committed to promoting youth welfare and development across the region.

## 140 students in Diphu receive scholarships

**HT Bureau**

**DIPHU, Aug 13:** A total of 140 students pursuing Higher Secondary and undergraduate courses in various colleges and HS schools under Diphu LAC today received scholarships through cheques under the Chief Minister's Relief Fund for educational purposes. The distribution ceremony was held at the Diphu Farmer Growth Centre.

The cheques were handed over by Diphu MLA Bidyasing Englang in the presence of dignitaries.

Speaking on the occasion, the MLA said the initiative aims to empower students and help them achieve their academic goals. "I wish them all the best for their future endeavours and academic pursuits, and I hope this assistance makes a positive impact on their educational journey," Englang said.

## AJYCP stages statewide protests demanding ILP, opposing CAA directives



**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Aug 13:** The Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuba Chatra Parishad (AJYCP) on Wednesday staged sit-in demonstrations across several districts of Assam, reiterating its long-standing demand for the implementation of the Inner Line Permit (ILP) system in the state and opposing recent government directives under the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). The protests were held in Nagaon, Dibrugarh, Biswanath and Jorhat as part of a state-wide agitation.

In Nagaon, the three-hour protest was led by district president Prabal Sarma and general secretary Hemanta Das, who urged chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to refrain from dividing the people of Assam on religious lines.

Protesters demanded the full implementation of the Assam Accord,

updating of the National Register of Citizens (NRC), and scrapping of the CAA.

Several district and central committee leaders, including Pragjyotish Bonia, Githartha Das and Devashish Das, along with Anchalik unit office-bearers, took part in the demonstration.

In Dibrugarh, AJYCP members gathered at Chowkidingee, raising concerns over the influx of migrants from other states, which they said threatened indigenous rights.

Leaders stressed that the ILP system—already in force in Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur—was the only foolproof mechanism to safeguard the interests of the indigenous population.

At Biswanath Chariali, demonstrators assembled in front of the UCO Bank, demanding immediate implementation of ILP and cancellation of the notification on citizen-

ship under the CAA.

The protest, attended by district president Diganta Barua, central committee joint secretary Kamaljit Dutta, and Nasir Ahmed, concluded with the submission of a memorandum to the Chief Minister through the Biswanath Deputy Commissioner.

In Jorhat, AJYCP members staged a sit-in in front of the Deputy Commissioner's office, protesting against the government's decision to withdraw cases pending in Foreigners' Tribunals against illegal non-Muslim Bangladeshi immigrants who entered Assam before December 31, 2014, under the CAA, 2019.

Led by district president Ashimjyoti Saikia and general secretary Biswajit Gayan, the protesters termed the move a violation of the Assam Accord and the Indian Constitution, and a threat to the culture, language and literature of the indigenous population. They called on the public to oppose the decision and submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister via the Jorhat DC office.

Across all locations, AJYCP leaders reiterated that there should be no religious criteria in determining the legality of immigrants, maintaining that anyone from Bangladesh—whether Hindu or Muslim—entering Assam after the March 24, 1971 cut-off date should be deported.

## NFR to host I-Day cultural event at Eco Park, Amingaon

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Aug 13:** The Railway Protection Force (RPF) of Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) will present a special patriotic performance at Eco Park, Amingaon, Guwahati, on the evening of August 15, as part of the nationwide Independence Day 2025 celebrations.

According to an official statement, the event is part of Indian Railways' initiative to foster patriotic spirit through RPF Band performances at key public venues across the country. On August 15 evening, the RPF Band will also perform at Kakori Railway Station in Uttar Pradesh, the Rail Museum and Hubli Public Garden near Hubli Railway Station in Karnataka, in addition to the Amingaon programme. The Amingaon event

will be attended by NFR General Manager Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, along with senior railway officials, staff, their families and members of the public. Family members of freedom fighters will be honoured, and a display highlighting the Armed Forces' achievements during 'Operation Sindoor' will be presented. Indian Railways has also set up special 'Operation Sindoor'-themed selfie points at various locations for visitors to capture their patriotic moments.

NFR has invited residents of Guwahati and nearby areas to join the celebrations, enjoy the RPF Band's open-air performance at the scenic Eco Park, and commemorate the nation's 79th Independence Day with music, unity and pride.

## AMRS principal Areef Ahmed receives Best North East Zonal Principal Award

**HT Correspondent**

**NAGAON, Aug 13:** Areef Ahmed, Principal of Ajmal Modern Residential School (AMRS), Hojai, a unit of Ajmal Super 40 under the Ajmal Foundation, has been conferred with the 'Best North East Zonal Principal Award 2024-25' by the Science Olympiad Foundation (SOF), New Delhi. The award recognises his vision, leadership and academic initiatives that enabled AMRS students to deliver outstanding performances in the SOF Olympiad Examinations during the 2024-25 academic session.

In the previous year, Mehraj Barbhuiya, a Class X student, secured the 1st Zonal Rank along with a scholarship, Zonal Gold Medal and Certificate of Zonal Excellence in the SOF International Mathematics Olympiad (IMO). This year, 21 students of AMRS cleared Level 2 of the SOF Olympiads. Among them, Class X students Khusbu Akhter Masud and Sahavan Langthasa secured Zonal Rank 2 with scholarships in the National Science Olympiad (NSO) and IMO, respectively.

Mir Mukul Ali, Olympiad In-charge of AMRS, was also honoured with the 'Best Overall Coordinator' and the 'Best Zonal Teacher Award 2024-25' by the SOF. Ajmal Foundation Managing Trustees Badruddin Ajmal and Sirajuddin Ajmal, MLA Binnakandi, along with Director Dr Khasrul Islam, General Manager Dr M.R.H. Azad, and Project Head Abdul Kadir, congratulated Areef Ahmed for bringing laurels to AMRS and to the Hojai district, a release stated.

## District-level IEC campaign on HIV/AIDS launched in Sivasagar

**HT Correspondent**

**SIVASAGAR, Aug 13:** The Assam State AIDS Control Committee, in collaboration with the Sivasagar District AIDS Control Cell, on Tuesday launched a comprehensive district-level Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaign to spread awareness on health issues, particularly HIV/AIDS.

The programme began with an awareness rally, inaugurated by District Joint Director of Health Services Dr Makhan Kalita, from Sivasagar Civil Hospital to Joysagar Chariali. Participants carried placards and banners highlighting messages on HIV/AIDS prevention. Following the rally, an awareness meeting was held under the chairmanship of Executive Magistrate (Health) Parimita Dihingia.

District AIDS Control Cell Officer Dr. Dwijen Koch said the two-month campaign aims to sensitise the public, youth and students about the seriousness of HIV/AIDS and its prevention. The IEC campaign, launched simultaneously in 25 districts of Assam, will include targeted outreach to ensure the message reaches a larger section of society.

The rally and meeting saw participation from ICTC Counsellor Nav Talukdar, Sivasagar Civil Hospital Superintendent Dr Sadhan Bora, Dr Ranjit Hazarika, Dr Prashant Pratim Sharma, Dr Dipamoni Saikia, Dr Nirmalya Chowdhury, Dr Rupam Barkakati, Dr Lalit Saikia, health department officials, and students from Bhagya Lakshmi Regional Child Welfare Centre, Shape NGO, Sivasagar National School, Joysagar High School and Joysagar Nursing School.

In a message, Deputy Commissioner Ayush Garg expressed hope that the campaign would generate widespread awareness about the threat posed by HIV/AIDS.

## Health check-up camp organised at DPS Nagaon

**HT Correspondent**

**NAGAON, Aug 13:** Delhi Public School (DPS) Nagaon, in collaboration with the District Health Society, Nagaon, organised its first-ever health check-up camp under the banner "We Care - 2025 (Your Health Matters)" on Tuesday. According to an official statement, the initiative aimed to ensure the well-being of students from Nursery to Class VIII, as well as teachers, through comprehensive medical screening and guidance. A total of 17 medical professionals from RBSK/RKSK and allied departments took part in the camp, including medical officers, dental surgeons, pharmacists, auxiliary nurse midwives (ANMs), community health officers (CHOs) and counsellors.

The team was led by District Coordinator Devid Borah and included specialists such as Dr Kumud Borah, Dr Pankaj Jyoti Baruah, Dr Abdur Rajek Ahmed, Dr Mitali Goswami, along with Ms Sabita Sarkar, Sadikur Rahman, Azizul Hussain, Ananya Tamuly, Krishnamoni Saikia, Dimbeswar Konwar, Jenifa Islam, Parinita Devi, Mukibur Rahman, Heli Borah, Moni Borah and Ciju Moni Saikia.

## Prohibitory order under BNSS 163 imposed

**HT Correspondent**

**SIVASAGAR, Aug 13:** In view of the ULFA (I) call for a bandh on Independence Day, Sivasagar District Magistrate Ayush Garg on Tuesday issued an order promulgating prohibitory measures under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, across the district.

The order prohibits gatherings of five or more persons in public places, collection or subscription from individuals or business establishments, movement of unauthorised persons within 200 metres of historical monuments protected by the Archaeological Survey of India or important public institutions, effigy burning, destruction of public property, road blockades, and carrying deadly weapons.

Violations will attract penalties under Section 223 of the BNSS, the order stated.

Meanwhile, the Sivasagar district police have tightened security, particularly along the Assam-Nagaland border areas.

## Cleanliness drive held in Margherita ahead of Independence Day

**HT Correspondent**

**MARGHERITA, Aug 13:** The Margherita Municipal Board organised a special cleanliness drive from August 2 to 15 in preparation for the 79th Independence Day celebrations and the 'Har Ghar Tiranga, Har Ghar Swachhata' campaign.

The drive covered the entire Margherita Municipal Board area

and 13 gaon panchayats under the 83rd Margherita LAC, focusing on Swahid Bedis and martyrs' memorials.

Margherita Municipal Board Chairman Anand Kumar Sharma, Margherita BJP Town Mandal President Sukhdev Sharma, Margherita Anchalik Panchayat President Moonmi Gogoi, and all

Safai Karmacharis of the Municipal Board participated in the programme.

Sharma said the initiative was aimed at paying tribute to the freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives for the country's independence and to instil in future generations the values of patriotism, devotion and dedication to the nation.

## Child help foundation expands welfare work across North-East India

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Aug 13:** Child Help Foundation (CHF), a pan-India non-profit organisation, is implementing a wide range of healthcare, education and humanitarian aid programmes across North-East India, covering Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya.

The initiatives have brought notable changes in critical illness treatment, learning opportunities and disaster relief in these states, according to an official statement issued by the organisation.

Under its flagship Emergency Medical Support Programme, CHF has extended life-saving treatment to children in Nagaland suffering from critical illnesses, with support for chemotherapy, radiation and bone marrow transplants in collaboration with over 100 hospitals nationwide.

These interventions have benefited children from financially disadvantaged families, restoring health and hope to their lives.

In the education sector, CHF marked Children's Day with a celebration at Athaiboi Banmajha High School in Assam, featuring cultural performances and creative activities.



It also supports the Assam Andhu Shishu Ashram by covering school fees, providing stationery and organising art sessions for orphans and children from single-parent households.

Additionally, the foundation has distributed stationery kits to over 1,000 students across Assam to encourage post-pandemic school attendance and reduce dropout rates.

During the 2022 floods in Assam, CHF, in collaboration with Raindrop Foundation and Bemil Pratyasha Foundation, distributed ration, sanitary and first-aid kits to 420 families in Nalbari, Changsari, Kamrup and Darrang districts.

In Silchar, it partnered with Cachar Cancer Hospital and Research Centre to deliver essential groceries to flood-affected house-



where illegal sand and soil mining has been rampant for years.

Local residents had repeatedly complained to the Hojai district forest department without receiving any redress.

Tensions escalated when an excavator, hired by an individual named Bijesh for sand extraction, was intercepted by locals, who assaulted the driver, tied him to a pole, and beat him severely.

Following Bijesh's complaint, police rushed to the spot to rescue the driver and recover the excavator but were met with violent resistance.

into their own hands.

The Nagaon Senior Superintendent of Police and a senior officer from West Karbi Anglong also visited the clash site and Hojai Police Station.

The injured excavator driver and others are undergoing treatment in hospital.

Many locals have fled Dighobali fearing police action. Authorities are working to identify more individuals involved and restore calm.

Investigations are ongoing to ensure all perpetrators are brought to justice.

## Seven arrested after violent clash with police in Hojai

**HT Correspondent**

**KHERONI, Aug 13:** At least seven people have been arrested following a violent attack on police personnel and media persons in Dighobali, a flood-affected area about 7 km from Hojai Police Station, on Tuesday night.

Over 100 armed locals, wielding sharp weapons and bamboo sticks, clashed with police, injuring several officers, including a female sub-inspector.

The incident reportedly stemmed from a long-standing dispute over a patch of alluvial soil and sand along the Kapili River,

Inspector General of Police (Law & Order) Akhilesh Kumar Singh and

Inspector General of Police, Central Range, Dr V Siva Prasad Ganjala, reviewed the security situation.

IGP Singh confirmed the arrests and urged the public not to take the law

into their own hands.

The Nagaon Senior Superintendent of Police and a senior officer from West Karbi Anglong also visited the clash site and Hojai Police Station.

The injured excavator driver and others are undergoing treatment in hospital.

Many locals have fled Dighobali fearing police action. Authorities are working to identify more individuals involved and restore calm. Investigations are ongoing to ensure all perpetrators are brought to justice.

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

*Liberty, when it begins to take root, is a plant of rapid growth.*—George Washington

## Trump-Putin meeting in Alaska

The stage is finally set. U.S. President Donald Trump will be meeting the Russian President Vladimir Putin in Alaska in USA on August 15 to discuss the Ukraine war issue and bring about a settlement for facilitating a long-term solution. If a framework of a solution is reached, President Putin will have the final meeting with the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky soon after to finalise the deal. The Alaska meet is taking place in the context of intensive discussions between the Russian and the US officials in the last two weeks after Trump gave Putin a 50 day deadline for concluding a peace agreement, warning otherwise, he would impose fresh sanctions on Russia. Trump also talked to Putin few days back and discussed the progress in the talks between the officials of both countries. The conclusion of a draft understanding at the Alaska meeting on the solution of Ukraine crisis is of supreme importance to Trump who is desperate to get Nobel Peace Prize for his peacemaking efforts in the world. Soon after taking over power on January 20 this year, Trump announced that Ukraine war ending is his priority. During the election campaign, he claimed that if he was elected as the President, he would stop the Ukraine war within 24 hours.

This time, the two Presidents are meeting carrying with them the draft of the framework which has been arrived after intensive talks at officials level of US and Russia. Zelensky was kept in the loop by the US side but the Ukrainian President was not given any final say. He would consider the draft to be agreed at Alaska meeting and in the follow up meeting with President Putin. Zelensky will be mentioning the points if he differed. In this entire exercise, Trump's office is in touch with Putin's office and the near final points for Alaska meeting are the common views of only Trump and Putin. In the next six days preceding the August 15 meeting, further finetuning of the two drafts will be made to facilitate an understanding.

In fact the draft which Trump and Putin may discuss on August 15 has many similarities with the 2014 draft agreement when discussions were held between the Russian side and the Ukrainian officials after Russian occupation of Crimea, which was a part of Ukraine. President Zelensky earlier in discussions during Joe Biden's time insisted on Crimea remaining a part of Ukraine, but Trump has ruled out that and as a part of the draft understanding, Russia will continue to keep its hold on Crimea. There are indications that Russia has agreed to leave some parts of Ukrainian land which Russian army occupied in the last two weeks as a part of Putin's strategy of establishing maximum control of Ukrainian land before going to the negotiating table.

# India's Path to Quantum Leadership

India stands at a critical juncture in the global race for quantum technology, a field poised to revolutionize computing, cryptography, materials science, and more. With its rich legacy in theoretical physics and mathematics, India possesses a strong foundation in quantum concepts, yet it lags behind global leaders like the United States and China in translating this knowledge into practical applications. The challenge lies not only in infrastructure and funding but also in attracting and retaining top-tier talent to bridge the quantum gap. Overcoming this lag demands a multifaceted strategy that leverages India's strengths, addresses systemic weaknesses, and fosters a vibrant ecosystem for quantum innovation.

India's theoretical prowess in quantum mechanics is undeniable. The country has produced luminaries like Satyendra Nath Bose, whose work on quantum statistics laid the groundwork for modern quantum theory. Indian institutions, such as the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), and Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), have nurtured a deep understanding of quantum principles. Students and researchers from these institutions consistently excel in theoretical frameworks, publishing high-impact papers and contributing to global discourse. However, the transition from theory to practice like building quantum computers, developing quantum algorithms, or creating quantum-resistant cryptography requires more than academic excellence. It demands cutting-edge infrastructure, interdisciplinary collaboration, and a robust pipeline of skilled professionals, areas where India currently falls short.

One of the primary hurdles is the brain drain of early-career researchers. Many of India's brightest minds in quantum science pursue opportunities abroad, particularly in the U.S., Europe, or Canada, where research facilities, funding, and career prospects are more attractive. According to estimates, thousands of Indian STEM graduates leave the country annually for higher studies or jobs, with a significant portion not returning. This exodus depletes India's quantum ecosystem, as these researchers contribute to advancements in foreign labs instead of domestic ones. For instance, institutions like MIT, Stanford, or companies like IBM and Google offer state-of-the-art quantum



hardware, generous stipends, and collaborative environments that Indian institutions struggle to match. Retaining this talent requires addressing the factors that drive them abroad: limited funding, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and a lack of cutting-edge facilities.

To counter this, India must invest heavily in creating world-class quantum research hubs. Initiatives like the National Quantum Mission (NQM), launched in 2023 with a budget of ₹6,000 crore, are steps in the right direction. The NQM aims to establish quantum technology hubs, foster industry-academia partnerships, and develop quantum computing applications. However, the scale of investment pales in comparison to China's \$15 billion quantum program or the U.S.'s multi-billion-dollar investments through the National Quantum Initiative. Increasing funding is essential, but it must be coupled with efficient allocation. Bureaucratic delays in approving grants or procuring equipment often stifle research momentum. Streamlining these processes and ensuring timely access to resources will make India a more attractive destination for researchers.

Attracting foreign talent is equally critical. Countries like the U.S. and China have bolstered their quantum programs by recruiting global experts. For example, China's Thousand Talents Program has successfully lured scientists with lucrative incentives and access to advanced labs. India, however, has struggled to create a welcoming environment for foreign researchers. Visa restrictions, limited funding for international collaborations, and a lack of global visibility for Indian quantum programs deter top-tier talent. To address this, India could introduce targeted schemes, such as fellowships for foreign quantum scientists,

tax incentives, and simplified visa processes. Collaborations with global institutions, like joint research programs with MIT or Oxford, could also draw expertise while fostering knowledge exchange. For instance, partnerships with companies like IBM, which has made quantum computing accessible via the cloud, could enable Indian researchers to work on real quantum hardware without needing to leave the country.

Beyond infrastructure and talent, India must cultivate an ecosystem that bridges academia, industry, and government. The U.S. and China have thrived by fostering synergies between these sectors. In the U.S., tech giants like Google and Microsoft collaborate closely with universities and receive government support through agencies like DARPA. In China, state-backed companies like Alibaba and Baidu work alongside academic institutions under a centralized quantum strategy. India, by contrast, has a fragmented ecosystem. While startups like QNu Labs and BosonQ Psi are emerging, they lack the scale and resources of their global counterparts. Encouraging public-private partnerships, providing tax breaks for quantum startups, and incentivizing industries to invest in quantum R&D can accelerate progress. For example, integrating quantum cryptography into India's cybersecurity framework could spur demand for homegrown solutions, driving innovation.

Education and skill development are also pivotal. India's quantum workforce must expand beyond theoretical physicists to include engineers, computer scientists, and material scientists capable of building and optimizing quantum systems. Current curricula in most Indian universities focus heavily on classical computing or theoretical physics, with limited exposure to applied quantum technologies. Introducing specialized quantum engineering programs, short-term certifications, and industry-aligned training can address this gap. Collaborations with platforms like Coursera or edX to offer accessible quantum courses could democratize learning, enabling students from diverse backgrounds to enter the field. Additionally, fostering interdisciplinary research like combining physics with computer science, materials science, and data science will prepare India for the multifaceted demands of quantum technology.

