

6 NATION Annamalai's exit no loss for party, says TN BJP chief Digvijaya Singh writes to PM, calls for govt white paper on exam leaks 7 NORTHEAST 3 killed after assailants attack village in Kangpokpi; CM condoles deaths Arunachal govt sets up 4 panels on infiltration, indigenous rights issues

Cabinet expansion: 11 BJP MLAs, 1 AGP legislator sworn in Team Assam ready to serve people with renewed zeal: CM

GUWAHATI, June 5: BJP MLAs Ranaj Pegu, Ashok Singhal, Biswajit Daimary and AGP's Keshab Mahanta were among the 12 legislators who took oath as ministers on Friday as Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma expanded his cabinet, taking the strength of the council of ministers to 17.

Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya administered the oath of office and secrecy to the MLAs at a function at the Jyoti-Bishnu Antartatik Kala Mandir here.

The chief minister, Union ministers Sarbananda Sonowal and Pabitra Margherita, Assam Assembly Speaker Ranjeet Kumar Dass, BJP state president Dilip Saikia and several NDA MLAs were present at the event.

"It's a balanced team which represents the aspirations of all sections of people and their experience and wisdom will fur-



ther strengthen our resolve of building a #ViksitAssam," the CM said about the new ministers in a post on X.

In another post, Sarma said, "Team Assam has grown today and is ready to serve the people with renewed zeal".

Congratulating all those who have taken the oath, the CM said their experience and wisdom will

add immense value to the Council of Ministers and chart the path to fast-paced growth and prosperity.

Among the new faces in the cabinet are BJP's Ashwini Ray Sarkar, Nilima Devi and Sushanta Borgohain.

Ray Sarkar, representing Golakganj in Dhubri district, became an MLA for a second time this year after 2016.

Nilima Devi, the president of the BJP's Mahila Morcha, has been elected to the assembly for the first time and represents the Mangaldoi constituency.

Borgohain, a third-time MLA, had first represented the Congress from 2011-16 and later joined the saffron party. He had won on a BJP ticket in 2021.

He represents Demow constituency in Upper Assam.

AGP's Mahanta, who was in both Himanta Biswa Sarma's previous cabinet as well as in the Sarbananda Sonowal-led first BJP government in the state, was included in the new council of ministers.

BJP MLAs Bimal Borah, Jayant Mallaburua, Kaushik Rai, Krishnendu Paul and Pijush Hazarika, who took the oath, had also served as ministers in the previous Himanta Biswa Sarma government. Pegu, a (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Shah talks tough against demographic change

Government's 'smart border' project is in the final stage: Home Minister

AGARTALA, June 5: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said the government will not tolerate demographic changes in West Bengal, Tripura and Bihar, asserting that the Centre is taking steps to bridge gaps in guarding the country's borders.

Shah, addressing BSF personnel at Lankamura Border Outpost in Tripura, also said that the government's "smart border" project is in the final stage.

"Demographic changes in West Bengal, Tripura and Bihar will not be tolerated... The Centre is making all efforts to bridge the gaps in guarding international borders," the home minister said.

"The concept of 'smart border' will be implemented in seven to eight places of the country as a pilot project. I request the Union home secretary and the director



general of the BSF to visit border areas, and hold talks," he said.

The new security grid will include cutting-edge tech, local administration and border sentinels, Shah said.

"Every border has its own chal-

lenges, from human trafficking to arms smuggling to drug supply, but the BSF jawans do their best to face these challenges," he said.

"To make India a 'viksit' (developed) nation by 2047, we have to stop the (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

India's GDP grows 7.8 pc in Q4, full-year growth rises to 7.7 pc

NEW DELHI, June 5: India's economy expanded 7.8 per cent in the January-March quarter, exceeding forecasts on strong domestic demand and government expenditure, before rising oil prices and supply-chain disruptions began clouding the outlook.

The GDP growth compared with 7 per cent expansion a year back and 8 per cent in the previous quarter. Full-year growth accelerated to 7.7 per cent from 7.1 per cent in FY25, supported by healthy consumption and robust investment activity.

The January-March period accounted for just one month of disruptions caused by the war in Iran. The spike in oil prices and the disruption in supplies from the Middle East -- a key source for India's crude oil, natural gas and LPG -- will be fully visible in the current April-June quarter.

The Reserve Bank of India has already cut its 2026-27 (FY27) GDP growth forecast to 6.6 per cent from 6.9 per cent, citing elevated energy and commodity prices and persistent supply-chain disruptions linked to the conflict in West Asia.

Chief Economic Adviser V Anantha Nageswaran said India could return to a growth rate of more than 7 per cent in FY28 if external conditions improve.

He said even if growth slows below 7 per cent in FY27, as projected by the RBI, policy measures aimed at preserving macroeconomic stability and ensuring adequate supplies could help the economy return to a growth trajectory above 7 per cent in FY28, provided external conditions improve.

