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CM Himanta clears air on land acquisition near Guwahati airport

Third edition of state's flagship Orunodoi scheme — Orunodoi Plus — initiated

GUWAHATI, Aug 1: The Assam government has initiated the process of acquiring around 500 bighas (around 166 acres) near Guwahati airport to construct a stadium for concerts and a convention centre, but a section of media outlets is wrongfully claiming that the Adani group is acquiring it, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said here.

The government aims to secure land from genuine investors who want to sell their land, and residents will not be evicted, Sarma assured at a press conference.

'This move has been initiated by the state government to safeguard the land for the people of Assam, and we plan to take up three specific projects in the area,' he said.

These include a state-of-the-art stadium to promote Assam's concert economy, a convention centre on the lines of the Bharat Mandapam and an entertainment zone or amusement park on the lines of Universal Studios, but not on such a big scale, he added.

'All these projects will be fully planned and implemented by the state government and not by any industrial house,' he said.

He urged the media not to mislead the public, as 'we have seen



recently that certain media houses are claiming that the state government is handing over land to Adani or Ambani'.

'If these industrial houses come to Assam, we will welcome them with garlands and open arms, but they are not coming here for every project,' he added.

The CM also announced that the third edition of the state's flagship Orunodoi scheme, catering to women beneficiaries, will be launched on September 17, coinciding with the birthday of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and will cover 40 lakh beneficiaries in the state.

Sarma said the Orunodoi scheme was first introduced in the 2019 budget, followed by Orunodoi 2.0 after the formation of the current government, which benefited 28 lakh people, and was closed this July.

In Orunodoi 3.0, all beneficiaries have been linked with Aadhaar and will receive ₹ 1,250 each. As part of the rollout, elected panchayat representatives and district administration officials will visit each beneficiary in August to present them with a book and a letter from the CM stating that they have been selected for the scheme, he added. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Over 400 hectares of land cleared on Day 4 of Rengma Forest eviction drive

Over 8,000 bighas reclaimed in incident-free ops

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 1: The fourth day of the ongoing eviction drive in the Rengma Reserve Forest marked significant progress, with over 400 hectares of forest land cleared across newly identified encroached areas. The expanded operation covered 2 & 3 No Doyalpur, 3 No. Dolonipathar, Kherbari, 2 No Madhupur, and Bidyapur, and concluded without incident.

The joint drive was carried out by the Assam Forest Department in coordination with the Golaghat District Administration and state police.

According to an official statement, all phases of the operation adhered strictly to legal and safety protocols.

Senior officials, including special chief secretary MK Yadava, Inspector General of Police Akhilesh Kr Singh, Golaghat Deputy Commissioner Pulak Ma-



hanta, and the Senior Superintendent of Police, Golaghat, were present at the site to oversee the proceedings, underlining the seriousness of the government's ongoing effort to restore ecological balance in the reserve.

Briefing the media, Special Chief Secretary Yadava said around 400 hectares of encroached

land were cleared on Friday alone.

He reiterated the government's commitment to continuing the operation in a responsible and lawful manner, especially given the forest's proximity to inter-state boundaries.

Deputy Commissioner Pulak Mahanta said that the cumulative forest area (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

DCs directed to conduct survey to ascertain encroachment on forest land: Sarma

GUWAHATI, Aug 1: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday said that he has directed all district commissioners to conduct surveys to ascertain the level of encroachment of forest lands in their respective areas. All districts will conduct the survey, and those living in forest areas will be evicted, except those who are eligible for forest rights, the chief minister said at a press conference here.

'Tribal people can stay in forests provided they have been there before 2005. We are going to evict people who are not covered under the Forest Rights Act,' he said.

Sarma said the level of encroachment is very high and beyond imagination.

'Even if one eviction is carried out each month, it will take 10 years to clear the land,' the chief minister said.

Sarma had earlier said that all unauthorised occupation of forest land, VGR (Village Grazing Reserve), PGR (Professional Grazing Reserve), Satras, Namghars, and other public areas would be cleared in a phased manner.

He had said 1,19,548 bighas (160 sq km) of land had been cleared of encroachment since his government

took over in May 2021, affecting about 50,000 people.

Of these, 84,743 bighas are forest land and 26,713 bighas are 'khas' or general government land, he said.

Another 63 lakh bighas, including 29 lakh bighas of forest land, are still under encroachment in the state, though some of it is occupied by tribals who will be provided with ownership as per rules, Sarma had said.

Sarma on Thursday had asserted that the state government has cleared nearly 3,305.78 acres of encroached land in the ongoing eviction drive at Uriamghat in Golaghat district, the largest area to be freed from encroachers in the state.

Most of the people displaced due to the eviction drive are Bengali-speaking Muslim communities who claim that their ancestors had moved and settled in the areas where drives were carried out after their land in the 'Char' or riverine areas was washed away due to erosion by the River Brahmaputra.

Meanwhile, the eviction drive continued for the fourth consecutive day on Friday in six villages of Golaghat district, and there was no report of any untoward incident so far, officials said. The eviction drive, one of the largest so far to clear 1,500 (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

PM Modi to visit state on Sept 8

GUWAHATI, Aug 1: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Assam on September 8 to inaugurate the year-long birth centenary celebrations of Bhupen Hazarika, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Friday.

The PM will arrive first at Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL) in Golaghat district and dedicate to the nation the bio-ethanol plant, set up at a cost of ₹ 4,200 crore, he said.

The PM will then travel to Mangaldoi in Darrang district, where he will inaugurate the Guwahati-Ring Road, a bridge over the Brahmaputra connecting Kuruma and Narengi in Guwahati, and also lay the foundation stone of the Mangaldoi Medical College Hospital.

In the evening, he will arrive in Guwahati and inaugurate the birth centenary celebrations of Assam's cultural doyen Bhupen Hazarika, Sarma said.

'The people of Assam are eagerly awaiting the arrival of the prime minister to inaugurate the various projects in the state, including the Bard of Brahmaputra's birth centenary celebrations organised by the state government,' he said.

'The morale of the people in the state is very high due to the various developmental projects that have been initiated. We hope that in the next six months, the PM will inaugurate many of these projects,' he said. 'All these development projects have been (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

US slaps 25% tariff on Indian goods

Half of India's \$86 bn exports to be hit; Trump signals tougher protectionism

WASHINGTON/NEW DELHI, Aug 1: US President Donald Trump unveiled sweeping new tariffs on dozens of countries including a steep 25 per cent for India, marking a new era of American protectionism and triggering fears of fresh turbulence in trade across the globe.

The US president signed an executive order raising tariffs for over five dozen countries with Washington's negotiations for trade deals going down the wire ahead of the August 1 deadline.

The new tariffs for Indian goods came in the midst of ongoing negotiations between the two countries for a bilateral trade deal as well as Trump's strong criticism of India for its trade ties with Russia, especially in the energy sector. He even described the Indian economy as "dead", a remark which prompted New Delhi to say that India is the world's fastest-growing major economy.

Without getting into Trump's comments or the tariffs and his diatribe against India, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Friday gave a measured response.

The US and India "partnership has weathered several transitions

and challenges. We remain focused on the substantive agenda for our two countries have committed to and are confident that the relationship will continue to move forward," said MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal in New Delhi.

He said the two countries "share a comprehensive global strategic partnership anchored in shared interests, democratic values, and robust people-to-people ties."

Asked about India's energy ties with Russia, Jaiswal said it is guided by national interest, adding: "In securing our energy for Indian goods came in the midst of ongoing negotiations between the two countries for a bilateral trade deal as well as Trump's strong criticism of India for its trade ties with Russia, especially in the energy sector. He even described the Indian economy as "dead", a remark which prompted New Delhi to say that India is the world's fastest-growing major economy.

The imposition of the 25 per cent US tariff will impact about half of India's over USD 86 billion worth of exports to America, government sources said in Delhi.

The sectors which could bear the brunt of 25 per cent duty include textiles/ clothing (10.3 billion), gems and jewellery (12 billion), shrimp (USD 2.24 billion), leather and footwear (USD 1.18 billion), animal products (USD 2 billion), chemicals (2.34 billion), and electrical and mechanical machinery (about USD 9 (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



Rengma body urges Assam govt to restore traditional rights of Rengma Nagas

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, Aug 1: The All Rengma Welfare Organisation (ARWO) Assam-Nagaland on Friday urged the Assam government to initiate steps for the recognition and restoration of the traditional rights of the Rengma Nagas over their ancestral lands.

Extending its heartfelt appreciation to chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for the decisive action undertaken by the Assam government in carrying out the eviction of illegal settlers in Rengma Reserve Forest under Uriamghat in Golaghat District, the ARWO appealed to the Assam government to continue such lawful and rightful actions and ensure the protection of the Rengma Reserve Forest. It further urged that permanent measures be taken to prevent (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

CM claims USTM built on forest land

GUWAHATI, Aug 1: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday claimed that Meghalaya's University of Science and Technology (USTM) has been constructed on forest land and it has already been brought to the notice of the Supreme Court.

'The university is on forest land, and whether USTM will be there after two years, no one can guarantee,' the CM said at a press conference here.

Sarma has on several previous occasions criticised USTM chancellor Mahbabul Haque, who was also arrested earlier this year for allegedly promising students that they would be allowed to use unfair means in exams to score high marks, but was later released on bail.

The chief minister said the matter has been brought to the notice of the Supreme Court, and it was up to the Meghalaya government to take ac-

tion on this.

'I keep praying to God that it be demolished as early as possible. It is not an educational institution but an institution that has commercialised education,' he said.

'If it had been in Assam, I would have sorted this out a long time ago,' Sarma added.

Reacting to Haque's recent statement that he would take responsibility for the education of those children who have been rendered homeless in the recent eviction drives, the CM said that he tries to enter into all matters.

Haque, along with five teachers of a school in Patharkandi of Sribhumidistrict, were arrested on February 22 from Guwahati and sent to 14 days' judicial custody. Police also filed multiple cases against him in different police stations of Gossagaon, Kokrajhar, Barpeta and Sonipur.

The Gauhati High Court granted

bail to Haque in connection with two cases registered in Sribhumidistrict — the first on March 3 and the second on March 5 — while also restraining his arrest in three other cases filed in Gossagaon, Kokrajhar, and Barpeta.

He was granted bail in the Sonipur case on March 24.

The USTM chancellor, who also heads the ERD Foundation, operates various educational institutions, including a school at Patharkandi.

Haque was embroiled in a controversy last year over his OBC certificate, which he had allegedly obtained "fraudulently" in Sribhumidistrict in the 1990s and was subsequently cancelled.

The CM had also held USTM and Haque responsible for "flood jihad" against Guwahati, claiming that the water flowing down from the varsity campus, which is located on a hill adjacent to the city, leads to massive flooding in the city. (PTI)

Centre to set up ₹188-crore maritime skill hub in Dibrugarh

Project aims to train Northeast youth in marine technology and logistics

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 1: The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) is setting up a state-of-the-art Regional Centre of Excellence (RCoE) in Dibrugarh, Assam, with an outlay of ₹188 crore to provide advanced maritime training for the youth of the Northeast.

The initiative, announced by Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal in an official statement during the ongoing monsoon session of the Lok Sabha, is part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat mission and the Centre's long-term Maritime Amrit Kaal 2047 vision.

According to the statement, the Dibrugarh RCoE will offer training in smart navigation systems, marine engineering, IT, logistics, and certified courses in inland waterway operations and maritime safety.

The project is expected to be completed within 19 months.

The new centre will work in tandem with the existing Maritime

Skill Development Centre (MSDC) in Guwahati, which currently provides training in areas such as inland vessel management, general purpose rating, hospitality, safety, and crew management.

Together, both institutions aim to serve aspiring maritime professionals, particularly from the eight northeastern states.

Speaking on the significance of the project, union minister Sarbananda Sonowal said, "Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Northeast is no longer seen as a remote corner of the country, but as a gateway to growth and connectivity. This new Centre of Excellence in Dibrugarh will harness the potential of our youth and equip them with world-class maritime skills."

He added that the centre would not only create employment but also contribute to India's inland water transport economy.

The trained maritime workforce

from the Northeast is expected to find placement opportunities in the upcoming Maritime Cities being developed in Lakshadweep, Andaman & Nicobar, and Gujarat.

These cities will feature eco-tourism infrastructure, ship and seaplane repair facilities, bunkering terminals, free trade zones, and maritime training institutions.

The Centre estimates that the project will generate over 50,000 direct and indirect employment opportunities, many of which will be accessible to trained candidates from the Northeast.

"We are investing in human capital and infrastructure simultaneously. This initiative will open up new economic corridors through the Brahmaputra and connect the region to national and international maritime networks," Sonowal said.

The minister underlined that the initiative aligns with India's strategic goal of becoming a global maritime power by (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Minister Pijush Hazarika distributes job offer letters to trainees

233 trainees receive job offer letters from North-East Skill Development Centre

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 1: A total of 233 trainees, including 114 from the Scheduled Caste (SC) community, received job offer letters during a ceremony held at the North-East Skill Development Centre in Guwahati on Friday. The event was organised under the Assam Skill Development Mission.

According to an official statement, Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment and Information & Public Relations, Pijush Hazarika, handed over the job offer letters to the successful trainees.

Minister of Skill, Employment & Entrepreneurship Prashanta Phukan was also present at the ceremony.

The statement said that the 114 SC trainees had undergone free



training in various trades through the Directorate for the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes under the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment.

Of the total recipients, 54 candidates have secured job offers from overseas organisations, while the others received domestic placements.

Congratulating the trainees, Minister Hazarika urged them to seize the opportunities to build promising careers. He said employment abroad not only benefits individuals and their families but also contributes to India's economic growth.

Citing examples of successful Indian professionals working globally, he emphasised the growing importance of skill-based education in today's world — a focus area of both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

The statement further informed that for the financial year 2025-26, the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment has planned skill development training for another 240 SC students.

Trump tariffs to hit less than half of India's exports; trade talks on; no compromise on agri, dairy

NEW DELHI, Aug 1: The US on Friday slapped a 25 per cent tariff on India, potentially impacting about half of the USD 86 billion Indian exports to America, while the other half, including pharmaceuticals, electronics, and petroleum products, continued to be exempted from the levy.

New Delhi continues to be engaged in talks with the US to work out a trade deal, but will make no compromise on agricultural, dairy and genetically modified (GM) products, sources said on Friday.

For the sixth round of talks, the US team is coming to India on August 25.

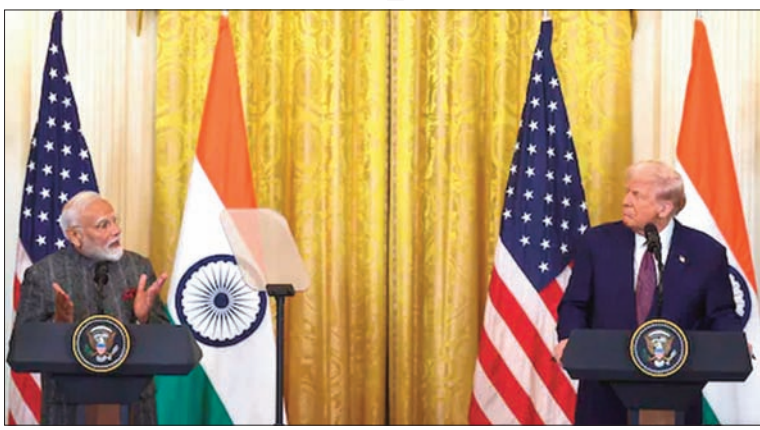
The sectors, which would bear the brunt of 25 per cent duty include textiles/ clothing (10.3 billion), gems and jewellery (12 billion), shrimp (USD 2.24 billion), leather and footwear (USD 1.18 billion), animal products (USD 2 billion), chemicals (2.34 billion), and electrical and mechanical machinery (about USD 9 billion).

According to sources, about half of the goods exported from India to the US are in the exemption category (such as pharma and electronic goods). So, the impact will be only on the remaining half.

"More than half of India's exports to the US will not be impacted by the duty. Due to the Section 232 exemption of the US, only exports worth about USD 48 billion would be impacted with these tariffs," they said, adding that the remaining exports will have a little impact on a country with a GDP of about USD 4 trillion and a consumer base of 140 crore.

In 2024-25, the bilateral trade between India and the US stood at USD 131.8 billion (USD 86.5 billion exports and USD 45.3 billion imports).

According to think tank GTRI, the 25 per cent tariffs will not be applica-



ble on the exempted categories, including pharmaceutical; energy products such as crude oil, refined fuels, natural gas, coal, and electricity; critical minerals; and a wide range of electronics and semiconductors, like computers, tablets, smartphones, solid-state drives, flat panel displays, and integrated circuits.

US President Donald Trump unveiled sweeping new tariffs on dozens of countries, including 25 per cent duties for goods from India, marking a new era of American protectionism that triggered fresh tensions and concerns over a much wider disruption in the global trade landscape.

There is no mention of a penalty on India for buying crude oil and military equipment from Russia.

"We are keeping our fingers crossed on the issue, as there is no mention of penalty in the order," sources added.

The US president signed an executive order that raised tariffs for over five dozen countries, with Washington's negotiations for trade deals going down to the wire ahead of the August 1 deadline.

In the Executive Order titled 'Further

Modifying The Reciprocal Tariff Rates', Trump announced tariff rates for nearly 70 nations. These tariffs will come into effect from August 7.

The announcement of duty and penalty is being seen as a pressure tactic to get New Delhi to agree to demands made by the US, which has, in recent days, got favourable trade deals with major partners like Japan, the UK and the European Union.

India's exports of petroleum products like diesel and jet fuel to the US continue to be exempted from the levy of any import duty or tariff, and Trump has, for now, not indicated the penalty he plans to impose to deter New Delhi's energy trade with Russia.

According to official data, India exported 4.86 million tonnes of petroleum products to the US in 2024-25 (April 2024 to March 2025) for over USD 4 billion. Reliance Industries Ltd is the biggest exporter of fuel to the US. With fuel exports continuing to be on the exemption list, it means business as usual for India and companies like Reliance, analysts said.

Meanwhile, export sectors that will be impacted by the tariff have urged

immediate intervention by the government on the matter.

Sudhir Sekhri, Chairman, AEPC (Apparel Export Promotion Council), said: "We request immediate government intervention to offset this huge setback. Exporters have their back against the wall and will have to sell below cost to keep their factories running and avoid mass layoffs".

Indian shrimp exporters face an unprecedented new challenge in the US market, which contributes close to 48 per cent of their exports, Crisil Ratings Senior Director Rahul Guha said.

Exporters are hoping that early finalisation of the India-US bilateral trade agreement will help in dealing with the tariff challenges. The negotiations between India and the US are still going on for an interim trade deal, though there will be no compromise on the red lines with regard to duty concessions on agriculture items, dairy, and genetically modified (GM) products, sources said. The two countries are negotiating a bilateral trade agreement (BTA). They are aiming to conclude the first phase of the pact by fall (October-November) this year. The two nations are also looking at an interim trade deal before the first tranche.

The government will protect the interests of farmers in trade negotiations with the US, Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said.

The agriculture sector is politically sensitive for India, as about 700 million rural livelihoods are dependent on it. Lowering duties would also pose a risk to national food security.

On Thursday, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal -- in a suo motu statement in both the houses of Parliament -- had said India will take all necessary steps to safeguard and promote national interest. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

CM clears air on land

Sarma also announced a new initiative — Orunodoi Plus — which will be rolled out as a pilot project starting January 2026 for four months. Under this, eligible beneficiaries who purchase LPG cylinders will receive an additional ₹ 250 subsidy.

"A form for LPG connection will also be provided with the letter, and Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) will inform the state government when the beneficiary buys gas. The ₹ 250 will be directly credited to their bank account," he said. "We are launching the scheme initially for four months to test coordination among the agencies. If it works, we will scale it up," he added.

Sarma also announced the launch of the second edition of the 'Nijut Moina' scheme, providing financial support to eligible girl students for higher studies so that they do not drop out of school and become victims of child marriage. The forms will be distributed to eligible girl students from August 6, he said. Residents of Assam studying in central universities like Tezpur and Assam University will also be covered under the scheme. The scheme was launched in October last year to provide financial assistance to girl students from higher secondary to post-graduate level in government and government-aided institutions, as most girls drop out of schools after class 10, and parents then marry them off. (PTI)

Over 8,000 bighas

reclaimed over the past four days now exceeds 8,000 bighas. He also acknowledged the coordinated efforts of multiple departments and agencies, and thanked them for ensuring that the operation remained peaceful and effective. Security arrangements remained tight, with personnel from the CRPF and Assam Police deployed to maintain law and order.

Senior officials monitored operations on-site in real time throughout the day. The eviction drive is expected to continue in the coming days, with authorities aiming to fully restore the ecological integrity of the Rengma Reserve Forest.

Vice Presidential election on

winning candidate will require 391 votes, considering that all eligible voters exercise their franchise. In the Lok Sabha, the BJP-led NDA enjoys the support of 293 of the 542 members. The ruling alliance has the support of 129 members in the Rajya Sabha (effective strength 240), assuming that the nominated members vote in support of the NDA nominee. The ruling alliance has the support of total 422 members.

A person cannot be elected as the vice president unless he is a citizen of India, has completed 35 years of age and is qualified for election as a member of the Rajya Sabha. A person is also not eligible if he holds any office of profit under the government of India or a state government or any subordinate local authority. Article 66 (1) of the Constitution provides that the vice presidential election shall be held in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote and the voting at such election shall be by secret ballot.

In this system, the elector has to mark preferences against the names of the candidates.

The vice president is the second highest constitutional office in the country. He/she serves for a five-year term, but can continue to be in office, irrespective of the expiry of the term, until the successor assumes office. (PTI)

DCs directed to conduct

hectares of forest, once completed, will displace around 1,500 families, mostly from the Muslim community. The drive began on Tuesday to clear the encroachments from Rengma Reserve Forest in Uriamghat in Sarupathar sub-division along the Assam-Nagaland border. (PTI)

PM Modi to visit

possible due to the liberal and generous funding due to the PM's initiative," he said. The state government has also utilised the Centre's funding properly and used it for public welfare, he added. The CM said he has directed the district commissioners to prepare a list of 50 people who had come into contact with Hazarika during his lifetime, and they will be invited to the function. Besides, 1,000 artists will also be invited to present together parts of Hazarika's prominent songs, he said.

Sarma also launched a portal where people who want to attend the function can register till August 20. An invite will be sent to them by the state's Cultural Affairs Department.

He said that at the function, the PM will also launch Hazarika's biography.

The state government will also organise year-long celebrations across the country, including Delhi, Mumbai, West Bengal and Arunachal Pradesh, to commemorate Hazarika's legacy. (PTI)

US slaps 25% tariff

billion). The sources said that about half of the goods exported from India to the US are in the exemption category (such as pharma and electronic goods), so, the impact will be only on the remaining half. In the Executive Order titled 'Further Modifying The Reciprocal Tariff Rates', Trump announced tariff rates for nearly 70 nations.

A 25 per cent "Reciprocal Tariff, Adjusted" has been imposed on India, according to the list released. The executive order however does not mention the "penalty" that Trump had said India will have to pay because of its purchases of Russian military equipment and energy. Besides the new tariff, Trump had also announced an additional "penalty" for New Delhi's purchases from Russia. While August 1 was the tariff deadline, the new levies will come into effect from August 7. In April, Trump had announced that India will face a 26 per cent "discounted reciprocal tariff", a per cent higher than the rate announced now.

Responding to the executive order, Senior Vice President of the Asia Society Policy Institute (ASPI) and former Deputy US Trade Representative Wendy Cutler said in a statement that India, a "promising candidate for an early agreement", was assigned a 25 per cent tariff. This "calls into question the fate of a bilateral trade agreement. The President's annoyance with India on a range of trade and broader matters rang through his Truth Social post," Cutler said.

Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) Director General Ajay Sahai said that the order provides relaxation for goods in transit and those loaded on ship for final sailing to the US by August 7. Goods cleared for consumption in the US by October 5 will also not be subject to reciprocal tariffs, thus providing some relief to exporters of goods already shipped or likely to be shipped this week.

According to Cutler, US customs officials will face challenges implementing the executive order, particularly with the different tariff rates now applied across the world.

In the executive order, Trump stated that some trading partners have agreed to, or are on the verge of agreeing to, meaningful trade and security commitments with the US, thus signalling their sincere intentions to permanently remedy trade barriers and align with Washington on economic and national security matters.

