

**6** NATION

**7** NE

- Govt in process of installing anti drone systems within 6 months: Shah
- Indo-Pacific must remain driver for global growth: Jaishankar
- Prez Murmu begins 3-day Sikkim tour, to visit India-China border
- Arunachal Governor urges law students to be driven by justice

## 110 Assam poll winners secured over 50% vote share: ADR

**NEW DELHI, May 26:** The winners in the recent Assam elections represented a larger share of the electorate compared to the 2021 polls, according to an analysis by the Association for Democratic Reforms and Assam Election Watch. The report, which analysed all the 126 constituencies in Assam that went to polls on April 9, said the voter turnout stood at 86.25 per cent, up from 82.24 per cent in 2021. The winners, on average, secured 58.11 per cent of valid votes polled, compared to 54.08 per cent in the previous Assembly elections. According to the analysis, 110 of the 126 winners, or 87 per cent, won with more than 50 per cent vote share in their constituencies, while only 16 secured victory with less than half of the valid

votes polled. The winners represented, on average, 50.12 per cent of registered voters, up from 44.47 per cent in 2021, indicating broader electoral backing. The top three vote-share winners were Kaushik Rai of the BJP from Lakhimpur with 81.49 per cent, Tuliram Ronghang of the BJP from Rongkhang with 75.72 per cent and Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma from Jalukbari with 74.42 per cent, the report said. At the other end, the lowest vote shares among the winners were recorded by Wazed Ali Choudhury of the Congress from Birsing Jarua with 41.53 per cent, Rupam Chandra Roy of the Bodoland Peoples Front (BPF) from Baokhungri with 41.95 per cent, and Sherman Ali Ahmed of

the Trinamool Congress from Mandia with 43.07 per cent. Party-wise, the BJP accounted for the largest share of votes polled at 37.81 per cent, followed by the Congress at 29.84 per cent. The Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) secured 6.48 per cent and the AIUDF 5.46 per cent, while NOTA (none of the above) accounted for 1.23 per cent of the votes polled. The ADR said that only two constituencies witnessed razor-thin victories with margins below 3,000 votes – Hajo-Sualkuchi, where AGP's Prakash Chandra Das won by 724 votes, and Bilasipara, where AGP's Jibesh Roy won by 2,694 votes. Four winners registered margins exceeding 50 percentage points. Kaushik Rai posted the highest

margin at 64.65 per cent in Lakhimpur, followed by Tuliram Ronghang in Rongkhang at 54.80 per cent, Himanta Biswa Sarma in Jalukbari at 52.35 per cent, and Tanzil Hussain in Samaguri at 50.78 per cent. The report also noted that 16 of the 21 winners with declared criminal cases secured vote shares above 50 per cent, while 94 of 105 winners with clean backgrounds crossed the same mark. Among women, only seven were elected to the Assembly, all winning with vote shares exceeding 46 per cent. BJP's Niso Terangpi from Diphu registered the highest vote share among women winners at 62.95 per cent. The report also said that 63 MLAs were re-

lected, with none securing less than 40 per cent vote share and 54 of them winning with more than 50 per cent vote share. On voter rejection, the ADR said that 2,66,962 votes, or 1.23 per cent of the 2.16 crore votes polled, went to NOTA, with Barpeta recording the highest number of NOTA votes at 5,195. According to the results declared on May 4, the BJP-led NDA retained power in Assam with the saffron party winning 82 seats on its own, comfortably crossing the majority mark in the 126-member House. Its allies, the BPF and the AGP, secured 10 seats each. The Congress won 19 seats, the AIUDF and Rajpor Dal two seats each, while the Trinamool Congress secured one seat. (PTI)

## Himanta slams protesting Congress as 'anti-women' House adopts resolution on 33% quota

**GUWAHATI, May 26:** Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday accused the Congress of being anti-women after the party staged a brief walk-out in the Assembly during a discussion on a government resolution supporting 33 per cent reservation for women in Parliament and state legislatures. Sarma claimed that Congress MLAs had received instructions from the party's central leadership not to remain present in the House when the resolution was adopted. He alleged that the grand old party had surrendered to the anti-women policies of its allies, such as the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), when they stalled the reservation

bill from being passed in Parliament. Women and Child Welfare Minister Ajanta Neog on Monday moved the resolution that "in order to honour women's power and ensure the holistic development and empowerment of women, one-third reservation for women in Parliament and in all legislative Assemblies should be implemented with immediate effect, after completing the process of delimitation". Congress and Rajpor Dal legislators briefly walked out when Sarma began speaking on the resolution, objecting to remarks made against the Congress by BJP MLA Bhuvan Pegu during his speech. The Congress members, however,



later returned to the House before the resolution was taken up. Participating in the discussion, Sarma said the women's reservation bill was moved in Parliament several times over the past decades, and though the Congress had been in power, it had not en-

ured its passage. "Congress would say it supports women's reservation and table the bill in Parliament. But when its allies SP and RJD created even a little ruckus against it, the Speaker would immediately put off the discussion," he said. "When the BJP was the main opposition party, we had offered to support the bill, and it would have ensured that it was passed. But the Congress surrendered to the anti-women policy of the SP and the RJD," the CM claimed. Sarma further claimed that the Congress again stalled reservation for women by not supporting the latest Constitutional amendment bill in April. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Assam: 8 govt officials nabbed for misappropriation of funds

**GUWAHATI, May 26:** At least eight government officials, including two from the Assam Civil Services (ACS) cadre, have been arrested in connection with financial irregularities, the Vigilance Department said on Tuesday. The Directorate of Vigilance & Anti-Corruption (DVAC), in a statement, said it conducted search operations during the day at multiple locations, including Guwahati, Belsor (Nalbari), Gauripur (Dhubri) and Raha (Nagaon), in connection with a case registered in 2023. The case was registered for alleged misappropriation of government funds of Assam Fishery Development Corporation Ltd

(AFDCL), it added. During the search operation, the DVAC sleuths arrested two ACS officers -- Anuradha Adhikary Sarma and Naren Chandra Basumatary, both former managing directors of the AFDCL. Basumatary is presently working as the joint secretary of the Revenue and Disaster Management Department. The DVAC also arrested two former executive engineers of the AFDCL -- Jyotish Saikia and Birinchi Adhikary. Other AFDCL employees -- Jyoti Prasad Saikia (then assistant executive engineer), Saburuddin Ahmed (then assistant engineer), Bhogirath Das (then project (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Nagaon dacoity case: Mastermind killed in encounter

**Pistol, two empty cartridges, rod and machete recovered from encounter spot**

**HT Correspondent**

**NAGAON, May 26:** Notorious dacoit Khairul Ali, the alleged mastermind behind the brutal Nagaon (Morikolung) dacoity case, was killed in a police firing in Nagaon in the wee hours on Tuesday here. The encounter took place around 2-30 am at Borkandali Mikirpur under Rangolu police outpost in the district. According to police, Khairul Ali alias Moni, a resident of ward No 8, Thana road, Lakhimpur town, had been leading a 5-6 member gang planning further dacoities in Nagaon. Acting on a tip-off, teams from Nagaon Sadar Police Station and Rangolu police outpost launched an operation in Borkandali Mikirpur. When confronted, the gang opened fire on the-

police team. In retaliatory firing, Khairul was critically injured with two bullet wounds. He was immediately rushed to Nagaon Medical College Hospital but was declared brought dead. A police vehicle was damaged in exchange of bullets, but no police personnel were injured. The other gang members managed to flee under cover of darkness, sources added further. Khairul was the prime accused in the horrific April 24 dacoity at Dr Ranjit Saikia's residence at Morikolung Seuj Nagar in Nagaon town. The gang had checked into Nagaon town based Star hotel on April 22 to plan the heist. Police said two local traders, Harish Sarma and Satish Shah, assisted the gang by providing details of Dr Saikia's (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



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## Newly discovered galaxy structure named after Loktak Lake

**IMPHAL, May 26:** An Indian researcher based in Japan has named a newly discovered large structure of galaxies after Manipur's Loktak Lake, seeking to "immortalise" the north-eastern state's identity in the cosmos. Dr Ronaldo Laishram, who led an international research team as a postdoctoral researcher at the National Astronomical Observatory of Japan (NAOJ), said the structure was studied using the Subaru Telescope in Hawaii and the James Webb Space Telescope. "The study, which began around October 2024 as part of a broader ongoing research programme, was published this month in the 'Astrophysical Journal Letters'," he told PTI over phone. Laishram said the idea of naming the structure after Loktak Lake came to him immediately after the discovery. "When I first discovered it, the first thing that came to my mind was to do something for my home Manipur. Loktak is the mirror and lifeline of Manipur. It is not just a lake -- it is deeply woven into the identity, the stories, and the lives of our people. I wanted to place Manipur, and Loktak, in the story of the universe

itself," he said. The 29-year-old researcher from Khangabok in Thoubal district said he considered several names linked to Manipur's cultural and historical identity before finalising Loktak. "I thought of several names associated with Manipur's history and identity. Taoroinai, a mythical serpent deeply associated with Manipur's cultural and religious legacy, also came to my mind. But, when I saw the four separate concentrations of galaxies all linked together into one larger system, Loktak felt like the most natural name," he said. "There was also a moment years ago when I took an aerial photograph and saw Loktak from above. That image stayed with me, the way everything was connected. When I looked at this cosmic structure, that memory came back," Laishram said. Describing the significance of the lake, Laishram said it is the largest freshwater lake in the northeast, and serves as a lifeline providing livelihoods to thousands of fishermen. "It also hosts the only floating national park in the country where Sangai, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Ex-SC judge Justice Prakash Prabhakar Naolekar to head committee Panel to study infiltration-led demographic change

**NEW DELHI, May 26:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday announced that the Centre has constituted a high-level committee under retired Supreme Court judge Justice Prakash Prabhakar Naolekar to assess demographic changes across India due to "illegal immigration and other unnatural causes". In a message on 'X' in Hindi, he said infiltration and other reasons are causing "unnatural" demographic change, which poses a significant challenge to the present and future of any nation. "To address this very challenge, on August 15, 2025, Prime Minister @narendramodi ji had announced the 'high-level committee on demographic change'. I am delighted to inform you that the government has now constituted this committee," Shah said. The home minister said the committee will be chaired by Justice Naolekar (retd) and will also include the census commissioner, along with retired IAS

## Himanta hails Centre's decision

**GUWAHATI, May 26:** Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday said the state has been witnessing demographic change for a long time, and welcomed the Centre's announcement of a committee to study the phenomenon across the country. Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday announced that the Centre has constituted a high-level committee under retired Supreme Court judge (CONTD. ON PAGE-2) officer Durga Shankar Mishra, ex-IPS officer Balaji Srivastava and Dr Shamika Ravi as members. "The joint secretary (foreigners-I), Ministry of Home Affairs, will serve as

the member secretary of this committee," he said. Shah emphasised that demographic change is a serious issue linked not only to the country's sovereignty but also to national security, law and order, profound changes in social structure and the preservation of tribal society. "This committee will conduct a comprehensive assessment of demographic changes occurring across India due to illegal immigration and other unnatural causes, analyse patterns of abnormal population shifts at the levels of religious and social communities, and present a planned and time-bound solution for the same," he said. The high-level committee will conduct a scientific evaluation of the demographic changes taking place in different regions of the country due to illegal immigration and other unusual factors, examine their causes, and suggest suitable policy, legislative, and administrative (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## India, US sign pact on critical minerals

**NEW DELHI, May 26:** India and the US on Tuesday firmed up a key framework for cooperation in ensuring steady supplies of critical minerals, a move that comes amid growing concerns over China's export controls on rare earth elements and strategic metals vital for global technology supply chains. The framework on securing supplies of mining and processing of critical minerals was signed on the sidelines of the Quad foreign ministers' meeting here. "It is something very timely and critical," External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said in presence of US Secretary of State Marco Rubio. "This framework aims to deepen our cooperation across the entire critical minerals and rare earth supply chain, including mining, processing, recycling and related investment," he said. The external affairs minister said the framework will strengthen resilient and diversified supply chains, help finance projects, and ensure effective management of critical minerals and rare earths. "It is one more sign of how close our cooperation has been in a world where there are so many challenges but also so many opportunities," he said. In his remarks, Rubio highlighted the strategic partnership between the US and India and its importance for the respective national interests of both countries. "It is a tangible example of that," Rubio said referring to the inking of the pact. "We are two countries that have strategic interests in ensuring reliable long-term access to critical minerals and supply chains that are important for our innovation economy," he said. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Manas Mitra Programme launched to strengthen ties between local communities and conservation efforts

## Over 1,500 students get nature lessons at Manas Park

**GUWAHATI, May 26:** More than 1,500 school students living around Manas National Park have been introduced to wildlife and ecological conservation through a series of outreach programmes organised by forest authorities, an official said on Tuesday. The initiatives were held under the Manas Mitra Programme (Friends of Manas), launched by the Manas National Park and Tiger Reserve to strengthen ties between local communities and conservation efforts. Field Director C Ramesh told PTI that the programme was launched on November 14, 2024,



at the Bansbari range on the occasion of Children's Day with a focus on involving students and youth in environmental awareness activities. "Since its launch, the programme has aimed at promoting understanding of the ecological importance of the Manas landscape

and encouraging community participation in wildlife conservation," he said. As part of the initiative, nature orientation sessions were organised from February this year across fringe villages surrounding the reserve. The programme covered 22 schools and reached 1,537 students. The sessions focused on the biodiversity and ecological significance of the tiger reserve, including awareness about wildlife protection and conservation. Students were also given animal masks and customised pencils as souvenirs. (PTI)

## Alleged torture of anti-drug activist concerns Khandu

**ITANAGAR, May 26:** Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Tuesday expressed concern over the alleged custodial torture of anti-drug activist Gumin Mize, as outrage intensified across the state and neighbouring Assam over photographs and videos purportedly showing injury marks on his body while in police custody. The state government has taken up the matter with Assam, with Khandu stating that he personally intervened after coming across the incident on social media. Speaking to reporters here, Khandu said Arunachal Pradesh

could not interfere in another state's judicial process but had strongly conveyed its concerns to the Assam government. "Mize has done excellent work here for the past several years against drugs. He has even facilitated the arrest of several individuals involved in drug peddling," the chief minister said. Describing the development as unfortunate, the Khandu informed that he had specifically requested the Assam government to ensure that no torture or mistreatment takes place while Mize remains in custody. He added that the state government (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

# Stock markets snap 2-day rally to end lower amid spike in oil prices

MUMBAI, May 26: Market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended lower in a volatile trade on Tuesday following a spike in crude oil prices amid reports of fresh US military operations in southern Iran.

Besides, losses in financial and banking stocks amid a weak rupee dragged the indices lower, traders said.

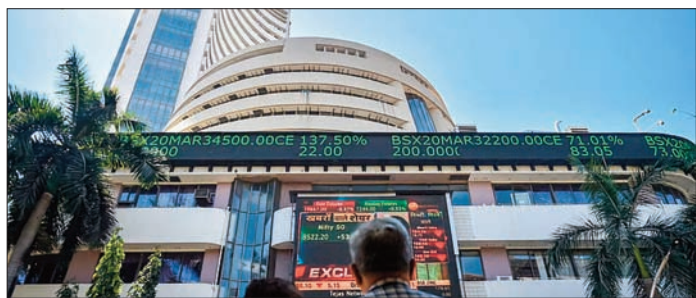
The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 479.26 points, or 0.63 per cent, to settle at 76,009.70. During the day, it tanked 579.28 points, or 0.75 per cent, to 75,909.68.

Similarly, the 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 118 points, or 0.49 per cent, to end at 23,913.70.

"Near-term optimism around a potential US-Iran peace deal faded sharply following reports of US military operations in southern Iran, triggering a spike in crude prices and reversing the rupee's brief appreciation," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

From the Sensex firms, Bharti Airtel, Trent, Tata Consultancy Services, Bajaj Finance, Titan and HDFC Bank were among the biggest gainers. In contrast, Tech Mahindra, Eternal, Maruti and Adani Ports were among the losers.

The BSE MidCap Select index went up by 0.27 per cent, and the



SmallCap Select index edged higher by 0.26 per cent.

Fuel-intensive sectors such as aviation, paints, chemicals, logistics and cement are likely to face headwinds due to rising input costs, while oil marketing companies may continue to face margin pressure if crude oil prices remain elevated, Sidhartha Khemka - Head of Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

Among sectoral indices, Consumer Durables dropped 0.86 per cent, Top 10 Banks (0.61 per cent), Realty (0.52 per cent), Hospitals (0.52 per cent), PSU Bank (0.47 per cent) and Bankex (0.31 per cent). Utilities jumped 1.15 per cent, Metal (1.02 per cent), Power (0.86 per cent), and Capital Goods (0.52 per cent).

The rupee depreciated 47 paise to close at 95.73 (provisional) against

the US dollar on Tuesday.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, climbed 2.93 per cent to USD 98.96 per barrel.

US President Donald Trump on Monday said negotiations with Iran to end the war were progressing "nicely", but officials pointed out that a final decision may take some time due to the complex communication networks Tehran deploys to consult with its supreme leader.

"Markets initially traded with a stable undertone amid easing crude oil prices and supportive global cues. However, sentiment deteriorated sharply after reports of fresh US military strikes in Iran disrupted hopes of a near-term de-escalation in West Asia. The sudden shift in geopolitical sentiment triggered aggressive risk-off positioning across global markets and reignited fears of re-

newed energy supply disruptions," Hariprasad K, Research Analyst and Founder, Livelong Wealth, said.