Gross value added, which strips out the volatile components such as indirect taxes and government subsidies to present a more accurate measure of underlying economic activity, grew 7.9 per cent during the January-March quarter, the data released by MoSPI showed.

"The fact that GVA growth at 7.9 per cent outpaced GDP growth suggests that India's expansion was not solely demand-driven but also backed by strong production mo-

mentum," said Rumki Majumdar, economist at Deloitte India.

Firm performance across services, manufacturing and construction indicates that the economy has entered a period of global uncertainty from a position of strength, which should help it better absorb potential supply-side shocks, she said.

"We remain cautiously optimistic that tensions in the Middle East will ease over the coming months and that supply-chain disruptions will gradually subside by the end of the year," she said.

"Real GDP or GDP at constant prices is estimated to attain a level of ₹ 323.12 lakh crore in the 2025-26, against the First Revised Estimate (FRE) of GDP for the year 2024-25 of ₹ 299.89 lakh crore," according to the data released by National Statistical Office (NSO).

The nominal GDP or GDP at current prices is estimated to attain a level of ₹ 346.36 lakh crore in 2025-26, against ₹ 318.07 lakh crore in 2024-25, showing a growth rate of 8.9 per cent.

This is the second set of GDP data in the new series with 2022-23 as the base year.

Commenting on the data, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed to further drive the "reform express" with decisive policy measures to ensure positive economic momentum amidst the global challenges.

NSO further said GDP at constant prices in January-March quarter of 2025-26 is estimated at ₹ 87.77 lakh crore, against ₹ 81.40 lakh crore in the year-ago period, a growth of 7.8 per cent.

Addressing a press conference after release of the data, Chief Economic Adviser V Anantha Nageswaran said the GDP data reflects a balanced picture with respect to different components of economy.

He also said India will return to 7 per cent growth rate in the next fiscal year on the back of policy measures. "We have no reason to second guess (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Assam Cabinet approves enhancement of DA/DR to 60 pc

GUWAHATI, June 5: The Assam Cabinet on Friday approved the enhancement of Dearness Allowance (DA) and Dearness Relief (DR) from the existing rate of 58 per cent to 60 per cent, effective immediately, benefiting more than 8 lakh state government employees and pensioners.

Addressing a press conference after chairing the first cabinet meeting earlier in the day, the chief minister said that the enhanced rates will benefit serving state govern-

ment employees, pensioners, family pensioners, extraordinary pensioners and compassionate family pensioners.

The cabinet also approved the enhancement of the MLA Local Area Development (MLALAD) fund allocation from ₹ 1 crore to ₹ 1.5 crore for each MLA during the year 2026-27, while from 2027-28, it will be further enhanced to ₹ 2 crore, Sarma said.

The cabinet has also approved amendment of the MLALAD guidelines to permit utilisation of up

to 10 per cent of the annual allocation for procurement and distribution of eligible community, educational, cultural, sports and disability-support equipment, Sarma said.

The cabinet also approved the proposal for the declaration of the second State Capital Region Area, Dibrugarh, and the constitution of the Second State Capital Region Development Authority, Dibrugarh (SCRDA-D). The region will cover an area comprising a 20 km radius of the (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Russian President Putin pitches Su-57 stealth jet to India

ST PETERSBURG, June 5: Russian President Vladimir Putin has offered New Delhi Russia's fifth-generation stealth aircraft Sukhoi Su-57 and even suggested that the combat jet could even be jointly produced in India in line with the strong strategic partnership between the two countries.

For decades, Russia has served as India's primary defence supplier. However, persistent supply chain disruptions and delivery delays stemming from the war in Ukraine have forced New Delhi to aggressively diversify its military procurement strategy.

After a years-long search for a fifth-generation fighter jet, India has launched its ambitious Advanced Multirole Combat Aircraft (AMCA) project, widely regarded as the nation's largest indigenous aerospace programme.

In an interaction with heads of leading global news agencies, including PTI on Thursday night, Putin delving into various aspects of India-Russia defence and military ties, said Moscow is still keen to involve New Delhi in the Su-57 aircraft programme.

"As for the Su-57, we offered our friends from India to jointly develop this machine, a fifth-generation aircraft. I think it's the best to date. But our Indian friends said, 'well, let's see'," he said, responding to a question from PTI's CEO and Editor-in-Chief Vijay Joshi, the only Indian journalist at the interaction.

"In principle, this could have been our (Russia-India) product. We made it independently. And we are ready to work with India. To work and develop. There will be no restrictions whatsoever," he said.

It is learnt that New Delhi has not yet completely closed its doors on the Russian offer, as state-run Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is in touch with the Sukhoi Design Bureau, the manufacturer of the jet, for possible collaboration.