Another challenge is the lack of domestic quantum hardware manufacturing. The U.S. and China have invested heavily in devel-

oping their own quantum processors and fabrication facilities. India, reliant on imported hardware, faces supply chain vulnerabilities and high costs. Establishing semiconductor and quantum hardware manufacturing units, supported by initiatives like the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, could reduce dependence on foreign technology. Collaborating with countries like Japan or South Korea, which excel in precision manufacturing, could accelerate this process. Simultaneously, India should leverage its software strengths to develop quantum algorithms and software frameworks, which require less capital investment but can yield significant impact. For instance, optimizing quantum algorithms for drug discovery or logistics could position India as a leader in specific quantum applications.

Public awareness and government commitment are crucial for sustaining momentum. Quantum technology is often perceived as esoteric, limiting public and political support. Raising awareness through science communication, public lectures, and media campaigns can build enthusiasm and justify investments. The government must also maintain long-term commitment, avoiding the pitfalls of short-term funding cycles. A clear roadmap, with milestones for quantum computing, sensing, and communication, can align stakeholders and ensure accountability.

Finally, India must learn from global best practices while carving its own path. The U.S. excels in innovation-driven ecosystems, while China's strength lies in centralized coordination and scale. India can blend these approaches, combining its democratic ethos and entrepreneurial spirit with strategic government intervention. For example, creating a national quantum consortium, involving IITs, IISc, DRDO, and private players, could centralize efforts while encouraging innovation.

India's quantum lag is not insurmountable. Its theoretical strengths provide a solid foundation, but practical progress requires retaining domestic talent, attracting global experts, and building a robust ecosystem. By scaling investments, streamlining processes, fostering collaborations, and prioritizing education, India can emerge as a quantum powerhouse. The journey demands urgency and vision, but with concerted efforts, India can not only catch up with the U.S. and China but also contribute uniquely to the global quantum revolution.

# Israeli genocide in Gaza has violated all types of International Laws

## UN human rights council must institute a separate mechanism for Gaza

By: Akansha Pillai, Akshat R.N

The violence in Gaza has evoked a novel reaction from the U.N. specialists, who have clearly warned the Palestinians about the 'annihilation'. As documented in the photos of dead bodies and funeral marches, the cost of human life has been deep. The crisis was made worse by brutal starvation tactics.

In November 2024, the International Criminal court issued an arrest warrant for Benjamin Netanyahu for committing the war crime of starvation and just three months after in March 2025, Netanyahu declared that the entry of all goods and supplies to Gaza Strip will be prohibited. The total blockade to Gaza began in March resulting in seventy-seven days of cruel and inhumane siege, and is further evidence of Israel's genocidal intent against the Palestinian population.

Delays in the provision of humanitarian assistance continue to compound the failing position of the international community. In June, for example, the United States vetoed a UN Security Council Resolution that called for "an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza," with less support from the U.S. than the fourteen other member states that voted in favour, including the United Kingdom. Amnesty International criticized the U.S. veto of the draft resolution called "the immediate and unconditional lifting of all restrictions to the entry of humanitarian assistance," labelling the U.S. veto as inhuman.

This analysis will start from the legal premise that when UN experts use the legal term "annihilation" it has a more defined legal meaning under international law in accordance with the 1948 Genocide Convention and customary international humanitarian law and the norms of international law that are considered peremptory (jus cogens) which cannot be derogated.

The U.N expert's invocation of the term 'annihilation' has exacted legal meaning that transcends rhetorical overtones. Such terminology expressly involves related but discrete legal regimes: the 1948 convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the crime of Genocide, customary International Humanitarian law, and peremptory norm, particularly jus cogens, from which derogation is not allowed.

As per Article II of the Genocide Convention, genocide is a term used to describe acts which are perpetrated with an intention to destroy, in whole or in part, national, ethnic, racial or any religious group. The international criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) has clarified that the term "destroy" does not only include physical means of killing but also to subject the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction also. With this understanding it was later understood and communicated that establishing conditions of life that would result in the destruction of a group is connected through the scope of convention.

The U.N experts' invocation of 'Annihilation' is in the context of this established jurisprudence. The expert's finding emphasises on the possibility that some acts in Gaza might engage rights under Genocide Convention. Expert jargon construes "considerable evidentiary weight" in determining risk thresholds of International Law.

Additionally, Article 40 of the International

Law Commission, states that states have certain obligations for all states when faced with gross systematic failure to fulfil obligations under peremptory norms. The Commission includes prohibition on genocide, meaning that warnings of 'Annihilation' triggers erga omnes obligations for all states which is owed to the international community as a whole.

The Genocide Convention creates a complex obligation for State parties and has provided distinctive framework for understanding these obligations. A State's duty to prevent, and the attendant duty to act arise at the moment when the State learns of or should have normally learned of the existence of a serious Genocide being perpetrated. A State can be held to have breached its duty to prevent even if it did not have certainty at the time when it should have acted, that genocide was on the verge of being perpetrated or was being perpetrated.

With time we have set out a refined legal test for determining State responsibility herein, by introducing an effective capacity to influence standards that depends upon a state geographical distance and strength of political and other links from the actors implicated. This standard was most recently applied in Gambia v. Myanmar (2024) and the provisional measures were directed by the ICJ on the basis of reports by U.N experts which were substantially identical with those concerning Gaza.

The ICJ had ordered some preventive measures such as guaranteeing humanitarian assistance, stopping incitement and requiring periodic reports on enforcement. The language of "annihilation", as warned by UN experts, triggers the entire gamut of preventive obligations.

The application of international humanitarian law during armed conflict and occupations has been authoritatively confirmed by international jurisprudence. The ICJ's Advisory opinion of the legal consequences of a wall in the occupied Palestinian Territory formulated three potential relations between these regimes of law: some may be exclusively matters of international human rights law, some humanitarian law, and others may be both these branches of international law.

This principle of equity was reaffirmed again in armed activities of the Congo (2005) and most recently by the ICJ's advisory opinion on Legal Consequences of the policies and practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian territory. With this practice, this simultaneous use created a complicated legal framework.

The reported mass casualty incidents need to be examined under Articles 51(4) and 51(5) of Additional Protocol, which bans indiscrete attacks including those which may be expected to cause incidental loss to civilian life which may be excessive in relation to concrete and direct military advantage anticipated. The principle of proportionality demands a proper assessment of whether incidental civilian losses are excessive and cannot be made in isolation from military advantage.

Article 57(2)(a)(ii) of Additional Protocol I mandates planners of attack to take all feasible precautions in the choice of means and methods of attack with a view to avoiding, and in any event to minimise incidental loss of civilian life. The ICTY also reiterated that in case of doubt the parties must err on the side of caution. Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, guarantees the right

to life. The Human Rights Committee's General Comment No. 36 stipulates that this must remain applicable in situations of armed conflict.

Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights states that purposefully interfering with access to food constitutes violation to the Covenant. Human rights obligations can be divided and tailored to the circumstances of extraterritorial action. In deciding if actions in Gaza violate these concurrent legal regimes, the courts must employ the complementary principle which is an established principle of interpreting IHRL.

The responsibility norm has developed from an intellectual concept to a nascently emerging concept in international law. There continues to be some scholarly dispute. The Report of the Secretary General on Implementing the Responsibility to protect has stated that R2P finds its footing in law on the basis of precedent treaty and customary law obligations. In 'Legal Consequences of the Construction of a wall in the occupied Palestinian Territory', the ICJ has established that an occupying power remains under some legal obligations to the occupying population. This was reaffirmed in the 2009 report of the UN Secretary-General on R2P, where it was made explicit that 'Pillar One' responsibilities are to be exercised over populations under effective control.

Nevertheless, ICJ's most recent Advisory Opinion on 'Legal Consequences of the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory' clarifies this by taking the view that the absence of a well-defined structure of government does not exclude the applicability of obligations of protection under international law.

The invocation of the Responsibility to Protect doctrine in Gaza represents a systemic failure of the international legal system in light of credible information of mass atrocities and genocide. The UN Special Committee concluded, "Israel is still practicing methods of waging war against Gaza that are genocidal", with the Committee also highlighting that Member States have the collective responsibility to uphold international law and accountability to international law wherever and whenever violations occur.

Additionally, targeted obstructive conduct against the provision of humanitarian assistance would go on as one of the components of the R2P failure, with the May 2025 Human Rights Watch assessment stating that "Israel's fresh plans... inch ever closer to extermination", explaining that "a definitive determination that genocide is already underway is not required" to warrant legal intervention, a standard established during their intervention in a case currently before the UK courts challenging the UK government's decision to continue to license military equipment used by Israeli forces in Gaza.

In a recent ruling courts have created a significant legal precedent directly within the ambit of commitments evoked from threats of annihilation by UN authorities. The jurisprudential evolution may be traced across various international tribunals and courts, adding unique instances to the governing legal framework.

The ICJ has emphasised that the UN expert's assessment formed part of the evidence base for such a finding. The Court directed Israel to

take all measures within its power to avoid any acts prohibited under the Genocide Convention, provide humanitarian aid, avoid and punish incitement of genocide, and maintain evidence of suspected violations.

Most significantly, the ICJ had mandated periodic reporting of implementation measures, creating a continuous monitoring process. This created a precedent that warnings like 'annihilation' initiate automatic judicial monitoring procedures. Furthermore, the International Criminal Court has developed pertinent jurisprudence. The situation in the state of Palestine affirmed the court's territorial jurisdiction in Palestine, Gaza. The office of the Prosecutor then initiated a formal investigation, with the Prosecutor's Statement specifying that evidence collection was concentrating on events leading to mass civilian casualties. The ICC jurisprudence regarding command responsibility would be applicable to commanders within the Gaza military and there could be criminal liability for not preventing war crimes under Article 28 the Rome Statute.

Institutional reaction to annihilation notification would need to be examined in light of fragmentation of International law, a thesis extensively debated by the international law commission in its first study "Fragmentation of international law: Difficulties arising from the diversification and expansion of international law".

Such a framework acknowledges the technical specialisation of various international institutions but insists on their complementary function to implement international legal rules. The remit of the UN Human Rights Council is to deal with situations of violation of human rights and report thereon. The UNHRC has built special procedural mechanisms with special application in Gaza. The process of UPR is realized in the discovery of adherence to human rights standards.

The United Nations Human Rights Council Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, established by UNHRC Resolution, has a mandate to investigate all violations of international humanitarian law and all violations and abuses of international human rights law alleged in the OPT. Its February 2024 report documented patterns of conduct that could amount to the crime against humanity of extermination; words that affirmatively follow threats of "annihilation."

Apart from the UNHRC, other UN organisations have some of their legal mandates directly applicable in Gaza. The Chapter VII power of the Security Council was extensively considered by the ICJ in Certain Expenses of the United Nations, where it held that the Council was primarily and not exclusively responsible for international peace and security. This precedent is the legal foundation under which the General Assembly may move under the Uniting for Peace procedure if warnings of "annihilation" are not properly heeded by the Council. The procedure was last invoked regarding Gaza in the General Assembly Resolution.

First, the UNHRC must establish a Special Monitoring Mechanism for Gaza under the framework established by the UNHRC Resolution. This mechanism would employ the "Minnesota Protocol" methodology for documenting civilian casualties. A precedent for such a mechanism exists in the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission which

is established by the Security Council Resolution. The SMMG must have specific authority to immediately transmit findings to the ICC office of the Prosecutor pursuant to Article 15 of the Rome Statute, by creating a real-time evidence collection mechanism.

Second, UN member states, particularly High Contracting parties to the Geneva Conventions, should implement their obligations under Common Article 1 to ensure respect for the convention activating specific domestic legal mechanisms.

Third, the General Assembly should invoke the Uniting for Peace procedure to recommend the establishment of the United Nations Emergency Peace for Gaza. The ICJ's Certain Expenses Advisory Opinion established the legal basis for such forces being invoked when the Security Council is deadlocked. The force's mandate must specifically include establishing and securing humanitarian corridors and civilian safe zones, with operating guidelines drawn from the UN infantry Battalion manual regarding protection of civilian's operations.

Fourth, all humanitarian actors should take up the "Parameters and Principles of UN assistance in Syria" framework with Gaza amendments, which had already set out precise operational procedures for humanitarian access during armed conflict. This would include third-party monitoring arrangements, deconfliction arrangements, and humanitarian notification arrangements. ICRC Commentary to Article 23 of the Fourth Geneva Convention entrenches that belligerent parties ought to be provided with humanitarian relief for civilians in certain circumstances, offering a legal basis for enforcement of humanitarian access.

The United Nations' warnings of "annihilation" in Gaza, paired with the United States' veto on lifting flight restrictions, have occasioned a serious legal light to be cast under the international humanitarian and human rights law framework. The usage of such language is not merely rhetorical—it triggers a whole array of legal obligations binding under the Genocide Convention, the Geneva Conventions, and customary international law.

Jurisprudence from international tribunals, such as the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court, has consistently upheld that acts threatening physical destruction of a population, be it by direct attack or systematic deprivation, fall within the prohibitions of international law. Therefore, the terminology of 'annihilation' carries with it evidentiary weight and makes it incumbent upon given states to urgently act so as to prevent further violations from occurring. The continued obstruction of humanitarian aid, with the Security Council deadlocked, is revealing of the institutional limitations in dealing with mass atrocity crimes. Yet, the legal obligations are not dependent on an alignment of political views. Rather, the obligation to prevent or to respond to such violations is embedded as peremptory norms and is reinforced by the Responsibility to Protect, thus, applicable even in situations of fragmented authority and contested jurisdiction.

Now, Gaza stands as the test case for the enforcement of international law. Failure to act decisively not only endangers life and rights but also goes against the legal order itself. The question remains if the accountability mechanisms will see meaningful application. (IPA Service)

# REINTERPRETING RELIGION THROUGH THE TALE OF AN ELEPHANT MADHURI

By: Swami Devendra Brahmachari

The story of Madhuri, a temple elephant who served the Nandani Jain Monastery for 35 years, has become a symbolic narrative about faith, tradition, and the intersection of law, politics, and religion. Recently, following a petition by PETA, Madhuri was relocated to the Jamnagar Wildlife Rescue Centre. This move sparked widespread anguish across the Jain community—not just in Maharashtra, but throughout India. Responding to this deep public sentiment, the Maharashtra government under Devendra Fadnavis intervened. As a result, steps were taken to file a review petition, withdraw criminal proceedings, and initiate Madhuri's return home. Undoubtedly, this decision by the Fadnavis government is a thoughtful and sensitive one, earning praise from many quarters. After all, Madhuri was not merely an elephant. She was a cherished part of the Nandani Jain Monastery and a living embodiment of the community's devotion and reverence.

Had Madhuri been able to speak, she might have said: "I am not an ordinary being. I am the embodiment of thousands of devotees' emotions. I have not only been seen—I have been worshipped. My name is Madhuri, but I am more than a name. I am the prayer echoing in the silence of the monastery, where I breathed in the shade of service, restraint, and spiritual culture for 35 years." Indeed, her silent presence, compassionate gaze, and serene demeanor brought life to the monastery. She was not merely a living being—she became the soul of the faith, intimately connected with the devotion, emotions, and worship of countless followers.

Madhuri, the Gajalakshmi of the Nandani Jain Monastery, was far more than

a wild animal—she was a living symbol of the Jain principle of compassion for all living beings. Her presence, her care, and her veneration were not the results of forced captivity but expressions of religious devotion. Organizations like PETA often see only the physical form of a living being. They miss the spiritual essence, the cultural context, and the dignity embedded in traditions. Thus, Madhuri's forced relocation to Jamnagar was not just a physical transfer—it was a wound inflicted upon the very heart of the faith. The Madhuri episode raises a profound question: Is religion still free and sovereign, or has it become entangled in political and legal mazes? Can the loving, devotional relationship with living beings be recognized outside the narrow definitions of law? Political interference has often challenged the sanctity of religious traditions. However, in this case, the response of the Maharashtra government—particularly the Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar—deserves appreciation. Their decisions, such as filing a review petition in the Supreme Court and withdrawing existing legal cases, reflect not only judicial consciousness but also spiritual sensitivity.

Jainism's foundational philosophy is one of coexistence with nature and non-violence towards all living beings. These ideals are not merely preached—they are lived. Madhuri embodied this way of life. Through her care, service, and veneration, the Nandani Monastery taught generations how to cultivate loving, soul-connected relationships with living creatures. Her departure to Jamnagar was not just the exit of an elephant—it marked the closure of a living school of ecological and spiritual ethics. A community that revered Madhuri as a divine presence could not accept her removal as

just a legal mandate. It was seen as a collective defeat of public faith, shared compassion, and spiritual dignity. But now, with her return becoming a real possibility, this moment feels like a shared victory for both faith and justice. Madhuri is not just an elephant—she is the material embodiment of the monastery's spirit. This is the essence of the entire discourse: her return symbolizes the restoration of the honor rooted in service, compassion, and reverence for all life.

In today's era, it is rare for governments to act with such sensitivity toward religious matters. But the Fadnavis government's approach proves that when the state, judiciary, and religious communities work together, a new era of justice and faith can be envisioned. I had the honor of participating in the high-level meeting convened by the state government to address the issue, where representatives from various religions gathered. The government's steps—particularly the Supreme Court review petition and withdrawal of criminal cases—are signs of a mature democracy that not only follows the law but listens to the heartbeat of its people. When Madhuri returns to the monastery, she will not return alone. With her will come the restoration of dignity to faith, the rebirth of devotion, a rediscovery of compassion, and renewed inspiration for harmonious coexistence with nature? Her return will make religion visible not just in scriptures but in daily life. Every Jain temple, every sacred space, and every soul will find reassurance in knowing that although justice and devotion may be delayed, they can never be defeated.

Madhuri's return is not just the homecoming of an elephant—it is a triumph of human sensitivity. The Maharashtra



government deserves heartfelt gratitude. So do those compassionate individuals who translated Madhuri's silent plea into a cry for justice. The respect shown to Madhuri, and the reaffirmation of the faith she represented, is not merely about one animal—it is a test of humanity's collective compassion. If politics is to truly represent public sentiment, it must go beyond votes and power equations. It must connect with the soul of society. The Maharashtra government's exemplary handling of this case shows how religious identity and public emotion can be honored through fair and thoughtful action. Religion was neither politicized nor ignored—it was treated as a sacred axis of culture and compassion. This is the kind of leadership that transforms

governance into public service, and religion into the very soul of the people.

The essence of Jainism lies in Ahimsa—non-violence. But this Ahimsa is not limited to refraining from physical harm. It is a deep lifestyle rooted in compassion, empathy, and service toward every living being. Jain Acharyas and monks have demonstrated this not just through words but through their conduct. They walk barefoot, sweeping the path ahead to avoid harming even the tiniest of life forms.

History is replete with examples where kings, under Jain influence, renounced violence and established cow shelters, bird hospitals, and water reservoirs for all creatures. Lord Mahavira's entire life stands as a testament to this

principle—he declared: "Savve Pāṇa Piyāyā"—"All living beings are dear." This deep reverence eventually became the bedrock of Jain society. Even today, Jains lead numerous initiatives for animal welfare—whether in bird hospitals, rescue centers for injured animals, or shelters for abandoned creatures. That a temple elephant like Madhuri was revered and cared for is living proof of this unbroken tradition of compassion stretching from ancient times to the present day. Jainism teaches us not only to love fellow humans but to nurture compassion for all life forms that inhabit this universe. It is this very compassion and empathy that breathe life into religion and elevate humanity to the realm of the divine.

## India celebrates, but how are its Lions really doing?

By: Aathira Perinchery

At an event to celebrate the day at Gujarat's Barda Wildlife Sanctuary, Union environment minister Bhupender Yadav and Gujarat chief minister Bhupendra Patel were the main dignitaries on the dais.

"Today we say with great pride that if anyone wants to see the Asiatic lion, they have to come to Gujarat," Yadav said, commenting on the increase in lion numbers (from 284 in 1990) to 891 in 2025—the latter recorded during the latest lion census undertaken by the state government this year.

Per the Census and the event of August 10, Barda is now the 'second home' of the Asiatic lion; 17 lions currently live in Barda. On August 10, the Gujarat CM also announced funding of Rs.180 crore to develop the new habitats for lions in the state.

An increase in lion numbers, a new home for lions, and funds to the tune of Rs.180 crore—all paint a glowing picture of India and its Asiatic lions. But how are India's lions really doing?

Conservationists are not very impressed. Scientists told The Wire that while the Asiatic lion population in Gujarat may have indeed risen, the use of outdated and flawed methodology in the latest lion census means that its findings need to be taken with a dollop of salt.