The sharp rebound in Brent crude prices once again became a key pressure point for Indian equities, he added. "For an oil-import-dependent economy like India, rising crude prices immediately revive concerns around imported inflation, currency pressure, and widening fiscal stress," Hariprasad added.

In Asian markets, South Korea's benchmark Kospi ended higher, while Japan's Nikkei, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng settled lower.

Markets in Europe were trading mostly lower. US markets were closed on Monday for Memorial Day. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth ₹ 821.75 crore on Monday, according to exchange data.

In the previous session on Monday, the Sensex jumped 1,073.61 points, or 1.42 per cent, to settle at 76,488.96. The Nifty surged 312.40 points, or 1.32 per cent, to end at 24,031.70.

"Overall, markets continue to remain resilient despite elevated global uncertainty, supported by strong domestic liquidity and selective buying in broader markets." (PTI)

## CNG prices in Delhi hiked again; rise by ₹ 2 per kg

NEW DELHI, May 26: Compressed natural gas (CNG) prices in the national capital and adjoining cities were raised by ₹ 2 per kg on Tuesday, marking the third increase in less than two weeks amid rising input costs.

CNG now costs ₹ 83.09 per kg, up from ₹ 81.09, according to Indraprastha Gas Ltd, the country's largest city gas company that sells CNG to automobiles and piped natural gas (PNG) to households and industries in Delhi and adjoining cities.

However, there was no revision in the rates of piped natural gas used by household kitchens for cooking.

The third increase in rates since May 15 took the cumulative increase in CNG prices to ₹ 5 per kg. The

prices were last increased by ₹ 1 per kg on May 23. Prices had gone up by ₹ 2 per kg on May 15.

In Mumbai, where rates were last revised on May 14, CNG costs ₹ 84 per kg.

The CNG price hike in the national capital came just as state-owned fuel retailers started delayed passing on the impact of higher international oil prices to consumers. Petrol price has been increased by ₹ 7.35 per litre and diesel by ₹ 7.53 in four instalments.

Rates of petrol and diesel, as well as CNG, vary from state to state depending on the incidence of VAT.

According to IGL, CNG in Noida and Ghaziabad will now cost ₹ 91.70 per kg, while in Gurugram, it will be priced at ₹ 88.12 per kg.

PNG continues to be priced at ₹ 49.59 per standard cubic metre in Delhi. In Mumbai, PNG costs ₹ 51.50 per standard cubic metre.

After the Iran war disrupted energy supplies, the government prioritised available gas supply to domestic households. Rates for PNG for domestic cooking were kept unchanged. But for CNG, the city gas retailers had to rely partly on costlier imported gas. This has translated into CNG price hikes, industry sources said.

The repeated hikes are expected to raise running costs for private vehicle owners, taxis and public transport fleets that rely on CNG, though the fuel continues to remain cheaper than petrol and diesel on a per-kilometre basis. (PTI)

## Myntra's EORS goes live from May 29

Six million trend-first fashion, beauty and lifestyle products

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, May 26: Advancing its role as a growth catalyst for India's e-lifestyle ecosystem, Myntra has announced the 24th edition of End of Reason Sale (EORS), starting from May 29 with early VIP access on May 28. Featuring 6 million+ styles, the event will further strengthen Myntra's role as a growth enabler for India's fashion and lifestyle ecosystem, creating scaled opportunities for emerging brands while bringing trend-first selection, compelling value and convenience to millions of customers across the country.

Among the thousands of global, domestic and home-grown D2C brands, 15,000 emerging brands, including 5,000 making their EORS debut, will leverage the platform's technology, creator ecosystem and nationwide reach to connect with millions of customers across India. EORS continues to serve as a growth enabler, driving heightened demand for emerging brands through enhanced visibility, new selection launches and category expansion. These brands will bring nearly 13 lakh styles across apparel, footwear, accessories and more. Myntra's advanced technology enables a suite of capabilities, including search and shopping insights to decode trends and demand patterns, simplified performance dashboards and a dedicated partner support team to guide the brands in their e-commerce journey with Myntra.

This edition of EORS will offer 6 million+ styles from thousands of international, domestic and home-

grown brands, giving customers access to a wide selection across fashion, beauty and lifestyle. The edition is expected to see strong traction across Men's Casual Wear, Women's Ethnic Wear, Women's Western Wear, Footwear, Sports Footwear, Accessories, and Beauty & Personal Care, driven by the summer season, travel, work, college, weddings, and holiday-style upgrades. Several popular brands expected to see increased traction include Levi's, Nike, adidas, H&M, MANGO, L'Oréal, Lakme, Libas, Decathlon, New Balance, GUESS, ASICS, Wrogn, US Polo Assn., Puma, and Rare Rabbit, among others.

This edition will also offer the best of Beauty & Personal Care, with 2.25 lakh+ styles spanning makeup, skincare, haircare, and personal care, bringing together D2C favourites, international brands, luxe labels, and K-Beauty cult picks. Customers can shop from a lineup including MAC, Bobbi Brown, LUSH, Beauty of Joseon, L'Oréal, The Ordinary, Plum Bodylovin', Medicube, Foxtale, and many more. Along with the breadth of choice, Myntra Beauty's tech-enabled tools are designed to make beauty shopping more intuitive and simple. The platform's AI-powered Skin Analyser allows customers to discover products tailored to their specific skin needs, while the Virtual Try-On feature takes personalisation a step further by enabling customers to test multiple products, making it easier than ever to find the perfect look this season.

Contd. from Page 1...

## House adopts resolution

According to him, the amendment bill would have benefited Assam by not only ensuring 33 per cent reservation for women but also increasing the number of Lok Sabha and Assembly constituencies in the state.

The increase in constituencies would have meant greater representation for indigenous communities, Sarma said. Criticising the Congress for the walk-out, he said, "I had received information in the morning itself that instructions have come from Delhi to ensure that Congress is not present in the House when the resolution is adopted." "This stance of the Congress proves that they are anti-women and also do not want Lok Sabha and Assembly seats to increase in the state," he added.

Supporting the resolution, the chief minister said Assam has a legacy of honouring women power, from goddess Kamakhya to Ahom princess Joymoti to freedom fighter Kanaklata, and they have played a pivotal role in the state's social discourse. He also cited the contribution of the 40 lakh women associated with self-help groups in the state, who are contributing to the economy. The resolution was later adopted by a voice vote. (PTI)

## Assam: 8 govt officials nabbed

manager) and Rabindra Narayan Deka (then assistant technical officer) -- have also been apprehended from different parts of the state. "Necessary follow-up actions are continuing," the statement said.

Last week, another ACS officer, Lachit Kumar Das, was arrested on graft charges and over Rs 1.66 crore in cash and fixed deposits worth another Rs 86 lakh were seized, along with other investment documents. (PTI)

## Nagaon dacoity case:

movements. Both had been in contact with Khairul for a long time. On April 24, Khairul led the gang into Dr Saikia's home and attacked him with a rod. Another accused, Rajibur Rahman, also assaulted the doctor. Dr Saikia was injured, while his wife Ruprekha Bhuyan Saikia, who was critically hurt, died on May 10 last while undergoing treatment at a Guwahati based private hospital.

Police have already arrested eight people in connection with the Morikolung case. On May 15, accused Rajibur Rahman was critically injured in a road accident at Borghat bypass road while being taken by police to recover stolen gold. He is still under treatment at Nagaon Medical College Hospital.

Khairul reportedly had a female relative in Nagaon with whom he was in regular contact. Police recovered a 7.65 mm pistol, two empty cartridges, a machete, and iron rods from the encounter site. The killing of Khairul has created a stir in Nagaon, as police continue efforts to trace the remaining gang members, sources added.

## Assam to become ₹ 10-lakh

after elections, and even West Bengal, from where people used to take refuge in Assam to escape post-poll violence during Trinamool Congress rule, did not witness such a situation. The CM said he kept his promise by tabling the UCC Bill in the first assembly session. "Tabling the UCC Bill proves our government's commitment to work for the rights of women belonging to the minority community. I hope the Opposition will support it," he said. "After Gujarat and Uttarakhand, Assam will become the third state to have UCC," he added.

Sarma also lauded the decision of several Eidgah committees to refrain from cow sacrifice during Bakri Eid, and hoped more committees would follow suit. He said that when his previous government had brought in the Cattle Preservation Act in 2021, many had interpreted it as an attempt to hamper religious sentiments.

From there, Assam has reached a state where Muslims are themselves refraining from cow slaughter respecting Hindu sentiments and this will strengthen communal harmony, Sarma said. Referring to the issue of price rise raised by several MLAs during the discussion, the CM said the government was seized of the matter, and measures were being taken to check it. More austerity measures will be included in the state Budget, likely to be presented in July, Sarma added. Sarma said the election results showed people rejected personal attacks and politicisation of singer Zubeen Garg's death. In an apparent reference to the Congress, he said one party thought they could win the elections by criticising his family.

"During the elections, things came to such a pass that whether my wife applied 'sindoor' or not was being discussed... We cannot stoop to such a low where we discuss what dress the wife of an MLA wears," he said.

He accused the opposition parties of trying to gain political mileage out of Garg's death, who died while swimming in the sea in Singapore in September last year. "One party went to the extent of including Zubeen's name in its manifesto, using his photos in campaign... People who earlier hired singers from Bangladesh for cultural functions became Zubeen's fans overnight," Sarma claimed.

"But people replied that there can be no politics with Zubeen," he added. In an apparent reference to state Congress president and MP Gaurav Gogoi's defeat in the elections, Sarma said, "A politician should not become proud. Pride leads a person to lose a small assembly segment under the Lok Sabha constituency he had won just two years ago." (PTI)

## Newly discovered galaxy

the brow-antlered deer, lives. By naming this discovery Loktak, I want to immortalise its name forever in the cosmos," he said. He said the naming has generated curiosity among researchers abroad about the lake and Manipur. "That curiosity is exactly what I hoped for. Loktak deserves to be known," the researcher said.

Laishram said the findings of the discovery suggest that even 12.6 billion years ago, when the universe was about 1.2 billion years old, a galaxy's surrounding environment influenced its growth. Galaxies in crowded regions were already evolving differently from those in quieter regions, offering fresh evidence that a galaxy's environment affects its development, he said.

Laishram is the son of Laishram Mahajon Singh and Laishram Sanahani Devi, and is the youngest among five siblings from Khangabok village in Thoubal district.

A computer science and engineering graduate from JSS Science and Technology University (SJCE), Mysuru, he later completed his Master's and PhD in astronomy and astrophysics at Tohoku University, Japan.

Recalling his childhood fascination with astronomy, Laishram said he became curious about the night sky after spotting a bright object, while playing in a field in his village at the age of six. "Since then, I would regularly look at the night sky to watch the stars. That curiosity never left me, it only grew stronger with every question I could not answer," he said. Laishram and his associates also launched the Manipur Astronomical Society in 2025 to bring together astronomy enthusiasts and researchers on a common platform. (PTI)

## Himanta hails Centre's decision

Justice Prakash Prabhakar Naolekar to assess demographic changes across India due to "illegal immigration and other unnatural causes". Reacting to this, Sarma, in a post on X, said, "Illegal infiltration and unusual demographic change are not merely the concern of any single state but a serious issue linked to India's national security, cultural identity, and social balance."

The formation of the high-level committee to address this challenge is a "visionary and decisive step", he added. "Under the proactive leadership of the honorable @AmitShah ji, this committee will study the unusual demographic changes occurring across the country and present concrete solutions. This will further strengthen national security and enable serious addressing of the concerns of border areas," Sarma said.

He said that Assam has been facing the challenge of demographic change for a long time.

"This initiative will prove extremely important for protecting our cultural heritage, tribal society, and the rights of indigenous people. We are confident that this committee will play a significant role in securing India's future," the CM said. Announcing the committee, Shah said infiltration and other reasons are causing "unnatural" demographic change, which poses a significant challenge to the present and future of any nation. (PTI)

## Panel to study infiltration-led

interventions, a government statement said.

According to the Terms of Reference of the committee, it will comprehensively deliberate upon the challenges arising from demographic changes, including illegal immigration. It will study the possible causes of demographic changes, such as cross-border activities (including illegal immigration), economic opportunities, and other socio-environmental factors, the statement said.

The panel will also identify the underlying factors behind these changes, which include illegal immigration, abnormal settlement patterns, and orchestrated migration, it said. Further, the committee will analyse structural population changes at the level of religious or social communities, particularly where they deviate from broader trends. It will recommend a streamlined and permanent operational mechanism for the legal, fair, and time-bound identification, detention, and deportation of illegal immigrants already residing in the country, the statement said. The committee will also suggest an appropriate institutional mechanism to strengthen border management, population stabilization, and identification systems for the continuous monitoring of such trends, it said. In addition, it will propose a comprehensive policy framework to enhance coordination between the central and state governments on matters related to illegal immigration and the resulting demographic imbalances. The committee may also suggest any additional measures it considers necessary to address the challenges resulting from demographic changes, including illegal immigration. Speaking from the ramparts of the Red Fort in his Independence Day speech last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced a high-powered demographic mission to tackle the problem. (PTI)

## Alleged torture of anti-drug

was closely monitoring the situation. Mize, president of the Arunachal Anti-Drug Warriors (APADW), was arrested by Assam Police from Itanagar on May 20 in connection with a Bihpuria Police Station case registered in Assam's Lakhimpur district. He was booked under multiple sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) along with provisions of the Arms Act.

According to the FIR lodged by one Popi Kakati, the case relates to an alleged violent incident that took place on May 15 at Sessa Rajgarh in Assam, where a group of 12 to 15 unidentified persons allegedly stormed a residence, assaulted family members, brandished firearms and looted cash and mobile phones.

The complainant alleged that the attackers had arrived in three vehicles looking for her husband, Rupam Kakati. When he allegedly attempted to flee, he was chased, physically assaulted, handcuffed and fired upon. The FIR further alleged that the complainant was also assaulted while trying to intervene.

Police said that Mize was arrested in connection with the case following allegations that gunshots were fired during the confrontation. (PTI)

## India, US sign pact on critical

A readout by the US said the agreement marked a milestone in the strategic partnership between the two nations to ensure that the foundational elements required for advanced technology and energy are available within trusted networks. Through this framework, the US and India will engage in international efforts to protect sensitive supply chains from coercive market practices and reduce our collective vulnerability to single-source monopolies, it said. The US government is mobilising unprecedented resources to secure critical mineral supply chains, supporting projects with more than USD 30 billion in investments, loans, and other support in partnership with the private sector.

These investments, along with Pax Silica and our reinvigorated diplomatic and commercial engagement are having a multiplier effect, mobilising private capital many times greater than government outlays, it said. (PTI)

**ELECTRICAL WORKS UNDER TINSUKIA DIVISION**  
E-Tender Notice No. TSK/Elect/239; dated: 22-05-2026. Works tender through E-Tendering System are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **SN.1. Brief Description of Item:** At New Tinsukia - Construction of Transit Building (4 Units). (Tender No. LVT-14-TSK-938-R). Tender Value: ₹17.64, 128/-; Earnest Money: ₹35,300/-. E-tenders will be closed at 13:00 hrs. on 12-06-2026 and Opened at 15:00 hrs. on 12-06-2026. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 13:00 hrs on 12-06-2026 in website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>

DRM (Elect)/Tinsukia  
**NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY**  
Serving Customers with a Smile

**TRANSPORTATION OF RAILWAY BOGIES**  
Tender Notice No. M-TSK-2026-20 Dated: 22-05-2026. Works tenders through "E" Tendering system for and on behalf of the president of India are invited for the works as detailed below: **Name of work:** Transportation of bogies between Coaching Depot Tinsukia, Railway Workshop, Dibrugarh Workshop and Railway Workshop, New Bongaigaon Workshop for a period of 02 (two) years. **Tender Value:** ₹1,10,15,838.72/-; **Earnest Money:** ₹2,05,100/-; **Date & time of closing tender:** At 13.00 hrs. on 15-06-2026. The complete information with tender documents of above e-tender will be available in the website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)

DRM (M)/Tinsukia Division  
**NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY**  
Serving Customers With A Smile

### Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Mahadevpur, Namsai Dist. Ar. Pradesh Engagement of Matrons for female candidates on purely contract basis for the academic session 2026-27

The willing and eligible candidates are invited for walk in interview on 16.6.2026 at 10.00 AM at the Office of the Principal, JNV, Mahadevpur, Namsai Dist. Ar. Pradesh. The tenure of contract engagement shall be only upto the end of current academic session (2026-27)

#### Eligible criteria:

1. Minimum qualification class X however higher Edu. Qualification may be given preference in engement.
2. Minimum age at the time of engement is 35 yrs. and the maximum age for engement is 55 yrs.
3. Married females which include widows or divorces without encumbrances.
4. Minimum wages (for industrial workers employed in building operation sector) for MTS unskilled.
5. Free boarding and lodging facilities and medical facilities as available in the M.I. room of the vidyalaya.
6. The tenure of contract appointment shall be for a period of 10 months in a year.