As the aircraft under the AMCA project is unlikely to join the Indian Air Force (IAF) (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Advertisement for Lokpriya Gopinath Borbora's birth anniversary. Text in Assamese: 'লোকপ্ৰিয় গোপীনাথ বৰদলৈদেৱৰ জন্মদিন'. Includes a portrait of Gopinath Borbora and contact information for Diprassam.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

Women from SHGs plant over one crore saplings in state

GUWAHATI, June 5: Women from Self Help Groups (SHGs) in Assam created a record by planting over one crore saplings across the state on the occasion of World Environment Day on Friday, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.



Sarma, in a social media post, said that Assam achieved a historic milestone with the planting of 1.02 crore saplings in just eight hours.

"In just over 8 hours, over 1.02 crore saplings have been planted by the people, in an effort led by Assam's enterprising #NariShakti, setting a new record in our green efforts. Compliments to all my sisters for achieving this feat", Sarma posted in X.

The Chief Minister's Office in another post said that on the occasion of World Environ-

ment Day, "women from SHGs and the public enthusiastically responded to the call of HCM Dr @himantabiswa to plant 1 crore saplings across Assam as part of a statewide green initiative". Governor Lakshman Prasad

Acharya urged citizens to actively contribute to increasing green cover and protecting the environment for the well-being of present and future generations.

Referring to this year's theme, "Inspired by Nature for Climate, for Future," he emphasised that safeguarding nature is essential for addressing climate challenges and ensuring a sustainable future.

The governor also called upon people from all walks of life to adopt environmentally responsible practices and participate in afforestation initiatives, noting that every sapling planted today is an investment for a healthier and greener tomorrow.

The chief minister had also planted a sapling at the same venue after the oath-taking ceremony. (PTI)

# Hyperscale data centre specialist AirTrunk to invest ₹ 3 lakh crore in India: PM Modi

**NEW DELHI, June 5:** Leading hyperscale data centre specialist AirTrunk plans to invest more than ₹ 3 lakh crore in India by 2030 in support of digital infrastructure capacity, positioning the country as a cornerstone of global growth strategy.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday announced the investment plans of AirTrunk, the Asia-Pacific and Middle East technology company, and its strategy to develop 5 GW of data centre capacity in India after his meeting with AirTrunk founder and CEO Robin Khuda.

"India's digital infrastructure journey is gathering remarkable momentum. AirTrunk has announced plans to invest around ₹ 3 lakh crore (USD 30 billion) in India and develop 5 GW of data centre capacity. This is among the largest proposed investments in the country's digital infrastructure ecosystem," he said in a post on X.

Modi noted that such investments will strengthen India's position as a global hub for cloud computing and AI, while generating employment opportunities, supporting local supply chains and accelerating innovation-led growth.

"It is clear that the future of the world's digital economy is increasingly being shaped in India," he said.

AirTrunk is a hyperscale data centre specialist creating a platform for cloud, content and large enterprise customers



across the Asia-Pacific and Middle East (APME) region.

AirTrunk CEO Khuda said that Prime Minister Modi's vision for India's digital economy has helped create one of the world's most compelling destinations for technology investment.

"India has the scale, talent, and ambition required to become a global AI powerhouse. AirTrunk is excited to support that vision," he said in a company statement.

Backed by Blackstone - one of the largest foreign investors in India - and the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB), AirTrunk's proposed investment programme would rank among the largest digital infrastructure initiatives currently being considered in the country and help enable the next wave of growth in cloud and artificial intelligence.

"AirTrunk plans to invest more than ₹

3,000 billion (USD 30 billion) in India by 2030 in support of digital infrastructure capacity, positioning the country as a cornerstone of AirTrunk's global growth strategy and one of the company's most significant long-term investment markets," AirTrunk said in its statement.

The company's proposed development pipeline in India, across multiple states and union territories, would support India's ambition to become a global destination for AI and cloud infrastructure investment while generating significant economic activity, employment, and technology ecosystem growth, it said.

The announcement follows AirTrunk CEO Khuda's first senior government engagement programme in India since the company's entry into the market through the acquisition of Lumina CloudInfra in April this year. Through this acquisition, AirTrunk's existing development pipeline in India includes 600 MW across Mumbai, Chennai, and Hyderabad.

The company develops and operates data centre campuses with industry-leading reliability, technology innovation and energy and water efficiency.

Founded in 2015, AirTrunk set up Australia's first and largest hyperscale data centres in 2017, then set its eyes on rapid expansion and now operates a platform of hyperscale data centres across the APME region. (PTI)

# India, US may execute first phase of bilateral trade pact by middle of next month: Goyal

**VISAKHAPATNAM, June 5:** India and the US are moving towards closing all the open ends of the interim trade agreement, and both sides are likely to execute the "very, very vibrant" first phase of the pact by the middle of next month, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Friday.

