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'Eviction drives in Assam to continue to clear illegal encroachment'

Minority groups orchestrating land jihad: Himanta

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 4: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday accused certain minority groups of oppressing the state's indigenous communities through what he described as "Love Jihad" and "Land Jihad."

Talking to reporters, Sarma responded to a recent memorandum submitted by leaders of the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) to the Assam Police headquarters in Ulubari.

The AIUDF delegation had alleged ongoing discrimination and persecution of minority communities in the state.

Countering the allegations, Sarma said, "The so-called minorities are, in fact, the ones oppressing our indigenous people. They are involved in Love Jihad, Land Jihad, and are illegally occupying large swathes of land. Despite this, they are the ones raising complaints, while the real victims—our native communities—remain unheard."

The Chief Minister cited specific cases to back his claims, stating that in forested areas, minority groups have been planting betel nut trees and establishing fisheries.

"I have personally visited Uriamghat, where



300 to 400 bighas of land have been encroached upon. In contrast, in Baksa district, our indigenous people are still waiting for land allotments," he added.

Sarma further asserted that the narrative of

victimhood was being misrepresented. "If anyone should be submitting memorandums and expressing grievances, it should be us. Justice demands that the plight of our indigenous communities be (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

BTC polls: BPF names 22 candidates

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Aug 4: The opposition Bodoland People's Front (BPF) on Monday released the first list of 22 candidates for the upcoming Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) elections, scheduled to be held in the last week of September.

The announcement marks the party's formal entry into the electoral contest, setting the tone for a high-stakes battle for control of the 40-member council.

According to an official statement issued by the party, BPF president and former BTC chief Hagrama Mohilary will contest from Debagao constituency.

Sitting West Kokrajhar MLA Rabiram Narzary has been fielded from Kachugaon, while senior party leader and former minister Rihon Daimary will contest from Bhairabkunda.

The complete list of 22 candidates released so far includes: Moon Moon Brahma (Parbhojora), Antaj Ali (Guma), Mukleswar Ahmed (Srirampur),



Mrityunjay Narzary (Soraibil), William Narzary (Jomduar), Prakash Basumatary (Dotma), Doneswar Goyary (Baukhungri), Derhasat Basumatary (Salakati), James Basumatary (Nichima), Paniram Brahma (Kajalgaon), Sukursing Muchahary (Chirang), Dhiraj Borgoyary (Sobaijhar), Begum Akhtara Ahmed (Mathanguri), Augusta Tigga (Dihira), Emmanuel Mushahary (Darrangajuli), Maheswar Basumatary (Goreswar), Ganesh Kochary (Suklai Serfang), Lwmsrao

Daimary (Khwirabari), and Fresh Mushahary (Dhansiri).

Party insiders suggest that the second list, covering the remaining 18 seats, will be released in the coming days.

With the announcement of this initial list, the BPF has officially launched its campaign to reclaim its former stronghold in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR).

The party, which once dominated the BTC administration, is aiming (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Why FSL report on probe over alleged audio clips of ex-CM Biren Singh not filed, SC asks state



NEW DELHI, Aug 4: The Supreme Court on Monday questioned the state government for not placing on record a fresh forensic report on the authenticity of leaked audio clips alleging role of former Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh in the ethnic violence despite its directions.

A bench comprising Justices Sanjay Kumar and Satish Chandra Sharma referred to a previous order and asked the state, "What happened to the forensic report? That should have come at least. This order was passed in May 2025. Three months have passed. By now, the forensic report laboratory must have given you a report. At least tell us whether the report has come or it's still in the pipeline."

When the state's counsel said the FSL report had not come, the bench asked further, "How long does it take FSL to give a definite report on the analysis of the voice? We will pass it over. This can't go endlessly."

The matter could not reach the hearing again during the day.

On May 5, a bench headed by former CJI Sanjay Khanna examined a forensic report on authenticity of leaked audio clips

alleging role of former Manipur CM and asked the state government to file a fresh report on the probe.

It opened the sealed cover report of the Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) submitted by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta and asked him to seek instructions from the state officers on the investigation.

"The FSL report has been filed. We need a month to probe it," the law officer said.

Mehta further said the Manipur High Court could hear the matter as "peace is prevailing now and the probe can go on".

After perusing the report, the CJI asked the law officer that he would have to speak to the officers about it.

The bench then posted the matter for a fresh report in the week of July 21.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for petitioner Kuki Organisation for Human Rights Trust (KOHUR), said the probe related to the former chief minister and it should be fair, the CJI said, "Now we have the President Rule there... it should not be a problem".

The matter was subsequently kept on (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Comprehensive drought relief programme launched in BTR

KOKRAJHAR, Aug 4: A comprehensive drought relief programme has been launched for affected farmers in five districts of Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) of Assam, an official statement said.

Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) chief Pramod Boro has launched the programme under the 'Vibrant BTR, Vibrant Agriculture -- From Mission to Action' initiative to provide immediate relief and establish a long-term mechanism to mitigate the impact of such climatic adversities in future, it said.

Four districts under the BTR -- Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa, Tamulpur -- are facing an acute drought, while Udalguri is experiencing moderate drought, posing a serious threat to rice production and the food security of thousands of farming families in the region.

As part of this programme, five per cent of BTR's agriculture budget (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Govt will be compelled to push bills in din if Oppn's protest continues in Parliament: Rijiju

NEW DELHI, Aug 4: The government will be compelled to press for the passage of its bills amid protests in Parliament, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said on Monday, as the Opposition's relentless disruptions over SIR dimmed the prospects of normal functioning of the two Houses.

While the Lok Sabha saw little transaction of any listed business on Monday, the Rajya Sabha was adjourned as a mark of respect for its member and former Jharkhand chief minister Shibu Soren, who passed away this morning.

Rijiju insisted that the government wants a thorough discussion in Parliament over its bills but will be compelled to push for their passage from Tuesday in "national interest" as the proposed legislations are important for governance.

Hitting out at the opposition parties, he said that they had



agreed to a two-day discussion over the National Sports Governance Bill and National Anti-Doping (Amendment) Bill, both of which were scheduled to be taken up together for consideration and passage in the Lok Sabha on Monday, but they dis-

rupted proceedings.

The Opposition has been insisting that the government agree to its demand for a discussion on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar before pushing its legislative agenda through Parliament.

Work for new Gauhati HC complex to start by year-end: CM

GUWAHATI, Aug 4: Despite strong opposition from the Gauhati High Court Bar Association over the proposed relocation of the high court complex, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday said construction of the new premises will begin by the end of this year.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of an official function in North Guwahati, where the new building is proposed, Sarma said paying compensation to land owners has begun for acquiring their plots for the new Gauhati High Court complex.

"We will construct the new building of Gauhati High Court at Rangmahal. We have acquired 129 bighas (over 42.5 acres) for this. Today, we officially handed over the compensation to the land owners, from whom we had acquired

land," he added.

After the first step in this process, the land for the judicial township has been made by the government and now the Public Works Department (PWD) will proceed to construct the high court, Sarma said.

"I believe the PWD will take control of the land soon and start the next process. Usually the tender process takes 2-3 months. We hope to start the construction by the end of this year," he added.

The Gauhati High Court Bar Association (GHBCA) has been vehemently opposing relocation of the high court complex to the northern banks of Brahmaputra from the existing place at the heart of the city.

Elaborating on the proposed new structure, the CM said, "We will construct the main high court

along with the subordinate courts. We have planned a judicial township here. The architectural design is still under consideration of the HC, which may take another month to finalise it."

He said that the new complex is likely to be the biggest high court in India.

"I feel there is no high court in India situated on such a large plot of land. It is going to be a big and beautiful project of Assam," Sarma said. Earlier, GHBCA had demanded an immediate halt to the project in the interest of all stakeholders and the public at large.

The HC is located in Uzan Bazar area of central Guwahati on the southern banks of Brahmaputra. It has a historical building, while a state-of-the-art multi-crore modern multi-storey structure was constructed (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

NRL inks pact with BSNL to deploy India's first 5G captive non-public network

GUWAHATI, Aug 4: Numaligarh Refinery Ltd (NRL) has signed an agreement with state-owned BSNL to deploy India's first 5G captive non-public network (CNPN) in its area. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said it was a proud moment for Assam.

"@BSNLCorporate & @NRL_MoPNG have signed an MoU to set up India's 1st 5G Captive Non-Public Network in the refinery sector. A big leap for #DigitalAssam & #AtmanirbharBharat- ushering IoT, AR/VR, Big Data into our industrial future," he said in a post on X.

BSNL's Chairman cum Managing Director Robert J Ravi said the partnership exemplifies the telco's commitment to empowering India's strategic sectors with next-generation digital infrastructure.

"The deployment of a dedicated 5G CNPN at NRL will mark a technological leap forward -- not only in connectivity but in redefining how core industries can operate in the future. As a trusted public telecom provider, BSNL is proud to pioneer this journey toward a self-reliant, digitally intelligent Bharat," he said.

An official of the NRL said the integration of 5G CNPN will not only enhance operational efficiency and cybersecurity but also enable transformative technologies such as AR and VR-based training, digital twins, and real-time IoT applications. The agreement, signed at a workshop organised by the Union Finance Ministry in Guwahati on Saturday, is expected to set the stage for replicable models across other industrial sectors, a statement said. (PTI)

IIT-G researchers develop sensor that can help people with voice disabilities communicate

GUWAHATI, Aug 4: Researchers at IIT-Guwahati have developed an underwater vibration sensor that enables automated and contactless voice recognition.

Developed in collaboration with researchers from Ohio State University in the US, the sensor offers a promising alternative communication method for individuals with voice disabilities who are unable to use conventional voice-based systems, the IIT-Guwahati said in a statement on Monday.

Voice recognition has become an integral part of modern life as it helps users in operating smart devices, including mobile phones and home appliances, through voice commands, it said.

However, for the people with voice disorders, this technological development remains inaccessible, it said.

To address this limitation, the research team has found a solution by focusing on the exhale air through the mouth while speaking, a basic physiological function, it added.

"In cases where individuals cannot produce sound, attempting to speak generates airflow from their lungs. When this air flows over a water surface, it produces subtle waves. The re-

search team has developed an underwater vibration sensor which can detect these water waves and interpret speech signals without depending on audible voice, thus creating a new pathway for voice recognition," the statement said.

The developed sensor is made from a conductive, chemically reactive porous sponge, it said.

When placed just below the air-water interface, it captures the tiny disturbances created by exhaled air and converts them into measurable electrical signals. The research team used Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN), a type of deep learning model, to accurately recognise these subtle signal patterns.

This setup allows users to communicate with devices from a distance, without the need to generate sound.

The findings of the research have been published in the journal, Advanced Functional Materials.

Professor Uttam Manna, who was a part of the research team, said, "It is one of the rare designs of material allowing to recognise voice based on monitoring the water wave formed at the air/water interface (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Purple rice breakthrough for regular diets and commercial cultivation AAU develops purple rice; gets plant variety registered

JORHAT, Aug 4: A high-yielding purple rice variety 'Labanya', developed by Assam Agriculture University (AAU), has been registered under the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority (PPVFA), officials said on Monday.

'Labanya' integrates the rich nutritional profile of the traditional black rice, with the adaptability and convenience required for both daily consumption and commercial cultivation, the Public Relations Officer (PRO) of AAU, Ranjit Kumar Hout, said.

"AAU is pleased to announce that 'Labanya' has recently been registered under the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority (PPVFA). This is a big achievement for the scientists at AAU," he said.

According to an official directive from the office of the Chancellor of AAU, the variety was officially launched for commercialization before its formal registration and notification



by the Government of India, only to leverage its commercial potential, the PRO said. "Accordingly, 'Labanya' was introduced on e-commerce platforms and exclusive commercial rights were granted to a local entrepreneur.

The variety has been sold across more than 18 states with over 30 per cent of buyers identified as repeat customers, reflecting strong market demand and consumer satisfaction," he said.

The salient features of the rice are

that its yield potential is 4.5-5 tonnes per hectare, as observed in farmers' fields, Hout said. 'Labanya' also has a lower glycemic index, aromatic grains and ease of cooking, thus making it ideal for regular dietary use, he said.

"It has higher head rice recovery (60 per cent) and amylose content (18 per cent), ensuring superior milling and eating quality. It is also rich in antioxidants, flavonoids, essential amino acids and minerals," the PRO said.

Besides, 'Labanya' is suitable for a wide range of value-added products, including bakery items, traditional delicacies and gluten-free flour, he added. "Compared to conventional black rice, which is often limited by low yields (1.5-2 tonnes per hectare) and longer cooking times (approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour) with a sticky texture, the rice addresses these challenges while preserving the health benefits and market appeal of pigmented rice," Hout said. (PTI)

Sensex rises 419 pts to close above 81k level on gains in metal, auto shares

MUMBAI, Aug 4: Benchmark BSE Sensex rose by nearly 419 points to close above the 81,000 level on Monday following gains in metal, commodities and auto shares amid a firm trend in global markets.

Snapping the two-day falling streak, the 30-share Sensex gained 418.81 points or 0.52 per cent to settle at 81,018.72 with 26 of its constituents ending higher and four down. During the day, it climbed 493.28 points or 0.61 per cent to hit an intraday high of 81,093.19.

The 50-share NSE Nifty jumped by 157.40 points or 0.64 per cent to close at 24,722.75. In the intraday session, it rose 169.3 points or 0.6 per cent to hit a high of 24,734.65.

Among Sensex firms, Tata Steel was the lead gainer, humping by 4.31 per cent. BEL, Adani Ports, Tata Consultancy Services, Tech Mahindra, Bharti Airtel, HCL Technologies, Trent, Mahindra & Mahindra, Reliance Industries, UltraTech Cement and Larsen & Toubro were the major gainers.

However, Power Grid, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Hindustan Unilever were among the laggards.

"The domestic equity market edged higher, supported by strong



performance in the metal and auto sectors. A weakening US Dollar, along with robust monthly auto sales and encouraging quarterly results from leading automakers, helped renew investor interest in these sectors.

"The Q1 earnings summary indicates that consumption-driven companies are benefiting from a rebound in volume demand. Meanwhile, rising unemployment and slower job creation in the US have reinforced expectations of a potential Fed rate cut. However, there still remains room for caution due to high US tariffs," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments, said.

The BSE smallcap gauge rose 0.76 per cent and the midcap index by 1.11 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, metal rose by 2.58 per cent, realty by 1.88 per cent, commodities by 1.79 per cent, services by 1.74 per cent, auto by 1.54 per cent, focussed IT by 1.48 per cent, tech by 1.46 per cent and IT by 1.38 per cent.

FMCG and Bankex were the only laggards.

"Markets started the week on a positive note, gaining over half a percent amid mixed cues. Despite a weak handover from the US markets, the Nifty opened slightly in the green and gradually moved higher throughout the session,

eventually settling near the day's high at 24,722.75. Sector-wise, most indices contributed to the rebound, with metals, realty, and auto emerging as the top gainers.

"The broader markets also found some relief after the recent correction, as both the midcap and smallcap indices posted gains of nearly 1.5 per cent," Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking, said.

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

Markets in Europe were trading in the green. The US markets ended in negative territory on Friday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 1.15 per cent to USD 68.87 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹ 3,366.40 crore on Friday, according to exchange data, and the 50-share NSE Nifty declined 203 points to close at 24,565.35.

The rupee depreciated 52 paise to close at 87.70 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, as sustained foreign fund outflows and trade tariff uncertainties dented investors' sentiment. (PTI)

Internet firm Rediff explores options to raise USD 100 mn

MUMBAI, Aug 4: Internet company Rediff is exploring options, including an initial public offering, to raise up to USD 100 million (around Rs 875 crore) to accelerate its push into enterprise-grade email, business productivity suite and digital payments, according to sources. The company, which is majority owned by financial technology company Infibeam Avenues Ltd, is considering options such as launching an IPO, private placement, or through private equity participation to raise capital, sources privy to the development said.

The board of Rediff.com is currently evaluating fundraising options and is expected to finalize the structure in the coming weeks, they said. However, the IPO option has a high chance of being chosen by management for its USD 100 million fundraising, sources said.

When contacted, Rediff Senior Vice-President for Corporate Development, Ashish Mehrota, said, "Yes, our company explores various fundraising options from time to time. At this stage, we do not have anything specific to share, but we are evaluating options." Sources said that the company will use the funds to accelerate its push into enterprise-grade email and business productivity suite - RediffOne, and digital payment - RediffPay. Infibeam has been investing aggressively in data centres, AI platforms, and now, sovereign digital services — all areas where Rediff is expected to play a central role, sources said. (PTI)

India's tea production dips 9 pc to 133.5 million kg in June

KOLKATA, Aug 4: India's tea production dipped 9 per cent to 133.5 million kg in June as compared to the same month of the previous year, according to official data. In June 2024, the country had produced 146.72 million kg of tea, according to data released by the Tea Board.

The decline in production was caused by adverse weather conditions and pest attacks, said the Indian Tea Association.

Production in North India, comprising West Bengal and Assam, declined to 112.51 million kg in June. It was 121.52 million kg in June last year.

Production in South India during June also declined to 20.99 million kg, as against 25.20 million kg in the same month of 2024. Big and organised planters produced 55.21 million kg in June, a decline from 68.38 million kg in the same month of 2024. (PTI)

Xtelify launches sovereign cloud and global AI-powered software platform

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 4: Xtelify, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Bharti Airtel, has launched 'Airtel Cloud', a sovereign, telco-grade cloud platform designed to handle 140 crore transactions per minute for Airtel's internal operations.

In an official statement issued on Monday, the company announced that the platform will now be extended to serve Indian businesses, offering secure, scalable, and cost-effective solutions with no vendor lock-ins. Hosted on next-generation sustainable data centres and supported by Gen-AI-based provisioning, Airtel Cloud is managed by a team of 300 certified cloud experts.

The platform offers Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS), Platform as a Service (PaaS), and advanced connectivity, ensuring secure migration, effortless scaling, and high reliability for enterprises.

Alongside the cloud platform, Xtelify has also launched an AI-powered software platform aimed at transforming the global telecom sector.

The software addresses every layer of the telecom value chain through a converged data engine that delivers AI-driven insights, a workforce platform for real-time task management, and an experience platform to oversee the entire customer journey.

The official release also announced that Xtelify has entered into three global partnerships.

In collaboration with Singtel, the company will deploy 'Xtelify Work', an enterprise-grade plug-and-play platform equipped with AI features such as fleet optimisation, automated task management, and real-time governance.

This platform is intended to enhance the productivity of Singtel's field teams in Singapore.

Airtel Africa Group CIO Jacques Barkhuizen said the collaboration with Xtelify is aligned with their goal of delivering meaningful digital advancements that enrich lives across the continent.

The announcements mark Airtel's renewed focus on enterprise solutions and its ambition to be a key digital transformation partner for global telecom operators.

Birdhichand Keshabdeo opens new retail store 'Manhar' in Fancy Bazaar

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 4: Birdhichand Keshabdeo, one of the oldest Pujan Samagri and traditional retail brands of the Northeast with a legacy dating back to 1935, has expanded its presence with the launch of a new store named Manhar at MS Road, Fancy Bazaar.

According to an official statement, the new outlet was inaugurated in the presence of young businessman Yashashwi Sharma, Anjali Sharma, Vinayak Sharma and other dignitaries.

The brand, known for its devotion to authenticity and quality, has been serving generations with tradi-

tional products ranging from Pujan Samagri and Poshak to Jadibuti and Shuddh Pooja items.

The new store offers a wide range of devotional and festive products, including Poshaks, Shringar, Mukut, Mala, Laddu Gopal idols, Radha Krishna murtis, Vandhanwars, Torans and decorative items for weddings and festivals.

"This is more than just an expansion; it's a continuation of a legacy shaped by sincerity and blessings. Manhar is our heartfelt offering to the community," proprietor Krishna Kumar Sharma said on the occasion.

Electrosteel Castings eyes domestic valve production after acquisition of Italian firm

KOLKATA, Aug 4: Electrosteel

Castings Ltd is gearing up to manufacture advanced valve solutions in India following its ₹ 150-crore acquisition of Italian firm T.I.S. Service S.p.A., to reduce import dependence and offer integrated water infrastructure solutions.

With the acquisition completed, the focus now is on stabilising. The company is actively planning localisation of T.I.S. product lines to align with the Centre's Make in India initiative in near future, an official said on Monday. The Italian arm, now operating as T.I.S. - An Electrosteel Enterprise, spe-

cialises in flow control equipment, a segment where India continues to rely largely on imports. "The technology and product portfolio of T.I.S. gives us a significant edge. We're currently importing valves for the Indian water segment, but eventually we aim to manufacture them locally," said Sunil Katial, Whole-Time Director and CEO, Electrosteel Castings Ltd. The company is evaluating its upcoming greenfield site in Odisha as a potential location for valve production.

"We remain committed to the new plant in Odisha. There is some delay related to land acquisition,

but once cleared, the new plant could add 0.5 million tonnes of ductile iron pipe capacity," Katial said. Electrosteel currently has a combined annual capacity of 0.85 million tonnes from its plants in Andhra Pradesh and Khardah, West Bengal. "We aim to deepen Electrosteel's presence in Europe, South East Asia, West Asia, and Latin America, while expanding into fluid management for irrigation, desalination and clean energy sectors through this strategic partnership," said Madhav Kejriwal, Whole-Time Director, Electrosteel Castings. (PTI)

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Minority groups orchestrating

acknowledged," he said. Meanwhile, the CM also announced that the first phase of eviction in the Rengma Reserve forest at Uriamghat in the Golaghat district is completed and at least 1200 hectare of land was made free from encroachment.

Taking to X. Sarma wrote, "Phase I of the eviction drive in Uriamghat is over where we recovered over 1200Ha of land in Rengma Reserve Forest." The chief minister also warned that the eviction exercise will continue in the state to clear illegal encroachment. "The drive will continue, here as well as across the State to take back every inch of land, which rightfully belongs to the people of Assam," Sarma added.

BTC polls: BPF names

to mount a significant comeback in this election. The BPF's move comes amid growing anticipation over candidate announcements from other key players. The ruling United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) and its ally, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), are expected to release their lists by mid-August.

Meanwhile, political activity has picked up momentum across the BTR districts, with parties intensifying their outreach and campaigning efforts to mobilise public support.

The BPF's early declaration is being viewed as a strategic attempt to galvanise its organisational base and rally voters ahead of its rivals. The BTC elections, held every five years, will decide the new council that governs the Bodoland Territorial Region.

The election is expected to witness a multi-cornered contest among the BPF, UPPL, BJP, and other regional players, with ethnic and developmental issues likely to dominate the campaign narrative.

Comprehensive drought relief

will be earmarked exclusively for disaster management, focusing on emergencies such as droughts, floods, locust attacks, and pest infestations.

This dedicated fund will ensure swift financial support to farmers during crises. Additionally, a special disaster monitoring cell will be set up in every agriculture development officer's (ADO) circle office to facilitate on-ground assessment and quick response measures.