"Other trading partners, despite having engaged in negotiations, have offered terms that, in my judgment, do not sufficiently address imbalances in our trading relationship or have failed to align sufficiently with the United States on economic and national-security matters," he said.

The tariffs in the list range from 10 per cent to 40 per cent, with Japan being charged 15 per cent, Laos and Myanmar (40 per cent each), Pakistan (19 per cent), Sri Lanka (20 per cent) and the United Kingdom (10 per cent).

Declaring that the US has a massive trade deficit with India, Trump had said that while "India is our friend, we have, over the years, done relatively little business with them because their tariffs are far too high, among the highest in the world, and they have the most strenuous and obnoxious non-monetary Trade Barriers of any country."

"Also, they have always bought a vast majority of their military equipment from Russia, and are Russia's largest buyer of energy, along with China, at a time when everyone wants Russia to stop the killing in Ukraine — All things not good!" Trump said.

He said that India will therefore be paying a tariff of 25 per cent, plus a penalty for the above, starting on August 1. Trump also mounted a sharp attack on India and Russia for their close ties.

"I don't care what India does with Russia. They can take their dead economies down together, for all I care," he said. "We have done very little business with India, their Tariffs are too high, among the highest in the World," he added.

In its reaction, India said it will take all necessary steps to safeguard and promote national interest and that the implications of the tariffs are being examined. (PTI)

Rengma body urges Assam

future encroachments. The ARWO lauded CM Sarma's political will and administrative clarity in upholding the rights of the indigenous people while simultaneously addressing the illegal migration issue that has deeply impacted the socio-political fabric of Assam, Nagaland and other northeastern states.

"This action marks a significant step toward restoring justice, law and order, and long-standing indigenous rights in the region," ARWO president Akhu Kath and Tegibu Tep said in a release.

The ARWO said the Rengma Reserve Forest, which has seen widespread encroachment in recent decades, is not just an ecological asset but it holds profound ancestral, historical, and cultural importance for the Rengma Naga tribe, one of the oldest indigenous communities of the region.

The land forms part of the traditional Rengma homeland, predating modern administrative boundaries and political developments. It is a living heritage site for the Rengma people, embedded in their identity and cultural continuity, it said.

The ARWO also thanked various civil society organisations, youth organisations, Naga political groups, and Nagaland chief minister Neiphiu Rio for taking proactive steps to protect the state's border.

Centre to set up ₹188-crore

2047. With a focus on capacity building in marine technology, logistics, and sustainable inland water transport, the RCoE in Dibrugarh is expected to emerge as a national hub for maritime education and hands-on training.

Reiterating Prime Minister Narendra Modi's commitment to regional equity, Sonowal said, "The rise of India is incomplete without the rise of the Northeast. Whether it is roadways, waterways or skill development, the region is witnessing unprecedented transformation under his leadership."

PhonePe launches 'Offline Partner Program'

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 1: PhonePe has launched its Offline Partner Program, a strategic initiative aimed at strengthening India's merchant ecosystem by enabling service providers to refer PhonePe's integrated payment solutions to their clients.

The program is designed for service providers such as Point of Sale (POS) billing software vendors, ERP solution providers, vending machine operators, and self-service kiosk firms. By joining the initiative, these partners can recommend PhonePe's digital payment tools to merchants and receive customised referral commissions.

According to the company, the program allows partners to present a comprehensive billing and payments package to their merchant clients, positioning themselves as key business enablers.

In turn, merchants can streamline their payment processes and enhance operational efficiency, while partners strengthen their role as trusted allies in business growth.

The integration process is quick, with merchants able to go live with PhonePe's solutions within hours. The product suite includes integrated POS devices, dynamic QR codes generated per transaction, and SMS-based payment links. When used with billing software, these tools help ensure secure, error-free transactions and smooth reconciliation. The program is targeted at a broad spectrum of merchant categories, including pharmacies, supermarkets, restaurants, electronics retailers, and apparel stores. PhonePe stated that the bundled offering is designed to simplify payment collection and improve the overall in-store customer experience. Service providers interested in joining the program can register through the Offline Partner Program page or contact PhonePe at offlinepartner-support@phonepe.com.

A PhonePe representative will guide them through the onboarding process. The company said the initiative offers an opportunity for service providers to earn revenue while enabling widespread adoption of integrated digital payment systems in the merchant segment.

Markets extend losses on global sell-off amid US tariff concerns; Sensex tanks 586 points

MUMBAI, Aug 1: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty declined sharply for the second straight session on Friday, tracking deep losses in pharma, metal, and IT stocks amid trade-related concerns and widespread selling pressure in global markets.

Besides, persistent selling by foreign investors added to the gloom, according to experts.

In a volatile trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 585.67 points or 0.72 per cent to settle at 80,599.91. During the day, it dropped 690.01 points or 0.84 per cent to 80,495.57. As many as 2,712 stocks declined while 1,306 advanced and 151 remained unchanged on the BSE. The 50-share NSE Nifty declined 203 points or 0.82 per cent to 24,565.35.

"The benchmark index Nifty wrapped up its fifth consecutive week in the red -- its longest losing streak since August 2023, raising eyebrows across the street...Despite making multiple attempts to scale up, the index has struggled to hold ground, only to be met with selling pressure each time. The long upper wicks are a telling story -- bulls tried, but bears had the final say," Sudeep Shah, Head - Technical Re-

search and Derivatives at SBI Securities, said. On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark tanked 863.18 points or 1.05 per cent, and the Nifty dropped 271.65 points or 1.09 per cent.

"The Indian equity market extended its decline for a second day, pressured by renewed tariff threats and punitive duties that could undermine India's global trade competitiveness. Investor sentiment weakened further as FII's now hold the second-highest net short position in derivatives, reflecting elevated caution. "Globally, markets turned negative amid rising US inflation and trade tensions. While the sell-off was broad-based, FMCG stocks emerged as a defensive play, supported by attractive valuations, resilient demand, and relative immunity to external trade disruptions," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

US President Donald Trump unveiled sweeping new tariffs on dozens of countries, including 25 per cent duties for goods from India, marking a new era of American protectionism that triggered fresh tensions and concerns over a much wider disruption in the global trade landscape. From the Sensex firms, Sun

Pharma tumbled 4.43 per cent after the company reported a 20 per cent year-on-year decline in consolidated net profit to ₹ 2,279 crore for the first quarter ended June 30, 2025.

Tata Steel, Maruti, Tata Motors, Infosys, Bharti Airtel and Tech Mahindra were also among the laggards.

However, Trent, Asian Paints, Hindustan Unilever, ITC, Kotak Mahindra Bank, and Reliance Industries were the gainers. The BSE smallcap gauge dropped 1.59 per cent, and the midcap index declined by 1.37 per cent.

Healthcare tanked 2.44 per cent, telecommunication (2.41 per cent), metal (1.94 per cent), oil & gas (1.91 per cent), tech (1.83 per cent), IT (1.81 per cent), and realty (1.78 per cent).

BSE FMCG index emerged as the only gainer. "Markets began the August series on a negative note, extending the prevailing corrective trend, and ended lower by over half a per cent. Markets continue to grapple with a mixed earnings season, while the recent tariff announcement and persistent foreign fund outflows are further weighing on sentiment," Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said. (PTI)

World's first cardiac intercontinental robotic surgery performed using indian system

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 1: In a major breakthrough for global surgical innovation and medical collaboration, SS Innovations International, Inc. has successfully conducted the world's first cardiac intercontinental robotic surgery using the indigenously developed SSI Mantra Surgical Robotic System.

The feat was announced in an official statement by the company.

The historic procedure was conducted during the Annual Conference of the Society of Robotic Surgery (SRS) held in Strasbourg, France.

Two complex intercontinental telesurgeries were performed using the SSI Mantra system, connecting surgical teams across nearly 10,000 kilometres — from the IRCAD headquarters in Strasbourg to the Sri Aurobindo Institute of Medical Sciences (SAIMS) and the IRCAD National Centre in Indore, India.

The first surgery — a gastric bypass — was performed remotely by Dr Mohit Bhandari, President of IRCAD India and

Founder of Mohak Bariatrics and Robotics, Indore.

The procedure lasted just over 44 minutes and was completed without complications, demonstrating the high precision and latency-free performance of the robotic system.

The second, a robotic atrial septal defect (ASD) closure, was performed by Dr Sudhir Srivastava, Founder, Chairman, and CEO of SS Innovations International.

The telesurgery was moderated live by noted robotic cardiac surgeon Dr Husam H Balkhy, President of the International Society for Minimally Invasive Cardiothoracic Surgery (ISMICS).

The on-ground surgical support in Indore included Dr Lalit Malik of Manipal Hospital, Jaipur; Dr Ram Krishna Shukla and Dr Bipin Arya from SAIMS, along with technical teams from SS Innovations and SAIMS.

The company stated that the surgeries were completed without any technical issues and with imperceptible latency.

No.CHD/SEEDM/BTC/W&D/25-26/11

Dated Kokrajhar the 31/07/2025

INVITATION FOR RFP

The Deputy Director cum Council Head of Department, Skill, Employment & Entrepreneurship Department, BTC, Kokrajhar invites sealed RFP from eligible bidders for the following works:

Schedule No.	Description	Estimated Costs of each Package
1	Annual Maintenance of web based platform to bring together job seekers and employers.	Rs. 5,00,000.00
2	Annual Website Maintenance of SEED, BTC	Rs. 2,99,999.00

The document may be obtained from the Office of the Deputy Director cum CHD, SEED, BTC, Kokrajhar during Office hour from 10.00 AM to 4.00 PM on all working day in person.

Date of issue of sale of RFP documents from 31-07-2025 to 06-08-2025 up to 2.00 PM.

Pre-bid meeting date and time 04-08-2025.

Last date of submission of RFP document is 06-08-2025 at 3.00 PM and RFP will be opened on the same day at 3.30 PM (Next day at the same time if 6th August/2025). The bid security will be deposited along with the RFP documents by demand Draft/ Bank Guaranty/Term Deposit in favour of Deputy Director cum CHD, SEED, BTC.

RFP should be submitted by affixing court fee stamp of Rs. 8.25

The IFB will form a part of the contract agreement.

IPR(BTC)/C/2025-26/2271

Sd/- Deputy Director cum CHD, SEED
BTC, Kokrajhar

World Breastfeeding Week launched in Kamrup(M)

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 1: World Breastfeeding Week was launched in Kamrup Metropolitan district on Friday with an inaugural programme held at the Dhirenpara First Referral Unit (FRU) in collaboration with the National Health Mission (NHM), Assam, and the District Health Committee. The week-long observance, held across the state from August 1 to 7, aims to raise awareness among mothers about the importance of breastfeeding for the health and well-being of newborns.

According to officials, the inaugural event was attended by Joint Director of Health Services Dr Apurba Krishna Sharma and officials from NHM. As part of the week, special awareness campaigns will be conducted at health centres in the district to educate expectant and nursing mothers on the benefits of breastfeeding.

Illegal Teak Timber seized in West Karbi Anglong

HT Correspondent

KHERONI, Aug 1: The Southern Range of the Forest Department, West Karbi Anglong, seized illegally procured teak timber during a raid at a furniture shop in Langmepi on Friday. The operation was led by Range Officer Bitupon Ronghang.

The timber, allegedly stored by smugglers, was recovered from the premises of M/s Mon Timber and Furniture, owned by Bhola Ronghang. The shop was sealed following the seizure. However, no arrests have been made so far, and there is no report of an FIR being lodged.

According to forest officials, it is an unusual instance where a commercial establishment was found being used as a timber dump by smugglers. The Southern Range typically deals with rampant smuggling of forest resources and illegal sand mining in the region.

Sources said timber smuggling operations often involve felling of trees in the already depleting forest areas of West Karbi Anglong, with the felled logs being transported into Meghalaya. Local involvement and cross-border logistical support are suspected, as evident from frequent seizures of equipment and vehicles used in such activities.

The porous and contested Assam-Meghalaya border continues to pose a major challenge in curbing illegal timber trade in the region.

Tipra Motha's 'Historic March to Delhi' reaches Kokrajhar

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Aug 1: The "Historic March to Delhi" led by Tipra Motha leader David Murasing and his 12-member team reached Kokrajhar on July 30 as part of their 2,500-km foot-march from Agartala to New Delhi, aimed at highlighting the issue of infiltration in Tripura. The march, which began on July 5, resumed from Kokrajhar the following day after a warm reception was accorded to the team by Kokrajhar East MLA Lawrence Islay at his office.

Several prominent leaders from Tripura, including former cabinet minister Mevar Kumar Jamatia, MLA Nandita Debbarma, TIPRA Women Federation president Manihar Debbarma, and general secretary Gita Debbarma, joined the march in Kokrajhar in a show of solidarity. The foot-march seeks to draw national attention to alleged illegal infiltration in Tripura and its impact on the indigenous Tiprasa community. The leaders have called for stringent measures by the Central Government to curb infiltration and ensure constitutional safeguards for the community. Speaking during the event, David Murasing said infiltration was not only a demographic challenge but also a serious security threat, and must be addressed with an "iron hand".

The marchers aim to reach Jantar Mantar in New Delhi, where they plan to submit a memorandum signed in blood to the central government, demanding justice, constitutional protection, and urgent action against infiltration.

NFR enhances passenger support with 24x7 helpline and real-time grievance redressal

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 1: The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has intensified its focus on passenger satisfaction by ensuring prompt redressal of grievances through a robust 24x7 support system, according to an official statement issued on Friday. In line with Indian Railways' commitment to responsive and transparent service, NFR has been actively addressing issues raised by passengers via the Railway Helpline Number 139 and the 'RailMadad' platform—an integrated complaint resolution system launched in 2019.

The platform consolidates grievances received through its website, mobile application, and helpline for efficient redressal.

To streamline operations under the RailMadad system, NFR has established dedicated war rooms at its headquarters and divisional offices. These units are manned round-the-clock by officials from all relevant departments to ensure real-time resolution of complaints, including coach cleanliness, toilet hygiene, electrical faults, bed roll availability, and overcharging of food and beverages.

The railway zone successfully resolved a record 1.79 lakh complaints during the financial year 2024-25.

Among these, 4,487 passengers received medical assistance onboard and at stations through the RailMadad system, with timely intervention by railway medical teams comprising doctors and nursing staff.

The statement further said that these initiatives underscore NFR's ongoing efforts to create a more inclusive and passenger-friendly environment by focusing on critical services and strengthening grievance redressal mechanisms.

Four police personnel injured in cattle smuggling operation

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Aug 1: Four police personnel, including a sub-inspector of Kaliabor Police Station, were injured during an operation against a gang of cattle smugglers in the early hours of Friday.

Acting on a tip-off, a team from Kaliabor PS launched an operation to intercept a luxury vehicle suspected to be involved in cattle theft.

When the police vehicle approached, the suspect vehicle (registration number AS 02 FR 5730) attempted to flee by ramming into the police team. A chase ensued, and the vehicle was intercepted on National Highway near Misa. While two suspected cattle thieves managed to escape by jumping out of the moving vehicle, one accused, identified as Mumtaz Ali of Samaguri area, was apprehended.

Four cattle heads were recovered from the vehicle, one of which was found dead. Local residents reportedly assaulted the apprehended accused at the site. The injured police personnel were identified as Assistant Sub-Inspector Jayanta Bora, Jawan Pavitra Bhuyan of the 9th APBN, and Havildar Jagdish Baruah.

Two of the injured personnel were admitted to Kaliabor Sub-Divisional Civil Hospital for treatment.

CEM Pramod Boro inaugurates thematic entrance gate to Kokrajhar

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Aug 1: Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), Pramod Boro, recently evening inaugurated the newly constructed thematic entrance gateway to Kokrajhar town at Karigaon.

The gateway, reflecting the cultural heritage of the Bodo community, marks a symbolic and aesthetic entry into the BTC headquarters.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Minister UG Brahma, BTC Speaker Katiram Boro, MP Joyanta Basumatary, BTC Executive Members Ranjit Basumatary, Dr Nilut Swargiary, Wilson Hasda, Rakesh Brahma, Gautam Das and Ukhil Mushahary, MLAs Lawrence Islay and Jiron Basumatary, MCLAs Sanjay Swargiary, Joy Mashahary and Madhav Chandra Chetri, BTC Principal Secretary Akash Deep, and other dignitaries. In his address, CEM Boro stated that the gateway was envisioned as a cultural landmark to attract visitors and reflect Kokrajhar's growing identity as the "city of peace."

Union Home Minister to inaugurate newly constructed Raj Bhavan

Amit Shah to visit Assam on August 29

GUWAHATI, Aug 1: Home Minister Amit Shah will visit Assam on August 29 to inaugurate the newly constructed Raj Bhavan, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Friday.

After inaugurating the new Raj Bhavan, he will attend a convention of the newly elected NDA panchayat members, who will also be felicitated at the programme, Sarma said.

In the evening, he will launch the birth centenary celebrations of Assam's first non-Congress chief minister, Golap Borbora, before leaving for New Delhi.

Borbora was arrested in 1975 during Emergency for opposing the then Indira Gandhi government and he spent 18 months in Tihar Jail.

He became the state unit president of the Janata Party in 1977 after his release from Tihar Jail and led the party to victory with 53 seats and was unanimously elected the first

non-Congress chief minister of Assam in 1978 but his government lasted for only 18 months.

He was also a Rajya Sabha member from 1968 to 1974.

Sarma said that the Union home minister, who is also the cooperation minister, will also launch a scheme at the panchayat convention to set up a cooperative society in each panchayat.

Shah will inspire the youth to set up cooperatives and take up dairy and agricultural activities on vacant lands, he said.

The societies can rent the vacant land from the government at a token amount and carry on with these activities, Sarma added.

'Encroachers usually settle on vacant land, so we are encouraging the setting up of cooperative societies for productive activities,' the CM added. (PTI)



Sonitpur observes 55th death anniversary of Natasurjya Phani Sarma

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Aug 1: The 55th death anniversary of Natasurjya Phani Sarma, a towering figure of Assamese modern theatre and cinema, was observed with solemnity and reverence across Sonitpur district on Friday.

Various institutions, cultural organisations, and citizens paid homage to the legendary dramatist at his birthplace through a series of commemorative events.

A central tribute programme was organised by the Sonitpur district administration at Sarma's gravesite near his residence.

The ceremony began with the ceremonial lighting of lamps by his elder son Ajit Sarma, Tezpur MLA Prithiraj Rava, and District Commissioner Ananda Kumar Das.

The event, coordinated by Baan Theatre member Pankaj Baruah, witnessed participation from several dignitaries including Development Commissioner Lakhinandan Saharia, ADCs Dyotibha Bora, Twahir Alam, and Kamal Baruah, AMTRON Vice-Chairperson Ritu Baran Sarma, BJP Sonitpur District President Madhusmita Hazarika Deka, Tezpur Development Authority Chairperson Biswadev Bhattacharya, and several office bearers and artists from Baan Theatre.

Reflections on Sarma's life and legacy were shared by the District Commissioner, MLA Prithiraj Rava, Development Commissioner Saharia, and Baan Theatre General Secretary Jitumoni Dev Choudhury. Veteran actor Bhupen Sarma and Phani Sarma's grandson Nabajyoti Sarma presented dramatic excerpts from the playwright's noted works Siraj and Kiyo, bringing his characters to life on stage.

Parallel observances were also held across the district. At Sahitya Sabha Bhavan, Tezpur Sahitya Sabha hosted a commemorative event presided over by its president Dhruva Jyoti Das. Cultural activist and former student leader Santanu Mahanta delivered a lecture highlighting Sarma's embodiment of Jyotiprasad's vision of the 'human artist' and his lasting contributions to realism in Assamese theatre and cinema.

A novel titled Makon by Nijara Rani Devi was also unveiled on the occasion by noted author Dr. Bhupen Saikia.

Sonitpur Zila Sahitya Sabha organised a separate tribute at Teleria LP School, presided over by Dipu Kanta Bora, president of the Teleria branch of Assam Sahitya Sabha.

The event was attended by Tezpur MLA Prithiraj Rava as chief guest and Assam Sahitya Sabha Publicity Committee Executive President Mahendra Kumar

Nath as distinguished guest.

Nath, in his lecture, urged citizens to follow the ideals of cultural pioneers like Phani Sarma for the preservation and advancement of Assamese language and identity.

Political organisation Rajior Dal also held a commemorative programme titled Nate-Mate Ebela at Sarma's residence.

The event was attended by the organisation's vice president Rishiraj Kaundinya, general secretary Alok Nath, district president Rabindra Kumar Bora, and several cultural figures including actress Dr Jahanara Begum, playwright Aishwarya Kakati, singer Kamal Rasid Ahmed, and former student leader Santanu Mahanta.

The meeting began with lamp lighting by Ajit Sarma and featured an announcement of medical assistance to him and renovation of the family home.

Aishwarya Kakati appealed to the government for early completion of the planned memorial.

Meanwhile, Baan Theatre, which was shaped by Natasurjya himself, began a two-day tribute programme with a memorial meeting inaugurated by Ajit Sarma.

The opening day featured a children's drama presentation. Additional events were also held at Jyoti Bharati under the Department of Cultural Affairs and at Sri Sri Sankardev Mandir, Majgaon.

KNCA celebrates 39th Foundation Day, renews call for autonomous state talks

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 1: The 39th foundation day of Karbi Nimso Chingthur Asong (KNCA), a prominent Karbi women's organisation, was observed with a daylong programme at the KNCA Central Committee office here on Friday.

The celebration commenced with the hoisting of the organisation's flag by KNCA president Maikon Rongpharpi, followed by homage to departed members, led by former Karbi Students Association (KSA) member Amika Teronpi.

As part of the day's observance, KNCA president Rongpharpi and general secretary Kajek Tokbipi submitted a memorandum to the Chief Executive Member (CEM) of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Tuliram Ronghang.

The memorandum urged the CEM to press Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to initiate tripartite talks on the Autonomous State issue with the central government, as assured during a July meeting with the FHASM delegation.

The KNCA also demanded the implementation of 33 per cent reservation for women in Parliament, state assemblies, and KAAC.

Additionally, the organisation called for the case of Namrata Engtipi's death in July at Nagaon to be taken up in a fast-track court for speedy investigation and justice.

A meeting in the afternoon saw the participation of leaders from several political parties and organisations. Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC) president Sonasing Terang, speaking on the occasion, recalled the 1986 Autonomous State movement led by the ASDC, KNCA, and KSA, which he said faced significant obstacles including police action.

He called for the revival of that spirit through joint movements by women and students' bodies.

He also referred to the formation of the Forum for Hills Autonomous State Movement (FHASM), comprising the ASDC, KSA, KNCA, APHLC, KKCA, PYDC, UKYA, DSU, and others.

Terang urged the KNCA to address growing social concerns such as substance abuse among youth, and said women must take proactive roles in correcting these issues.

KNCA general secretary Kajek Tokbipi reaffirmed the organisation's commitment to advocating for women's rights.

She highlighted issues like domestic violence, social media addiction, financial stress, and early marriages, all of which were discussed at the meeting.

She called for efforts to bring positive

changes in society through grassroots mobilisation.

In her presidential address, KNCA president Maikon Rongpharpi announced plans to visit regional committees to strengthen the organisation.

She said the KNCA would soon organise health camps and awareness programmes to address early marriage among school dropouts, which she said was contributing to rising cases of domestic violence and child-mother related issues.

Karbi Cultural Society president Humsing Bey and APHLC president James Hanse also addressed the gathering, speaking on the role of women in societal development and the Autonomous State movement.

On the occasion, the KNCA felicitated two women athletes — Homsira Rongpipi and Pokhila Engtipi — for their participation in the World Masters Games held in Taiwan in May 2025.

Other speakers and participants included KSA president Jemson Timung, ASDC Youth Front president Premson Bey, Rasinja Asong president Kasang Beypi and vice president Deepali Engjaipi, and Karbi So-arlo Kirsan Asong (KSKA) president Basapi Taropi and secretary Leena Hansepi.

Berlin Kiez Award-winning film 'Kiyo' released across state

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Aug 1: The much-anticipated cinematic adaptation of Kiyo, the iconic play by renowned dramatist Natasurjya Phani Sarma, was released in cinema halls across Assam on Friday, including at SVF Cinema Hall in Tezpur.

The release coincided with the observance of Phani Sarma's 55th death anniversary, paying tribute to one of the pioneers of modern Assamese theatre.