Meanwhile, even though Gujarat is setting up a 'second home' in the state for lions at Barda Wildlife Sanctuary, this will not be ideal because it is just around 100 km from Gir, biologists told The Wire. And Gujarat still refuses to part with its lion prides. Despite a Supreme Court order in 2013 that some lions should be relocated into Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh, nothing has moved. While cheetahs have come into Kuno all the way from Africa, India's Asiatic lions still do not have a home in another state in their own country.

This could affect their survival. With the entire population of Asiatic lions being located exclusively in Gujarat, a single disease outbreak could easily wipe them out, biologists say. News reports have recorded a few recent lion deaths too.

### A looming threat

Single population species—or species that survive in only one natural population in a single, isolated geographic area—are at a huge risk of extinction. A prime reason: disease.

A single major disease outbreak—such as a virus—could wipe out such isolated single populations of species very quickly, coupled with other existing threats such as persecution by people, climate change and habitat loss.

These fears are justified because this has happened in the past. The Christmas Island Rat, a rat native to the Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean and found only there is thought to have gone extinct between 1898 and 1908, after contracting parasitic protozoans called trypanosomes from black rats (that came to the island accidentally as stowaways on expedition ships).

The Asiatic lion which dwells in Gujarat, however, is technically not a separate species of lion from their cousins in Africa. They're a separate sub-species: which means they are not different enough to be called a different species, but distinct enough—both physically and genetically—to be a different sub-species. And Gujarat's Gir is the Asiatic lions' only home.

Recent Asiatic lion deaths in the district of Amreli in Gujarat have worried conservationists. In late July this year, news reports recorded the death of three lion cubs in Amreli; forest authorities have kept six other cubs and three lionesses under observation. In 2018, a combination of several health concerns including canine distemper—caused by a highly communicable virus—and a protozoal infection had killed more than 30 lions in Gujarat in a month's span.

Early this year, the Gujarat state government said in the Gujarat Assembly that 286 lions including 143 cubs had died between January 2023 and December 2024. At least 58 lions and 17 cubs died unnaturally, reported The Indian Express.

"It is prudent conservation practice based on strong scientific foundations not to have all members of an endangered species existing at a single site," commented big cat biologist Ravi Chellam, who has been involved with lion conservation since 1985.

"Any catastrophe natural or human-mediated can in a very short span of time wipe out the hard-won conservation success and lay to waste several decades of work, if

all surviving members of an endangered species are restricted to a single population. The risks are numerous and include habitat fragmentation, degradation and destruction, cyclones, floods, forest fires, disease outbreaks, political decisions, droughts, poaching, violence and wars," Chellam said.

**Rising numbers, expanding ranges**  
On May 21 this year, Gujarat CM Patel announced results from the latest census of Asiatic lions. Their number has risen from 674 to 891 in five years, he said. The Census document claims that lion populations have also expanded their range (35,000 sq km now, an increase by around 16% when compared to 2020).

"I suppose there is some merit in this claim. From the available information including maps, it looks like they have computed this area by joining the locations of the lion sightings farthest from Gir," commented Chellam.

Per the Census, nearly half of the lion population (44%) has been observed in "non-forest areas"—wasteland, agricultural lands, riverine areas and near human habitation.

The bulk of this area where the expansion of Asiatic lions has occurred is human-dominated areas including cities and towns which are not very suitable for lions to inhabit, Chellam said.

"It does throw up challenges," Chellam commented. "People's lives are disrupted and the lions are also under stress. There are reports of lions turning aggressive and attacking people. There was a recent report of a man being attacked and killed by lions. This is bound to happen especially since people approach the lions closely on foot and often harass the lions. In fact, it is a miracle that the number of attacks are so low, given the extremely frequent interactions and the resulting opportunities for lions to attack people."

On June 25, a lion dragged a five-year-old from a farm near Thordi village near Savarkunda range in Amreli district. The boy, who was mauled in the attack, died. The state forest department captured the lion and moved it to a rescue center, according to a report by the Press Trust of India. The latest Census recorded the presence of lions for the first time in Amreli: the district did not host lions before.

Again in Savarkunda, forest department watchers found the body of a partially-eaten man in March this year. This came just a week after Amreli witnessed a lion kill a farmer, drag his body away and sit on it refusing to let go until forest officials intervened.

**Flaws in census methods**  
Most people do not look beyond the main result of the latest lion census—that lion numbers have increased. Prime Minister Narendra Modi too raved about this rise. In his 122nd episode of Mann Ki Baat on May 25, he said:

"This number of lions that emerged after the lion census is very encouraging. Friends, many of you must be wondering how this animal census is conducted! This exercise is very challenging. You will be surprised to know that the Lion Census was conducted in 11 districts, in an area of 35 thousand square kilometres. For the census, the teams monitored these areas round the clock... twenty four hours. Both verification and cross verification were done in this entire campaign. This enabled the counting of lions to be completed with utmost precision."

But there's more to the Census—and it turns out that "precision" may have been the last thing that the exercise involved.

While the Asiatic lion population may indeed have risen, scientists who have studied both the Asiatic lion as well as methods to accurately estimate big cat populations across the world—including African lions—told The Wire that the outdated and flawed methodology in India's lion census leaves much to be desired.

The methodology employed to count the Gir lions falls within the broad category of 'index-based methods' in wildlife abundance estimation literature, scientist Arjun Gopalaswamy, told The Wire. Gopalaswamy is the founder and chief scientist of Carnassials Global, an organisation that provides science advisory services to governments, universities, etc. in Africa and Asia, and has co-authored studies on population estimation of big cats including tigers in India, African lions in Uganda and South Africa and African cheetahs in Kenya.

This category of 'index-based' methods is now considered outdated, as it fails to account for detection probability, rendering the information generated by such surveys unreliable, Gopalaswamy said. Detection probability is the probability that observers detect signs of an animal in an

area, if it is present there.

"Consequently, any perceived changes in abundance are also unreliable," Gopalaswamy added.

The latest "contemporary and robust approach" to counting lions relies on obtaining unambiguous individual identities, he said. This is now done predominantly through direct photography and complemented by other field methods. Moreover, this has to be done "within a rigorous spatial capture-recapture framework", Gopalaswamy added.

Spatial capture-recapture means a photo capture system where a region is divided into smaller blocks, or grids, and camera traps are deployed in these areas over a fixed amount of time taking into account the home ranges of lions. The number of lions here is then estimated using mathematical models, based on the number of times a specific individual was "caught" and "recaptured" by the camera traps.

"This approach has been successfully implemented at large scales across several countries and specific sites in Africa," Gopalaswamy said.

This is the same method that India too uses to estimate its tiger numbers. So why isn't this more advanced and scientifically more robust technique being used to count lions? Because India does not use this method for lions yet, it "significantly lags behind many countries and sites in Africa in the scientific estimation of wild lion populations", Gopalaswamy said.

Even big cat biologist YV Jhala who was formerly with the government-run Wildlife Institute of India has been cautious about the numbers presented in the lion census. He told Al Jazeera in June this year that a "total count of wide-ranging wild carnivores is not a scientific way of estimating their population".

**Why does this matter?**  
Firstly, it raises questions about the validity of lion population estimation numbers that India is proudly celebrating. And secondly, bad science can be deleterious—for both people and wildlife—because this can influence conservation action in several ways.

"An emerging trend of concern is that changes in lion numbers, based on unreliable index-based methods, are being adopted uncritically in IUCN assessments, including the Red List and Green Status List," Gopalaswamy said.

"Worryingly, these trends are also being incorporated into scientific manuscripts without adequate questioning."

**A second home for India's lions?**

Biologists including Chellam have recommended time and again that Gujarat relocate some of its Asiatic lions to another site away from Gir to ensure that another, stand-alone population thrives in another location. But the Gujarat state government has resisted these suggestions, and even orders to this note from the Supreme Court. In April 2013, the Supreme Court had ordered that a few lions be translocated from Gir to Kuno within six months. But Gujarat has refused to share Asiatic lions with any other state so far.

It is important to not forget that translocating lions to Kuno is "the law of the land" because of the Supreme Court order, Chellam added. "It is well over twelve years since this order was passed and tragically, everyone concerned has chosen to ignore this order of the Supreme Court of India."

In this regard it is "disappointing" to see the "levels of impunity" with which the State Government of Gujarat and also the Government of India have been operating at, he said.

The governments are now setting up Barda as a 'second home' for the lions—but it is not ideal, Chellam commented.

"Barda, as the crow flies, is less than 100 km from Gir, small in size (less than 200 sq.km), with a very low-density prey population and hence unsuitable to host a viable population of lions," Chellam cautioned.

The whole point in translocating a few lions to establish a second free-ranging population of wild Asiatic lions outside Gir is to ensure geographical isolation, he added. This geographical isolation is necessary to mitigate the risks of having the entire population of an endangered species as a single population.

"Conservation of lions and in fact, most species, doesn't require astronomical budgets," Chellam noted. "What is required is knowledge-based plans which are implemented in a transparent, inclusive and accountable manner. Harping on Barda as a second home is merely a distraction and a delaying tactic to continue to stall the translocation of lions to Kuno." (Courtesy: thewire)

## Why is the green Hydrogen industry faltering in Australia?

By: Krishna Vohra

One of the most promising pathways towards a clean energy future, green hydrogen (H<sub>2</sub>) emerged as a pillar of decarbonisation, particularly for hard-to-abate industries like steelmaking and heavy transport. Green H<sub>2</sub> is produced by splitting water into hydrogen and oxygen using renewable electricity. Grey H<sub>2</sub>, which is produced from fossil fuels such as natural gas, emits substantial amounts of greenhouse gases. Blue H<sub>2</sub> combines this method with carbon capture mechanisms to reduce emissions. Green H<sub>2</sub>, on the other hand, results in zero emissions and has been projected to become a major global export in the future.

Australia was on track to become one of the leading producers and exporters of green H<sub>2</sub>, with Australian green energy giant Fortescue having already put pen to paper on a deal to supply German energy company E.ON with the renewable energy source. Why then, has the industry suddenly stuttered?

After a year of regulatory inconsistency and political uncertainty in the backdrop of a hard-fought election, the nascent green H<sub>2</sub> industry has faced a number of hurdles. In recent months, a wave of cancellations, disinvestment, and scepticism has cast a pall over the sector.

Major projects have collapsed as several Australian state governments pulled financial backing due to ballooning costs and shifting priorities. The cornerstone CQ-H2 project was terminated after a critical US\$1 billion funding request was rejected, following the Liberal National Party's election victory in Queensland. In New South Wales, Origin Energy backed out of plans for establishing a 'hydrogen hub' in Hunter Valley. South Australia also saw the dismantling of the dedicated hydrogen office planned at Whyalla, with nearly 600 billion Australian dollars (A\$) being redirected away from the sector.

Damaging rhetoric by sceptics in the opposition has further complicated the decarbonisation outlook in the country. In the run-up to the Australian elections in May, the conservative coalition slammed government spending on what has often been dubbed a "fantasy" in conservative discourse. In a nation scarred by high rates of inflation and rising energy prices, this sort of campaign talk resonated with a significant voter base. When green energy is politicised, made into a partisan issue, and vilified for rising costs, the unfortunate outcome is that it becomes more challenging to advocate for—and even more so to secure government funding.

Although Labour, which has previously championed Australia's green hydrogen revolution, ultimately emerged victorious, the perception of clean energy has most certainly shifted. The green hydrogen ambition will remain a part of Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's government's Future Made in Australia policy; yet, work remains to be done. Addressing the transition, as well as Australia's rising coal exports, with clarity will go some way in allaying fears. Backing clean energy projects with policy coherence and state finance can further help revive the sector.

### Global Hydrogen Outlook

Aside from the surging coal exports, the Albanese government has also been criticised for continuing to allow the expansion of Australian coal mines. Labour's plan for a federal environment protection agency was also shelved by Albanese before the last election, fearing it could provoke backlash in Western Australia. However, there has been a recent breakthrough, as a New South Wales court blocked the state's largest coal mine expansion. Experts say that the industry has entered something of a disillusionment phase, common with any new disruptive technology following the initial hype. While green hydrogen is not the catch-all solution it was touted to be, its role in hard-to-abate industries isn't speculative. Green H<sub>2</sub> is already in action, and its use will inevitably continue as supply chain vulnerabilities and surging costs of grey steel become more pronounced.

Aside from the surging coal exports, the Albanese government has also been criticised for continuing to allow the expansion of Australian coal mines.

Australia and the rest of the world should not be deterred by the setbacks the industry has faced down under; such challenges are to be expected. When left entirely to market forces, the transition to clean energy is likely to be controversial in most countries and expensive in the short term. With robust policy support and adequate financing, costs will decline in the medium and long term as industry practices improve. Green hydrogen projects will not become more affordable until the initial hurdles are overcome with adequate state support. Governments have to step in to support clean energy in the interest of their own energy security.

What the rest of the world can learn from Australia's experience is that the road to a green energy future is not always linear, and the effort is very likely to face setbacks. These are often compounded by shifting government priorities, insufficient policy backing, and fiscal uncertainty. A long-term vision that prioritises energy security through renewables rather than subsidising legacy fossil fuels for short-term political gain is the need of the hour. Following the US retreat from any meaningful climate action, Australia must realise it can play a pivotal role in decarbonising the Indo-Pacific. Fostering cooperation with Japan, where green H<sub>2</sub> is increasingly in demand, would be a welcome step. Indo-Australian collaboration in sustainable steelmaking projects can also be scaled up to strengthen Indo-Pacific climate cooperation. (Courtesy:ORF)

## French president says Trump wants to achieve ceasefire at upcoming Alaska summit

**BERLIN, Aug 13:** US President Donald Trump was "very clear" in a meeting Wednesday with European leaders that the US wants to achieve a ceasefire at the summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Alaska, French President Emmanuel Macron said.

Speaking after the virtual meeting between Trump, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and other European leaders, Macron said Trump was prioritising a ceasefire between Ukraine and Russia. He added that Trump had been clear that "territorial issues relating to Ukraine ... will only be negotiated by the Ukrainian president."

Following his meeting Friday with the Russian leader, Trump will also "seek a future trilateral meeting" — one involving Trump, Putin and Zelenskyy, Macron said. "I think that's a very important point in this regard. And we hope that it can be held in Europe, in a neutral country that is acceptable to all parties," Macron said.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz described the meeting with Zelenskyy and Trump as "constructive." Speaking alongside Zelenskyy, Merz said after the



videoconference that "important decisions" could be made in Anchorage, but stressed that "fundamental European and Ukrainian security interests must be protected" at the meeting.

Merz convened the virtual meetings in an attempt to make sure European and Ukraine's leaders are heard ahead of the summit, where Trump and Putin are expected to discuss a path toward ending Moscow's war in Ukraine.

Zelenskyy and the Europeans have been sidelined from that summit. German government spokesperson Steffen Meyer said the intention of Wednesday's meetings was to "make clear the position of the Europeans."

ners in the United States and Europe to coordinate efforts and "force Russia to peace." "Pressure must be applied on Russia for an honest peace. We must take the experience of Ukraine and our partners to prevent deception by Russia," Zelenskyy said.

The stakes for Europe Trump has said he wants to see whether Putin is serious about ending the war, now in its fourth year, describing Friday's summit as "a feel-out meeting" where he can assess the Russian leader's intentions. Yet Trump has disappointed allies in Europe by saying Ukraine will have to give up some Russian-held territory. He has also said Russia must accept land swaps, although it was unclear what Putin might be expected to surrender.

European allies have pushed for Ukraine's involvement in any peace talks, fearful that discussions that exclude Kyiv could otherwise favor Moscow.

Trump on Monday ducked repeated chances to say that he would push for Zelenskyy to take part in his discussions with Putin, and was dismissive of Zelenskyy and his need to be part of an effort to seek peace. (AP)

## Sheikh Hasina's niece Tulip Siddiq dismisses Dhaka corruption trial as 'farce'

**LONDON, Aug 13:** British MP Tulip Siddiq, the niece of Bangladesh's deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, on Wednesday dismissed a corruption trial in Dhaka as a "farce" that is built on "fabricated accusations and driven by a clear political vendetta".

Siddiq, who represents north London's Hampstead and Highgate constituency for the governing Labour Party, had resigned as a Treasury minister earlier this year after allegations of corruption against her family hit the headlines.

Bangladesh's Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) had opened investigations into the member of Parliament in connection with the government of Sheikh Hasina, ousted after a massive student-led protest last year. It claims Siddiq received a 7,200-square-foot plot in a diplomatic zone through "abuse of power and influence".

"The so-called trial now underway in Dhaka is nothing more than a farce — built on fabricated accusations and driven by a clear political vendetta," Siddiq said in a statement posted on social media.

"Over the past year, the allegations against me have repeatedly shifted, yet I have never been contacted by the Bangladeshi authorities once. I have never received a court summons, no official communication, and no evidence," she claimed.

The former UK government anti-corruption minister said if the proceedings, which began in Bangladesh on Wednesday, were a genuine legal process, the authorities would have engaged with her or her legal team and presented their alleged evidence.

"Instead, they have peddled false and vexatious allegations that have been briefed to the media but never formally put to me by investigators. Even my offer to meet Bangladesh's Chief Adviser, Muhammad Yunus,



during his recent visit to London was refused," said Siddiq.

"Such conduct is wholly incompatible with the principles of a fair trial that we uphold in the UK. I have been clear from the outset that I have done nothing wrong and will respond to any credible evidence that is presented to me. Continuing to smear my name to score political points is both baseless and damaging," she added.

The 42-year-old politician has consistently denied all the allegations against her, claiming the prosecution is politically motivated.

In her resignation letter to Prime Minister Keir Starmer back in January, she pointed out that his Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests had not found her in breach of the UK's Ministerial Code and asserted that she had not "acted improperly".

Siddiq, who is the daughter of Sheikh Hasina's sister Sheikh Rehana, is among a number of family members indicted in the Bangladesh proceedings, which began this week. (PTI)

## Nepal to export additional 200 MW electricity to India

**KATHMANDU, Aug 13:** Nepal will export nearly 200 MW electricity to India in addition to the existing 940 MW, officials said, a development that will earn little more than NRs 80 billion for the Himalayan nation.

This is part of the long-term agreement that Nepal signed for the export of 10,000 MW power to India over the next 10 years, most of it during the rainy season between June to November.

"The Central Electricity Authority of India on Tuesday approved the import of additional 199.70 MW electricity from Nepal to Haryana," Nepal Electricity Authority spokesperson Rajan Dhakal told PTI.

The news about additional export prompted Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli to post on his social media that Nepal will earn over NRs 80.27 billion from exporting hydro-electricity to India.

Earlier, India had agreed to import 941 MW electricity from Nepal and with Wednesday's approval, Nepal will now export 1,140.70 MW electricity.

Nepal is currently selling its surplus electricity to Indian states of Bihar and Haryana during monsoon.

"Till now Haryana was importing 235.5 MW electricity from Nepal. With the new agreement in place, Haryana will import 435.5 MW electricity from Nepal," Dhakal added. The export will start as soon as there is a power surplus, the officials said.

Nepal and India had in January 2024 signed a long-term agreement for the export of 10,000 MW power to India, from 450 MW till 2023, in the next 10 years during the 7th meeting of the Nepal-India Joint Commission here coinciding with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's visit to the Himalayan nation. (PTI)

## US, Pak to deepen bilateral cooperation to tackle leading militant groups

**ISLAMABAD, Aug 13:** Pakistan and the US have agreed to deepen bilateral cooperation to tackle leading militant groups, including the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), ISIS-Khorasan, and the Taliban.

The issues were discussed during a bilateral counterterrorism dialogue in Islamabad on Tuesday, a day after the US designated the Pakistan-based BLA a Foreign Terrorist Organisation. The dialogue was co-chaired by Nabeel Munir, Pakistan's Special Secretary for the UN, and Gregory D. LoGerfo, the Acting Coordinator for Counterterrorism at the US Department of State.

According to a joint statement issued after the meeting, the two sides reaffirmed their shared commitment to combating terrorism in "all its forms and manifestations". "Both delegations underscored the critical importance of developing effective approaches to terrorist threats, including those posed by Balochistan Liberation Army, ISIS-Khorasan, and Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan," it stated. Reaffirming the "long-standing partnership" between Pakistan and the US, both sides stressed that "sustained and structured engagement" is vital to countering terrorism and promoting peace and stability. The US applauded Pakistan's "continued successes in containing terrorist entities that pose a threat to the peace and security of the region and the world". Both delegations emphasised the

importance of building stronger institutional frameworks and developing capabilities to respond to security challenges and to counter the use of emerging technologies for terrorist purposes. They also reaffirmed their intention to work closely in multilateral fora, including the United Nations, to "promote effective and enduring approaches to counterterrorism".