The programme also envisions the creation of model climate-resilient VCDC units in each ADO circle, through convergence with the departments of agriculture, irrigation, soil conservation, and water resources.

These units will focus on promoting sustainable farming practices, enhancing irrigation infrastructure, and building resilience among farmers against climate-induced disruptions, the statement added. (PTI)

Why FSL report on probe over

August 4. The state government earlier informed the bench that a forensic report on the authenticity of the leaked audio clips alleging the role of Singh in the ethnic violence was ready to be filed.

Singh resigned as the chief minister of Manipur on February 9, amid rumblings within the state BJP and growing demands for a change in leadership.

The top court had previously sought a sealed-cover forensic report from the CFSL on the authenticity of the leaked audio clips alleging Singh's role in the ethnic violence that began in May 2023.

KOHUR had sought a court-monitored SIT probe into Singh's alleged role.

Bhushan termed the contents of the audio leaks a "very serious matter" and said Singh was purportedly heard saying that Meitei groups were allowed to loot arms and ammunition of the state government. On November 8 last year, a bench headed by former CJI D Y Chandrachud directed KOHUR to produce material to indicate the authenticity of some of the leaked audio clips.

Over 260 people were killed and thousands displaced since the ethnic violence broke out between the Imphal valley-based Meitei and neighbouring hills-based Kuki communities in May 2023.

The clashes began after a "Tribal Solidarity March" was organised in the hill districts to protest against an order of the Manipur High Court on the Meitei community's demand for scheduled tribe status. Bhushan alleged that the recorded conversation prima facie showed the complicity and involvement of the state machinery in the violence against the Kuki Zo community.

He said the clips had "disturbing conversations" and Singh could be heard instigating the violence and protecting the attackers. KOHUR's plea alleged that Singh was instrumental in "inciting, organising and thereafter centrally orchestrating the large-scale murder, destruction and other forms of violence against the Kuki-dominated areas in Manipur". (PTI)

Work for new Gauhati HC

and inaugurated a few years ago. Both the buildings are located face-to-face on two sides of Mahatma Gandhi Road and are connected through an underground tunnel, having escalator facilities. The Assam government is seeking to develop the river front of Brahmaputra, for which it requires to acquire the High Court land. (PTI)

IIT-G researchers develop

because of exhaling air from the mouth. This approach is likely to provide a viable solution for communication with those individuals with partially or entirely damaged vocal cords."

On a lab scale, the working prototype costs ₹ 3,000, the statement said. With research exploring potential industry collaboration for bringing the technology from the lab to real-world use, the cost of the final product is expected to be reduced, it said. Some of the key features of the developed sensors include AI-powered interpretation using CNNs and hands-free control of smart devices, it said.

As the next step, the research team is planning to get clinical validation for the developed device. (PTI)



KOLKATA, Aug 4: Coal India Ltd (CIL) has set an ambitious supply target of 900.24 million tonnes (MT) for 2025-26, representing over 18 per cent growth from the previous year's achievement, as part of a strategy to meet rising power demand and reduce imports.

According to the company's outlook by its management in its latest annual report, around 74 per cent of the total coal dispatch is expected to be consumed by the power sector alone, underscoring CIL's critical role in ensuring uninterrupted electricity supply across the country.

The projected demand from the power sector for FY26 stands at 668.1 MT, and the company aims to cater to the entire requirement of power and non-regulated consumers while substituting imported coal wherever possible, the miner informed.

CIL's growth roadmap aligns with the government's objective of providing 24x7 power to every household, with plans to scale up production to 1 billion tonnes by 2028-29, the company said.

To sustain growth while reducing environmental impact, the company is focusing on selective mining, coal beneficiation and blending, enhancing production from underground mines, and diversifying into cleaner coal technologies such as coal gasification and coal-

to-liquid (CTL) projects.

"CIL intends to offer more coking coal to the steel sector and also supply coal for upcoming coal gasification projects," the company said, outlining plans to explore alternative uses of domestic coal and improve long-term financial performance.

For FY26, CIL has earmarked a capital investment of ₹ 16,000 crore to maintain volume growth. Additional investments are planned in railway infrastructure development, solar and thermal power projects, coalbed methane extraction, and the revival of fertiliser plants.

During FY25, total power generation in the country grew by 5 per cent to 1,826 billion units (BU), while coal-based generation increased to 1,299 BU.

Against a projected demand of 661 MT from the power sector, CIL supplied 616.17 MT, achieving a materialisation rate of around 93 per cent.

Coal supplies to the non-regulated sector peaked at 145.3 MT, up 8.1 per cent, while e-auction bookings rose to 89.38 MT. However, the average e-auction premium moderated to 48 per cent from 72 per cent in the previous fiscal.

Meanwhile, the Chairman and Managing Director, P M Prasad, in his address, said Coal India is intensifying efforts to future-proof its business through strategic diversification and monetisation of assets.

Addressing shareholders in the latest annual report, Prasad said the state-run coal mining major is actively pursuing projects in coal gasification, coalbed methane (CBM) extraction, solar power generation, and critical minerals exploration as part of its broader plan to align with the country's energy transition goals and reduce dependency on fossil fuels.

These efforts, he noted, are also aimed at unlocking new revenue streams beyond thermal coal.

In a first for India, CIL monetised the 2 MTPA Dugda Coal Washery in Jharkhand's Bokaro, under the build-own-operate model, valued at ₹504 crore, marking the country's first-ever coal washery monetisation in line with the government's asset monetisation policy, he said. (PTI)

E-AUCTION PROGRAMME FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST, 2025 OF LUMDING DIVISION

The e-auction programme for Sale of Railway Scrap materials under the jurisdiction of Lumding Division for the month of AUGUST, 2025 is hereby fixed as under:-

SN	MONTH	DATE FIXED
1	AUGUST, 2025	12-08-2025 19-08-2025 26-08-2025

Interested bidders are advised to bid through IREPS website (www.ireps.gov.in) for registration, training, participation in e-auction.

Sr. Divisional Materials Manager, Lumding

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

GOVT OF ASSAM

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

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

Date:

PRESS NOTICE INVITING TENDER

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

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Baithalangso Division (Irrigation)
Hamren

Date: 02/08/2025

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

Indigenous Peoples' Day to be celebrated in Diphu

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 4: The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples will be celebrated in Diphu on August 9 at the Sertalin Auditorium, Taralango.

The event, hosted by the Karbi Cultural Society (KCS), is jointly organised by the Indigenous Women's Forum of North East India (IWFNEI), Karbi Human Rights Watch (KHRW), Naga People's Movement for Human Rights (NPMHR), Borok Indigenous Tripura Peoples Development Centre (BITPDC) and Zo Indigenous Forum (ZIF), with support from Indigenous Peoples of Asia Solidarity (IPAS) and Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP).

Addressing media persons here on Monday, KHRW convener Pankaj Teron said the celebration would bring together indigenous representatives from across the eight North-eastern states.

"For the first time, we are organising the event on a grand scale to showcase our rich traditions, culture and cuisine to the world," he said, underlining the need to highlight the unique identities shared by indigenous peoples despite geographical distances.

According to the schedule, reception and registration will begin at 8 am followed by inauguration of the Indigenous Fair at 9 am by KCS president Humsing Bey. A solidarity rally with traditional dances and messages from indigenous communities of the region will begin at 10 am.

Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council chief executive member Tuliram Ronghang will attend as chief guest, while Karbi traditional king Longsing Ronghang will offer the invocation prayer.

A reception committee headed by Chandra Sing Kro as president and Sunil Tokbi as general secretary, with Kamsing Ingti as working president and several sub-committees, has been formed to ensure smooth conduct of the event.

BTR govt holds community meet, distributes books under Happiness Mission

BTR govt intensifies cultural outreach under Happiness Mission

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Aug 4: Continuing its outreach to promote cultural preservation and social engagement, the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) government on Monday organised an interaction programme with community representatives and distributed books under the Bodoland Happiness Mission at the BTCLA Auditorium Hall, Bodofa Nwgr here.

The four-day programme, which began on August 2 and will conclude on August 5, is an extension of the BTR Vision Document initiative and follows the release of several key publications on July 6 at Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra, Guwahati.

Among the books distributed were 'BTR Communication Bridge - A Practical Resource', a multilingual publication featuring 18 regional languages; 'Transforming Bodoland'; the annual re-



port of the Bodoland Happiness Mission; and 'Looking Within - My Reflections', authored by BTR chief executive member Pramod Boro.

The sessions, presided over by

BTCLA Speaker and Vision Document Committee chairperson Katiram Boro and attended by former executive member and MCLA Reoreo Nazriahy, provided a platform for the represen-

tatives of BTR's 26 communities to share their views on initiatives launched after the release of the Vision Document on December 30, 2025.

Highlights of the initiatives include a national seminar on language, literature and culture in New Delhi; a community museum project; restricted holidays for all communities on culturally significant days; a multilingual resource book of 1001 commonly used words and sentences; and the Bodoland Lifetime Achievement Award 2025 for folk culture.

The BTR government also announced a forthcoming ethnography research project to document the cultural and historical narratives of the region.

Community leaders expressed gratitude for what they termed an inclusive and proactive approach to safeguarding the unique identity and heritage of each group.

'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign preparations underway in Karbi Anglong

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 4: In line with the nationwide observance of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, the Government of India has once again launched the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign for 2025, urging citizens to hoist the National Flag at their homes between August 13 and 15.

The initiative aims to deepen citizens' emotional connection with the Tricolour and promote a collective sense of national pride and unity, according to an official statement.

In Karbi Anglong district, the District Administration has begun extensive preparations to ensure widespread participation in the campaign.

A coordination meeting was convened at the District Conference Hall in Diphu on Sunday, chaired by Additional Deputy Commissioner Ankita Bora, ACS, where detailed instructions were issued to departments for effective implementation.

As per the official statement, the campaign will be executed in three phases, combining physical participation with digital engagement.

Citizens are encouraged to hoist the National Flag at their residences and also participate virtually by uploading selfies with the Tiranga on the official website www.harghartiranga.com and pinning digital flags.

ADC Ankita Bora instructed various departments to organise themed events across educational institutions.

These include quiz, drawing, and rangoli competitions based on the National Flag, setting up of selfie points, and implementation of tricolour lighting at all government offices.

The Department of Handloom and Textile has been tasked with promoting weaves and products incorporating the Tricolour theme. The Assam State Rural Livelihoods Mission (ASRLM) will mobilise Self Help Groups (SHGs) to produce tricolour-themed decorative

items such as garlands and diyas to add vibrancy to the campaign.

In a collaborative move, the Departments of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Jal Shakti, and Ministry of Culture will jointly carry out awareness drives in both urban and rural areas to reinforce the values of the campaign and increase its outreach.

Educational institutions and civil society groups have been urged to play a leading role in community mobilisation.

The administration has called on schools, colleges, NGOs, youth groups, and local organizations to ensure active participation and help make the campaign a mass movement.

Officials noted that the 2025 edition of Har Ghar Tiranga builds on the overwhelming response from the past two years and is aimed at turning the National Flag into a daily symbol of active citizenship, unity in diversity, and collective patriotism.

Sonitpur District Day concludes with cultural tribute to heritage and progress



HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Aug 4: The two-day Sonitpur District Day celebrations came to a close on Sunday evening with a cultural programme titled "Chirojugomiya Geotor Ek Suriya Godhuli" at the Neriwalm auditorium here, paying a soulful tribute to the district's rich artistic legacy and collective aspirations.

The concluding programme, blending music, poetry, dance and drama, opened with a group presentation by Jyoti Bharati artists of a song penned by late musician Dilip Choudhury.

It was inaugurated by Naduar MLA and chairman of the Gorukhuti Agricultural Project, Padma Hazarika, who recited a poem by Rupkonwar Jyotiprasad Agarwala and presented a dramatic monologue from the classic play Samay, originally written by theatre doyen Prafulla Bora.

In his address, Hazarika highlighted Sonitpur's vibrant heritage and urged the youth to foster a work culture that would transform the district into a model of holistic development and a major hub of tourism and economic activity in Assam.

The evening featured a Sattriya group dance choreographed by renowned artiste Prerana Baishya, and

recital of self-composed poems by Superintendent of Police Barun Purkayastha and Additional Deputy Commissioner Kamal Baruah.

A colourful puppet dance staged under the aegis of the Women and Child Development Department was coordinated by ADC Kabita Kakati Konwar and District Social Welfare Officer Rubi Kalita.

Singers Chandamita Thakuria and Bishnu Sharma evoked nostalgia with evergreen Assamese numbers such as Ahar Dore Ubhoti Atori Gola, Jon Dhole Jonalite, Sandhiyar Akashot Bogoli Ure and Poka Dhanor Maje-Maje, rendering timeless classics of Jyotish Bhattacharya, Dr Bhupen Hazarika, Jayanta Hazarika and Dr Birendranath Dutta.

Earlier in the day, a community walkathon was flagged off by Deputy Commissioner Ananda Kumar Das from Ananda Chandra Agarwala Park.

Officials, students, NSS volunteers and members of the public took part.

A blood-donation camp was held at the Marwari Panchayati Dharamshala in association with Marwari Yuva Manch, alongside a special health check-up camp for senior citizens organised at the Ganesh Ghat office of the Red Cross Society.

The camp was inaugurated by Tezpur MLA Prithiraj Rava and attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner for Health Tahir Alam, Assistant Commissioner Irish Arman Ahmed and noted physician Dr Biswaranjan Kalita.

Over 100 elderly citizens, including retired academicians Dr Abani Kumar Sharma and Prof Himendra Nath Sarma, availed of the facilities.

As part of the District Day celebrations, a tree-plantation drive was undertaken on Saturday at Naduar led by CDC Manas Saikia, while on Sunday, cabinet minister Ashok Singhal inaugurated a district-level painting competition at Dhekiajuli.

Traffic police personnel and officers of the co-district were also felicitated with certificates of appreciation, in a ceremony coordinated by CDC officer Dyotibha Bora.

Youth drowns in Hadhadi waterfall near Chapanala

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Aug 4: A 21-year-old businessman from Nagaon town drowned in the Hadhadi waterfall near Chapanala under Samaguri Police Station in Nagaon district on Monday morning.

The deceased has been identified as Sanam Jain, son of the late Sudarshan Jain.

According to sources, he was visiting the site with four male and three female friends when the incident occurred during recreational water activities.

Following the incident, panic gripped the area. Locals and friends informed the police, after which personnel from Samaguri Police Station and the State Disas-

ter Response Force (SDRF) launched a search operation.

Jain's body was later recovered and sent to Nagaon Medical College and Hospital for post-mortem.

Police have launched an investigation into the incident. Nagaon-Batadroba MLA Rupak Sarma expressed deep sorrow and extended condolences to the bereaved family.

Local residents noted that this was not the first such incident at Hadhadi waterfall and Blue Water Lake, which have seen multiple drowning cases in recent years.

The community has urged the district administration to implement safety measures at popular tourist spots across the district.

Judges, police officers, bureaucrats hold talk on child protection ecosystem

GUWAHATI, Aug 4: Judges, police officers, bureaucrats and child rights experts came together in Guwahati to discuss how different departments can work better together to protect children, especially those coming in contact with the justice system, a statement said on Monday.

The first-ever state-level dialogue under the 'Sishu Mitra' programme was hosted by the Assam Police on Sunday to discuss the child protection ecosystem, it said.

"The event aligned with the chief minister's larger vision to create a justice system that is truly child-centric. We wanted to create a space where we could all speak

freely and find practical solutions," Assam Director General of Police Harmeet Singh said.

It was for the first time that the Assam Police hosted a multi-stakeholder dialogue on child protection under the 'Sishu Mitra' initiative, which will stand as a milestone in child-friendly policing, he added.

The programme was launched in 2019 by the Assam Police in partnership with UTSAH Child Rights Organisation and UNICEF.

It focuses on making policing more child-friendly and ensuring that children receive timely justice and rehabilitation, the statement said. (PTI)

Bir Lachit Sena warns against harbouring illegal migrants

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Aug 4: Bir Lachit Sena leader Shrinkhal Chaliha on Monday warned that attempts by "certain indigenous Muslims" to shield alleged illegal Bangladeshi settlers in Sivasagar could trigger communal tension in the otherwise peaceful district.

Addressing the media, Chaliha claimed no Hindu families had rented houses to suspected illegal migrants in areas such as Amolapatty, Phukan Nagar and Ganakpatty, whereas "many indigenous Muslim households" had allegedly provided shelter to "Miya" settlers in Muslim-dominated areas.

He cautioned against harbouring such migrants, asserting that Assamese youth were acting independently of any political party and were determined to protect the state from illegal settlers even if it meant taking "extreme steps".

Ronghang confident of BJP's continued hold over KAAC



HT Correspondent

DONGKAMUKAM, Aug 4: Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) chief Tuliram Ronghang on Monday asserted that the Autonomous State Demand Committee (APHL) would not return to power in the council "for the next 50 years".

Addressing a joining programme at the Middle Langmepi playground under No 7 Kopili MAC constituency, Ronghang claimed that regional party workers "have no future" and that "no development will come" as

"there will be none to pursue their problems in the council". He said people from every corner of Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong were joining the

BJP "day by day" as "being with the party in power ensures smooth development".

Denying APHL's charge, he said no panchayati raj system had been implemented in the twin districts and hence no panchayat elections were held. Ronghang appealed to all residents to come forward to build a peaceful and prosperous Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong.

Altogether 401 families led by Kangbura Bey and Babu Dera joined the BJP at the programme, which was attended by MLAs Rupsingh Teron and Dorsing Ronghang, as well as KAAC executive members, MACs, board chairmen and senior party leaders.

Two die, five hurt as night bus rams vehicles on Khowang flyover

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, Aug 4: Two persons were killed and five others injured after a night bus collided with two private vehicles on the Khowang flyover near Dibrugarh late on Sunday night.

Police said the victims were returning from a "Bol Bom" religious trip when their vehicles — bearing registration numbers AS 06 AA 5723 and AS 06 H 1049 — were hit by the speeding bus.

The deceased died on the spot, while the injured were rushed to Assam Medical College and Hospital, Dibrugarh, where they are undergoing treatment. The bus driver allegedly fled after the accident. A case has been registered and further investigation is on.

AAU launches integrated BTech-MTech course in molecular biotechnology

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, Aug 4: Assam Agricultural University (AAU) on Monday launched an integrated BTech-MTech programme in Molecular Biology and Biotechnology at the DBT-North East Centre for Agricultural Biotechnology (DBT-NECAB) here. University officials said nearly all 40 seats have already been filled in the first round of counselling itself, with three more rounds remaining.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by vice-chancellor Dr Bidyut Chandan Deka, dean of agriculture Dr P Pathak, director of postgraduate studies Dr A Das, joint registrar Dr Ramendra Samah, heads of departments and guest faculty members Dr Jitendra Kumar (BIRAC, New Delhi) and Dr Purnima Sharma (BCIL, New Delhi). Dr Kumar and Dr Sharma assured students of support in entrepreneurship development and industrial training through BIRAC and BCIL.

Addressing the gathering, Dr Deka lauded the efforts of the biotechnology department in launching the programme and underscored the importance of molecular technologies in driving socio-economic growth. Head of department and DBT-NECAB director Dr Bidyut Kumar Samah described the integrated course as an innovative initiative, noting that AAU is among the few institutions in the country to offer it. Highlighting technologies developed by the department, he congratulated course director Dr Sumita Acharyee and coordinators Dr Akhil Ranjan Baruah and Dr Robin Boro for their efforts.

Dr Samah added that, given the high biodiversity of the Northeast, the course is expected to significantly boost the biotechnology sector in the state and region.

Preparations underway for 33rd Borjan Zonal Karbi Youth Festival

HT Correspondent

BOKAJAN, Aug 4: The Borjan Jutang Havar Amai (Borjan Zonal Karbi Cultural Society) has begun preparations for the 33rd edition of the Zonal Karbi Youth Festival.

A meeting to discuss arrangements and scheduling of the event was held at the auditorium hall of the Bokajan Municipal Board.

During the meeting, a Reception Committee was formed with Jivan Chandra Pathak as president, Borsing Bey as vice-president, and Sardili Bey as secretary. Member of Autonomous Council and Executive Member of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Surya Rongphar, has been named Chief Patron, while retired professor Nobin Terang will serve as Patron. The meeting was attended by Borjan Zonal KCS president Janasing Teron, secretary Janasing Tokbi, Bokajan Municipal Board chairman Sardili Bey, and other members.

Tribal bodies rally against move to include non-protected groups in Tirap Belt

HT Correspondent

MARGHERITA, Aug 4: Over 5,000 people from various indigenous tribal communities on Monday took out a massive protest rally at Jagun against the Assam Cabinet's decision to include non-protected communities under the protected class category and grant land pattas within the Tirap Tribal Belt and Block under Margherita (No 83) constituency in Tinsukia district.

Starting from Kangkan Ground at Lakla, the rally — led by the All Assam Tribal Sangha (Margherita sub-division) and the Tirap Autonomous District Council Demand Committee, along with several students' and community organisations — culminated in Jagun town.

Participants from the Mising, Sonowal Kachari, Mech Kachari, Tangsa, Singpho, Tai Khamti, Tai Khamyang, Rabha, Tai Phakey, Ha-jong, Deori and Sema communities marched with banners and raised slogans, terming the decision a direct threat to the constitutional land rights, cultural identity and safeguards of Scheduled Tribes in the notified tribal belt.

Speakers at the rally stressed the historical role of the Tirap Tribal Belt and Block in protecting the rights and heritage of local tribes.

They warned the government that diluting its status would set a dangerous precedent for tribal areas across the state and country.

Pallab Shyam Wailung, general secretary of the Tirap Autonomous District Council Demand Committee, said granting protected status and land rights to non-protected groups in the belt was a "gross violation" of Article 342 of the Constitution.

He warned that the movement would intensify if the decision was not withdrawn, and said BJP leaders would "face consequences" in the 2026 Assembly elections.

A memorandum demanding immediate revocation of the decision and wider consultation on all future policies concerning tribal belts and blocks was submitted to the Prime Minister through the Margherita Co-Deputy Commissioner.

GU welcomes fresh FYIMP cohort with value-based induction

Gauhati University holds orientation for third FYIMP batch

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 4: Gauhati University held an inspiring orientation programme for the third batch of its Five-Year Integrated Masters' Programme (FYIMP) at the Birinchi Kumar Baruah Auditorium on Monday, welcoming over 900 new students.

Addressing the gathering, Vice Chancellor Prof Nani Gopal Mahanta recited the Sanskrit shloka "Kak chesta bako dhyanam, shwan nidra tathaiva cha, alpahari grhyayagi, vid-yarthi pancha lakshanam," highlighting five essential qualities of an ideal student — perseverance like a crow, focus like a crane, alertness like a dog, moderation in consumption, and detachment from material comforts.

He urged students to adopt these traits to achieve academic excellence and serve society. Guwahati Commissioner of Police Partha Sarathi Mahanta interacted with the students, stressing their responsibilities and the supportive role of parents.

"The true rebellion of a student lies in their pursuit of knowledge, not in the chase for possessions," he said.