Directed and produced by Aparup Agarwala under the banner of Shree Haribilas Movies, the film has already gained international recognition, having won the Best First Time Director Award at the Berlin Kiez Film Festival.

The award marks a rare global honour for a debut Assamese filmmaker.

Aparup Agarwala, son of the late Bibekananda Agarwala and nephew of Rupkonwar Jyotiprasad Agarwala, undertook the project as a continuation of his family's artistic legacy.

A trained filmmaker from Berlin, Agarwala described the film as a tribute to Phani Sarma, who was a close associate of Jyotiprasad and is credited with shaping modern Assamese drama and cinema.



The recognition of Kiyo on the international stage has been hailed as a moment of pride for Assam, particularly for Tezpur, which holds historical significance as the birthplace of Assamese cinema with Jyotiprasad's Joymoti, the first Assamese and fourth Indian film.

"This film is not only a cinematic experience but also a gesture of respect toward a legend who shaped the foundation of modern Assamese theatre. Watching it is the best homage we can offer," said Aparup Agarwala, urging audiences to watch the film and honour the legacy of Natasurjya Phani Sarma.

No. e. DME/M.Sc.(N)/2005/684780

EDUCATIONAL NOTICE

Offline Counselling & Spot Admission for Selection of Candidates for Admission into the 1st year M. Sc. Nursing courses at Regional College of Nursing, Guwahati for the session 2025

This is for information of all concerned candidates whose names have appeared in the Merit list of M. Sc. Nursing Entrance Examination, 2025 conducted by Srimanta Sankaradeva University of Health Sciences that an offline counselling & spot admission for selection of candidates for admission into 1st year M. Sc. Nursing course at Regional College of Nursing, Guwahati will be held at the office of the Director of Medical Education, Assam, Sixmile, Khanapara, Guwahati-22, on **8th August, 2025 at 11:00 am.**

Interested candidates, who secured **rank from 1 to 16** in the Merit list of M. Sc. Nursing Entrance Examination, 2025, conducted by Srimanta Sankaradeva University of Health Sciences, may appear in the counselling and are hereby directed to bring their certificates and testimonials in original along with necessary admission fees etc. for the counselling.

All candidates, whose names are in the Merit list of M. Sc. Nursing Entrance Examination, 2025 conducted by Srimanta Sankaradeva University of Health Sciences and applying for NEC quota seats may appear in the counselling. They are required to bring necessary recommendation from the Secretary, North Eastern Council (NEC) along with other certificates and testimonials in original at the time of counselling. Selected candidates shall have to get admitted on the spot by paying necessary admission fees etc.

Admission fees and other fees to be paid at the time of admission shall be around **Rs.20,000.00.**

For any further query candidates may contact the Authority of Regional College of Nursing, Guwahati.

DIPR /DI/HLT/96/2-Aug-25

Sd/-
Director of Medical Education, Assam

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Happiness is the only thing that multiplies when you share it. - Albert Schweitzer

Future of electric vehicle

There's a blind spot in India's electric vehicle ambitions, which sits deep inside the battery. Lithium, neodymium, dysprosium, praseodymium are rare earth elements. Laboratory processing of these rare earth materials yields permanent magnets, which have applications spanning dental, aerospace, defense, electronics, batteries, and automotive sectors. And India imports most of permanent magnets from a single source: China. In late 2024, China tightened its grip on permanent magnets exports, citing national security and environmental concerns. It was a sharp reminder of where power lies in the global clean-tech race. China controls more than 70% of global rare earth production and refining. India's \$240 billion auto industry just found itself exposed. Although Indian automobile manufacturers frontloaded magnet imports in March and April this year, up 20% and 87% year-on-year, respectively - those stockpiles are expected to run out soon. This is no time for wishful thinking. If India is serious about electrifying transport and building clean-tech self-reliance, it must first learn how others played this game.

Initially, United States improvised by importing through third country route when China pulled the plug. US companies quietly redirected supply chains through third countries, mostly Thailand and Mexico. Between December 2024 and April 2025, US imports of antimony oxide (a type of rare earth material) from the two nations reached approximately 3,834 metric tonnes, more than the previous three years combined. That's because it wasn't, at least on paper. In reality, the materials were shipped from China to these intermediaries. There, they were relabelled and re-exported to the U.S., often disguised as unrelated goods such as zinc, iron, or even art supplies. US regulations permit this kind of re-routing, so long as shipments are licensed. And Beijing has no easy way to stop it.

However, this strategy of rerouting through third countries did not remain effective for long. Chinese government tightened export controls, making it increasingly difficult for the U.S. to procure materials through transshipment channels. Starting May 2025, Chinese Ministry of Commerce (MOCOM) launched a dedicated campaign against smuggling and illicit transshipment of these strategic items. Authorities intensified customs checks, investigations, and legal actions against domestic and overseas entities involved in re-routing goods to the U.S. If India wants to lead the global EV transition, it can't afford to be a bystander in the rare earth game. These materials may lie buried in foreign soil, but the strategy to secure them can be hammered out at home. Because no matter how sleek the car, it won't move an inch without the right minerals.

Citizenship, Identity, and the New Demographic Anxiety

The complexities surrounding citizenship, identity, and demographic shifts have long cast a shadow over Assam's sociopolitical fabric. In recent years, however, the anxiety surrounding these elements has intensified, producing volatile discourse and unsettling uncertainties. At the heart of Assam's current crisis lies the fear of cultural erasure and political displacement, fuelled by concerns over migration, the National Register of Citizens (NRC), and the implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). This interwoven matrix of history, politics, and demography continues to redefine what it means to be Assamese, creating fault lines between communities while challenging the foundational premises of Indian citizenship.

Assam's experience with migration dates back to colonial times when the British administration encouraged the movement of labourers and peasants from other parts of India, especially Bengal, to cultivate its fertile land. Over decades, the demographic composition of Assam began shifting, leading to anxieties among the indigenous communities regarding the dilution of their cultural identity, language, and control over resources. This long-standing fear crystallized in the form of the six-year-long Assam Movement (1979-1985), demanding the identification and deportation of illegal immigrants, particularly those from Bangladesh. The movement culminated in the Assam Accord of 1985, which set 24 March 1971 as the cut-off date for detecting and deporting illegal migrants. Yet, this accord did not deliver the clarity or closure many hoped for; instead, it laid the groundwork for continuing ambiguities and disputes over citizenship.

The updating of the NRC, touted as a mechanism to address these concerns, brought both hope and chaos. The final list, published in 2019, excluded around 1.9 million people, including many Assamese-speaking Hindus and Muslims. While some anticipated that the NRC would validate the identity of indigenous citizens, its implementation exposed systemic flaws, legal loopholes, and bureaucratic hurdles. Instead of resolving the citizenship question, the NRC only deepened uncertainties and anxieties. The absence of clear guidelines for those excluded and the establishment of Foreigners Tribunals further complicated the fate of lakhs of people caught in administrative limbo. For a region already scarred by identity-based violence, these developments brought no peace.

The introduction of the CAA in 2019 further inflamed tensions. While the government claimed it was a humanitarian measure to offer refuge to persecuted minorities from neighbouring countries, in Assam, it was widely perceived as a betrayal of the Assam Accord. By allowing citizenship to undocumented non-Muslim migrants from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, the CAA potentially legitimizes the presence of communities that the Assamese people have long struggled to identify as outsiders. For many in Assam, the Act challenges the very definition of citizenship that the NRC was supposed to clarify. It fuels the fear that the cultural and linguistic uniqueness of the Assamese people is at risk of being subsumed under a homogenizing national identity that does not acknowledge regional aspirations or historical grievances.

This demographic anxiety is not limited to numbers but extends to the deeper question of identity. For the indigenous communities of Assam, identity is inseparable from land, language, and ancestry. The fear that unchecked migration could undermine these pillars creates a climate of cultural siege. This siege mentality, in turn, influences political rhetoric, electoral strategies, and policy formulations. Political parties across the spectrum have weaponized identity politics, often reinforcing divisions between indigenous and migrant communities, between Assamese speakers and Bengali speakers, and between Hindus and Muslims. In this fraught environment, citizenship becomes not just a legal status but a moral and emotional claim to belonging.

However, such essentialist narratives of identity risk erasing the complex reality of Assam's pluralism. The state is home to a mosaic of communities—Ahoms, Bodos, Karbis, Tea Tribes, Bengalis, and many others—each with distinct histories and cultural practices. The danger of reducing this diversity to binaries of insider versus outsider or indigenous versus migrant undermines the inclusive ethos that should ideally govern a democratic society. Moreover, the lived experiences of many so-called "outsiders" reveal decades of rootedness in Assam—generations who have contributed to its economy, culture, and society. Denying them recognition on the basis of perceived foreignness only perpetuates alienation and exclusion.

What complicates the situation further is the absence of robust mechanisms to reconcile legal definitions of citizenship with social perceptions of belonging. The NRC was



supposed to be such a mechanism, but its flawed execution eroded public trust. The CAA, instead of clarifying ambiguities, introduced new ones by privileging religious identity over territorial and historical continuity. This piecemeal approach to citizenship exacerbates the demographic anxiety it was meant to address. It neither satisfies the indigenous communities' demand for cultural preservation nor assures security to long-term residents fearing statelessness.

The new demographic anxiety in Assam is thus both a cause and a consequence of these unsettled debates over identity and citizenship. It is an anxiety that finds expression in protests, court battles, and everyday conversations. It is also a deeply political anxiety, shaped by electoral calculations and ideological agendas. In recent elections, political parties have sought to consolidate votes by invoking the fear of the "other"—a tactic that may yield short-term gains but erodes the social fabric in the long run. The rise of identity-based political parties and the polarization of public discourse further entrench these divides, making reconciliation increasingly difficult.

Yet, amidst this gloom, there is a growing recognition—especially among youth, civil society groups, and independent intellectuals—that Assam's future cannot be built on exclusion. There is an emerging discourse that calls for a more nuanced understanding of identity, one that acknowledges historical grievances without perpetuating them, and one that sees citizenship as an evolving relationship with the state rather than a static entitlement. This vision requires legal reforms, administrative transparency, and most importantly, empathy. It demands that citizenship

processes be humane, inclusive, and sensitive to the lived realities of people.

The challenge before Assam today is to navigate this complex terrain without sacrificing justice at the altar of identity, or unity at the altar of numbers. While it is legitimate for communities to seek the preservation of their culture and language, this cannot come at the cost of marginalizing those who have shared space, labour, and aspirations for decades. The test of any democracy lies not just in how it protects majorities but in how it treats its minorities—especially those rendered invisible by politics and policy.

What Assam needs is a reimagining of citizenship that moves beyond mere documentation. It needs a framework that balances cultural autonomy with constitutional guarantees, regional sentiments with national commitments. This is not an easy task, but it is a necessary one if the state is to emerge from the shadows of its demographic anxieties and chart a path towards inclusive development. This reimagining also calls for education, dialogue, and the courage to confront difficult truths—about past policies, present prejudices, and future possibilities.

Assam's demographic anxiety is symptomatic of a larger national debate on citizenship and identity, one that questions who belongs, on what terms, and with what rights. The answers to these questions cannot be found in exclusionary laws or contested registers. They must emerge from a collective reckoning with history, a commitment to justice, and an unflinching belief in the plural foundations of the Indian republic. Only then can Assam truly lay to rest the ghosts of its past and embrace a future rooted in dignity and shared belonging.

Indian Police crackdown on muslim Bangla-speaking migrants

By: Saleem Samad

Two impoverished families have been working as scrap pickers for over two decades in the suburb of New Delhi. Both families were detained, transported in harsh conditions, and pushed into Bangladesh in the dark hours. Police in Delhi claimed that they are Bangladeshi citizens and that their ancestors were from a village in the southern district of the country.

The ordeal of the two families surfaced after their families filed cases with the Delhi High Court and Kolkata High Court. The families complained that the Indian authorities do not know of their whereabouts in Bangladesh, and the families do not have any contact with them.

The petition said that last month, Sweetie Bibi and her two sons, Korban Sheikh (16 years old) and Imam Sheikh (6 years old) and another family, Sonali Khatun, her husband, Danesh Sheikh and their son Sabbir Sheikh, were abducted, and police said they were deported to Bangladesh as they were Bangladeshi citizens.

Later, the West Bengal police collected several documents to prove that the family's ancestors' history is from the state of West Bengal and that they are genuine Indian citizens.

A video shot inside Bangladesh, which went viral on social media, showed two women, one teenager and one male, who was seen in the footage. It could not be ascertained where in Bangladesh it was recorded. The woman, Sweetie Bibi, described in the video how they were forcibly abducted by police and later pushed into a foreign country and were alleged to be émigrés from Bangladesh.

In the recent spate of crackdown against illegal immigrants, India, when persons speak Bangla (the official language of Bangladesh and also spoken in neighboring states of West Bengal and Tripura) are and Muslim, that person, in the eyes of the police, is a potential demographic threat to the country's security. The authorities jump to the conclusion that the suspects are "illegal immigrants" from Bangladesh.

All over India, such suspects in thousands were hauled and taken to different concentration camps. The detained persons are enduring untold miseries, agony and sufferings. They are tortured by law enforcement agencies. The encampments have poor sanitation, no running water and inadequate food.

Indian press, which habitually barks anti-Bangladesh rhetoric, hardly reported the incidents of the harassment and illegal confinement of Indian citizens, bracketed as "unauthorized immigrants" from Bangladesh. Most of them live in shanty slums and work as menial workers and have migrated from different places for a better future and finan-

cial solvency.

According to international media and rights organizations, they have been critical of such government-induced crackdown against the working class in India. Most do not have proper documents to prove their identity. Even though they had valid citizenship documents, they had those confiscated and were told that the documents were counterfeit.

Human Rights Watch (HRW), a New York-based organization, said India forcibly expelled more than 1,500 Muslim men, women, and children to Bangladesh between 7 May and 15 June, quoting Bangladeshi authorities. The police, while detaining the suspects, speak of harrowing tales of being robbed of their cash and valuables, the poor people possessed. For the detained Muslims, the sky seems to have fallen over their head.

India is one of the few South Asia countries where secularism, equality and rights of citizens are guaranteed in the state constitution, but the government and law enforcement authorities are flouting the law with impunity during the arbitrary crackdown on illegal immigrants.

The suspects are forcibly boarded on a train or trucks and brought near the India-Bangladesh border. They are pushed through porous borders into Bangladesh. Such "push-in" as it is popularly said on both sides of the border has become a regular phenomenon of the Indian Border Security Forces (BSF).

Bangladesh is encircled by India on three sides by land, and has seen relations with New Delhi turn icy since a mass uprising in August last year toppled the autocratic government of Sheikh Hasina, an ally of India, who is living in exile somewhere in New Delhi.

Bangladesh's Foreign Ministry has repeatedly communicated with the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to abide by international laws for deporting illegal immigrants. The standard procedure would be to produce a list of names, photos, addresses in Bangladesh, and documents to prove they are from Bangladesh.

Bangladesh authorities would verify their citizenship and decide who could be sent back. Meanwhile, some Arab countries, Malaysia, South Korea, the United States and other countries have provided documents of those deported for illegally staying in their country and are undocumented. They are listed when their work permit and visas expired long ago, or they were involved in heinous crimes and given long-term prison sentences. The criminals are sent back to serve the rest of their imprisonment tenure in their home country.

Political historian and researcher Mo-hiuddin Ahmad aptly said thousands of

senior and junior leaders of Awami League, which ruled Bangladesh for more than 15 years, have fled to India, but they are not arrested for illegally crossing the border to India without valid travel documents.

The Indian government has kept its eyes closed to exiled politicians. The political leaders are mostly living in Kolkata and New Delhi at the behest of the Indian authorities. The majority of the Awami League leaders are Muslims and speak Bangla, but they are exempted from the crackdown, Ahmad remarked.

South Block in New Delhi remains silent over the pressing issue. Every week, the Indian border police are pushing so-called unauthorized immigrants into Bangladesh. The Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) is not at all informed of the push-in. The operation is secretly conducted and in the cover of darkness by the BSF.

Despite the arbitrary deportation of "illegal immigrants" including Indian citizens, embargo on exports to India, moratorium on visas for Bangladeshis, and other pressing issues, Foreign Affairs Adviser Touhid Hossain last week reiterated that the interim government always wanted a good working relationship with India based on reciprocity and mutual respect. Our (Bangladesh) position remains unchanged," Hossain said, noting that no one from the interim government ever said they do not want good relations with India.

Meanwhile, HRW in a strongly worded statement recently said India has pushed hundreds of ethnic Bangla-speaking Muslims into Bangladesh without due process, accusing the government of flouting rights and fuelling bias on religious lines.

The Hindu nationalist government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has long taken a hard-line stance on immigration, particularly those from neighboring Muslim-majority Bangladesh, with top authorities referring to them as "termites" and "infiltrators".

The crackdown has sparked fear among India's estimated 200 million Muslims, especially among those speaking Bangla, the HRW statement said. "India's ruling BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) is fuelling discrimination by arbitrarily expelling Bangla-speaking Muslims from the country, including Indian citizens," said Elaine Pearson, Asia Director of HRW.

"The Indian government is putting thousands of vulnerable people at risk in apparent pursuit of unauthorized immigrants, but their actions reflect broader discriminatory policies against Muslims," India has also been accused of forcibly deporting Muslim Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, with navy ships dropping them off the coast of the war-torn nation.

A City's reckoning with negligence and privilege

By: Dipak Kurmi

In the stillness of a humid July night in Guwahati, a life full of promise was shattered by a moment of reckless negligence. Twenty-one-year-old Samiul Haque, a final-year electrical engineering student at Nalbari Polytechnic and a newly appointed temporary worker at the Guwahati Municipal Corporation (GMC), was fatally injured in a hit-and-run incident in Kahilpara's Dakshingao area. What could have been a bright beginning to a meaningful career ended instead in silence—on a hospital bed, four days after the accident, as the city erupted in protest and grief. At the center of this tragic saga stands Assamese actress Nandinee Kashyap, now arrested in connection with the case, and a justice system once again under public scrutiny.

The accident occurred on the night of July 25—ironically, the very day Samiul had joined GMC on a temporary basis. He was diligently working on the installation of streetlights, part of a larger initiative to improve the city's infrastructure. Eyewitnesses claim a speeding vehicle struck him and fled the scene without a pause. That vehicle, later identified as belonging to Nandinee Kashyap, left behind a trail of horror: Samiul was critically injured, sustaining severe brain trauma and multiple fractures.

Initially rushed to Gauhati Medical College and Hospital (GMCH), Samiul was later transferred to Apollo Hospitals on July 28 as his condition deteriorated. Despite the efforts of doctors and the prayers of loved ones, he succumbed to his injuries on July 29. His death triggered a wave of outrage across Assam, with local residents, student bodies, and civil society demanding accountability, transparency, and swift justice.

The immediate reaction to the incident was marked by confusion, frustration, and despair. Police officials claimed that the family had not named the accused in the FIR, yet the name of the vehicle owner, the location, and the circumstances were clear from the outset. The case, initially registered under bailable sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)—namely Sections 115(2), 125(b), and 281—was criticized for being too lenient. Only later was a non-bailable charge under Section 105 added, raising further questions about the police's priorities and procedural integrity. The arrest of Nandinee Kashyap came a day after Samiul's death. She was intercepted near Mandakata while returning from a theatre rehearsal and detained by a Guwahati Police team. By the following day, she was formally arrested and brought to the All Women Police Station at Panbazar for interrogation. During this period, the vehicle involved in the incident—a car bearing registration number AS 01FM 9199—was seized by the authorities. Still, doubts lingered over whether Kashyap herself was behind the wheel at the time of the acci-

dent. The police have yet to officially confirm this, despite eyewitness reports suggesting her involvement directly. The story does not end with the crash or the arrest. What followed in the days afterward speaks volumes about both personal conduct and systemic failure. According to Samiul's family and local residents, not only did Kashyap fail to stop after hitting the young man, but she also made no attempt to check on his condition or offer help in the days that followed. A relative claimed that she made a call on WhatsApp where she reportedly said she wouldn't help and cited her political connections as a shield. When Samiul was eventually shifted to Apollo Hospital, it was not the actress, but her father who visited. "He came with a few people, looked at Samiul, said he would get better, and left," a relative recounted in anguish.

Facing growing criticism, Nandinee's mother later issued a public statement expressing sorrow over the incident. She claimed that the family had tried to offer financial assistance but were rebuffed by hostile youths. She also added that police had advised Nandinee against visiting the hospital for safety reasons. Regarding prior traffic violations linked to the car, her mother insisted those were the responsibility of the driver and not the actress herself. "We are open to helping in any way possible after the legal procedures conclude," she added.

However, the apology has done little to quiet the storm. Samiul's death has become a symbol of growing anger against unchecked privilege, legal loopholes, and the rising menace of hit-and-run cases in Guwahati. The All Assam Polytechnic Students' Union (AAPSU) filed a formal FIR at Dispur Police Station and held public demonstrations outside Apollo Hospital, demanding strict action. Samiul was not just a student but also a diligent young man working night shifts to support his family. His story has become a painful representation of countless young lives in Assam striving to rise against odds, only to be crushed under the wheels of negligence and impunity.

The Rajdhan Theatre, where Kashyap was under a two-year contract, terminated its association with her, citing the need to protect its institutional reputation. Members of the Assamese film fraternity also expressed their sorrow. Actor Ravi Sarma, who had acted alongside her in the movie Rudra, posted a heartfelt note: "The tragic loss of Samiul Haque has deeply saddened me. My thoughts and prayers are with his family during this incredibly difficult time."

But grief alone cannot resolve the deeper issues at play. Guwahati has seen a sharp rise in hit-and-run cases over the past few years. According to city traffic data and local reports, incidents of vehicles striking pedestrians or two-wheelers and fleeing the scene have nearly doubled since 2019. The reasons are manifold: increasing vehicular density, inadequate pedestrian in-

frastructure, late-night speeding, distracted driving due to mobile use, and, significantly, the presence of unlicensed or underage drivers on the roads. Law enforcement, for its part, has repeatedly failed to keep up with these challenges. While Guwahati Police has launched surveillance projects, including CCTV installation and traffic monitoring squads, loopholes in investigation and weak initial charges often delay justice. In many cases, FIRs are delayed, eyewitness accounts are ignored, and powerful individuals escape consequences through influence or manipulation. Even when vehicles are seized, the legal process is often diluted, as was seen in the initial bailable charges filed in Samiul's case.

To curb the rising tide of hit-and-run incidents in Guwahati, systemic reform is urgently required. Firstly, traffic enforcement needs a major overhaul. Speeding, driving under the influence, and reckless driving must be treated as serious criminal offenses from the outset—not as bailable infractions. Police must be equipped with better training and resources to handle accident scenes, gather forensic evidence swiftly, and protect the rights of victims and their families.

Secondly, public awareness campaigns must focus on responsible driving behavior, ethical responsibility during accidents, and the legal obligations of drivers. The general attitude that "powerful people can get away with anything" must be challenged both culturally and legally.

Thirdly, there is a need to improve road infrastructure. Poor lighting, lack of pedestrian crossings, and chaotic intersections make nighttime travel dangerous for both drivers and workers like Samiul. Municipal bodies and the state government must prioritize safe road engineering alongside urban development. Finally, a victim compensation and support mechanism should be instituted. Families of hit-and-run victims often struggle to afford medical care or legal support. A state-backed fund could offer immediate relief, legal aid, and rehabilitation assistance for those affected.

Samiul Haque's story is not just the tale of one life lost—it is an indictment of a city failing to protect its youth. It is about the growing disconnect between the privileged and the common citizen, about a legal system that drags its feet when speed is most needed, and about a culture that must evolve to place value on human life above status and influence. As protests continue and investigations unfold, Guwahati must reckon with a crucial question: how many more lives must be lost before the system begins to care?

The death of Samiul must not be allowed to fade into another unsolved file or a passing news cycle. It should serve as a wake-up call—one that jolts conscience, ignites reform, and builds a city where justice is not a privilege, but a right. (the writer can be reached at dipakkurmigpltd@gmail.com)

Health promotion: Create real world change

By: Annika Way

What does a career in health promotion mean?

A career in health promotion is about making real change in real communities. It means looking at health in a broad way, understanding the different factors that make some people healthier than others. By working in health promotion, you can improve the health of whole communities and populations, through policies and projects with big impact. Health promotion isn't about fixing problems for a short time. It's about finding the root causes of health issues and stopping them before they start, helping people stay healthy and out of the hospital.