He said that the US team was in New Delhi from June 2-4 for finalisation of the deal. They held discussions with the Indian team.

"I also met with them yesterday, and we are fast moving towards closing all the open ends, and I think sometime by the middle of next month or so, we should be in a position to execute a very, very vibrant first tranche..."

"It is only the first tranche of our bilateral trade agreement, which will give preferential access to India over our competitors," he told reporters here.

He added that a high-level team is expected to visit India towards the end of this month.

The team is likely to be led by US Trade Representative (USTR) Jamieson Greer.

During this week's talks in the national capital, the two teams held constructive and positive discussions across a wide range of issues, covering trade in goods, non-tariff measures, customs and trade facilitation, economic security alignment and other areas of mutual interest, the commerce ministry said.

The US team was led by its chief negotiator Brendan Lynch. India's chief negotiator is Darpan Jain, who is an additional secretary in the Department of Commerce.

After finalising the framework for the first phase of the bilateral trade agreement (BTA),

the two countries are looking to finalise the details of the interim trade pact and take forward the negotiations for the broader BTA.

On February 7, India and the US issued a joint statement finalising the contours or framework of the first phase of the BTA or an interim trade deal.

According to that framework, the US had agreed to reduce tariffs on India to 18 per cent from 50 per cent. It had removed the 25 per cent tariffs on Indian goods for buying Russian oil and was to cut the remaining 25 per cent to 18 per cent under the pact.

But, on February 20, the US Supreme Court ruled against President Donald Trump's sweeping reciprocal tariffs, which were imposed under the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA).

After that, the US President announced the imposition of 10 per cent tariffs on all countries for 150 days, starting February 24. It will end on July 24.

In light of these changes, the two sides met in Washington in April, when the Indian team, headed by Jain, visited America from April 20-23, 2026.

To carry forward those discussions, the US team was here for the talks.

As the tariff landscape has changed in the US, both sides may wish to revisit the agreement's framework.

The February joint statement on the framework has a clause that in the event of any changes to the agreed upon tariffs of either country, the US and India agree that the other country may modify its commitments.

Under the agreed framework, India proposed to eliminate or reduce tariffs on all US industrial goods and a wide range of food

and agricultural products, including dried distillers' grains (DDGs), red sorghum for animal feed, tree nuts, fresh and processed fruit, soybean oil, wine and spirits, and additional products.

New Delhi has also expressed its intentions to purchase USD 500 billion of US energy products, aircraft and aircraft parts, precious metals, technology products, and coking coal over the next five years.

When the framework was agreed, India had a comparative advantage over its competitor countries, such as Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Now, with all US trading partners facing a uniform 10 per cent tariff, the pact requires recalibration. It is important that India gets an advantage over its competitor nations on the tariff front in the trade pact.

As the US Supreme Court has ruled against Trump's sweeping tariffs, the US administration now has the option of using the Section 301 investigation mechanism to impose new tariffs.

According to sources, the US could use this mechanism as a pressure tactic to bring its trading partners on the table to negotiate trade deals.

In March, the US Trade Representative (USTR) launched two unilateral Section 301 investigations against a number of countries, including India, over excess capacity and failures to eradicate forced labour in global supply chains.

On June 2, the USTR proposed imposing 12.5 per cent tariffs on 54 countries, including India, for allegedly failing to prohibit the import of goods produced with forced labour. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

## Team Assam ready to

former Chief Executive Member of the Mising Autonomous Council, represents the Dhemaji constituency and has been a minister since 2021.

Daimary, the speaker in the last assembly and a former Rajya Sabha member, has been elected from Tamulpur constituency. Singhal, a veteran BJP leader, has been a minister since 2021 and represents the Dhekiajuli constituency.

Borah has been representing the Tingkhong assembly constituency in Upper Assam and has been a minister since 2021. Hazarika has been representing the Jagiroad constituency since 2011 and has been a minister since 2016.

Mallabuarah has won from Nalbari constituency from 2011 to 2016 and again from 2021, holding ministerial berth in Sarma's cabinets.

Rai and Paul represent the Barak Valley constituencies of Lakhimpur and Patharkandi, both of whom were inducted into Sarma's cabinet in 2024.

Rai took the oath in Hindi and all others in the Assamese language.

The strength of the Assam cabinet will now be 17, including the CM, with four other ministers sworn in on May 12.

The optimal strength of the state cabinet is 19 in the 126-member Assam assembly.

The ministers sworn in earlier are AGP's Atul Bora, BPF's Charan Boro and BJP's Ajanta Neog and Rameshwar Teli.

The new cabinet will have 13 BJP ministers, two from the AGP and one from the BPF.

Neog and Nilima Devi are the two women ministers in the cabinet, and the number remains the same as in the previous cabinet. The expanded ministry represents several ethnic communities and geographical regions.