Devasish Sharma, IAS, Deputy Commissioner of Nagaon, sang Dr Bhupen Hazarika's Manuhe Manuhor Babe, calling upon students to embrace values of humanity and social responsibility — evoking a strong emotional response from the audience. The event was attended by Prof Utpal Sarma, Registrar; Prof Rajib Handique, Academic Registrar; Dr Hemanta Kumar Nath, Secretary, University Classes; Dr Ranjan Kumar Kakati, Director, Students' Welfare; and Manas Pratim Kalita, President of the Post-Graduate Students' Union (PGSU), alongside parents, faculty, and staff members, reflecting a collective institutional commitment.

The induction programme will continue till August 13, offering students deeper engagement with the university's ethos and academic environment.



Delhi new labour codes

Delhi government has finally taken a step towards implementation of the controversial new labour codes by publishing its Draft Code on Social Security Rules, 2025. This is first to be framed by the Delhi Government under the Code on Social Security 2020 passed in the Parliament of India. The rules under other three codes – the Code on Wages 2019, Code on Industrial Relations 2020, and the Code on Occupational Safety, Health, and Working Conditions 2020 – are in various states of finalization, which the state government expects to complete in near future. It is to be noted that Delhi government led by Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) had been opposing the new labour codes which the PM Narendra Modi government at the centre got passed in the parliament as part of biggest labour reform in the country since independence. These codes primarily aimed ease of doing business. PM Modi had said that it would benefit the workforce in the country, which the joint platform of the Central Trade Unions (CTUs) has been opposing these as anti-labour and pro-corporate, with numerous protest demonstrations and even all India strike actions, the last being on July 9, 2025.

Nevertheless, the BJP led government at the Centre and in Delhi does not seem to be affected by the strike action of July 9, and they are going forward to implement those controversial labour codes. On July 24, the Union Minister of State for Labour and Employment Shobha Karandlaje has informed the Rajya Sabha in a written reply to a question that as a step towards implementation of the four labour codes, the Central Government has pre-published the draft Rules. Since labour is in the Concurrent List of the Constitution of India, state governments are also empowered to make labour rules. She informed the parliament that out of 36 states and UTs, 32 have pre-published their draft rules under the four labour codes. The states and UTs which have not pre-published their draft rules under any of the labour codes were West Bengal and Lakshadweep. Lakshadweep is a Union Territory while the West Bengal is ruled by Trinamool Congress led by Mamata Banerjee, who is dead against the new labour codes.

As for Delhi is concerned, it had pre-published draft rules under the Code of Wages 2019 in November 2021, when the state ruled by AAP under chief ministership of its Supremo Arvind Kejriwal. It should be noted that pre-publication of the rules allows the government for public consultation. Thereafter, Delhi has stopped framing of rules and their pre-publication. The work on labour codes progress only after BJP won the Delhi election held in February 2025, and came to power. BJP led government in Delhi has the started working on framing of rules under the four labour codes.

Gopinath Bordoloi: The architect who shielded Assam from Islamisation

In the turbulent landscape of modern Assam, where political discord and social fragmentation threaten the state's harmony, the memory of Gopinath Bordoloi, fondly known as "Lokpriya" or "loved by all," emerges as a beacon of unity and resilience. As the first Chief Minister of Assam in independent India, Bordoloi's indomitable spirit and farsighted leadership were instrumental in safeguarding Assam from being subsumed into an Islamic state during the critical juncture of India's independence in 1947. At a time when the British government's divisive policies sought to carve the subcontinent into Hindu and Muslim majority states, Bordoloi's resolute opposition to the Cabinet Mission Plan ensured Assam's distinct identity within the Indian Union. His legacy, rooted in principled leadership and unwavering commitment to his people, remains a clarion call for unity amidst the contemporary challenges facing Assam.

Born on June 6, 1890, in Raha, Assam, Gopinath Bordoloi's early life was marked by personal tragedy and academic excellence. The loss of his mother at the age of 12 did little to deter his intellectual pursuits. Excelling in his studies, he matriculated in 1907 and gained admission to Cotton College in Guwahati, then affiliated with the University of Calcutta. His academic journey continued at the prestigious Scottish Church College in Calcutta, where he earned his bachelor's degree in 1911, followed by a Master's degree from the University of Calcutta in 1914. Initially pursuing law, Bordoloi briefly served as Headmaster of Sonaram High School at the request of Tarun Ram Phukan before establishing a legal practice in Guwahati in 1917. This foundation of intellectual rigor and public engagement set the stage for his transformative political career.

Bordoloi's political awakening came in 1921 when he joined the Indian National Congress as a volunteer, immersing himself in the Non-Cooperation Movement. His arrest in 1922, resulting in a year of imprisonment, only deepened his commitment to India's freedom struggle. After the movement's suspension following the Chauri Chaura incident, Bordoloi resumed his legal practice but remained active in social work,

serving on the Guwahati Municipal Board and Local Board from 1930 to 1933. His advocacy for a separate university and high court for Assam during this period reflected his vision for the state's development. By 1936, the Government of India Act paved the way for provincial elections, and Bordoloi emerged as the leader of the opposition in the Assam Legislative Assembly, showcasing his growing political stature.

In September 1938, following the resignation of the Md. Sadulla Cabinet, Bordoloi was invited to form the government, becoming Assam's Premier. His tenure was marked by reforms aimed at protecting indigenous rights, including halting land allocations to migrant Muslims and suspending the Land Tax. The outbreak of World War II in 1939 and Mahatma Gandhi's call for resistance led to the resignation of his Cabinet in 1940, followed by his arrest in December of that year. Released due to ill health, Bordoloi's resolve remained unbroken. During the Quit India Movement of 1942, he faced imprisonment again, only to resume his activism upon release in 1944. His formation of a peace brigade in Assam to uphold non-violence amidst the Japanese advance from Burma and to aid war refugees from Burma and Malaya underscored his humanitarian leadership during a time of crisis.

The year 1946 marked a defining moment in Bordoloi's career as the Congress secured victory in the Assam Assembly elections, and he was unanimously chosen as Chief Minister for the second time, a position he held until his death on August 5, 1950. The arrival of the British Cabinet Mission on March 23, 1946, tasked with drafting a future Constitution for India, posed an existential threat to Assam's autonomy. The Mission's plan arbitrarily divided British India into three groups: Group A, comprising six Hindu-majority provinces; Group B, including Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, and the North-West Frontier Provinces; and Group C, clubbing Assam with Bengal to create a predominantly Muslim zone in eastern India. This proposal, designed to

align with the Muslim League's demands for Pakistan, was a calculated move by the British Labour government to perpetuate division in the subcontinent.

On April 1, 1946, Bordoloi met with the Cabinet Mission and vehemently opposed the inclusion of Assam in Group C. He argued that Assam, a province formed on linguistic and cultural lines with provincial autonomy, deserved to remain a distinct entity in the future constitutional framework.

Rejecting Mohammed Ali Jinnah's demand for Pakistan as "absolutely preposterous," Bordoloi also supported the separation of Sylhet district from Assam to preserve its cultural integrity. Despite his cogent arguments, the Mission persisted with its grouping scheme, announced on May 16, 1946. The proposal required Assam's representatives to the Constituent Assembly to sit with Bengal's representatives to determine both provincial and group constitutions by a simple majority, effectively subordinating Assam's interests to a Muslim-majority Bengal.

The announcement sparked widespread outrage in Assam. The Assam Provincial Congress Committee, meeting in Guwahati, lodged a strong protest with the Congress Working Committee, while the Asom Jatiya Mahasabha exposed the Muslim League's designs through secret documents. A fervent agitation swept the state, driven by fears that Assam would lose its identity in a "political whirlpool of Muslim India." On July 16, 1946, the Assam Legislative Assembly, led by Bordoloi, adopted a resolution expressing strong disapproval of the grouping plan. It directed Assam's ten representatives to the Constituent Assembly to refrain from sitting with any other province to devise Assam's constitution or settle related matters, a bold stand that underscored Bordoloi's determination to protect Assam's sovereignty.

Recognizing the gravity of the situation, Bordoloi sought the guidance of national leaders. Accompanied by Bijoy Chandra Bhagawati and Mahendra Mohan Choudhury, he met Mahatma Gandhi at Srirampur to present Assam's case. Strengthened by Gandhi's blessings, Bordoloi tirelessly lob-

bied the Congress Working Committee, which initially hesitated to take a firm stance. His persistence and strategic acumen ultimately prevailed, convincing Indian leaders to reject the Cabinet Mission's grouping scheme. This victory ensured that Assam could draft its own constitution independently, averting its inclusion in what would become East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). Had Bordoloi not acted with such foresight, Assam's history—and indeed India's northeastern frontier—might have been irrevocably altered.

Beyond this pivotal achievement, Bordoloi's post-independence contributions as Chief Minister were transformative. He spearheaded the establishment of Gauhati University, the High Court of Assam, Assam Medical College, and Assam Veterinary College, laying the foundation for the state's educational and judicial infrastructure. His efforts to rehabilitate millions of Hindu refugees fleeing violence in East Pakistan fostered communal harmony and stability. As chairman of the North-East Frontier Tribal and Excluded Areas Sub-Committee, Bordoloi shaped the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, ensuring autonomous governance for tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram. His literary contributions, including works like Annasaktiyog and Shreeramachandra, penned during his imprisonments, reflected his intellectual depth and Gandhian values.

Bordoloi's untimely death in 1950 was a profound loss, yet his legacy endured. In 1999, he was posthumously awarded the Bharat Ratna by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, becoming the first Northeasterner to receive this honor. On October 1, 2002, a life-size statue of Bordoloi was unveiled in the Parliament House by President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, cementing his place among India's national heroes. Revered as a disciplined Gandhian and a statesman of unparalleled stature, Gopinath Bordoloi's heroic leadership rescued Assam from a colonial conspiracy, ensuring its cultural and political integrity. As Assam grapples with contemporary challenges, Bordoloi's example of unity, integrity, and selfless service remains a powerful reminder of the leadership needed to navigate the state's future. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmipltd@gmail.com)



DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Dipak Kurmi

The criminalization of Indian politics

By: Hemanga Goswami

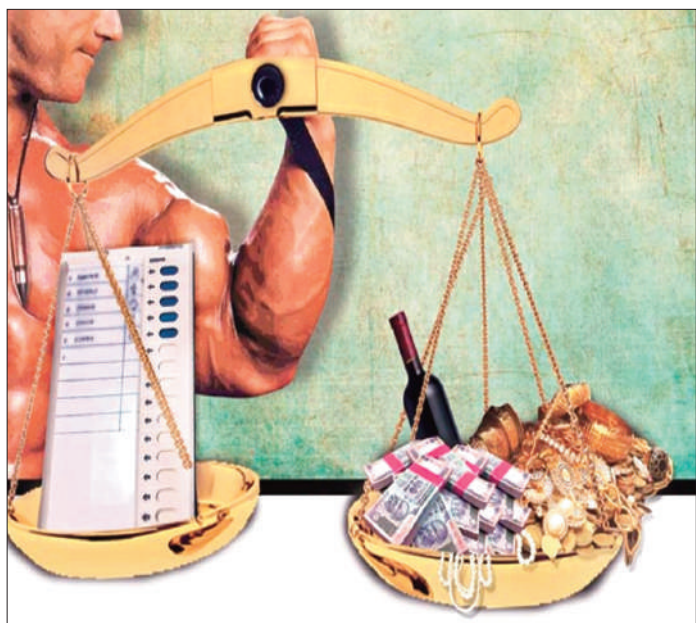
Politics has become the last refuge of criminals. Criminalization of politics is a major challenge for India, the world's largest democracy. Decriminalization of politics is essential for a healthy democracy. How dangerous it is for the democratic system to entrust the responsibility of legislation to lawbreakers. During every election, candidates are required to declare before the commission cases against them and a list of movable and immovable assets under affidavit. People can know who owns how much property and who is involved in how many criminal cases. 413 candidates in the first phase of the Lok Sabha elections have been revealed to have criminal cases against them. 18 candidates have criminal cases against women.

The next list will reveal the nature of more criminal candidates. The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) recently reported that the number of candidates with criminal cases in all major political parties in Karnataka has increased ahead of the 2023 Assembly elections. This has raised the issue of criminalization of politics. The ADR has recommended permanent disqualification of candidates convicted of felony contesting elections.

However, such disqualification has not yet been implemented. Political criminalization comes into play when criminals participate in politics to stay in government, ie contest elections and are elected to Parliament and State Assemblies. The growing threat has become a major problem for society. This has affected fundamental principles of democracy such as fairness in elections, rule of law and accountability etc. Since 2004, the number of candidates with criminal cases elected to Parliament in India has been increasing, according to ADR data.

In 2004, 24% of MPs had criminal cases pending, rising to 43% in 2019. A petition filed in February 2023 claimed that since 2009, the number of MPs with declared criminal cases had increased by 44%. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, 159 MPs declared under oath their serious criminal cases of rape, murder, attempted murder, kidnapping and crimes against women. One of the main reasons for the criminalization of politics is the vote bank.

Some candidates and political parties often resort to vote buying and other illegal activities to



win elections. The close relationship between politicians and some of the most unscrupulous people in their constituencies creates an environment that encourages the misuse of power and resources for personal gain breeds corruption and criminal activity.

This culture of political crime is often given dimension by these connections. Corruption is another serious problem—most candidates contesting elections require large amounts of money, people, and donations. Where will this huge amount of money come from? So many have to resort to black money criminal mafia industrialists take unfair advantage after elections in exchange for helping people with money. Indirectly, they want to use politicians to suit their own interests.

It is also the source of the massive corruption scam. Politicians make eloquent promises during elections to end corruption and muscle power but rarely deliver. The inefficient governance of the country also plays an important role in increasing the criminalization of politics. There is a lack of proper laws and regulations to govern the electoral process. There is only a model code of conduct, which is not enforced by any law. The main problem is that the lawbreakers become the law makers of the country in the guise of the people. This adversely affects the effectiveness of the democratic process in delivering good governance. The Constitution of India does not specify the grounds on which a person can be disqualified from contesting elections to Parliament, Assembly or any other legislative body. The Representation of the

People Act, 1951 provides for the criteria for disqualifying a person from contesting Assembly elections. Section 8 of the Act provides for disqualification from contesting elections if convicted of certain offences. Accordingly, a person sentenced to more than two years cannot stand for election for six years after the end of the term of imprisonment.

However, the law does not prevent persons who have criminal cases against them from contesting elections. The Vohra Committee on the Criminalization of Politics was established in 1983 with the objective of identifying the extent of political-criminal nexus and suggesting ways to effectively address the criminalization of politics. In 2017, the central government launched a one-year plan to set up 12 special courts to expedite criminal cases against MPs and MLAs. In 2002, the Supreme Court ruled that every candidate contesting elections must declare their criminal and financial records along with their educational qualifications. Voters should be more conscious and responsible when electing people's representatives so that no criminal mafia can take advantage of the voters' awareness to enter the floor of the holy parliament. Voters should also be aware of misuse of funds during elections.

The judiciary should play an active role by considering banning candidates with serious criminal charges from contesting elections. To increase criminalization in politics, the RPA of 1951 needs to be amended so that persons against whom cases of crimes of a serious nature are pending cannot contest elections.

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

The northeastern region of India, comprising eight states—Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim—has long been a vital yet overlooked part of the country. Despite its unique cultural mosaic, strategic geopolitical significance, and rich natural resources, this region continues to face persistent neglect by the Indian national media. The limited and often skewed media attention towards the Northeast not only marginalizes its people but also undermines the very fabric of India's unity and diversity. This ongoing sidelining is a complex problem rooted in geography, politics, cultural ignorance, and media economics, which together result in the Northeast being largely invisible on the national stage.

The roots of this media neglect trace back to the structure and priorities of India's mainstream press and electronic media. Major media houses are predominantly headquartered in metropolitan cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru. These urban centres shape editorial agendas that focus heavily on their immediate regions or on areas with large, lucrative markets. The Northeast, with its comparatively smaller population and lesser economic clout, falls far outside these priorities. News coverage is often dictated by considerations of advertising revenue and audience interest, making stories from the Northeast appear commercially less attractive. As a result, important issues from the region rarely receive the sustained attention or prime placement they deserve.

The persistent invisibility of the Northeast in national media narratives leads to a disturbing pattern. News about the region mostly surfaces when crises erupt—be it ethnic violence, insurgency, floods, or natural disasters. Even then, coverage is often fleeting, superficial, or sensationalized, reinforcing stereotypes of the Northeast as a conflict-ridden and unstable frontier. Such portrayals ignore the everyday realities of vibrant communities, developmental efforts, cultural festivals, and political dialogues that shape life in the region. This episodic and crisis-driven coverage serves only to alienate the people of the Northeast further and distorts the perception of the region among the wider Indian public.

A significant consequence of this neglect is the erosion of empathy and understanding between



the Northeast and the rest of India. The region's complex history, marked by colonial legacies, ethnic diversity, and struggles for identity, requires nuanced and context-rich storytelling. However, the national media's tendency to simplify or homogenize the Northeast into a monolithic entity strips away these complexities. Each Northeastern state is unique, with distinct languages, customs, and challenges, yet this diversity is rarely reflected in mainstream discourse. This reductive approach not only diminishes the region's cultural richness but also prevents the emergence of informed national conversations on its developmental and political issues. Representation within newsrooms is another critical aspect contributing to the Northeast's marginalization. Journalistic leadership and reporting staff predominantly hail from India's Hindi-speaking belt or southern metro cities, often lacking lived experience or cultural understanding of the Northeast. Without a strong presence of Northeastern journalists in mainstream media, stories from the region risk being reported with bias, ignorance, or outright misrepresentation. Meaningful inclusion of Northeastern voices in media production is vital to bridge the empathy gap and foster more accurate and respectful narratives.

Language barriers further compound the problem. While regional news outlets in local languages, their stories seldom reach national platforms due to lack of translation and cross-media collaboration. English and Hindi dominate the national media landscape, limiting the dissemination of vernacular reports from the region. Strengthening partnerships between regional and national media, and investing in translation and content sharing, would greatly enhance the visibility of Northeast issues on the national agenda.

The rise of digital media has brought some positive change by

providing alternative platforms for Northeastern voices. Online portals, independent news websites, and social media channels based in the region have begun to highlight local stories that traditional media overlook. These digital outlets play a crucial role in grassroots reporting and community engagement. However, despite their growth, their reach and influence remain limited compared to legacy national media giants. Without integration into the larger media ecosystem, these alternative sources cannot fully counterbalance the mainstream neglect.

The ramifications of this persistent media neglect go beyond public perception; they influence policymaking and governance as well. Media attention often acts as a catalyst for political action and resource allocation. When Northeast India's concerns do not receive consistent national coverage, they fail to generate the political urgency required for comprehensive development and peacebuilding. Infrastructure deficits, ethnic tensions, environmental challenges, and social welfare issues in the region remain peripheral in the national policy discourse largely because they are invisible in the public domain. Media, as a democratic watchdog, must actively spotlight these concerns to ensure accountability and progress.

Strategic considerations further underscore the importance of inclusive media coverage of the Northeast. The region shares sensitive international borders with China, Myanmar, Bhutan, and Bangladesh, making it a critical zone for national security and foreign policy. Moreover, India's "Act East" policy seeks to enhance connectivity and economic integration with Southeast Asia through the Northeast. However, the lack of national media focus on these developments limits public understanding and support for initiatives vital to the country's strategic interests. Comprehensive coverage would not only inform citizens

but also build national consensus on policies affecting the region.

Addressing this persistent neglect requires concerted efforts on multiple fronts. Media organisations must decentralize their operations by establishing robust bureaus in Northeastern states staffed with local journalists. Editorial priorities should treat stories from the region with equal seriousness and frequency as those from other parts of India. Journalism education and recruitment policies need to actively promote Northeastern representation at all levels, from reporters to editors. National media must also forge partnerships with regional news outlets to facilitate content exchange and wider dissemination of regional stories. Language inclusivity through translations and subtitling can help bridge communication gaps.

The role of media consumers is equally significant. Audiences must demand diverse and balanced news coverage that includes the Northeast as an integral part of India's national narrative. Civic activism, public discourse, and social media campaigns can pressure media houses to rectify biases and expand their geographical focus. Greater public curiosity and empathy towards the Northeast can drive editorial change and encourage more comprehensive reporting.

Persistent neglect of the Northeast by the Indian national media is not simply a journalistic oversight; it represents a democratic failure. In a pluralistic and federal nation, all regions and peoples must have a voice in the public sphere. The media's fundamental role as a bridge between the government, civil society, and the citizenry is compromised when vast areas of the country remain invisible. Genuine national integration and social cohesion depend on inclusive media that fairly represents the diversity of India's geography and culture.

Bringing the Northeast out of the shadows requires an acknowledgment of its importance and an unwavering commitment to balanced reporting. It demands recognition of the region's unique challenges and contributions, alongside a respect for its cultural and ethnic plurality. Only through sustained and empathetic media engagement can the Northeast become a visible, vibrant, and respected part of India's democratic and developmental journey. The persistent neglect of the Northeast must end, for the health of Indian democracy and the unity of its people depend on it.

Persistent neglect of Northeast in Indian National Media

How phones and WiFi hide our cosmic address

By: Satyabrata Borah

Scientists have long turned to the mysteries of black holes to unlock secrets about our place in the vast expanse of the universe. These enigmatic cosmic entities, where gravity is so intense that not even light can escape, serve as crucial beacons for understanding the structure, expansion, and evolution of the cosmos. By studying the signals emitted from around black holes, particularly radio waves, astronomers can map out galaxies, trace the history of the universe back to the Big Bang, and pinpoint our exact location within this immense framework. It's like using distant lighthouses to navigate a foggy sea. However, in an ironic twist, the very technology that connects us in our daily lives like mobile phones and WiFi is increasingly obscuring this cosmic view, creating interference that hampers scientific progress.

To appreciate the issue, we first need to delve into why black holes are so vital to astronomy. Black holes form from the collapse of massive stars, creating regions of spacetime so warped that they devour everything nearby. But it's not just their destructive power that fascinates scientists; it's the phenomena around them. For instance, as matter spirals into a black hole, it heats up and emits powerful radiation across the electromagnetic spectrum, including radio waves. These waves travel across billions of light-years to reach us, carrying information about the black hole's environment, the distribution of dark matter, and even the rate at which the universe is expanding. Projects like the Event Horizon Telescope, which captured the first image of a black hole in 2019, rely on synchronizing radio telescopes around the world to create a virtual Earth-sized observatory. This allows us to "see" these invisible giants and, by extension, orient ourselves in the cosmic landscape.

Our position in the universe isn't just a philosophical question. It's a scientific one with profound implications. By analyzing black holes in distant galaxies, astronomers can measure redshift, which tells us how fast objects are moving

away from us due to the universe's expansion. This helps refine the Hubble constant, a key parameter in cosmology. Moreover, supermassive black holes at the centers of galaxies act as anchors, influencing galactic formation and evolution. Understanding them helps us comprehend why our Milky Way looks the way it does and where Earth fits into this galactic neighborhood. Without clear observations, we're essentially flying blind in our quest to answer fundamental questions: How did the universe begin? Where is it headed? And what is our role in it?