What does health promotion involve?

Do you often see the strengths in people? If so, you already have the right mindset for health promotion. You could make a big difference if you turn that ability into a career.

Health promotion is more than just giving out health information and education. It's about helping communities build the tools and confidence they need to make choices that fit their needs. Instead of focusing on what's missing, health promotion builds on what is already there. That might be strong leaders, local groups, or creative talents in communities. Good health projects that have positive impacts build on the existing strengths and adapt to each community's values and culture.

Empowering communities

Maybe you want to help people, but you don't want to work in a hospital. Through health promotion, you can create bigger changes that help many people, not just one at a time.

By working with communities, you can:

- Listen to and support local voices.
- Work together to create solutions that solve real problems.
- Push for policies that meet the needs of different communities.

How do I do it?

You might already be learning about health promotion without even knowing it! In high school, subjects like Health teach you ideas like the Ottawa Charter and the Social Determinants of Health. These are key parts of health promotion and public health.

If you go to university, you will learn more about the different factors that affect health. You will study topics like health systems, policies, environmental health, and how social, cultural, and financial factors affect health.

Equipping you for the future

Study areas at university or TAFE where you can develop knowledge and skills for a future career include health promotion, public health, population health, health science, social science, political science, community development, youth work, and many other courses.

If you choose to focus on health promotion, you will learn how to design, run, and evaluate health promotion projects that solve real-world problems. You will learn how to look at health systems, challenge unfair practices, and speak up

for vulnerable communities. Your skills will help you lead projects that improve health and fight for fairness, both locally and globally.

Whether you're working to reduce chronic diseases, helping to shape national health programs, or leading local projects, you will be listening to people, working with them, and making a real difference. It's not just about numbers and statistics; it's about understanding people's real experiences.

Australia has many different communities and unique health challenges. There is a need for future leaders in health promotion who can make sure every community can influence their own health. Are you ready to make a real difference? Health promotion could be the perfect path for you. *(Courtesy:myfuture)*

IBPS Clerk Recruitment 2025 – Online Apply for 10277 CSA Posts

Last Date: 21/08/2025.

Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS) has released an employment notification to conduct online examination for the next Common Recruitment Process (CRP CSA XV) to recruit 10277 Clerical Cadre posts. The exam is tentatively scheduled in October, 2025 and November, 2025. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here .

Name of examination: IBPS CRP Customer Service Associate – XV

Name of post: Customer Service Associate

No of posts: 10277 posts

State-wise vacancy:

Andaman and Nicobar Islands: 13

Andhra Pradesh: 367

Arunachal Pradesh: 22

Assam: 204

Bihar: 308

Chandigarh: 63

Chhattisgarh: 214

Dadra and Nagar Haveli/ Daman & Diu: 35

Delhi: 416

Goa: 87

Gujarat: 753

Haryana: 144

Himachal Pradesh: 114

Jammu and Kashmir: 61

Jharkhand: 106

Karnataka: 1170

Kerala: 330

Ladakh: 5

Lakshadweep: 7

Madhya Pradesh: 601

Maharashtra: 1117

Manipur: 31

Meghalaya: 18

Mizoram: 28

Nagaland: 27

Odisha: 249

Puducherry: 19

Punjab: 276

Rajasthan: 328

Sikkim: 20

Tamil Nadu: 894

Telangana: 261

Tripura: 32

Uttar Pradesh: 1315

Uttarakhand: 102

West Bengal: 540

Pay: ₹ 24050-1340/3-28070-1650/3-33020-2000/4-41020-2340/7-57400-4400/1-61800-2680/1-64480

Total no of posts: 204 posts

Bank-wise vacancy:

Bank of Baroda: 10

Punjab National Bank: 25

Canara Bank: 25

Union Bank of India: 7

Bank of India: 10

Indian Bank: NR

Central Bank of India: 106

Indian Overseas Bank: 0

UCO Bank: NR

Bank of Maharashtra: 8

Punjab & Sind Bank: 13

Age Limit: Candidates age should be between 20 years to 28 years as on 1st August 2025. candidate must have been born not earlier than 02.08.1997 and not later than 01.08.2005 (both dates inclusive).

Age Relaxation: Category-wise age relaxation is as mentioned below.

Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribe: 5 years

Other Backward Classes (Non-Creamy Layer): 3 years

Persons With Disabilities: 10 years

Educational Qualification:

A Degree (Graduation) in any discipline from a University recognised by the Govt. Of India or any equivalent qualification recognized as such by the Central Government. The candidate must possess valid Mark-sheet / Degree Certificate that he/ she is a graduate on the day he / she registers and indicate the percentage of marks obtained in Graduation while registering online.

Computer Literacy:

Operating and working knowledge in computer systems is mandatory i.e. candidates should have Certificate/Diploma/Degree in computer operations/Language/ should have studied Computer / Information Technology as one of the subjects in the High School/College/Institute.

Proficiency in the Official Language of the State/ UT:

The candidates applying for vacancies of a particular State/UT, should be proficient in (reading, writing, speaking and understanding) the specified / opted local language of that State/UT .

Application Fee:

SC/ST/PWBD/EXSM: Rs. 175/- (inclusive of GST)

Others: Rs. 850 /- (inclusive of GST)

Payment mode: Online (Debit Cards (RuPay/Visa/MasterCard/Maestro), Credit Cards, Internet Banking, IMPS, Cash Cards/ Mobile Wallets)

How to Apply for IBPS Clerk Recruitment ?

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for these vacancy by visiting official IBPS Recruitment Portal. Candidates may follow below mentioned steps to apply online.

Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .

Click on the "Online Application Form" and complete the registration process by clicking "New User ? Register Here".

In the next stage, click on "Online Application Form" Link and Login.

Fill your all personal and educational details and upload necessary documents.

Make payment of application fee as per your category and submit the form.

At the end, take a print out of the application form .

Important Dates of IBPS Clerk Recruitment 2025

Starting Date for Apply Online: 1st August 2025

Last Date to Apply Online: 21st August 2025

Date for Prelims Exam: October, 2025

Date for Release of Result for Online Exam: October/ November, 2025

Date for Mains Exam: November, 2025

NHM Assam CHO Recruitment 2025 – 882 Community Health Officer Posts

National Health Mission, Assam has released the official notification for the recruitment of 882 Community Health Officer (CHO) vacancy for engagement on contractual basis. The candidate must have passed B.Sc (Nursing) or Post Basic B.Sc (Nursing) with Integrated Certificate Course in Community Health/ B.Sc. (Community Health) Registered by Director of Medical Education, Assam to be eligible to apply for this post.

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here for these posts.

Name of post: Community Health Officer (CHO)

No of posts: 882 posts

Category-wise vacancy:

OBC/ MOBC: 0

STP: 36

STH: 103

SC: 90

Tea Tribes: 109

UR: 554

Name of organisation: National Health Mission, Assam

Remuneration: Rs. 27,500/- per month and monthly performance based incentive up to Rs. 15,000 per month .

The eligibility criteria for applying for the post is as follows:

Educational Qualification:

The candidate must have passed B.Sc (Nursing) or Post Basic B.Sc (Nursing) with Integrated Certificate Course in Community Health/ B.Sc. (Community Health) Registered by Director of Medical Education, Assam are eligible to apply for the post.

B.Sc(Nursing) / Post Basic B. Sc Nursing passed from a Nursing institution/ University recognized by Indian Nursing Council / Assam Nurses Midwives' & Health Visitors' Council.

Candidates must be Registered Nurse Registered Midwife (RNRN) from Assam Nurses Midwives' & Health Visitors' Council/ DME Assam.

Candidates shall submit a Certificate from the Principal of their respective Nursing College (where from candidate has passed) for confirmation of the Integrated Certificate Course in Community Health as per given format

Age Limit: Candidates' age must be less than 40 years of age as on 1st January 2025.

Age Relaxation: Category-wise the upper age limit relaxation is as mentioned below:

SC/ST: By 5 years .

OBC/MOBC: By 3 years .

PWD: By 10 years .

Application Fee: No fee is required to be paid.

Interested and eligible candidates may apply through online mode by visiting the NHM Assam's official website <https://nhm.assam.gov.in>. Candidates may fill up their online application by following below mentioned steps.

Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .

Click on the "Online Application Form" .

A new webpage will be opened.

Select your desired post and fill all personal and educational details and upload necessary documents.

Next submit the application form .

At the end, take a print out of the application form .

Following documents will have to uploaded with the Application Form:

i) Final year marksheet of last Qualifying Exam (Final Year BSc Nursing/Post Basic BSc Nursing)

ii) Provisional/Final Degree Certificate

iii) Registration Certificate from Assam Nursing Council.

iv) Age proof certificate.

v) Candidates applying under reserved category will have to attach a copy of their caste certificate issued by competent authority.

vi) Certificate from Principal of the Nursing College (Appendix I)

Starting date of submission of online application: 20th July 2025

Last date of submission of online application: 5th August 2025

ICMR RMRC Dibrugarh Recruitment – 11 Clerk, Technician & Lab Attendant Posts

Last Date: 14/08/2025.

ICMR-Regional Medical Research Centre, N.E. Region (ICMR-RMRCNE), Dibrugarh has released an advertisement for the recruitment 11 Clerk, Technician & Lab Attendant Posts. Interested and eligible candidates may apply here.

1. Lower Division Clerk

No of posts: 3

UR: 2

OBC: 1

Pay Matrix: 7th CPC Pay Level 2 (Rs.19900 - 63200)

Age Limit: Not exceeding 27 years i.e. Age must be from 18 to 27 years.

Educational & Other Qualification:

i. 12th class pass or equivalent qualification from a recognized Board or University.

ii. Typing speed of 35 w.p.m. in English or 30 w.p.m. in Hindi on Computer (correspond to 10500 KDPH / 9000 KDPH on an average of 5 key depressions for each word).

2. Upper Division Clerk

No of posts: 1

UR: 1

Pay Matrix: 7th CPC Pay Level 4 (Rs.25500 - 81100)

Age Limit: Not exceeding 27 years i.e. Age must be from 18 to 27 years.

Educational & Other Qualification:

i. Degree from a recognized University or equivalent.

ii. Typing speed of 35 w.p.m. in English or 30 w.p.m. in Hindi on Computer (corresponds to 10500 KDPH / 9000 KDPH on an average of 5 key depressions for each word).

3. Technician-I

No of posts: 4

OBC: 3

SC: 1

Pay Matrix: 7th CPC Pay Level 2 (Rs.19900 - 63200)

Age Limit: Not exceeding 28 years i.e. Age must be from 18 to 28 years.

Educational & Other Qualification: 12th or Intermediate pass in Science subject with 55% marks from a Govt. recognized Board and at least one year Diploma in Medical Laboratory Technology (DMLT) from govt. recognized Institution.

4. Lab. Attendant-I

No of posts: 3

OBC: 1

UR: 2

Pay Matrix: 7th CPC Pay Level 1 (Rs.18000 - 56900)

Age Limit: Not exceeding 25 years i.e. Age must be from 18 to 25 years.

Educational & Other Qualification: 10th pass with 50% marks in aggregate from recognized board plus one year working experience in a govt. recognized / approved / registered Lab in respective field or trade certificate issued by govt. agencies.

Citizenship: Candidates must be a citizen of India.

Age Relaxation: Category-wise age relaxation is as mentioned below.

OBC: 3 years

SC: 5 years

Application Fee:

Candidates have to pay the application as mentioned below according to their caste:

Category	Application Fee
UR/ OBC	Rs.2000/-
SC/ Women	Rs.1600/-

How to Apply for ICMR RMRC Dibrugarh Recruitment ?

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for these vacancy by visiting official Recruitment Portal. Candidates may follow below mentioned steps to apply for ICMR RMRC Dibrugarh Recruitment.

Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .

Click on the "Online Application Form" and complete the registration process by clicking "New user? Click here to Register".

In the next stage, click on "Online Application Form" Link and Login.

Fill your all personal and educational details and upload necessary documents.

Pay the necessary application fee as per your category .

At the end, submit the application form and take a print out of the application form .

Starting date for submission of online application: 25th July 2025

Last date for submission of online application: 14th August 2025

RRB Technician Recruitment 2025 – 6238 Posts, Online Apply

Last Date: 07/08/2025.

Railway Recruitment Board (RRB), Ministry of Railways, Govt. of India has released an employment notification CEN No. 02/2025 for the recruitment of 6238 Technician Posts in various RRBs . The online application process for RRB Technician Vacancy 2025 starts from 28th June 2025 to 9th August 2025.

Interested and eligible candidates may read the advertisement and apply online here.

Name of post: Technician

No of posts: 6238 posts

Technician Grade-I Signal: 183 posts

Technician Grade-III: 6055 posts

No of posts under RRB Guwahati: 184 posts

Technician Grade-I Signal: 15 posts

Technician Grade-III: 169 posts

Pay scale:

Technician Grade-I Signal: Level-5 of 7th CPC, Rs.29200/-

Technician Grade-III: Level-2 of 7th CPC, Rs.19900/-

Eligibility Criteria of RRB Technician Recruitment

Age Limit: Category-wise age limit is as under.

Technician Grade-I Signal: Candidates age must be between 18 to 33 years as 1st July 2025.

Technician Grade-III: Candidates age must be between 18 to 30 years as 1st July 2025.

Age Relaxation: The relaxation of upper age limit for reserved categories are as follows:

Category	Age Relaxation
OBC-NCL	3 years
SC/ST	5 years
PwBD - UR & EWS	10 years
PwBD - OBC/NCL	13 years
PwBD - SC & ST	15 years

Educational Qualification:

Technician Grade-I Signal:

A) Bachelor of Science In Physics / Electronics / Computer Science / Information Technology/ Instrumentation from a recognized University/Institute OR B.Sc. in a combination of any sub-stream of basic streams of Physics/Electronics/Computer Science/Information Technology/Instrumentation from a recognized University/Institute.

(OR)
B) Three years Diploma in Engineering in the above basic streams or in combination of any of above basic streams

(OR)
Degree in Engineering in the above basic streams or in combination of any of above basic streams.

Technician Grade-III:

Matriculation / SSLC plus ITI from recognized institutions of NCVT/SCVT in the trade/s as mentioned in the official notification.

(OR)
Matriculation / SSLC plus Course Completed Act Apprenticeship in the trades mentioned above.

Note: For detail educational qualification, pl check Annexure - A of Detailed Notification as mentioned below.

Candidates may contact following helplines for any queries related to technical issues.

Phone: 9592-001-188 | 0172-565-3333

Email: rrb.help@esc.gov.in

Time: 10 AM to 5 PM

Candidates have to pay an examination fee as mentioned below as per their categories or community:

Category	Fee
Category Fee	
SC/ST	Rs 250/-
Ex-Serviceman	Rs 250/-
Female	Rs 250/-
Transgender	Rs 250/-
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Economically backward class.	Rs 250/-
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Candidates can pay their exam fee through online mode using options like Internet Banking, Debit Card, Credit Card, or UPI.

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Kyiv mourns after Russian attack that killed 31 people, including 5 children

KYIV, Aug 1: The Ukrainian capital Kyiv observed an official day of mourning Friday, a day after a Russian drone and missile attack on the city killed 31 people, including five children, and injured more than 150, officials said.

The youngest victim in Thursday's strikes was 2 years old, and 16 of the injured were children, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said.

It was the highest number of children killed and injured in a single attack on Kyiv since aerial attacks on the city began in October 2022, according to official casualty figures reported by The Associated Press.

The death toll rose overnight as emergency crews continued to dig through rubble. The Russian barrage demolished a large part of a nine-story residential building in the city, while more than 100 other buildings were damaged, including homes, schools, kindergartens, medical facilities and universities, officials said.

Russia has escalated its attacks on Ukrainian cities in recent months, ignoring calls from Western leaders including US President Donald Trump to stop striking civilian areas after more than three years of war.

Russian forces are also pressing on with their grinding war of attri-



tion along the 1,000-kilometres front line, where incremental gains over the past year have cost the lives of thousands of soldiers on both sides.

Ukraine wants more sanctions on Russia

Zelenskyy said that in July, Russia launched over 5,100 glide bombs, more than 3,800 Shahed drones, and nearly 260 missiles of various types, 128 of them ballistic, against Ukraine.

He repeated his appeal for countries to impose heavier economic sanctions on Russia to deter the Kremlin, as US-led peace efforts have failed to gain traction.

"No matter how much the Kremlin denies (sanctions') effectiveness, they are working and must be stronger," Zelenskyy said.

break through defences after some 18 months of fighting.

Zelenskyy said that Russian claims of capturing Chasiv Yar on Thursday were "disinformation."

"Ukrainian units are holding our positions," Zelenskyy said in his daily video address on Thursday evening. "It is not easy, but it is the defense of Ukrainians' very right to life."

Even so, the Institute for the Study of War said that Ukraine's hold on the key city is weakening.

"Russian forces will likely complete the seizure of Chasiv Yar in the coming days, which will open several possible avenues for Russian forces to attack Ukraine's fortress belt — a series of fortified cities that form the backbone of Ukraine's defensive positions" in the Donetsk region, the Washington-based think tank said.

Ukraine has tried to pressure the Russian army by striking rear areas with long-range drones that target rail networks, oil depots and arsenals.

Russia's Defence Ministry said Friday that air defences shot down 60 Ukrainian drones overnight.

More than half were destroyed over Russia's Belgorod region on the country's border with Ukraine, it said. Belgorod Gov Vyacheslav Gladkov said that one person was injured. (AP)

His comments Friday appeared to be a response to Trump's remarks the previous day, when the Republican president said the US plans to impose sanctions on Russia but added, "I don't know that sanctions bother him," in reference to Russian President Vladimir Putin. Ukraine also called for an urgent UN Security Council meeting to be convened Friday, Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said, in an effort to push Putin into accepting "a full, immediate and unconditional ceasefire."

Russian forces bear down on a key eastern Ukrainian city

Meanwhile, Ukrainian forces are under heavy pressure in the strategic hilltop city of Chasiv Yar, in the eastern Donetsk region where Russia is making a concerted push to

Trump's new tariffs give some countries break, while shares and US dollar sink

BANGKOK, Aug 1: US President Donald Trump's new tariff rates of up to 41 per cent on US imports from dozens of countries drew expressions of relief Friday from some countries that negotiated a deal or managed to whittle them down from rates announced in April. Others expressed disappointment or frustration over running out of time after hitting Trump's Aug 1 deadline for striking deals with America's trading partners.

The new rates are due to take effect on Aug 7, but uncertainty over what Trump might do next remains. The way ahead for China, which runs the largest trade surplus with the US, is unclear after talks earlier this week in Stockholm produced no deal. Trump has yet to say if he'll extend an Aug 12 pause on painfully high import duties on Chinese products.

The reaction from financial markets was muted. Benchmarks fell in Asia, with South Korea's Kospi dropping nearly 4 per cent after the tariff rate for the US ally was set at 15%. The US dollar weakened against the Japanese yen, trading at more than 150 yen per dollar.

For Canada and Switzerland, regret and disappointment

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said his government was disappointed by Trump's move to raise the US tariff on goods from America's northern neighbour to 35 per cent from 25 per cent, effective Friday. Goods transhipped from unspecified other countries face a 40 per cent import duty.

Trump cited what he said was a lack of cooperation in stemming trafficking in illicit drugs across the northern border. He also slammed Canada's plan to recognise a Palestinian state and has expressed frustration with a trade deficit largely

due to US oil purchases.

"Canada accounts for only 1 per cent of USentanyl imports and has been working intensively to further reduce these volumes," Carney said in a statement. Many of Canada's exports to the US are covered by the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement and face no tariff. But steel, lumber, aluminum and autos have been subject to still higher tariffs.

Switzerland was reeling after Trump ordered a 39 per cent tariff rate for the land of luxury watches, pharmaceuticals and financial services. That was up from his original proposal of a 31 per cent duty.

"The Federal Council notes with great regret that, despite the progress made in bilateral talks and Switzerland's very constructive stance from the outset, the US intends to impose unilateral additional tariffs on imports from Switzerland," the government said in a post on X. It said it would continue to seek a negotiated solution.

Still working on it

New Zealand officials said Friday they would keep lobbying Trump to cut the 15 per cent tariff he announced for their country's exports to the US, up from the original 10 per cent baseline set in April.

"We don't think this is a good thing. We don't think it's warranted," Trade Minister Todd McClay told Radio New Zealand. The exporter of meat, dairy, wind and farm machinery ran a USD 1.1 billion trade surplus with the US in 2024, according to US Trade Representative data.

McClay said New Zealand exporters had reported they could absorb a 10 per cent tariff or pass it on to US consumers through increased costs. A further increase would "change the equation," he said. (AP)

Judge blocks Trump administration from ending protections for 60,000 from Central America and Nepal

SAN FRANCISCO, Aug 1: A federal judge ruled on Thursday against the Trump administration's plans and extended Temporary Protected Status for 60,000 people from Central America and Asia, including people from Nepal, Honduras and Nicaragua.

Temporary Protected Status is a protection that can be granted by the Homeland Security secretary to people of various nationalities who are in the United States, preventing from being deported and allowing them to work. The Trump administration has aggressively been seeking to remove the protection, thus making more people eligible for removal. It's part of a wider effort by the administration to carry out mass deportations of immigrants.

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem can extend Temporary Protected Status to immigrants in the US if conditions in their homelands are deemed unsafe to return due to a natural disaster, political instability or other dangerous conditions. Noem had ruled to end protections for tens of thousands of Hondurans and Nicaraguans after determining that conditions in their homelands no longer warranted them.

The secretary said the two countries had made "significant progress" in recovering from 1998's Hurricane Mitch, one of the deadliest Atlantic storms in history.

Trump ended conflicts including India-Pak, should get Nobel Peace Prize: WH press secy

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON, Aug 1: Donald Trump should be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt has said, claiming that the US President ended several conflicts around the world including the one between India and Pakistan.

Since May 10, when Trump announced on social media that India and Pakistan had agreed to a "full and immediate" ceasefire after a "long night" of talks mediated by Washington, he has repeated his claim on several occasions that he helped settle the tensions between the two countries. At a White House

press briefing on Thursday, Leavitt said that Trump has "now ended conflicts between Thailand and Cambodia, Israel and Iran, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, India and Pakistan, Serbia and Kosovo and Egypt and Ethiopia."

She said that the president has brokered, on average, about one peace deal or ceasefire per month during his six months in office.

"It's well past time that President Trump was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize," she said.

Trump has repeated his claim nearly thirty times that he "helped settle" the tensions between India

US envoy visits distribution site in Gaza as humanitarian crisis worsens

DEIR AL-BALAH(GAZA STRIP), Aug 1: US President Donald Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff visited southern Gaza on Friday during international outrage over starvation, shortages and deadly chaos near aid distribution sites.

Witkoff and US Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee toured one of Gaza's humanitarian Foundation's distribution sites in Rafah, Gaza's southernmost city, according to an official involved with the visit. The official requested anonymity because he was not authorised to brief the media.

All four of the group's distribution sites are in zones controlled by the Israeli military and throughout their months in operation have become flashpoints of desperation, where starving people scramble for scarce aid. Hundreds have been killed by either gunfire or trampling. The Israeli military says it has only fired warning shots at people who approach its forces, and GHF says its armed contractors have only used pepper spray or fired warning shots to prevent deadly crowding.

Witkoff's visit comes a week after US officials walked away from ceasefire talks in Qatar, blaming Hamas and pledging to seek other ways to rescue Israeli hostages and make Gaza safe.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said Thursday that he was sent to craft a plan to boost food and aid deliveries as part of an

effort "to save lives and end this crisis," while Trump wrote on social media that the fastest way to end the crisis would be for Hamas to surrender and release hostages.

International organisations have said Gaza has been on the brink of famine for the past two years. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, the leading international authority on food crises, said recent developments, including a complete blockade on aid for 2 1/2 months, mean the "worst-case scenario of famine is currently playing out in Gaza."

Though the flow of aid has resumed, including via airdrops, the amount getting into Gaza remains far lower than what aid organisations say is needed. A security breakdown in the territory has made it nearly impossible to safely deliver food to starving Palestinians, much of the limited aid entering is hoarded and later sold at exorbitant prices.

In a report issued Friday, Human Rights Watch called it "a flawed, militarised aid distribution system that has turned aid distributions into regular bloodbaths."