According to the US State Department, the BLA and The Majeed Brigade's designation as an FTO "demonstrates the Trump administration's commitment to countering terrorism". "Terrorist designations play a critical role in our fight against this scourge and are an effective way to curtail support for terrorist activities," the State Department said.

The BLA was blacklisted in 2019 following a string of deadly attacks in Pakistan but it has continued terrorist activities, including taking credit for the hijacking of the Jaffar Express this year. The train's hijacking in March resulted in the deaths of 31 civilians and security personnel. Pakistan had blamed India for allegedly supporting the BLA. Pakistan and the US ties have markedly improved in recent months, as witnessed by back-to-back visits of Army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir to the US and having high-profile interaction, including with President Donald Trump. (PTI)

## Migrant boat capsizes off Italy, leaves at least 20 dead: UN

**ROME, Aug 13:** A boat carrying nearly 100 migrants capsized Wednesday in international waters off the Italian island of Lampedusa, killing at least 20 people and leaving a dozen missing, the UN refugee agency and local officials said.

Sixty survivors were brought to a centre in Lampedusa, said a UNHCR spokesman in Italy, Filippo Ungaro. According to survivor accounts, there were 92 to 97 migrants on board when the boat departed Libya. Authorities have recovered 20 bodies, and were searching for another 12 to 17 survivors, according to the UNHCR.

It was not immediately known how long the migrants had been at sea. Lampedusa Mayor Filippo Mannino said the shipwreck happened "presumably at dawn."

According to the UNHCR, 675 migrants have died making the perilous central Mediterranean

crossing so far this year, not counting the latest sinking.

"Deep anguish over yet another shipwreck off the coast of Lampedusa, where UNHCR is now assisting the survivors," Ungaro wrote on social media X.

According to UNHCR, in the first six months of 2025, 30,060 refugees and migrants arrived in Italy by sea, a 16 per cent increase compared to the same period last year.

The irregular migration route from northern Africa to southern Europe is considered one of the most dangerous in the world, with almost 24,500 people dying or disappearing on the Mediterranean crossing in the past ten years, according to the International Organisation for Migration.

Most of the deaths have been attributed to small boats setting off from the coasts of Tunisia and Libya. (AP)

### GOVT OF ASSAM

#### OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER PWD (R&B), ASSAM, DIPHU.

No.ACEH/CS/SSA/03/2025-26/07

Date. 11.08.2025.

#### Cancellation Notice

It is for information to all concerned that the Bids for "Construction of 50 bedded hostel separately for boys & girls" at 66 No's of school under the scheme "Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarh Abhiyan" in Karbi Anglong District and West Karbi Anglong District, published earlier vide Press Notice Inviting No. ACEH/CS/SSA/03/2025-26/02, Dated 07-07-2025 is hereby cancelled due to Revised Administrative Approval. Fresh Notice will be floated for the same shortly.

Sd/-

Additional Chief Engineer,  
P.W.D.(R&B), Hills, Assam, Diphu.

Memo NoACEH/CS/SSA/03/2025-26/07-(A)

Date 11/08/2025.

### GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM

#### OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER, P.W.D. (R&B), HILLS, ASSAM, DIPHU

No. ACEH/CS/SSA/03/2025-26/08

Dated:12-08-2025.

#### PRESS NOTICE INVITING BID

The Additional Chief Engineer, P.W.D(R&B), Hills, Assam Diphu, on behalf of Governor of Assam invites Item Rates bids from registered contractors of Class-I(A&B) category for various works Construction of 50 bedded hostel separately for boys & girls" at 66 Nos of school under the scheme "Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan" in Karbi Anglong District and West Karbi Anglong District. Details may be seen at e procurement portal website [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in), and also in the office of the undersigned during office hours from 18/08/2025 to 28/08/2025. The Bidders must be registered with the E-tendering system (ETS) of the Govt. of Assam. It will supersede the earlier Press Notice Vide This Office No. ACEH/CS/SSA/03/2025-26/2 Dated: 07-07-2025

Sd/-

Additional Chief Engineer. P.W.D.(R&B)  
Hills, Assam, Diphu.

Memo No ACEH/CS/SSA/03/2025-26/08-(A)

Dated: 12-08-2025

### Tender Notice

No. EE/CS/115/2025-26/2865

Dated Diphu the: 08/08/2025

The Executive Engineer, PWD, Diphu Roads Division, Diphu on behalf of the Governor of Assam Invites Tender/Bids from registered contractors of category Class-III and above for the work under SOPD (KAAC) for the year 2025-26. The details may be seen at the office of the undersigned during office hours w.e.f. 08/08/2025 to 14/08/2025. Selling of Bid documents will commence from 11.00 AM on 12/08/2025 to 2.00 Pm on 14/08/2025 and Tenders will be open at 3.00 Pm of 14/08/2025.

(N.B.: Financial Sanction will be considered as per availability of Fund)

Name of Works:- 1. Construction of retaining wall at Chekso Anglong near St. Anthony School, Birla, Diphu under SOPD (KAAC) for the year 2025-26.

**Bid Value: Rs.29,40,695.00**

2. Improvement of approach road to Panchayat Office, Diphu under SOPD (KAAC) for the year 2025-26.

**Bid Value: Rs.34,76,045.00**

3. Improvement of link road to Geeta Ashram, Diphu under SOPD (KAAC) for the year 2025-26.

**Bid Value: Rs.37,81,247.00**

4. Construction of bamboo buricade at Diphu Govt. Boys' playground, Diphu for celebration of "Independence Day" Programme on 15th August 2025 and "Republic Day" Programme on 26th January' 2026 under SOPD (KAAC) for the year 2025-26.

**Bid Value: Rs.1,70,607.00**

5. Construction of road near Rengbonghom HS School to Geeta Ashram at Rongmonjir, Diphu under SOPD (KAAC) for the year 2025-26.

**Bid Value: Rs.42,01,490.00**

Sd/-

Executive Engineer, PWD  
Diphu Roads Division, Diphu

N. B. Documents Requires to be submitted at the time of submission of Tender.

1. KAAC Money Receipt of Rs 10.00 (Rupees Ten) only
2. Registration Certificate/Pan Card/ GST registration Certificate
3. Trading license [Not Required for ST(H)]/ Professional tax clearance certificate.

Sd/-

Executive Engineer, PWD  
Diphu Road Division, Diphu.

Memo No.EE/CS/115/2025-26/2866-2872

Dtd:08/08/2025

## Preparations complete for 79<sup>th</sup> Independence Day celebrations at IG Park, Itanagar

**HT Correspondent**

**ITANAGAR, Aug 13:** Almost all preparations have been completed for the celebration of the 79th Independence Day at Indira Gandhi Park (IG Park) in the capital city of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar.

The information was provided in an official statement from the district administration.

Itanagar Capital Complex Deputy Commissioner (DC) Toko Babu informed that the final dress rehearsal involving uniformed personnel and student contingents was successfully conducted at IG Park on Wednesday.

Speaking to the media after the rehearsal, the DC said that despite inclement weather, all arrangements have been finalised.

A special coordination meeting was held earlier in which all line departments were directed to complete their assigned



tasks on a war footing. "The 79th Independence Day will be celebrated by the people of the frontier state in a befitting manner, with great en-

thusiasm and patriotic fervour," DC Babu said.

As per the programme, Chief Minister Pema Khandu will hoist the tricolour at

IG Park, take the salute of the marching contingents, and address the people of the state.

The parade will feature around 27 contingents, including units from the police, NCC, Scouts & Guides, and school students from various institutions under the Itanagar Capital Complex.

A special contingent from the Nagaland Police will also participate. State awards will be announced during the function.

The celebrations will include a variety of cultural performances by teams representing different tribes and districts of Arunachal Pradesh, showcasing the state's diverse traditions and heritage.

The Department of Art & Culture will present patriotic songs, while the Department of Health & Family Welfare will stage a skit on drug abuse awareness.

DC Babu said that several dignitaries, including community-based organisation leaders, political leaders, and representatives from various tribes, are expected to attend the event.

While the weather might pose challenges, he expressed confidence that the people of Itanagar would turn out in large numbers to mark the historic day.

Meanwhile, Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIGP) Itanagar Range, Tumme Amo, stated that the Arunachal Pradesh Police have made elaborate security arrangements to ensure public safety and maintain law and order during the celebrations.

Security personnel will be deployed across the city, particularly around IG Park, and multiple advisories have been issued for the convenience of visitors.

Vehicle owners have been advised not to park in restricted areas near the venue

for security reasons.

Designated parking spaces have been arranged for VVIPs, VIPs, and invitees, with parking stickers issued accordingly.

All visitors, including invitees, will be subject to frisking at the entry gates, and the carrying of weapons or prohibited items is strictly banned.

In view of the issue of illegal immigration, the DIGP informed that instructions have been issued to all check gates across the state and within the capital complex to strictly verify Inner Line Permits (ILP).

Visitors have been urged to carry valid identity proof to avoid inconvenience.

The statement added that the administration and police are working in close coordination to ensure that the Independence Day celebrations at IG Park take place smoothly, safely, and in an atmosphere of unity and patriotic pride.

## DCM Chowna Mein names 51-ft Lord Parashuram sculpture 'Statue of Strength'

*Mein says project will blend spiritual heritage with modern infrastructure to boost pilgrimage and tourism at Parashuram Kund*



**HT Correspondent**

**WAKRO, Aug 13:** Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein on Wednesday inspected the ongoing development works at Parashuram Kund and announced that the 51-

foot statue of Lord Parashuram will be called the "Statue of Strength".

According to an official statement, Mein said that with the combined efforts of the Government of

Arunachal Pradesh, VIPRA Foundation, and local communities, the project is on track for a grand inauguration by November or December this year.

As part of the Riverfront Development Project, several infrastructure upgrades are under way, including safe bathing facilities, structural protection works, and enhanced public amenities, to make Parashuram Kund both a revered pilgrimage site and a vibrant tourism destination.

Despite recent flood damage, expert-led redesigns are being implemented to ensure greater safety, accessibility, and improved visitor experience.

The deputy chief minister also chaired a coordination meeting with the Lohit district administration, chief engineers of various departments, heads of offices, and public leaders.

Discussions focused on devel-

oping the site into a major pilgrimage and tourism hub, strengthening security and IT facilities, implementing riverfront protection measures, and ensuring effective management of mega events.

Valuable suggestions were shared for the long-term preservation of Parashuram Kund.

Mein reiterated the state government's commitment to safeguarding its sanctity while unlocking its potential as a spiritual and cultural landmark.

Mein was accompanied by VIPRA Foundation national convenor Susil Ojha, sculptor Naresh Kumar Kumawat, State Council for IT & e-Governance chairman Nyamar Karbak, Lohit ZPC Dacula Krisikro, Lohit DC Kesang Damo, retired chief engineer Atop Lego, BJP Namsai district president Ningroo Ong Maio, chief engineers, Wakro ADC, and other dignitaries.

## ANYA-EKDU to hold rally in Seppa demanding re-assessment of Lada-Sarli Frontier Highway

**HT Correspondent**

**ITANAGAR, Aug 13:** The All Nyishi Youth Association East Kameng District Unit (ANYA-EKDU) has reiterated its demand for a re-verification of the Lada-Sarli stretch of the Frontier Highway Project and announced that it will organise a peaceful rally from the welcome gate to the Deputy Commissioner's office in Seppa, East Kameng district, on August 18. Addressing the press at the Arunachal Press Club in Itanagar, ANYA-EKDU president Ramesh Taku said the decision followed the expiry of a 14-day ultimatum served to the district administration regarding the distribution of compensation for the project.

Alleging a lack of transparency in disbursing compensation for the 126 km highway stretch, Taku said multiple anomalies were revealed through documents obtained under the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

He claimed that there were disparities in the rate of compensation, with some landowners receiving ₹100 per square metre while others were paid ₹200 for similar land.

According to Taku, the District Land Revenue and Settlement Officer (DLRSO) of Seppa also compensated unclassified forest land falling within divisional forest areas, while separate payments were made for the shifting of utilities, leading to further irregularities.

Taku further alleged that measurements of a graveyard were taken randomly during assessment and that no geo-tagging, video recording, or photographs of the affected areas were conducted.

"Through RTI, we sought the concerned department to provide the geo-tagging photos and video recordings, but the same was not furnished," he said. Social activist Sol Dodum, who accompanied the association, questioned the compensation of government-built structures under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JMM).

"How come water tanks constructed by the government were compensated?" he asked. ANYA-EKDU has demanded that the disbursement of compensation be halted until the re-verification is completed, and that no transfer orders be issued for the DC and DLRSO until the process is finalised.

## APPSC team meets Arunachal Pradesh Governor



**HT Correspondent**

**ITANAGAR, Aug 13:** The Chairman of the Arunachal Pradesh Public Service Commission (APPSC), Prof (Dr) Pradipt Lingfa, along with Commission members, called on the Governor of Arunachal Pradesh, Lt General KT Parnaik (Retd), at Raj Bhavan here on Wednesday.

According to an official statement, the delegation briefed the Governor on the recently concluded State Public Service Examination and the successful completion of the recommendation process. They also submitted the Commission's Annual Report for 2024-25.

Congratulating Prof Lingfa and the APPSC team, the Governor commended their dedication and efficiency in ensuring a fair and smooth examination process.

He emphasised that recommendations must be made purely on merit to ensure that the most capable and deserving candidates are entrusted with key roles in the State's governance.

The Governor noted that by selecting candidates solely on merit, the Commission is shaping the future leadership of Arunachal Pradesh and strengthening the machinery of the State.

He advised the APPSC Chairman to uphold the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and efficiency, stressing that the institution's functioning must not only be fair and impartial but also perceived as such by the public.

Those present in the meeting included Col Koj Tari (Retd), Rosy Taba, and Jalash Pertin, APSC (Retd). APPSC Secretary Parul Gaur Mittal, IRS, briefed the Governor on potential administrative and procedural improvements to further enhance the Commission's operations.

## Takam Regam to represent state at Red Fort on Independence Day

**ITANAGAR, Aug 13:** In a proud moment for Arunachal Pradesh, renowned social worker and youth leader Takam Regam has been selected as a special guest for the 79th Independence Day celebrations at the Red Fort in New Delhi, officials said here on Wednesday.

The honour comes from MY Bharat, an autonomous body under the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs, in recognition of his exceptional work in youth empowerment and nation-building.

Regam will join distinguished representatives from across the country at the national event, which will be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Known for his dynamic leadership, he is the founder president of Youth in Action for Arunachal Pradesh and the Arunachal Pradesh Youth Mission Adventure Club, initiatives that promote leadership, social responsibility, and adventure-based learning.

His achievements include securing second position in the National Youth Parliament 2024 and winning the state-level declamation at the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue.

He has also been actively involved in inter-state and border area youth exchange programmes, national exposure youth programme, Jai Bhim Padyatra, and the 8th North East Youth Festival, officials added. Apart from attending the Red Fort ceremony, Regam will participate in various cultural and ceremonial events linked to Independence Day. (PTI)

## Blood donation drive marks Patriots' Day in Itanagar

**HT Correspondent**

**ITANAGAR, Aug 13:** The Manipuri Welfare Society of Arunachal Pradesh (MWSAP) organised a one-day voluntary blood donation drive at Rama Krishna Hospital here to commemorate the 134th Patriots' Day of Manipur.

Centred on the theme "Give Blood, Save Life", the drive saw participation from around 40 volunteers, including personnel of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), students from the North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology (NERIST), and MWSAP members.

According to an official statement, the initiative aimed to honour the sacrifices of the patriots by mobilising volunteers for a life-saving cause.

It also sought to raise awareness about the importance of blood donation and the role of



community involvement in strengthening healthcare support.

A representative of Rama Krishna Hospital expressed gratitude to the donors and underlined the critical need for blood, especially in medical emergencies.

The hospital encouraged continued public participation in similar humanitarian activities.

MWSAP Advisor Laiprakpam Robindro Singh thanked all the volunteers, particularly the NDRF personnel, NERIST students, and MWSAP members, for their contributions.

He said the drive was both a tribute to the region's patriots and a step towards improving access to blood resources across Arunachal Pradesh.

The statement said the drive was a success, with the collected units expected to help patients in need throughout the state.

## Governor distributes National Flags under 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign



**HT Correspondent**

**ITANAGAR, Aug 13:** As part of the nationwide 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign, the Governor of Arunachal Pradesh, Lt General KT Parnaik (Retd), distributed the National Flag to officials and staff of the Raj Bhavan in a programme held at Raj Bhavan here on Wednesday.

According to an official statement, the campaign, being observed across the country, seeks to inspire every household to hoist the tricolour with pride and honour, turning the act into a collective expression of patriotism. It is aimed at fostering a deep sense of unity among citizens and encouraging them to display the national emblem as a tribute to the spirit of the nation.

While presenting the flags, the Governor called upon all to nurture the spirit of nationalism and unity in their day-to-day lives.

He encouraged the staff to proudly display the National Flag at their homes during the campaign period, describing the initiative as not just a symbolic act, but a festival of the Tiranga—a celebration of India's unity in diversity and a heartfelt tribute to the ideals of the nation.

He reminded those present that the true honour of the flag lies not merely in hoisting it high, but in upholding its values of patriotism, unity, and brotherhood through everyday conduct.

"The tricolour represents the sacrifices, struggles, and aspirations of our people, and we must ensure that it remains a beacon of hope and inspiration for generations to come," the Governor was quoted as saying.

The Governor also appealed to the Raj Bhavan staff to maintain cleanliness in and around their homes, stressing that a clean environment reflects civic responsibility and complements the ideals represented by the national flag.

The statement added that the Governor had inaugurated the 'Tiranga Mahotsav' the previous day, marking the beginning of a series of programmes in the run-up to Independence Day.

These events are intended to strengthen patriotic fervour and encourage public participation in nation-building.

## Block-level training on PAI 2.0 and SDG localisation held in Kyidphel Block

**HT Correspondent**

**TAWANG, Aug 13:** A block-level training programme on Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) 2.0 and the localisation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was held for Kyidphel Block in Tawang district at the Conference Hall of the Deputy Commissioner's Office.

According to an official statement, the programme was organised by the State Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (SIRD&PR) in collaboration with the District Panchayati Raj Department, Tawang, and was chaired by Deputy Commissioner Namgyal Angmo, IAS.

It was attended by ZPC Tawang Leki Gombu, Assistant Director SIRD Mihin Lali, DPDO Tawang Sangey Wangmu Mosobi, Member Secretary PR Kitipi Tsering Chedon, ZPMs, and all PRI members of the block.



In her inaugural address, the Deputy Commissioner stressed the importance of PAI as a tool for planning, transparency, and performance assessment of Gram Panchayats.

She said the index fosters healthy com-

petition among Panchayats, helping identify gaps and areas for improvement.

Noting that Tawang district ranks fifth in the state in Panchayat performance, she urged collective efforts to achieve higher rankings.

## Guv celebrates Raksha Bandhan with Brahma Kumaris

**HT Correspondent**

**ITANAGAR, Aug 13:** Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lt General KT Parnaik (Retd) celebrated Raksha Bandhan with members of the Brahma Kumaris organisation at Raj Bhavan, Itanagar, in an atmosphere of traditional warmth and joy.

According to an official statement, the sisters of the Brahma Kumaris tied rakhis to the Governor, symbolising the sacred bond of protection and the enduring values of love, respect and mutual commitment.

The Governor extended Raksha Bandhan greetings and conveyed his best wishes to the members, expressing hope that the festival would continue to strengthen bonds of goodwill, harmony and unity across all sections of society.

Praising the Brahma Kumaris for their contributions in the field of social service, the Governor encouraged them to continue working towards the vision of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'—a united and strong India enriched by cultural harmony and shared purpose.

## Indian Army holds organ donation awareness drive in Jonai

**HT Correspondent**

**JONAI, Aug 13:** The Indian Army organised an Organ Donation Awareness Drive at Jonai Girls' College on Wednesday to mark World Organ Donation Day, under the theme "Angdaan - Jeevan Sanjeevani Abhiyaan." According to an official statement, the event was attended by over 800 students and faculty members from Jonai in Assam and neighbouring border districts of East Siang in Arunachal Pradesh.