There are two representatives, Kaushik Rai and Krishendu Paul, from the Barak Valley, while BPF's Boro and BJP's Daimary belong to the Bodo community.

Besides, Pegu is from the Mising tribe, Ray Sarkar from the Koch Rajbongshi and Borgohain from the Ahom community.

Borgohain, along with Borah, is from upper Assam, Singhal from the northern part of the state, Pijush Hazarika from central Assam and Mallabuarah from lower Assam.

After the path-taking ceremony, the CM planted a 'bakul' sapling at the venue to mark World Environment Day.

Sarma was sworn in as the chief minister along with four ministers on May 12.

The NDA won a record 102 seats in the 126-member assembly, including 82 from the BJP.

The BJP allies, the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and the Bodoland People's Front (BPF), bagged 10 seats each. (PTI)

## Shah talks tough

entry of fake notes, human trafficking and drugs smuggling from across the borders," the senior BJP leader said.

Shah had in May said the government will launch a tech-enabled "smart border" project by the next year to make the 6,000-km fronts with Pakistan and Bangladesh impenetrable, and ensure that the "conspiracy" to change the demography of the country is defeated.

"The government of India has decided that not only will we stop infiltration, but we will find each and every infiltrator and send them out of the country," the home minister had said.

"I want to assure BSF troops that we will launch the smart border project within the 60th year of its raising, and we will make the Bangladesh and Pakistan borders impenetrable through major technical assistance," Shah had said in New Delhi on May 22, while delivering the annual Rustamji Memorial lecture hosted by the BSF. (PTI)

## Assam Cabinet approves

Dibrugarh Capital Complex within Dibrugarh district, Sarma said.

The Second State Capital Region Development Authority, Dibrugarh, will be responsible for the preparation of regional and sectoral development plans and identifying growth corridors and urban expansion areas related to the development of the second capital region.

A fund of Rs 500 crore would be provided in the budget of the concerned line departments to carry out all works related to the development of infrastructure related to the Second Capital Region.

The cabinet approved the amendment of the Assam Secondary Education (Provincialised Schools) Service (Amendment) Rules, 2026, to regulate the procedure for promotion of serving Grade IV employees to Grade III positions, he added. (PTI)

## India's GDP grows

them (RBI forecast) at this point, because there are both possibilities on the upside and on the downside with respect to the numbers that they have presented," he said here.

"So, even if the growth were to slip below 7 per cent as the RBI forecast suggests... macro stability measures and supply assurances will bring us back to a 7 per cent plus growth track in FY28 or as soon as external conditions improve," Nageswaran said.

NSO said secondary and tertiary sectors have boosted the performance of the economy by registering growths of 8.8 per cent and 9.3 per cent, respectively, during FY26.

These sectors include construction, manufacturing, 'trade, hotels, transport, communication and services related to broadcasting, storage', and 'financial, real estate, IT, professional services and ownership of dwelling'.

The primary sector registered 3.2 per cent growth rate mainly driven by the performance of agriculture and fishery sectors.

"Agriculture, livestock, forestry and fishing" segment grew at 3.6 per cent in the fourth quarter compared to 4.6 per cent. During 2025-26, the growth was 3.1 per cent.

On the expenditure side, both private final consumption expenditure (PFCE) and gross fixed capital formation (GFCF) registered over 7.5 per cent expansion during 2025-26.

The gross value added (GVA) has been estimated at Rs 294.91 lakh crore in 2025-26, against Rs 273.36 lakh crore in 2024-25, registering a growth rate of 7.9 per cent as against 7.3 per cent in the preceding year.

The GVA in the fourth quarter of FY26 was Rs 80.18 lakh crore against Rs 74.32 lakh crore in the year-ago period, registering a growth of 7.9 per cent. (PTI)

## Russian President

before 2035, the government is considering the procurement of at least two squadrons (around 36) of Su-57s, provided they fulfil the technical specifications.

India and Russia were in talks for joint development and production of a fifth-generation fighter aircraft (FGFA) for close to 15 years. However, in 2021, India conveyed to Russia its unwillingness to go ahead with it primarily due to the high cost involved in the project. The cost was estimated at around USD 30 billion or Rs 2 lakh crore.

In his remarks, Putin also expressed Russia's willingness to join hands with India in development of other critical platforms including integrated air defence systems.

"The same goes for the air defence system," he said, explaining that Russia is ready to work with India on air defence systems and related hardware.

India is developing an indigenous air defence system called "Sudarshan Chakra" and Russian-origin S-400 missile systems are set to be its one of the key components.

In October 2018, India signed a USD 5 billion deal with Russia to buy five units of the S-400 air defence missile systems, notwithstanding a warning by the US that going ahead with the contract may invite US sanctions under the provisions of Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA).