Israel's military and prime minister's office did not respond to request for comment on the report.

A July 30 video published Thursday by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs showed an aid convoy driving past a border crossing as gunfire ricocheted off the ground near where crowds congregated. (AP)

'Balanced', 'forward-looking': Pakistan hails 19% tariffs under US trade deal

ISLAMABAD, Aug 1: Pakistan on Friday announced that the US has imposed a 19 per cent tariff on its exports and termed the step as a "balanced and forward-looking" move that enhances the country's competitiveness in the American market.

The new rate is down from the previous 29 per cent tariff announced by US President Donald Trump.

Welcoming the "successful conclusion" of the tariff-related discussions with the US, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a statement said, "As per the outcome of these talks, a tariff of 19 per cent will be applicable for Pakistani exports to the US market."

The decision reflected a "balanced and forward-looking approach" by the US authorities, keeping Pakistan competitive relative to other South and Southeast Asian countries," it said.

The ministry said the revised tariff level is expected to support Pakistan's export potential, especially in key sectors such as textiles, "which remain the backbone of the country's export economy."

Pakistan's exports to the US rose by 11.06 per cent to USD 5.552 billion from USD 4.999 billion in the first 11 months of the last fiscal.

The ministry said the current tariff presented a "significant opportunity to expand Pakistan's footprint in the US market."

"It is now essential for Pakistani exporters and trade bodies to adopt an aggressive and focused marketing strategy to capitalise on this development," it said.

The statement also pointed out a substantial potential for growth in other sectors.

"The Government of Pakistan looks forward to further positive engagements and close cooperation with the United States in the areas of investment, artificial intelligence, crypto currency, mines and minerals, energy, and other emerging sectors," it said.

The ministry said Pakistan will continue to engage closely with Trump and the US administration to promote the shared goals of economic development and mutual prosperity.

The revised tariff for Pakistan came after the US and Islamabad finalised a trade deal in Washington on Wednesday.

In a social media post on Wednesday, the US President said, "We have just concluded a deal with the country of Pakistan, whereby Pakistan and the United States will work together on developing their massive oil reserves." (PTI)

Trump orders 35% tariff for goods from Canada

WASHINGTON, Aug 1: President Donald Trump has raised the tariff rate on US imports from Canada to 35% from 25%, effective Friday.

The announcement from the White House late Thursday said Canada had failed to "do more to arrest, seize, detain or otherwise intercept... traffickers, criminals at large, and illicit drugs".

Trump has heckled Canada for months and suggested it should become its 51st US state. He had threatened to impose the higher tariff on Canada if no deal was reached by Friday, his deadline for reaching trade agreements with dozens of countries.

Earlier Thursday, the president said Canada's announcement it will recognise a Palestinian state would "make it very hard" for the United States to reach a trade agreement with its northern neighbour. Trump has also expressed frustration with a trade deficit with Canada that largely reflects oil purchases by America. Prime Minister Mark Carney had tempered expectations over tariffs, saying Ottawa would only agree to a deal "if there's one on the table that is in the best interests of Canadians".

In a statement released early Friday, he said he was disappointed by Trump's actions and vowed to diversify Canada's exports. (AP)

Statehood remains distant dream for Palestinians as nightmare unfolds in Gaza

OTTAWA, Aug 1: Plans announced by France, the United Kingdom and Canada to recognise a Palestinian state won't bring one about anytime soon, though they could further isolate Israel and strengthen the Palestinians' negotiating position over the long term.

The problem for the Palestinians is that there may not be a long term.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejects Palestinian statehood and has vowed to maintain open-ended control over annexed east Jerusalem, the occupied West Bank and the war-ravaged Gaza Strip — territories Israel seized in the 1967 war that the Palestinians want for their state.

Israeli leaders favour the outright annexation of much of the West Bank, where Israel has already built well over 100 settlements housing over 500,000 Jewish settlers. Israel's offensive in Gaza has reduced most of it to a smoldering wasteland and is pushing it toward famine, and Israel says it is pressing ahead with plans to relocate much of its population of some 2 million to other countries.

The United States, the only country with any real leverage over Israel, has taken its side.

Critics say these countries could do much more

Palestinians have welcomed interna-

tional support for their decades-long quest for statehood but say there are more urgent measures Western countries could take if they wanted to pressure Israel.

"It's a bit odd that the response to daily atrocities in Gaza, including what is by all accounts deliberate starvation, is to recognize a theoretical Palestinian state that may never actually come into being," said Khaled Elgindy, a visiting scholar at Georgetown University's Centre for Contemporary Arab Studies.

"It looks more like a way for these countries to appear to be doing something," he said.

Fathi Nimer, a policy fellow at Al-Shabaka, a Palestinian think tank, says they could have suspended trade agreements with Israel, imposed arms embargoes or other sanctions. "There is a wide tool set at the disposal of these countries, but there is no political will to use it," he said.

It's not a completely empty gesture

Most countries in the world recognised Palestinian statehood decades ago, but Britain and France would be the third and fourth permanent members of the UN Security Council to do so, leaving the US as the only holdout.

"We're talking about major countries and major Israeli allies," said Alon Pinkas, an Israeli political analyst and former consul general in New York. "They're isolating the US and they're



leaving Israel dependent — not on the US, but on the whims and erratic behavior of one person, Trump."

Recognition could also strengthen moves to prevent annexation, said Hugh Lovatt, an expert on the conflict at the European Council on Foreign Relations. The challenge, he said, "is for those recognising countries to match their recognition with other steps, practical steps."

It could also prove significant if Israel and the Palestinians ever resume the

long-dormant peace process, which ground to a halt after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu returned to office in 2009.

"If and when some kind of negotiations do resume, probably not in the immediate future, but at some point, it puts Palestine on much more equal footing," said Julie Norman, a professor of Middle East politics at University College London.

"It has statehood as a starting point for those negotiations, rather than a certainly-not-assured endpoint."

Israel calls it a reward for violence

Israel's government and most of its political class were opposed to Palestinian statehood long before Hamas' Oct 7, 2023, attack triggered the war.

Netanyahu says creating a Palestinian state would reward Hamas and eventually lead to an even larger Hamas-run state on Israel's borders. Hamas leaders have at times suggested they would accept a state on the 1967 borders but the group remains formally committed to Israel's destruction.

Western countries envision a future Palestinian state that would be democratic but also led by political rivals of Hamas who accept Israel and help it suppress the militant group, which won parliamentary elections in 2006 and seized power in Gaza the following year.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, whose authority administers parts of the occupied West Bank, supports a two-state solution and cooperates with Israel on security matters. He has made a series of concessions in recent months, including announcing the end to the Palestinian Authority's practice of providing stipends to the families of prisoners held by Israel and slain militants.

Such measures, along with the security coordination, have made it deeply unpopular with Palestinians, and have yet to earn it any favours from Israel or the

Trump administration. Israel says Abbas is not sincerely committed to peace and accuses him of tolerating incitement and militancy. Lovatt says there is much to criticise about the PA, but that "often the failings of the Palestinian leadership are exaggerated in a way to relieve Israel of its own obligations".

The tide may be turning, but not fast enough

If you had told Palestinians in September 2023 that major countries were on the verge of recognising a state, that the UN's highest court had ordered Israel to end the occupation, that the International Criminal Court had ordered Netanyahu's arrest, and that prominent voices from across the US political spectrum were furious with Israel, they might have thought their dream of statehood was at hand.

But those developments pale in comparison to the ongoing war in Gaza and smaller but similarly destructive military offensives in the West Bank. Israel's military victories over Iran and its allies have left it the dominant and nearly unchallenged military power in the region, and Trump is the strongest supporter it has ever had in the White House.

"This (Israeli) government is not going to change policy," Pinkas said. "The recognition issue, the ending of the war, humanitarian aid — that's all going to have to wait for another government." (AP)

Arunachal Cong chief meets Kharge, seeks intervention for Article 371(H) amendment

ITANAGAR, Aug 1: Arunachal Pradesh Congress chief Bosiram Siram on Friday met Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge in New Delhi and submitted a memorandum seeking intervention for amendment to Article 371(H), review of the Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP), and restoration of the Old Pension Scheme (OPS), a party release said.

Siram urged that Article 371(H) of the Constitution be amended to grant Arunachal Pradesh constitutional safeguards and legislative powers similar to those enjoyed by Nagaland under Article 371(A) and Mizoram under Article 371(G).

This, he said, is essential to protect the state's land, natural resources, customary laws, and socio-cultural identity.

Article 371(H) grants special provisions to Arunachal Pradesh, primarily focusing on law and order and governance. It empowers the governor with special re-



sponsibility to maintain peace and ensure good governance in the state, particularly due to its sensitive geographic and socio-cultural context.

However, unlike similar provi-

sions in neighbouring states such as Nagaland (Article 371A) and Mizoram (Article 371G), Article 371(H) does not provide legislative safeguards over land ownership, natural resources, or

customary practices.

Expressing grave concerns over the proposed SUMP, he warned of severe social, environmental, and demographic impacts, including the displacement of indigenous communities. He demanded that the project be re-evaluated through extensive consultations with local stakeholders.

Siram also called for the roll-back of the National Pension Scheme (NPS) and restoration of the Old Pension Scheme to secure the future of government employees after retirement.

The Congress president assured Siram of full support and expressed solidarity with the people of Arunachal Pradesh, it said.

He commended Siram's commitment to representing grassroots concerns and reaffirmed the party's dedication to protecting the rights and aspirations of the state's citizens. Siram was accompanied by A Chellakumar, AICC secretary and Arunachal Pradesh in charge. (PTI)

Deputy CM announces enhanced support for Donyi-Polo Mission School



HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Aug 1: Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein has announced increased financial support for the Donyi-Polo Mission School for the Hearing and Visually Impaired in Itanagar, reaffirming the government's commitment to inclusive education in Arunachal Pradesh.

The announcement was made during a workshop on 'Let's Speak Arunachal' held at the school, themed 'Empowering Youth Voices and Building Pathways', according to an official statement.

Addressing students and atten-

dees, the Deputy CM announced that the school's annual grant-in-aid would be enhanced from ₹1.4 crore to ₹2 crore.

Additionally, a ₹5 crore corpus fund would be allocated for the institution to support its long-term sustainability.

Both provisions will be incorporated into the upcoming State Annual Budget for the next financial year.

Established in 1990, the school provides free education, therapy, and skill development to children with hearing, visual, and intellectual disabilities.

Remembering the school's founder and former chief minister Gegong Apang, Mein lauded the institution's role in empowering children with disabilities and affirmed the state government's continued support for its functioning.

In a gesture to promote the vocational skills of the students, Mein directed his office to procure paper gift bags made by the students using recycled waste, appreciating their creativity and self-reliance.

Speaking at the inaugural session of the workshop, Mein underlined the importance of effective communication, especially for youth development.

He emphasised the need to equip young minds with public speaking and expression skills to build confidence and leadership.

He also commended Porsum Ori, founder of the 'Let's Speak Arunachal' initiative, and Secretary Tana Jiri for conducting workshops across schools in the state and offering training in public speaking.

He termed the initiative a meaningful step toward nurturing confident and articulate youth.

The event was also attended by Secretary of Sports & Youth Affairs and Social Justice & Tribal Affairs, Abu Tayeng; Director of Youth Affairs, Ramesh Linggi; Principal Aravinda Dey; faculty members, students, and parents.

Namsai holds felicitation ceremony to honour Sampoornata Abhiyan contributors



HT Bureau

NAMSAI, Aug 1: A felicitation ceremony under the Sampoornata Abhiyan was held at the Multipurpose Cultural Hall in Namsai on Friday to honour the dedication of frontline workers and officials who contributed to the district's performance in key developmental indicators.

The event was organised in the presence of Namsai MLA Chau Zingnu Namchoom as the Chief Guest and ZPC Nang Urmila Mancheikhun as the guest of honour, according to an official statement.

Deputy Commissioner C R Khampa, addressing the gathering, said the Sampoornata Abhiyan was a targeted three-month campaign—from July to September 2024—designed to saturate six key performance indicators (KPIs) across 112 Aspirational Districts and 500 Aspirational Blocks nationwide.

He informed that during the campaign, four KPIs

under the Namsai Aspirational District Programme (ADP) and three KPIs under the Chongkhram Aspirational Block Programme (ABP) were successfully saturated.

Acknowledging the coordinated efforts of frontline workers and departments such as Health, Women and Child Development, Agriculture, Power, and Education, the Deputy Commissioner stated that the ceremony was organised to recognise their tireless service.

He also announced that NITI Aayog had awarded the Namsai district a bronze medal and the Chongkhram block a copper medal, with formal recognition scheduled at Itanagar.

Speaking on the occasion, chief guest Chau Zingnu Namchoom congratulated all stakeholders and commended their commitment.

He reiterated his vision of a clean and green Namsai and called for regular cleanliness drives.

Citing rising dengue cases, he also urged greater public awareness and preventive measures.

He further announced that 10% of his MLA Local Area Development Fund would be allocated for skill development initiatives to enhance the district's ADP performance.

Encouraging continued progress, he called on stakeholders to elevate Namsai from an Aspirational to an Inspirational District.

Guest of honour Nang Urmila Mancheikhun appreciated the grassroots workforce for their persistent efforts and underscored the importance of teamwork in achieving development goals.

The event featured felicitation and cash incentives for ASHAs, ANMs, Anganwadi workers, mentors, supervisors, Agricultural Field Assistants, Soil Mitras, Gram Sevikas, Health Workers, drivers, computer operators, lab attendants, education officials, medical officers, engineers, and other departmental representatives for their contributions under the campaign.

IMD forecast heavy rain in Arunachal till tomorrow

ITANAGAR, Aug 1: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a 'red' alert for Arunachal Pradesh on August 3, warning of extremely heavy rainfall, thunderstorms, and lightning in multiple districts.

An 'orange' alert has also been issued for August 2, when very heavy rains are also expected in several areas of the state.

According to the IMD forecast, Papum Pare, Lohit, and Anjaw districts are likely to receive more than 20 cm of rainfall on August 3. East Kameng and Lower Dibang Valley are expected to experience very heavy rainfall in the range of 12 to 20 cm, while Kurung Kumey, Kamle, West Siang, and Namsai may receive heavy rainfall between 7 to 11 cm.

On August 2, very heavy rainfall is forecast for Papum Pare, West Siang, and Namsai, while heavy showers are likely in East Kameng, Lower Subansiri, Lepa Rada, and Anjaw. All these weather events are expected to be accompanied by thunderstorms and lightning, increasing the risk of localised hazards.

Authorities have advised residents, especially in low-lying and landslide-prone areas, to remain vigilant and take precautionary measures. The forecast suggests potential traffic disruptions, power outages, and communication breakdowns due to uprooted trees and waterlogging. There is also a significant risk of landslides, mudslides, and flash floods.

The IMD has warned that agricultural and horticultural activities could be impacted, with potential damage to standing crops and seed displacement in fields.

Disaster management authorities have been placed on high alert, and the IMD has advised people to avoid unnecessary travel and postpone agricultural activities such as sowing. (PTI)

NE scientists, tribal farmers urge Centre to include mithun under National Livestock Mission

ITANAGAR, Aug 1: Scientists and tribal farmers from the Northeast have jointly urged the central government to include mithun (Bos frontalis), a semi-domesticated bovine species native to the region, under key central sector schemes such as the National Livestock Mission (NLM).

They say the move is vital for the sustainable development of mithun farming and to arrest the species' declining population.

In a recent letter to Union Animal Husbandry and Dairying Secretary Alka Upadhyaya, Director of ICAR-National Research Centre on Mithun (NRCM), Nagaland, Dr S Girish Patil, stressed that despite Mithun's ecological, economic and cultural importance in the region, the animal continues to remain excluded from the ambit of central livestock development schemes.

The ICAR-NRCM is a premier institution under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

India currently has 3.9 lakh mithun, according to the 2019 livestock census, with 95 per cent of the global population found within the country.

Arunachal Pradesh alone accounts for 91 per cent of India's mithun count.

The animal is deeply integrated into the lives of tribal communities in Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, and, more recently, parts of Assam.

It is not only a source of high-quality meat and milk, but also plays a key role in the food security and socio-cultural fabric of the re-



gion.

Mithun is the state animal of both Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland.

Patil noted that despite these factors, mithun remains outside the framework of the National Livestock Mission.

He pointed out that its inclusion would help drive focused research on breeding, feeding, health, and value addition, while also creating livelihood opportunities for farmers operating in challenging and remote geographies. He added that ICAR-NRCM is ready to provide the necessary documentation and support required for the animal's inclusion in the scheme.

Supporting this institutional appeal, the Jomlo Mongku Mithun Farmer Federation from Siang district in Arunachal Pradesh also raised the issue, calling for the intervention of Arunachal MPs Kiren Rijiju and Tapir Gao.

Federation chairman Tadang Tamut expressed concern that the mithun population is shrinking due to indiscriminate slaughter and unscientific farming practices.

He argued that exclusion from central schemes has left mithun farmers without access to scientific infrastructure, financial support, and sustainable management tools.

Tamut emphasised that mithun is more than just a livestock animal, it represents cultural pride and is a lifeline for thousands of tribal families.

He said including mithun in schemes like the NLM would not only encourage scientific rearing and conservation, but also increase its market value, thereby improving tribal incomes and boosting rural economies in the northeast.

He also pointed out that the significance of mithun has already been recognised at national and international levels.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) notified mithun as a food animal with effect from September 1, 2024.

It has also been listed in the domestic animal diversity information system (DAD-IS) maintained by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in Rome. (PTI)

Supreme Nocte Queen Phaliam Wangcha passes away at 114

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, Aug 1: Phaliam Wangcha, the revered pongwen (supreme queen) of eight Nocte villages in Arunachal Pradesh's Tirap district, passed away at the age of 114 at Dadam village on July 28.

Her demise marks the end of an era for the Nocte community, with villagers from Hunkan, Moktowa, Chinkoi, Lahu, Bera, Kuthin, Kapu, Bordumsa, and Dadam mourning the loss of their spiritual and cultural matriarch.

On Friday, traditional honours were observed in accordance with Nocte royal customs.

Community members performed ceremonial war dances, gun salutes, and rituals commemorating her life and legacy.

As per tradition, her funeral rites—scheduled for Saturday—are a collective responsibility of all eight villages under her symbolic reign.

Phaliam Wangcha held the status of pongwen, or queen of queens, performing sacred rituals that affirmed her spiritual and political authority.

Among the most symbolic was the Thom-siat ceremony, in which she was carried by villagers on a ceremonial log drum.

Local folklore holds that a tigress became her spirit animal, representing her strength and revered status.

"She was not just a queen; she was the living embodiment of our traditions. Her wisdom guided us, and her rituals protected our villages. Losing her is like losing a part of our history," said an elder from Dadam village.

Throughout her life, Wangcha hosted several feasts of merit, a central tradition among the Nocte that signifies generosity, leadership, and spiritual potency.

Man trampled to death by wild elephant

ITANAGAR, Aug 1: A man was killed by a wild elephant in Arunachal Pradesh's Tirap district, officials said on Friday. The deceased, identified as one Jatphok Savin, was attacked and killed by a wild elephant between 9 and 10 pm on Thursday in Thalot village, they said. This was the third incident within a month. On July 9, former Khonsa North MLA Kapchen Rajkumar was trampled to death by a wild elephant during a morning walk from Namsang to Deomali town. On July 28, 46-year-old tea garden labourer, Dhiren Tati was also trampled to death at his residence in Aghuripather.

Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Deomali Chimoy Simai on Friday visited the site at Thalot village. He acknowledged the challenges faced by the forest department, including acute shortage of personnel and the difficulty of tracking elephants in dense forests, especially during night hours when the animals are most active. (PTI)

Action over apathy: Youths restore hope in Arunachal's West Siang

ITANAGAR, Aug 1: In a powerful display of grassroots leadership, youths in Arunachal Pradesh's West Siang district have taken it upon themselves to revive incomplete infrastructure projects and address long-standing civic issues, without waiting for government support.

Across the state, young people are stepping up to drive change, tackling a wide range of challenges from drug awareness and waste management to infrastructure development. A notable instance of this spirit is unfolding in West Siang, where two youths have spearheaded the redevelopment of the long-pending Aalo Indoor Stadium, while another young entrepreneur has repaired a vital bridge connecting remote villages.

The Aalo Indoor Stadium project, sanctioned under the 2014-15 Special Plan Assistance (SPA) with an estimated cost of ₹ 35.28 crore, was awarded to M/s TK Engineering Consortium Limited.

Construction began in June 2018 with a 36-month deadline, yet the project remains incomplete.

In contrast, other stadiums sanctioned in the same period at Chimpu, Pasighat, Yupia, and Ziro have already been completed and are regularly hosting sports events. By 2024, the delay had tested the patience of local communities.

Multiple appeals from community-based organisations, students, and senior citizens to expedite construction or have the firm vacate the site went unheard.

Frustrated by the prolonged inaction,



two men in their early 40s, Nyatum Bagra and Kento Ete, decided to act.

On June 30, the West Siang District Olympic Association, under the leadership of its president Bagra, began redeveloping the abandoned ground to make it suitable for hosting football and volleyball tournaments, without any government funding or logistical support.

"We were concerned by the lack of sports activities for almost a decade due to the construction of the stadium," said Bagra.

"Young people, due to stadium construction and lack of other facilities, were left with no option and were going astray, indulging in alcohol and drugs," he

pointed out. Bagra noted that West Siang, once a sporting powerhouse in Arunachal, had lost its edge.

The legacy of sports in the district includes the Ramakrishna Mission School, Aalo, which reached the finals of the prestigious Subroto Mukherjee Cup in 1988 and 1990, and footballer-turned-coach Gumpe Rime, who hails from the district.

Kento Ete, general secretary of the West Siang District Football Association, echoed similar sentiments.

"A generation has lost the opportunity due to government apathy," Ete remarked, adding that the state government, district administration, and the sports department had failed the community.

With a group of volunteers, they began clearing the overgrown field, removing shrubs, debris, and discarded construction materials. However, the gallery, rostrum, and equipment left by the construction firm were left untouched. The initiative drew overwhelming public support, with contributions from the Football Players' Union, Tractors Union, senior citizens, and even manual labourers (mutias).

On July 16, the volunteers completed the ground redevelopment, drawing district-wide praise.

The team now awaits rainfall to begin planting carpet grass, a substitute for the astro-turf originally promised in the DPR.

"The planting process is likely to cost us around ₹ 10-12 lakh," Bagra said, expressing hope to complete it soon.

District Sports Officer Tumto Loyi acknowledged that the ground should have been ready by 2019.

"The project under SPA was delinked due to litigations. As a citizen of Aalo, I feel the boys did a good job," Loyi said, though he maintained that the work should have followed technical protocols.

While a renewed state fund had been allocated in 2022-23, construction once again slowed down due to unknown reasons. In June 2024, the West Siang District Olympic Association staged a peaceful dharna to protest the ongoing delays.

Following mounting pressure, several organisations in November last year issued a 48-hour ultimatum for the contractor to vacate the site. The latest deadline for

completion was set for December 31, 2024.

However, after months of inaction and the government's failure to blacklist the contractor, the WSDOA decided to move ahead on its own. In another inspiring act of community service, Gotum Gangkak, a 31-year-old entrepreneur and SRCC Delhi University B.Com graduate, took it upon himself to renovate a steel bridge over Himak River, which connects Darak circle with the rest of West Siang.

"I was moved by the dangers faced by the people of Darak to cross the bridge," Gangkak said.

Despite being a vital lifeline for around 1,000 residents, the bridge had remained neglected for decades. With no help in sight, he hired JCB machines, fabrication equipment, a generator, and labourers, funding the entire operation himself.

He spent ₹ 5-6 lakh to procure materials from outside the state and completed the bridge repair.

Jumba Loyi, a health department worker in Darak, praised the effort.

"Now people can use the bridge without being worried," Loyi said, noting that previously, even trucks and dumpers engaged in construction in nearby Belo village could not use the bridge safely.

As both the stadium redevelopment and the bridge repair came to fruition, the residents of West Siang have expressed gratitude to the young change makers whose actions reflect the power of initiative and community spirit. (PTI)

Bright young minds should shape India's future: Murmu

RANCHI, Aug 1: President Droupadi Murmu on Friday called upon the country's brightest young minds to harness their technical education for the greater good of society, urging them not to limit their achievements to personal success alone.