It featured an awareness lecture on the importance, process, and ethical aspects of organ donation, fol-

lowed by a poster-making contest to creatively promote the life-saving message of organ donation.

The Principal of Jonai Girls' College praised the participants, describing organ donation as a "selfless gift that can give someone a second chance at life," and urged students to spread awareness in their communities. The programme concluded with the distribution of prizes for the poster-making contest, which reflected the youth's creativity and commitment to building a healthier society, followed by a vote of thanks to participants and organisers.

ZPC Leki Gombu called on officials to take such training seriously, as they are key to guiding current and future Panchayat members.

He thanked SIRD&PR and PRI members for their participation and encouraged them to make the most of the resource persons' expertise.

Assistant Director Mihin Lali explained the objectives of PAI, highlighting its role in assessing advancement levels and bridging development gaps through accurate data collection.

DPDO Sangey Wangmu Mosobi emphasised the need for authentic and accurate data submission to ensure fair and reliable records of Panchayat performance.

According to the statement, the training sought to enhance Panchayat performance, align local governance with SDG themes, and promote inclusive, participatory rural development in the region.

## Tawang marks 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign



**HT Correspondent**

**TAWANG, Aug 13:** Tawang district, in collaboration with the North East Zonal Cultural Centre (NEZCC), Dimapur, Ministry of Culture, Government of India, and the Department of Art and Culture, organised the "Har Ghar Tiranga" Campaign 2025 at Government Secondary School, Seru.

According to an official statement, the event featured traditional dance competitions and solo song performances by students, highlighting the region's cultural diversity and artistic talent.

In the house-wise competition, Patel House won first place, followed by Gandhi House in second

and Nehru House in third. All three teams received prizes for their performances.

The awards were presented by District Programme Coordinator (ISSE) Dondup, representing the Deputy Director of School Education, Tawang, who attended as the chief guest.

In his address, Dondup praised the students' enthusiasm and urged them to take pride in their cultural heritage while contributing to national unity and progress.

The celebration reflected the spirit of the Har Ghar Tiranga movement, promoting patriotism alongside the preservation of local traditions.

## Bihar SIR row: Electoral rolls can't remain static, bound for revision, says SC

NEW DELHI, Aug 13: The Supreme Court on Wednesday said electoral rolls cannot "remain static" and were bound to be revised as it disagreed with the submission that special intensive revision (SIR) of voter list in poll-bound Bihar had no basis in law and ought to be quashed.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joyimalya Bagchi was informed by NGO Association of Democratic Reforms that the exercise should not be allowed to be carried out pan-India.

Aside from the NGO, leaders of opposition parties including Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and the Congress have challenged the electoral roll revision drive of the Election Commission of India (ECI) in Bihar. Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appearing for the NGO, said the ECI notification on SIR ought to be set aside for want of legal basis and never being contemplated in law.

He, therefore, contended it couldn't be allowed to go on.

The ECI can never conduct such an exercise since inception and it is being done for the first time in history and if allowed to happen only God knows where it will end, he added. "By that logic special intensive revision can never be done. One-time exercise which is done is only for the original electoral roll. To our mind, the electoral roll can never be static," the bench noted.

"There is bound to be revision,"

BJP alleges Sonia Gandhi became voter before getting Indian citizenship

NEW DELHI, Aug 13: The BJP alleged on Wednesday that former Congress president Sonia Gandhi was registered as a voter before she became an Indian citizen, as the ruling party stepped up its counter-offensive amid the Opposition's charge of "vote-chori" against the government and the Election Commission.

"Sonia Gandhi's tryst with India's voters' list is riddled with glaring violations of electoral law. This perhaps explains Rahul Gandhi's fondness for regularising ineligible and illegal voters, and his opposition to the Special Intensive Revision," BJP's IT department head Amit Malviya said on X.

He posted a copy of the electoral roll form of the official residence of the then prime minister Indira Gandhi, claiming that her name was added during the revision of the rolls with January 1, 1980 as the qualifying date.

"Her name first appeared on the rolls in 1980 — three years before she became an Indian citizen and while she still held Italian citizenship," Malviya claimed.

Until then, the voters registered at that address were Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Sanjay Gandhi, and Maneka Gandhi, he said, adding that Sonia Gandhi's name was added during the revision.

"This entry was a clear violation of the law, which requires a person to be an Indian citizen to be registered as a voter. Following an outcry in 1982, her name was deleted from the list — only to reappear in 1983," he said.

He added, "Even her reinstatement raised serious questions. In the fresh revision of the electoral rolls that year, Sonia Gandhi was listed at serial number 236 in polling station 140. The qualifying date for registration was January 1, 1983 — yet she was granted Indian citizenship only on April 30, 1983." Her name entered the electoral rolls twice without meeting the basic citizenship requirement, he claimed. "We are not even asking why it took her 15 years after marrying Rajiv Gandhi to accept Indian citizenship. If this isn't blatant electoral malpractice, what is?"

At a press conference, BJP leader Anurag Thakur claimed irregularities in voter registration in Rae Bareilly, Wayanad, Diamond Harbour and Kannauj parliamentary seats and asked Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Abhishek Banerjee and Akhilesh Yadav to resign as Lok Sabha MPs, alleging they secured victory in elections with "vote chori". Hitting back at Thakur's comments, Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera said it took the Congress six months to collect data for one assembly seat and the BJP leader's reference to so many Lok Sabha constituencies showed how connected the ruling party is with the EC.

"We also want to point out that what he (Thakur) has released today is evidence of a crime. We demand that this evidence be handed over within 24 hours so we can proceed with the investigation. We also want the electronic voter list of Varanasi, where the Prime Minister won by a very small margin," he said. (PTI)



the top court said, "otherwise, how will the poll panel delete the names of those who are dead, migrated or shifted to other constituencies?"

The bench went on to tell Sankaranarayanan that the ECI had residual power to conduct such an exercise as it deemed fit. It referred to Section 21(3) of the Representation of the Peoples Act (RP Act), which says "the Election Commission may at any time, for reasons to be recorded, direct a special revision of the electoral roll for any constituency or part of a constituency in such manner as it may think fit."

Justice Bagchi further asked Sankaranarayanan, "When the primary legislation says 'in such manner as deemed fit' but the subordinate legislation does not... will it not give a residual discretion to ECI to dovetail the procedure not completely in ignorance of rules but some more additives than what

the rules prescribe to deal with the peculiar requirement of a special revision?" Sankaranarayanan submitted that the provision only allowed revision of the electoral roll for "any constituency" or "for part of a constituency" and the ECI couldn't wipeout the rolls of an entire state for fresh inclusion.

"Actually, it is a battle between a constitutional right and a constitutional power," Justice Bagchi said. The residuary power of the ECI flows from Article 324 of the Constitution and the RP Act mentions both summary revision and special revision and the ECI in the instant case has only added the word "intensive", that all, the judge noted.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, also appearing for the NGO, alleged the ECI played "mischief" and removed the search feature from the draft roll and the list of 65 lakh people whose names were

deleted for being dead, migrated or shifted to other constituencies.

"This happened just a day after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi did a press conference pointing out over lakh people as fake voters," he added, arguing an ordinary person was denied the right to search their name on the draft roll whether dead or alive or migrated to another place. Justice Kant said he was unaware of any such press conference but when it comes to the Registration of Electors Rule of 1960, Section 10 mandates the election commission to publish a copy of the draft roll at the office in the constituency.

"They have to publish the draft roll at the office in the constituency. That's a minimum threshold under the law. However, we would have liked it if it was published on the website for wider publicity," Justice Bagchi said.

Senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, appearing for the ECI, said the petitioners claimed the rural population of Bihar was not tech savvy and now they were talking about the inability of the same people in searching online.

During the hearing, the bench also told senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for petitioners, that the 11 documents required to be submitted by an elector for Bihar's SIR as opposed to seven documents in summary revision conducted previously showed the exercise was "voter friendly". (PTI)

## Operation Sindoor provided opportunity for successful use of technology: Jitendra Singh

JAMMU, Aug 13: Union minister Jitendra Singh gave credit to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday for the use of technology in the defence sector and safeguarding the country, and said Operation Sindoor provided an opportunity to put this technology into use successfully.

Drawing a contrast between the time when Modi himself risked his life to go to Srinagar's Lal Chowk to hoist the national flag and today, Singh said every hand in the valley now holds the tricolour.

Replying to a reporter's question on Pakistan repeatedly resorting to threats, he said, "There is not much need for me to comment on this as the Ministry of External Affairs will take cognisance of it."

Singh, who led a Tiranga rally in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district, referred to Operation Sindoor as India's response to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack.

Attributing the operation's success to technology, the Union minister said, "Whatever achievements came from Operation Sindoor were the result of the technology that has been adopted in the last 10 years."

He said the use of this technology began after Modi came to power. "Under the core principle of an indigenous and self-reliant India, it was inducted into the

country. Operation Sindoor also provided an opportunity to put this technology into use successfully," he said.

Referring to the Tiranga rallies sweeping the country, Singh said this programme is running for the last four years. "It is the result of Prime Minister Modi's vision and thought process. Such events are organised in every corner of the country ahead of Independence Day. This is the fourth time that this is being held," he said. The Union minister added that these rallies are creating a festival-like atmosphere across India.

Praising the prime minister's efforts in ensuring peace and normalcy in the region, he said in Srinagar too, such rallies were taken out on Tuesday.

Drawing a comparison between the past and the present, Singh said, "There was a time when a massive campaign had to be organised just to hoist the national flag and it required a great deal of struggle. There was also a time when Prime Minister Modi himself risked his life to go to Lal Chowk to hoist the flag. The incident at that time was such a big event that it was discussed all over the country."

Modi took out the Ekta Yatra in Jammu and Kashmir in 1991 despite terror threats and unfurled the tricolour at Lal Chowk. (PTI)

## Cong highlights 'vote chori' with video, Kharge asks people to raise voice

NEW DELHI, Aug 13: The Congress on Wednesday stepped up its campaign against alleged 'vote chori' by releasing a new video depicting how fake votes were being cast and party chief Mallikarjun Kharge asking people to raise their voice and save constitutional institutions from the "clutches of the BJP".

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi also shared the minute-long video and said, "Aapke vote ki chori aapke adhikar ki chori, aapki pehchaan ki chori hai."

Tagging the advertisement titled 'booth par vote chori', Congress president Kharge said, "Do not let your rights to vote be snatched away. Ask questions, demand answers this time! Raise your voice against vote chori."

"Free constitutional institutions from the clutches of the BJP," he said in his message to the people on X.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also shared

the video on X, and said, "the theft of your vote is theft of your rights, theft of your identity."

"Save your right to vote, Raise your voice against vote theft," she said.

The video made by the Congress depicts a family entering a polling booth with two people telling them that their votes have already been cast by them and it ends with the two persons casting fake votes showing a thumbs up to an officer sitting at the table with 'election chori aayog' display plate on his table.

The Congress on Tuesday had claimed that "vote chori" was a "do-or-die" issue for it, and announced a roadmap to take its allegations to the people through various activities, including taking out 'Loktantra bachao mashaal marches' on August 14 evening.

The opposition party also claimed that as more "evidence" of "vote chori" was coming to the fore, it seemed that it was not mere theft but "dacoity". (PTI)

## CBAM to cost India 0.03 pc of GDP, domestic carbon tax can blunt impact: Analysis

NEW DELHI, Aug 13: India's GDP could fall by 0.02 to 0.03 per cent between 2026 and 2030 due to revenue outflows if the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) is applied without a domestic carbon pricing system, according to a new working paper.

This would also curb household consumption, with urban families experiencing the most impact due to higher prices of carbon-heavy goods.

However, if India implements its own carbon tax and keeps the revenue domestically, it can largely reduce the economic impact of the EU levy, the analysis by public policy think tank Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP) said.

The EU's CBAM is designed to impose a carbon price on imports from countries with lower environmental regulations, initially covering iron and steel, aluminium,



cement, fertilisers, electricity and hydrogen.

The tariff is pegged to the carbon price in the EU Emissions Trading System (EU-ETS), which in 2026 is assumed at ₹ 5,200 per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent, with a five per cent annual rise as free allowances in the EU are phased out.

Brussels says the policy is aimed at preventing "carbon leakage",

where production moves to jurisdictions with looser climate rules, but India and other BRICS members have repeatedly criticised it as an unfair and unilateral trade measure that shifts the cost of decarbonisation onto developing economies.

The move has also sparked debate at multilateral forums, including UN climate conferences, with

## 'Chor machaye shor' BJP taunts Oppn, alleges 'farziwada' in voter list in seats of Rahul, other leaders



NEW DELHI, Aug 13: The BJP on Wednesday claimed irregularities in voter registration in Rae Bareilly, Wayanad, Diamond Harbour and Kannauj parliamentary seats and asked Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Abhishek Banerjee and Akhilesh Yadav to resign as Lok Sabha MPs, alleging they secured victory with "vote chori".

It accused the Congress and other opposition parties of running a campaign against the Election Commission to steal the mandate of "honest and genuine Indian citizens" while compromising national security. Giving a slideshow presentation at the BJP headquarters here on an 'analysis' of electoral rolls in these constituencies represented by opposition leaders, former Union minister Anurag Thakur also flagged "irregularities" in the voter registration in Kolathur assembly seat in Tamil Nadu and Mainpuri Lok Sabha seat in Uttar Pradesh and asked Chief Minister and DMK supreme M K Stalin and SP leader Dimple Yadav to resign for "rigging" election.

He slammed the Congress, TMC, Samajwadi Party and DMK leaders for raising questions on the Election Commission and accused them of running a vicious propaganda against the special intensive revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls, which is currently underway in Bihar and would be launched in other states, to protect their "vote bank of illegal Bangladeshi infiltration" and other "intruders".

"Seeing this 'shor' (hue and cry) being made by the opposition, it now seems that 'chor machaye shor'", he said, suggesting those who are in the wrong are now cry-

ing foul.

"Rae Bareilly, Wayanad, Kannauj, to Diamond Harbour -- everywhere one question is coming up - why did they make fake voters. Will they resign for indulging in 'vote chori' and protecting intruders?" Thakur said.

The Congress and other opposition parties are running the campaign against the poll panel to steal the mandate of "honest and genuine Indian citizens" for their appeasement politics while compromising the national security, he charged.

Levelling allegations of "vote chori", Rahul Gandhi had on Thursday, through a presentation at a press conference, cited data from the 2024 Lok Sabha polls to claim that over 1 lakh votes were "stolen" in Mahadevapura assembly segment in Karnataka through five types of manipulation, including duplicate voters, fake and invalid addresses and single-address voters.

Thakur lambasted the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha over his "vote chori" charge against the ruling BJP and the Election Commission, calling him a "propaganda king".

He claimed irregularities in the voters' registration in Gandhi's Rae Bareilly Lok Sabha constituency and asked the Congress leader if he did "vote chori" to get elected from this seat in Uttar Pradesh in the 2024 parliamentary elections.

About 2.99 lakh "doubtful voters" were registered in the Rae Bareilly constituency, Thakur alleged.

Of them, about 19,512 entries are duplicate voters, 71,977 voters have fake addresses, 15,853 voters showed mixed households, and

92,747 voters were listed via mass addition, he claimed.

Reading the names of some of such voters, the BJP leader said, "One Mohd Kaif Khan has three different EPICs."

"So you arrange fake birth certificates and make voters by doing such 'farziwada' (forgery) and when the Election Commission talks about cleaning of electoral rolls, you try to stop reforms to protect your intruder vote banks, special vote banks," he charged.

The BJP leader said about 93,499 "doubtful voters" were registered in Wayanad Lok Sabha constituency in Kerala, from where Priyanka Gandhi was elected.

Of them 20,438 are duplicates, 17,450 voters have fake addresses, 4,246 voters have mixed households and 51,365 voters listed through mass addition, he said and asked Priyanka Gandhi if she will resign as Lok Sabha member.

Citing irregularities in the voter registration in the seats from where TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee, SP's Akhilesh and Dimple Yadav have won, Thakur said the number of doubtful voters registered in the Diamond Harbour parliamentary constituency was more than 2.69 lakh.

There were more than 2.51 lakh such voters in the Kannauj seat and over 2.55 lakh in the Mainpuri seat, he claimed.

In the electoral roll of Tamil Nadu's Kolathur assembly seat from where Stalin won, there were 19,776 doubtful voters, with 9,133 voters giving fake addresses, he said, asking the DMK chief if he will resign for such irregularities in the voters' registration.

On Tuesday, opposition leaders took out a protest march from the Parliament House to the Election Commission's headquarters here on the issue of "vote theft" and special intensive revision of electoral rolls in Bihar, but were stopped and briefly detained by the police.

The Congress on Wednesday stepped up its campaign against alleged 'vote chori' by releasing a new video depicting how "fake votes" were being cast, with party chief Mallikarjun Kharge asking people to raise their voice and save constitutional institutions from the "clutches of the BJP".

Gandhi also shared the minute-long video and said, "Aapke vote ki chori aapke adhikar ki chori, aapki pehchaan ki chori hai". (PTI)

## Shivpal, Akhilesh target UP gov't's 'Vision 2047'

LUCKNOW, Aug 13: Senior Samajwadi Party leaders Akhilesh Yadav and Shivpal Yadav on Wednesday launched a scathing attack on the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh over its 'Vision 2047' document, accusing it of selling dreams for the future while failing to address the problems of today.

In a statement, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav said the BJP should release a "reason document" explaining why it has failed to fulfil even a single promise in nine years, alleging that its government presided over corruption, loot, dishonesty and broke all records in inflation, unemployment and graft.

The former chief minister said the BJP has no real vision for the state and has failed in law and order, flood control, education, health and development. While dozens of districts have been hit by floods, health services are in disarray, with a shortage of doctors, paramedical staff and equipment, he charged.

He alleged that the government has not built a single district hospital, ruined ambulance services, closed schools and was conspiring to keep the poor away from education while selling public institutions into private hands.

On farmers, the Kannauj Lok Sabha MP said the BJP has failed to provide fertilisers, seeds, water and functioning mandi systems, despite repeated promises to double their income.

Akhilesh Yadav described the BJP's "real vision" as "misleading the public, spreading hatred and indulging in corruption", contrasting it with the SP government's record from 2012 to 2017, which he said included expressways, metro services, laptops for students, modern policy reforms, new power plants, sports infrastructure and welfare schemes.

Earlier, in a post on X, Akhilesh shared an image reading "REASON DOCUMENT", with a message in Hindi that the state BJP government should not release a "vision document" but rather a "reason document" explaining its failures. (PTI)

developing countries arguing that, under UN climate change rules, countries cannot dictate how others should reduce emissions.

The model-based analysis by former CSEP consultant Joydeep Ghosh and associate fellow Rajat Verma studies three scenarios. In the CBAM-only case, where Indian exporters to the EU pay the carbon tariff directly to Brussels, export declines are seen across cement, aluminium, fertilisers and especially iron and steel, which account for 90 per cent of India's CBAM-exposed shipments.

In this scenario, the EU would collect about ₹ 5,500 crore from Indian exporters in 2030.

Under a domestic carbon tax, referred to as the PCARBON scenario, the government could raise ₹ 2.93 lakh crore in 2026 and Rs 3.61 lakh crore in 2030, roughly one per cent of GDP, which could be used to offset household and industry losses.

A hybrid option, PCARBON plus CBAM, halves both domestic and EU carbon rates, retains about ₹ 1.46 lakh crore in 2026 and ₹ 1.76 lakh crore in 2030 for India, and reduces the EU's share to about ₹ 2,900 crore in 2030.

The authors said India's CBAM-covered exports to the EU are only 0.2 per cent of its GDP, yet the potential impact on key sectors and household welfare warrants attention.

Without a domestic carbon price, urban households bear a larger consumption loss, while rural households are also affected. Recycling domestic carbon revenues can cushion these impacts and support a smoother transition.

The authors recommend using such revenues for green subsidies, industrial decarbonisation and targeted household compensation, alongside measures to diversify exports towards non-EU markets and improve energy efficiency. (PTI)

Party says absence of OBC list in Meghalaya denies community access to 27% central quota benefits

# BJP Meghalaya to press state, Centre on OBC recognition

SHILLONG, Aug 13: The Meghalaya unit of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has assured on Wednesday to take up, with both the state and central governments, regarding the issues pertinent to the other backward classes (OBC) population of the state.