Yet, this pursuit is being thwarted by an unlikely culprit: the radio frequency interference (RFI) from everyday devices. Mobile phones, WiFi routers, satellite communications, and even Bluetooth gadgets operate on frequencies that overlap with those used in radio astronomy. Radio telescopes are incredibly sensitive instruments designed to detect faint signals from the edge of the observable universe. When a telescope picks up these human-made signals, it drowns out the cosmic whispers, leading to noisy data that's hard to interpret. Imagine trying to listen to a faint whisper in a crowded stadium; that's the challenge astronomers face today.

The problem has escalated with the rollout of modern technologies. The advent of 5G networks, for example, uses higher frequency bands that encroach on the spectrum reserved for astronomical observations. WiFi 6 and beyond promise faster internet but at the cost of more pervasive RFI. Even low-Earth orbit satellites like those in Starlink constellations beam down signals that can blanket the sky, creating streaks of interference in telescope data. In remote observatories, where scientists once escaped urban noise, this satellite pollution is becoming unavoidable. A study published in *Nature Astronomy* in 2023 highlighted how satellite mega-constellations could increase RFI by up to 10 times, potentially blinding radio telescopes to certain frequencies.

This interference isn't just a minor annoyance; it has real consequences for science. Take the search for fast radio bursts (FRBs), mysterious



millisecond-long pulses often linked to black holes or neutron stars. Detecting these requires pristine radio data, but RFI can mimic or mask them, leading to false positives or missed discoveries. Similarly, efforts to study the cosmic microwave background rely on mapping subtle temperature variations, which RFI can distort. If we can't observe black holes accurately, our models of the universe become less reliable, stalling advancements in physics, from general relativity to quantum gravity theories.

The human element adds another layer to this dilemma. Our reliance on connectivity has exploded; billions of people use smartphones daily for work, social interaction, and entertainment. WiFi is ubiquitous in homes, offices, and public spaces, enabling everything from streaming videos to smart home devices. This technological

boom has lifted societies, bridging gaps and fostering innovation. But it comes at a price. As urban sprawl and digital infrastructure expand, even protected "radio quiet zones" like the National Radio Quiet Zone in West Virginia, USA, face encroachments from nearby developments.

Astronomers are fighting back with creative solutions. One approach is relocating telescopes to isolated spots with minimal human activity. The Atacama Desert in Chile hosts the Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array (ALMA), perched at high altitudes where the dry air and remoteness reduce interference. Similarly, the Square Kilometre Array (SKA), an ambitious project spanning Australia and South Africa, is being built in radio-quiet regions to capture unprecedented details of black holes and early universe phenomena. These sites enforce strict controls: no cell phones, no

WiFi, and even restrictions on vehicle electronics.

Technological fixes are also emerging. Advanced signal processing algorithms can filter out RFI, using machine learning to distinguish cosmic signals from terrestrial noise. For instance, software like RFI mitigation tools in the MeerKAT telescope in South Africa employs real-time excision of interfering signals. International regulations play a role too. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) allocates spectrum bands for astronomy, designating "protected" frequencies where commercial use is limited. However, enforcement is tricky, as demand for bandwidth from telecom giants grows. Advocacy groups like the Committee on Radio Astronomy Frequencies (CRAF) lobby for better protections, urging governments to balance economic interests with scientific needs.

Collaboration between scientists and industry offers hope. Some companies are designing "astronomy-friendly" technologies, like satellites that dim their signals over observatories or WiFi systems that avoid sensitive bands. Public awareness is key; educating people about the invisible pollution of RFI could lead to supportive policies. Imagine apps that notify users when their devices might interfere with nearby telescopes, encouraging temporary shutdowns.

This conflict highlights a broader tension in human progress: the trade-off between immediate convenience and long-term knowledge. Black holes remind us of our smallness in the universe, yet our gadgets are inadvertently veiling that truth. To truly know where we are, we must quiet the digital clamor. By fostering dialogue between tech developers, policymakers, and astronomers, we can preserve the clarity needed to gaze into the abyss.

Black holes aren't just distant curiosities. They're mirrors reflecting our cosmic address. If we let phones and WiFi block the view, we risk losing sight of our place in the grand scheme. But with mindful innovation, we can have our connectivity and our cosmos too. The universe is calling; we just need to clear the line.

India 2047: In search of a New Economic imagination

By: Dipak Kurni

Recent developments detrimental to India's economic interests — such as China's restrictions on the export of rare earths and fertilisers, and the sudden exodus of Chinese engineers and technicians from Foxconn's iPhone facilities — underscore an urgent need for strategic recalibration. These are not isolated incidents. They reflect broader shifts in global trade architecture, the weaponisation of commerce, and a deepening asymmetry between India and China's economic heft. India's immediate responses will naturally aim to cushion disruptions in critical supply chains. But the more pressing imperative lies beyond crisis management — it is about engineering a fundamental transformation in the policy architecture that has governed India's growth story. The central question now is: Will this moment of geopolitical churn catalyse a new development bargain that places growth, prosperity, and upward mobility at the heart of India's future?

The Foundations: A Compact Built on Stability

The idea of a growth-oriented elite compact is not new. Historically, India's priorities have often tilted away from economic expansion and towards state consolidation. At the time of Independence, the trauma of Partition, the incorporation of princely states, and fears of national disintegration shaped a compact rooted in stability rather than growth. A strong Centre, enshrined in the Constitution, was seen as essential for holding the Union together. Political arrangements and economic policies alike were crafted within this overarching framework. Planning was centralised. Economic efficiency took a back seat.

In the early decades after Independence, the state's interventions in the economy were not necessarily designed to maximise output or innovation but to manage social and political coalitions. Even the liberalising shifts of the 1980s, as noted by economists Dani Rodrik and Arvind Subramanian, were less a response to economic logic and more an attempt to garner political support from dominant business lobbies. The result was a stunted economic landscape: Anaemic growth, widespread poverty, and a missed opportunity to build a dynamic industrial base. The system failed to deliver mass prosperity.

The 1991 Watershed: Building a Growth Consensus

It took the 1991 balance of payments crisis to realign national priorities. What followed was the construction of a new compact — one that placed growth and development at its core. The liberalisation process triggered by the Narasimha Rao government, with Manmohan Singh as finance minister, represented a break from decades of economic conservatism. This was India's entry into a global order dominated by open markets, capital flows, and multilateral trade.

Economist Stefan Dercon calls such realignments "development bargains" — agreements among a nation's political and economic elites to prioritise prosperity and structure politics accordingly.

Interestingly, this new consensus emerged at a time of political decentralisation. The era of one-party dominance gave way to coalition politics, yet the elite bargain around growth held firm. The NDA government under Atal Bihari Vajpayee deepened the reform agenda, expanding infrastructure and opening up telecom and insurance sectors. The subsequent UPA governments continued the economic liberalisation journey, albeit with a sharper focus on inclusive development through schemes such as MGNREGA and the National Rural Health Mission. These welfare programmes were not detours from the growth compact, but rather its social stabilisers — mechanisms to preserve support for a market-oriented development path in a complex and unequal society.

The Age of Globalisation: Riding the Tides

This period coincided with the zenith of globalisation. As tariffs fell and capital flowed freely, India found a place in the global economy. Export-oriented sectors thrived, the IT industry exploded, and millions moved from agriculture into manufacturing and services. Urbanisation accelerated. Foreign direct investment surged. Poverty declined faster than in previous decades, and a new Indian middle class emerged — particularly from the southern and western states — propelled by the services sector and new aspirations.

Yet the high tide did not lift all boats equally. Regional disparities persisted. Infrastructure bottlenecks constrained growth. And while the private sector expanded, job creation lagged. Still, the broad elite consensus — that growth must be pursued as the primary national objective — endured. Even as growth slowed during the second UPA term, due in part to corruption scandals, policy drift, and global headwinds, there was no serious rupture in the underlying compact.

2014 and After: New Hopes, Emerging Fault Lines

The 2014 general elections were a turning point. The Bharatiya Janata Party, riding a wave of discontent over economic stagnation and corruption, came to power with a single-party majority — the first in three decades. This was widely interpreted as a moment of clarity: the end of fractious coalitions would allow decisive economic reforms. The promise of "Minimum Government, Maximum Governance" sought to reinvigorate the stalled growth story.

The Modi government's first term saw significant policy continuity. Initiatives like the Goods and Services Tax (GST), inflation targeting through a revamped RBI framework, and fiscal discipline carried forward the reform momentum. Foreign investors responded positively. Programmes like "Make in India," "Digital India," and the Jan Dhan Yojana hinted at new ambi-

tions. Yet, the actual outcomes on job creation and investment were mixed. The growth compact was in need of renewal, and by the time the pandemic struck, fault lines had already begun to show.

The Pandemic and the Populist Turn

The COVID-19 pandemic dealt a severe blow to India's economy, but it also exposed deeper weaknesses in the elite consensus. Economic inequalities widened. Urban employment collapsed. Upward mobility pathways, especially for the youth, shrank. In this climate, political incentives shifted. Across parties and states, a populist impulse took hold. Cash transfers, tax cuts, loan waivers, and free food schemes proliferated. While these measures provided short-term relief, they also diluted the focus on long-term productivity, innovation, and enterprise.

India's Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, aimed at fostering manufacturing champions, was one of the few major policy innovations. But it remains a nascent effort with limited traction beyond a few sectors. Another noticeable development is the informal strategy of promoting select private conglomerates as national champions. While this may work in some strategic areas, it cannot substitute for a broad-based industrial policy or genuine entrepreneurship.

What is missing is a new, updated version of the 1991-style development bargain — one that reflects contemporary geopolitical and economic realities. **Global Headwinds and Structural Constraints** The international environment has changed dramatically. Trade is no longer the reliable engine of growth it once was. The Trump era marked a retreat from multilateralism, a trend that continues in various forms globally. India, too, has grown wary of trade deals — walking out of RCEP was one such sign. But in choosing to stay out of deeper integration with Asian supply chains, India risks isolating itself from the most dynamic nodes of global manufacturing.

Compounding this are new disruptions: the rise of artificial intelligence, which threatens the very IT jobs that created India's middle class; China's increasing economic coercion; and the reshuffling of global value chains. In this context, a mere continuation of past strategies — or a reliance on state-led populism — will not suffice.

The Tall Order of 2047

India has set itself an ambitious target: becoming a developed nation by 2047. This is aspirational, and rightly so. But it must be tempered by economic realism. Only a few nations have managed to climb from middle-income status to high-income prosperity within a few decades. If India continues to grow at the pace seen over the past ten years — a 5.7% annual increase in per capita income in dollar terms — average incomes by 2047 will hover just under \$10,000. This would place India on the cusp of high middle-income status, but still well short of developed country benchmarks.

More importantly, sustaining such growth will require more than good intentions. It will require an explicit elite compact — a conscious agreement among the political and economic classes — to prioritise growth through innovation, investment, education, and global engagement. This will not happen automatically. It will demand tough reforms, a deeper fiscal state, and strong institutions.

Towards a New Growth Bargain

India needs to rediscover the political will to frame a new growth bargain. This bargain must go beyond slogans. It must re-imagine the roles of government and markets, empower cities and states, unleash entrepreneurial energies, and build resilient supply chains that are integrated with, not isolated from, global flows. It must invest massively in human capital, not just physical infrastructure.

At its core, this new compact must be built on the recognition that sustained growth — the kind that creates jobs, raises wages, and delivers dignity — is not a technocratic exercise. It is a political choice.

If India wants to be a developed nation by 2047, the road does not lie through populist giveaways or protectionist walls. It lies through a renewed commitment to economic dynamism, supported by a unified elite, and underwritten by the aspirations of its people. Only then can the promise of 1991 be fully realised. Only then will the dream of 2047 be within reach. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmigpld@gmail.com)

When hypocrisy takes a toll on children's education

By: Dr Privanka Saurabh

On one hand, in India, we claim to touch new heights in science, technology and space research, on the other hand, even today, such scenes are found in every corner of the country where children are deprived of education. This irony becomes even more painful when the path of education is obstructed not only by poverty or lack of resources, but also by superstition and hypocrisy.

Hypocrisy is not just the miracles shown by a fake Baba, it is a social trap in which the thoughts, questions and dreams of children are trapped. Such people whose aim is to establish their dominance in the society consider education to be the biggest threat. Because education teaches to question, gives discretion to think and makes a person self-reliant. This is the power that can close the shops of hypocrites.

Even today, in many villages, towns and backward areas of the country, there are so-called sadhus, saints and religious gurus who preach from the stage, "If you educate girls too much, they will not manage the house", "A daughter's education becomes an obstacle in her marriage", "A highly educated girl is inauspicious". Such statements are not just jokes, they give direction to the thinking of the society and prevent parents from sending their children to school.

Despite government efforts, education cannot spread until the mindset of the society changes. On one hand, the government is running schemes like nutritious food, scholarships and free books to bring children to school, while on the other hand, the self-proclaimed contractors of the society are looking at education with disdain.

Every voice opposing education is actually a symbol of the fear that haunts the hypocrites — that if a child gets educated, he will raise questions on issues like casteism, discrimination, discrimination in temples, the status of women, exploitation and injustice. This fear keeps them away from books.

Even today, it is said in many places that "If you educate your daughters too much, it will become difficult for them to get married." At some places, it is also said that "An educated girl becomes cultureless." This thinking is not only a result of backwardness, but also of that hypocritical thinking which promotes ignorance in the name of religion and culture.

The point to be noted here is that those self-proclaimed religious leaders who say that education is useless are themselves highly educated. Their children study in foreign universities, but they teach the children of the villages the lessons of 'Gurukul culture' where there is no place for logic. This double standard is the biggest tragedy of this country.

The boundary line between faith and superstition gets blurred when some baba says "send children to satsang, not school" and the society follows him blindly. This is the moment when hypocrisy prevails over education.

An educated society is the foundation of a progressive nation. But when education itself is viewed with suspicion, the future of the country becomes dark. Considering schools inferior to places of worship, giving teachers a second place in society and giving priority to mantras instead of knowledge — all this is the result of the same mentality.

It is also worth noting that many times political power and religious hypocrisy come together. In the vote bank politics, so-called sadhus get a platform and they

exploit the mentality of children by calling their education a delusion and a sin. Many times such preachers even get a government platform, security and facilities.

When children go to school, they don't just learn math, science, or language. They also learn freedom, equality, reason, and rights. This is what makes hypocrites uncomfortable.

They don't want any child to ask -

"If we are all children of God, then why are there castes?"

"Why are women not allowed to enter temples?"

"Why don't the poor get good schools?" Only these questions can shake the roots of hypocrisy, hence the first attack of such people is always on education.

The sad thing is that even the education department sometimes succumbs to these tendencies. Teaching religious rituals in schools, giving holidays in the name of Babas, or holding bhajan competitions have now become common.

In such a situation, a child who should be given the freedom to think is taught the lesson of imitation.

The condition of girls is even more pathetic. Silencing them in the name of "Kanyadaan", keeping them confined in the house in the name of 'purity', and depriving them of education in the name of 'culture' — all this is the true picture of a society that shines from outside but is rotten from within.

We often say that an educated mother educates the entire family. But when society forces that mother out of school, generations grow up in darkness.

We have to understand that education is not an optional means, it is a fundamental right. The sparkle in the eyes of children increases when they have books in their hands, when they have the freedom to ask questions and when the teacher is their guide, not some Baba.

If we want a society that is rational, just and egalitarian, then we must connect children with education. For this, not just plans but a change in mindset is required.

We have to ask this direct question to the babas and hypocrites -

"If education is a sin, then why do you educate your children?"

"If it is unfair for girls to go to school, then why are the daughters of your house going to college?"

Asking questions is the first step in the fight against hypocrisy.

Teachers should not only teach the curriculum but also make children discerning. They should tell them the difference between faith and understanding. Schools should become centres where independent thoughts are respected and not just imitation is taught.

Governments should stop any kind of religious interference in the field of education. Constitutional citizens should not allow the rights of children to be violated in the name of religion. And above all, society should consider children's education as a 'duty' and not a 'religion'.

There can be no religion greater than the future of children. His school is more important than any sermon.

More important than any miracle is his courage to ask the question.

Only books can break down the walls of hypocrisy. And on the first page of that book it should be written - "I can think, therefore I am free."

Ultimately, it is our collective responsibility to raise our children in a society where they can live with conscience, think freely and shape their future above all kinds of hypocrisy.



US tariffs put 30,000 South African jobs at risk, officials say

JOHANNESBURG, Aug 4: US reciprocal tariffs have put an estimated 30,000 jobs at risk, South African authorities said Monday, four days before a 30 per cent US tariff on most imports from South Africa kicks in.

South Africa was slapped with one of the highest tariff rates by its third-largest trading partner — after China and the EU — creating uncertainty for the future of some export industries and catapulting a scramble for new markets outside the US Tariffs come into effect on August 8.

In an update on mitigation measures, a senior government official warned that an estimated 30,000 jobs were in jeopardy if the response to the higher tariffs was “mismanaged”.

“We base this on the ongoing consultations that we have with all the sectors of the economy from automotive, agriculture and all the other sectors that are going to be impacted,” said Simphiwe Hamilton, director-general of the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition.

South Africa is already grappling with stubbornly high unemployment rates. The official rate was 32.9 per cent in the first quar-

ter of 2025 according to StatsSA, the national statistical agency, while the youth unemployment rate increased from 44.6 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2024 to 46.1 per cent in the first quarter of 2025.

In his weekly public letter on Monday, President Cyril Ramaphosa said that South Africa must adapt swiftly to the tariffs since they could have a big impact on the economy, the industries that rely heavily on exports to the US and the workers they employ.

“As government, we have been engaging the United States to enhance mutually beneficial trade and investment relations. All channels of communication remain open to engage with the US,” he said. “Our foremost priority is protecting our export industries. We will continue to engage the US in an attempt to preserve market access for our products.”

President Donald Trump has been highly critical of the country’s Black-led government over a new land law he claims discriminates against white people.

Negotiations with the US have been complicated and unprecedented, according to South Africa’s ministers, who denied rumours



that the lack of an ambassador in the US affected the result of the talks. The Trump administration expelled Ebrahim Rasool, South Africa’s ambassador to Washington, in mid-March, accusing him of being a “race-baiting politician” who hates Trump.

International Relations Minister Ronald Lamola highlighted that even countries with ambassadors in the US and allies of Washington had been hard hit with tariffs. However, Lamola confirmed that the process of appointing a replacement for Rasool was “at an advanced stage”.

The US accounts for 7.5 per cent of South Africa’s global exports. However, several sectors, accounting for 35 per cent of exports to the US, remain exempt from the tariffs. These include copper, pharmaceuticals, semiconductors, lumber products, certain critical minerals, stainless steel scrap and energy products remain exempted from the tariffs.

The government has been scrambling to diversify South Africa’s export markets, particularly by deepening intra-African trade. Countries across Asia and the Middle East, including the

United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia have been touted as opportunities for high-growth markets. The government said it had made significant progress in opening vast new markets like China and Thailand, securing vital protocols for products like citrus.

The government has set up an Export Support Desk to aid manufacturers and exporters in South Africa search for alternate markets.

While welcoming the establishment of the Export Support Desk, an independent association representing some of South Africa’s biggest and most well-known businesses called for a trade crisis committee to be established that brings together business leaders and government officials, including from the finance ministry.

Business Leadership South Africa said such a committee would ensure fast, coordinated action to open new markets, provide financial support, and maintain employment.

“US tariffs pose a severe threat to South Africa’s manufacturing and farming sectors, particularly in the Eastern Cape. While businesses can eventually adapt, urgent temporary support is essential,” said BLSA in a statement. (AP)

Tesla awards CEO Musk millions in shares valued at about USD 29 billion

WASHINGTON, Aug 4: Tesla is awarding CEO Elon Musk 96 million shares of restricted stock valued at approximately USD29 billion, just six months after a judge ordered the company to revoke his massive pay package.

The electric vehicle maker said in a regulatory filing on Monday that Musk must first pay Tesla USD 23.34 per share of restricted stock that vests, which is equal to the exercise price per share of the 2018 pay package that was awarded to the company’s CEO.

In December Delaware Chancellor Kathaleen St Jude McCormick reaffirmed her earlier ruling that Tesla must revoke Musk’s multi-billion-dollar pay package. She found that Musk engineered the landmark pay package in sham negotiations with directors who were not independent.

At the time McCormick also rejected an equally unprecedented and massive fee request by plaintiff attorneys, who argued that they were entitled to legal fees in the form of Tesla stock valued at more than USD 5 billion. The judge said the attorneys were entitled to a fee award of USD 345 million.

The rulings came in a lawsuit filed by a Tesla stockholder who challenged Musk’s 2018 compensation package. (AP)

Videos of emaciated Israeli hostages in Gaza increase pressure on Netanyahu for ceasefire



JERUSALEM, Aug 4: New images of emaciated Israeli hostages held in Gaza have horrified Israelis and added pressure on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to reach a ceasefire with Hamas, even as his government considers another expansion of the nearly 22-month war.

The videos released late last week by militant groups Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad show two skeletal hostages pleading for their lives. In one, Eyyatar David says he is digging his own grave and speaks of days without food. In the other, Rom Braslavsky writhes in agony on a dirty mattress and says injuries in his foot prevent him from being able to stand.

The Associated Press does not normally publish videos of hostages filmed under duress, but is publishing brief excerpts after receiving consent from their families.

The videos led tens of thousands of Israelis to take to the streets on Saturday night and demand a ceasefire deal, in one of the largest turnouts for the weekly protests in recent months.

“In this new video, his eyes are extinguished. He is helpless, and so am I,” Braslavsky’s mother, Tami, said in a statement.

Warnings of famine in Gaza
The videos were released as warnings about famine among Palestinians are growing in Gaza. Images of starving Palestinians have drawn international condemnation of Israeli policies limiting aid deliveries into the territory.

Families of the hostages fear that the lack of food threatens the remaining hostages, too. Fewer than half of the 50 hostages are believed to be alive.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he was shocked by the images of the two hostages and met with the Red Cross to ask that it bring hostages food and medicine — access that the organisation says it has never been granted by Hamas. “When I see these, I understand exactly what Hamas wants,” Netanyahu said on Sunday.

day. “They do not want a deal. They want to break us using these videos of horror.”

Netanyahu said the videos renewed his determination to release the hostages and eliminate Hamas. He added that the militant group is starving the hostages “like the Nazis starved the Jews.”

The International Committee of the Red Cross said it was “appalled by the harrowing videos” and called for access to the hostages.

Hamas’ military wing said it was ready to respond positively to Red Cross requests to deliver food to hostages, if humanitarian corridors for aid deliveries are opened in a “regular and permanent manner” in Gaza. It also asserted that the hostages “eat the same food as our fighters and the general public” and denied any intentional starvation of them.