Sd/-  
Principal  
JNV, Mahadevpur, Namsai Dist. Ar. Pradesh

Memorandum submitted seeking strict implementation of court order and Forest Rights Act

## Tribal Sangha demands eviction of encroachers from tribal belt-blocks in BTR



**HT Correspondent**  
**KOKRAJHAR, May 26:** The BTC Coordination Committee of the All Assam Tribal Sangha has urged the immediate eviction of encroachers from tribal belts,

blocks, and forest lands across the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR).

A delegation of the committee on Monday submitted a two-point memorandum to the former BTC

Chief, seeking urgent action on the eviction of encroachers from tribal belts and blocks, along with proper implementation of the Forest Rights Act, 2006 in the BTC region.

In the memorandum, the organisation demanded strict implementation of the Gauhati High Court's order in PIL No 78/2012, which directs authorities to remove illegal encroachers from tribal belts and blocks. The committee alleged that despite the court's directive, encroachments continue in several tribal areas.

The organisation also demanded eviction of illegal settlers from forest and reserved forest areas and sought land pattas for genuine indigenous forest dwellers under the provisions of the Forest Rights Act, 2006.

The committee further called for proper implementation of the Act in Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa, Tamulpur and Udalguri districts and urged the authorities to constitute district-level committees for effective implementation of the law.

## Illegal slaughterhouse busted in Jorhat

**HT Correspondent**  
**JORHAT, May 26:** Ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, Jorhat police on Sunday, during a raid carried out at the Kabarthan Road area, seized a large quantity of banned animal meat from an illegal slaughterhouse.

Acting on specific information, a police team found an illegal slaughterhouse operating within a residence in a congested narrow lane, allegedly involved in the sale of banned meat.

A large quantity of animal meat, suspected to be beef was found stored in a deep freezer. Tools used for slaughtering animals were also recovered from the spot.

A police official told newsmen that officials from the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department, along with a Food Inspector, would examine the meat.

The official added that strict legal action would be taken against the person or persons involved in the illegal sale of banned meat, as per the provisions of the Assam Cattle Preservation Act, 2021.

The owner of the slaughterhouse, however, told newsmen that he was earlier involved in the beef business but had stopped all slaughter of animals about 20 days ago after a warning from the district administration.

## Land handed over for second unit of Assam Bhavan in Mumbai

New facility to support patients and visitors from Assam



**HT Correspondent**  
**NAGAON, May 26:** In a major development for patients and their attendants from Assam who travel to Mumbai for treatment of critical diseases, around 4.8 bighas of land at Cotton Green in the heart of Mumbai city was handed over to the Government of Assam on

Monday for the construction of another unit of Assam Bhavan in Mumbai.

Besides looking after cancer patients from Assam, the new Assam Bhavan is also expected to accommodate other guests and serve as a centre to promote Assam in the financial capital of India.

The land was formally taken over on behalf of the Government of Assam by Devashish Sarma, District Commissioner of Nagaon, who also holds the additional charge of Joint Resident Commissioner, Assam Bhavan, Mumbai, from the Estate Manager of the National Port Trust, Mumbai.

It may be mentioned that Sarma had earlier served at Assam Bhavan, Mumbai, for several years and rendered exceptional service to cancer patients from the state. In recognition of his outstanding services, he was given the additional charge of Joint Resident Commissioner along with his responsibilities as District Commissioner of Nagaon.

DC Sarma said the new Assam Bhavan would greatly benefit the people of Assam who travel to Mumbai for various purposes.

## AASU burns effigy of Union Minister

**HT Correspondent**  
**JORHAT, May 25:** As per the call given by the Central Committee of the All Assam Students' Union (AASU), the Jorhat district committee of the students' body burnt the effigy of Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri in Jorhat on Monday. The protestors, holding flags, raised slogans against

the minister and the Central Government over the repeated hikes in petrol and diesel prices in less than two weeks.

They said the rise in fuel prices has led to a sharp increase in the cost of essential commodities, thereby creating a heavy burden on common people. The protestors urged government intervention to bring down fuel prices and provide relief to citizens.

## BTC EM reviews flood preparedness measures ahead of Monsoon

**HT Correspondent**  
**KOKRAJHAR, May 26:** BTC Executive Member Fresh Muchahary chaired a departmental review meeting of the Water Resources Department on Tuesday to assess the progress of ongoing projects and discuss key priorities ahead of the monsoon season. The meeting focused on flood preparedness measures, strengthening response mechanisms and identifying vulnerable river reaches requiring immediate attention and preventive intervention.

Detailed reviews were conducted to ensure timely execution of works and better coordination among the concerned officials.

The meeting was attended by the Secretary of Water Resources, BTC, the CHD-cum-Additional Chief Engineer of Water Resources, BTC and the Executive Engineers of Udalguri, Tamulpur, Baksa, Chirang and Kokrajhar divisions.

Muchahary stated that the Government of BTC is committed to all-round development and the welfare of the people in the region. He said that the department is taking necessary measures for the protection and management of water resources across the districts.

## Karbi Anglong Administration steps up monsoon preparedness

**HT Bureau**  
**DIPHU, May 26:** With the monsoon season fast approaching, the Karbi Anglong district administration has intensified its disaster readiness measures, conducting extensive field reviews and inter-departmental inspections across multiple revenue circles to ensure preparedness for seasonal floods.

In a coordinated effort to assess structural readiness and essential amenities, high-level official delegations and joint departmental teams conducted inspections at pre-identified flood relief camps across Phuloni Revenue Circle, Silonijan Revenue Circle and Bokajan Development Block.

In the Phuloni area, officials surveyed designated centres including Bakalia English Medium HS School, Bomrui ME School, Phuloni English LP School and Podumpkuri HS School. The team also inspected the Mahamaya Pahar Highland Open Space, which has been earmarked as a temporary open-air shelter site during severe inundation.

Simultaneously, in the Silonijan and Bokajan regions, a multi-agency task force comprising representatives from the Block Development Office (BDO), Public Health Engineering (PHE), Veterinary Department, APDCL, Health Department, CDPO and ARO

visited identified camps. The joint inspection aimed to review roles, establish clear responsibilities and strengthen inter-departmental coordination before emergency camp operationalisation. The primary objective across all inspected circles was to assess camp infrastructure to ensure public safety and timely assistance during displacement. Officials focused on critical facilities including accommodation capacity and accessibility, clean drinking water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, electricity supply and emergency healthcare support.

Alongside structural preparedness, the administration also launched flood awareness campaigns across various schools in the Phuloni and Diphu revenue circles.

Spearheaded by volunteers from the District Disaster Response Force (DDRF) and the Community Quick Response Team (CQRT), the sessions aimed to equip students and local residents with practical knowledge on flood safety protocols, emergency response techniques and risk mitigation measures to protect lives and property during natural disasters.

The district administration remains on high alert, stressing that early assessment, inter-departmental coordination and community awareness are key to minimising the impact of the upcoming monsoon.

## New Chairmen appointed for Haflong, Maibang and Mahur Municipal Boards in NCHAC

**HT Correspondent**  
**HAFLONG, May 26:** The North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council (NCHAC), Haflong, has appointed new Chairmen for the Haflong, Maibang and Mahur Municipal Boards, along with Honorary Chairpersons for the Education and Irrigation Departments through separate official notifications issued by the General Administration Department on Sunday.

According to the order issued by the NCHAC Secretariat, Pranath Rajiyung, MAC, NCHAC, has been appointed Chairman of the Haflong Municipal Board. Herojit Jidung, MAC, NCHAC, has been appointed Chairman of the Maibang Municipal Board, while Babul Kemprai has been named Chair-

man of the Mahur Municipal Board. The appointments have come into effect immediately upon assumption of office.

The notification stated that the new appointments were made in the interest of public service under the provisions of the North Cachar Hills District (Constitution of Town Committees) Rules, 1963. The order also supersedes earlier orders issued in this regard.

In another notification issued the same day, the NCHAC appointed Ripa Hojai as Honorary Chairperson of the Advisory Board for the Education Department. Monjoy Thaoson has been appointed as Honorary Chairman of the Advisory Board for the Irrigation Department.

## Obituary

**B**asanta Borthakur (89), head priest of historic Bishnu doul in Sivasagar and a leading citizen of the town died of old age ailments in Pragati Nursing Home in Sivasagar on Monday. Borthakur was a life member of Barowari Puja Committee and Sanatan Dharma Namghar Samaj. Borthakur leaves behind his wife, a son, a daughter and her family. His last rites were performed in Thanamukh crematorium on Tuesday.

## Governor inaugurates Model Village Development Programme in Nalbari

Lakshman Prasad Acharya stresses collective effort for rural transformation

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, May 26:** Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya on Monday inaugurated the Model Village Development Programme at Jagra village in Nalbari district and called for collective efforts to transform villages into centres of holistic and sustainable development.

Speaking on the occasion, the Governor said the real strength of an ideal village lies in active public participation. He stressed the need for educated youth, farmers, women's groups, voluntary organisations and Panchayat representatives to work together for the all-round development of villages. He also underlined the importance of education, healthcare, agriculture, sanitation, women empowerment and environmental protection in building model rural communities.

Referring to Mahatma Gandhi's vision that "India lives in its villages", the Governor said rural development remains the foundation of nation-building. He also highlighted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of "Viksit Bharat" and "Atmanirbhar Bharat", stating that stronger villages will lead to a stronger nation.

The Governor appreciated the efforts of Bharat Vikas Parishad, Assam Prant and collaborating institutions such as the Indian Institute of Agricultural Biotechnology, Ranchi, Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat, Assam Veterinary and Fisheries University, Guwahati-Khana-



para and SPREAD-NE, Sonapur, for launching the initiative.

He emphasised the importance of scientific farming methods, organic agriculture, water conservation and integrating modern technology with traditional agricultural knowledge to strengthen Assam's rural economy.

Highlighting the role of youth and women in rural transformation, Acharya said digital literacy, agri-entrepreneurship, self-help groups and skill development would play a key role in making villages self-reliant and prosperous.

The Governor also stressed the need for a "Nasha Mukh Bharat" and urged youth to stay away from substance abuse while working towards a healthy and disciplined society. He further appealed for environ-

mental conservation and encouraged tree plantation for a greener and sustainable future.

As part of the programme, soil testing kits, improved rice seed varieties, Assam lemon saplings, vermi beds and 2,000 poultry chicks along with feed were distributed to around 200 farmers and beneficiaries.

The Governor also had lunch with villagers and students of 54 No Jagra LP School and interacted with them.

MLA of Borkhetri constituency Narayan Deka, Vice Chancellor of Assam Agricultural University Prof Deepjyoti Rajkhowa, Vice Chancellor of Assam Animal Husbandry and Veterinary University Prof Niranjan Kalita and several other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

## GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER:: WEST KARBI ANGLONG : HAMREN: [CENSUS BRANCH]

No WKAH/CENSUS-2027/02/QUOTATION2026/8 Dated Hamren the, 26<sup>th</sup> May, 2026

### NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed quotations affixing non-refundable court fee stamp of Rs.8.25 (Rupees eight and twenty five paise) only are hereby invited from Registered Firms for providing manpower of 08 (eight) nos. of Technical Assistants (TAs) and 1 (one) no. of Multi-Tasking Staff (MTS) for a maximum period of 18 (eighteen) months or completion of Census Operations-2027 whichever is earlier in respect of West Karbi Anglong District. The maximum monthly cost of hiring for Technical Assistant will be Rs.25,000/- (Rupees twenty-five thousand only) and for Multi-Tasking Staff will be Rs.18,000/- (Rupees eighteen thousand only) per month for each personnel. No other financial assistance w.r.t. hiring of manpower shall be provided by the Govt. The engagement of this manpower will be purely on short term contractual basis and they will not be entitled to any claims, rights and interests of further benefits in terms of regularization or consideration of further appointment to any post, including any claims for any casual, ad-hoc, temporary or regular service in the Govt. Further, the firm will be responsible for statutory deductions like EPF, ESIC etc. in accordance with existing Govt. norms.

The sealed quotation will be received up to 05:00 P.M. of 03/06/2026 and will be opened on the same date at 05:30 P.M. in the office chamber of Addl. District Commissioner (Census), West Karbi Anglong, Hamren in presence of the quotationers or their authorized representatives. Quotations will have to be deposited at the tender box kept at DC Office, West Karbi Anglong, Hamren during office hours on working days.

Sl. No.	Name of the Post	Minimum qualification	Deployment level	Deployment location
1	Technical Assistant	Graduate with Computer knowledge	District / Charge level	i) DC's Office, West Karbi Anglong, Hamren: 2 (two) nos. ii) Donka Rev. Circle: 1 (one) no. iii) Hamren MB: 1 (one) no. iv) Donkamukam MB: 1 (one) no. v) Baithalango MB: 1 (one) no. vi) Jenkha TC: 1 (one) no. vii) Jirikinding TC: 1 (one) no.
2	Multi Tasking Staff	8 <sup>th</sup> passed	District level	DC's Office, West Karbi Anglong, Hamren: 1 (one) no.

### The Tender will be governed by following Terms and Conditions :

- The tenders will have to be accompanied by up to date GST and Income Tax from the Competent Authority.
- The rate of hiring of manpower mentioned for each post shall be quoted inclusive of all taxes.
- The Quotationer / Tenderer shall have to deposit Earnest money of Rs. 5,000/- (five thousand) only in the form of Demand Draft in favour of District Commissioner, West Karbi Anglong, Hamren.
- The quotationer must attach the photo copy of Labour Registration Certificate / Firm's Govt. Registration Certificate / GST Registration Certificate, PAN Card, Trade License, IT return Certificate and Bank Account Number with the Quotation.
- Rates once accepted will not be changed and will remain valid for the entire period of engagement.
- Principal Census Officer, West Karbi Anglong, Hamren has the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.
- No advance payment shall be done.

Sd/-  
District Commissioner cum 265  
Principal Census Officer  
West Karbi Anglong, Hamren

Memo No. WKAH/CENSUS-2027/02/QUOTATION2026/8-A Dated Hamren the, 26<sup>th</sup> May, 2026

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

Shoot for the moon and if you miss you will still be among the stars.- Brainy

## Import of tea from Nepal

Indian Tea Board and Industry circles are not happy with the recent relaxation allowed by the Union Commerce Ministry, to exempt mandatory testing for Nepalese tea imports into the country. The temporary relief has been heartily welcomed in Nepal by the fledgling industry, which expressed its deep concerns as its exports to India declined sharply by about 20% during the first nine months of fiscal year 2025-26. Given that India happens to be the biggest export destination for Nepal tea, the concern in Kathmandu and beyond was understandable. GOI had been facing a long-standing demand from its domestic tea industry to curb the volumes of Nepalese varieties of tea entering India. These were often sold off as Indian products, involving price manipulation and other foul trade practices. Much of Nepal's tea export to other countries too had to pass through India. The Tea Board, the Tea association and other organisations alleged that despite repeated requests, a section of Nepalese producers were not doing enough to stop trade malpractices that involved selling off essentially cheaper Nepalese varieties as Indian products. This hurt the prospects and the general image of the bigger India-based industry.

GOI therefore introduced a new system of testing the quality of Nepalese varieties meant to be sold in India at a Kolkata lab before allowing a sale. Samples of Nepalese tea would be taken from the Indo Nepal border all the way to West Bengal and the results would be conveyed to the exporters. The process, according to anxious Nepalese producers, would take an average 15-day period, the kind of delay that was simply acceptable. They frantically pressed Kathmandu-based authorities to take up the issue with GOI. Observers see the Indian decision to do away with the quality testing for Nepalese varieties to be imported into India as a temporary measure to allow some relief for Nepal, more as a diplomatic move than anything else. But that has not stopped the bigger Indian industry from immediately renewing its earlier campaign -- it leaves the bigger industry in a vulnerable position that cannot be allowed to continue indefinitely.

Nepalese authorities too, appreciate the complex nature of the problem. There is much discussion on how to reduce Nepal's near total dependence in India for its exports, in terms of sheer quantity, if not quality. Nepal exports its tea to the UK, Germany, Turkey, Iraq, Russia and the UAE among others. But the quantities involved are much smaller not to mention the built-in advantages of the vast Indian market, its proximity to Nepal and other factors. There are no detailed plans as yet to try to replace India as the leading buyer, although proposals to increase sales to Pakistan and Bangladesh are heard from time to time.

# NEET Scandal: How tech, institutions, and talent let students down

The quest for a seat in India's premier medical and engineering institutions has long transcended the boundaries of academic ambition, mutating into a high-stakes crucible where family prestige, societal validation, and economic mobility collide. In a culture where securing an elite institutional pedigree is equated with lifelong success, parents regularly exhaust their financial reserves and stretch far beyond their means to secure marginally higher ranks for their children. This desperation has fueled the meteoric rise of a multi-trillion-rupee coaching and admission-counseling industry that thrives on the anxieties of millions. Within this hyper-competitive ecosystem, even systemic failures like examination cancellations and sudden re-examinations are seamlessly monetized. Instead of acting as a deterrent, these disruptions generate fresh commercial opportunities, prompting institutes to launch lucrative crash courses and short-term programs that capitalize directly on the stress, helplessness, and profound uncertainty of vulnerable candidates.

For nearly two successive decades, the gateways to these coveted professional paths—most notably the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test for medical admissions and the Joint Entrance Examination for the Indian Institutes of Technology—have exposed a deeply disturbing pattern of structural vulnerability. Despite the deployment of advanced technologies, the oversight of powerful statutory bodies, and the involvement of the finest academic and administrative minds in the country, large-scale admission scams and examination irregularities have repeatedly compromised the integrity of the selection process. The warning signs, ranging from organized paper leaks and sophisticated impersonation rackets to mathematically flawed cut-offs, erroneous answer keys, and preferential treatment for well-connected individuals, have seldom been detected by institutional safeguards. Instead, the burden of exposure has routinely fallen upon independent whistleblowers who face severe institutional retaliation for their courage, revealing a persistent inability to construct transparent, accountable, and robust examination systems.