The President was addressing the 45th convocation ceremony of IIT (Indian School of Mines) in Dhanbad, where she released a customised postal stamp, including a special cover of the institute, which would commemorate its 100 glorious years.

"Bright young minds should shape India's future and play a leading role in solving social and national issues. Use technology for building a just India, a green India — where development does not come at the cost of the environment and nature. Whatever you do in future, it should reflect your empathy, excellence and ethics along with intelligence. Innovation driven by compassion,

not just innovation, makes the world better," the President said, addressing the convocation.

"India is progressing towards becoming a technological superpower," she asserted, and appealed to students to focus on innovation and startups.

"India's biggest strength is its vast human resources. Increasing access to technical education and the spread of digital skills are leading the country towards becoming a technological superpower. Making India's education system more practical, innovation-focused and industry-friendly will give the right direction to the talent of the country's youth and allow them to move forward at the global level," she said.

Murmu said the country and the world are facing many complex and rapidly changing challenges, from climate change and lack of resources to digital disruption and social inequality.

"In such a situation, the guidance of an institute



like IIT-ISM is even more important," she said and urged IIT-ISM to play a leading role in finding new and sustainable solutions.

"There is a need to encourage patent culture along with promoting R&D and startups to compete at the global level. To develop holistic thinking among students and find creative solutions to complex problems, the adoption of an interdisciplinary approach in education is also very important," she emphasised.

"Do not limit your knowledge to personal advancement, but to make it a vehicle for public good," she said.

She appreciated IIT-ISM efforts to empower tribal youth, deprived women through initiatives like the Centre of Excellence for Tribal Development.

Murmu said IIT (ISM) Dhanbad has a glorious legacy of nearly 100 years.

"It was established to produce trained experts in the field of mining and geology, and over the years, it has broadened its academic horizons and has now become a leading centre of higher education and research in diverse fields," she said.

"This institute has played a vital role in technological development and innovation. I am happy to note that IIT Dhanbad has developed an ecosystem where the objectives of education and innovation are aligned with the needs of the people and aspirations of the citizens," she said.

The President said IIT-ISM has an important role in the overall development of the country.

"Apart from preparing excellent engineers and researchers, this institute also needs to create compassionate, sensitive and purposeful professionals. The future of our country is taking shape through the commitment of institutions like IIT-ISM, which are promoting cutting-edge research and innovation and guiding bright young minds," she stressed.

During the convocation, Murmu conferred the President's Gold Medal to Priyanshu Sharma, the top-ranking B.Tech graduate in computer science and engineering. (PTI)

Opposition protests rock Rajya Sabha; proceedings adjourned for the day

NEW DELHI, Aug 1: Rajya Sabha proceedings were washed out on Friday amid vociferous protests by Opposition members, who were demanding a discussion on Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar and its rollback.

Some of the Opposition members tried to enter the well but were blocked by marshalls in the house, leading to strong objections by some leaders. They later alleged that it was a "paramilitary takeover" of the house.

When the House reassembled at 12 noon, some TMC and DMK MPs tried to enter the well, but were blocked by security personnel at the entry point. However, some MPs, including some women, sneaked into the well and raised slogans. They also protested against the blockade by security staff. Among some of the members who protested in the well were Nadimul Haque, Sagatika Ghosh, Derek O'Brien (all of TMC), Tiruchi Siva (DMK), and Sanjay Singh (AAP). The Rajya Sabha could not function on Friday, and both the Zero Hour and Question Hour became casualties. They raised slogans against SIR and demanded its withdrawal.

In the afternoon session, there was no let-up in the protests.



Ghanshyam Tiwari, who was in the chair, asked Vivek Tankha (Congress) to ask his supplementary question, urging protesting members to return to their seats and allow the question hour to function.

However, Tankha said he cannot speak as the House was not in order. Amid the din, the chair adjourned the Rajya Sabha for the day, as opposition members continued with their sloganeering inside the well and spoke into the microphones. The House will now meet again on Monday morning.

Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge also wrote to Deputy Chairman Hari-

vansh in this regard, asking him not to allow security personnel to enter the well when members are raising important public issues.

Congress leader and chief whip Jairam Ramesh later alleged that there is a sudden "takeover by paramilitary forces".

"After the sudden and unprecedented resignation of the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, we are now seeing the takeover of the chamber of the Council of States by the personnel of the CISE," Ramesh said.

The Opposition has been demanding a discussion in the House on the SIR issue and the withdrawal of the EC's exercise, which has come ahead of Assembly elec-

tions slated to be held later this year. In the morning session, Deputy Chairman Harivansh said he received 30 adjournment notices under Rule 267 for discussion on SIR, alleged discrimination against Bengali migrant workers in other states, impact of the US decision to impose a 25 per cent tariff on Indian imports, and mass layoffs in the Indian IT sector, among others. Harivansh said that since the notices do not conform to the detailed directions given by the Chair, they were declined.

The Opposition member were up on their feet, protesting the Chair's decision, and several of them raised slogans and stood in the aisle. The Chair allowed Manoj Kumar Jha (BJD) to speak, who urged the Chair to allow discussion on SIR. Harivansh said since the matter is sub judice, he cannot allow discussion on it.

"This is a sub judice matter and the rules of this House are very clear. I cannot allow (discussion)," he said, and urged the protesting members to return to their seats and called Ashok Kumar Mittal (AAP) to raise his Zero Hour mention.

However, the protests continued. The Chair's repeated efforts to ensure smooth functioning went in vain, and the proceedings were adjourned within 11 minutes. (PTI)

Vice Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan takes charge as 47th Vice Chief of Naval Staff

NEW DELHI, Aug 1: Vice Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan, a gunnery and missile systems specialist, on Friday assumed charge as the 47th Vice Chief of the Naval Staff.

Prior to assuming his new charge, Vice Admiral Vatsayan held various important operational, staff and training appointments, including at the Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (HQ IDS), and Naval Headquarters (NHQ) in New Delhi.

"Vice Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan, AVSM, NM, assumed charge as the 47th Vice Chief of Naval Staff #VCNS on 01 Aug 2025," the Navy posted on X.

Commissioned into the Indian Navy on January 1, 1988, the Flag Officer is a gunnery and missile systems specialist, it said.

"He held various important operational, staff and training appointments including DCIDS (Policy, Plans and Force Development) and DCIDS Ops at @HQ_IDS India, Chief of Staff @IN_HQENC, Deputy Commandant of the National Defence Academy, Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet and ACNS Policy and Plans at #NHQ," the Navy posted. An alumnus of the 71st course at the National Defence Academy, Pune, Vice Admiral Vatsayan was commissioned into the Indian Navy on January 1, 1988.

He has held a wide range of command, operational and staff assignments over his distinguished naval career spanning more than three decades.

At sea, the flag officer has served onboard various frontline warships, including as the commissioning crew of the guided missile destroyer INS Mysore, INS Nishank and pre-commissioning crew of Coast Guard OPV ICGS Sangram, the defence ministry said in a statement.

He also served as the executive officer of INS Mysore, besides commanding the Coast Guard ship C-05, missile vessels INS Vibhuti and INS Nashak, missile corvette INS Kuthar and guided missile frigate INS Sahyadri (commissioning commanding officer), it said.

In February 2020, he took over as the Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet, and led numerous operational deployments and exercises during heightened maritime activity post the events at Galwan, the statement said.

A graduate of the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, Naval War College, Goa, and the prestigious National Defence College, New Delhi, the Flag Officer has also excelled in key strategic and policy-oriented staff roles.

He succeeded Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, who on

Thursday assumed charge as the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief (FOCinC), Western Naval Command (WNC), taking over from Vice Admiral Sanjay J Singh at a ceremonial parade held at INS Shikra. On assuming charge as the FOCinC, Vice Admiral Swaminathan paid homage to the bravehearts who made the supreme sacrifice in service to the nation at the Gaurav Stambh, naval dockyard, Mumbai, officials said.

Commissioned into the Indian Navy on July 1, 1987, the Flag Officer is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Joint Services Command and Staff College, Shrivenham, the UK, the College of Naval Warfare, Karanja, and the United States Naval War College, Newport. He held several key operational, staff and training appointments in his naval career, including the command of missile vessels INS Vidyut and INS Vinash, missile corvette INS Kulish, guided missile destroyer INS Mysore, and aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya, the Navy said.

In a post on X, the HQ IDS said Vice Admiral Vineet McCarty assumed charge as the Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (policy planning and force development) on Friday, after relinquishing the coveted appointment of Controller Personnel Services, Naval HQ. (PTI)

EC publishes draft electoral rolls for Bihar following SIR

PATNA, Aug 1: The draft electoral rolls for poll-bound Bihar were published on Friday after the month-long Special Intensive Revision (SIR) by the Election Commission, which will now invite "claims and objections" by voters till September 1.

No state-wide compiled list was made available, but voters can check their names on the EC's website.

There were 7.93 crore registered voters in the state before the SIR began in June, according to the EC. It is yet to be known how many voters are in the just-published draft rolls.

District magistrates of Supaul, Nawada, Lakhisarai, Darbhanga, Seohar, Jamui and Gayaji handed over the draft rolls of their respective districts to the representatives of political parties, officials said.

The publication of the draft rolls kicked off the process of "claims and objections". (PTI)

Cong has 'atom bomb' of proof that EC doing 'vote chori' for BJP: Rahul

NEW DELHI, Aug 1: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday claimed that his party has an "atom bomb" of an evidence to prove "vote chori" by the Election Commission for the BJP and said that when it explodes the poll panel will have no place to hide anywhere in the country.

The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha also warned that those people in the EC who are involved in this, right from the top to the bottom, should remember that they will not be spared because the have indulged in "treason". His remarks came on a day the Election Commission published the draft electoral rolls for Bihar, following the completion of the month-long Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise ahead of the upcoming assembly polls.

The opposition has been protesting in both Houses of Parliament against the SIR, alleging the EC's exercise was aimed at "disenfranchising voters" in Bihar ahead of the Assembly elections. They have been demanding a discussion on the issue in both Houses.

Asked about the issue, Gandhi said, "I have said 'vote chori' is happening and now we have open and shut proof that the Election Commission is involved in 'vote chori'." Gandhi told reporters in the Parliament House

complex here. "I am not saying this lightly. I am saying this with 100 per cent proof. As soon as we release it the whole country would know that EC is indulging in 'vote chori'. It is doing it for the BJP," he said.

Gandhi said his party had suspicions of poll irregularities in Madhya Pradesh assembly polls in 2023, then in the Lok Sabha polls last year and this went further in Maharashtra.

"We believe that vote theft has happened at the state level (in Maharashtra). Voter revision had happened and crore voters were added. Then we went into detail seeing that the EC is not helping and decided to dig deep into this," he said.

"We got our own investigation done, it took six months and what we have found is an atom bomb. When it explodes, the EC would have no place to hide anywhere in the country," Gandhi said.

The Congress leader also warned that those people in the EC who are involved in this, right from the top to the bottom, should remember that they will not be spared because they are "working against India".

"This is treason, nothing less than that. You may have retired, you may be anywhere, we will find you," Gandhi said. (PTI)

Study alleging widespread antibiotic contamination in Indian rivers based on assumptions: Govt

NEW DELHI, Aug 1: A recent study alleging widespread antibiotic contamination in Indian rivers is based on "simulations and assumptions" and therefore, no conclusion on the issue can be drawn from it, the government has said.

Replying to a question by Congress MP Pramod Tiwari in the Rajya Sabha on Friday, Union Minister of State for Environment Kirti Vardhan Singh said the study has cited its "own limitations of data availability".

The study, conducted by researchers from McGill University, alleged that 80 per cent of the total length of rivers in India could be posing environmental and health risks due to antibiotic pollution.

The media report, published on April 24, 2025, is based on a study titled "Antibiotics in the global river system arising from human consumption" conducted by researchers from McGill University, Canada, and its "findings are based on simulations and assumptions",



the minister said in a written reply. Furthermore, the minister informed that the government has not conducted any study on antibiotic contamination of rivers.

Regarding the steps taken to regulate pharmaceutical waste and strengthen pollution control, Singh informed that the government launched the National Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance (NAP-AMR) in April 2017 to develop and implement strate-

gic interventions to reduce the environmental impact of antimicrobial resistance through effective waste management and safe disposal of expired antimicrobials.

He mentioned that the environment ministry issued a notification for the bulk drug and pharmaceutical industry in August 2021, classifying chemical and biological sludge or any residue generated from wastewater treatment as hazardous waste.

These shall be managed in

an environmentally sound manner in accordance with the Hazardous Waste and Other Wastes (Management and Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016, Singh added.

He highlighted that state pollution control boards have been empowered to prescribe additional relevant parameters and monitoring frequencies based on local conditions.

The expired antimicrobials are disposed of by manufacturers or suppliers through incineration as per the Bio-medical Waste Management Rules, 2016, while sludge from effluent treatment plants is sent to common biomedical or hazardous waste treatment facilities for incineration or safe disposal.

"To reduce antibiotic residue from effluent sources, industries are adopting reduce, recycle and reuse of treated effluent to maximise the extent of Zero Liquid Discharge to minimise the risk of pharmaceutical compound residues," the minister said. (PTI)

GOVT. OF ASSAM
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT SPORTS OFFICER,
KARBI ANGLONG: DIPHU.

No. DSO/Dev. 15(A)/2025-2026/72
Dated, Diphu the 01-08-2025

SHORT TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tender affixing non-refundable KAAC Court fee Stamp (Receipt) Rs. 10.00 (Rupees Ten) only eventual to be drawn up in form are hereby invited from KAAC/PWD/Society registered Contractor/Supplier and will be received by the undersigned up to 3.00 P.M. on 11/08/2025 and will be opened on the same date place and the hours in presence of the Contractor or their authorized agent if any.

If the day or opening of tender happens to be any holiday, non- working day the tender will be opened in the next day. The undersigned has the right to accept/ reject tender without assigning any reason thereof and will not be bound himself to accept the lowest tender.

Sl. No.	Name of Work/Goods	Tender amount (In lakhs)	Earnest Money	Time allowed for completion
1.	Supply of Sports Goods for the year of 2025-2026.	Rs. 65.00L	1% for SC, ST(H) & 2% for Genl. (On tender value).	30 days
All total		Rs. 65.00L		

(Rupees Sixty five lakh) only.

Details of tender documents may be obtained from the office of the District Sports Officer, Karbi Anglong District, Diphu from 02/08/2025 during working hours.

Terms and Conditions:-

- The rate quoted as % (Percent) above/below/ as per schedule rate for works for all division under APWD.
- Earnest money should be deposited in favour of the undersigned in the form of call deposit/ Bank draft & should be attested with the tender, otherwise tender will not be accept.
- The works must be carried as directed by the Executive Engineer (Works), KAAC, Diphu.
- The following documents should be enclosed with the tender:-
 - Professional Tax Clearance Certificate.
 - Sale Tax & GST Clearance Certificate.
 - Council/PWD Registration.
 - Call Deposit.
 - Caste Certificate.
- Payment will be made subject to availability of Fund.

Sd/-
District Sports Officer,
Karbi Anglong, Diphu.

Memo No. DSO/Dev. 15(A)/2025-2026/
Dated, Diphu the 01-08-2025

'Made in Nagaland' and 'Naga Crafts' must become global brands, says Rio

Nagaland's identity must be preserved, promoted globally: CM Neiphiu Rio

KOIHMA, Aug 1: Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio on Friday called for renewed efforts to safeguard and globally promote Nagaland's distinct identity, protected under Article 371(A) of the Indian Constitution.

Addressing a special programme titled 'Nagaland's Global Footprints: Cultural Diplomacy and International Engagements' here, Rio emphasised that Nagaland must take pride in its heritage and share its cultural richness with the world.

"This Article is our foundation. It protects our customs, our land, and our traditions. No other state in India has what we do. We must understand its value and use this privilege with purpose," Rio said, referring to Article 371(A), which grants Nagaland special autonomy over its religious, social, and customary practices, as well as land and resources.

The event was organised to highlight the outcomes of Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio's recent official visits to Russia and Japan from July 10 to 17 along with team of Naga artists and officials from Tourism and Industries department, where Nagaland was invited as one of six Indian states to participate in international cultural engagements facilitated by the Ministry of External Affairs.

Rio shared that Nagaland's cultural troupe was specially invited to perform at the Bharat Utsav - Festival of India in Moscow, Russia, where, representing the rich heritage of the state, the performers took part in the concluding segment of the nine-day festival and received appreciation from Russian authorities.



Certificates of appreciation issued by the Russian Embassy were formally handed over during the Kohima event.

The chief minister noted that the performances helped build awareness and respect for the diverse traditions of Nagaland and the wider Northeast region.

He added that engaging in such international events fosters soft diplomacy and opens doors to future cultural, academic, and economic exchanges.

In Japan, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with Kochi Prefecture for cooperation in key sectors such as human resource development, environmental sustainability, and healthcare.

Rio announced that the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has already committed to supporting the Nagaland Institute of Medical Sciences and Research with 400 hospital beds and has offered training and employment opportunities for doctors and nurses from Nagaland in Japan.

Rio also recalled the emotional significance of inaugurating the Kohima Peace Memorial in collaboration with the Government of Japan, describing it as a 'monument of reconciliation' that marks a new era of mutual respect and friendship rooted in the memory of World War II.

Stressing on the necessity of showcasing Nagaland's identity and traditions on global platforms, the chief minister said, "We must not only preserve our culture but also present it to the world with confidence".

Rio underscored the success of the Hornbill Festival in unifying Nagas and attracting global attention, saying such platforms should be further strengthened. He added that showcasing indigenous crafts, traditions, and cultural performances can create livelihoods and preserve the identity of future generations.

"Our identity, culture, and traditions are not just to be preserved—they are to be shared with the world. Let us globalise the spirit of Nagaland," the chief minister said. Touching upon past injustices, Rio mentioned the presence of Naga human remains, such as skulls, stored in museums in the UK. He said efforts are being made to ensure the dignified return of these remains and to document the true history of the Naga people through collaborative research and museum projects.

Rio urged policymakers, institutions, and youth to embrace a broader vision for Nagaland, one that is rooted in heritage but open to the world.

"We must grow bigger, become more visible, and internationalise the Naga identity. 'Made in Nagaland' and 'Naga Crafts' must become global brands," he said.

The CM also emphasised the need for partnerships across sectors, including education, healthcare, and sustainable development, noting that international collaborations like those with Japan and Russia can help transform the state's future.

Advisor to the CM and Chairman of the Investment and Development Authority of Nagaland (IDAN), Abu Metha, who had also accompanied Rio to the two countries, said the visits, facilitated through invitations from the Kochi Prefectural Government in Japan and the Indian Embassy in Russia, mark a strategic step in positioning Nagaland on the global map.

Metha said the tour has had a multi-dimensional impact — enhancing institutional cooperation, promoting Brand Nagaland, fostering cultural diplomacy, and creating international opportunities for Naga youth. (PTI)

Street vendors protest outside Shillong Municipal Board office over licence revocation

Protesters carried placards and submitted a memorandum seeking redressal of their grievance



SHILLONG, Aug 1: Street vendors, mostly women, staged a protest outside the Shillong Municipal Board (SMB) office here on Friday, alleging arbitrary revocation of vending licences and biased allotment of stalls at the newly designated vending zone.

The protesters, under the banner of the Meghalaya and Greater Shillong Progressive Hawkers and Street Vendors Association (MGSPHSA), demanded a review of the relocation process carried out by the SMB and the Urban Affairs department.

The vendors accused authorities of excluding several genuine local hawkers—particularly Khasi women—from the final list of beneficiaries, while stalls were allegedly allotted to non-local vendors.

Protesters carried placards and submitted a memorandum seeking redressal of their grievance.

"Our names were there in the survey, and we even received vending certificates. But now our names are missing, and others

have taken our place," said one of the protesting vendors.

The protest follows a July 29 order of the Meghalaya High Court, which disposed of a PIL on vendor relocation, observing that the government had complied with the court's directive to shift certified vendors from Khyn-dailad to the vending zone at the MUDA Parking Complex by July 22.

According to officials, 407 vendors were identified through a formal survey. Of them, 311 received Certificates of Vending (CoVs), and 282 stalls at the MUDA complex have already been occupied.

The relocation is part of the implementation of the Meghalaya Street Vendors Scheme, 2023.

However, vendors at the protest alleged that the final list of beneficiaries was never published publicly, and many certified vendors were excluded without notice.

They demanded a halt to further evictions and a transparent re-assessment of stall allotments.

Angela Rngad, leader of the

civil society group Thma U Rangli-Juki (TUR), speaking on behalf of MGSPHSA, warned that the protest may intensify if the Town Vending Committee (PTVC) is not convened immediately to address the grievances of vendors whose CoVs were revoked despite being eligible.

She alleged that the Shillong Municipal Board had bypassed the PTVC and issued or revoked vending licences in an arbitrary manner, potentially favouring certain individuals. "This must go through the PTVC with proper documentation to prevent corruption or bias," she said.

Rngad said many legitimate vendors are still awaiting CoVs and questioned the lack of transparency in determining vendor eligibility.

She also raised concerns about alleged irregularities in the construction and allocation of stalls at the vending zone.

The association has demanded a review of the vending zone plan and rationalisation of vendor spaces, especially for small-scale sellers such as betel nut or water vendors.

The hawkers have resolved to continue their sit-in protest until the SMB agrees to hold a PTVC meeting.

Under the relocation plan, each certified vendor is eligible for a ₹ 10,000 one-time assistance and a ₹ 2,000 monthly support for five months to help them re-establish their businesses at the new site.

The High Court has scheduled the next hearing on pending concerns, including licence revocations, on August 5. (PTI)

4 militants arrested in Manipur

IMPHAL, Aug 1: Four militants were arrested by security forces from different parts of Manipur, officials said on Friday. Among those arrested was the self-styled army chief of the banned Kangleipak Communist Party (Nongdrenkhomba), Moirangthem Birmamni Meitei, they said.



He was arrested on Thursday from Phubala Patton in Bishnupur district, they added.

Two members of the Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL) were arrested from the Salungpham Bazar area in Thoubal district on Wednesday. They are identified as Keisham Wilson Singh (18) and Thokchom Sanathoi Meitei (22). They were accused of extorting small business, officials said.

A 9mm pistol along with a magazine, a 36 HE hand grenade, and three 9mm live rounds were recovered from them. An active cadre of PREPAK (PRO) was arrested from Khurai Chairenthong in Imphal East district on Thursday. He has been identified as Telem Naoba Singh (29).

Meanwhile, security forces recovered two firearms, including an AK rifle with a magazine, during an operation near K Geljang in Churachandpur district. Three detonators, two radio sets, an IED cap, and three country-made mortars were also recovered. (PTI)

Two women among five arrested, heroin seized

AIZAWL, Aug 1: Five people, including two women, have been arrested in connection with the seizure of heroin in three separate operations, police said.

Champhai Police intercepted an Aizawl-bound taxi at Khankawn check gate in Champhai and seized 364 gm of heroin worth ₹ 10.92 lakh on Thursday, police said.

The taxi driver, identified as C Zoramhluna (29), a resident of Biate village and presently residing in Aizawl's Chaltlang Lily Veng locality, and his passengers Lalnunzira (34) and Lalthanmawia (30), both from Chaltlang Lily Veng, were arrested in connection with the seizure, they said.

Zoramhluna revealed to the police that he had come to Champhai to receive the contraband for delivery to some persons in Aizawl, police said. Officials of the Excise and Narcotics Department also seized 60.27 gm of heroin from the possession of two women peddlers in two separate operations at Chhiatlang village in Serchhip district on Thursday, officials said.

All five accused were booked under sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act 1985. (PTI)

CM Sangma urges Chhattisgarh to consider revoking charges against nuns held for 'conversion'

SHILLONG, Aug 1: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma on Friday wrote to his Chhattisgarh counterpart, Vishnu Deo Sai, urging the latter's government to ensure a fair probe and consider revoking charges against two Catholic nuns from Kerala who were arrested last week over alleged human trafficking and forced religious conversion.

In a letter addressed to the Chhattisgarh CM, Sangma expressed concern over the arrest of Sister Vandana Francis and Sister Preethy Mary -- both affiliated with Fatima Hospital in Agra in Uttar Pradesh.

The two nuns, along with another person Sukhman Mandavi, were arrested by the Government Railway Police (GRP) at Durg railway station in Chhattisgarh on July 25 following a complaint by a local Bajrang Dal functionary, who accused them of forcibly converting three women from tribal-dominated Narayanpur district and trafficking them.