Israel’s mission to the UN said it requested an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council on the hostages, which will take place Tuesday. Israel’s Foreign Minister Gideon Sa’ar said he will travel to New York for the meeting.

The videos were being used by Hamas “to force upon us their conditions on remaining in power in Gaza,” Sa’ar asserted.

Netanyahu on Monday said he will convene the Cabinet this week to instruct Israel’s military on how to achieve the goals of defeating the enemy, releasing the hostages and assuring that Gaza will no longer pose a threat to Israel: “all of them, without exception.”

More starvation deaths
The videos of the hostages emerged as experts warn that Gaza faces “a worst-case scenario of famine” because of Israel’s blockade. No aid entered Gaza between March 2 and May 19, and aid has been limited since then. The United Nations says at least 850 people have been killed attempting to access aid near chaotic and dangerous distribution sites set up by Israel and the United States in May. Gaza’s Health Ministry said Monday that five more Palestinian adults died of malnutrition-related causes in the past 24 hours. (AP)

Cambodian, Thai officials meet in Malaysia to iron out ceasefire details

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 4: Thai and Cambodian officials met in Malaysia on Monday for the first round of cross-border committee talks since a tense ceasefire was brokered last week after five days of deadly armed border clashes that killed dozens and displaced over 260,000 people.

The four-day General Border Committee meetings were initially due to be hosted by Cambodia, but both sides later agreed to a neutral venue in Malaysia, the annual chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which has mediated the halt in hostilities last month.

The July 28 ceasefire followed economic pressure from President Donald Trump, who had warned the two warring nations that the US would not conclude trade deals with them if the fighting persisted. Washington lowered tariffs on goods from the two countries from 36 per cent to 19 per cent on Aug 1 following the truce. Monday’s talks focused on ironing out details to avoid further clashes. Discussions of the decades-long competing territorial claims over the pockets of land near the shared border are not on the agenda.

Thailand and Cambodia have been feuding neighbours for centuries, since both were mighty empires. In modern times, a 1962 ruling by the International Court of Justice awarding Cambodia the land on which the ancient Preah Vihear temple stands marked a new low point in relations, and other border territory remained claimed by both countries.

Fighting erupted in 2011 at Preah Vihear, after which the International Court of Justice in 2013 reaffirmed its earlier ruling, ranking Thailand. Relations deteriorated again sharply in May this year, when a Cambodian soldier was shot dead in a brief fracas in one of the disputed border zones, setting off diplomatic and trade sanctions, one against the other.

Soon after two incidents last month in which Thai soldiers were wounded by land mines in disputed territory, for which Thailand blamed Cambodia, the two sides downgraded diplomatic relations and fighting broke out, each side blaming the other for starting the armed clashes. Thai Deputy Defence Minister Gen Natthaphon Nakpanit is leading a delegation that includes representatives of all branches of the military, in addition to the police force and the ministries of foreign affairs. (AP)

Imran Khan’s party to hold protests on second anniversary of his arrest

ISLAMABAD, Aug 4: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party on Monday announced that it will hold nationwide protests on Tuesday on the second anniversary of the arrest of the party founder and former prime minister Imran Khan.

Khan was arrested on August 5, 2023, from his residence in Lahore after being convicted by a court in a corruption case. He has been incarcerated since his arrest due to conviction in other cases, and is currently being held at the Adiala Jail, Rawalpindi.

“PTI to stage protests tomorrow (Tuesday) across the country, as per instructions of the former prime minister Imran Khan. Protests will be staged constituency-wise, with the public demanding the rule of law,” said Zulfikar Bukhari, adviser to Imran Khan on international media.

He also said that after “peaceful protests”, the party would conduct conventions across the country in the next stage, which would be followed by public rallies in the last stage. “Strategy to be announced in different phases, which shall be communicated accordingly,” he said.

Bukhari also claimed that workers were being arrested by the Punjab government, claiming that around 150 workers had been detained so far in Lahore. “Fearing the protest by PTI, the Punjab government has started arresting party workers and members, descending into madness by barging into their residences late last night, without warrant or providing any arrestable offence,” he said.

He said that apart from Lahore, there were arrests in Rawalpindi but declined to give figures. “Their crime? Dare to state a protest, which is yet to happen. That’s not lawful, that’s tyranny,” he said.

The Express Tribune newspaper reported that the PTI, under the auspices of an opposition parties’ alliance, the Tehreek Tahaffuz Ain-e-Pakistan (TTAP), is going to launch its much-touted protest movement against what it called the “illegal” detention of Khan. “On August 5, a nationwide protest will be held

under the flags of Pakistan, the PTI, and the white flag of peace,” announced TTAP Secretary General Asad Qaiser in an emergency press conference held on Sunday at the PTI District Secretariat in Swabi, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

He said August 5 marks the completion of two years since Khan’s “illegal” arrest, and the opposition will hold peaceful protests throughout Pakistan.

Qaiser emphasised that the movement would remain entirely within the constitutional and legal framework and would be conducted peacefully. He said if there is any evidence against Khan, then it should be presented in an open court.

“Imran Khan is the most popular and dignified leader of this nation, who not only elevated Pakistan’s image internationally but also gave the nation a vision,” he added. “His legal and constitutional rights are being violated, which is a direct attack on democracy, the Constitution, and the rule of law.”

The PTI has finalised its plan of action for the August 5 protest, according to Khan’s instructions. Instead of marching toward Islamabad or holding a central rally, it has been decided that protests will be held in every district.

In Peshawar and Khyber districts, a rally will begin at 3:30 pm from Hayatabad Toll Plaza on Ring Road and proceed to Qila Bala Hisar, led by Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur.

In Swabi, participants will gather at the Ambar Interchange, and a one-day protest will be held. The protest will start at 3:30 pm and continue until Isha (evening) prayers.

In Nowshera, party workers will hold a day-long protest at Khairabad beginning at 3:30 pm.

All members of the National Assembly, the K-P Assembly and ticket holders have been instructed to record videos of their gatherings from their residences, or starting points and submit these to their respective district organisations, which will then forward them to the regional leadership. (PTI)

SKorea begins removing border propaganda speakers in conciliatory gesture toward North

SEOUL, Aug 4: South Korea’s military said Monday it had begun removing loudspeakers along its border with rival North Korea in a move aimed at reducing tensions.

The speakers had previously been used to blast anti-North Korean propaganda across the border, but the South’s new liberal government halted the broadcasts in June in a conciliatory gesture as it looks to rebuild trust and revive dialogue with Pyongyang, which has largely cut off cooperation with the South in recent years. South Korea’s Defence Ministry said the physical removal of the loudspeakers from the border was another “practical measure” aimed at easing tensions between the war-divided Koreas and that it does not affect the South’s military readiness. Lee Kyung-ho, a spokesperson for the ministry, didn’t share specific details on how the removed loudspeakers will be stored or whether they could be quickly redeployed to the border if tensions flare again between the Koreas. There were no discussions between the two militaries ahead of the South’s decision to remove the speakers, Lee said during a briefing.

North Korea, which is extremely sensitive to any outside criticism of its authoritarian leadership and its third-generation ruler, Kim Jong

Un, didn’t immediately comment on the South Korean step. The South’s previous conservative government resumed the daily loudspeaker broadcasts in June last year following a years-long pause in retaliation for North Korea flying trash-laden balloons toward the South in a psychological warfare campaign.

The speakers blasted propaganda messages and K-pop songs, a playlist clearly designed to strike a nerve in Pyongyang, where Kim’s government has been intensifying a campaign to eliminate the influence of South Korean pop culture and language among the population in a bid to strengthen his family’s dynastic rule.

The Cold War-style psychological warfare campaigns further heightened tensions already inflamed by North Korea’s advancing nuclear program and South Korean efforts to expand joint military exercises with the United States and their trilateral security cooperation with Japan. South Korean President Lee Jae Myung, a liberal who took office in June after winning an early election to replace ousted conservative Yoon Suk Yeol, has vowed to improve relations with Pyongyang, which reacted furiously to Yoon’s hard-line policies and shunned dialogue. (AP)

China pushes back at US demands to stop buying Russian and Iranian oil

WASHINGTON, Aug 4: US and Chinese officials may be able to settle many of their differences to reach a trade deal and avert punishing tariffs, but they remain far apart on one issue: the US demand that China stop purchasing oil from Iran and Russia.

“China will always ensure its energy supply in ways that serve our national interests,” China’s Foreign Ministry posted on X on Wednesday, following two days of trade negotiations in Stockholm, responding to the US threat of a 100 per cent tariff.

“Coercion and pressuring will not achieve anything. China will firmly defend its sovereignty, security and development interests,” the ministry said.

The response is notable at a time when both Beijing and Washington are signalling optimism and goodwill about reaching a deal to keep commercial ties between the world’s two largest economies stable — after climbing down from sky-high tariffs and harsh trade restrictions. It underscores China’s confidence in playing hardball

when dealing with the Trump administration, especially when trade is linked to its energy and foreign policies.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, emerging from the talks, told reporters that when it comes to Russian oil purchases, the “Chinese take their sovereignty very seriously”.

“We do not want to impede on their sovereignty, so they would like to pay a 100 per cent tariff,” Bessent said.

On Thursday, he called the Chinese “tough” negotiators, but said China’s pushback has not stalled the negotiations. “I believe that we have the makings of a deal,” Bessent told CNBC.

Gabriel Wildau, managing director of the consultancy Teneo, said he doubts President Donald Trump would actually deploy the 100 per cent tariff. “Realising those threats would derail all the recent progress and probably kill any chance” for Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping to announce a trade deal if they should meet this fall, Wildau said.

China plays hardball

When Trump unveiled a sweeping plan for tariffs on dozens of countries in April, China was the only country that retaliated. It refused to give in to US pressure. “If the US is bent on imposing tariffs, China will fight to the end, and this is China’s consistent official stance,” said Tu Xinqun, director of the China Institute for WTO Studies at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing. WTO is the acronym for the World Trade Organization. Negotiating tactics aside, China may also suspect that the US will not follow through on its threat, questioning the importance Trump places on countering Russia, Tu said.

Scott Kennedy, senior adviser and trustee chair in Chinese Business and Economics at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, said Beijing is unlikely to change its posture when it sees inconsistencies in US foreign policy goals toward Russia and Iran, whereas Beijing’s policy support for Moscow is consistent and clear. (AP)

Boeing addresses more labour strike amid attempt to resuscitate its reputation

ARLINGTON (US), Aug 4: A strike by thousands of workers who build fighter jets for Boeing at three US plants is the second labour disruption for the plane builder in less than a year.

The strike that began just after midnight Monday involving more than 3,000 members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers arrives as Boeing is attempting to resuscitate its reputation.

Boeing, once a beacon of US manufacturing and the gold standard in the global aircraft industry, has been rocked by fatal crashes, investigations and changes in leadership.

Following is a quick rundown of events that have buffeted the Arlington, Va., company.

January 2013: 787s worldwide are grounded nearly three weeks

after lithium-ion batteries that are part of the planes led to a fire in one plane and smoke in a second.

August 2015: The first 737 Max plane rolls off the production line, and within a year, it is undergoing flight tests.

October 29, 2018: Lion Air Flight 610, a Boeing 737 Max 8, plunges into the Java Sea off the coast of Indonesia minutes after takeoff from Jakarta, killing all 189 people on board. Questions are raised over a new Boeing flight-control system called MCAS that Boeing did not disclose to pilots and airlines. Indonesian investigators say the Flight 610 pilots struggled for control as the automated system pushed the nose of the plane down more than two dozen times.

March 1, 2019: Wall Street remains enamoured with Boeing as

commercial aircraft orders rocket. Shares of Boeing Co. close at an all-time high of USD 430.35.

March 10, 2019: Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302, a Boeing 737 Max 8, crashes after takeoff from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, killing 157 passengers and crew members. Shares of Boeing began a long, downward slide and have yet to recover.

March 2019: Within days of the second crash, the US Federal Aviation Administration and regulators in nations around the world ordered the grounding of all 737 Max jets.

December 23, 2019: Boeing ousts CEO Dennis Muilenburg, who was seen as pressuring the FAA to lift the Max grounding order.

January 7, 2021: US Justice Department charges Boeing with fraud but won’t prosecute the company for misleading regulators



about the 737 Max if it pays a USD 2.5 billion settlement.

January 5, 2024: A panel covering an unused emergency exit blows off a 737 Max 9 during an Alaska Airlines flight. Pilots land the plane safely.

February 26, 2024: A panel of outside experts, convened after the two deadly crashes, reports Boeing’s safety culture falls short despite the company’s efforts to fix it.

March 11, 2024: A LATAM Airlines Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner

flight between Australia and New Zealand suddenly plunges, injuring 50 people. Boeing tells airlines to inspect switches on pilots’ seats after a published report said an accidental cockpit seat movement likely caused the rapid loss of altitude.

March 25, 2024: Dave Calhoun, who replaced Muilenburg, says he will step down as CEO by year-end as part of a broader shakeup of Boeing leadership.

July 7, 2024: Boeing agrees to plead guilty to conspiracy to defraud the US government for misleading regulators who approved pilot-training standards for the Max.

July 31, 2024: Boeing names Kelly Ortberg as its new chief executive. Ortberg is a trained engineer and was CEO of aerospace supplier Rockwell Collins for eight years. Many see his appointment

as an attempt by Boeing to get back to its roots.

Sept 13, 2024: About 33,000 Boeing factory workers walk off the job in a strike that will cripple production at one of the preeminent manufacturers in the US for almost two months. It is the first labour action taken against the company in 16 years.

May 23, 2025: The Justice Department reaches a deal with Boeing that takes criminal prosecution off the table for allegedly misleading regulators about the 737 Max jetliner before the two fatal plane crashes. Boeing agreed to pay or invest more than USD 1.1 billion, including an additional USD 445 million for crash victims’ families, removing the risk of a criminal conviction that would have jeopardised the company’s status as a federal contractor. (AP)

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Mission Karmayogi a movement, not mere training programme: CM Khandu

'Build not just a workforce, but a culture of service'



ITANAGAR, Aug 4: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Monday described Mission Karmayogi as a transformative movement rather than just a training programme.

and Tripura, Khandu described Mission Karmayogi as more than just a training programme.

"Mission Karmayogi is not just another training programme. It is a movement. A transformative journey to reorient our government employees to go beyond the routine, to act with empathy, to serve with humility, and to solve with creativity," Khandu said.

"Real change doesn't start in policy files. It starts within us, in how we show up and how we treat the people who walk into a public office," he asserted.

The chief minister called for a complete overhaul of traditional governance approaches through role-based human resource management, digital upskilling,

modernisation of departmental training, and a performance-and transparency-driven culture. Khandu stressed that development should not come at the cost of cultural identity.

"If development erodes our cultural values, that's a tragedy. But if, in the name of preserving culture, we reject development, that's equally tragic," he observed.

"Let us build not just a workforce, but a culture of service. Let us be the reason someone believes the system can work for them," he added.

Highlighting the need for holistic progress, he said improving the happiness index must go hand-in-hand with governance reforms.

"If governance improves but the happiness index declines, we've missed the point," he added.

The CM reaffirmed the state government's commitment to inclusive development, particularly for the underserved.

He noted that Mission Karmayogi will play a critical role in reaching "the last person in the queue."

Calling it the world's largest capacity-building initiative, Khandu lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership in spearheading the reform.

He urged lead trainers to immerse themselves in the training and return to guide the next level of master-trainers in their districts.

The chief minister set a deadline of

September for completing Mission Karmayogi training modules across the state.

Khandu reaffirmed the state government's commitment to inclusive development, particularly for the underserved.

Mission Karmayogi does not target only top-tier officers. It includes all personnel involved in government functioning, including district administrators, clerks, and field agents, officials said.

Also present were Chief Secretary Manish Kumar Gupta, CBC Member (HR) Dr R Balasubramaniam, CBC Joint Secretary Shyama Prasad Roy, consultants from the Capacity Building Commission, and lead trainers from both Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura. (PTI)

Golden Jubilee celebrations of Arunachal Assembly



HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Aug 4: The Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly (APLA) commenced on Monday with the curtain-raiser of the APLA@50 Outreach Connect programme at Rajiv Gandhi University (RGU), according to an official statement.

The event was graced by Speaker Tesam Pongte Tutsa and legislators Nabam Vivek and Laisam Simai.

Jointly organised by the Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly and RGU, the initiative is aimed at fostering greater civic engagement and democratic aware-

ness among the youth of the state.

As part of the 'Outreach Connect' series, MLAs and university representatives will visit colleges and educational institutions across Arunachal Pradesh to interact with students, sensitise them about legislative processes and inspire them to take active part in the democratic journey of the state.

Speaking at the launch, Speaker Tesam Pongte highlighted the importance of youth participation in strengthening democracy and described the golden jubilee celebration as an opportunity to honour the Assembly's legacy, while encouraging future generations to contribute to policy discourse.

Other speakers reaffirmed the commitment of APLA and RGU towards building a well-informed and socially responsible citizenry.

The day's programme also included interactive sessions with students and faculty members, who expressed enthusiasm over the opportunity to engage directly with lawmakers.

According to the official statement, a series of activities including campus visits, lectures and awareness drives will be conducted under the 'APLA@50 Outreach Connect' banner in the run-up to the special Assembly session to mark 50 years of the State Legislature.

Plantation drive 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' held in Itanagar

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Aug 4: Over 400 students took part in an environment-themed plantation drive titled "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" at Don Bosco School here on Sunday, as part of an initiative organised by My Bharat Itanagar in collaboration with Youth in Action for Arunachal (YAA), according to an official statement.

The initiative, aimed at spreading awareness on rainwater harvesting and environmental conservation, encouraged students to plant saplings in honour of their mothers as a tribute to their nurturing spirit and as a reminder of their responsibility towards nature.

Chau Zingnu Namchoom, MLA, attended the programme as chief guest while State president of BJP Kishan Morcha and ZPM Aalo Gumsen Lollen graced the occasion as guest of honour. Gopesh Pandey, deputy director of My Bharat Itanagar (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India), was present as the special invitee.

Addressing the gathering, Takam Regam, president of YAA and APYMAC, underscored the importance of youth participation in environmental protection and lauded the efforts of students in making the campaign meaningful.

The programme concluded with cultural presentations by school students followed by a collective green pledge to safeguard the environment and carry forward the message of sustainability.



Body of missing man found

ITANAGAR, Aug 4: The body of a 28-year-old man, who had gone missing while fishing in Yomgo River in Arunachal Pradesh's West Siang district, was found on Monday, police said.

The man, identified as Limin Ingo, went missing after he accidentally fell into the river and was swept away by strong currents around 2 pm on August 1.

Locals spotted the body from Patum Bridge over the river, Aalo police station officer-in-charge Yomken Riram said.

A National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) team fished out the body around 10.30 am, he said.

Ingo had gone fishing along with two friends on August 1. He slipped and fell into the river while his friends were some distance away. His friends rushed to rescue him, but failed.

Police had engaged the NDRF and the State Disaster Response Force to trace the missing person.

Hundreds of people from Paya, Kabu, Patum, Logum Jini villages and residents of Aalo town assisted the police, NDRF and SDRF in the search operation. (PTI)

Capital residents question road preparedness during monsoon



HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Aug 4: Residents of the Itanagar Capital Complex have raised serious concerns over the preparedness of the Capital administration, National Highway Authority and the agencies executing

Packages A, B and C of NH-415 for restoration and maintenance of roads damaged during the ongoing monsoon, according to an official statement.

Locals alleged that despite repeated instances of disaster-in-

duced damage to the highway, the authorities continue to wait for formal instructions from senior officials before initiating emergency repair work.

The public questioned why concerned departments are not being regularly directed to remain alert and responsive during periods of heavy rain and natural calamities.

Citizens have appealed to the State government and all departments headquartered in the Capital to put in place robust response systems to ensure public safety and protect life and property.

They maintained that authorities should remain vigilant and act swiftly under disaster conditions instead of waiting for top-down orders.

The statement further stated that the public expect greater accountability and proactive intervention from the Capital administration and implementing agencies of the highway project, particularly at a time when widespread road damage and landslips continue to pose serious risks to commuters.

Hails legacy as tribal rights champion Khandu mourns death of Soren

ITANAGAR, Aug 4: Condoling the death of former Jharkhand CM Shibu Soren, Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu said he was a stalwart of tribal rights.

Soren, the founder of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), died on Monday morning at the age of 81 while undergoing treatment for kidney-related ailments at a hospital in Delhi.

"Saddened to learn about the passing of Shibu Soren Ji, former Chief Minister of Jharkhand and a stalwart of tribal rights. My deepest condolences to his family, loved ones, and the people of Jharkhand. May his soul attain eternal peace. Om Shanti,"

Khandu said in a post on X.

Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein remembered Soren as a towering figure in Indian politics and a tireless advocate for the rights of tribal communities.

"Saddened to learn of the passing of former Jharkhand Chief Minister and veteran leader, Shri Shibu Soren. A towering figure in Indian politics and a tireless advocate for the rights of tribal communities, his contributions to public life and social justice will be remembered," Mein said in a social media post.

"I extend my heartfelt condolences to his family and loved ones. May his soul rest in eternal peace," he added. (PTI)

Mayor joins international volunteers in Itanagar cleanliness drive

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Aug 4: In a significant effort to promote urban cleanliness and environmental stewardship, Mayor of the Itanagar Municipal Corporation (IMC) Tame Phassang participated in a large-scale cleanliness drive organised by ASEZ (Save the Earth from A to Z), an international student volunteer organisation under the World Mission Society Church of God, according to an official statement.

The drive, conducted along the stretch from IG Park to the Civil Secretariat Gate, saw participation from scores of local residents alongside student volunteers from South Korea. Volunteers collected litter, segregated waste and interacted with citizens to promote sustainable living and climate-conscious behaviour. Addressing the gathering, Mayor Phassang lauded the initiative, stating that the enthusiastic participation of both local and international students reflected a shared commitment to safeguarding the environment.

"If international volunteers can take the initiative to clean our streets, we, as citizens, must feel even more responsible for our own city," he said.

The Mayor urged residents of the Capital Complex to embrace Jan Bhagidari (people's participation) in maintaining cleanliness and greenery.

He also announced plans to formally



collaborate with ASEZ and involve them in future awareness campaigns on waste management and environmental sustainability within IMC jurisdiction and across the state.

ASEZ, which operates in more than 175 countries, undertakes voluntary service projects in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs), focusing on fostering civic responsibility, environmental consciousness and youth-led climate action.

The campaign concluded with participants pledging their continued commitment towards a cleaner, greener Itanagar and expressing hope that similar initiatives would be adopted across Arunachal Pradesh.

Committed to strengthening grassroots democracy: Arunachal CM

ITANAGAR, Aug 4: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Monday said his government was committed to strengthening grassroots democracy through performance-based governance and fiscal empowerment. Speaking at a state-level workshop on Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) 2.0, Khandu said the initiative reflects a commitment to better governance from the ground up. He said Arunachal Pradesh is among the very few states in India to devolve 10 per cent of state-owned revenue (SOR) directly to panchayati raj institutions.