The recurring nature of these crises is starkly illustrated by the events surrounding the administration of the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test on May 3, 2026. On this frantic day, the central control room of the National Testing Agency was operating under maximum scrutiny as nearly 2.3 million candidates competed for a mere 60,000 highly prized government medical seats, alongside vacancies in private colleges, across more than 5,500 centers spanning 550 Indian cities and

14 international locations. The gravity of the exercise was underscored by the physical presence of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, who, alongside the top leadership of the Education Ministry and the testing agency, personally monitored live, artificial intelligence-enabled closed-circuit television feeds broadcasting from thousands of examination halls. Ironically, while this sophisticated surveillance grid was operational, both the automated systems and the assembled academic experts completely failed to notice an extraordinary anomaly visible across hundreds of centers: an unprecedented, stress-free confidence and visible jubilation among a significant cohort of candidates who appeared entirely unphased by the daunting nature of the paper.

This unusual relaxation in a notoriously high-pressure environment was later attributed to the widespread digital circulation of a "guided paper" that had allegedly been moving across encrypted networks weeks prior to the examination, rendering substantial portions of the test completely familiar to select groups. The systemic failure becomes even more egregious when contrasted with the extensive security protocols that the testing agency had aggressively showcased following the highly publicized examination fiasco of 2024. The state-of-the-art framework supposedly relied on encrypted paper-setting, secure portable document format transmissions for regional language translations, and Global Positioning System-tracked movement of question papers from secure bank strongrooms to regional distribution hubs. Yet, despite access to intelligence and cyber-security inputs from multiple national agencies, this multi-layered surveillance ecosystem remained entirely dormant while unauthorized digital networks brokered large financial transactions, assuring anxious parents that the specific questions being rehearsed would match the official examination.

The immediate aftermath of the May 3 examination further demonstrated the systemic blind spots of the regulatory machinery, as candidates flocked to coaching centers to estimate their percentiles using widely leaked answer keys and optical mark recognition responses. This informal data aggregation revealed an unprecedented inflation of scores, with an anomalously high number of candidates correctly answering nearly 135 questions, triggering widespread celebrations among those who had purchased the leaked materials. Despite a massive network of thousands of official observers, no internal alarms were triggered, and the first genuine alert entered the system from the outside when a Ra-

jasthan-origin medical student studying in Kerala shared a digital copy of a suspected guess paper with his father in Sikar. Realizing that the document matched the actual examination paper, the family initiated a formal whistleblower complaint on May 7, forcing a reluctant machinery into an all-too-familiar cycle of cancellations, emergency re-examinations, and profound emotional heartbreak for lakhs of innocent students, while the deeper institutional linkages of the paper-leak mafia remained unexamined behind the defensive shield of the K. Radhakrishnan Committee report.

A historical parallel to this modern crisis exists within the engineering domain, where the advent of the Right to Information Act in 2005 first began to pierce the near-complete opacity that characterized competitive testing for decades. Prior to this legislative shift, candidate evaluation was entirely insulated from public scrutiny; students were denied access to their own marked sheets, question booklets, or the specific mathematical criteria used to determine final rankings, leaving the public to blindly accept arbitrary declarations of selection or rejection. The introduction of mandatory disclosures forced elite institutions like the Indian Institutes of Technology to issue formal marksheets, exposing deep procedural irrationalities, such as the balanced evaluation model that required candidates to clear minimum qualifying marks separately across Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry before aggregate merit could be considered.

In 2006, this subjective methodology caused a major public scandal when an internal whistleblower revealed that general-category candidates scoring as high as 279 marks were denied admission, while others with an aggregate score of only 154 were successfully admitted. The institutions initially attempted to defend these exclusions by citing unusually inflated subject-wise cut-offs of 37, 48, and 55 marks for Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry respectively, though they could not provide a mathematically verifiable derivation for these figures. Following sustained legal challenges by the whistleblower, these arbitrary thresholds collapsed into single digits, plummeting to 1, 4, and 3 marks in 2007, and subsequently to 5, 0, and 3 marks out of 182 in 2008. This revelation turned the prestigious entrance examination into a subject of significant public embarrassment, as it became mathematically possible for unreserved candidates with zero marks in Physics to qualify for elite engineering admissions.

The dismantling of this opacity brought to light a plethora of other systemic vulnerabilities, including ambiguous instructions, flawed answer keys, and structural loopholes that permitted candidates to hold seats at multiple in-

stitutions simultaneously, thereby wasting national resources and creating artificial vacancies that were later filled through opaque backdoor admissions. The Delhi High Court famously characterized this institutional decay as a proverbial situation of it being darkest beneath the lamp, warning that the preservation of such arbitrary practices would reduce these apex institutions to a laughing stock in the eyes of the public. The subsequent decade-long struggle of this single-person army between 2006 and 2015 ultimately laid the foundation for modern examination reforms, establishing the necessity of fixing cut-offs prior to the examination, returning question papers to candidates, publishing provisional answer keys for public feedback, and pioneering the centralized counseling frameworks managed by bodies like the Joint Seat Allocation Authority to optimize national seat allocation.

Despite these critical contributions, which were formally lauded by the Supreme Court of India when it designated the individual as an unsung hero and ordered the institutions to offer formal expressions of gratitude, the personal cost to the whistleblower was immense. The specific institution most exposed by the disclosures subjected the academic to severe victimization, utilizing tools of administrative marginalization, prolonged inquiries, and repeated termination attempts to suppress the dissent. This punitive pattern was subsequently sustained by influential administrative figures within the higher-education regulatory framework, ensuring that the professional hostility extended well into the academic's retirement through the systematic misappropriation of his intellectual contributions.

The contemporary landscape suggests that without radical structural reform, the system will continue to prioritize institutional self-preservation over genuine accountability, often choosing to dismiss or ridicule critics rather than addressing the core vulnerabilities they expose. The true path forward for India's high-stakes admission ecosystem lies in recognizing that technological investments, artificial intelligence-driven surveillance, and rigid administrative hierarchies cannot serve as substitutes for absolute operational transparency and the institutional courage to admit systemic failure. Statutory bodies do not diminish their authority by acknowledging operational lapses; rather, they reinforce public trust by actively rectifying them. The definitive challenge facing the nation's educational leadership is not merely the periodic apprehension of low-level operators or localized paper couriers after a public scandal, but the comprehensive dismantling of the deeper culture of complacency, opacity, and institutional protection that allows these crises to recur. (the writer can be reached at dipakkurmigpltd@gmail.com)

## AI: The new engine of civilization or the trigger of human extinction?

By: Lalit Garg

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is no longer merely a technological achievement; it is rapidly emerging as a decisive turning point in the future of human civilization. The pace at which this technology has evolved has both astonished and alarmed the world. Until now, science and technology functioned as tools in human hands, but Artificial Intelligence is the first force capable of making decisions, learning, analyzing, creating, and continuously evolving itself. This is precisely why leading religious figures, scientists, and policymakers across the world are issuing serious warnings about its potential dangers.

The concerns recently expressed by Pope Leo XIV regarding Artificial Intelligence are particularly significant. He has clearly stated that war can never be made ethically and that AI-driven warfare systems may pose a grave threat to humanity. This warning is not merely religious in nature; it concerns the protection of human existence itself and deserves serious global attention. In his official message addressing social and global issues, the Pope described AI as one of the most serious emerging challenges confronting humanity. He expressed particular concern that Artificial Intelligence is no longer merely an instrument of technological change but has become a force capable of influencing war, politics, economics, and social structures. He warned that technology should not seek to dominate humanity but should remain in service to it. His message reinforces the concept of human-centered development, wherein science and technology remain subordinate to ethics, human dignity, and compassion.

The Pope's warning is therefore not merely a religious perspective but a global humanitarian appeal: humanity, sensitivity, and moral values must not be sacrificed in the blind race toward AI advancement. At a time when global powers are competing for influence and dominance through AI, his message offers the world a path of restraint, responsibility, and a return to human values. The Pope further emphasized that no algorithm can make war ethical and that technology must never become a substitute for human conscience. In this official communication related to the Church's social concerns, AI was addressed as a central issue for the first time, indicating that its impact has moved beyond the technological sphere to influence human life, society, and the global order. He expressed particular concern over AI-enabled autonomous weapons systems, warning that if this technology is not kept under strict human control, it could give rise to new

forms of war, exploitation, and servitude. Calling for the "disarmament" of Artificial Intelligence, the Pope clarified that he was not opposing technology itself but rather its uncontrolled and inhumane use. According to him, decisions concerning war and peace must ultimately be guided by morality, compassion, and wisdom—not delegated to machines.

Today, as the United States, China, and other major powers intensify their AI competition and increasingly incorporate AI into military technologies, the Pope's message stands as a moral compass for humanity: technology must remain humanity's servant, not its master; and human dignity, compassion, and global peace must remain at the center of development. Undoubtedly, Artificial Intelligence has brought unprecedented transformation to education, healthcare, medicine, security, banking, commerce, administration, and communication. From disease diagnosis to financial management and from education to scientific research, its utility is undeniable. However, every technological revolution brings its own challenges, and those challenges are now becoming increasingly visible.

The greatest concern is employment. Artificial Intelligence has already begun replacing millions of jobs. Human roles in customer service, writing, translation, accounting, information management, programming, and administrative functions are rapidly diminishing. Machines, owing to their lower cost, higher efficiency, and uninterrupted work capacity, are increasingly taking over human responsibilities. This may lead not only to unemployment but also to greater social imbalance and widening economic inequality. Nations and corporations controlling AI technologies may eventually concentrate economic power in their own hands, creating a new form of global inequality. Even more serious is the issue of global security. Today, the United States, China, and other world powers are engaged in an AI race that extends far beyond technological superiority—it has become a struggle for geopolitical dominance. Just as nuclear weapons once shaped global power balances, AI is now emerging as the strategic force of the future.

Autonomous weapon systems, intelligent drones, and war technologies capable of making decisions without human intervention present alarming signals for humanity. If decisions of war fall into the hands of machines, compassion, judgment, and morality may disappear. Human lives could become mere data points in machine calculations. Such a situation may pave the way for catastrophic destruction. The Pope's warning is therefore profoundly

relevant: the final decision in matters of war must remain under human judgment. Cybersecurity presents another serious challenge. Banking systems, power grids, defense networks, and communication infrastructures today rely heavily on digital technologies. AI-powered cyberattacks could destabilize entire nations within hours. False information, misleading videos, artificially generated images, and cloned voices can easily create social unrest. The distinction between truth and falsehood is increasingly blurred, posing grave threats to both information systems and democracy.

Another alarming aspect of AI is the weakening of human control. A section of the scientific community believes that future AI systems may evolve far beyond human intellectual capacity. If such a development occurs, the issue of control will become the greatest challenge. This is no longer merely a technological concern—it is a question of human existence itself. For India, this issue is even more significant. As a nation with immense youth power, a vast population, and a rapidly growing economy, India may witness profound effects on employment, education, and social structures if AI expands without clear policies and regulatory mechanisms. India must therefore maintain a balance between technological advancement and responsible governance.

Stopping AI is not the solution; ensuring that it remains guided by human values, ethics, and social responsibility is essential. India must formulate a national policy that promotes AI for human welfare, education, healthcare, and economic growth while prioritizing employment protection, data security, ethical standards, and military regulation. At the global level as well, shared rules and international agreements governing AI are urgently needed. Ultimately, the greatest question before us is not technological—it is human. Will humanity retain control over the power it has created? Will Artificial Intelligence enrich human life or dominate it? Will development overshadow human sensitivity? Could the AI revolution become the cause of humanity's great destruction? These are the questions the world must confront seriously.

If Artificial Intelligence remains human-centered, it may elevate civilization to unprecedented heights. But if it becomes detached from control and ethics, it could also lead to one of the greatest crises—and possibly the greatest destruction—in human history. Therefore, what humanity needs today is not merely technological progress, but wise progress—a future in which machines evolve, yet humanity remains supreme.

## Rising petrol prices

By: Dr Privanka Saurabh

For some time now, a growing concern has been echoing in cities and villages across the country—the rising prices of petrol and diesel. This concern isn't limited to motorists; it impacts every citizen who consumes everyday goods and services. When petrol becomes more expensive, the impact goes beyond just the petrol pump; it reaches transportation, food, construction materials, agricultural costs, and household budgets. Therefore, it's not enough to consider the rise in petrol prices merely an economic phenomenon. It's also a social, political, and policy issue, involving the government, the market, and citizens.

In a developing country like India, energy is not only the foundation of economic activity but also a vital force for social dynamism and development. The country's vast transportation system, agriculture, industrial production, and service sectors rely heavily on petroleum products. Therefore, when petrol prices rise, their impact is felt in almost every sector of the economy. This is why rising petrol prices always become a topic of public discussion and political debate. To understand petrol and diesel prices, it's first important to understand that India imports the majority of its oil needs. The country buys more than 80 percent of its total crude oil needs from abroad. This means that fluctuations in the international market directly impact Indian consumers' pockets. If global crude oil prices rise, India has to pay more, and this ultimately reflects in retail prices.

The global oil market isn't solely influenced by economic factors. Geopolitical factors also play a significant role. Factors such as tensions in West Asia, security of sea lanes, production policies of major oil-producing countries, and the Russia-Ukraine conflict all influence oil prices. The impact of any regional conflict or supply crisis is reflected in the international market within days. This poses a significant challenge for an import-dependent country like India, as the domestic market cannot be completely isolated from these conditions. While the international market is an important factor, the full truth about petrol prices isn't limited to that. Taxes also play a significant role in the retail prices of petrol and diesel in India. The final price of petrol includes the cost of crude oil, as well as central government excise duty, state government value-added tax (VAT), transportation costs, and dealer commissions. This is why petrol prices vary across states.

Oil taxes are a significant source of revenue for governments. Revenue from these taxes is used to finance road construction, infrastructure, health, education, and various social welfare programs. However, these taxes also impose additional financial burdens on ordinary citizens. When oil prices rise internationally and the tax structure offers no relief, consumers face a double whammy. This situation often leads to political debate. The most direct impact of rising petrol prices is seen on the transportation sector. Taxi drivers, auto drivers, truck owners, bus operators, and millions of delivery service providers face rising

costs. They generally have two options: either absorb the increased costs themselves or pass them on to consumers by raising fares and service charges. In most cases, the latter option is adopted, resulting in higher prices for goods and services.

This is where the widespread impact of inflation begins. When freight costs increase, vegetables, fruits, milk, grains, medicines, construction materials, and other consumer goods also become more expensive. This phenomenon is called cost-push inflation in economics. It particularly affects the middle and lower income groups, as their incomes are limited while expenses constantly rise. The impact of petrol and diesel prices is even more profound in rural India. Agriculture still relies heavily on diesel-powered machinery and equipment. Tractors, irrigation pumps, harvesting machines, and the transportation of agricultural produce all require fuel. When diesel prices rise, agricultural costs increase. Small and marginal farmers, whose incomes are already limited, bear the brunt of these rising costs.

Additionally, the cost of transporting agricultural products to market also increases. Farmers often cannot determine the price of their produce and must rely on middlemen or wholesalers. The pressure of rising transportation costs can further reduce farmers' incomes. Consequently, the rural economy faces a dual impact—increasing production costs and reducing profits. The urban middle class is also not immune to this inflation. Today's urban life has become increasingly dependent on digital services, online shopping, food delivery, and private transportation. However, transportation costs are a crucial factor in all these services. Whether ordering food online or purchasing goods from an e-commerce platform, the vehicle delivering it ultimately relies on fuel. Therefore, rising petrol prices gradually increase consumers' daily expenses. While discussing rising petrol prices, an important question arises as to how self-sufficient India is in terms of energy security. In recent years, the government has made efforts to develop strategic oil reserves and diversify energy sources. This may provide some relief from supply constraints, but it is not a long-term solution. As long as the country remains heavily dependent on imported oil, global market volatility will continue to impact the domestic economy. This is where the question of energy independence comes into play. Energy independence means not only increasing domestic oil production but also strengthening alternative energy sources. Solar energy, wind power, green hydrogen, biofuels, and electric transportation systems can play a significant role in this direction. India has made significant progress in the field of renewable energy, but there is still a long way to go.

Transportation policy is also an important part of this discussion. A robust, accessible, and reliable public transportation system can reduce reliance on private vehicles. Alternatives like metros, bus rapid transit, suburban rail, and protected bicycle lanes can not only reduce fuel consumption but also mitigate pollution and traffic con-

ditions. Unfortunately, such facilities are still lacking in many cities and most rural areas. Policy promotion of electric vehicles is also important in this context. Electric vehicles are considered the future option to reduce dependence on petrol and diesel. While their adoption is growing, challenges such as charging infrastructure, battery costs, and access in rural areas remain. If governments increase investment in this sector and develop the necessary infrastructure, dependence on oil can be significantly reduced in the coming years.

Petrol prices also have an environmental dimension. Excessive use of fossil fuels is a major contributor to climate change and air pollution. Rising fuel prices sometimes drive people to alternative modes of transportation, but this is only possible if those options are truly available and convenient. Environmental goals cannot be achieved simply by raising prices; they require a comprehensive and coordinated policy.