The decision was taken during the first meeting of the party's OBC Morcha held in presence of state president Rikman G Momen, state vice president Bipen Pradhan and state general secretary Wankitbok Pohshna.

While addressing the gathering as one of the speakers, state general secretary Wankitbok Pohshna stated that the State BJP is ready to raise certain vital and pertinent OBC issues with both the State and Central governments.

Pohshna has reminded everyone that the government has not yet



listed the OBC castes of Meghalaya; consequently the OBC community residing in the state stands

handicapped by not being able to avail the 27 per cent reservation in all central govt jobs and educational institutions.

Pohshna further stated that a delegation of BJP leaders are slated to meet the Chief Minister soon and discuss the grievances of the community and the obstacles faced by them on a regular basis.

Pohshna informed the people present in the meeting, that he has personally met with several OBC leaders and they have categorically stated that the community is not interested in any kind of state reservation but only wants to apply for various central govt jobs from which the community continues to be deprived as a direct result of Meghalaya not sending the list of OBCs to be recognised by the central government.

## Tipra Motha MLA urges Centre for urgent NRC in Tripura, accuses state govt of inaction on illegal migrants

**HT Correspondent**  
AGARTALA, Aug 13: Tipra Motha Party MLA Ranjit Debarma has written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, seeking immediate implementation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Tripura to identify and deport illegal migrants.

and pushing back illegal migrants within 30 days, followed by a subsequent order on May 28 to state authorities and the Bureau of Immigration.

In his letter, Debarma cited the Ministry of Home Affairs' (MHA) directives issued on May 19, 2025, for detecting, deporting,

dedicated headquarters, rendering it ineffective.

Tripartite signs ₹ 1,119 crore deal with Hyderabad-based firm to set up 120 MW power plant

AGARTALA, Aug 13: The Tripura Power Generation Ltd (TPGL) has signed a contract with Hyderabad-based engineering firm Megha Engineering and Infrastructures Limited (MEIL) to set up a 120 MW combined cycle gas turbine at Rokhia power plant in Sepahijala district, an official said on Wednesday.

Calling the state's measures "an eyewash," Debarma alleged that large-scale infiltration continues, with some migrants involved in "anti-India activities."

The bridge, inaugurated by MLA Dzongu Pintoso Namgyal Lepcha, serves as a connectivity lifeline not just for the residents of Dzongu, but also for the upper areas of north Sikkim, including Chungthang, Lachen and Lachung, an official release said.

Earlier, two bridges were swept away by the Teesta river following incessant rainfall and flash floods, affecting Mangan district and other parts of the state, the officials said.

## Bridge over Teesta river to restore connectivity

GANGTOK, Aug 13: The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) on Wednesday opened for public the Sanklang modular bridge over the Teesta river to restore road connectivity to various areas in north Sikkim, officials said.

The high-altitude modular bridge was constructed "under some of the harshest weather conditions and terrain", it said.

## Two women among three held with heroin

AIZAWL, Aug 13: Three people, including two women, were arrested for possessing 323 grams of heroin in three locations in Aizawl, an official of state excise and narcotics department said on Wednesday.

He said that officials of the excise and narcotics department, in collaboration with Assam Rifles and anti-drug squad of Central Young Mizo Association (CYMA), a civil society organisation, seized 35 grams of heroin from one person at Thuampui area in the northeastern part of the state capital on August 11.

Subsequent investigation of the case led to the seizure of another 235 grams of heroin and the arrest of two women peddlers at Bawngkawn locality, he said.

Based on the confession of the three accused, 135 more grams of heroin was seized from Zuangtui area in the northern outskirts of Aizawl the same day, he said.

## Meet reviews Hornbill Fest preparedness

DIMAPUR, Aug 13: The Nagaland government held a meeting to review the status of preparedness of the Hornbill Festival 2025 at the secretariat conference hall in Kohima on Wednesday.

The 10-day Hornbill Festival, also called the festival of festivals, is held at Naga Heritage village, Kisama, near Kohima, every year from December 1.

Chairing the meeting with all the departments, chief secretary Sentiyanger Imchen emphasised the importance of starting preparations for the festival early and formation of subcommittees for effective coordination.

Imchen called on the line departments to come prepared with concrete action plans and proposals for the next meeting on August 25.

The meeting also deliberated in length on various issues related to roads, sanitation, transportation, electricity and logistics arrangements by various departments.

Various departments highlighted their action plans and work progress during the meeting.

## 'Urge everyone to unite despite political and ideological differences'

IMPHAL, Aug 13: Former Manipur chief minister N. Biren Singh on Wednesday urged everyone to unite despite political and ideological differences to establish peace and ensure peaceful coexistence in the state.

That historic event. Manipur is the legacy of those forefathers."

Speaking on the sidelines of the 134th Patriots Day celebrations, Singh told reporters, "Despite knowing they would be defeated, Yubraj Tikendrajit, Thangal General, Chirai Naga, and others fought a war with the British. Patriots Day is a commemoration of

"Through there is no popular government now, the MLAs and all of us are working along with the governor and officers to restore peace," Singh added. (PTI)

## Mizoram MP urges BRO to expedite projects, resolve land issues



AIZAWL, Aug 13: Mizoram's lone Lok Sabha MP Richard Vamhlangaiha has urged the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) to expedite the ongoing projects and resolve land acquisition issues in the state, an official statement said on Wednesday.

During a meeting with BRO Director General Lt. Gen. Raghu Srinivasan in New Delhi on Tuesday, Richard urged him to expedite the construction of roads and other development infrastructures currently being undertaken by the organisation across the state, the statement added.

He requested the BRO director

tion will be taken to ensure that the ongoing and upcoming projects are executed, the statement added.

## Pradyot Manikya terms SC order on street dogs 'inhuman', urges for reconsideration

AGARTALA, Aug 13: Terming the Supreme Court order on street dogs "inhuman" the royal scion of Tripura Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debarma on Wednesday urged the apex court reconsider this order and work with animal welfare groups to find a solution.

Pradyot, well-known for his deep love for dogs, has adopted numerous strays both in his palace and at his residence in Shillong. He is often seen raising his voice against cruelty towards these loyal companions, standing as a steadfast advocate for their welfare.

In a statement, Pradyot said, "I strongly oppose the recent order by the Supreme Court directing the authorities to immediately remove all the stray dogs from Delhi NCR within eight weeks. This is not only hasty but inhumane. There is clearly no strategic planning, no logistics check, and most importantly, no consultation with animal welfare organisations, which have the expertise to guide such initiatives in a humane and effective manner".

### E-AUCTION FOR LEASING OUT OF SLR COMPARTMENT BY VARIOUS TRAINS

E-Auction for leasing contract of SLR compartments by various trains originating from Tinsukia Division through e-Auction on single trip basis for a period of 2 years. Description: Parcel Space in SLR Coach (Single Compartment). Auction Start Date & Time: 10:00 hrs. on 29-08-2025. Auction Close Date & Time: 12:10 hrs. on 29-08-2025. Rate Unit: Per Trip Licensing Fee.

Seq No.	Lot No./Category	Trips/Days
AA/1	13281-SLR-F1-DBRG-RJPB-25-2 (Parcel-SLR)	105
AA/2	15933-SLR-F1-NTSK-ASR-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	105
AA/3	20505-SLR-F1-DBRG-NDLS-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	209
AA/4	15968-SLR-R1-LEDO-RNY-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	314
AA/5	15930-SLR-F1-NTSK-TBM-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	105
AA/6	22504-SLR-F1-DBRG-CAPE-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	730
AA/7	15903-SLR-F1-DBRG-CDG-25-2 (Parcel-SLR)	209
AA/8	15604-SLR-F2-LEDO-GHY-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	730
AA/9	15960-SLR-F1-DBRG-HWH-25-2 (Parcel-SLR)	522
AA/10	15670-SLR-R1-DBRG-GHY-25-2 (Parcel-SLR)	730
AA/11	15928-SLR-F2-NTSK-RNY-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	418

The Auction catalogue has already been uploaded on 11-08-2025 on IREPS website.

Divisional Commercial Manager (IC), Tinsukia  
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY  
"SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE"

No: SMED/DMCH/Tender/PI-II/2023-24/023/

**Corrigendum**  
The Short Quotation Notice vide no: SMED/DMCH/Tender/PI-11/2023-24/023/651-53, Dated: 29/07/2025 published on newspaper on 30/07/2025 is hereby by extended due to less participation. The Quotation is to be submitted to the Principal cum Chief Superintendent, Diphu Medical College & Hospital, Diphu on or before 18/08/2025 till 1:00 PM. Quotation will be opened on same day at 2.30 PM. Other terms and condition will remain same as per earlier notice. The interested supplier may visit official website www.diphumch.assam.gov.in for details.

Sd/-  
Principal cum Chief Superintendent  
Diphu Medical College & Hospital, Diphu

DIPR /C/HLT/120/14-Aug-25

No. Misc/2/XXXV/1588 Date 13/08/2025

### SHORT TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tender in prescribed form affixing court fee stamp of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees Eight & paise twenty five) only for each group separately are hereby invited from Registered Contractors of Irrigation Deptt., Assam for the following works under M & R for the year 2025-26 and will be received up to 2.00 P.M. on 19-08-2025 and will be opened on the same date and place at 3.00 P.M. by the undersigned in presence of tenderer or their authorised representative if any so desire.

In case of any unavoidable circumstances or any Govt. Holiday being declared on that day, the same will be received and opened on the next working day at the same place and hour.

Sl. No.	Name of Scheme	Approximate value of works	Time of completion
1	Repairing of Canal of Pokalagi F.I.S.	Rs. 7,00,000.00	3 (three) months
2	Repairing of Canal of Boshguri F.I.S.	Rs. 7,00,000.00	3 (three) months
3	Repairing of Canal of Gambhirakata F.I.S.	Rs. 9,00,000.00	3 (three) months
4	Repairing of Canal of Duldwisa F.I.S.	Rs. 9,00,000.00	3 (three) months
5	Repairing of Main Canal of Patakata F.I.S.	Rs. 9,00,000.00	3 (three) months
6	Downstream Protection works of Mahamaya F.I.S.	Rs. 9,00,000.00	3 (three) months
7	Repairing of Earthen Canal of Panbari F.I.S.	Rs. 9,00,000.00	3 (three) months
8	Repairing of Canal of Doraigaon F.I.S.	Rs. 8,00,000.00	3 (three) months

Location :- Kokrajhar West Sub-Division (Irrigation), Kamfali B.I. & Gossaigaon Sub-Division (Irrigation), Gossaigaon.  
Approx. Value of Work :- Rs. 67.00 L  
Time of Completion :- As per Group List.  
Earnest Money :- 2% of the value of the Work (1% for S.C./S.T./O.B.C. & M.O.B.C. Category)  
Detailed specification of item & other terms and condition may be obtained from O/O the Undersigned on written request on depositing a sum of Rs. 300.00 (Rupees Three hundred) only by cash on all working days during office hours.  
Sd/- Executive Engineer,  
Gossaigaon Kokrajhar West Division (Irrigation), Gossaigaon

IPR(BTC)/C/2025-26/2549

No. PKDI/TB/8/10 Date 12/08/2025

### SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed tender affixing non-refundable court fee stamp of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees eight and twenty-five paise) is hereby invited from the eligible registered contractors/surveyor of Irrigation Department, Assam and BTC in prescribed form subsequently to be drawn in APWDF-2 form of Tender Agreement for the works as listed below which will be received by the undersigned up to 2.00 p.m. of 20-08-2025 and will be opened on the same day at 2.30 p.m. in presence of the interested tenderer(s) or their authorized representatives. In the event of any reason, if the office remains closed in the specific date, the tenders will be received/opened on the next working day at the same time and same place.

Sl. No.	Name of Scheme	Approx Amount in Rs.
1	Renovation of Headwork and protection work of Guide Bund of Okra Bund FIS under SOPD (BTC) for the year 2025-26.	Rs 13,00,000.00

Earnest Money : 2% against work value (1% for SC/ST/OBC) in the shape of Bank Draft/ Call deposit drawn from any Scheduled Bank guaranteed by RBI and duly pledged in favour of "The Executive Engineer, Paneri-Kalaigaon Division (Irrigation) Tangla is to be submitted along with the tender.  
Time of Completion :- 45 (Forty Five) days only.

Sd/- Executive Engineer  
Paneri- Kalaigaon Division (Irrigation), Tangla

IPR(BTC)/C/2025-26/2566



Distinguished external resource persons of the workshop are Dr William Westerman, a Fulbright International scholar and associate professor at New Jersey City University, USA, Dr Theyiesinuo Keditsu, renowned educator, poet, and scholar, and assistant professor at Kohima College and Dr Sentinaro, folklorist and cultural expert, and assistant professor at Baptist College.

The resource persons will offer critical insights into the study of indigeneity and folklore, particularly in the context of a rapidly changing global landscape.

## Experts from India and abroad share insights on decolonising folklore and preserving oral traditions International workshop on indigenous folklore studies at NU

**HT Correspondent**  
DIMAPUR, Aug 13: A two-day international workshop on the 'indigenous folkloristics: methods and approaches' commenced at the Centre for Naga Tribal Language Studies, Nagaland University, Kohima, on Wednesday.

Convener of the workshop Dr Yanbeni Yanthan said the workshop has been organised to explore how other indigenous communities across the world navigate the realities of cultural hegemony and change.

It is also aimed at encouraging the Nagas to engage with their own folklore and oral traditions through a multifaceted lens that fosters greater inclusivity and dynamism in current approaches to folklore studies and advance the call to "put the folk back into folklore", reframing it as both a scholarly, cultural and social imperative, and as a step towards the broader project of decolonisation.

# JOHN ABRAHAM WRITES TO CJI, CALLS FOR REVIEW OF SC'S DIRECTIVE ON STRAY DOGS

**NEW DELHI, Aug 13:** Actor John Abraham on Tuesday wrote a letter to Chief Justice B R Gavai, urging a review and modification of the recent Supreme Court directive ordering removal of street dogs from the Delhi NCR region.

The letter came a day after the Supreme Court directed the authorities to permanently relocate all strays from streets to shelters "at the earliest".

The 52-year-old, who was named the first honorary director of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India, said dogs are not strays but rather part of the community and loved by many. "I hope you will agree that these are not 'strays' but community dogs - respected and loved by many, and very much Delhiites in their own right, having lived in the region as neighbours to humans for generations," Abraham said.

The actor stated that the directive is in conflict with the Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules, 2023, and the apex court's past judgements on the issue which have consistently "upheld a methodical sterilisation programme".

"The ABC Rules prohibit the displacement of dogs, instead mandating their sterilisation, vaccination, and return to the very areas they inhabit. Where the ABC programme is implemented earnestly, it works," he said, giving the example of cities like Jaipur and Lucknow.

He added, "Delhi can achieve the same. During sterilisation, dogs are vaccinated against rabies, and sterilisation results in calmer animals, fewer fights and bites, as they have no puppies to protect. Because community dogs are territorial, they also deter unsterilised, unvaccinated dogs

from entering their areas."

According to the actor, removing street dogs from public spaces doesn't guarantee a solution to the issue.

"Delhi has an estimated 10 lakh dogs.

It is neither practical nor humane to shelter or relocate them all, and removal only opens the door for unfamiliar, unsterilised, and unvaccinated dogs to move in—leading to greater competition, territorial disputes, and public health risks.

"I respectfully request a review and modification of this judgment in favour of the lawful, humane, and effective ABC approach, which safeguards public health while honouring the constitutional values of compassion and coexistence, a stand the Supreme Court has consistently upheld since 2015."

On Monday, the supreme court directed all the strays to be removed and put in shelters by the Delhi government and civic bodies of Gurgaon, Noida and Ghaziabad.

A bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and R Mahadevan noted that there was an "extremely grim" situation due to stray dog bites resulting in rabies, particularly among children. (PTI)



# HIS CHARISMA AND AURA JUST OUTSTANDING: NAGARJUNA AND 'COOLIE' CAST ON RAJINIKANTH

**MUMBAI, Aug 13:** Renowned south actor Nagarjuna says working with superstar Rajinikanth for their upcoming film "Coolie" was a fantastic experience.

The film is set to release in theatres on Thursday and is directed by Lokesh Kanagaraj, known for projects such as "Kaithi", "Leo" and "Aviyal". Backed by Sun Pictures, "Coolie" also stars Aamir Khan and Satyaraj in pivotal roles.

Nagarjuna attended the music launch event of their film on Monday in Mumbai. He was accompanied by his co-star Shruti Haasan and music composer Anirudh Ravichander. The actor, who essays the role of a villain in the film, said Rajinikanth has also helped him with the Tamil dialogues. "Working with Rajinikanth is fantastic. Something I will take back home. That man's charisma and aura on set are just outstanding. It was really nice that he helped me with Tamil dialogues and guided me. Though I played the most negative role, I took back something very positive with myself after doing the film," he told reporters. Asked what made him say "yes" to a negative role, Nagarjuna said he has mostly played good roles, which became, to some extent, boring for him. "Because I was always play-

ing good all the time, it was getting a little boring. So, I thought, let me play the baddy. Completely enjoyed it, very liberating," he said.

But the actor admitted it took him some time to be convinced by Kanagaraj. "I made Lokesh work for it. I had to make sure that I was doing the right thing by playing bad... It took almost 7 to 8 meetings before he (Lokesh) convinced me," he said.

"(I'm playing a) straight up baddy. There's no reason why I'm bad. He's that kind of person... He doesn't give a damn about anybody and that's why I enjoyed the role. There was no inhibition, nothing to hold back. And I had Anirudh backing me up with his music," he added. Haasan said working with Rajinikanth was a dream-come-true moment for her. "His aura is like that. The minute you encounter him for the first time, you're like, 'Wow, ok, this is like a powerhouse full on'. But I think it was when I saw his face up close, I was like, 'Oh my God, that is Rajinikanth sir,'" she said. "It (working with Rajinikanth) was never something that I even considered. When Lokesh came to me with this, it was already a dream come true. And then as the cast kept growing and people like Nag sir, and then Sathiyaraj sir, Soubin (Shahir) sir, Aamir sir, Upenra (Rao) sir, like the list goes on and on... It really was a great learning experience, truly, as well as the fact that there was just so much good energy all around." (PTI)

# 'Inspector Zende' about Marathi superhero who did extraordinary work: Director Om Raut

**MUMBAI, Aug 13:** Filmmaker Om Raut says he has been eager to explore historical narratives about Maratha heroes, be it his 2020 blockbuster "Tanhai: The Unsung Warrior" or his upcoming production "Inspector Zende".

Raut debuted as a director with the acclaimed 2015 Marathi movie "Lokmanya: Ek Yug Purush", based on the life of social reformer Bal Gangadhar Tilak and then made Ajay Devgn-starrer "Tanhai" about Marathi warrior Tanaji Malusare.

Raut is currently producing the film "Inspector Zende", directed by Chinmay D Mandekar and featuring Manoj Bajpayee in the lead role.

Inspired by the Mumbai police officer Madhukar Zende, who apprehended notorious criminal Charles Sobhraj, popularly known as the "Bikini Killer".

"Inspector Zende, he's a national figure because he's done some extraordinary work. He's also a Marathi superhero, somebody who comes from the land that I and Chinmay come from, we are from Maharashtra.

"Inspector Zende's career flourished in this city and in this state. So, be it the film on Lokmanya Tilak, which was my first film, it is about a Marathi-born national figure, who received international acclaim," the

43-year-old filmmaker told PTI in an interview.

Set in the bustling bylanes of 1970s and 1980s Mumbai, "Inspector Zende" follows the story of a determined police officer, played

Bajpayee, and Carl Bhojraj (Jim Sarbh), the infamous "Swimsuit Killer" who escaped from Tihar Jail in New Delhi.

The cat-and-mouse chase between the two unfolds as a quirky blend of crime, comedy, and nostalgia. Raut, who produced the movie along with Jay Shekaramani through the banner Northern Lights Films, said the contribution of local heroes must not be forgotten. "Stories like this excite me a lot as a boy who grew up not far from here, these are the stories that I would like to tell," he said. The filmmaker believes that the essence of Inspector Zende's story transcends cultural boundaries, making it relevant to global audiences.

That's why they decided to release the movie on streaming service Netflix. "Reaching a wider audience is something which is important, and that's why every film, script and subject has the right platform, and 'Inspector Zende' could be told nicely on this platform because then it can go to a much wider stage."