"That's real empowerment. That's walking the talk," he said, calling it a tan-

gible step towards decentralisation and self-governance.

Khandu said the PAI is a tool designed to evaluate and strengthen the functioning of panchayati raj institutions. The index assesses key areas including planning, transparency, service delivery, financial management, and citizen participation.

"The PAI is not just another meeting. It is a tool to hold ourselves accountable and push for improvement where it matters the most at the grassroots," the chief minister said.

"Ask questions. Dig deeper. Make the most of this," he told the participants of the workshop. The chief minister also pre-

sented the PAI 1.0 Puraskar to top-performing districts, blocks, and gram panchayats. He commended the awardees for their outstanding performance and their crucial role in strengthening democratic institutions.

"These are the institutions carrying our democracy forward," he said, lauding the role of panchayat functionaries and local leaders in translating policy into action on the ground.

Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Minister Ojing Tasing said the PAI will play a pivotal role in transforming rural governance by fostering a performance-based and data-driven culture. (PTI)

No.TECH-213 /NT/KOK (BLDG)/2023-24/2014

SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed tenders affixing a non-refundable court fee stamp of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees eight & paise twenty five) only with a validity period of 180 days, which will subsequently to be converted and drawn up in the printed F-2 form are invited from the registered contractors under PWD of all classes of the Assam PWD Building and BTC according to their eligibility for submitting tenders for the works stated below. The tenders will be received by the undersigned up to 1.30 P.M on 08/08/2025 and will be opened on the same date & place at 2.30 P.M.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Amount	Earnest Money (2% for GNL and 1% for ST & SC)	Cost of Tender Document	Time of Completion
1	Repair and renovation of Boshgaon Market Shed under Kachugaon Dev. Block in Kokrajhar District	Rs. 15,00,000.00	Rs. 30,000.00 (2%) and Rs. 15,000.00 (1%)	Rs. 500.00	3 (Three) Month
2	Installation of New Showcase in the Textile Gallery at District Museum, Kokrajhar	Rs. 4,90,000.00	Rs. 9,800.00 (2%) and Rs. 4,900.00 (1%)	Rs. 300.00	1 (One) Month
3	Construction of Statue of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose at Gossagaon	Rs. 8,00,000.00	Rs. 16,000.00 (2%) and Rs. 8,000.00 (1%)	Rs. 500.00	2 (Two) Month

Detail N.I.T. may be seen in all working days in the office of the undersigned. Tender paper will be issued to the contractor or their authorized agent upto 1.30 PM on all working days from 04/08/2025 to 08/08/2025 in the office of the undersigned on payment in the form of Bank Draft/ Demand Draft, duly pledged to the Principal Secretary, BTC.

IPR(BTC)/C/2025-2/2345

Sd- Executive Engineer, P.W.D.
Kokrajhar Dist. & Chirang Dist.
Territorial Building Division, Kokrajhar

17 crore jobs created under Modi rule in 10 years: Mansukh Mandaviya to Parl

NEW DELHI, Aug 4: India generated 17 crore jobs in the 10 years of the Modi government, a big leap from 3 crore in the previous decade of UPA rule, Parliament was informed on Monday.

Answering an oral or starred question in Lok Sabha, Labour & Employment Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said, "About 10 crore employment generation is recorded in the last 10 years during the Modi government...If we work of ten years of UPA rule, then only 3 crore jobs were created. We don't say at our own as it is the data of RBI."

The minister said that the RBI has been releasing annual employment generation data since Independence. He also told the House that in the last 16 months, the Centre has made jobs available to 11 lakh youth in the country.

"Modi ji has not only created employment but

also has a work plan for next five year to create jobs...at the beginning of Modi 3.0, PM Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana is announced under the plan to create over 4 crore jobs with an outlay of ₹ 2 lakh crore. We are getting good results from this scheme," Mandaviya said.

Employment-linked incentive scheme, PM Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana (PMVBRY), is rolled out from August 1, 2025.

The scheme, aimed at incentivising job creation in the country, was approved by the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi earlier. With an outlay of ₹ 99,446 crore, the PMVBRY aims to incentivise the creation of more than 3.5 crore jobs over two years. Of these, 1.92 crore will go to freshers.

The benefits of the scheme will apply to jobs



created between August 1, 2025, and July 31, 2027. The scheme, Mandaviya said, forms a crucial part of India's strategy to accelerate economic growth.

It consists of two parts, with Part A focused on first-timers and Part B focused on employers.

Part-A will offer a one-month EPF wage up to ₹15,000 in two instalments. Employees with salaries up to ₹ 1 lakh will be eligible.

The first instalment will be payable after six months of service, and the second will be payable after 12 months and completion of a financial literacy programme by the employee.

A portion of the incentive will be kept in a savings instrument or deposit account for a fixed period and can be withdrawn by the employee at a later date. The Centre will incentivise employers,

with up to ₹ 3,000 per month, for two years, for each additional employee with sustained employment for at least six months.

For the manufacturing sector, incentives will be extended to the third and fourth years as well.

Establishments registered with EPFO will be required to hire at least two additional employees (for employers with less than 50 employees) or five additional employees (for employers with 50 or more employees), on a sustained basis for at least six months.

All payments to the first-time employees under Part A of the Scheme will be made through the DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer) mode using the Aadhar Bridge Payment System (ABPS). Payments to the Employers under Part B will be made directly into their PAN-linked Accounts. (PTI)

'China guru' Rahul Gandhi vowed to weaken India: BJP

'Imagine, a leader of the opposition being repeatedly rebuked for speaking such recklessly'

NEW DELHI, Aug 4: As the Supreme Court rapped Rahul Gandhi over his remarks about the Indian Army, the BJP on Monday tore into the Congress leader and alleged that he has vowed to "weaken India and strengthen China".

Calling Gandhi "China guru", the ruling party claimed that Gandhi and his party also "hate" the Indian armed forces and that he is being "remote controlled by foreign forces". The Supreme Court on Monday stayed the proceedings against Gandhi before a Lucknow court over his remarks about the Army during his December 2022 Bharat Jodo Yatra. The top court, however, censured the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha, saying if he is a true Indian, he would not say such a thing.

Latching on to the apex court's observations, BJP national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia alleged that Gandhi keeps making "immatured, irresponsible and anti-India comments" even though he has been rapped by various courts for such remarks in the past. "Today when the Supreme Court's comment has come, it won't be wrong to say that Rahul Gandhi has certainly vowed to weaken India and strengthen China," Bhatia told a press conference at the BJP headquarters here.

Showing a purported picture of Rahul Gandhi signing some document in the presence of Sonia Gandhi and Chinese President Xi



Jinping, the BJP spokesperson claimed that the Congress leader had signed a party-to-party memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Communist Party of China. "That's why Rahul Gandhi was saying that our soldiers were thrashed by Chinese soldiers, be it (in) Doklam or Galwan, while every Indian was standing by India and brave soldiers of India," he charged. They never tell the people of India what was there in the Congress' party-to-party MoU with the Communist Party of China, he said.

"It seems Rahul Gandhi has love for China and Pakistan in his veins, but no love for India," he added.

Bhatia termed the apex court's observations as "very serious" and said with this, Gandhi's credibility has gone down to "zero".

"Does India deserve a more responsible and a better Leader of

Opposition (LoP)? As the LoP who has taken oath under the Constitution to protect the sovereignty of our country, is he destroying the sovereignty of our country? Is he helping nations that are inimical to our country? Is he demoralising the brave Indian armed forces?" he asked. Rahul Gandhi's credibility is "at stake", Bhatia said.

In a post on X, BJP IT department head Amit Malviya said, "The Supreme Court has once again reprimanded 'China Guru' Rahul Gandhi for making irresponsible statements concerning India's national security and territorial integrity."

"Imagine, a leader of the opposition being repeatedly rebuked for speaking such recklessly," he said.

Malviya also took on the Congress leader over his recent "dead" economy remark, calling it "a diplomatic disaster on multiple

fronts".

"His recent 'dead economy' jibe is just the latest in a long series. In doing so, he implicitly admitted that Russia, a long-standing ally, is struggling, while bizarrely endorsing a hostile state like Pakistan as having a robust economy," he said.

Echoing US President Donald Trump's criticism of the Indian economy, Gandhi said on August 1 that everybody except Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman know that the country's economy is "dead". Referring to Gandhi's remarks on the surgical strike and Operation Sindoor, BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla alleged that the Congress leader and his party "hate" Indian armed forces. "Sena ka Apman Congress ki pehchan (Insulting the Army is the hallmark of the Congress)," Poonawalla said in a post on X.

"Rahul and Congress hate Indian Armed Forces," he charged, adding, "Today SC has slammed him." Another BJP national spokesperson Pradeep Bhandari said on X that the Supreme Court's poser to Gandhi about his claim exposed him.

He said, "Supreme Court asks Rahul Gandhi - 'How did you know that China had occupied land?'" This question by the Supreme Court has not only "exposed" Gandhi, but further got the attention back on the "secret MoU that Gandhi-Vadra family had with China", he said. (PTI)

Trump's dead economy remark should not be taken literally: Shashi Tharoor

PUNE, Aug 4: Congress MP Shashi Tharoor has said US President Donald Trump's remark terming India a "dead economy" was meant to be an "insult" and must not be taken "literally".

Tharoor on Sunday said that when wars are being conducted with the active involvement of some of the biggest powers, and people who are supposed to be upholding world order are contributing to promoting disorder, India needs to be very clear about its national interests.

The senior Congress leader, who was in conversation with Crossword CEO Aakash Gupta in Pune, spoke on a wide range of issues, including his latest book, "The Living Constitution".

US President Trump last week called India a "dead economy" just hours after he announced a 25 per cent tariff on the import of Indian goods along with an unspecified "penalty" for buying "vast majority" of Russian military equipment and crude oil.

Tharoor said that it is a turbulent and unpredictable world, especially with Trump in the White House.

"On Trump, let me say, you can't take him literally, but you do need to take him seriously. He is the President of the US, and the decisions he makes can affect policies, and policies can affect us. So take him seriously, but don't take him literally, not every word. When he says your economy is dead, it's like a schoolboy in the playground saying your mother is ugly. You are not supposed to take that seriously. It is meant to be an insult, not meant to be taken literally," he said.

The entire impact of Trump's tariff policies over the last six months or so has taken the whole world back, and India too had a bit of a jolt just two to three days ago, Tharoor said. "We are going to have to recover because the American relationship, and I don't just mean the trade relationship, the strategic partnership, is important enough for us to want to make the real effort to make this work. So I think there is a lot that



needs to be done," he said.

He added that the credibility of the United Nations Charter and the Security Council is cast into question.

"...the wars are being conducted with the active involvement of some of the biggest powers in the world. And that, again, means that the people who are supposed to be upholding world order are contributing to promoting disorder. In the midst of all this, what does India do to navigate its position? Well, first of all, of course, we have to be very clear in our minds what our national interests are," Tharoor said.

India's first and most important national interest is the well-being of its people, of the Indian people, he said.

"And that means focusing on our development, on our prosperity, on our harmony, on our coexistence with each other, and on the safety and security of our borders as well, which have recently been threatened both from the Chinese side and the Pakistani side. And we have to be prepared to be robustly able to defend ourselves without jeopardising the larger story of our development and our growth," he said. (PTI)

Veteran tribal leader Shibui Soren breathes his last at 81

RANCHI/NEW DELHI, Aug 4: JMM founder Shibui Soren, the veteran tribal leader who played a key role in Jharkhand's creation, breathed his last on Monday.

He was 81.

Shibu Soren was undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Delhi for over a month for kidney-related problems.

"Respected Dishom Gurujii has left us all... I have become 'shunya' (zero) today," Hemant Soren posted on X.

The Jharkhand Assembly was adjourned sine die, while the state government declared a three-day state mourning following the former CM's demise.

Condolences came pouring in from across the country.

The mortal remains of the former Jharkhand chief minister will be brought to Ranchi from Delhi around 5.30 pm on Monday, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) said.

His body will be taken to his native village in Ramgarh district on Tuesday and his last rites will be performed there, the party said.

The Jharkhand Assembly was adjourned sine die as a mark of respect to the former chief minister.

Adjourning the House sine die, Assembly Speaker Rabindra Nath Mahato said, "Dishom Gurji Shibui Soren left for heavenly abode today... His demise is not only an irreparable loss to Jharkhand but to the nation... He was known for his fight for the poor..."

The five-day monsoon session began on August 1. The Jharkhand government declared a state mourning for three days as a mark of respect to Shibui Soren.

The government also cancelled all its scheduled programmes, including the state-level events, while all state government offices



will remain closed on August 4 and 5, an official statement said.

Shibu Soren had been undergoing treatment at the hospital since June 19 under the care of Dr A K Bhalla, Senior Consultant, Nephrology. Dr Bhalla said Shibui Soren was declared dead at 8.56 am. "He was suffering from kidney ailments, and had suffered a stroke a month and a half back. He was on life support for the last one month," the doctor said.

"Despite the best efforts of our multidisciplinary medical team, Shibui Soren passed away peacefully on August 4, 2025, with his family by his bedside," the hospital said in a statement.

Shibu Soren had been the leader of the JMM for the past 38 years and is recognised as the party's founding patron.

President Droupadi Murmu condoled the death of Shibui Soren and said his demise was a big loss in the space of social justice.

She said in a post on X, "The demise of Shri Shibui Soren Ji is a big loss in the space of social justice. He championed the cause of tribal identity and the formation of the state of Jharkhand."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Shibui Soren was particularly passionate about empowering tribal communities, and the poor

and downtrodden.

He said on X, "Shri Shibui Soren Ji was a grassroots leader who rose through the ranks of public life with unwavering dedication to the people. He was particularly passionate about empowering tribal communities, the poor and downtrodden."

"Pained by his passing away. My thoughts are with his family and admirers. Spoke to Jharkhand CM Shri Hemant Soren Ji and expressed condolences. Om Shanti," the PM added.

PM Modi also visited the hospital and paid tributes to the mortal remains of Shibui Soren.

"Went to Sir Ganga Ram Hospital to pay homage to Shri Shibui Soren Ji. Also met his family. My thoughts are with Hemant Ji, Kalpana Ji and the admirers of Shri Shibui Soren Ji," he said in a post on X.

Union minister Nitin Gadkari said on X, "Deeply saddened by the passing of Shri Shibui Soren Ji, a prominent face in Indian politics who devoted his life to uplifting the marginalised and shaping Jharkhand's identity. His legacy will continue to inspire generations. My heartfelt condolences to his family and countless admirers. Om Shanti."

Jharkhand Governor Santosh Gangwar and leaders cutting across party lines also condoled the death of the JMM patriarch.

"The demise of former chief minister and Rajya Sabha MP Dishom Gurji Shibui Soren Ji is extremely sad and painful. He was a strong voice of tribal identity and rights. His contribution to society will remain unforgettable. My deepest condolences to the bereaved family," Gangwar posted on X. (PTI)

Prez Murmu, PM Modi lead country in paying tributes to Shibui Soren

RANCHI, Aug 4: President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and leaders cutting across party lines paid tributes to former Jharkhand chief minister Shibui Soren who passed away on Monday.

Jharkhand Mukti Morcha co-founder Soren, who was undergoing treatment at the Sir Ganga Ram Hospital in Delhi for over a month for kidney-related problems, died at the age of 81.

President Droupadi Murmu condoled the death of Shibui Soren and said his demise was a big loss in the space of social justice.

"The demise of Shri Shibui Soren Ji is a big loss in the space of social justice. He championed the cause of tribal identity and formation of the state of Jharkhand," Murmu said in a post on X.

The President said that besides his work at the grassroots, Soren also contributed as the chief minister of Jharkhand, as a Union minister and as a Member of Parliament.

"His emphasis on the welfare of the people, especially the tribal communities, will always be remembered. I extend my deepest condolences to his son and chief minister of Jharkhand, Shri Hemant Soren Ji, other family members and admirers," she said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tributes to Shibui Soren, saying he was particularly passionate about empowering tribal communities and the poor and downtrodden.

"Shri Shibui Soren Ji was a grassroots leader who

rose through the ranks of public life with unwavering dedication to the people. He was particularly passionate about empowering tribal communities, the poor and downtrodden," he posted on X.

In a post on X, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said, "He struggled for decades for the rights and empowerment of the tribal community in Jharkhand. With his simple personality and humble nature, he connected with the masses."

In his condolence message, AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge said, "He fought all his life for a separate Jharkhand state and for the rights of its people to water, forest, land and for the protection of tribal culture."

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi posted on X: "A strong voice of the tribal society, Soren ji fought for their rights and interests throughout his life. His role in the creation of Jharkhand will always be remembered."

Expressing grief over Shibui Soren's death, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said a chapter of Jharkhand's history came to an end.

BJD supreme and former Odisha CM, Naveen Patnaik, said Shibui Soren would be remembered for his dedicated fight for the rights of the tribal and marginalised people.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said Soren's life was dedicated to the well-being of the deprived, tribals, and labourers. (PTI)

Statehood, sixth schedule top priority for Ladakh, says MP Mohmad Haneefa

NEW DELHI, Aug 4: A democratic set-up and constitutional safeguards under the sixth schedule remain the priority for people of Ladakh, said MP Mohmad Haneefa, as he rued the slow pace of talks with the Union home ministry.

In an interview with PTI as Ladakh marks six years as a Union Territory, the MP, who comes from the Kargil region of Ladakh, said the cultural diversity and fragile environment of the cold desert must be protected constitutionally.

Haneefa said that the formation of the Union Territory was welcomed by many at the time, but people soon realised it was not what they had wanted.

"When Jammu and Kashmir was divided into two parts and Ladakh was made a Union Territory, one section was welcoming it and the other section was against it," he said.

That Ladakh should become a Union Territory was the voice of the people in Leh, but those in Kargil were against it.

"In 2019, when they abrogated Article 370, divided Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh was made a separate UT, at that time, there was a wave of happiness among the people who were demanding this. They welcomed it and celebrated it. But as people came to know about

this setup, they also realised that this is not the UT people of Ladakh were demanding," Haneefa said.

"The people who were demanding UT wanted one that had democracy. They wanted a UT with a legislature. At the same time with the abrogation of Article 370 and 35A, all our safeguards were gone. Ladakh got neither safeguards nor any democratic set-up was provided, so people of Ladakh realised that our future is dark in this set-up," he said.

People in Ladakh, whether Buddhists or Muslims, are ready to sacrifice their lives for the country, the lawmaker asserted. "But Ladakh is culturally different. There are seven ethnic groups in Ladakh, and the culture changes across tribes and regions. The environment is fragile, and while the area is huge, it is the largest constituency in India, but the population is very small, around 3-4 lakh. If people from outside come and settle down in Ladakh, the demography would change," he said.

Haneefa said the Union government must look at Ladakh from a different perspective.

The Leh Apex Body and Kargil Democratic Alliance, the two groups representing social, religious interests, are in talks with the government on their four-point demand. (PTI)

Wildlife crime cases in India decline significantly from 2020 to 2024: Govt

NEW DELHI, Aug 4: India recorded over 2,700 wildlife crime cases from 2020 to 2024, with West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, and Haryana reporting some of the highest numbers, according to government data.

Responding to a question in the Lok Sabha, Union Minister of State for Environment Kirti Vardhan Singh said the responsibility for conservation and protection of wildlife, including prevention of illegal trafficking, lies primarily with the state governments and Union Territories under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

The Wild Life Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) collects and shares intelligence, coordinates enforcement and issues alerts to combat organised wildlife crime.

The data shows India recorded a total of 2,701 wildlife crime cases from 2020 to 2024. The country registered 820 cases in 2020; 632 in 2021; 546 in 2022; 349 in 2023 and 354 in 2024. Between 2020 and 2024, West Bengal recorded the highest number of cases at 349, followed by Uttar Pradesh with 297 and



Haryana with 243.

Tamil Nadu logged 200 such cases, Assam 178, Uttarakhand 15, Andhra Pradesh 153, Madhya Pradesh 145, Odisha 143, Karnataka 84, Maharashtra 77, Himachal Pradesh 76, Meghalaya 71, Telangana 51, and Punjab 49. Singh said the WCCB works with state agen-

cies, customs, border forces and international organisations like INTERPOL and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime to tackle wildlife trafficking.

India is also a signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), with its provisions incorporated into the Wild Life (Protection) Act through a 2022 amendment.

In the last five years, the WCCB conducted 806 training programmes for government officials and 128 awareness campaigns and community outreach initiatives to curb wildlife trafficking.

The bureau has also established regional and sub-regional offices, including one covering Andhra Pradesh under its southern jurisdiction.

Singh said measures to strengthen surveillance include joint operations, intelligence sharing and sensitisation of border guarding forces.

He said the government remains committed to tackling organised wildlife crime to safeguard India's biodiversity. (PTI)

BJP's ally IPFT demands SIR in Tripura



AGARTALA, Aug 4: The Indigenous People's Front of Tripura (IPFT), an ally of the ruling BJP in Tripura, has demanded a special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in the northeastern state on the lines of Bihar, a senior party leader said on Monday.

The development came days after a delegation of Tipra Motha Party (TMP), another ally of the BJP in Tripura, met Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar and de-

manding SIR in the state.

"A four-member team, headed by IPFT president Prem Kumar Reang, met the CEC on August 1 in New Delhi and submitted a memorandum before the poll panel backing the demand for SIR in our state," the party's general secretary, Swapan Debbarma, said.

"In our memorandum, the party has clearly stated that the ECI will have to ensure that no genuine citizen of the state shall be disenfranchised from the electoral rolls," he said.

Debbarma said the party will organise a massive rally at Swami Vivekananda Ground in Agartala on August 23 to mark 'Sixth Schedule Day'.

"The party used to hold a rally in Delhi's Jantar Mantar on the occasion of Sixth Schedule Day, but this time, we will organise the programme at Vivekananda Ground here because the crucial elections of Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) are due next year," he said.

A memorandum will be submitted to Union Home Minister Amit Shah through Governor N Indrasena Reddy demanding the formation of Tipraland, Debbarma said.

The IPFT, capitalising on its core demand of a separate state of Tipraland comprising the TTAADC areas, had contested the 2018 assembly election and won 14 ST-reserved seats. The BJP-led coalition unseated the Left Front from power in the state in that election. (PTI)

Mizoram denies shifting capital from Aizawl

'Clerical error' led to misunderstanding, says govt

AIZAWL, Aug 4: The Mizoram government on Monday denied the allegation that it has been trying to shift the state capital from Aizawl to Thenzawl in Serchhip district.

In a statement, the Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) government also asserted that a "clerical error" in a letter sent by the Centre to the state administration led to the misunderstanding that the capital would be shifted to Thenzawl.

Thenzawl is a census town located about 93 km from Aizawl, and it falls under the Serchhip constituency from where Chief Minister Lalduhoma was elected consecutively in the 2018 and 2023 assembly polls. Mizoram's main opposition party, the Mizo National Front (MNF), on August 1 charged the CM with "secretly" trying to shift the state capital from Aizawl to Thenzawl and seeking funds from the Centre to execute the plan.