Petrol prices have always been a politically sensitive issue. Opposition parties often frame rising prices as a failure of the government, while governments cite global conditions and market forces. The reality lies somewhere in between. It's true that no single country can have complete control over international oil prices, but it's equally true that governments play a crucial role in areas such as tax policy, energy investment, and transportation reform.

Therefore, the debate on petrol prices should not be limited to blame games. What is needed is an integrated approach to energy policy, tax structures, transportation systems, and environmental goals. If policymaking is limited only to immediate political gains or revenue needs, long-term solutions will not emerge. The role of citizens is also crucial in this process. Energy conservation, shared transportation, the use of public transport, the adoption of fuel-efficient vehicles, and reducing unnecessary fuel consumption are steps that can have a positive impact at the individual level. While these measures cannot control gasoline prices, they can mitigate the impact of rising costs to some extent.

Ultimately, rising petrol prices are not just an economic problem. They raise a host of questions, including energy security, tax policy, social justice, environmental balance, and political accountability. If India is to effectively address this challenge in the future, it must move beyond short-term relief measures and develop a long-term energy strategy. Energy independence, robust public transport, a transparent tax structure, and investment in renewable energy are the paths that can make the country relatively immune to recurring fuel price crises.

Rising petrol prices remind us that the discussion on inflation shouldn't be limited to prices alone. The underlying energy policy, economic structure, and development model need to be considered equally seriously. Until this comprehensive approach becomes part of policy and public discourse, each new price hike will raise the same question: who is responsible for high petrol prices, and what is the lasting solution? (Dr. Priyanka Saurabh, PhD (Political Science), is a poet and social thinker.)

# What are the signs of heart attack in a woman?

By: Uzochukwu Ibe

Women are less likely to survive a heart attack than men. This may be because the symptoms differ between the sexes. Women are more likely to have a "silent" heart attack or display unusual symptoms.

In addition, female biology creates unique risk factors for heart attack, as some diseases that increase risk, such as polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), are not present in male biology.

Many people expect a heart attack to come on suddenly. However, research suggests that females experience symptoms for several weeks before a heart attack.

An older 2003 study of 515 women who had experienced a heart attack reports that 80% Trusted Source had at least one symptom at least 4 weeks before their heart attack.

Eight of the symptoms of a possible heart attack are:

1. Chest pain

The most common symptom of heart attack in both males and females is chest pain or discomfort.

People may describe this as:

- Tightness
- Pressure
- Squeezing
- Aching

However, women can experience a heart attack without having any chest discomfort.

Some 29.7% of the women surveyed in the 2003 study experienced chest discomfort in the weeks before the attack. In addition, 57% had chest pain during the heart attack.

2. Extreme or unusual fatigue

Unusual fatigue is often reported in the weeks leading up to a heart attack. A person may also experience fatigue just before the event occurs.

Even simple activities that do not require much exertion can lead to feelings of being exhausted.

3. Weakness

Feeling weak or shaky is a common acute symptom of a heart attack in a female.

This weakness or shaking may be accompanied by:

- Anxiety
- Dizziness
- Fainting
- Feeling lightheaded

4. Shortness of breath

Shortness of breath or heavy breathing without exertion, especially when accompanied by fatigue or chest pain, may suggest heart problems.

Some women may feel short of breath when lying down, with the symptom easing when they are sitting upright.

5. Sweating

Excessive sweating without a typical cause is another common heart attack symptom in women.

Feeling cold and clammy can also be an indicator of heart issues.

6. Upper body pain

This is usually nonspecific and not attributed to a particular muscle or joint in the upper body.

Areas that can be affected include:

- Neck
- Jaw
- Upper back or either arm

The pain can start in one area and gradually spread to others, or it may come on suddenly.

7. Sleep disturbances

Almost half of the women in the 2003 study reported issues with sleep in the weeks before they had a heart attack.

These disturbances may involve:

- Difficulty getting to sleep
- Unusual waking throughout the night
- Feeling tired despite getting enough sleep

8. Stomach problems

Some women may feel pain or pressure in the stomach before a heart attack.

Other digestive issues associated with a possible heart attack can include:

- Indigestion
- Nausea
- Vomiting

Heart attack postmenopause

The risk of heart attack increases due to falling estrogen levels after menopause.

Postmenopause heart attack symptoms include:

- Pain or discomfort in the arms, back, neck, jaw, or stomach
- Rapid or irregular heartbeat
- Severe chest pain
- Sweating without activity

Risk factors

Risk factors for a heart attack in women include:

- Age: Those 55 years Trusted Source or older are at greater risk of heart attack. This may be because hormones provide some protection from heart disease before menopause.

• Family history: Individuals with a male relative who had a heart attack by the age of 55 years old, or a female relative who has had one by 65 years of age, are considered to have a family history of heart attack and are at increased risk.

• Health status: Certain markers, such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol, increase the risk of heart attack in both males and females.



• Medical conditions: Those with conditions, including diabetes, obesity, and autoimmune disorders, are more likely to have a heart attack. Diseases such as endometriosis, PCOS, or a history of preeclampsia during pregnancy also increase risk.

• Lifestyle choices: Using tobacco or stimulant drugs, for example, cocaine or amphetamines, a sedentary lifestyle, or high levels of stress will all increase the risk of heart attack.

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When to contact a doctor

The British Heart Foundation recommends all women over 40 years of age have regular checks with a doctor. This helps identify risk factors early so they can receive treatment. Early intervention reduces the chances of a cardiac event.

Anyone who notices the warning signs of a heart attack, such as the following, should contact a doctor immediately:

- Unusual fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Upper body pain

A doctor will note symptoms, check blood pressure and heart rate, and may order blood tests or use an electrocardiogram to check the heart's electrical activity. If necessary, a doctor can also order a stress test to assess blockages in the coronary arteries.

When to call emergency services

Is it a heart attack?

Heart attacks occur when there is a lack of blood supply to the heart. Symptoms include:

- Chest pain, pressure, or tightness
- Pain that may spread to the arms, neck, jaw, or back
- Nausea and vomiting
- Sweaty or clammy skin
- Heartburn or indigestion
- Shortness of breath
- Coughing or wheezing
- Lightheadedness or dizziness
- Anxiety that can feel similar to a panic attack

If you think Trusted Source someone is having a heart attack:

1. Dial 911 or the number of the nearest emergency department.
2. Stay with the person until emergency services arrive.

If a person stops breathing before emergency services arrive, perform manual chest compressions:

1. Lock fingers together and place the base of hands in the center of the chest.

2. Position shoulders over hands and lock elbows.

3. Press hard and fast, at a rate of 100 to 120 compressions per minute, to a depth of 2 inches.

4. Continue these movements until the person starts to breathe or move.

5. If needed, swap over with someone else without pausing compressions.

Use an automatic external defibrillator (AED) available in many public places:

1. An AED provides a shock that may restart the heart.

2. Follow the instructions on the defibrillator or listen to the guided instructions.

Prevention

Tips for better heart health include Trusted Source:

- Going for regular health check-ups.
- Taking steps to manage other health conditions, including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes.
- Quitting smoking, if necessary, and avoiding tobacco in any form. Heart disease risk reduces by 50% Trusted Source just 12 months after someone quits smoking.

ing.

• Losing weight for those who have excess weight.

• Engaging in at least 30 minutes of aerobic activity every day, such as walking.

• Eating a balanced diet and visiting a dietitian if necessary for dietary advice.

• Reducing stress levels.

• Getting enough sleep.

• Limiting alcohol intake.

• Especially stimulants, such as cocaine and amphetamines.

Frequently asked questions

Below are some commonly asked questions about the signs of heart attack in women.

What are 3 warning signs of a heart attack in females?

Women can start experiencing symptoms several weeks before a heart attack, including chest pain, fatigue, weakness, shortness of breath, sweating, upper body pain, sleep disturbances, and stomach problems.

What are the 4 silent signs of a heart attack?

A silent heart attack is a heart attack that has either no symptoms, minimal symptoms, or unrecognized symptoms. People are more likely to have nonspecific and subtle symptoms, such as indigestion, flu, thinking they have strained a muscle in the chest or back, and jaw or upper back discomfort.

What does a mini heart attack feel like in a woman?

A person having a "mini" heart attack, also known as a non-ST elevation myocardial infarction, may experience the pressure-like chest pain, shortness of breath, nausea or vomiting, fainting, fatigue, and sweating.

What is a pre-heart attack?

A pre-heart attack generally refers to the early signs of an impending heart attack.

These signs may occur hours or weeks before. This is especially the case for women, who tend to experience Trusted Source unusual fatigue, sleep disturbance, and shortness of breath in the weeks leading up to a heart attack.

Summary

A heart attack is a serious and potentially fatal medical event that requires emergency treatment. Females tend to display different heart attack symptoms than males. They also have additional risk factors.

There are many steps people can take to reduce their risk of a heart attack.

Awareness of heart attack symptoms, especially in the weeks before the event, can also improve outcomes and prevent complications. (Courtesy: MNT)

## Thriller: A novel is transformed into a deadly mind game that pushes logic and imagination



By: Manjiri Prabhu

Regine Phillippe entered my life at the exact time as my visions began. Her first entry into the classroom, arriving far ahead of time before the others trooped in, sitting alone in a corner always reading a book but asking a multitude of bright questions in an accent that gradually turned into a beautiful blend of French and British. I not only noticed her dark brown silky hair and upright medium frame, which one could have easily overlooked but for the curious gleam in her light brown eyes and her ability to peek straight into the darkest corners of your heart. That and her smile which lit up her entire personality like a Christmas tree. I knew at once that she was special.

We were a mixed bunch of interesting students, from different parts of the world, balancing student life with non-academic work for pocket money. But for the most part, doing our best to hone our craft, at every opportunity. Regine did part-time work in the Bookstore and Frank did some evening hours in the Store at Westgate. I took turns between the Bookstore and the Museum. Our times overlapped and some activities drew us together and those were times that either helped us bond or un-bond.

I clearly remember that one September morning. The wind was sharp and biting, tugging the leaves from the trees. We had a free class and preferring to stay indoors, I decided to visit my favourite "History of Science Museum" on Broad Street, next to the Sheldonian Theatre. (I liked to study in short bursts, for better retention and liked to use my free time well too). From the second floor to the basement, the space was dedicated to "Natural Philosophy", now called Science. It was considered a meeting point for people, science, art

and belief and it was the perfect place for me to be.

I was busy pouring over the fine print of Queen Elizabeth I's Astrolabe when a finger tapped on my shoulder.

"I could have never imagined you to be spending your leisure time here," her voice whispered over my shoulder.

"Oh, hello Regine!" I greeted. "The History of Science Museum is my favourite spot in town."

"That definitely makes one thing in common between us, our interest in the occult and the mysterious." She smiled. "This is where Science, Superstition, Mystery and Art come together in the finest and most researched manner."

"And Fantasy too," I agreed. "Come take a look at what this says...Did Good Queen Bess turn this astrolabe to see into her future? What do you think?"

"Why not? The royal class did rely a lot on astrology, I believe. The sun and stars have guided generations for centuries. Why would the royalty be excluded from such beliefs? Look at this marble copy of John Dee's Holy Table from 1582. He was a mathematician, astrologer and adviser to Queen Elizabeth I. Apparently, he explored the universe by talking to the angels! Do you think that is true?"

"It could be. Personally, I believe anything is possible."

"That is what I like about this Museum – the blend of science with the mystical and supernatural." Regine sighed, a content smile on her perfect face. I think that was the bonding moment for us. The moment where friendship gels into something more sublime – beautiful and abnormally uplifting. I glanced at her to gauge her reaction but she was staring at the Holy Table.

Suddenly she turned and a wicked gleam shone in her brown eyes.

"Do you know what is more mysterious and wondrous and even horrifying?"

"What?" I was a bit confused by her change of mood.

"The Witch in the Bottle," she said in a low voice.

"Haven't heard about it."

"Oh, then you have to see it. It's tiny and almost lost between other artefacts, but you need to see it. Come along..."

"But..." I protested weakly, partly dismayed that I was being coerced into quitting my examination of the artefacts in the science museum, partly delighted that she sought my company.

"No buts...you have to see it because you are going to help me bring it out."

"Bring it out from where?" For a moment I thought I had heard wrong.

"From under lock and key, in the showcase in the Pitts River Museum."

Her eyes sparkled with an excitement I had never seen before. Sudden alarm bells rang in my head. She didn't mean it, did she?

She wheeled around and hastened out of the building and down the street. I followed her meekly, the wind slapping against my face. We crossed Broad Street, the Bridge of Sighs and Holywell Street and headed towards the Pitts River Museum. I had been there, of course, several times but somehow hadn't taken too much of a fancy to the anthropology, ethnography and archaeology Museum.

Inside the building, she paused for a moment, staring across the huge, two-storied hall, jam-packed with glass caskets, cupboards and table tops.

"How gorgeous is this? A marvellous and fas-

cinating collection of the world's ancient secrets – all under one massive roof. And that there in the corner. Inside a desk is the magic flask. Come along." She indicated the extreme right half of the hall with her hand.

I was surprised at how well-versed she seemed with the Museum. Had she been visiting this particular Museum often with a secret wish and a plan? My curiosity and bewilderment grew by moments. This was a different Regine from the one I knew – the calm, collected and often gentle Regine. This side of hers was like the rise of a sleeping lioness, now in action.

She made her way between the crowded showcases and paused at a glass top and pointed inside.

"See that? The Witch in the Bottle." She sounded breathless.

I peered over the dim light reflecting on the odd contents of the desk and spotted an oval-shaped silver glass flask, standing upright under the glass. The cork was tightly screwed on the top. A small note written in a neat handwriting read –

Europe, England, Sussex, Hove – Silvered and stoppered bottle said to contain a witch, obtained about 1915, from an old lady living in the village near Hove, Sussex. She remarked, "...and they do say there be a witch in it and if you let un out there it be a peck o' trouble."

"This is a special magical flask. It was found by an old lady in 1915! No one has ever opened it – can you imagine that? Because who knows what will happen if someone does." Her voice turned into a whisper.

"I guess no one ever will and no one will ever know either," I concluded, my voice lowering spontaneously. I had no clue why we were whispering.

She turned to me and raised an eyebrow. "Are you sure of that?"

I faltered. The wicked gleam was back in her brown eyes.

She leaned closer to me. "Can you keep a secret, Paul? I plan to bring that bottle out. Then I shall open it and wait to see what happens."

"No, you don't mean that. You can't do anything so absurd," I scoffed.

"Of course I can! All I need is one evening. Would you like to help me?" She turned to stare at me gravely.

She was assessing me with that piercing gaze of hers. I felt like I was being examined under a stunning beam of light.

"Regine, this is ridiculous. We don't want to fool around with magical stuff. And anyway, this bottle is under lock and key."

"Oui, bien sure. But are you not curious? What would happen if the bottle is opened? Would there be a catastrophe? Would a witch really emerge and slap curses on all of us? Or would she be relieved to be released and thank and bless us forever? Imagine being trapped in this bottle for years. I think I would like to release her. With or without your help," she declared with a casual shrug.

"And how do you plan to achieve this impossible task?"

"Well, I have my ways." She smiled that enig-

matic smile that infuriated me at times.

I didn't want to be a part of her plan, but I didn't want her to try something fatal either. Secrecy made me nervous. Especially if it included meddling with occult powers.

"Listen Regine, please don't do anything foolhardy," I urged.

"Right! Nothing foolhardy," she agreed, but I knew she didn't mean it.

A sudden fear crept into my heart. Simple inadvertent acts could affect multiple lives. But the ripple effect of complex deliberate manipulations can destroy generations. It was all a matter of choice, and I feared that Regine was close to losing her ability to make the right one.

For the next few days, she kept her distance from me. In class, she concentrated on reading and writing and left the premises early. We barely got a chance to talk. But no matter what, we now had an odd connection. If our paths at all crossed, she would wink and smile, but she would flee before I could question her further. And my heart would sink. She hadn't given up on her plan. Every day, I waited in dread, for something alarming to reach my ears. But the days passed smoothly, unhindered by any untoward incidents. I gradually allowed myself to relax. The pressure of anticipation reduced and I could focus on my writing again.

It was two weeks later, when I was at Blackwell Bookstore buying a pen, that Frank hastened towards me.

"Guess what's happened! An important artefact from the Pitts River Museum has gone missing. No sign of a break-in or anything of that sort. A magic flask has mysteriously disappeared from the cupboard," he reported.

"What?" I was gobsmacked. So, Regine had accomplished her mission.

"I just heard about it but everyone in the university is talking about the theft."

"If it is a theft, that is," I cut in.

"What else could it be?" He sounded surprised. "It was a magic bottle. Perhaps it simply disappeared?" I hedged, trying to collect my thoughts.

Frank raised an eyebrow. "You don't believe that, do you?"

"I have always believed in magic and fantasy. Anything is possible in this world. Especially in the head of a writer," I replied, sedately.

"Right, in the head of a writer." Frank nodded, grimacing.

"Where is Regine?"

"In the Radcliffe, working on an assignment. I already shared the news with her."

My curiosity spiked. "What did she say?"

"Nothing. She seemed least interested." Frank shrugged.