The fifth squadron is yet to be delivered.

The S-400 systems played a crucial role during Operation Sindoor.

In March, New Delhi cleared the procurement of a fresh batch of five S-400 missile systems from Russia that will take the total number to 10.

Leading military think-tank, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) in March said India was the world's second largest importer of arms and military hardware from 2021 to 25 and the largest chunk of the imports came from Russia.

In New Delhi, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, responding to a question on Putin's remarks on Su-57, said India-Russia defence ties are strong.

"You mentioned the Su-57; The defence ties between India and Russia are strong. For this programme, you will be able to get specific details from the Ministry of Defence," he said. (PTI)

## Rupee ends 56 paise higher at 95.18 against US dollar post RBI policy decision

**MUMBAI, June 5:** The rupee appreciated 56 paise to close at 95.18 against the US dollar on Friday after the Reserve Bank announced measures to support foreign capital inflows and strengthen forex liquidity.

Forex traders said the announcements in the RBI policy boosted investor sentiments after the apex bank asserted that the country's forex reserves provide a sufficient buffer against external shocks.

The Reserve Bank on Friday expectedly kept interest rates unchanged for the second time in a row as it weighed the impact of rising energy prices and supply disruptions caused by the West Asia crisis. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 95.72, then touched an intraday high of 94.89 and finally ended the session at 95.18, registering a gain of 56 paise from its previous close. On Thursday, the rupee rose 2 paise to settle at 95.74 against the US dollar. Announcing the second bi-monthly monetary policy for the current fiscal, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has unanimously decided to retain the short-term lending rate or repo rate at 5.25 per cent with a neutral stance. "By holding the repo rate at 5.25 per cent with a neutral stance even while raising the FY27 inflation forecast by 50 basis points to 5.1 per cent, the RBI has drawn a clear line; the rate instrument is reserved for inflation, and the rupee will be defended through the capital account," said Anindya Banerjee, Head of Commodity and Currency Research, Kotak Securities. The expansion of the Fully Accessible Route to all new 15-, 30- and 40-year G-Sec issuances, the removal of FPI concentration limits, the extension of FCNR(B) hedging support, the PSU ECB swap window, and the restoration of the export realisation period to nine months together amount to the most comprehensive dollar-mobilisation effort since 2013, Banerjee added. (PTI)

## RBI holds interest rates as oil shock clouds outlook; unveils measures to support rupee

**MUMBAI, June 5:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday kept its benchmark repo rate unchanged at 5.25 per cent, as expected, and announced a raft of measures to attract foreign capital and support the rupee amid growing risks to growth and inflation from the prolonged West Asia conflict, elevated energy prices and global supply-chain disruptions.

To support the rupee, the measures included scrapping taxes on interest income and capital gains for eligible foreign investors in government securities, offering concessional terms for foreign-currency deposits from non-resident Indians and subsidising hedging costs for select offshore borrowings.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) unanimously voted to leave the policy repo rate unchanged at 5.25 per cent, and continue with its "neutral" stance.

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said India had entered the latest episode of global turbulence with stronger macroeconomic fundamentals than in previous crises, but warned that escalating geopolitical tensions, elevated commodity prices and supply disruptions were clouding the economic outlook.

"The committee noted that the global environment has deteriorated," he said announcing the policy decision. The panel felt it would be "prudent" to wait for greater clarity to emerge, he added.

The central bank said underlying inflation pressures remain subdued, but cautioned that rising costs could spill over into wages and inflation expectations. It also cited risks from a below-normal monsoon forecast and possible El Niño conditions, which could put pressure on food prices in the months ahead.

RBI lowered its growth expectations for the current fiscal year, projecting real GDP growth at 6.6 per cent in 2026-27, below the 6.9 per cent April forecast. The projection is also lower than 7.6 per cent estimated for 2025-26.

It forecast inflation to rise to 5.1 per cent in 2026-27, with price pressures expected to peak at 5.9 per cent in the third quarter before easing. This compares to the previous projection of 4.6 per cent average retail inflation for the year.

Core inflation is expected at 4.7 per cent, up from earlier projection of 4.4 per cent.

While headline inflation remains below the RBI's 4 per cent target with a tolerance band of 2-6 per cent, MPC cautioned that higher global energy prices and supply shocks could trigger broader second-round effects on wages and inflation expectations.

"The MPC felt it would be prudent to wait for greater clarity to emerge," the governor said, adding that the central bank would remain data-dependent and closely monitor inflation risks.

The RBI said domestic demand remained resilient, supported by consumption, investment and continued expansion in manufacturing and services.

However, high energy costs, weaker global demand and a forecast of below-normal monsoon rainfall pose risks to growth.

The government said it would scrap taxes on interest income and capital gains for eligible foreign investors in government securities from April 1, 2026, while the RBI broadened the universe of sovereign bonds available under its unrestricted foreign investment route.