MNF general secretary Zodinpuia had said, "On April 24, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs sent letters to the Mizoram chief secretary and resident commissioner in Delhi under the subject 'shifting of state capital from Aizawl to Thenzawl', asking them to prepare a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the matter."

The state Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation department in a statement clarified that there was a "clerical error" in the letter sent to the state government by the Centre, which was

mistaken for shifting the state capital from Aizawl to Thenzawl.

The letter was about sanctioning a fund of ₹ 10 crore by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs for preparing the Detailed Project Report for the 'Thenzawl peace city' project, it said.

On April 4, Lalduhoma said that plans were afoot to develop Thenzawl and the surrounding areas as a 'peace city' to house about 10 lakh



people. Lalduhoma had said that he was optimistic about getting financial help from the Centre for the project, as he had earlier discussed the plan with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The CM had also said he discussed the plan with the 16th Finance Commission, and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs approved ₹ 10 crore to develop a master plan for the project. (PTI)

Eight militants arrested in Manipur

IMPHAL, Aug 4: Security forces have arrested eight militants belonging to four banned outfits from different districts of Manipur, police said on Monday. All the arrests were made on Sunday.

Security forces arrested five active cadres of KCP (PWG) from different locations in Imphal West and East and Bishnupur districts.

They were involved in extortion, firing incidents, kidnapping and possession of arms and ammunition. They have been identified as M Premkumar Singh (28), Yambem Shital Singh (39), Sorokhaibam Inaoton Singh (38), Khongbantabam Inaocha Devi (52) and Oinam Naoba Singh (18), a police statement said. One 9mm pistol with a magazine and a cartridge was recovered from their possession.

Police also arrested an active cadre of KCP (Taibanganba) outfit from his residence at Haobam Marak in Imphal West district.

The militant, identified as Heisnam Bobo Singh (37), was involved in extortion, serving monetary demands and collecting extortion money from schools in the Imphal Valley.

One active cadre of the proscribed PREPAK was also arrested from Itam Thongkhong in Imphal East district. He has been identified as Sorokhaibam Rohit Meitei (24).

Security forces also arrested an active cadre of the banned KCP (Noyon) outfit from a farm located near his residence at Lamlai Chingkhui in Imphal East district. He has been identified as Nepram Hari Meitei (19). (PTI)

DHR gets power boost with new NDM-6 diesel engine

GUWAHATI, Aug 4: The North-east Frontier Railway (NFR) has conducted the final trial run of the newly procured NDM-6 Diesel-Hydraulic Locomotive (DSL) for the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR).

The successful trial was conducted on the downhill route from Darjeeling to Siliguri with three coaches, NFR said in a release on Monday.

This follows the earlier successful uphill trial run from Siliguri to Darjeeling.

Two additional NDM-6 diesel locos are under procurement and will soon be introduced into the DHR.

The NDM-6 loco, specially designed for narrow gauge heritage routes like the DHR, is equipped with upgraded safety features and offers improved performance and reliability.

The loco has been introduced to enhance operational efficiency on the UNESCO World Heritage section, ensuring safer and more sustainable travel across the picturesque hill terrain.

The trial runs are a part of routine safety and performance evaluation before introducing the loco into regular service.

This development marks a significant step in preserving the charm of the DHR while incorporating modern engineering enhancements.

NFR remains committed to the preservation and modernisation of heritage railway systems like DHR, the release added. (PTI)

Two drug peddlers from Assam arrested in Meghalaya

JOWAI (MEGHALAYA), Aug 4: Two drug peddlers were arrested in Meghalaya's West Jaintia Hills district on Monday, and over 50 grams of heroin was seized from their possession, police said.

The two hailed from Darang district in neighbouring Assam.

Acting on intelligence inputs, a joint team of the Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) Meghalaya and district police conducted a naka operation under the jurisdiction of Jowai Police Station in the early hours of Monday and apprehended the suspects.

They were travelling from Silchar in Assam to the Meghalaya capital Shillong in a bus which was stopped by the authorities around 4 am.

During a search, two soap cases containing heroin were recovered from one person, while three more such soap cases were found in possession of the other.

The contraband, concealed in undergarments and pockets, tested positive for heroin and weighed a total of 52.02 grams, the police officer said.

A case has been registered at Jowai Police Station under the NDPS Act.

Police said further investigation is on to trace the supply network and identify other operatives involved in the narcotic drug trade. (PTI)

5 tribes committee on job quota suspends 3rd phase agitation

HT Correspondent

DIMPUR, Aug 4: The 5 Tribes Committee on Review of Reservation Policy (CoRRP) on Monday put its proposed third phase agitation on hold.

The move follows newly appointed chief secretary Sentyanger Imchen's assertion to the committee at a meeting in his office today that the state cabinet will have a sitting on August 6 and take a final call on its core demands, including the framing of terms of reference and composition of a commission to look into the demands within the next fortnight.

CoRRP convenor Tesinlo Semy and member secretary GK Zhimomi, in a release, after the meeting said Imchen on August 2 invited the 5 Tribes CoRRP for the meeting in Kohima.

The meeting discussed the core demands of the committee and the response of the state government to them so far.

The committee has been demanding



that the 48 years of indefinite job quota for seven backward tribes in Nagaland, introduced in 1977 with an initial duration of 10 years, either be scrapped or the remaining unreserved quota be reserved exclusively for the five tribes of Sumi, Ao, Lotha, Angami and Rengma.

On May 29, the 5 Tribes CoRRP held protest rallies in all the districts inhabited by the five tribes and submitted an ultimatum reminder to the state government on their "legitimate demands".

Subsequently, on June 12, the state cabinet decided in principle to constitute a commission to examine all aspects of the reservation policy in government employment.

Again, on July 9, the committee held a protest in front of the Nagaland civil secretariat to press for its demands.

The committee had warned that the five tribes intend to intensify the agitation in various forms till their grievances are addressed.

BJP ally Tipra Motha criticises Delhi Police for terming Bengali 'Bangladeshi language'

AGARTALA, Aug 4: Tipra Motha Party (TMP), an ally of the BJP, criticised the Delhi Police on Monday for terming Bengali "Bangladeshi language".

In a recent letter written to the officer-in-charge of Banga Bhavan, the guest house of the West Bengal government in the national capital, the Delhi Police sought a translator for the translation of documents containing "text written in Bangladeshi language" to aid its investigation in a Foreigners' Act case. "Referring to Bengali as a 'Bangladeshi language' by Delhi Police is deeply concerning. Today it is Bengali, tomorrow it can be any other language. There is no such thing called Bangladeshi language," TMP supremo Pradyot Debbarma said in a post on X.

"How can we forget that even our national anthem 'Jana Gana Mana' was originally composed in Bengali by Tagore? These actions by Delhi Police give space to extremist views and give people like Md. Yunus a chance to tarnish our country's image," he said.

Shibu Soren served people with unwavering commitment: Sangma

SHILLONG, Aug 4: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma on Monday expressed deep grief over the demise of former Jharkhand CM and veteran politician Shibu Soren.

Shibu Soren, the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha founder, died in the morning at the age of 81 while undergoing treatment for kidney-related ailments at a hospital in Delhi. He is the father of Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren.

"Deeply saddened by the passing of former Hon'ble Chief Minister of Jharkhand, Shri Shibu Soren ji. A towering figure

in Indian politics, he was a revered leader and dedicated statesman who served the people with unwavering commitment. I join the nation in offering heartfelt condolences to his family and loved ones. May his soul rest in eternal peace," Sangma said in a post on social media. Soren was widely respected for championing the rights of tribals and underprivileged communities across eastern India. Political leaders across the country have paid their tributes to Shibu Soren, remembering his decades-long contribution to public life. (PTI)



also reflect the strong academic foundation and research culture nurtured at Nagaland University.

"This accomplishment reaffirms the university's ongoing commitment to

cultivating a scholarly environment that encourages advanced learning and prepares students for impactful careers in academia, research, and education," Patnaik added.

SRIMANTA SANKARADEVA UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES
(A State University of the Govt. of Assam)
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No. SSUHS/25/2025/5316

EDUCATIONAL NOTICE
(Online Counselling for selection of candidates for admission into D.Pharm and B.Pharm courses in the Govt. Institutes of Assam for academic session 2025-26)

This is for information of all the candidates who have appeared in the Entrance Examination held on 08-08-2025 and obtained the minimum eligibility score that the online counselling form for filling of choices shall be available in the University website (Notices) www.ssuhs.in from 05-08-2025 to 09-08-2025.

Candidates are requested to carefully go through the instructions given in the application portal before filling up as no change / modification will be possible once the students lock their choices/ preferences. The candidates are also to pay requisite counselling fee through the payment gateway available with the application form at the time of submission. No application will be considered, if counselling fee is not paid within the stipulated period.

The selection shall be solely on the basis of rank of the students secured in the Entrance Examination conducted by SSUHS.

The first selection list shall be published on 14th August, 2025 and date of admission in the allotted Colleges shall be held on 18th & 19th August, 2025.

However, the applicants may call the Helpline No. 7977259728/ 8108014947 for any assistance.

Sd/-
Registrar
Srimanta Sankaradeva University of Health Sciences

DIPR /D/HLT/100/5-Aug-25

No. TE(Ex)Admn-5/2025/444

EDUCATIONAL NOTICE
SPOT ROUND OF ALLOTMENT FOR CSAB NEUT-2025

[For admission in to the vacant seats in Degree Courses in Engineering/ Technology and Architecture in the institutions outside Assam against the seats reserved for the candidates of Assam by Ministry of Education, Government of India.]

It is for the information of all concerned that the **spot round of allotment** of seats reserved for the candidates of Assam by Ministry of Education, Govt. of India in Degree courses in Engineering/ Technology and Architecture in different Technical Institutions of India (outside Assam) which remained vacant after 2 rounds of online allotments by CSAB NEUT 2025, will be held on **7th August, 2025 from 10.30 am in the Office of the Director of Technical Education, Assam, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19.**

The allotment and admission against these seats will be based on the All India Rank of JEE (Main)-2025 subject to the condition as per the Information Brochure of CSAB-NEUT-2025. Interested candidates are requested to report to the Office of the Director of Technical Education, Assam, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, with all original documents and 03(three) copies of passport size photographs on **7th August, 2025 before 12:00noon** positively.

Those candidates who have a confirmed seat allotment under CSAB NEUT-2025, with admission letter issued by respective DTEs of States/UTs/NERIST from 1st/2nd Rounds, cannot participate in Spot Round unless they Withdraw their currently allotted seats.

Candidates are required to pay an amount of Rs 100/- as registration fee. Candidates who register for spot round and allotted a seat are required to pay an allotment fee of Rs.5000/- on the day of the spot counselling round. The payment details will be made available during the spot round. The details of the vacant seats and documents required for verification during spot round of counselling will be made available in DTE, Assam website dte.assam.gov.in

Disclaimer: It will be the sole responsibility of the candidate to verify his/her minimum eligibility and / or special eligibility for a particular course/program/institute and the availability of chosen programs (Course and Institute). Directorate of Technical Education, Assam will not be responsible for any cancellation of seats due to non-fulfilment of minimum eligibility and / or special eligibility conditions or Non availability of the seats / Programs.

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

DIPR /D/HLT/101/5-Aug-25

No. TECH/U&BDTD/BLDG/AFB/2025-26/2066 Date 02/08/2025

PRESS NOTICE INVITING FOR BID

The Executive Engineer, PWD (B&NH) Udalguri & Baksa District Territorial Building Division, Udalguri on behalf of Governor of Assam invites bids from approved and eligible Contractors registered with Public Works Department (Buildings), Assam/Contractors registered with Bodoland Territorial Council in the category of Class-I (A, B & C), Class-II, Class-III for 01 (One) nos. of work for bids amounting to Rs. 29,86,000.00 (approx) (Rupees Twenty-Nine Lakhs Eighty-Six Thousand) only.

Details may be seen at in the office of the undersigned during office hours and PWD portal assamtenders.gov.in

Sd/- Executive Engineer P.W.D. (B&NH),
Udalguri and Baksa District
Territorial Building Division, Udalguri

IPR(BTC)/C/2025-26/2326

No. TECH/U&BDTD/BLDG/AFB/2025-26/2070 Date 02/08/2025

PRESS NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Executive Engineer, PWD (B&NH), Udalguri district and Baksa district Territorial Building Division, Udalguri on behalf of Governor of Assam invites bids from approved and eligible Contractors registered with Public Works Department (Buildings), Assam/Contractors registered with Bodoland Territorial Council in the category of Class-I (A, B & C), Class-II & Class-III for 04 (Four) nos. of works for bids amounting to Rs. 29,99,116.00 (approx) (Rupees Twenty-Nine Lakhs Ninety-Nine Thousand One Hundred Sixteen) only.

Details may be seen at in the office of the undersigned during office hours.

Sd/- Executive Engineer P.W.D. (B&NH),
Udalguri and Baksa District
Territorial Building Division, Udalguri

IPR(BTC)/C/2025-26/2328

TV GAVE ME A GREAT LEASE OF LIFE, FANTASTIC PAYCHECK: SONALI BENDRE ON REALITY SHOWS



MUMBAI, Aug 4: Actor Sonali Bendre decision to do television initially raised eyebrows among her colleagues, but looking back, she calls it the "best thing" she ever did -- a move that gave her career a fresh lease of life along with a great paycheck. The 50-year-old, who first appeared on television in "Kya Masti Kya Dhoom....!" after the success of her films "Hum Saath Saath Hai" and "Sarfarosh", recalled how her decision at the time made people think that she had "lost the plot".

"Everybody thought I had lost the plot because television was not the thing to do. It was like, Why are they doing TV? But it was a great show, I loved the concept of that show, and I thought it was a fantastic paycheck," Bendre told PTI in an interview. She even credited her partner at the time, and now her husband, Goldie Behl, for supporting her decision.

"This (TV) is the future, television is going to become big (Goldie said). I listened to him and said, 'Let me do it'." It was

the best thing I did," the actor said.

Bendre went on to judge reality shows like "Indian Idol 4", "India's Got Talent", "Hindustan Ke Hunarbaaz", "India's Best Dramebaaz", "India's Best Dancer 3". She is currently featuring on "Pati Patni Aur Panga" as a host.

In fact, according to Bendre, it was television that helped her remain relevant.

"The kids (on her first reality show) who used to see me at that time are all grown up now, and they still remember me. So, as a celebrity, your life is as long as your fans remember you."

"I got a great lease of life. At that time, people used to say that you are doing TV, but it just gave me an amazing lease of life, which I didn't think that's what would happen, but it did happen," she added.

Besides, working in television offered her the opportunity for a healthy work-life balance, which became a crucial factor since she wanted to be present for her son during his formative years.

"When I had my child, these shows were closest in my line of work. I didn't do fiction work because my child was growing up and I wanted to be there for him," Bendre added. "Pati Patni Aur Panga" features popular celebrity couples such as Debinna Bonnerjee-Gurmeet Choudhary, Hina Khan-Rocky Jaiswal, Rubina Dilaik-Abhinav Shukla, Avika Gor-Milind Chandwani, Swara Bhasker-Fahad Ahmad, Geeta Phogat-Pawan Kumar, and Sudesh Lehri-Mamta Lehri.

The show, which premiered on Saturday on Colors Channel, will see celebrity couples competing against each other as they take on fun challenges.

Talking about the show, Bendre said the show is unlike anything she has done before.

"You are holding the whole show together; you talk to the contestants, and more so to those who are not opening up. Besides, it's not scripted. It is a challenge, but I'm enjoying it," she concluded. (PTI)

ZEE5 Bangla betting on regional storytelling, affordable pricing to lure viewers, says business head



KOLKATA, Aug 4: ZEE5 aims to make content both affordable and relatable for Bengali audiences, particularly in tier two and three cities, by aligning pricing and storytelling with local needs and cultural sensibilities, says Rusa Banerjee, Business Head of the streamer's Bangla arm.

The OTT platform is trying to keep pace with changing audience preferences by innovating with different genres and storytelling formats to stay relevant and engaging, Banerjee added.

"Storytelling in Bengali is evolving fast and so are we. We are actively experimenting across formats, genres, and narrative styles to stay in step with what audiences want today."

"We wish to give audiences, hooked on Bengali contents, a platform that reflects their stories, in their language, at a price that respects their wallet and enables them to pay only for what they want to watch," Banerjee told PTI in an interview.

On the programming level, she said the platform is deliberately mixing thrillers, dramas, and cultural themes to broaden and deepen their viewer base.

"From psychological thrillers like 'Bibhishon' to socially grounded dramas like 'Bohurupee', and previous breakout titles like 'Abar Proloy', 'Chhotolok', 'Swetkai', 'Kaantaye Kaantaye' and 'Shabash Feluda', our content slate reflects a move to diversify and deepen our engagement with Bengali audiences," she added. According to Banerjee, the future content lineup will blend various types of content while staying rooted in Bengal's cultural and emotional identity.

"You'll see a strong mix across originals, post-theatricals, and direct-to-digital premieres alongside innovative new content formats. Our upcoming line-up will be a mix of edge-of-your-seat thrillers, socially conscious dramas and heartwarming family stories."

"We've seen strong traction on Bangla ZEE5 on the back of stories that have resonated with audiences on an emotional and cultural level. Titles like 'Bibhishon', 'Bohurupee', 'Swetkai', and 'Chhotolok' have done extremely well across both metros and in smaller towns, and even overseas, helping us reach new audiences," she added.

ZEE5 isn't relying solely on established filmmakers, said Banerjee and emphasised the platform's commitment to supporting new talent from across Bengal to bring in fresh perspectives and regional authenticity.

"We've always believed in championing local stories and the people behind them. While we've worked with big names like Raj Chakraborty and Kaushik Ganguly, we're equally committed to nurturing fresh, new voices from Bengal," she said, adding that the streamer is actively identifying new storytellers through writing workshops, direct commissioning and talent collaborations.

"For the streamer, localisation isn't just about language, it's about getting the casting right, weaving in music that feels familiar and telling stories that reflect real lives and emotions. By supporting and investing in homegrown talent, along with growing our content slate, we're helping build the next generation of creative leaders in Bengal," she added. (PTI)

Dulquer Salmaan begins shooting for his 41st film

CHENNAI, Aug 4: A few days ago, Dulquer Salmaan unveiled the teaser of his much-anticipated film, Kaantha. Moving forward, his next film, helmed by Ravi, was launched on Monday.

Actor Nani gave the first clap for Dulquer's 41st film, which is billed to be a heartwarming contemporary love story. Filmmakers Srikanth Odeala and Buchi Babu Sana were also present at the pooja ceremony. Bankrolled by Sudhakar Cherukuri, under the banner SLV Cinemas, GV Prakash Kumar will compose the tunes. Anay Goswamy will handle the camera.

Other details regarding the cast and crew will be revealed by the makers in the coming days.

Meanwhile, Dulquer also has Aakasam Lo Oka Tara, a Telugu film, and 'I'm Game (Malayalam) in the pipeline. As a producer, he has Lokah Chapter 1: Chandra, in which the actor will play a cameo role as well. (PTI)



SRK to Tharoor on National Award congratulations: Wouldn't have understood something more magniloquent

NEW DELHI, Aug 4: Wordsmith-politician Shashi Tharoor chose to keep it simple in his congratulations to Shah Rukh Khan for his National Award win but not the superstar who went the whole hog in his response and had his X readers reaching out for the dictionary.

The tables were turned as it were. "A National Treasure wins a National Award. Congratulations @iamsrk," Tharoor wrote on X in response to Shah Rukh bagging the National Award for his 2023 film "Jawan".

"Thank you for the simple praise Mr Tharoor... would not have understood something more magniloquent and sesquipedalian...ha ha," the superstar wrote back early Monday, tongue firmly in cheek as he added some words to our lexicon. The Oxford dictionary defines magniloquent as 'using high-flown or bombastic language' and sesquipedalian as 'of many syllables'.

Tharoor's comments often leave even those well-versed with English scratching their heads. Today, was clearly Shah Rukh's turn.

He has been on a thanking spree ever since the announcement of his first National Award on Friday. He shares the award with Vikrant Massey for "12th Fail". When wife Gauri congratulated her favourites -- Rani Mukerji, Karan Johar and Shah Rukh -- for winning the National Film Awards, Shah Rukh replied, "Please brag about me to me when we sit for dinner tonight... thanks for producing the film." Mukerji got the award for her performance in "Mrs Chatterjee vs Norway". Karan Johar's "Rocky and Rani Ki Prem Kahani" was adjudged the best popular film providing wholesome entertainment.

To his co-star and friend of decades, Juhi Chawla, Shah Rukh simply wrote, "Thank you @iam_juhi... I have learned from the best. You have been an integral part of my journey. Big hugs!!"

To his friend Viveck Vaswani, Shah Rukh said, "All started with you. Raju finally ban gaya gentleman." To his "Jawan" director Atlee, he replied, "MAAASS, MAAASS... Thank you for your vision. Only you could do this... In the next song, we will do more steps. Love u." The 59-year-old actor had shared his joy on Instagram with a video on Friday after winning the National Film Award. (PTI)

SDA Diphu organises fashion and modeling show - Beauty Of The Hills Season -1

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 4: In order to groom kids and teenagers from tender age in fashion and modeling world, Singh Dance Academy (SDA), Diphu, has organised a fashion and modeling show - Beauty Of The Hills Season-1, at Marwari Viva Bhawan on Sunday evening (Aug 3), where kids and young children of SDA showcased their talent in front of parents and audiences.

The show was entertaining and eye-catching as kids and teenagers dressed in sparkling fashionable dresses, with make-up and ornaments walked on the ramp. The competition was divided into two groups. A group for kids and B group for teenagers. The competition lasted for two hours from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. The competition included a ramp walk and question hours from the judge. Prity Das, a grooming personality teacher and expert in stage presence (ramp walk) was the judge

for the competition.

On the show the judge Prity Das said it was good and she really loved the kids' performance. Das is a modeler herself, now having her own fashion and modeling academy in Kolkatta. She was born and brought up in Diphu town. Seeing the smartness of the kids with their stunning beauty, she (Das) hoped that talented modellers would be produced from the district (Karbi Anglong) to take it as a career. She wished the children their bright future.

The owner of SDA and organiser of the fashion show Pritom Singh said the show has been organised to make his students (kids) become smart from a young age and learn how to go a ramp walk. It is also allowing the children to enter into competition from a young age and build up confidence in facing the audience. Altogether 30 students participated in the competition. Singh expressed hope of doing better in the



next season with more kids.

Results were declared soon after the competition by the judge. In the teenage category the winner was Santoshi Mahato and runners up was bagged by Ningme Kram-sapi. Best Smile award was received by Dipshikha Jain; Best Costume by Mriganshi Hasnu and Best Sparkling

Eyes by Nishtha Hazarika. Best Stylish Post was taken away by Sahina Ahmed; Best Confident was judged to Arleen Rongpipi and Audience Choice went to Monisha Baglary. In the kids category the winner was Senso Terangpi and the runner up was bagged by Hiyashree Deka. The Best Smile was

received by Nimso Terangpi; Best Costume was awarded to Harshikha Das; Best Sparkling Eyes received by Kshainika Chetri; Best Stylish Pose was won by Mirzirso Kropi; Best Confident went to Sontona Devi and Audience Choice was awarded to Senso Terangpi.