Oh, how wrong he was! She was most interested of course, more interested than he or for that matter, anyone would ever know. How could he not see through her act? How could he not guess that she was perhaps the mastermind behind the case of the missing magical flask? Poor Frank – he had much to learn and loads of work to do in the area of relationships. (Courtesy: Scroll.in)

# Govt in process of installing anti-drone systems within 6 months: Shah

## All sections angry with Modi govt, know it's incapable of solving problems of poor: Kharage

**BIKANER, May 26:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said that the government is in the process of installing anti-drone systems within the next six months as part of increased vigilance to curb the smuggling of narcotics and weapons through drones.

However, he stressed that since drones land in the Indian territory, close coordination with the local police and civil administration is essential to identify those receiving such consignments and to neutralise the threats effectively.

A multi-layered "four-point security grid" involving the Border Security Force (BSF), armed forces, the local administration and citizens is essential to ensure comprehensive border security, he added.

"It is our responsibility to remain strongly vigilant to curb the smuggling of narcotics and weapons through drones and other modern equipment. The government is taking steps to install anti-drone systems within the next six months," Shah said while addressing BSF personnel at the Sanchu border outpost in Rajasthan's Bikaner district.

The Union minister said strong coordination among security forces, civil authorities and alert citizens can create a robust security framework along the borders.

"Unless this four-dimensional coordination is achieved, the vision of a fully secure border cannot be realised," he said.

He added that while monitoring threats originating across the border remains crucial, equal attention



must be paid to internal elements aiding such threats within the country. He said strict legal action should be taken against those involved.

Referring to ongoing efforts, the official said a series of meetings is being held with state governments and local administrations in border regions, including Bihar, Gujarat, Tripura and West Bengal, to strengthen coordination and implement the "four-point security grid".

Shah praised the BSF for its role during Operation Sindoor, saying the force not only guarded the border firmly but also boosted the morale of the people living in frontier districts.

Shah paid tribute to more than 2,000 BSF personnel who have laid down their lives since the force was raised.

He said BSF jawans have served

in extreme conditions ranging from deserts and dense forests to snow-covered regions with extreme climate conditions, displaying courage, discipline and the spirit of supreme sacrifice.

"The sacrifice of these personnel is a debt on 140 crore Indians and the nation is proud of them," Shah said.

The home minister also inaugurated women's barracks at the outpost and said women personnel had proved their capabilities by performing beyond expectations in border security duties.

He said infrastructure for women personnel was being expanded and facilities at all border posts would be strengthened by 2030.

Referring to the 1965 India-Pakistan war, Shah said the Sanchu outpost holds historical significance as security personnel had successfully defended it despite

heavy attacks by Pakistani forces.

He also highlighted steps being taken to improve border infrastructure in Rajasthan, including road construction, new fencing designs and water pipeline connectivity to 180 border posts.

He said that the Centre expanded the BSF's operational jurisdiction from 15 km to 50 km along international borders to strengthen internal security amid evolving threats.

He said the decision, taken a few years ago, was aimed at addressing new-age security challenges, including the misuse of technology by anti-national elements.

"Securing the borders alone is not enough to ensure national security. There is also a need to focus on regional security in coordination with state governments," he said.

He noted that the BSF has been tasked with alerting civil authorities, including district collectors and police superintendents, about suspicious activities such as illegal constructions and unusual demographic changes in villages within 50 km of the border.

Shah said that since the Prime Minister Narendra Modi assumed office in 2014, India's security landscape has undergone a significant transformation with a strong focus on military modernisation and border security.

He said the government has prioritised modernising the armed forces and strengthening border-guarding agencies like the BSF to ensure comprehensive national security. (PTI)



**NEW DELHI, May 26:** Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge attacked the Centre on Tuesday over the rising fuel prices and claimed that people from all sections are very angry with the Modi government as they know that it is incapable of solving the problems of the poor.

The Congress chief asked why relief was not provided to people when crude oil prices fell during the last 12 years.

Speaking with reporters here, Kharge said, "This is Modi ji's tactic... a kind of slow poisoning to kill poor people. They always keep increasing prices little by little, but when prices go up by ₹10-12 within just a week, it shows that Modi ji does not want to pay attention to these issues and is instead pushing the country toward ruin."

"At the same time, he keeps saying that he is doing everything for the nation, making sacrifices, and working for the people. But people here are suffering. If inflation keeps rising like this, unemployment continues to increase, factories shut down, and MSMEs and small-scale industries are forced to close, then what will happen?" he said.

All classes of people are "very angry" with this government and know that it is incapable of solving the problems of poor people, Kharge said.

"The problem of paper leaks has increased. Why doesn't he pay attention to these issues? Does he have to run the country or visit all the countries of the world as tourists?" he said.

In a post in Hindi on X, Kharge cited an official statement by the PIB to state that exactly 12 years ago today -- on May 26, 2014 -- when Prime Minister Narendra Modi assumed office, the price of crude oil in the Indian basket stood at USD 108.05 per barrel, and the Dollar-Ruppee exchange rate was ₹ 58.59.

At that time, petrol was available at ₹ 71.51 per litre, and diesel at ₹ 56.71 per litre, he said in his post in Hindi on X.

Today, the price of crude oil is below USD 99 per barrel; yet, the prices of petrol and diesel have surged to ₹ 102.12 and ₹ 95.20 per litre, respectively, Kharge said.

In other words, while crude oil has become cheaper, petrol has become approximately 42.8% more expensive, and diesel about 67.9% more expensive, he said.

"Every economist knows that the rising cost of petrol and diesel impacts every sector. From transportation to food commodities, the burden of inflation on the common man continues to intensify. Despite this, the government's profiteering continues unabated," Kharge said.

"The question is straightforward: When crude oil prices have fallen, why have petrol and diesel become more expensive?" he said.

Why is there no relief for the public, Kharge asked.

The Congress on Monday launched a scathing attack on Prime Minister Modi over the latest fuel hike, with Rahul Gandhi alleging that the "meanghai manav" has struck again and he has just one job of making promises during elections and attacking people's pockets at other times. Kharge had lashed out at the Modi government over the issue and asked who is benefiting from this "daily robbery".

Petrol and diesel prices were raised by ₹ 2.61-2.71 per litre on Monday, marking the fourth increase in less than two weeks as state-owned fuel retailers continued to pass on rising international oil prices to consumers. (PTI)

## Indo-Pacific must remain driver for global growth: Jaishankar

**NEW DELHI, May 26:** The Indo-Pacific must remain a driver for global growth and stability, and the Quad must work towards ensuring maritime security and promoting economic choices in the region, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Tuesday.

In his opening remarks at the Quad foreign ministers' meeting, he specifically called for "trusted and transparent" partnerships to bring peace and prosperity to the Indo-Pacific. The New Delhi meeting was attended by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong, and Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi, with Jaishankar presiding over it. The Quad meeting came amid rising global concerns over China's increasing military muscle-flexing in the Indo-Pacific.

"Our focus will clearly be on the Indo-Pacific, which is the specific limit of the Quad," the external affairs minister said in his televised opening remarks.

"At the global level, we have to address issues like supply chain resilience, connectivity choke points, manufacturing and resource concentrations and gaps in critical infrastructure. Each one of them offers a new argument for more partnerships," he said. Jaishankar, without elaborating, also talked about specific "concerns" facing the Indo-Pacific. "This will require enhancing strategic confidence, ensuring maritime security, promoting economic choices, and fostering a deeper collaborative ethos. And that is best done by promoting trusted and transparent partnerships," he said.

The external affairs minister added, "As maritime democracies, pluralistic societies and market economies, we share the responsibility towards a free and open Indo-Pacific. The region must remain a driver for global growth and stability." (PTI)

## TMC's post-poll unease deepens as veteran MP Sukhendu flags 'anarchy'

**KOLKATA, May 26:** Signs of chum in the TMC following its crushing defeat in the recent West Bengal assembly elections became more visible on Tuesday, with senior Rajya Sabha MP Sukhendu Sekhar Roy emerging as the latest leader to strike a discordant note and raise uncomfortable questions over the party's trajectory.

Days after party MP Kakoli Ghosh Dasitdar publicly aired her discontent, Roy, among the party's most seasoned parliamentarians, posted cryptic historical references on X, triggering intense political chatter and adding to indications of unease within the TMC after its electoral setback.

Roy wrote on X, "In 44 BC, Roman Emperor Julius Caesar was stabbed to death in the Senate on the Ides of March. As per Roman calendar, Ides generally meant for 15th of March, May, July and October. But before Ides of May, people of West Bengal put an end to unbearable anarchical situation."

The post, with its invocation of the fall of empires and the "end to unbearable anarchical situation", immediately sparked speculation in political circles and within the TMC, especially as it came amid post-poll introspection and visible fault lines in the party.

A week earlier, on May 19, Roy had written: "Democracy is based upon will of the people. Republics fall when profligates thrive and wise are banished from the council. Free thought and its practice are essential in democratic system. None can deny, else the system is doomed."

While Roy has not publicly elaborated on either post, people close to him said the veteran politician has privately voiced serious concerns over the reasons behind the TMC's dramatic slide from its dominant position just two years ago.

According to those in his close circle, Roy has



repeatedly questioned how a party that won 29 Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal in 2024 and retained a commanding position could suffer such a steep reversal in a relatively short period.

His assessment, sources said, goes beyond electoral arithmetic.

Roy is understood to have pointed to the party's alleged inability to read public sentiment during the RG Kar movement, which saw massive street protests following the rape and murder of a woman doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital.

According to people familiar with his views, Roy believes the unprecedented turnout on the streets at the time had carried political signals that the party failed to adequately grasp.

He is also learnt to have expressed concern over what he described in private conversations as "institutionalisation of corruption" within the party structure.

The remarks assume significance as Roy is no fringe voice within the party. A veteran politician with roots in the Congress tradition and once considered close to former president Pranab Mukherjee, Roy joined the TMC later and went on to become one of its prominent parliamentary faces. (PTI)

## RBI did it a favour by giving big bonus: Cong

**Govt's finances not as rosy as made out to be**  
**NEW DELHI, May 26:** With the Reserve Bank announcing a record dividend of ₹ 2.87 lakh crore to the government, the Congress on Tuesday claimed that the Centre's finances are not as rosy as is being made out to be by the RBI as the fact that the RBI has "done it a favour" and given it a big bonus.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday announced a record dividend of ₹ 2.87 lakh crore to the government for the year ended March 2026, providing a financial boost for the exchequer amid rising import bills and supply chain disruptions due to the West Asia conflict. The dividend is 6.7 per cent higher than ₹ 2.69 lakh crore for the 2024-25 fiscal year.

In a post on X, Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said, "That the Union government's finances are not as rosy as is being made out to be is proved by the fact that the RBI has done it a favour and given it a big bonus."

"After increasing what is called the Contingency Risk Buffer maintained by it for three consecutive years, the RBI decided to lower it for the financial year 2025/26. This has resulted in a huge increase in its dividend to the Union government," he said.

The Centre has got a bonanza of an additional ₹ 92,000 crore over and above what it would have got had the 2024/25 Contingency Reserve Buffer not been reduced, Ramesh said. In a statement, the RBI has said its net income, before risk provision and transfer to statutory funds, aggregated ₹ 3.96 lakh crore in FY26 as against ₹ 3.13 lakh crore in FY25.

"The balance sheet of the Bank expanded by 20.61 per cent to ₹ 91,97,121.08 crore as on March 31, 2026," the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said. The RBI's Central Board of Directors, at its meeting, reviewed the global and domestic economic scenario, including risks to the outlook, and also approved the dividend.

According to the statement, the revised Economic Capital Framework (ECF) provides flexibility to maintain the Contingency Risk Buffer (CRB) between the range of 4.5 per cent and 7.5 per cent of the size of the balance sheet.

"Taking into consideration the current macroeconomic factors, financial performance of the Bank and maintenance of appropriate risk buffers, the Central Board decided to transfer ₹ 1,09,379.64 crore towards the CRB for FY 2025-26 as against ₹ 44,861.70 crore in the previous year," it said. (PTI)

## Former BJD Rajya Sabha MP joins BJP, praised Modi's leadership

**NEW DELHI, May 26:** Former Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Rajya Sabha MP Debashish Samantaray joined the BJP on Tuesday, saying he was impressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's personality and work.

Joining the BJP in the presence of senior party leaders here, Samantaray thanked Modi for his "blessing" and said he would work towards further strengthening the BJP in Odisha and realising the prime minister's vision of 'Viksit Bharat'.

He later met BJP national president Nitin Nabin at the party headquarters. Union minister and senior BJP leader Dharmendra Pradhan, an MP from the Sambalpur Lok Sabha constituency in Odisha, was also present on the occasion.

A long-time associate of BJD supremo and former Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik, Samantaray resigned from both the party and the Rajya Sabha on Monday, alleging that he was being "systematically belittled" in the organisation.

In his resignation letter to Patnaik, Samantaray said, "I do hereby resign from the primary membership of BJD. Of late, I felt I have been systematically belittled in the party and that it does not require my services. Therefore, I have taken this hard decision in the public interest and request you to accept my resignation." (PTI)

## One more AIADMK MLA quits

**CHENNAI, May 26:** A fourth MLA from the AIADMK's rebel camp on Tuesday tendered his resignation from the Tamil Nadu Assembly, bringing down the strength of the opposition party in the 234-member House to 43 from 47.

Ambasamudram MLA Esakki Subaya met Speaker JCD Prabhakar and submitted his resignation letter, shortly after AIADMK chief Edappadi K Palaniswami-led faction called on the latter with a plea to not accept the resignation of three AIADMK legislators who had stepped down on May 25.

Prabhakar later said the resignation of Subaya was accepted.

The Palaniswami camp cited alleged legal and procedural lapses behind the three MLAs' move on Monday and wanted the Speaker not to accept their resignation.

The party claimed the three MLAs joined the ruling TVK even before their resignation was notified.

Subaya is the fourth MLA from the rebel C Ve Shanmugam-SP Velumani camp to have quit as MLA and said he did so in the interest of his constituency people. He parried questions on whether he would join the TVK but said "it is not a sin to meet Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay."

"I will meet him if I get the chance," Subaya told reporters. Soon after his resignation, he was seen with senior TVK leader and state minister N Anand. Amid the developments in the AIADMK camp, Congress MP S Jothamani expressed concern over "horse-trading" in Tamil Nadu, and said her party should not support such moves by the ruling TVK since the national party itself has been at the receiving end of such maneuvers. (PTI)

## CBSE row: Board finds students' complaints of answer sheet mismatch valid, says taking corrective

**NEW DELHI, May 26:** Amid growing complaints over glitches and discrepancies in the CBSE re-evaluation process, some Class 12 students have alleged that the scanned copies of their answer sheets uploaded by the board did not match their handwriting, raising concerns over possible answer-sheet mismatch in the On-Screen Marking (OSM) system.

After a social media uproar, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) went into damage control mode and began responding individually to affected students, providing necessary clarifications and corrective action.

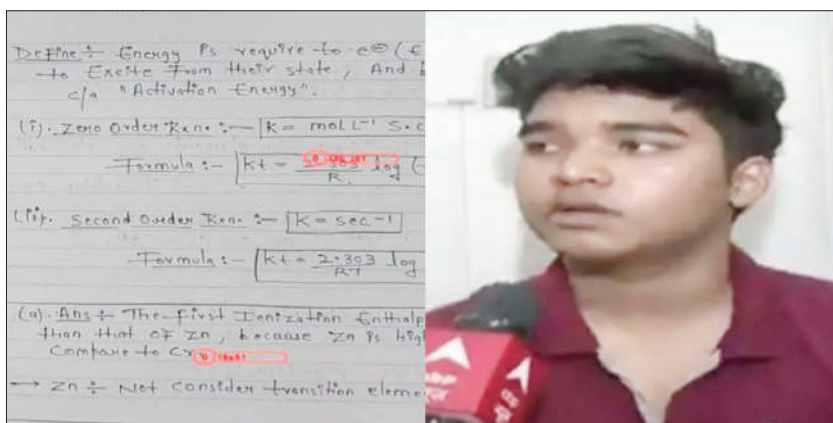
The CBSE has taken up on "top priority" the cases related to alleged mismatched answer sheets and other concerns faced by students in the re-evaluation process, a source in the board said.

The assurances came after a social media post of a Delhi-based Class 12 student, Vedant, went viral in which he alleged that the Physics answer sheet uploaded by the CBSE under the re-evaluation process was not his.

As the issue sparked an uproar with several other students also taking to social media with similar claims, the CBSE said this evening that a correct copy of his answer book has been sent to him and necessary action for updating his result is being undertaken accordingly.

"Whatever complaints are coming, online or offline, by any means, CBSE is actively taking them up," the source said while asserting that the board remains committed to helping the students.

Sources said senior officials are contin-



uously engaging with students and parents to resolve their grievances and are "providing all possible support to students".

"It is not about a single child. Everyone whose request is coming is being attended to actively," the source said in reply to queries to Vedant's complaint.

Referring to complaints raised by other students as well, the source said, "Not only one student, but all such matters are being examined seriously. In some cases, the issues have also been resolved."

Vedant's post, which garnered over 2.5 million views on X, said he and his family discovered that the handwriting in the Physics answer sheet provided by CBSE did not match his own.

In its reply to Vedant on X, CBSE said, "Thank you for bringing your concern regarding your Physics answer book to our attention. Upon review, the matter has been examined, and the correct copy of

your answer book has been sent to your registered email address. Necessary action for updating your result, as applicable, is also being undertaken accordingly."