The central bank also announced concessional forex swaps for state-run firms raising overseas debt and said it would bear hedging costs on fresh three-to-five-year FCNR(B) deposits until September 30 to attract dollar inflows from non-resident Indians.

Together, the measures are aimed at shoring up the rupee which has plunged over 6 per cent this year on war-driven surge in crude prices and record foreign fund outflows.

India's foreign exchange reserves stood at USD 682.3 billion as of May 29, providing an import cover of about 11 months, the RBI said.

The governor reiterated that the central bank does not target any specific exchange-rate level and would intervene only to curb excessive volatility and prevent disorderly market conditions.

Commenting on the MPC decisions, Upasna Bhardwaj, Chief Economist, Kotak Mahindra Bank said, "RBI expectedly kept the rate and stance unchanged, while highlighting the amplified risks on the inflation front. We expect 50bp of rate hike beginning in October. On the positive side, the measures taken by the RBI to attract capital would help ease pressure on the INR." (PTI)

## India launches high ethanol-blended E85 for flex-fuel vehicles

**NEW DELHI, June 5:** India on Friday launched E85 fuel, a high-ethanol blend designed for flex-fuel vehicles, at ₹ 20 a litre discount to normal petrol.

The fuel will initially be available at select petrol pumps and can be used only in vehicles with flex fuel engines. Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri unveiled the fuel at an IndianOil retail outlet in New Delhi on World Environment Day, with the rollout beginning at 48 public sector fuel stations nationwide.

He said the government plans to expand its availability to 500 outlets by December 2026 and to about 5,000 outlets by December 2027.

E85 contains 80-85 per cent ethanol and 14-19 per cent petrol, and can be used only in flex-fuel vehicles capable of operating on ethanol

blends ranging from E20 to E100.

The expansion of E85 infrastructure is expected to help raise India's overall ethanol blending level to nearly 26 per cent by 2030-31, he said. Puri said India had successfully balanced energy security, affordability and sustainability, while shielding consumers from global energy market volatility. He noted that domestic fuel prices had seen among the lowest increases globally since February 2026.

India has increased ethanol blending in petrol from 1.53 per cent in 2014 to 20 per cent currently, achieving its target five years ahead of schedule, the minister said. The programme has helped save more than ₹ 1.84 lakh crore in foreign exchange and reduced crude oil imports by nearly 302 lakh metric tonnes, he added. (PTI)

### NAME CORRECTION

I, Sri Deva Kanta Deka son of Late Cheniram Deka resident of Cherakani Gaon, PO Cherakani, PS Dokmoka, Karbi Anglong would like to mention that in my Aadhaar Card my name wrongly recorded as Deb Deka instead of Deva Kanta Deka.

### NAME CORRECTION

BY AFFIDAVIT BEFORE HOJAI EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE I DECLARED THAT MY ACTUAL AND CORRECT NAME IS ABDUL MALIK BY PRINT MISTAKE MY NAME INSERTED IN MY PASSPORT AS MOHAMMED ABDUL MALIQUE. ABDUL MALIK S/O MUJAJID ALI

DDB/15FC/T/41/2026-27/118

Date 05/06/2026

### NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Block Development Officer, Dotma Dev. Block, Dotma, BTC Kokrajhar, invites sealed bids affixing non-refundable Court Fee Stamp of Rs.8.25(Rupees Eight and Twenty-five Paise) only from the approved and eligible contractor of Class-I (A,B,C), Class-II or Class-III categories registered with Assam PWD (Roads & Buildings/Irrigation Deptt. for the following work under P&RD Deptt. under 15th FC(Tied) for the year 2024-25 during the year 2025-26. The tender Form will be issued from the undersigned from 15/06/2026 at 11.00AM up to 25/06/2026 at 4.00PM. The submission of tender will start from 11.00AM on 15/06/2026 and continue up to 2.00PM on 26/06/2026 in the Office of Block Development Officer, Dotma Dev. Block, Dotma. The tender box will be opened on 26/06/2026 at 3.00 PM. The tender fee shall be submitted in the form of DD/Banker Cheque in favour of the Principal Secretary, BTC and the Bid Security shall be submitted in the form of DD/Banker Cheque/FD in favour of the Block Development Officer, Dotm Dev. Block, Dotma. The TIA reserves the right to accept or reject any bid/tender and to cancel the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award without assigning any reason thereof..For further information, interested bidders may contact the office of the undersigned.