The idea for "Inspector Zende" came from the stories Raut heard from his father, a journalist, about a remarkable police officer who became a local legend.

He said he had the opportunity to meet Zende himself and talk to him about the film.

"Chinmay was part of my earlier project (Lokmanya) as an actor, we used to always talk about it (film on Inspector Zende). And one fine day I said, 'Chinmay why don't you take a shot of writing this film', and he said okay. (PTI)



# COMIC CON INDIA TO KICK OFF IN OCTOBER THIS YEAR IN HYDERABAD

**HYDERABAD, Aug 13:** Comic Con India, the annual event that celebrates various pop culture fandoms, will kick off this year in Hyderabad on October 31, the organisers have announced.

The 13th edition of Comic Con for 2025-2026 season will begin in Hyderabad's HITEC Exhibition Centre from October 31 and will run till November 2, before moving on to other cities. Spanning several months, Comic Con India will unite fandoms across the country in a celebration of comics, cosplay, gaming, films, TV, anime, merchandise, and more.

Shefali Johnson, CEO of Comic Con India said, "Hyderabad has rapidly evolved into one of India's most dynamic cultural and creative hubs... The city is the perfect launch-

pad for Comic Con India's grand 2025-2026 season".

"We are bringing the best line-up of celebrities and guests to each city, tailored to match the unique interests and passions of their own. We are also creating deeper, more immersive experiences for fans across India," Akshat Rathee, Co-founder and MD of NODWIN Gaming added.

Last year, Hyderabad Comic Con drew over 40,000 attendees, bringing gamers, comic book fans, creators, and pop culture enthusiasts under one roof. This year's event will feature cosplay competitions, live music performances, and exclusive meet-and-greets with some of the country's top content creators. Tickets for Hyderabad Comic Con 2025-2026 are live now on the District app. (PTI)



# 'Sholay'@50: More than just a movie, a shared memory that lives on

**NEW DELHI, Aug 13:** When dialogues, characters and scenes become part of popular folklore, woven into the tapestry of national memory that rolls on generation after generation, is when celluloid magic happens. "Sholay" is that film - and it doesn't matter whether you have seen the film or not.

It has been 50 years since the film released, a cult classic so impactful it continues to thrive, almost a living, breathing entity evolving through time and referenced on just about any occasion. And so, a late entrant who walks into a silent conference room says "Itna sannata kyon hai bhai" and everyone breaks into smiles. The connect is instant. The film is familiar to all. The Ramesh Sippy masterpiece that melded comedy and romance, terror and tragedy was released on August 15, 1975, with a runtime of more than three hours. The response was tepid to begin with but picked up over the weeks that followed.

Cinema history was being made in 70 mm. The cast was impressive with Sanjeev Kumar, Dharmendra, Amitabh Bachchan, Hema Malini, Jaya Bachchan and almost newcomer Amjad Khan in an explosive first major role as Gabbar Singh. But Thakur, Jai, Veeru, Basanti and Gabbar are not the only ones who have stood the test of time.

A range of character artists there for a scene or maybe two are remembered in detail. Some for their dialogues - the aged,

blind father played by A K Hangal unaware that his son has been killed asking why everyone is so quiet or Mac Mohan who became famous as Samba mouthing just that one dialogue "poore pachas hazaar" - and others for their cameos. Remember mausiji, Soorma Bhopali, "Angrezon ke zamane ke jailer", Kaalia. Just some of the many characters populating the film, ensuring that audiences move from laughter to tears to terror in quicksilver succession, each a setpiece complete in itself.

"They have become part of Indian culture and common language. A picture made 50 years ago and till today its dialogues are used in stand-up comedy. There are its references which are used in other films and they are also used in language and even in political speeches, so on and so forth," Javed Akhtar, one half of the famed scriptwriting duo of Salim-Javed, told PTI.

The canvas of the film was such that it just became timeless, Akhtar who penned the film with Salim Khan, said.

"It was a symphony of all human emotions. It had come without any conscious effort. It just happened," Akhtar said. According to Amrit Gangar, film scholar, historian and curator, "Sholay" despite its spaghetti western influences defies the Western dogma of genre.

"It is a great thali film. Thali is a typical Indian multi-rasa food plate," he said. In

his view, the only other film to have that kind of impact on public imagination is "Mughal-e-Azam".

"Sholay" does the magic without being grandly spectacular but it has the power of the words," he added.

Though "Mughal-e-Azam" is a period romance, "Sholay" is set in post-Independence rural India, not in a picturesque village of rolling greens and mustard fields but in rocky, arid and bleak landscape. Unlike many of its contemporaries, it has aged well, despite its feudal setting. The women characters shine through, be it the motormouth tonga puller Basanti (Hema Malini) or the silent widow Radha (Jaya Bachchan). The flirtatious romance between Basanti and Veeru is contrasted beautifully with the unspoken love between Jai and the white-clad widow. And both would be equally relevant today.

The vengeful Thakur (Sanjeev Kumar) is an upright and progressive man who wants his daughter-in-law to find love again. Salim-Javed were not just trying to stay not just with the times but were ahead of it. Their imagination gave birth to the most quoted villain of Hindi cinema. Gabbar Singh, the dacoit without a backstory, redefined the word menacing. His many dialogues are endlessly re-counted -- "Kitney admī they", "Jo dar gaya, samjho mar gaya", "Pachas, pachas kos..." Film historian, author and archivist, S M M Ausaja said "Sholay"

represents one of those rare occurrences when every department of the film delivered to the maximum.

"It is a curious case of everything falling into place at the right place and right time. The characterisation was very good and the kind of performances that Ramesh Sippy managed out of the stars, out of all the actors, is exemplary."

"Plus, all the emotions are there. From comedy to tragedy, it has every emotion you can dream of."

You can meet any Indian and start discussing "Sholay", then 100 per cent they'll have a conversation with you, said actor-filmmaker Farhan Akhtar, also the son of Javed Akhtar.

"It's something that connects us in a weird way. It was a mainstream, entertaining film which was incredibly made for its time... Technically, it's a very superior film. It's just an amazing film that you can keep going back to and watch it from wherever you want," Farhan said.

Salim-Javed had already delivered hits such as "Zanjeer", "Seeta Aur Geeta" and "Deewaar" before "Sholay". Many sequences have been embedded in India's collective consciousness. Fifty years on, there are still those who clamber up on water and mobile towers in protest. A hark back to Veeru's famous drunk scene when he climbs a water tower and refuses to come down until Basanti's mausi relents. (PTI)

# Khalid Jamil has signed a two-year contract, will serve as full-time India coach: AIFF



**NEW DELHI, Aug 13:** The All India Football Federation (AIFF) on Wednesday said Khalid Jamil has taken charge of the senior men's team on a full-time basis for a period of two years with an option to extend his contract by one year depending on results.

The AIFF said Jamil has signed the contract after parting ways

with ISL team Jamshedpur FC. Jamil will begin his first training camp on August 15 at the Dravid-Padukone Centre for Sports Excellence in Bengaluru.

His first assignment with the Blue Tigers will be the CAFA Nations Cup, where India will face hosts Tajikistan (August 29), Iran (September 1) and Afghanistan

(September 4) in Group B.

In the October FIFA Window, India will play two crucial AFC Asian Cup 2027 qualifying matches against Singapore (October 9 and 14).

Jamil said, "I am both deeply proud and immensely privileged to have been entrusted with the responsibility of leading our national team.

"Over the years, I've had the opportunity to train Indian players, and I've grown to understand their strengths and weaknesses intimately. These insights will be fundamental to everything we do as we prepare for the CAFA Nations Cup and the upcoming crucial Asian Cup Qualifiers against

Singapore."

He has replaced Manolo Marquez, whose contract was terminated by the AIFF last month.

Jamil, the first Indian to coach the men's national team since Savio Medeira in 2012, has extensive coaching experience in the Indian Super League and the I-League, managing clubs like Jamshedpur FC, NorthEast United FC, Aizawl FC, East Bengal FC, Mohun Bagan AC and Mumbai FC.

He sensationally led Aizawl FC to a historic I-League title in 2016-17.

The 48-year-old's most recent spell with Jamshedpur FC saw the Red Miners reach the final of the Super Cup 2025, and the semi-finals of the ISL play-offs 2024-25 and the Super Cup 2024.

Jamil is a former India international with 15 caps to his name. A midfielder, he made his debut in the 1997 SAFF Championship in Nepal, where India emerged champions. He was part of the Indian squads for the 2002 FIFA World Cup Qualifiers and the 2001 Merdeka Tournament.

In his club playing career, Jamil won the National Football League, two Federation Cups and two IFA Shields with Mahindra United. He also donned the shirts of Air India and Mumbai FC.

In the Santosh Trophy, Jamil represented Maharashtra, with whom he won the title in 1999. (PTI)

*Feel sorry for Jamil, he's taking charge in difficult situation: Bhutia on football team coach*



**NEW DELHI, Aug 13:** Former India captain Bhaichung Bhutia feels "sorry" for Khalid Jamil, who has taken charge of the national football team at a time when the sport is going through a difficult phase in the country and said the AIFF preferred him because he is unlikely to make too many demands.

Jamil, who replaced Spaniard Manolo Marquez, became the first Indian in 13 years to be appointed as head coach of the senior national team. "We have got two world class coaches leaving, we have got Igor Stimac who coached the Croatian team, and then Manolo Marquez who is one of the great coaches with great history," Bhutia told PTI

Videos after the Fidel Castro Centenary Football Cup's exhibition match. "If these two coaches couldn't work with the federation, then you bring people who will listen and will do what Federations says and will not come up with his own ideas and demands from the federation. "I think Jamil being a domestic coach fits into that as he is fairly new to the team. (Feel) sorry for him as well as he is taking charge of the team when it's in a very difficult situation," he added.

Jamil was chosen ahead of Stephen Constantine and Stefan Tarkovic. Taking aim at AIFF president Kalyan Chaubey, Bhutia said: "For Kalyan, he is the right guy because Indian coaches do not demand much. At the same time he is saying that there are financial problems and today the federation has gone into such a bad situation that we don't have money to pay to the coaches as well.

"There are coaches who are national team coaches, and they are

being paid by the other people, so, I don't know where all the money's gone and there are scam after scam." Chaubey had recently admitted that club football is "going through crisis" due to the uncertainty surrounding the Indian Super League, while attributing the situation to "some self-claimed reformers with vested interests".

Bhutia responded: "He (Chaubey) said exactly the right things but who is the head of the federation, and who is controlling football right now and that person should be responsible for the same. "He is saying that it's in a crisis but not saying that I am (Chaubey) the head of the federation that created those crises.

"He does not understand what position he is in and the football in this country is in crisis and it is the responsibility of the federation and the president to solve those crises and if he cannot do that he should let somebody come in who can solve those crises."

Bhutia and Chaubey have shared a history of verbal spats, with the former frequently questioning Chaubey's leadership, even calling the AIFF a "circus".

The AIFF president has denied the accusations, calling instead for constructive contributions.

The National Sports Governance Bill was passed in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday, a day after it cleared the Lok Sabha. Bhutia welcomed the development and said: "I welcome the Sports Bill. I only hope that the BCCI was included in that. But, overall, it's a welcome move. We have been struggling in terms of football and Olympics and I hope this bill brings transparency and right people at the job." (PTI)

## St Louis Rapid and Blitz: Gukesh joint fifth after six games; Caruana snatches sole lead

**ST. LOUIS (US), Aug 13:** Reigning World Champion D Gukesh had a relatively unremarkable day at the St. Louis Rapid and Blitz, as he lost one game and drew two, placing him in the middle of the standings in the 10-player tournament, which is part of the Grand Chess Tour.

After a shock defeat at the hands of tailender Sam Shankland of United States in the fourth round, Gukesh followed it up with two draws -- against Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France and Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan.

Meanwhile, the lead changed hands dramatically as highest

ranked American in the fray, Fabiano Caruana conceded just a lone draw and defeated overnight leader -- the Armenian-turned-American Levon Aronian in the last game of the day to take a two-points lead.

Like Gukesh, Aronian was just able to draw two games and lost one. With just three rounds to go in the rapid, Caruana, on 10 points out of a possible 12, seems poised to win this section which would mean that he would have some advantage going ahead in the blitz section which will have a double round-robin comprising 18 rounds in all. Aronian is still a not-far-behind

second on eight points, sharing the second spot with Wesley So, also from United States. A close fourth is Vachier-Lagrave on seven points, while Gukesh shares the next spot along side another US import Leinier Dominguez Perez, who is a born Cuban.

Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan and Liem Le Quang of Vietnam share the seventh spot on five points and another two points behind is Grigoriy Oparin who also changed his federation to United States. The last man standing in the event is Sam Shankland with the lone prize catch of Gukesh that net-

ted him two points.

The Indian ace had done well to win two games on the trot after losing to Aronian in the opening round but a tougher opponent awaited him in the second round.

Against Shankland, Gukesh tried to go for complications but they backfired as the American is known for his decent tactical skills and won a piece with some precise calculation in the middle game.

Gukesh did not push for more against Vachier-Lagrave and settled for a draw and against Abdusattorov he did not get many chances as the players headed to a king versus king

position after 60 moves.

Results round 4: Leinier Dominguez Perez (Usa) (draw with Levon Aronian (Usa); Sam Shankland (Usa) beat D Gukesh (Ind); Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb) beat Grigoriy Oparin (Usa); Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra) drew with Liem Le Quang (Vie); Wesley So (Usa) drew with Fabiano Caruana (Usa).

Round 5: Gukesh drew with Vachier-Lagrave; Wesley drew with Aronian; Caruana beat Shankland; Liem drew with Abdusattorov; Dominguez drew with Oparin. (PTI)

*All countries need not play Tests, scarcity is Test cricket's friend: Greenberg*



**MELBOURNE, Aug 13:** Cricket Australia CEO Todd Greenberg feels not all nations need to aspire to play Tests, given the financial burden it places on some of the weaker boards and said while there is no definitive number of Test-playing countries, "scarcity in Test cricket is our friend, not our foe."

Australia, which hosted a record-breaking Border-Gavaskar Trophy in the 2024-25 season, is set to welcome England for the Ashes later this year.

Earlier this month, India and England concluded a highly competitive five-Test series, while Australia and New Zealand recorded lopsided victories against the West Indies and Zimbabwe respectively -- outcomes that have reignited debate about the global structure of red-ball cricket.

"I don't think there is a right number (of Test playing nations) ... but I think in the future scarcity in Test cricket is our friend, not our foe," Greenberg told reporters.

"What I mean by that is, I don't think everyone in world cricket needs to aspire to play Test cricket and that might be OK.

"A lot of traditionalists might not like that (and) I'm not suggesting I know the number that will play, but literally we're trying to send countries bankrupt if we force them to play Test cricket." Emphasising the need for

meaningful competition, he said: "We need to make sure we invest in the right spaces, play Test cricket where it means something and has jeopardy.

"That's why the Ashes will be as enormous and as profitable as it is because it means something ... it means something to every player.

"We've got to make sure when we play Test cricket that's at the top of our mind."

The International Cricket Council (ICC) recently formed a working group to examine the Test format, and Greenberg expressed his willingness to consider new models, including a two-tier system.

"I've got an open mind to that question because I don't know the details to what a two-tiered structure would look like," he said.

"Test cricket needs an injection of capital and an injection of resources because it can't just be about Australia, India and England -- it needs to be bigger than that.

"Red-ball cricket in this country, and in England and in India, is unbelievably successful but it's not like that in all parts of the world.

"It's incumbent on us to make sure we play our part to help, so the concept of tiers I think needs to be explored. I'm not prepared to say we're against something until we see all the details," he noted. (PTI)

## Gautam bhai always tells me 'you are not aware of your own talent': Akash Deep

**NEW DELHI, Aug 13:** A coach who believed in him more than himself, a captain who supported when the chips were down and conditions that felt more like home than away -- Indian pacer Akash Deep says his maiden but impactful tour of England was rather smooth.

A 10-wicket match-haul in one game and a very important half-century in another, both in winning causes, summed up Akash Deep's performance that has made him an overnight star but he can't forget what head coach Gautam Gambhir told him after his 66 at the Oval.

"Tumko khud pata nahi tum kya kar sakte ho (You aren't aware of your capabilities). "See, I was telling you, you can do it. You have to play with this dedication always," the 29-year-old recollected in an interview to PTI.

"Gautam bhai is a very passionate coach. He always motivates us. He believes in me more than I believe in myself, both in my batting and bowling," he gushed after having earned the vote of confidence from his coach.

Having made his Test debut under Rohit Sharma and now playing under Shubman Gill, the adjustment has been easy for the Bengal speedster, who terms the new skipper as someone who is calm yet brimming with on-field ideas. "He is a very good captain. It's not like he is a new captain. He has already been an IPL captain for a couple of years, which is a big platform. That experience does count," he said.

"With Shubman as captain, I didn't feel like I was playing for the first time. He's very supportive.

When a captain supports you and understands things well, especially when you are down, it makes a big difference.

"I have played Duleep Trophy under his captaincy last year so it wasn't the first time. He is a cool customer with a lot of ideas and when someone is calm, it helps in taking good on-field decisions," Akash Deep explained.

Although it was his first time in England, Akash Deep, for the better part of the series, felt that he was playing on sub-continental tracks with negligible movement for quick bowlers.

"In Australia, there was a lot of bounce and carry and I tried keeping it slightly back of length or at times pitch it up. However, in four out of the five Tests that we played in England, it didn't resemble the

typical English wickets that we have traditionally heard of or seen over the years.

"If you see, the ball wasn't seaming or swinging a lot at times and we had to hit the India length, fuller one. We had to make that adjustment which, if you have played enough cricket, you should be able to do it."

Akash Deep then dwelled on his net routines and visualisation techniques before going into an actual match.

"Practice sessions are very important for me in terms of execution. I am always trying to think about the main opposition batter that I am supposed to bowl," he revealed. "Bhale hi main Yashvini ke nets pe ball daloon, plan mera (Ben) Duckett aur (Joe) Root ke liye hota tha. (I might be bowling

to Yashvini in nets but my plan was for Duckett or Root)."

When asked about concerns around his fitness after he missed games in both the tours of Australia and England due to niggles, Akash Deep said he is doing his best to be in good shape.

"The on-field impact injuries can't be avoided. If you have to dive to save a boundary, you have to do it. You can't think that I will hurt my shoulder and all. Yes, if it is fitness and training related injuries, the aim is to minimise them as much as possible," he said. Till now, Akash Deep has played 10 Tests and taken 28 wickets. When asked if he has been zeroed in only for the longer version of the game, Akash Deep said that he hasn't been told anything in specific. (PTI)

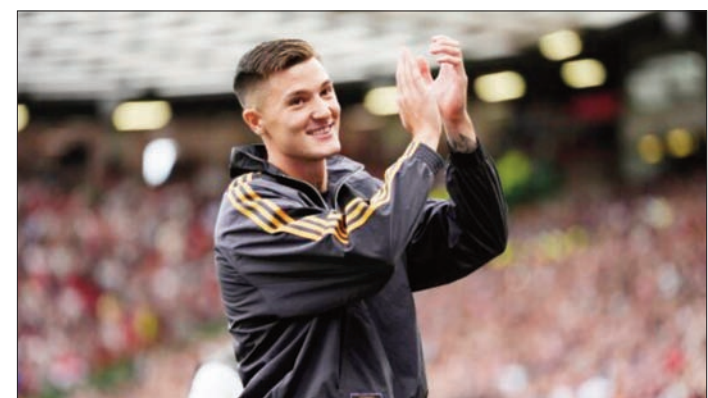
## It could be the most open Premier League title race in years as clubs spend big to take advantage

**MANCHESTER (ENGLAND), Aug 13:** The Premier League is back after one of the most unpredictable seasons in recent memory saw Liverpool win a record-equaling 20th title, Manchester City go into meltdown and Manchester United hit new lows.

The new campaign kicks off on Friday and teams have spent big in an attempt to capitalize on what looks like being a wide open title race after City's dominance was ended.

Defending champion Liverpool hasn't stood still, with Florian Wirtz the pick of its signings for a fee that could rise to a British record \$156 million. Pep Guardiola's rebuild at City began in January with around \$450 million spent since then on revamping a team that saw its four-year title-winning run snapped last term. And perennial runner-up Arsenal has finally secured a top-class striker in Viktor Gyokeres as it looks to win its first title since 2004.