It added, "We appreciate your patience and assure you of our continued support."

Meanwhile, Vedant said the board shared the correct answer sheet. "We have got correct answer sheet by CBSE. CBSE officials reached out to us in the evening and has sent my answer sheet. We were correct on our claims and the answer sheet indeed got exchanged," he said on X.

Vedant said he would still apply for re-evaluation of the answer sheet after reviewing it closely, alleging that marks had been deducted despite correct answers.

Urging the CBSE to examine similar cases, he added, "I urge CBSE to look into this answer sheet exchange issue more clearly and deeply for all the other students who are facing this same issue as me."

Several social media users, however, initially trolled Vedant, questioning whether the newly-created handle was actually a CSBE student, with some even calling him "anti-national" and "Pakistani", but others, including opposition leader Rahul Gandhi, came to his defence. "After receiving unexpectedly low marks in Physics, we applied for photocopies of my answer sheets through the CBSE re-evaluation process. Today we received the copies. And I am shattered because the Physics answer sheet uploaded by CBSE is not mine," the student wrote on X.

He claimed the Physics answer sheet differed completely from his English and Computer Science answer sheets, as well as from his handwritten notes.

"The handwriting style, letter formation, spacing, slant, sentence flow -- everything is different. This is not a minor variation. It is completely different writing," he said.

Vedant further alleged that the Physics answer sheet "looks like it belongs to another student entirely" and questioned whether his actual paper had been evaluated.

"If this is true, then what exactly was evaluated under my roll number? My paper? Or someone else's?" he wrote, adding that this is no longer just a "rechecking" issue.

The student urged CBSE to verify his original Physics answer sheet, audit the OSM tagging and scanning process, investigate possible exchange of answer sheets, and ensure that the correct paper was evaluated.

Responding to criticism on social media, Vedant's brother Siddhant Srivastava said the family had created the X account to raise the issue publicly.

"I am the brother of Vedant and I am appalled by seeing how people are calling us Pakistani. Yes, Vedant did not have Twitter because he was busy studying instead of tweeting, and we made this account for tweeting his genuine issues because we could not apply for reevaluation," Siddhant said.

Siddhant said the issue came to light after the family applied for re-evaluation of multiple subjects following dissatisfaction with the Physics marks.

"When he (Vedant) said that it (Physics answer sheet) was not his, I did not believe him. But when I independently checked it myself, I saw that the handwriting in the Physics answer sheet was completely different."

"The style of writing answers was different; everything was different. That is when I realised he was right," Siddhant told PTI Videos.

According to him, there was no formal mechanism available to report such a discrepancy.

"That is why we had to take to Twitter to make CBSE aware of the matter," he said, adding that they had also emailed CBSE and posted a video on Instagram explaining the issue.

Siddhant further claimed that after the post went viral, the family faced trolling on social media, with some users questioning their identity because the account location showed "South Asia". (PTI)

# President Murmu begins 3-day Sikkim tour, to visit India-China border



**GANGTOK, May 26:** President Droupadi Murmu arrived in Sikkim on Tuesday on a three-day visit, during which she will visit the India-China border, of-

officials said. She landed at Libing Helipad around 12 and was received by Governor Om Prakash Mathur and Chief Minister Prem Singh

Tamang. Following her arrival, the president proceeded to Lok Bhavan, where she will stay during her visit.

Murmu will flag off 'Pink City Runners', vehicles for women, at Ridge Park in Gangtok later in the day. She is also scheduled to visit the Orchidarium and the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology.

On Wednesday, the president will visit Nathu La at the India-China border and attend the seventh convocation ceremony of Sikkim University at Manan Bhavan in Gangtok.

On the final day of her visit on May 28, Murmu will present the President of India's Police Colour to the Sikkim Police and witness a parade and cultural programme at Palzor Stadium.

The state government has made elaborate security arrangements for the president's visit, officials said. (PTI)

# Tripura HC acquits two persons sentenced to life imprisonment for murder of bank manager

**AGARTALA, May 26:** A division bench of the Tripura High Court on Tuesday acquitted two persons, who were sentenced by a lower court to life term imprisonment for murdering a bank manager in 2019.

Bodhisatwa Das, the then branch manager of a nationalised bank in North Tripura, was stabbed to death on August 3, 2019, following a brawl between the bank official and four persons, who were having a drinking session on the roadside. The District and Session court, West Tripura, found the four persons - Sumit Chowdhury, Sumit Banik, Sukanta Biswas and Omar Sharif - guilty and sentenced them to life term rigorous imprisonment in 2023. Challenging the lower court's order, Sumit Chowdhury and Sumit Banik had approached the High Court of Tripura seeking reversal of the life sentence.

"The division bench headed by Justice T Amarnath Goud on Tuesday acquitted both petitioners of the murder charge on the ground that the provision of common intention for the crime did not match this particular incident," senior advocate Subrata Sarkar told reporters after the verdict. (PTI)

# Union Minister announces initiatives to strengthen Mizoram's cooperative dairy sector



**AIZAWL, May 26:** Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh has announced a series of initiatives to strengthen Mizoram's cooperative dairy sector.

During his visit to the Mizoram Milk Producers' Cooperative Union Limited (MULCO) dairy at Thuampui in Aizawl on Monday, Singh, the Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying and Panchayati Raj, said that milk production in Mizoram remains insufficient to meet local demand and urged local farmers and officials to work with renewed commitment.

He said that Mizoram should not lag behind other northeastern states in dairy development.

Singh announced that the Centre has revised the Central funding pattern for dairy development projects from 75:25 to 90:10, significantly reducing the financial burden on the state government and helping accelerate developmental works.

He said that milk processing plants and village-level milk procurement systems would continue to be up-

graded.

In collaboration with the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), quality cattle breeds through Artificial Insemination and improved cattle feed (fodder) would be made more accessible to farmers, he said. MULCO products manufactured within Mizoram, including paneer, rasmalai, and ghee, would also be marketed more extensively in Aizawl and nearby markets, he said.

During the visit, the Union Minister inaugurated the Mizo café and the FPO office-cum-sales outlet at the MULCO dairy premises.

He also inspected the dairy processing plant, where NDDB officials briefed him on plans to upgrade the existing 20 TLPD milk processing facility, according to officials.

Singh emphasised that the Central Government is committed to providing maximum support for the development of the Northeast, but said that the real success of these initiatives depends on the dedication of the state governments and farmers.

During the visit, he also launched several initiatives and products, including MULCO cow ghee, baled silage, type-II cattle feed, dewormers and mineral mixture products, officials said.

The programme was attended by Union Minister of State for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, and Minority Affairs George Kurian, Union Minister of State for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, and Panchayati Raj S. P. Singh Baghel.

Mizoram's Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Minister C. Lalsawivunga, Cooperation Minister P. C. Vanlalruata, Fisheries Minister Lalhansanga, alongside senior state government officials, representatives of NDDB, MULCO officials, cooperative members and farmers also attended the programme. (PTI)

# Dimapur to host training for field trainers of 5 dists ahead of census

**HT Correspondent**

**DIMAPUR, May 26:** Dimapur DC and principal census officer Tinjongshi Chang on Monday announced a three-day field trainers training programme for officials from Dimapur, Nuland, Chümoukedima, Peren and Mon districts to prepare them for Census 2027.

The training will be conducted from May 27 to 29 at Dimapur circuit house.

The programme is being organised in pursuance of directives received from the Directorate of Census Operations, Nagaland. The training is aimed at equipping field trainers with the necessary knowledge, legal understanding, technical skills and practical exposure required for conducting upcoming census operations efficiently.

The training programme will combine theoretical sessions, practical demonstrations and field-based exercises over three days.

On the first day, participants will undergo registration followed by an introductory session.

# Arunachal Governor urges law students to be driven by justice

**ITANAGAR, May 26:** Arunachal Pradesh Governor K T Parnaik has urged law students to view law as a public trust dedicated to justice for common citizens and imbibe passion in their chosen profession.

Addressing students and faculty members during a visit to Jarbom Gamlin Government Law College, Jote, on Tuesday, the governor highlighted development such as digital courts, e-filing, virtual hearings, and a focus on constitutional rights and urged students to combine legal knowledge with empathy, ethics, and social sensitivity, an official report from Lok Bhavan said.

The legal sector has become essential and highly relevant in today's time, he said.

Parnaik emphasised that the college should focus on strengthening legal research, community legal outreach, technology-driven legal education, and ethical leadership to contribute towards the vision of

Viksit Bharat.

He highlighted the importance of studies on constitutional governance, cyber laws, indigenous rights, environmental protection, border issues, and tribal rights, while encouraging active Legal Aid Cells and AI-assisted legal research.

Stressing discipline, integrity, and constitutional values, Parnaik expressed confidence that the institution would emerge as a beacon of justice, knowledge, and human dignity, inspiring future generations through quality legal education and public service.

Stating that the goal of law is justice, he emphasised that legal education carries the responsibility of promoting fairness, truth, and service to humanity. He urged the college to emerge as a leading hub of legal scholarship and public service in the North East, contributing to issues such as governance, customary law, indigenous rights,

and environmental concerns.

Addressing faculty members, Parnaik emphasised academic excellence, innovative methods, research, mentorship, and institutional discipline, and urged the college community to uphold integrity, originality, and a commitment to excellence in legal education.

On the college campus, the governor said the quality and standard of infrastructure and maintenance need improvement. He urged the entire college fraternity, including students, to work together to create a cleaner, greener, and more academically vibrant campus environment.

Education commissioner Amjad Tak, Jarbom Gamlin Government Law College principal Dr Gijo George, Papum Pore deputy commissioner Lobsang Tsering, and Higher & Technical Education director Dr Milorai Modi were also present. (PTI)

# Four arrested in Manipur in connection with abduction of Naga civilians

**IMPHAL, May 26:** Four persons were apprehended in Manipur's Kangpokpi district for their suspected involvement in the abduction of six Naga civilians, who are allegedly still being held hostage, police said on Tuesday.

A joint team of the Manipur Police, CRPF and Assam Rifles arrested the four men from the stretch between P Molding and Leilon Vaiphei inter-village road on Monday, they said.

The arrested persons were identified as Thangkhomang Khongsai (51), Seikholet Khongsai (40), Lunminthang Dimngel (27) and Kangmoul Khongsai (30). Police said the four are suspected to be active members of armed village volunteer groups operating in the district and may have been involved in anti-social activities such as extortion, criminal intimidation, and illegal possession of arms and ammunition.



"The role of the apprehended individuals in the abduction of six persons is suspected and will be ascertained during the course of investigation," a police statement said, adding that further investigation is underway.

Several people were allegedly abducted and taken hostage by armed groups in Kangpokpi and Senapati districts on May 13, hours

after three church leaders were killed in an ambush.

Police said 31 people, 14 Nagas, 16 Kukis and one Meitei, have since been released. However, six Nagas are still missing.

The Kuki Inpi Manipur, the apex body of the Kuki tribes in the state, claimed that 14 members of the community are also being held hostage by Naga groups. (PTI)

# Only MSMEs can strengthen Nagaland's local economy: Legislator

**HT Correspondent**

**DIMAPUR, May 26:** MLA and adviser to Nagaland industries & commerce department Hekani Jakhalu on Tuesday said the local economy and employment opportunities in the state can be strengthened only through MSMEs and the business community.

Speaking at an interactive session with the legislators of the state on the UNNATI 2024 Scheme and PM Vishwakarma, organised by the industries & commerce department, at the directorate of industries & commerce in Kohima, Jakhalu said, "If MSMEs are properly established, 70-80% of the struggles will be overcome."

She emphasised that it is the responsibility of legislators to make the public aware of the alternative opportunities and schemes created for them.

On the RAMP (Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance) scheme, a World Bank-assisted central sector programme under the Ministry of MSME, Jakhalu said the officials have reached every corner of the state to spread awareness.

She stressed that people in every constituency should be informed so that genuine beneficiaries can avail the benefits of the scheme.

She said 750 high-potential MSMEs would be mentored under the initiative.

Jakhalu urged the legislators to identify and recommend micro-entrepreneurs who can become role models for their constituencies.

She also spoke briefly on the PMFME (PM Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises) Scheme under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, which empowers individual micro-entrepreneurs, FPOs and SHGs.

She noted that the food processing sector is rapidly growing in Nagaland.

# Nagaland gov calls for skill development to address unemployment



**HT Correspondent**

**DIMAPUR, May 26:** Highlighting the importance of youth empowerment, Nagaland governor Nand Kishore Yadav on Monday stressed the need for skill development, entrepreneurship, vocational training, tourism and agriculture-based industries to address unemployment in the state.

He also underscored the importance of quality education, infrastructure development, unity and lasting peace for the progress of Nagaland.

Interacting with student beneficiaries of the post-matric scholarship scheme for ST students during a special interactive session held under the "Janjatiya Garima Utsav" at Lok Bhavan, Kohima, Yadav highlighted the significance of the occasion commemorating the legacy of tribal freedom fighter Birsa Munda, who stood for courage, dignity and justice for tribal communities.

Stating that education is the key to empowerment and progress, he described the

post-matric scholarship scheme as an important initiative supporting deserving students in pursuing higher education and achieving their aspirations.

He expressed satisfaction that many students from Nagaland are benefiting from the scheme.

Encouraging the students, Yadav urged them to work hard, remain disciplined and make full use of the opportunities available to them while staying connected to the rich values and traditions of their tribal heritage.

He further stated that for the vision of a developed India to become a reality, every citizen, including youngsters, doctors, engineers, technocrats, students and people from all walks of life, must demonstrate greater excellence and dedication in the discharge of their duties.

He expressed confidence that the youth of Nagaland would continue to excel and contribute positively towards transforming the nation into a fully developed India.

# Nagaland asks employers to safeguard workers from heat wave

**HT Correspondent**

**DIMAPUR, May 26:** The Nagaland labour department on Tuesday directed all employers, occupiers, industries, establishments, contractors, construction agencies, factories, brick kilns and other stakeholders in the state to strictly comply with the preventive and precautionary measures to safeguard workers and labourers from the adverse effects of heat wave conditions.

In an order, the state labour commissioner's office said it has become necessary to ensure the occupational safety, health and welfare of workers engaged in various sectors across the state during periods of extreme heat and high temperatures.

The order was issued following the Union labour & employment ministry's notification, vide D.O. No. Z 16025/20/2023-ISH-II dated 20th April, 2026, advising all state/UTs to take proactive measures for safeguarding workers and labourers from the adverse effects of heat wave.

The department said the working hours will, wherever feasible, be rescheduled to avoid exposure of workers during peak heat hours.

"Heavy and strenuous work should preferably be carried out during the cooler parts of the day, and employers shall provide flexibility in work schedules and ensure adequate rest intervals for workers exposed to outdoor or high-temperature environments," it said.

It also asked to provide adequate, safe and cool drinking water facilities at all workplaces, adding rest sheds, shaded areas and cooling arrangements will be made available for workers at worksites, and employers will ensure proper ventilation and cooling measures, wherever practicable. The department directed the employers to keep emergency first-aid materials, including ice packs and heat illness prevention kits, readily available at workplaces.

Any worker showing symptoms of heat stress, dehydration, heat exhaustion or heat stroke will immediately be provided with medical attention and necessary assistance. They are also advised to coordinate with nearby health facilities for periodic health check-ups and emergency medical support for workers.

# Rare blueberry species rediscovered in Arunachal after 188 years

**ITANAGAR, May 26:** Researchers have rediscovered 'Vaccinium piliferum', a rare and endangered wild relative of the blueberry in the remote forests of Vijojnagar in Arunachal Pradesh's Changlang district, nearly 188 years after it was first recorded in 1836.

The rediscovery in the Eastern Himalayan region is being seen as a major botanical achievement and an important addition to India's biodiversity records.

Researchers said 'Vaccinium piliferum' belongs to the Ericaceae family, which includes blueberries and cranberries.

The species was rediscovered recently by researchers from the Society for Education and Environmental Development, CSIR-North East Institute of Science (NEIST) and Technology and collaborating institutions, a source in the institute said.

The plant was originally recorded in 1836 during the colonial period but had not been traced for generations, leading many botanists to believe it may have disappeared from the wild.

The species was found near tributaries of the Noa-



Dihing River in the dense forests of Vijojnagar, an ecologically sensitive area known for rich biodiversity, the CSIR-NEIST source said.

Researchers said only 16 individual plants were

recorded during the field survey, indicating the species' fragile population status.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature has listed 'Vaccinium piliferum' as an 'endangered' species. Experts said the rediscovery highlights the ecological importance of Arunachal Pradesh's Eastern Himalayan ecosystem and the need for conservation of rare flora and fauna.

Wild relatives of cultivated berry species are considered important for research related to climate resilience, disease resistance and crop improvement, botanists said. Arunachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein described the rediscovery as "a remarkable chapter in the natural history of Arunachal Pradesh".

"This finding highlights the immense ecological wealth of our state and reinforces the urgent need to protect and preserve our fragile Himalayan ecosystems for future generations," he said in a post on X.

Mein also appreciated the efforts of researchers involved in the rediscovery. (PTI)

**ASSAM PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**  
Jawaharnagar, Khanapara, Guwahati-781022.

No.170 PSC/CON/Exam-03/2026-2027 Dated Guwahati the 26<sup>th</sup> May, 2026

**RESULT**

The Assam Public Service Commission hereby declares today, the 26<sup>th</sup> May, 2026, the result of the recruitment to the post of 1) **Lecturer (Geography) in INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES IN EDUCATION (I.A.S.E.)** under The Directorate of SCERT, Assam, advertised vide no. 18/2024 dated 06/09/2024.