The nuns have been booked under Section 4 of the Chhattisgarh Freedom of Religion Act, 1968 (forced conversion) and Section 143 of the BNS (trafficking).

Calling the allegations "false", and terming it a case of "harassment," Sangma urged the Chhattisgarh government to uphold the rights of religious minorities



and ensure justice is served. He also requested that the charges be reviewed and revoked.

Sangma added that the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) has already written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, seeking their intervention in the matter. Catholic Christians in Meghalaya have also submitted petitions to the Chhattisgarh CM demanding justice for the detained nuns.

Sangma said he hoped the issue would be resolved in a manner that respects constitutional values and religious freedom. (PTI)

Bangladesh envoy arrives in Tripura on three-day visit

AGARTALA, Aug 1: Bangladesh High Commissioner to India, M Riaz Hamidullah, arrived here on Friday on a three-day visit to Tripura, a senior official said.

During the visit, Hamidullah is scheduled to meet Governor N Indrasena Reddy and Chief Minister Manik Saha.

According to an official release, the envoy will also visit the Agartala Integrated Check Post (ICP) and the Akhaura Land Port on the Bangladesh side.

On Saturday, he will depart for Akhaura ICP to visit

Ashuganj port via Bangladesh territory, the statement said, adding that Hamidullah is also scheduled to inspect the Nischintapur railway station, part of the Agartala-Akhaura rail link.

A technical trial run on the newly constructed railway tracks from Bangladesh's Gangasagar to Tripura's Nischintapur was successfully conducted in September 2023.

However, the project could not be operationalised due to a sudden political shift in Bangladesh. (PTI)

Shivraj Singh Chouhan praises Meghalaya's pineapples, value chain model at Delhi event

SHILLONG, Aug 1: Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Friday praised Meghalaya's organic produce and transformative agricultural efforts while inaugurating the third edition of the Meghalaya Pineapple Festival in New Delhi.

The event also marked the signing of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) between the Meghalaya government and Reliance Fresh, Amazon Karigar, and Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters to enhance procurement, national distribution, and visibility of Meghalaya's agri-products, according to a statement issued here.

Savouring the famed Kew pineapples from Meghalaya, Chouhan lauded the state's value chain approach.

"The products of Meghalaya are almost fully organic... jackfruit, coffee, mushrooms, pineapple, everything is amazing. Today, the air in Delhi feels filled with the fragrance of Meghalaya," the statement quoted the minister as saying.

He assured Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma of the Centre's continued support, and urged Delhi residents to visit the festival to "feel the taste of Meghalaya." The MoUs signed are aimed at scaling market access and logistics for Meghalaya's farmers, who are increasingly moving towards value-added production, the statement said.

The chief minister said the state produces around 1.5 lakh metric tonnes of



pineapples annually, most of which is consumed in the Northeast.

"We've set up processing units across the state and aim to establish one in each of Meghalaya's 55 blocks.... These MoUs will provide crucial logistics support and connect produce from across the Northeast to wider markets," Sangma said.

He also unveiled Meghalaya's achievements in the agriculture sector, in line with its Vision@2032 to transform the state into a USD 16 billion economy. He highlighted ongoing investments in cold storage, mobile units, refrigerated trucks, and processing hubs.

According to officials, over 682 metric

tonnes of processed pineapples were exported to the EU, Gulf and Southeast Asia in 2024, with over 150 MT sold in domestic metros through institutional partnerships..

The festival, organised by the Meghalaya government's Department of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, features curated stalls, live tastings, B2B meets, value-added products, and cultural performances by musicians from Garo, Khasi, and Jaintia Hills under the Chief Minister's Meghalaya Grassroots Music Project (CM-MGMP). The Meghalaya Pineapple Festival 2025 is open to the public at Dilli Haat until August 3 from 11 AM to 8:45 PM. (PTI)

Senior BSF officers brief Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla

IMPHAL, Aug 1: Senior BSF officers on Friday briefed Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla on the security situation along the border and ongoing efforts to maintain peace and stability in the region. BSF ADG Mahesh Kumar Aggarwal, along with IG of Mizoram & Cachar Frontier Ravi Kant, met

the governor at the Raj Bhavan in Imphal, a statement said. During the meeting, the officers briefed the governor "on the overall security situation along the border, operational preparedness of the BSF in the region, and ongoing efforts to maintain peace and stability", it said. (PTI)

Measles outbreak in Manipur's Senapati district

IMPHAL, Aug 1: A measles outbreak was reported from Manipur's Senapati district on Friday, with 11 people testing positive, officials said.

These cases were detected in Council River Colony, Phymai Vabuh, TNK Gate, Yapao Colony, DV School, Road to Emesiphro and Mt Everest areas, they said.

Results of samples of another 18 people, who have shown similar symptoms, are yet to come, they said.

Ten of the 11 patients had not re-

ceived a single dose of the measles vaccine, they added.

"A rapid survey of these areas revealed large gaps in immunisation," a district official said, urging people to get vaccinated.

The district administration has convened a multi-stakeholder meeting to develop a coordinated response to control the spread of infection and address the vaccine hesitancy, he said.

"Vaccine hesitancy has contributed significantly to the current situation," he said. (PTI)

Manipur govt launches official e-gazette portal

IMPHAL, Aug 1: The Manipur government on Friday officially launched its e-gazette portal in a move aimed at promoting digital governance and enhancing public access to official information, a statement said.

"This visionary initiative marks a significant step towards paperless administration and greater public access to official government information," it added.

With the launch, the government has discontinued all physical printing and sale of hard copies of the Manipur Gazette, effective August 1.

"The purpose of the e-gazette portal is to publish the Manipur Gazette exclusively in electronic format on the official portal, and physical printing and sale of hard copies of the gazette stands discontinued from August 1," the statement added. (PTI)

ENGINEERING WORKS IN TINSUKIA DIVISION

Tender Notice No.: TSK/Engg/45 of 2025, Dated: 30-07-2025. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work: **Item No. 1: Brief Description of Item:** At Tinsukia Division:- Provision of 07 nos RUB at RM 323, RM332, RM333, RM334, RM335, RM336 and RM 337 under the jurisdiction of ADEN/ Silapathar. **Tender Value:** ₹33,90,19,374/-. **Earnest Money:** ₹18,45,100/-. **Date & Time of closing of tender:** 15:00 hrs. of 20-08-2025 & opening at 16:00 hrs. of 20-08-2025. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. of 20-08-2025 in website www.ireps.gov.in

DRM (W), Tinsukia
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

PROVISION OF 07 NOS. ROAD UNDER BRIDGE

E-Tender Notice No.: TSK/Engg/44 of 2025 Dated: 30-07-2025. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **Brief Description of Item:** At Tinsukia Division:- Provision of 07 nos RUB at RM 323, RM332, RM333, RM334, RM335, RM336 and RM 337 under the jurisdiction of ADEN/ Silapathar. **Tender Value:** ₹33,90,19,374/-. **Earnest Money:** ₹18,45,100/-. **Date & Time of closing of tender:** 15:00 hrs. of 20-08-2025 & opening at 16:00 hrs. of 20-08-2025. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. of 20-08-2025 in website www.ireps.gov.in

DRM (W), Tinsukia
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

ENGINEERING WORK

E-TENDER NOTICE NO. TSK/Engg/43 of 2025; dated: 30-07-2025. E-tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work: **Item No. 1: Brief Description of Item:** At Tinsukia Division:- Provision of 05 nos RUB at RM 299, RM 303, RM 306, RM 309, RM 318 under the jurisdiction of ADEN/ Silapathar and 01 no RUB at ST-89 under the jurisdiction of ADEN/ Mariani Jn. **Tender Value:** ₹28,96,03,859/-. **Earnest Money:** ₹15,98,000/-. E-tenders will be closed at 15:00 hrs. on 20-08-2025 and opened at 16:00 hrs. on 20-08-2025. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. of 20-08-2025 in website www.ireps.gov.in

DRM (Work)/Tinsukia
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers with a smile

No. E-583625/53

NOTICE

The Admission Notice for one year training course in Elementary Knowledge of Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Science (VFA Training) for the Session 2024-25 vide No. E-583625/42 dated 11/06/2025 which was published on 12/06/2025 is hereby kept in abeyance until further order.

Sd/-
Director
Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Department, Assam
Chenikuthi, Guwahati-03

DIPR /D/HLT/94/2-Aug-25

No. TM/V/E-419201/631

ORDER

In pursuance to the Results of the Recruitment for the posts of Enforcement Inspectors (EI) under Transport Department (Adv. No. 17/2024 dated 06-08-2024) declared by the Assam Public Service Commission vide No.91PSC/CON/Exam-21/2024-2025 dated 03-07-2025, a verification schedule is hereby communicated to the recommended candidates to be present on the date of verification along with all necessary original documents.

DATE: 04-08-2025 (Monday)
TIME: 11:00 AM onwards
VENUE: Transport Department, 4th Floor, D-Block, Janata Bhawan, Dispur

The recommended candidates are also hereby requested to submit an affidavit (as per enclosed format), along with medical certificate from the Joint Director of Health Services, Orunodoi beneficiary details (if any), and two undertakings (Small Family Undertaking and Undertaking reg. Pension) at the time of document verification.

Sd/-
Principal Secretary to the Govt. of Assam
Transport Department

DIPR /D/HLT/95/2-Aug-25



‘Squid Game’ star Lee Jung-jae to headline Prime Video’s ‘Nice to Not Meet You’

NEW DELHI, Aug 1: Streaming service Prime Video on Thursday announced “Nice to Not Meet You”, an upcoming Korean romantic comedy series featuring globally-popular star Lee Jung-jae.

Lee, who shot to international fame with the hit Netflix series “Squid Game”, will star alongside acclaimed South Korean actor Lim Ji-yeon in the show, which will premiere exclusively on Prime Video, the OTT platform said in a press release.

“Nice to Not Meet You” brings together the worlds of entertainment and hard-hitting journalism through a witty, behind-the-scenes lens.

The story follows the unlikely connection between Lim Hyeon-jun (Lee), a typecast actor yearning for a fresh start in melodramas, and Wi Jeong-sin (Lim), a decorated political journalist suddenly reassigned to the entertainment desk, as per the official logline.

“What begins as a clash of personalities unfolds into a story full of charm, laughter, and unexpected chemistry,” it added.

According to the official character description, Lee’s Hyeon-jun is a seasoned actor stuck in the role of Kang Pil-gu—the beloved protagonist of a hit detective series now heading into its fifth season.

While his career is thriving, he dreams of breaking free from the mold and proving himself in a more emotionally rich role.

Lim’s Wi Jeong-sin, a hard-hitting journalist whose award-winning political coverage is abruptly sidelined. Relocated to entertainment reporting mid-investigation, Jeong-sin must navigate a world she never intended to join—only to find herself drawn into the orbit of the very actor she’s reluctant to cover. “Nice to Not Meet You” is directed by Kim Ga-ram and written by Jung Yeo-rang. (PTI)



Neeraj’s ‘Homebound’ to close 2025 Indian Film Fest of Melbourne



NEW DELHI, Aug 1: “Homebound”, the acclaimed drama film from filmmaker Neeraj Ghaywan, will serve as the closing film at the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM) 2025, the organisers announced on Friday.

Starring Ishaan Khatter, Janhvi Kapoor and Vishal Jethwa, the film made waves earlier this year with its world premiere at the 2025 Cannes Film Festival.

Backed by producers Karan Johar, Adar Poonawalla, Apoorva Mehta and Somen Mishra, the project also features global cinema heavyweight Martin Scorsese as executive producer.

“Homebound” explores the fragile threads of friendship, ambition, and the emotional cost of breaking free to come into your own. IFFM has long championed meaningful cinema, and I’m very excited that Homebound is part of that legacy as their closing film,” Ghaywan said in a statement.

The movie, which is executive produced by Hollywood legend Martin Scorsese, revolves around two childhood friends played by Khatter and Jethwa. The official synopsis of the film reads: “Two childhood friends from a small North Indian village chase a police job that promises them the dignity they’ve long been denied. But as they inch closer to their

dream, mounting desperation threatens the bond that holds them together.”

“Homebound” is inspired by the New York Times 2020 essay “Taking Amrit Home” by journalist Basharat Peer.

Johar said “Homebound” is a story of aspiration, identity, and the quiet heartbreak that comes with change.

“Neeraj has crafted a hauntingly beautiful film, and I’m immensely proud that Dharma Productions could back this vision. To showcase it as the closing film at IFFM, a festival that celebrates bold and relevant storytelling, is the perfect next step in its journey,” he added.

IFFM Festival Director Mitu Bhowmick Lange said the festival was proud to bring “Homebound” to Australian audiences.

“Neeraj Ghaywan’s storytelling has always spoken to truth and empathy, and with stellar performances by Ishaan, Vishal and Janhvi, the film promises to leave a lasting impact,” she added.

The 2025 edition of IFFM will be held from August 14 to 24 across Melbourne, featuring a packed schedule of screenings, red carpet galas, industry panels, and the IFFM Awards.

“Homebound” will also be screened at the 50th Toronto International Film Festival as part of the Gala Presentations lineup in September. (PTI)

Ali Fazal meets Pedro Pascal, shares photo with ‘The Fantastic Four’ star on Instagram



NEW DELHI, Aug 1: Actor Ali Fazal had a star-studded encounter when he ran into Hollywood star Pedro Pascal during a recent flight.

Fazal shared a candid selfie with Pascal, who currently headlines Marvel Studios’ blockbuster movie “The Fantastic Four: First Steps”, on his official Instagram page.

The photo shows the two actors smiling for the camera in what appears to be the cabin of a commercial flight.

In the caption, the 38-year-old actor posted a number of emojis and summed it up, saying, “Shhhhhh...”

Fazal’s post sent fans into a frenzy. “OMG,” wrote one fan in the comments section, while another posted, “My God lucky u Ali.”

“Oh myyyyy!! Pedro-Fazal,” read a comment. One fan posted, “Reed Richards and Guddu Bhaiya”, referring to Fazal and Pascal’s characters in the “Mirzapur” and “The Fantastic Four”, respectively.

Fazal is no stranger to Hollywood, having appeared in a string of international projects including “Furious 7”, “Victoria & Abdul” opposite Judi Dench, and Ken-

neth Branagh’s “Death on the Nile”.

He was most recently seen in the Hindi movie “Metro... In Dino” by filmmaker Anurag Basu.

Pascal, 50, became an international star with his role of Oberyn Martell in HBO’s “Game of Thrones” and then starred in hit shows “Narcos”, “The Mandalorian” and “The Last of Us”. He has also headlined movies such as “Wonder Woman 1984”, “Gladiator II” and most recently “The Materialists”.

“The Fantastic Four: First Steps”, which released worldwide last week, stars Pascal as Reed Richards, also known as the stretchy Mr Fantastic; Vanessa Kirby as Sue Storm-Richards, the Invisible Woman; Joseph Quinn as the fiery Johnny Storm aka the Human Torch; and Ebon Moss-Bachrach as the rock-skinned powerhouse Ben Grimm, also called The Thing.

Set in a sleek 1960s-inspired retro-futuristic world, the movie follows the Fantastic Four as they try to thwart the planet-devouring threat of Galactus. It also stars Julia Garner as Shalla-Bal aka Silver Surfer. (PTI)

Song had to match the heartbeat of film: A R Murugadoss on ‘Salambala’ from ‘Madharaasi’

NEW DELHI, Aug 1: Filmmaker A R Murugadoss says the first track “Salambala” from his much-awaited film “Madharaasi” sets the tone for the film as it matches the heartbeat of the movie.

Murugadoss’ “Madharaasi” is headlined by Sivakarthikeyan. The film also reunites the actor and the filmmaker, who have previously worked in the 2014 Tamil sports comedy film “Maan Karate”. Murugadoss served as producer and writer for the project.

The makers released the first track from Madharaasi on Friday. The song is composed by Anirudh Ravichander and features the vocals of Sai Abhyankar.

“Madharaasi” is built on emotion and adrenaline, and ‘Salambala’ had to match that heartbeat. We weren’t looking for a typical breakup song. We wanted something that hits hard and makes you move. Anirudh brought that fire,

and Sivakarthikeyan added his own spark. This song sets the tone for the madness that’s coming,” Murugadoss said in a statement.

Ravichander called the experience of working on the track “fun and unpredictable”.

“With ‘Salambala’, we wanted to break away from the usual breakup mood. It’s fun and unpredictable, and teaming up with SK always brings out something wild. With Murugadoss directing, the vision was clear: go big or go home,” he said.

Mandar Thakur, CEO, Times/Junglee Music, added, “Anirudh and Sivakarthikeyan are a force together. Salambala is the kind of song that’s built for repeat listens; it grabs you from the first second.”

“Madharaasi” also stars Rukmini Vasanth and Vidyut Jammwal. The film is slated to hit the big screen on September 5. (PTI)



71st Nat’l Film Awards: Shah Rukh, Vikrant share best actor honour; ‘12th Fail’ is be

NEW DELHI, Aug 1: Superstar Shah Rukh Khan on Friday won his first National Film Award for best actor for the 2023 blockbuster “Jawan”, an honour that he shared with “12th Fail” star Vikrant Massey. Actor Rani Mukerji was named the best actress for her performance in “Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway”.

“12th Fail”, directed by Vidhu Vinod Chopra, was adjudged the best feature film, while the best director honour went to Sudipto Sen for “The Kerala Story”.

Filmmaker Karan Johar’s “Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani” bagged the award for best popular film for wholesome entertainment, while Meghna Gulzar’s “Sam Bahadur” was named best feature film promoting national, social and environmental values.

“Sam Bahadur” was also recognised for costume and make-up honours.

The National Film Awards for the year 2023 was announced by jury head and filmmaker Ashutosh Gowariker here. (PTI)

Jamil named Indian men's football team coach, tenure likely to be 'two or three' years

NEW DELHI, Aug 1: Khalid Jamil on Friday became the first Indian to become the head coach of the national football team in 13 years as he pipped Stephen Constantine and Stefan Tarkovic to grab the coveted post.

The last Indian to serve as the head coach of the national men's team was Savio Medeira, who held the position from 2011 to 2012. The 48-year-old Jamil had guided the unheralded Aizawl Football Club to a famous I-League title in 2017 and has a tough task at hand to turnaround the struggling Indian team's declining fortunes.

A former India international and currently in charge of Indian Super League side Jamshedpur FC, Jamil was selected by the All India Football Federation's (AIFF) executive committee.

Constantine was a former India head coach while Tarkovic has managed the Slovakia national team in the past.

The AIFF Technical Committee, led by legendary striker IM Vijayan, had shortlisted the three candidates for the executive committee's final decision.

An AFC Pro License Diploma holder, Jamil will succeed Spaniard Manolo Marquez, who parted ways with the AIFF last month following India's recent struggles.

"The AIFF ExCo has picked Khalid Jamil as the new head coach but his tenure has not yet



been decided. We will do that after discussions with him and among ourselves. We also have to discuss with him his salary," AIFF President Kalyan Chaubey told PTI after the meeting.

"Jamil wanted a three-year tenure. Some ExCo members said it could be one year or two years. But it will be a long-term tenure, may be two or three years, and performance-based," Chaubey

said. The AIFF president also made it clear that Jamil will be a full-time national team head coach and will not be associated with any other club. Jamil's predecessor Manolo had played a dual role during his one year tenure, taking charge of ISL side FC Goa when there was no national team matches.

"Jamil will only be head coach of the national team," Chaubey

replied when asked whether Jamil will also play dual role just like Manolo. Jamil's first assignment in his new role will be the Central Asian Football Association (CAFA) Nations Cup, to be held in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan starting August 29. He will have the tough task of reversing India's poor performances in recent past.

After losing 0-1 to lower-ranked Hong Kong in an away match of

the AFC Asian Cup qualifiers on June 10, the country has been left in danger of missing out on qualifying for the continental showpiece in 2027.

After the CAFA Nations Cup, India play their AFC Asian Cup qualifying round games on October 9 and 14 -- against Singapore home and away.

Jamil has long been a trailblazer in Indian football.

The biggest achievement of his more than a decade-long managerial career was the 2016-17 I-League title with Aizawl FC, who upstaged big-spending giants like Mohun Bagan, East Bengal and Bengaluru FC.

The northeastern club had an annual budget of just around Rs 2 crore. The unassuming Mumbai-based club also guided two relatively understated sides to the ISL play-offs -- NorthEast United in 2020-21 and Jamshedpur FC in 2024-25. Jamil was considered the frontrunner even before his appointment and he got the support from legends like Vijayan and Ali -- Technical Committee chairperson and vice chairperson respectively -- and former India coach Amranda Colaco who is currently advisor to Chaubey.

The AIFF said Vijayan was in favour of an Indian coach, saying the country had a much higher FIFA ranking with the likes of Sukhwinder Singh and Syed Nayemuddin as the head coaches. (PTI)

Piastrri has 'confidence' in his F1 title shot as he returns to Hungary, where he got his 1st win

BUDAPEST, Aug 1: Some Formula 1 races live in the memory because of thrilling action, some for controversy, some even for being so dull they forced a rule change. And then there's Oscar Piastri's first F1 win, the benchmark for sheer awkwardness.

Piastri is happy to be back in Hungary this week, but his breakthrough victory there last year remains a lesson for McLaren as it tries to manage his title fight with teammate Lando Norris.

It's all the more important now. Piastri has developed into a genuine title contender over the last year and leads Norris by 16 points following his victory in Belgium last week.

"I have a lot of confidence in myself that I can do it," the Australian said of his title chances Thursday. "The pace in the last few weekends, especially (Belgium), I've been very confident in and very proud of. I'm more than capable of continuing that for the rest of the year." McLaren can reach some milestones this weekend, with a potential 200th win in F1 for the team. It could also be Piastri and Norris' fourth one-two finish in a row, a feat McLaren last managed in 1988. McLaren dominates practice; Norris beat Piastri by just .019 of a second in the first practice session as McLaren led the way once again. Charles Leclerc was third fastest for Ferrari.

Max Verstappen was ninth in his first session since committing to stay with Red Bull for 2026. Brazilian driver Felipe Drugovich was 16th as he stepped in

for Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso, who has a back injury. The team said it will decide Friday whether Alonso can return this weekend.

Managing the title rivalry Piastri took the win last year in Hungary, but only after McLaren had to plead over the radio with Norris to "do the right thing" and let Piastri past, something the British driver was reluctant to do.

Piastri had been leading but McLaren's pit strategy -- which would normally favor the leader -- had put Norris ahead. Piastri thinks the team can still take positives from that situation.

"I think it underlined the good nature in the team. It was obviously a slightly awkward situation, but it highlighted that we will do the right thing in all circumstances -- well, ideally all circumstances -- when we're on track," Piastri said.

"It showed the trust that we have with the team and with each other as well, that things will be put the right way." F1 has a history of title fights turning team relationships sour -- not least at McLaren with Ayrton Senna and Alain Prost over 30 years ago -- but Piastri and Norris have kept their rivalry friendly. Even so, there's been a collision in Canada, a near-miss in Austria and Piastri's rejected request for Norris to give up the lead in Britain. Piastri said one factor preventing his relationship with Norris from deteriorating is that both are committed to keeping McLaren on top in F1 for "many years to come." (AP)



Durand Cup: Indian Navy edge past Real Kashmir FC 2-1

IMPHAL, Aug 1: Indian Navy edged past a more fancied Real Kashmir FC 2-1 in a closely contested Group F encounter of the Durand Cup, here on Friday.

Goals from Vijay Marandi (6th min) and Sreyas V G (70th min) ensured full points for the Sailors, while Franck Villaseca's 64th-minute strike proved to be a consolation for the Snow Leopards. The Sailors struck early in the sixth minute when Roshan Panna made a slick run down the right and delivered a low cross into the box.

Marandi timed his run well and tapped it in with his knee, handing Navy the lead amid loud cheers from the local crowd.

The first half saw some end-to-end action, but the score remained 1-0 in Navy's favour going into the break. Anteeb, who looked lively, was denied twice, once by a tight angle save from Bhaskar and another by misfiring just before the half-time whistle.

Real Kashmir resumed the second half with high-press strategy.