Siraj stars with magic spell as India tie series against England with spirited comeback at Oval



LONDON, Aug 4: The perseverant Mohammed Siraj's warrior spirit steered India to a series-levelling six-run victory over England in the fifth and final Test here on Monday, bringing a fitting end to one of the most intensely-fought and drama-filled showdowns in recent times.

With four wickets in hand and 35 runs to get, England held the edge before start of play but the gladiator in Siraj made life hell for the opposition batters from ball one.

In the end, his effort, complemented quite well by Prasidh Krishna at the other end, left England short by the thinnest of margins and allowed India to sign off 2-2 in the high-pressure five-match rubber.

Siraj was deservedly adjudged player of the match for his nine-wicket match haul for the team that was missing its regular

pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah in this game due to his workload management.

"I woke up in the morning and checked google on my phone and took out a 'Believe' emoji wallpaper and told myself that I will do it for the country," the effervescent 31-year-old said in a post-match interaction, joy and relief both apparent on his face despite a tired body that delivered 185.3 overs in the series.

The decision to call off play on day four before cut-off time after a brief spell of rain was questioned by the likes of Stuart Broad and Michael Vaughan but it seemed fitting that the series-decider went to the final day with both teams fighting tooth and nail from start to finish.

The day started with bright sunshine but two hours before start of play, the clear skies made way for dark clouds, giving

more hope to India and their fans who ensured a sellout crowd at The Oval on day five. The 25 pounds non-refundable ticket helped fill the 27,500 capacity facility in no time.

"For us as a team that wasn't given a chance in the series...for us to fight back and fight every game and get a result of 2-2...for us and for Indian Test cricket going into the future, this will rank right at the top and this is where the change begins and the team will win a lot more series outside of India," said batter K L Rahul, who had his own role in the triumph with two hundreds.

The ground's chief curator Lee Fortis, who made headlines before the start of the game for his verbal spat with India head coach Gautam Gambhir, used the heavy roller for one last time which usually makes batting a tad easier in the first 30 minutes of play.

When proceedings finally began, the new ball was due in 22 balls but England expectedly went on the offensive in overcast conditions from the word go.

Prasidh Krishna, who had four balls left from his 23rd over overnight, bowled a short ball to start with and Jamie Overton did well to pull it away for a four. An inside edge the following ball meant back to back fours for England, reducing the target to 27 runs.

Siraj, India's stoic warrior in the series, made the old ball talk in his opening over from the pavilion end and immediately got the ball to shape away.

I googled and got 'Believe' emoji after I woke up today: Siraj on winning it for India

LONDON, Aug 4: The word impossible is not a part of Mohammed Siraj's dictionary as he always believed that he can win the final Test for India from any point as he pulled off one of the biggest heists in the traditional format in recent times.

"I woke up in the morning and checked google on my phone and took out a 'Believe' emoji wallpaper and told myself that I will do it for the country."

Without Jasprit Bumrah, the Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) of Telangana Police bowled 185.3 overs to take 23 wickets, and it couldn't have been more fitting that he earned India a win for posterity.

"I always believe that I can win the game from any point, and did that to the morning," Siraj told Dinesh Karthik in a post match chat for Jio Hotstar.

Having consistently troubled the English batters, Siraj finished with 5 for 104 in 30.1 overs and a match haul of nine wickets.

"My only plan was to bowl good areas. Didn't matter if I took wickets or went for runs," Siraj said.

His feet touched the boundary rope while trying to catch Harry Brook when the batter was on 19. Brook scored a smashing ton and it looked like the match slipping from India's grasp.

"I didn't think I'd touch the cushion when I took it. It was a match-changing moment. Brook got into T20 moment. We were behind the game after that but Thank God. I thought the match was gone," Siraj said. (PTI)

The dangerous Jamie Smith (2) was beaten in the first two balls before a third one in the off-stump area took the outside edge on way to the keeper, causing the sizeable Indian fandom in the stadium to erupt in unison.

Every ball of that Siraj over was an event.

Following the much-needed breakthrough, a half chance was created against Gus Atkinson the very next ball on the fifth stump but that half chance was not taken by K L Rahul at second slip.

In his following over, Siraj foxed Overton with a nip backer as the batter expected the bowler to continue with the

off-stump line.

The on-field decision was reviewed by Overton but the ball was just clipping the leg-stump. England still needed 20 to win at that stage.

Prasidh backed up Siraj from the other end by reducing England to 350 for nine, a full ball trapping Josh Tongue in front and drawing a deafening roar from the partisan crowd.

What followed next would feature among the great moments of on-field bravado.

A game after Rishabh Pant came out to bat with a fractured foot for India, Chris Woakes walked into the centre with a tied broken left arm, prompting everyone in the stadium to stand in respect.

That moment of immense courage took one back to 1963 when Colin Cowdrey came out to bat with a broken arm and helped England secure a draw against the West Indies.

With Woakes in no position to bat, Atkinson did not have an option but to use the long handle.

He targeted the straight boundary and managed to clear Akash Deep who got his hands on the ball only to send it over the ropes.

The target soon was in single digits and with Atkinson doing well to keep himself on strike, India had to go for one final roll of the dice. With field spread out, Siraj fired a yorker to shatter Atkinson's off-stump, bringing a heart-stopping end to the game. (PTI)

Durand Cup: Punjab FC start campaign with late winner against Karbi Anglong

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Aug 4: Punjab FC began their 134th IndianOil Durand Cup campaign with a dramatic 2-1 victory over Karbi Anglong Morning Star FC (KAMSFC), here at the SAI Stadium. In a closely contested Group D tie, KAMSFC stunned the ISL side with a 69th-minute goal from Joseph Olaleye, before Pramveer (73') and Konsum Sanathoi Singh (90+2') turned the game around in the final quarter of the match to give the Shers a winning start to their campaign.

All matches of the 134th IndianOil Durand Cup are being broadcast LIVE on the Sony Sports Network (Sony Ten 2 channels) and streamed on the SonyLiv platform.

The Shers head coach Panagiotis Dilmperis fielded a youthful side in a 4-2-3-1 setup, handing debuts to Vishal Yadav and Muhammad Uvais. The frontline featured Vishal, Suhail F., and Ninthoi Meetei, while captain Nikhil Prabhu anchored the midfield alongside Ravi Kumar in between the sticks. Karbi Anglong Head Coach C A Laldinsang Pudaitie, in their final match of the tournament, made two changes to his starting line-up bringing in goal keeper Gojen Hanse and Ghana International defender Ben Nash Quansh in place of Wellyster Mendes and Khupminlun Hupminlun.



The Shers showed early attacking intent, with chances falling to debutant Vishal and Suhail. Karbi keeper Gojen Hanse stood tall, pulling off crucial saves including a double attempt in the 12th minute and another fingertip denial from Kipgen's strike that hit the crossbar in the 16th minute.

Against the run of play, Karbi nearly took the lead when Joseph Bempah forced a flying save from Ravi Kumar in the 29th minute. Off the resulting corner, a handball gave Karbi Anglong

a penalty. But Lunminlen Haokip fired it wide, letting Punjab off the hook.

Despite controlling possession and creating multiple half-chances, Punjab couldn't break through Karbi Anglong's disciplined defence, with Harbamon Timung leading from the back. The first half ended goalless.

The second half saw Punjab dominate the tempo, with Lungdim testing Gojen again from distance, and Ninthoi continuing to deliver dangerous balls into the box.

However, it was Karbi Anglong who

struck first, Nigerian midfielder Victor Jackson launched a lofted ball to Olaleye in front from the center of the field, who took advantage of Ravi Kumar being off his line to place it beautifully from outside the box inside the goal in the 69th minute and give the I-League side the lead.

Punjab responded quickly. Four minutes later, a corner from substitute Shami found Pramveer, who rose above the defence to head home the equaliser in between the keeper and defender on the right bottom corner.

The Shers kept pushing the Karbi Anglong defense trying to find the winner but were not able to find the finishing touch.

In added time, with the match heading for a draw, Uvais floated in a teasing cross from the left which found Konsum Singh, unmarked inside the box. Konsum met the cross on the volley and smashed home the winner in the 90+2 minute, sealing all three points for the Shers.

The win gives Punjab FC a vital early boost in their Group D campaign, while KAMSFC, despite a spirited performance, will rue missed chances and their inability to hold on to the lead as they end their 2025 Durand Cup campaign without a single win. Punjab FC will face ITBP FC in their next group D encounter on Wednesday.

I think this will rank right at the top: KL Rahul



LONDON, Aug 4: Opener K L Rahul on Monday said the 2-2 Test series draw against England "will rank right at the top" among the biggest moments of Indian cricket as it was pulled off by a team that "wasn't given a chance" in the absence of giants like Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma.

Led by the tireless Mohammed Siraj's extraordinary bowling effort that fetched him a five-wicket haul in the second innings, India scraped past England by six runs in the series-deciding fifth and final Test. The win secured the tourists a 2-2 draw in the intensely fought series, which saw them claw back repeatedly from difficult situations.

"We have seen India lift the World Cup, I mean nothing compares to lifting the World Cup. But so many doubts, so many questions from everybody about whether Test cricket will stay or not. I think both the teams and the way we've played in this series, I think we've answered that question," Rahul said at the post-match press conference.

"For us as a team, that wasn't given a chance in this series. And for us to fight back and to fight in every game and to get a result which is 2-2 might seem like a drop. But for us and for Indian Test cricket going in the future, I think this will rank right at the top," he added.

He said the Indian Test team will go on to win a lot many series "outside of India and the whole team deserves it."

"For the start of the series, we had Virat Kohli retiring, Rohit Sharma retiring, we had Ashwin retiring. So three big names out of the roster in India's team," he pointed out. A senior player now, Rahul emerged as one of India's biggest performers with 532 runs across the five Tests and forged a fine partnership with the younger Yashasvi Jaiswal at the top.

"Yeah, I think it hit me when I joined the

team. I was here about two weeks earlier playing India A's and it didn't hit me back then. But once I joined the team and I looked around and I didn't have Rohit and Virat and Ashwin who I played all my cricket with..."

"Just to look around and not see them felt a bit weird. But yeah, that's when it hit me that everyone else is looking at me, coming to me to ask about English conditions, what they need to do, how they need to prepare."

Rahul said he relied on his experience to do his bit in not just performing but also steering the younger lot.

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Rahul was full of praise for Gill. "Shubman's been phenomenal. I think he's really led from the front. He's worked really hard on the boys behind the scenes as well. In forming connections which a lot of people don't see."

"He's been tactically really good. The changes he's made over the series has always got us the wickets somehow. And I think he will grow. He will grow on to be a really, really good Test captain."

"I can't speak too much about his individual performance because I think he's already shown the world what he can do in all three formats. And especially this series, the way he batted. (PTI)

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Both teams travel to the Caribbean for a series of three one-day internationals. (AP)



'Engage in games and sports for a healthy Body and sound mind'

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Aug 3: The Director of Sports, Tadar Appa, on Sunday appealed to one and all to take part in games and sports to stay fit and healthy, both in body and mind.

Director Tadar Appa was participating as the chief guest in a friendly football match between the Nyishi and Apatani communities at the Sange Laden Sports Academy Complex, Chimpu. He said the match was significant, as the players represented two major communities of the state, the Nyishi and the Apatani and all the players were super veterans. Some of them are over 65 years old, and none are below 50. "This is important because if we, the older generation, can still play games and sports, why can't our younger generation? I appeal to all our younger brothers and sisters to take part in sports and games to stay physically fit and live a long, healthy life," he said.

He added that it was heartening to learn about the two participating teams. One



team was from Nyapin in Kurung Kumey district, composed of former students of Government Higher Secondary School, Nyapin. Most of them are either employed or self-employed and understand the importance of the saying 'health is wealth'. The other team was the winner of the Dree Festival celebration tournament, and its players range from junior officers to secretaries, all employed individuals.

"This shows that if one wants to live long and healthy in this world, participating in sports and regular physical exercise is a must," said Appa.

He further expressed immense joy in having played as a member of one of the teams, saying it inspired every player present. "So, I appeal to all my dear young and old friends to maintain a healthy body and sound mind through regular exercise and involvement in games and sports. Take advantage of the state government's 5% to 10% job reservation policy for sports persons. Today, the sports industry has become a viable career option, and one can earn both name and fame through it," he added.

Alumni Association Nyapin School (AANS) Football Super Veteran Team Captain Tadar Sima and Paatii Super Veteran Team Captain Hege Tapu also addressed the media. They spoke about maintaining strong relationships, bonhomie, and friendship among neighboring tribes of the state.

"This spirit should continue. We welcome the announcement that the next match will be played at Yupia Stadium, as assured by the Director of Sports," the team captains said.

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Siraj stars with magic spell as India tie series against England with spirited comeback at Oval



LONDON, Aug 4: The perseverant Mohammed Siraj's warrior spirit steered India to a series-levelling six-run victory over England in the fifth and final Test here on Monday, bringing a fitting end to one of the most intensely-fought and drama-filled showdowns in recent times.

With four wickets in hand and 35 runs to get, England held the edge before start of play but the gladiator in Siraj made life hell for the opposition batters from ball one.

In the end, his effort, complemented quite well by Prasidh Krishna at the other end, left England short by the thinnest of margins and allowed India to sign off 2-2 in the high-pressure five-match rubber.

Siraj was deservedly adjudged player of the match for his nine-wicket match haul for the team that was missing its regular

pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah in this game due to his workload management.

"I woke up in the morning and checked google on my phone and took out a 'Believe' emoji wallpaper and told myself that I will do it for the country," the effervescent 31-year-old said in a post-match interaction, joy and relief both apparent on his face despite a tired body that delivered 185.3 overs in the series.

The decision to call off play on day four before cut-off time after a brief spell of rain was questioned by the likes of Stuart Broad and Michael Vaughan but it seemed fitting that the series-decider went to the final day with both teams fighting tooth and nail from start to finish.

The day started with bright sunshine but two hours before start of play, the clear skies made way for dark clouds, giving

more hope to India and their fans who ensured a sellout crowd at The Oval on day five. The 25 pounds non-refundable ticket helped fill the 27,500 capacity facility in no time.

"For us as a team that wasn't given a chance in the series...for us to fight back and fight every game and get a result of 2-2...for us and for Indian Test cricket going into the future, this will rank right at the top and this is where the change begins and the team will win a lot more series outside of India," said batter K L Rahul, who had his own role in the triumph with two hundreds.

The ground's chief curator Lee Fortis, who made headlines before the start of the game for his verbal spat with India head coach Gautam Gambhir, used the heavy roller for one last time which usually makes batting a tad easier in the first 30 minutes of play.

When proceedings finally began, the new ball was due in 22 balls but England expectedly went on the offensive in over-cast conditions from the word go.

Prasidh Krishna, who had four balls left from his 23rd over overnight, bowled a short ball to start with and Jamie Overton did well to pull it away for a four. An inside edge the following ball meant back to back fours for England, reducing the target to 27 runs.

Siraj, India's stoic warrior in the series, made the old ball talk in his opening over from the pavilion end and immediately got the ball to shape away.

I googled and got 'Believe' emoji after I woke up today: Siraj on winning it for India

LONDON, Aug 4: The word impossible is not a part of Mohammed Siraj's dictionary as he always believed that he can win the final Test for India from any point as he pulled off one of the biggest heists in the traditional format in recent times.

"I woke up in the morning and checked google on my phone and took out a 'Believe' emoji wallpaper and told myself that I will do it for the country."

Without Jasprit Bumrah, the Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) of Telangana Police bowled 185.3 overs to take 23 wickets, and it couldn't have been more fitting that he earned India a win for posterity.

"I always believe that I can win the game from any point, and did that to the morning," Siraj told Dinesh Karthik in a post match chat for Jio Hotstar.

Having consistently troubled the English batters, Siraj finished with 5 for 104 in 30.1 overs and a match haul of nine wickets.

"My only plan was to bowl good areas. Didn't matter if I took wickets or went for runs," Siraj said.

His feet touched the boundary rope while trying to catch Harry Brook when the batter was on 19. Brook scored a smashing ton and it looked like the match slipping from India's grasp.

"I didn't think I'd touch the cushion when I took it. It was a match-changing moment. Brook got into T20 moment. We were behind the game after that but Thank God. I thought the match was gone," Siraj said. (PTI)

The dangerous Jamie Smith (2) was beaten in the first two balls before a third one in the off-stump area took the outside edge on way to the keeper, causing the sizeable Indian fandom in the stadium to erupt in unison.

Every ball of that Siraj over was an event.

Following the much-needed breakthrough, a half chance was created against Gus Atkinson the very next ball on the fifth stump but that half chance was not taken by K L Rahul at second slip.

In his following over, Siraj foxed Overton with a nip backer as the batter expected the bowler to continue with the

off-stump line.

The on-field decision was reviewed by Overton but the ball was just clipping the leg-stump. England still needed 20 to win at that stage.

Prasidh backed up Siraj from the other end by reducing England to 350 for nine, a full ball trapping Josh Tongue in front and drawing a deafening roar from the partisan crowd.

What followed next would feature among the great moments of on-field bravado.

A game after Rishabh Pant came out to bat with a fractured foot for India, Chris Woakes walked into the centre with a tied broken left arm, prompting everyone in the stadium to stand in respect.

That moment of immense courage took one back to 1963 when Colin Cowdrey came out to bat with a broken arm and helped England secure a draw against the West Indies.

With Woakes in no position to bat, Atkinson did not have an option but to use the long handle.

He targeted the straight boundary and managed to clear Akash Deep who got his hands on the ball only to send it over the ropes.

The target soon was in single digits and with Atkinson doing well to keep himself on strike, India had to go for one final roll of the dice. With field spread out, Siraj fired a yorker to shatter Atkinson's off-stump, bringing a heart-stopping end to the game. (PTI)

Durand Cup: Punjab FC start campaign with late winner against Karbi Anglong

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Aug 4: Punjab FC began their 134th IndianOil Durand Cup campaign with a dramatic 2-1 victory over Karbi Anglong Morning Star FC (KAMSFC), here at the SAI Stadium. In a closely contested Group D tie, KAMSFC stunned the ISL side with a 69th-minute goal from Joseph Olaleye, before Pramveer (73') and Konsum Sanathoi Singh (90+2') turned the game around in the final quarter of the match to give the Shers a winning start to their campaign.

All matches of the 134th IndianOil Durand Cup are being broadcast LIVE on the Sony Sports Network (Sony Ten 2 channels) and streamed on the SonyLiv platform.

The Shers held coach Panagiotis Dilmperis fielded a youthful side in a 4-2-3-1 setup, handing debuts to Vishal Yadav and Muhammed Uvais. The frontline featured Vishal, Suhail F., and Ninthoi Meetei, while captain Nikhil Prabhu anchored the midfield alongside Ravi Kumar in between the sticks. Karbi Anglong Head Coach C A Laldinsang Pudaitie, in their final match of the tournament, made two changes to his starting line-up bringing in goal keeper Gojen Hanse and Ghana International defender Ben Nash Quansh in place of Wellyster Mendes and Khupminlun Hupminlun.



The Shers showed early attacking intent, with chances falling to debutant Vishal and Suhail. Karbi keeper Gojen Hanse stood tall, pulling off crucial saves including a double attempt in the 12th minute and another fingertip denial from Kipgen's strike that hit the crossbar in the 16th minute.

Against the run of play, Karbi nearly took the lead when Joseph Bempah forced a flying save from Ravi Kumar in the 29th minute. Off the resulting corner, a handball gave Karbi Anglong

a penalty. But Lunminlen Haokip fired it wide, letting Punjab off the hook.

Despite controlling possession and creating multiple half-chances, Punjab couldn't break through Karbi Anglong's disciplined defence, with Harbamon Timung leading from the back. The first half ended goalless.

The second half saw Punjab dominate the tempo, with Lungdim testing Gojen again from distance, and Ninthoi continuing to deliver dangerous balls into the box.

However, it was Karbi Anglong who

struck first, Nigerian midfielder Victor Jackson launched a lofted ball to Olaleye in front from the center of the field, who took advantage of Ravi Kumar being off his line to place it beautifully from outside the box inside the goal in the 69th minute and give the I-League side the lead.

Punjab responded quickly. Four minutes later, a corner from substitute Shami found Pramveer, who rose above the defence to head home the equaliser in between the keeper and defender on the right bottom corner.

The Shers kept pushing the Karbi Anglong defense trying to find the winner but were not able to find the finishing touch.

In added time, with the match heading for a draw, Uvais floated in a teasing cross from the left which found Konsum Singh, unmarked inside the box. Konsum met the cross on the volley and smashed home the winner in the 90+2 minute, sealing all three points for the Shers.

The win gives Punjab FC a vital early boost in their Group D campaign, while KAMSFC, despite a spirited performance, will rue missed chances and their inability to hold on to the lead as they end their 2025 Durand Cup campaign without a single win. Punjab FC will face ITBP FC in their next group D encounter on Wednesday.

I think this will rank right at the top: KL Rahul



LONDON, Aug 4: Opener K L Rahul on Monday said the 2-2 Test series draw against England "will rank right at the top" among the biggest moments of Indian cricket as it was pulled off by a team that "wasn't given a chance" in the absence of giants like Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma.

Led by the tireless Mohammed Siraj's extraordinary bowling effort that fetched him a five-wicket haul in the second innings, India scraped past England by six runs in the series-deciding fifth and final Test. The win secured the tourists a 2-2 draw in the intensely fought series, which saw them claw back repeatedly from difficult situations.

"We have seen India lift the World Cup, I mean nothing compares to lifting the World Cup. But so many doubts, so many questions from everybody about whether Test cricket will stay or not. I think both the teams and the way we've played in this series, I think we've answered that question," Rahul said at the post-match press conference.

"For us as a team, that wasn't given a chance in this series. And for us to fight back and to fight in every game and to get a result which is 2-2 might seem like a drop. But for us and for Indian Test cricket going in the future, I think this will rank right at the top," he added.

He said the Indian Test team will go on to win a lot many series "outside of India and the whole team deserves it."

"For the start of the series, we had Virat Kohli retiring, Rohit Sharma retiring, we had Ashwin retiring. So three big names out of the roster in India's team," he pointed out. A senior player now, Rahul emerged as one of India's biggest performers with 532 runs across the five Tests and forged a fine partnership with the younger Yashasvi Jaiswal at the top.

"Yeah, I think it hit me when I joined the

team. I was here about two weeks earlier playing India A's and it didn't hit me back then. But once I joined the team and I looked around and I didn't have Rohit and Virat and Ashwin who I played all my cricket with..."

"Just to look around and not see them felt a bit weird. But yeah, that's when it hit me that everyone else is looking at me, coming to me to ask about English conditions, what they need to do, how they need to prepare."

Rahul said he relied on his experience to do his bit in not just performing but also steering the younger lot.

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