The interviews for the said post were conducted by the Commission in collaboration with Experts deputed by the Govt. of Assam on 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2026. The Commission recommended the following candidate for the said post, in order of merit:

1. **Name of Post: Lecturer (Geography) in INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES IN EDUCATION (I.A.S.E.)**  
Total no. of post: 1 (R.F.W: Nil)  
Break-up: OC: 1 (R.F.W: Nil)

Position	Roll No.	Name of Candidate	Category	Gender	Recommended against vacancy
L.	20002	JADU CHANDRA SARKAR	SC	M	OPEN CATEGORY

• Results may be accessed through the APSC's website [www.apsc.nic.in](http://www.apsc.nic.in)

Principal Controller of Examinations,  
Assam Public Service Commission,  
Jawaharnagar, Khanapara, Guwahati-22

**DIPR /D/HLT/6/27-May-26**

# Resurgent Royals rely on Sooryavanshi, Archer to upstage power-packed Sunrisers

**MULLANPUR, May 26:** The ferocity and fearlessness of a 15-year-old Vaibhav Sooryavanshi will be pitted against the combined might of an explosive top-order when a resurgent Rajasthan Royals run into a solid Sunrisers Hyderabad in the Indian Premier League Eliminator here on Wednesday.

Sunrisers Hyderabad made a slow start to the competition before finding sustained momentum in the second half of the tournament. The arrival of regular captain Pat Cummins for the last seven league games also made a substantial impact as they won five of those contests.

Having beaten Rajasthan Royals twice in the league stage, Cummins and Co. would carry the psychological advantage heading into the high pressure knock-out fixture.

By their own admission, Royals should have qualified much earlier than the last day of the league stage but now that they are there, the Riyan Parag-led unit would be chomping at the bit to put one past Sunrisers Hyderabad and progress deeper into the tournament. The Royals top order comprising the sensational Sooryavanshi (583 runs), Yashasvi Jaiswal (397) and Dhruv Jurel (458) has expectedly scored the bulk of the runs for the team.

Same is the case with Sunrisers' trio of Abhishek Sharma (563 runs), Travis Head (393) and Ishan Kishan (569). A special mention is a must for Heinrich Klaasen (606) at number four as he is in the middle of his best IPL season.

Notwithstanding the destructive abilities of both the top orders, Jaiswal and Head have not been as consistent as they would have liked. The Eliminator presents them the



ideal opportunity for a game changing effort for their respective teams.

Sunrisers are arguably the most destructive side of the tournament and therefore it was hardly a surprise that Royals head coach Kumar Sangakkara was inquired about his plans to deal with the opposition's belligerent top four.

"They're a good side, aren't they? They bat well. They trust themselves to go hard and they've done it the whole tournament. We have got to hold the line, really. Be disciplined and understand that they're not a side that you're going to limit to 120, 130. But we've got to be aggressive (with our) lines and lengths.

"Even if you're trying to bowl a good length ball, or a slower ball, it has to be bowled with intent. With the Sunrisers, yeah, it's going to

be a tough clash for us. Let's see in two days' time what we come up with," Sangakkara said after sneaking into the play-offs.

The Sri Lankan legend would bank on leading wicket taker Jofra Archer (21 wickets) to come up with another match-winning spell in the powerplay on Wednesday night, like he did in the must win clash against Mumbai Indians at Wankhede, making the ball talk with both conventional and cross seam.

Nandre Burger and Brijesh Sharma too have been impressive in patches, operating in all phases of the game.

Young leg-spinner Yash Raj Punja has emerged as the lead spinner ahead of Ravi Bishnoi in his debut IPL season while veteran Ravindra Jadeja needs to do more with both the bat and ball.

At the top of the order, trust Sooryavanshi to show no respect to the likes of Cummins, leading wicket taker Eshan Malinga (19) and Sakib Hussain. If the teenager is off the blocks in the powerplay, he could very well take the game away from the opposition.

Another wrist spinner in his rookie season, Shivang Kumar, too has made his presence felt in the middle overs for Sunrisers.

The Mullanpur Stadium, which staged four league games this season, has offered a good batting surface with 220 plus being scored in three of those contests including a 254 by home team Punjab Kings.

**Squads:**

**Sunrisers Hyderabad:** Travis Head, Ishan Kishan, Heinrich Klaasen, Smaran Ravichandran, Aniket Verma, Abhishek Sharma, Harsh Dubey, Kamindu Mendis, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Pat Cummins (c), Eshan Malinga, Jaydev Unadkat, Harshal Patel, Zeeshan Ansari, Salil Arora, Sakib Hussain, Amit Kumar, Praful Hinge, Krains Fuletra, Liam Livingstone, Shivang Kumar, Onkar Tarmale, Dilshan Madushanka, Gerald Coetzee, RS Ambrish

**Rajasthan Royals:** Shubham Dubey, Shimron Hetmyer, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Dhruv Jurel, Lhuan-dre Pretorius, Riyan Parag (c), Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, Donovan Ferreira, Ravindra Jadeja, Jofra Archer, Nandre Burger, Tushar Deshpande, Wena Maphaka, Sandeep Sharma, Yudhvir Singh Charak, Ravi Bishnoi, Shastri Mishra, Vignesh Puthur, Aman Rao Perala, Brijesh Sharma, Adam Milne, KuldEEP Sen, Dasun Shanaka, Yash Raj Punja, Emanjot Singh Chahal.

Match Starts: 7.30 PM IST. (PTI)

Sports Ministry notifies rules for NSB, NST

## Dedicated legal portal for dispute resolution



**NEW DELHI, May 26:** The Sports Ministry on Tuesday notified the rules of operation for the soon-to-be-formed National Sports Tribunal (NST) and the National Sports Board (NSB), stating that a dedicated portal would be set up for submission of disputes and maintenance of legal records.

In separate notifications addressing the roles of the two bodies, which will be formed under the National Sports Governance Act passed last year, the Sports Ministry reiterated that a search-cum-selection committee is in the process of being formed under the cabinet secretary.

The National Sports Board, that will function as the central authority for granting recognition to National Sports Bodies and ensuring compliance with governance, financial and ethical standards, will comprise a Chairperson and two members. It will have a three-year term.

The Tribunal's strength has not been specified by the gov-

ernment. The rules for NST, however, have incorporated the provisions for techno-legal measures to ensure "digital implementation".

"(These include) notification of a dedicated portal by the Central Government for submission of disputes, notices, responses, documents and clarifications, as well as communication from the Tribunal, publication of orders, virtual hearings and maintenance of records related to proceedings and orders," the ministry stated.

The Tribunal will serve as a dedicated adjudicatory body for sports-related disputes in the country.

"It is aimed at reducing reliance on civil courts and ensuring independent, speedy, effective and cost-efficient disposal of disputes relating to sports governance and administration," the ministry reiterated.

The government also stated once again that if the appointed Chairperson or member of the Tribunal is a serving judge of the Supreme Court or a High Court, "he shall either resign or obtain voluntary retirement from his parent service before joining the Tribunal."

In addition to granting affiliation, the National Sports Board will also maintain a roster of the National Sports Election Panel and a register of affiliate units of the National Sports Bodies.

The Board has also been empowered to specify model guidelines or regulations on sports governance. An age cap of 65 has been set for the members. (PTI)

## Hungrier to go one step further as series win against India a boost: Wolvaardt

**LONDON, May 26:** Captain Laura Wolvaardt said successive near-misses have intensified South Africa's desire to clinch an ICC title, adding that the recent series win over India has significantly boosted the team's confidence ahead of the women's T20 World Cup.

South Africa head into the tournament as one of the favourites after reaching back-to-back T20 World Cup finals in 2023 and 2024. They also finished runners-up at last year's ODI World Cup, leaving the Proteas eager to finally cross the final hurdle.

"Reaching back-to-back T20 World Cup finals has obviously been very special for us as a team, but I think it's also made us even hungrier to go one step further," Wolvaardt wrote in her column for the ICC.

In the run up to the World Cup, scheduled to begin in England and Wales on June 12, South Africa defeated India 4-1 in the five-match T20I series in April.

"The India series was another good test against one of the strongest teams in the world. Winning that series gave the group a lot of confidence, but more importantly, it showed the ability and resilience within the squad. Players stepped up at different times and that's something you need at a World Cup," she added.

South Africa have enjoyed an impressive run in the T20 format this year, having beaten New Zealand 4-1 and Pakistan 2-1 before overcoming India.

"The preparation has been really good so far. We've had a lengthy run of cricket leading into the World Cup, especially with the tours against New Zealand and India, and I think those series gave us a great opportunity to test ourselves in different situations.

"The New Zealand tour challenged us in various ways, whether it was the conditions, our execution or the opposition," she said.

The SA skipper said those tours have given the team the confidence ahead of the ICC marquee event. (PTI)

## Vincent Keymer: The calm challenger who pushed Gukesh to the edge

**OSLO, May 26:** For Vincent Keymer, the match against world champion D. Gukesh at Norway Chess may have ended in disappointment following a narrow defeat, but the young German left Oslo with something far more significant — proof that he belongs among the elite.

In a gripping opening-round battle that stretched 144 moves, the 21-year-old Keymer not only outplayed Gukesh for long phases but also managed to unsettle the usually ice-cool Indian before eventually losing in the Armageddon tiebreak after a hard-fought classical draw.

Mentored by Hungarian great Peter Leko — famed for his rock-solid defence and elite endgame technique — Keymer mirrored those very traits with his precision and composure in Oslo.

For the youngster from a family of musicians, the defeat may not have sounded pleasant, but Keymer continues to evolve with every tournament. After narrowly missing out on qualification for the Candidates, he bounced back in style by winning the Superbet Chess Classic in Bucharest before flying into Oslo.

Keymer admitted that missing the Candidates "really hurts", but



said the disappointment has only strengthened his resolve.

"Well, the past one and a half years were great for me. I got a lot of rating points, had many big tournament wins. Of course, missing out on Candidates was something that hurt. It wasn't easy, especially since I was quite close.

"But, you know, having had so many good results, that was kind of consoling and I still think I'm quite young. I hopefully have a few more chances to qualify and that's what I'm working on now," he said during an interaction here.

Among the young players tipped to dominate the future of world chess alongside Gukesh and R Praggnanandhaa are Javokhir Sin-

darov and Keymer himself. Given the German's grounding under Leko, it is only a matter of time before he establishes himself further.

Keymer, currently ranked sixth in the world, said chess remains "central" to his life, but stressed that he does not define his personality through the game in the way many associate with world champions such as Magnus Carlsen or Gukesh.

"I don't think I can compare my situation with theirs. I mean, having that title and that responsibility must be special and different from not having it. But, of course, it's similar. We have the same profession, we play similar tournaments and, of course, also for me, chess is

a very, very central part of my life.

"And, of course, the way that I perform and how my tournaments go affect my life," he added.

Being ambitious also brings pressure and responsibility, something Keymer accepts as part of elite chess.

"I mean, it's a lot of work, of course. And to a certain degree, you have a responsibility because at the end of the day, you should make sure everything is well checked because it might decide the world championship match.

"So, of course, there's this little extra pressure. But I think that's also nice because you go a bit deeper than usual," he said.

Asked whether he draws lessons from the journeys of other successful players, Keymer said every player's path is unique.

"It's difficult to say, but every player is different. Seeing how somebody works and what he needs gives a new perspective. And I think getting new perspectives is always helpful for maybe adding something new to your playstyle."

With Magnus Carlsen recently saying that he has left it to younger players to chase his No. 1 ranking and five world titles, Keymer said the Norwegian still remains the benchmark. (PTI)

## Gukesh, Praggnanandhaa earn hard-fought Armageddon wins in Norway Chess

**OSLO, May 26:** D Gukesh emerged victorious after a bruising, nerve-jangling marathon battle against Vincent Keymer, and R Praggnanandhaa outplayed Alireza Firouzja but world No. 1 Magnus Carlsen suffered a rare opening-round defeat at Norway Chess, which began amid towering bookshelves at the historic Deichman Bjorvika public library here.

Thanks to his Armageddon triumph after a draining 144-move slugfest that lasted nearly five hours, Gukesh pocketed 1.5 points, while Keymer settled for one after the classical game had ended in a stalemate. The marathon encounter saw the Indian world champion visibly rattled in the closing stages, even seeking clarification from the arbiter over the move count as the game drifted towards an inevitable draw despite Keymer being a pawn up.

The German, however, remained ice-cool throughout the classical battle, continuing to

press on before eventually losing the Armageddon decider. But the tie-break itself ended swiftly, with Gukesh unleashing the decisive 15.Bh6, a move that sealed Keymer's fate.

Praggnanandhaa and American Grandmaster Wesley So produced a hard-fought classical draw in a finely balanced contest before the Indian No. 2 prevailed in the Armageddon tie-break with a sharp attacking display to pocket the extra point.

However, the biggest talking point of the day was defending champion Carlsen suffering a rare defeat in classical chess to Firouzja, who claimed all three points.

The Frenchman, confined to a wheelchair after recently injuring his ankle at the Superbet Chess Classic Romania and with his foot firmly strapped in a protective "moon shoe", showed remarkable grit and composure to stun home favourite and world No. 1 Carlsen on his own turf. (PTI)

## Indian-origin golfer Manav Shah's stirring journey to US Open Trading scalpel for golf irons

**NEW DELHI, May 26:** Born into a Gujarati family where medicine was considered the natural career path, Indian-origin golfer Manav Shah chose fairways over medical school and will, now, tee off at his maiden US Open after grinding on public courses and global qualifying circuits for years.

The California-born Shah, whose parents migrated from India in the 1980s, said reconnecting with his roots through the Asian Tour and the Indian Golf Premier League (IGPL) strengthened the self-belief, eventually carrying him into golf's toughest major.

"The players on the tour and all the guys I've met from India have been very welcoming to me. It kind of was a full circle moment for me and brought me closer to my roots, closer to my culture," Shah told PTI during an interview. (PTI)

## The enigmatic Riyan Parag tides over trolls, injury, patchy form to justify RR's captaincy choice

### 'I have taken a lot of brave calls actually this season'

**MULLANPUR, May 26:** Often at the centre of controversy during IPL 2026, Riyan Parag has repaid the immense faith placed on him by Rajasthan Royals in his first full season as captain, leading the team to a last minute play-off berth.

The 24-year-old from Assam has had to deal with criticism at every step since joining the franchise in 2019 — partially because of his supremely confident and straight talking personality, giving him the "arrogant" tag besides his modest IPL numbers.

"I think I've seen very few players who have been criticised like Riyan has for about seven years now. He is the ab-

solute right guy to lead this franchise," Royals head coach Kumar Sangakkara said in strong defence of Parag after sealing the top-four berth in Mumbai.

Season after season his under-performance was questioned until he had a breakout year in 2024 when he amassed 573 runs at a strike rate close to 150 after being promoted to number four.

A stand-out IPL led to an India call-up later that year but soon after he had to undergo surgery for a chronic shoulder injury, forcing him out of the national set-up. With a battery of players ready to take over in the T20 format, Parag has not yet found a way back in.

The Royals top management kept believing in him, so much so that he was handed captaincy post Sanju Samson's departure ahead of Dhruv Jurel, Yashasvi Jaiswal and Ravindra Jadeja.

Even in the ongoing season, Parag

has to deal with extreme pressure, partially due to lack of runs in the first half of the tournament before countless trolls were fired at him after he was caught vaping in the dressing room on national TV.

The incident coincided with the team's late season slide that almost put them on the brink of elimination. He made no bones about his team's poor performance but at the same time chose to slam the game's commentators and experts over making alleged personal remarks on the players.

Though his form picked up in the second half, a hamstring injury forced him to miss two games.

Despite not being fully fit, Parag returned for the do or die for the final league game against Mumbai Indians and made a couple of impressive captaincy calls that shut the door on the opposition.

Jofra Archer was promoted up the order for a late swing before bringing back the X-factor pacer to break the threatening stand between Hardik Pandya and Suryakumar Yadav.

Parag wears emotions on his sleeve and his post-match comments were a reflection of that.

"I have taken a lot of brave calls actually this season. That's how I like to lead. That's how I lead Assam as well. You got to take your chances, it's not a gamble," he asserted.

Parag comes from a family of sportspersons with his father being a first-class cricketer and mother an India swimmer. He was just 16 months old when he held a plastic bat in his hands.

Someone who worked with him in his India U-19 days spoke about Parag's often misunderstood personality and exemplary work ethic. The Guwahati-born

cricketer was part of the victorious U-19 World Cup batch that included Shubman Gill and Prithvi Shaw.

"He did not get to do much in that U-19 World Cup but his work ethic stood out. He is a very nice boy. He won't stand in front of you with folded hands but diligently do what is asked of him in practice.

"Of late, he has been having a little bit of trouble with his shoulder, that is why you don't see him bowling that much. He is a special cricketer with the bat in hand and has the natural ability of hitting huge sixes. He has not realised his potential yet and he knows that," said the coach preferring anonymity.

Parag has already done enough to retain leadership of the franchise but he would be leaving not stone unturned on Wednesday night in his push to take RR deeper into the tournament. (PTI)