Their persistence paid off in the 64th minute when Villaseca levelled the score. The Ivory Coast player made a sharp run behind Navy's backline to latch onto a sublime long ball from Seila Toure and finished confidently past Bhaskar Roy. But the Sailors were quick to regain their lead. Just six minutes later, in the 70th minute, Panna once again turned provider. His low diagonal pass found Sreyas V G inside the right edge of the box, who finished with precision from his right foot to restore Navy's advantage at 2-1. In the end, the Indian Navy walked away with all three points and climbed to the top of Group F. (PTI)

Lakshya, Mannepalli enter semifinals of Macau Open; Satwik-Chirag out

MACAU, Aug 1: Star Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen and promising Tharun Mannepalli advanced to the men's singles semifinals of the Macau Open Super 300 badminton tournament after registering hard-fought wins here Friday.

Taking the court first, the 23-year-old Mannepalli, ranked 47th in the world, showcased speed and a versatile shot selection to edge out China's 87th ranked Hu Zhe 21-12 13-21 21-18 in a 75-minute battle.

Later in the day, Lakshya, a Commonwealth Games gold medalist and second seed here, eked out a tough 21-14 18-21 21-14 victory over Xuan Chen Zhu of China in his quarterfinal that lasted one hour and three minutes. Lakshya will be up against fifth seed Alwi Farhan of Indonesia while Mannepalli will take on Malaysia's Justin Hoh in the last-four round. This marks Mannepalli's maiden semi-final appearance at a BWF Super 300 event. He had reached the quar-



terfinals at the German Open in February. However, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty bowed out of the tournament after losing 14-21 21-13 20-22 to Malaysian combination of Choong Hon Jian and Haikal Muhammad in the quarterfinals.

Mannepalli, who joined the Pullela Gopichand Academy four years ago, has focused on improving his fitness, agility, and movement over the past two

years. His hard work paid off this week as he also stunned top seed Lee Cheuk Yiu of Hong Kong in the last eight.

The Indian, who won gold at the 37th National Games, was trailing 4-7 in the first game before rallying to 12-9. He then took control and scored six straight points from 15-11 to seal the game.

After the change of ends, Hu played with greater intent, lead-

ing 6-2 and extending the lead to 15-6. Mannepalli couldn't close the gap as the Chinese player dominated the second game.

In the decider, Mannepalli surged to a 5-0 lead and maintained a healthy advantage up to 19-15. It got tense towards finish as he squandered three points, with Hu sending two returns on his forehead corner.

However, Mannepalli stayed composed and landed a timely body smash to earn two match points. He secured the win with a precise push to Hu's backhand corner and raised his arms in celebration. Mannepalli started playing badminton at the age of eight in Khammam, Telangana, before moving to Hyderabad after Class X to pursue the sport seriously alongside his studies.

Lakshya had to work hard to get past world number 77 Chen.

The Indian produced a dominating show in the opening game, building on an early 9-4 lead to quickly move to 15-8 and pocketing the game. (PTI)

England openers send Indian pacers on a leather hunt, 109/1 at lunch

LONDON, Aug 1: England openers Zak Crawley and Ben Duckett smashed the Indian pacers with absolute disdain on a seaming surface after bundling out the visitors for 224 in the first half hour of play on day two of the series deciding fifth Test here on Friday.

Duckett (43 off 38) and Crawley (52 batting off 43) hit boundaries for fun on a green surface where Gus Atkinson took a deserving wicket haul by removing three Indian batters shortly after

play began.

The hosts raced to 109 for one in 16 overs at lunch, trailing India by 115 runs.

The trio of Akash Deep, Mohammed Siraj and Prasidh Krishna ran out of ideas against the onslaught from the England openers. Much to their relief, Duckett was caught behind 15 minutes before lunch attempting another reverse hit off Akash.

The opening stand yielded 92 runs off just 77 balls. It was unusual to see Akash wrap his arm around Duckett and

give him a send off with a smile on his face.

Crawley collected five of his 12 fours off Siraj, including a straight drive, punch through the covers and flick towards mid-wicket. He completed his fifty with a boundary in the third man region off Akash.

Duckett deliberately disturbed the pacers' rhythm by dancing down the track at will, using the cut on the charge twice against Akash.

He pulled off a reverse scoop

off Akash before playing a ramp off for a maximum off Siraj soon after.

Ollie Pope joined Crawley in the middle and began with a couple of sweetly timed cover drives.

In the first 30 minutes of play, India lost four wickets for just 20 runs after resuming the day at 204 for six.

Overnight batters Karun Nair (57 off 109 balls) and Washington Sundar (26 off 55) perished in quick succession before Atkinson polished off the tail. (PTI)

FROM RELUCTANCE TO PASSION

'Accidental coach' Khalid Jamil's journey to top of Indian football

NEW DELHI, Aug 1: Khalid Jamil's rise can't exactly be termed as meteoric but the last eight years has been nothing less than extraordinary for the 48-year-old, who on Friday took over reins of the national men's football team.

If he decides to take a pause and look back to that summer of 2008, he might have a chuckle about his reluctance and anger after Mumbai FC management wanted him to coach the U-19s despite him being an active senior team player.

What if he would have rejected club's request outright? He didn't and thankfully on August 1, once an accidental coach is now at helm of country's national team.

From carrying Aizawl FC to an emotional I-League triumph which many felt was a shot in the arm for football in the north east

to facing immense pressure of expectations while coaching Kolkata giants East Bengal and Mohun Bagan with humongous fan base, Jamil has earned his stripes through the bump and grind of Indian football.

He is very much a product of the Indian football system having done his yards.

This is a system he can play around and vice-versa.

No wonder he is one of rare Indian head coach of an ISL side -- Jamshedpur FC and AIFF's choice to go for a 'Made In India' gaffer certainly won't raise eyebrows. Jamil, the youngest of the three contenders and without national team coaching experience at any level, became the first Indian in 13 years to occupy the coveted post. The last Indian who was the national men's team head coach was Savio Medeira from

2011 to 2012.

Jamil is, without question, the best Indian coach at the moment. He is the AIFF 'Coach of the Year' in the last two seasons, having made a name for himself for helping teams punch above their weight both in the I-League and the Indian Super League.

The unassuming Mumbai-based is a quintessential hard-worker known for meticulous planning before matches. His philosophy has been 'train hard and play harder'.

If one compares Jamil with coaches of yesteryears, closest comparison would be Syed Nayemuddin, another firm believer in slogging hard at training and enjoying the fruits of labour during matches.

An AFC Pro License Diploma holder, Jamil has long been a trailblazer in Indian football.

Jamil was born in Kuwait but his family shifted to Mumbai after the Gulf War (1990-91). While studying at the famous Rizvi College in Mumbai, he made it to the university team. He later played for Mahindra United, Air India and Mumbai FC for major part of his club career.

"I always liked football from childhood, but when I started I didn't play the sport thinking of it as a profession. I kept on playing and it went like that," he had said. He is a deeply religious man, who offers namaaz five times a day. Jamil made his national team debut in 1997 in a SAFF Cup match against Bangladesh in Kathmandu. A contemporary of the legendary Bhaichung Bhutia, Jamil played 15 matches for India till his retirement in 2006 due to injuries.

While playing for the Mumbai FC senior team, he was asked to coach the junior side in 2008 and he reluctantly did that, and that changed his life.

"I was in the Mumbai FC senior team but one day I was asked to coach the U19 team. I had the hunger to play in senior team and did not want to coach. I was angry but agreed to coach the junior team," he had said.

"The U19 team did very well, won the league. Since David Booth has left the senior team, I was asked to take charge of the senior team (in 2009)." At just 33, he became the youngest coach in the I-League. He spent six seasons at Mumbai FC as head coach.

The national team under Jamil may not be pleasing to watch, with less of 'tiki-taka' style short passing system. It will be a hard-working, well-organised, defen-

sively solid unit. His style is expected to be pragmatic football, according to match situation.

Jamil has spoken about keeping things simple, allowing his players the freedom to express themselves while maintaining defensive discipline. "My instructions (to players) are play defensively, man to man, be in shape, otherwise I give them a lot of freedom, to play their natural game depending on match situations," he had said.

"I don't give too many instructions especially to inexperienced Indian players. It should shouldn't be like my players are like robots and do exactly as I say. It's not very rigid.

Jamil will have the tough task of reversing India's poor performances in recent past.

After losing 0-1 to lower-ranked Hong Kong in an away

match of the AFC Asian Cup qualifiers on June 10, the country has been left in danger of missing out on qualifying for the continental showpiece in 2027.

After the CAFA Nations Cup in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan beginning August 29, India play their AFC Asian Cup qualifying round games on October 9 and 14 -- against Singapore home and away.

After that, India face Bangladesh on November 18 -- away match -- and Hong Kong on March 31, 2026 at home. India are currently at the bottom of the group table. Only the group winners will qualify for the 2027 AFC Asian Cup.

Only time will tell whether Jamil can pull the national team out of the downward spiral. That will be a fairytale and he would want to tell that tale. (PTI)

Zimbabwe facing a big defeat in first Test against New Zealand



BULAWAYO, Aug 1: Zimbabwe is facing a big defeat in its first Test against New Zealand in almost nine years.

New Zealand dismantled the home team's top-order for the second time as Zimbabwe slumped to 114-6 at lunch on Day 3 – still needing 44 runs to avoid an innings defeat.

Sean Williams (49) and captain Craig Ervine (22) showed some resilience Friday and combined in a half-century stand before both left-handers perished late in the first session.

Williams was brilliantly snapped by wicketkeeper Tom Blundell down the leg side off captain Mitchell Santner's delivery that slanted into the batter.

Fast bowler Matt Henry, who grabbed a six-wicket haul in Zimbabwe's below-par first innings score of 149, impressed again with 2-44. He beat the batters with wobble seam and was finally rewarded when he found the edge of Ervine's bat in the penultimate over of the first session and pushed the home team to the brink of defeat.

Earlier, resuming on 31-2, Will O'Rourke (3-28) perfectly shared the workload of injured fast bowler Nathan Smith, who didn't take the field on Friday after picking up an abdominal tear on Thursday during New Zealand's first innings of 307.

O'Rourke struck twice when Nick Welch (4) nicked the fast bowler behind to Blundell and then Vincent Masekela (2) gloved a catch to Rachin Ravindra at forward short leg after he got beaten by variable bounce off the wicket as Zimbabwe slipped to 53-4.

Williams and Ervine then dug in for a 57-run stand with Williams hitting six fours and Ervine also finding three boundaries. However, New Zealand dismissed both batters in quick succession and got into the lower-order before the break. Sikandar Raza was batting on four and Tafadzwa Tsiga was yet to get off the mark.

The series is not part of the World Test Championship, but it is the first test between the two nations since they met in 2016 in the longer format. (AP)

Don't think picking and choosing is a fair comment to Bumrah: India's assistant coach



LONDON, Aug 1: Jasprit Bumrah had made himself available for only three of the five Tests in England and the Indian team management felt it was right to honour the star pacer's call considering his workload, said assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate.

With the series on the line, Indian captain Shubman Gill and head coach Gautam Gambhir waited till the last minute to take a call on Bumrah, who played the first Test at Headingley, skipped the second match at Edgbaston, and featured in the games at Lord's and Old Trafford.

Speaking to reporters after day one of the series-deciding fifth Test against England here, Doeschate said it is always a tough call leaving a player like Bumrah on the bench.

Durand Cup: Bodoland FC edge Karbi Anglong Morning Star FC

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Aug 1: The Bodoland FC (BFC) registered their first win of the 134th Indian Oil Durand Cup with a hard-fought 2-1 victory over debutants Karbi Anglong Morning Star FC (KAMSFC) in a tightly contested Group D clash, here at the SAI Stadium in Kokrajhar on Thursday evening.

Karbi Anglong struck first through Nigerian forward Joseph Mayowa Olaleye, but Bodoland responded swiftly with an equaliser from Gwngwmsar Gayary in the 37th minute. Colombian striker Robinson calmly slotted home at the hour mark to secure all three points for the local side.

Bodoland FC head coach Vikash Panthi fielded a strong 4-2-3-1 lineup led by Colombian striker Robinson Blandon Rendon, while KAMSFC's head coach C A Laldinsang Pudaite made four changes from their last game with Nigerian forward Joseph Mayowa Olaleye spearheading the attack.

The early exchanges were cagey, with Bodoland FC having the first clear chance when Robinson found himself one-on-one with Karbi Anglong keeper Wellyster Mendes, only for the play to be flagged offside. Pedro Astray's free-kick in the 11th minute for BDFC also struck the wall, as both sides struggled to create meaningful openings.

Momentum shifted in the 22nd minute when Karbi Anglong launched a swift counter. Nigerian forward Olaleye was brought down just outside the box, earning a free kick. Joseph Bempah's effort was well-saved by BDFC keeper Birkhang Diamary.

But the pressure told three minutes later when Wellyster's long ball from the Karbi Anglong half



caught the BDFC defence off guard. Olaleye latched onto it, beat the last defender, and drilled a powerful low strike into the near post to put KAMSFC ahead in the 25th minute.

Bodoland FC found the equaliser in the 37th minute through winger Gwngwmsar Gayary. A long diagonal ball from midfield found Gayary on the left, who headed into the danger area. A failed clearance by KAMSFC captain Harbamon Timung gave Gayary a second chance, and he made no mistake in firing it past Wellyster Mendes to make it 1-1.

BDFC nearly took the lead in first-half stoppage time when Robinson left a defender on the turf with a clever run but missed the target. Another teasing free-

kick from Pedro found Robinson again, but he failed to convert from close range as the half ended on 1-1.

The second half resumed with both teams trying to take control. Haokip (KAMSFC) and Pedro (BDFC) traded tame free kicks in the opening five minutes, both collected comfortably by the respective goalkeepers.

The best opportunity of the second half for Karbi Anglong came in the 56th minute when Sujit Singh broke free, but his shot lacked placement and went straight to Diamary.

Bodoland FC capitalised on the missed chance. In the 60th minute, a corner from Pedro was headed on target by Abdul Samed, blocked but not cleared. Skipper Hazowary

delivered a curling cross from the left, and this time Robinson made no mistake, tapping in the ball between the keeper's legs to put BDFC 2-1 ahead.

The play was halted briefly around the 75th minute due to a swarm of bees invading the pitch, forcing players and officials to hit the ground for safety. On the resumption of play, KAMSFC built momentum with a promising passing sequence, but Pedro made a vital interception to deny them.

Despite box-to-box action in the final minutes and late pressure from Karbi Anglong, BDFC maintained their composure to see out the game and seal all three points. With this result, Bodoland FC keep their hopes of progressing from Group D alive, while Karbi Anglong Morning Star FC suffer their second straight defeat, putting them on the brink of elimination.

Saturday's fixtures:

I-League side Real Kashmir FC will make their Durand Cup debut against the Indian Navy Football Team in a Group F encounter at the Khuman Lampak Main Stadium, Imphal, kickoff scheduled at 4:00 PM. With the previous Group F match, the Imphal Derby, ending in a thrilling draw, a win for either team could prove pivotal in the race for a quarterfinal berth.

Later in the evening, the action will move to Kishore Bharati Kriangan (KBB) in Kolkata, where the Border Security Force Football Team (BSF FT) will face Diamond Harbour FC in a Group B clash starting at 7:00 PM. Diamond Harbour, having already registered a win against Mohammedan SC, will be eyeing another victory to strengthen their bid for a top-place finish and qualification to the next round.

Duleep Trophy: Shardul to lead West Zone; Shreyas, Gaikwad, Jaiswal, Sarfaraz included

MUMBAI, Aug 1: India and Mumbai all-rounder Shardul Thakur was on Friday named the West Zone captain for the Duleep Trophy to be played in September.

The 15-member squad also includes India opener Yashasvi Jaiswal, middle-order batters Sarfaraz Khan and Shreyas Iyer as a total of seven Mumbai players have been named in the team.

Ruturaj Gaikwad will bolster the middle-order while Saurashtra's Harvik Desai and Maharashtra's Saurabh Nawale are the wicketkeepers.

Seven others, including Mumbai's Musheer Khan, were named among standby players. However, senior batters Ajinkya Rahane and Cheteshwar Pujara were not included in the squad.

The six-team Duleep Trophy is moving back to the zonal format as the tournament will be the 2025-26 domestic season opener with state selectors from respective zones naming the squads.

The tournament was held between four teams — India A, B, C and D — picked by the national selectors last year.

South Zone were the winners when the tournament was held in the zonal format last in 2023-24, as they and the West secured direct entries to the semifinals to be held in Bengaluru.

The West Zone squad was selected by the selection committee chaired by Mumbai's Sanjay Patil, Baroda's Prayan Dave, Maharashtra's Akshay Darekar, Sandip Mani- yar from Saurashtra Cricket Association and Kirat Damani from the Gujarat Cricket Association.

Mumbai Cricket Association secretary Abhay Hadap was the convener of the meeting.

West Zone squad: Shardul Thakur (Captain, Mumbai), Yashasvi Jaiswal (Mumbai), Aarya Desai (Gujarat), Harvik Desai (wk, Saurashtra), Shreyas Iyer (Mumbai), Sarfaraz Khan (Mumbai), Ruturaj Gaikwad (Maharashtra), Jaymeet Patel (Gujarat), Manan Hingraja (Gujarat), Saurabh Nawale (wk, Maharashtra), Shams Mulani (Mumbai), Tanush Kotian (Mumbai), Dharmadrasinh Jadhav (Saurashtra), Tushar Deshpande (Mumbai), Arzan Nagwaswala (Gujarat).

Standby players: Mahesh Pithiya (Baroda), Shivalik Sharma (Baroda), Mukesh Choudhary (Maharashtra), Siddharth Desai (Gujarat), Chintan Gajia (Gujarat), Musheer Khan (Mumbai), Urvil Patel (Gujarat). (PTI)

Vedika lies second in US Kids World Championship, Ojaswini is ninth

PINEHURST (US), Aug 1: Indian golfers Vedika Bhansali and Ojaswini Saraswat made promising starts to find a place in the top-10 after the opening day of the US Kids World Championship golf at Pinehurst Village here.

Bengaluru's Vedika with a bogey-free 3-under 33 was tied-second with five others and was one shot behind the leader, Audrey Zhang of the US.

Ojaswini from Mohali, a former medallist at the US Kids World Championship, was Tied-ninth in Girls 12 after a card of 2-under. She was runner-up in Girls 11 a year ago and is looking at going one better.

Vedika, who was fourth a year ago in Girls 8 category, had three birdies and Ojaswini, runner-up last year in Girls 11, had three birdies and dropped her only shot on the 18th at the Longleaf club.

Chandigarh golfer Nihal Cheema, who was runner-up on Boys 7 in 2024, had just one birdie against two bogeys in his nine-hole round at Mid Pines (Black).

Cheema, playing in Boys 8 Category this year, was placed Tied-12th.

Results of the Indians at US Kids World Championships at Pinehurst:

The Indian boys were placed as follows: **Boys 8:** Nihal Cheema (Boys 8, Chandigarh) T-12;

Boys 10: Kabir Goyal (Boys 10, Noida) shot 72 (T-33);

Boys 11: Sohraab Singh Talwar (Boys 11, Mohali) – 76 (T-50);

Boys 12: Adit Veeramachaneni (Boys 12, Bangalore) – 73 (T-23), Siddharth Sharma (Boys 12, Faridabad) 78 – (T-93) and Hridaan Saragi (Boys 12, Jaipur) 79 (T-112). (PTI)

lethal in the prevailing conditions.

Is he picking and choosing games considering his injury prone past and back surgeries?

"I don't think picking and choosing is a fair comment to Bumrah. He did say he was going to play three games, he left it up to us which three he played. We've tried to manage the situation, it's not ideal, I guess giving those guys attention, the guys who aren't playing particularly when you're carrying 18 is important."

"... Make them know that you're making all the decisions in good faith, in the best interest of the team, and just on that, all the guys who haven't played, they've been fantastic, they've trained the house down, they're disappointed when they get left out."

"They don't let it show when they're around the group and that's very important to creating a good culture for the guys who are playing to perform."

Doeschate added that it made sense to play Bumrah in Manchester than keeping him for the final Test.

"Every time I've answered this question I've spoken about like putting the pieces of the puzzles together and guys were baffled when we didn't play him in the third Test," he said.

"Our thinking was that the Oval, yes it's got bounce but it's normally a fairly good wicket for batting on, and we thought we'd roll the dice and if we'd won the toss we would have bowled."

"In hindsight you would have loved to have him here, but you would also have said if we come here 3-1 down that we didn't use him there, so it's trying to not guess but trying to look into the future and then see how we can manage him, and maybe England have got it spot on leaving the best bowling wicket for the last Test after he's played three," Doeschate said. (PTI)

BFI elections scheduled for August 21

NEW DELHI, Aug 1: The long-overdue Boxing Federation of India elections (BFI) will be held on August 21 in Delhi, the Interim Committee running the sport in the country has announced.

According to a circular issued on July 31 and signed by Interim Committee chief Ajay Singh, "the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Boxing Federation of India will be held on 21.08.2025 at Delhi-NCR at 11:00 am."

The agenda for the AGM are "confirmation of minutes of the previous meeting; election of various posts for the term 2025-2029 and any other item with the permission of the chair."

The tenure of the previous BFI office-bearers ended on February 2. Elections were initially scheduled for March 28, but the process was stalled due to legal wrangling, including multiple appeals and counter-appeals.

The BFI has been plagued by internal strife and factionalism in the run-up to the elections. The Returning Officer, former Delhi High Court judge RK Gauba, also resigned from his post, alleging a smear campaign against him.

In April, World Boxing, the sport's international governing body, constituted the Interim Committee to manage the day-to-day affairs of Indian boxing. Last month, it set a deadline of August 31 to conduct the elections.

The entire electoral process will now restart, including the appointment of a new Returning Officer and the drafting of a fresh Electoral College.

The member associations have been asked "to send names of their two representatives as per the provisions of BFI's Constitution as approved by World Boxing to BFI's office email before 5 pm on 04.08.2025."

Singh, who has completed two four-year terms as President, is set to contest for the third and last term as per the 2011 National Sports Development Code of India.

Former Sports Minister Anurag Thakur's had been nominated by Himachal Pradesh Boxing as its representative in the Electoral College finalised by Singh and subsequently approved by the RO.

Singh had said Thakur was "ineligible" to represent Himachal Pradesh, citing an official directive stating that only "bonafide and duly elected members during the election AGM (duly notified to BFI) of the State Units affiliated with the BFI shall be authorised to represent their respective States/Union Territories."

Thakur's exclusion led his faction to initiate legal proceedings.

Interestingly, the revised BFI Constitution, which was approved by World Boxing on May 18, clearly defines a representative as "a person nominated by each Member to represent it at the General Council. Such person shall be an elected member of State/UT Association in Election AGM in presence of BFI Observer and shall not be a Government servant or holding a public office."

It needs to be seen if HP Boxing nominee Thakur's name again. (PTI)



machal Pradesh Boxing as its representative in March but his name didn't figure in the Electoral College finalised by Singh and subsequently approved by the RO.

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Good start by Diksha at AIG Women's Open in Wales

PORTHCAWL (WALES), Aug 1: Indian golfer Diksha Dagar carded a one-under 71 to lie tied 30th after the first round of the AIG Women's Open, the last Major of the year for women.

Diksha, making her sixth appearance at the Women's Open, picked up four birdies against three bogeys in unpredictable weather conditions here.

She was lying Tied-30th after being Tied-14th till the 15th hole. She picked birdies on the first, seventh, ninth and the 11th and the bogeys came on the sixth, eighth and the 11th.

Diksha, who is the sole Indian in the field this week at Porthcawl, finished Tied-21st in 2023, her best performance at the Open.

Pranavi Urs played the qualifiers but failed to make the main event after shooting 75 in the one-round final qualifier at the Par-71 Pyle and Kenfig course three days ago.

Japan's Eri Okayama and Rio Takeda shared the lead in the opening round with both carding an impressive five-under-par 67 at Royal Porthcawl. Six Japanese players sit in the top 13 after just 18 holes of the final major of the season.

Japan's Miyu Yamashita, who was in the same group as Takeda, sits one-shot back in solo third place, after firing a round of four-under par.

It's a tight leaderboard with a total of 10 players sharing the fourth place after firing the opening rounds of three-under par.

England's Mimi Rhodes, Belgium's Manon De Roey, Germany's Laura Fuenfstueck, Austria's Emma Spitz, Japan's Shioh Kuwaki, Mao Saigo and Chisato Iwai, South Korea's Ina Yoon and In Gee Chun, and America's Alexa Pano, are only a further shot back. (PTI)

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