Chelsea has continued its heavy-



spending policy under American owners Todd Boehly and Clearlake Capital and, fresh from being crowned world club champion, will expect to challenge for the biggest prizes again.

Liverpool knows just how difficult it is to win back-to-back championships.

Not since 1984 has the club successfully defended the title and it is not alone in struggling to hold onto the trophy. Only Guardiola's City -- champion in six out of seven seasons between 2018 and 2024 -- has managed to retain the title since Alex Ferguson's Man United retained its title in 2009. But Liverpool coach Arne Slot already defied the odds by joining an elite group of coaches to win the title in their first year in the Premier League, following Jose Mourinho, Carlo Ancelotti, Manuel Pellegrini and Antonio

Conte. He has brought in high-quality additions, with Wirtz and Hugo Ekitike adding more firepower to Liverpool's attack.

City endured a sudden and dramatic decline last season when its title defense unraveled before Christmas.

Defeat in the FA Cup final against Crystal Palace consigned City to its first trophyless season in eight years.

There were mitigating factors -- mainly the injury to Ballon d'Or winner Rodri. But Guardiola's extensive rebuild, including the signings of Omar Marmoush and Rayan Cherki, suggest City's problems were more deeply rooted. The last time Guardiola relinquished a title, he went on to win the next four. City's Premier League rivals have been warned.

No team has been more consistent than Arsenal over the past three seasons -- but that still hasn't delivered a title. The signing of Gyokeres could be the last piece of the puzzle. The Sweden striker outscored

Kylian Mbappe, Haaland and Mohamed Salah last term. His overall record for Sporting Lisbon was 97 goals in 102 games. Arsenal will hope he can reproduce that form in England.

United recorded its lowest finish in the Premier League era (15th) last season, the most losses (18) and its lowest points total (42). Add to that the failure to qualify for any European competition and it was a year to forget. Coach Ruben Amorim has vowed to bring the good times back. He's signed Premier League-proven forwards in Matheus Cunha and Bryan Mbeumo, along with highly rated Slovenia striker Benjamin Sesko. He's also had a full off-season to work with his squad -- something he was denied when hired midway through last season.

After winning two Portuguese titles at Sporting Lisbon, United is convinced he is the man to end more than a decade of decline since former manager Alex Ferguson retired in 2013. (AP)

# Pakistan skittled for 92 as West Indies seal third ODI by 202 runs for historic 2-1 series win

**TAROUBA (TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO), Aug 13:** Shai Hope helped deliver some long overdue good news for the West Indies with a century to inspire the Caribbean cricketers to a series-clinching, 202-run win over Pakistan.

It was the first bilateral ODI series won by West Indies against Pakistan since 1991 and ended a run of home series defeats across the test and Twenty20 formats to Australia and Pakistan.

Hope stroked an unbeaten 120 before pace bowler Jayden Seales destroyed Pakistan's chase with six wickets in the third and final one-day cricket international.

The West Indies captain said he was extremely proud of his team.

Hope added there'd been a lot of stress on negatives in the game but now there was "positives to shout about" for West Indies cricket.

The big win came in the wake of a two-day emergency summit for Caribbean cricket. Hope attended part of the summit, along with greats including Brian Lara and Clive Lloyd, to help create strategies to lift West Indies back toward the top of the international game.

The summit was called after a West Indian lineup scored just 27 runs in its second innings — one run short of the all-time test record for low totals — while losing the third of three tests to Australia.



After losing eight straight matches to Australia and then losing a Twenty20 series 2-1 to Pakistan in Florida, West Indies lost the ODI series-opener to Pakistan last week by five wickets. West Indies leveled the series with a five-wicket victory in the second ODI to stoke hope of a revival and dominated the third.

Pakistan was dismissed for 92 in 29.2 overs Tuesday after West Indies posted 294-6 at Brian Lara Stadium in Tarouba, Trinidad and Tobago.

Hope hit five sixes and 10 fours in his 94-ball knock, sharing an unbroken seventh-wicket stand with Justin Greaves of 110 runs in around eight overs.

Greaves was 43 not out in only 24 deliveries, including two sixes and four fours.

Pakistan collapsed early in its chase to 23-4 in the ninth over, with three ducks from its top four batters. Opener Saim Ayub was caught behind on the third ball of the innings, Abdullah Shafique also failed to score, and Pakistan was 8-3 when captain Mohammad Rizwan was bowled by Seales for a golden duck in the third over.

Seales took his fourth wicket by trapping Babar Azam (9) lbw. Seales finished with figures of 6-18 from 7.2 overs.

Hasan Nawaz (13) advanced and was stumped against the bowling of Gudakesh Motie and Roston Chase bowled Hussain Talat (1), leaving Pakistan on 62-6 in the 21st over. Salman Agha top-scored for Pakistan with a 49-ball 30.

The match and series ended with another golden duck when Ahrar Ahmed was run out by Chase. (AP)

## Yastika, Radha sparkle as India A beat Australia A by 3 wickets

**BRISBANE, Aug 13:** Yastika Bhatia hit a fifty and bowlers, led by skipper Radha Yadav, struck at regular intervals as India A scammed to a three-wicket win over their Australian counterparts in the first women's one-day match here on Wednesday.

India now lead the three-match series 1-0.

Left-arm spinner Radha took three wickets (3/45) as India A bundled out Australia A for 214, and then chased down the target in 42 overs with Bhatia (59 off 70 balls, 7x4) leading the visitors' charge.

India actually made a fine start with Bhatia and Shafali Verma (36 off 31 balls) adding 77 runs for the opening wicket in just 10.4 overs.

After Shafali fell to Sianna GINGER, Bhatia combined with Dhara Gujar (31 off 53 balls) and milked 63 runs for the second wicket as India marched to 140 for 1 in 23.3 overs.

But Gujar fell to Tess Flintoff and Bhatia to Kim Garth as India A were reduced to 157 for three. Off-spinner Ella Hayward (2/46) then ousted Tejal Hasabnis and Tanusree Sarkar in the 30th and 32nd overs, leading to the tourists further slipping to 166 for five.

India found a saviour in the determined Raghvi Bist (25 not out off 34 balls) and survived the quick dismissals of Radha and Minnu Mani by left-arm pacer Lucy Hamilton to go past the tape.

Earlier, Australia never really found the going easy despite Anika Learyod (92 not out off 90 balls) and Rachael Trenaman (51 off 62 balls) pulling off solid knocks.

The best part of the Australian innings was a 63-run partnership between Learyod and Trenaman that rescued the home side from a wobbly 50 for three before the latter was run out.

Learyod and Nicole Faltum (18) then added 45 runs for the third wicket as the Aussies reached 158 for four in 34.1 overs. (PTI)

## IOA approves India's 2030 CWG bid; says Games to include all 'medal-earning' sports

**NEW DELHI, Aug 13:** The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) on Wednesday formally approved the country's bid to host the 2030 Commonwealth Games during its Special General Meeting (SGM) here with its top officials saying that India would host an "inclusive" edition featuring all "medal-earning" sports.

India has already submitted an Expression of Interest for the 2030 CWG with Ahmedabad as the host city. But the nation will have to submit the proposals for the final bid before the August 31 deadline.

IOA President P T Usha said along with Ahmedabad, 2010 host Delhi and Bhubaneswar will also be considered.

"I am happy that all are together and it was a unanimous decision and our preparations will go ahead. We can't just tell whether Ahmedabad is the host city. We have good facilities in Bhubaneswar and even in Delhi also," Usha said after the

SGM that lasted just over half an hour.

"The 2026 Glasgow CWG is a scaled down Games because of circumstances. If we get 2030 CWG, it will be full fledged one just like we did in 2010," she added, referring to the pruned roster of the 2026 Glasgow edition where major sports like hockey, badminton, wrestling and shooting have been left out citing the cost factor.

With Canada having pulled out of the race, India's chances of getting the 2030 CWG have brightened.

"The plan is to have all our medal-earning sports like shooting, archery, wrestling etc. Our traditional sports like kabaddi, and kho kho should also be there," IOA joint secretary Kalyan Chaubey said.

A team of officials from Commonwealth Sport, led by its Director of Games Darren Hall, recently visited Ahmedabad to inspect the



venues and meet Gujarat government officials.

A bigger delegation of Commonwealth Sport is expected to be in the city later this month.

"The 2030 CWG will be a full-fledged Games. We will have all the sports we are good at and have a chance of winning maximum medals," said Executive Council member Rohit Rajpal.

"There are three groups of sports. First is core sports of the Commonwealth Games which are always there, then are sports which the host nation can choose and the third one are the additional sports.

"The 2030 will be an inclusive Games and will feature our traditional and indigenous sports also," Rajpal added. (PTI)

## Rohit rises to No 2 in ICC ODI rankings

**DUBAI, Aug 13:** Amid the chatter around his future in international cricket, Indian maestro Rohit Sharma has risen to the number two spot in the latest ICC ODI rankings for batters released on Wednesday.

The 38-year-old Rohit, who has not played any competitive cricket since the 2025 IPL season, dethroned Babar Azam while moving a place up even as the Pakistani slipped to No. 3 after a string of low scores in the recently-concluded ODI series against the West Indies in the Caribbean.

With 756 rating points Rohit sits just behind India's Test captain Shubman Gill (784), who has retained the No. 1 position in the rankings.

Former captain Virat Kohli held the fourth position with 736 points. Both Rohit and Kohli had announced their retirement from the Test format before the Indian team's tour of England but have expressed their willingness to carry on in the 50-over game.

The two star batters might be seen in action in the three-match ODI series against Australia in October, and have started training to get back in the groove. One of the all-time greats of the ODI game along with his longtime India teammate Kohli, Rohit at-

tained his career-best ranking points during the 2019 World Cup when he accumulated 882 points after smashing a record-breaking fifth century in the tournament. Rohit and Kohli last appeared in ODIs during India's victorious Champions Trophy campaign in the UAE earlier this year.

India currently boast five players in the top 15 of the men's ODI batting rankings, with Shreyas Iyer in eighth place and KL Rahul in 15th position.

Meanwhile, in-form batters from Australia and South Africa have been the big winners and reached new career-high ratings following the latest update to the T20I rankings.

Tim David is the leading run-scorer across the opening two matches of the T20I series between Australia and South Africa and the hard-hitting right-hander has improved six spots to 10th overall.

Teammate Cameron Green also gained six spots to rise to 17th, while youngster Dewald Brevis is the big winner from a South African perspective following his record-breaking exploits in the second game of the series in Darwin, where he struck a scintillating hundred. (PTI)

## Newcastle signs Germany defender Malick Thiauw from AC Milan

**NEWCASTLE (ENGLAND), Aug 13:** Newcastle signed Germany defender Malick Thiauw from AC Milan. The 24-year-old Thiauw spent three years at Milan, making 85 appearances in all competitions — including one against Newcastle in the Champions League. Thiauw, who predominantly plays at center back, has played three times for Germany. He is the third signing of the offseason for Newcastle, which is back in the Champions League in the coming season.

"The gaffer (Newcastle manager Eddie Howe) showed me his vision and what he wants to do with me as a player and the club itself, which is really exciting," said Thiauw, who has reportedly cost Newcastle around 35 million pounds (\$46 million). (AP)

## DURAND CUP Bodoland FC blank ITBP FT to seal historic quarterfinal spot



**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, Aug 13:** Bodoland FC capped off a dream group stage campaign in the 134th Indian Oil Durand Cup with a commanding 4-0 victory over ITBP FT, here at the SAI Stadium, in front of over 12,000 ecstatic home fans. The win saw the home side finish top of Group D with a perfect nine points from three matches, qualifying for the knockout stages for the first time in their history.

All matches of the 134th Indian Oil Durand Cup are being broadcast LIVE on Sony Sports Network (Sony Ten 2 channels) and streamed on SonyLiv.

Both teams came into the contest unbeaten, but the hosts, unchanged from the side that stunned ISL outfit Punjab FC except for Urjoo Brahma replacing Manabir Basumatary at left-back, immediately took control in drizzling rain. Colombian striker Robinson led the line in Vikash Panthi's 4-2-3-1, while ITBP head coach Surojit Kumar Prodhani made four changes to his 4-3-3 in search of a more attacking edge.

The opening exchanges saw Bodoland dominate possession, with Junior Onguene, Pedro Astray, and Robinson testing ITBP goalkeeper Ugesh Lama. Against the run of play, ITBP almost snatched the lead in the 14th minute when Srikumar Karjee broke through, only to drag his shot wide.

Bodoland's breakthrough arrived in the 25th minute, when Pedro Astray put a peach of a ball from his free-kick near the halfway line, Timothy Narzary, who had shot wide a minute earlier, rose to the occasion to head powerfully down at the near post, giving Lama no chance and igniting the stands.

Twelve minutes later, Bodoland doubled their advantage when Pradipta Biswas fouled Robinson inside the box and the referee wasted no time in pointing towards the spot. Spaniard Pedro stepped up to convert the spot-kick with a precise left-foot strike into the bottom right corner.

The home side were relentless with their waves of attack, and in the 40th minute they made it 3-0 with a sweeping team move. Robinson fed Junior, whose defence-splitting diagonal pass released Gwngwsar Gayary. The winger coolly slotted between Lama's legs to put Bodoland firmly in control at the break.

The second half opened with end-to-end action despite heavier rain. ITBP's best chance came just after the hour mark when a loose back pass gifted Leimajan

Singh a sight at goal, but Bodoland's defence recovered swiftly. Junior thought he had scored the fourth in the 78th minute only for the offside flag to deny him.

The fourth did arrive in the 82nd minute. From Pedro's corner, Lama's punch fell to Rabha outside the box, whose shot deflected to Abdul Samed Ango. The Ghanaian pounced, firing low into the near post to complete the rout.

Bodoland goalkeeper Diamary was called into serious action only in the 85th minute, tipping away a long-range effort from Lungunhao Sithhou. The hosts comfortably saw out the closing stages to preserve their perfect defensive record in the tournament so far.

The final whistle sparked jubilation in the crowd as Bodoland FC, in their third Durand Cup season, not only topped Group D but did so unbeaten, scoring seven goals and conceding just one.

Bodoland FC will join the Indian Navy Football Team (Group F), who qualified earlier today, and the other seven teams in the quarterfinal's lineup for the 134th edition of Asia's oldest football tournament. Other teams to make it to the quarterfinals are Emami Bengal (Group A), Mohun Bagan SG (Group B), Jamshedpur FC (Group C) and NorthEast United FC (Group E), while Shillong Lajong FC (Group E) and Diamond Harbour FC (Group B) advance as the two best second-placed sides with six points and goal differences of +7 and +4 respectively.

A proud symbol of India's footballing legacy, the Durand Cup is Asia's oldest and the world's third-oldest football tournament. Organized by the Indian Army on behalf of the three Services, it has served as a breeding ground for India's finest football talent for over a century.

The inaugural edition was held in Shimla in 1888, before the tournament moved to New Delhi in 1940, where it remained for more than seven decades.

In 2019, the Durand Cup came under the aegis of the Eastern Command and shifted to the football heartland of the East, with Kolkata, the Mecca of Indian football and headquarters of the Eastern Command as its home base. Over the past six years, the tournament has grown from a single-city event into a multi-city, multi-state sporting spectacle. And this year for the first time ever, Durand Cup is being played across five states — West Bengal, Jharkhand, Assam, Meghalaya and Manipur.

## Implementation of sports bill in 6 months, regulation of participation standard safeguard: Mandaviya

**NEW DELHI, Aug 13:** Its passage through Parliament achieved smoothly, the landmark National Sports Governance Bill will be implemented within the next six months and preparatory work like "drafting of rules and identification of infrastructure" has already started, Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya told PTI on Wednesday.

In his first interview after the passing of the bill in both houses, Mandaviya also justified as "standard safeguard" the bill's provision that gives government discretionary power to "impose reasonable restrictions" on international participation of Indian teams and individual athletes under "extraordinary circumstances".

"This bill will be implemented as soon as possible. Within the next six months, all procedures will be completed to ensure 100 per cent implementation," Mandaviya said in the exclusive interaction at his residence.

The passing of the bill makes India the 21st country to have a sports law. Implementation of its most significant provisions would require the setting up of a National Sports Board (NSB), which would provide affiliation to National Sports Federations (NSFs), a National Sports Tribunal (NST) for dispute resolution and a National Sports Election Panel (NSEP) to oversee NSF elections. "Creation of posts and other adminis-

trative approvals will follow established procedures of the Department of Personnel and Training and the Department of Expenditure," Mandaviya said.

"The aim is to ensure that both institutions (NSB and NST) are fully functional at the earliest possible date consistent with statutory and procedural requirements," he added, while reiterating that the bill is "the single biggest reform in sports since independence".

The bill has been largely supported by the NSFs as well as athletes. The Indian Olympic Association, which was at first skeptical, has also backed it after extensive discussions with the minister.

With the passing of the bill, the unsaid understanding of the government having the final say on India's participation in international events has been formalised.

This is an issue that crops up mostly when arch-foes Pakistan are involved in times of high border tensions as has been the case since this year's Pahalgam terror attack. Mandaviya said the government discretion in the bill has not been codified with any particular country in consideration.

"The provision empowering the government to stop international participation is a standard safeguard seen in sports laws globally, intended for use in extraordinary circumstances," Mandaviya said. "It covers situations such as national



security threats, diplomatic boycotts, or global emergencies, and is not directed against any particular country.

"In practice, decisions regarding sporting engagements with Pakistan have been shaped by broader government policy and security assessments, particularly after major incidents affecting bilateral relations," he added.

He cited the absence of bilateral cricket between the two countries since the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks as a case in point.

"...full senior men's cricket tours to Pakistan have not taken place since the 2008 Mumbai attacks, and high-profile matches have often been moved to neu-

tral venues. Such decisions are taken on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Ministry of External Affairs and security agencies.

"The Act formalises the government's ability to act decisively and lawfully in such situations, while ensuring that any decision remains consistent with India's commitments under the Olympic Charter and the statutes of relevant international sporting bodies," he said.

"This reflects the Modi government's clarity in protecting national interest while upholding global sporting obligations."

Speaking about the challenges that he faced during the consultative stage of the bill, Mandaviya said he took it upon himself to clear doubts with extensive presentations for all stakeholders on the nitty-gritties of the document.

"The first major challenge was the fragmented legal landscape, with over 350 ongoing sports-related court cases that had stalled governance in many National Sports Federations.

"The second challenge was balancing the demand for autonomy, as required under the Olympic Charter and International Federation statutes, with the need for public accountability and transparency," he explained.

"The third challenge was addressing the wide variation in operational capac-

ity, professionalism, and resources across different federations and state associations," he said.

Mandaviya said consensus was achieved through more than 60 rounds of structured discussions, including plenary meetings, one-on-one engagements, and a Chintan-Shivir with stakeholders such as state sports ministers from all over the country.

"I gave an entire day to NSF representatives, an entire day to athletes, coaches. I gave presentations to explain each and every clause of the bill. I explained to them why I think the clauses were needed. I did not impose, I asked for their feedback."

"I told them that they should tell me what kind of bill they wanted, what kind of governance they wanted," he said.

"Not just that, I also consulted sports lawyers in the High Court and the Supreme Court. All the suggestions were duly taken into consideration. I also went through each and every one of the 600 public suggestions," he added.

A prominent name with whom Mandaviya consulted was former sports minister and Congress leader Ajai Maken, who prepared the draft sports bill in 2011 but could not push it beyond cabinet consultation.

"In 2013, honourable Ajai Maken ji brought this bill to the cabinet but it

could not be passed. It was because the moment the bill mentioned good governance in federations, vested interests within NSFs, especially those with political background, were against coming under any kind of governance scrutiny," he said.

Asked about the specific demands put forth by athletes during his interaction with them, Mandaviya said, "They wanted representation. Women athletes wanted representation, they asked where are we? And it was a legitimate question given that women athletes have been doing well consistently."

The bill ensures that at least four women and two athletes of outstanding merit will have to be a part of any NSF's Executive Committee, the overall strength of which has been capped at 15.

Confident that India's sporting landscape will go through a positive transformation due to the new law, Mandaviya said next on the agenda is a medal strategy to bring India into the list of top five global performers in the next two decades.

"In the coming days, we will bring in a sports medal strategy. It would create the roadmap to figure where we should be in five years, next 25 years. What should be the planning for this."

"Athlete is a part of society and sports is a people's movement," he said. (PTI)