Sl. No.	Name of Activity	Estimated value (in Rs.)	EMD/Bid Security (in Rs.1% ST, SC & 2% Others)	Tender fees (in Rs.)
1	Const. of Community Toilet at Monakosa daily market, Fakiragram. (15th FC Tied).	Rs. 11,00,000.00	1% for reserve category & 2% for unreserve.	Rs. 350.00

Sd/-  
Block Development Officer,  
Dotma Dev. Block, Dotma

IPR(BTC)/C/2026-27/475

# Massive plantation drive marks World Environment Day in BTR

**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, June 5:** The 53rd World Environment Day was observed with befitting programmes at different places in several districts of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) on Friday. In Kokrajhar, the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) observed the day at Dwimguri in Kokrajhar district. The programme was jointly organised by the Kokrajhar District ABSU and Dotma Anchalik ABSU.

ABSU president Khwrmwdao Wary attended the event and planted saplings as part of the observance. Speaking on the occasion, Wary emphasised the importance of environmental conservation and urged people, especially the younger generation to actively participate in protecting nature

through tree plantation and sustainable practices.

The programme witnessed the participation of ABSU members, local citizens, students and community leaders, who joined hands in promoting environmental awareness and a greener future.

ABSU leader Wary said students participated in the observance and planted saplings across the region, stressing that nature and the environment must be conserved to ensure sustainability.

On the occasion, the Kokrajhar Cancer Centre in association with the Forest Department, Kokrajhar, jointly organised a mass plantation programme at the campus of the Kokrajhar Cancer Centre. The initiative aimed to promote a greener environ-

ment in the region.

Among others, Tanesh Baro (HQ Beat Officer, Kokrajhar), Pintu Sarkar (Depot Officer under Haltugaon Division, Kokrajhar), Amrit Newar (I/C Social Forestry Range, Fakiragram), Naresh Basumatary (I/C Social Forestry Basugaon Range), Kirat Basumatary (I/C Social Forestry Kokrajhar Beat) and other officials of the District Forest Department participated in the programme. Staff of the Kokrajhar Cancer Centre also actively took part and expressed gratitude to the Forest Department for supporting the initiative.

In Chirang, the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) observed the 53rd World Environment Day with a massive plantation drive and public awareness programme at

Raipur, Deosri under Runikhata Forest Range.

Organised by the Forest and Environment Department, BTC, under the theme "Inspired by Nature for Climate, for Our Future" and the nationwide campaign "Name Van - Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam," the programme witnessed enthusiastic participation of thousands of people, including public representatives, government officials, environmentalists, students, NGO members and local residents.

The programme was graced by BTC Chief Executive Member Hagrama Mohilary as chief guest. Other dignitaries included Paniram Brahma, Executive Member of the Forest and Environment Department, BTC and MLA; Prakash Basumatary, Executive Mem-

ber of the Social Welfare Department, BTC and Derhasath Basumatary, Executive Member of the Health and Family Welfare Department, BTC.

Also present were BTC MCLAs Kampa Borgoyari, James Basumatary, Sukursing Basumatary and Nandalal Mogor; Karmadev Brahma, BTC Secretary for Forest Department; Chirang Deputy Commissioner Madhu Sudhan Nath; Superintendent of Police Mohan Lal Meena and Dr C. Ramesh, Field Director of Manas National Park and Manas Tiger Reserve, along with officials of the Forest Department, SSB, Eco Task Force, NGOs and members of the public.

The celebration began with the inauguration of a large-scale plantation drive by

BTC CEM Hagrama Mohilary, who planted a sapling to mark the occasion. The dignitaries and participants subsequently joined the plantation programme, demonstrating collective commitment towards environmental stewardship.

More than 200 bighas of land were covered under the plantation drive, while thousands of saplings were distributed among the public to encourage community participation in afforestation efforts. The initiative is expected to significantly enhance green cover, restore ecological balance and mitigate the impact of climate change in the region. A public awareness meeting highlighted the urgent need to conserve forests, protect biodiversity and promote sustainable environmental practices.

## SKA marks 21st Foundation Day at Taralango

**HT Bureau**

**DIPHU, June 5:** The Sominder Karbi Amei (SKA) celebrated its 21st foundation day with a significant gathering at Taralango on Thursday, renewing its commitment to unite the Karbi community under a single cohesive platform.

Founded in 2005 during a period of intense ethnic conflict and regional instability, the SKA was originally established to give the Karbi people a unified voice amid a number of overlapping organisations. While the central body had become inactive in recent years, the organisation continued to function through active branches across various districts.

Driven by a long-standing community demand for a single tribal organisation, the central leadership revived the platform for the milestone anniversary, which coincided with World Environment Day.

The day's events began in the morning with the hoisting



of the organisational flag by SKA president Mrinmoy Teron. Following this, a solemn tribute was paid to deceased members, led by SKA advisor (retired) Professor Bernard Rongphar.

To mark both the organisation's history and World Environment Day, a tree plantation drive was held at Recho Artu in Taralango. The environmental initiative was spearheaded by Pranab Terang, Secretary of the Forest Department of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC).

During the formal meeting, founding members and partici-

pants discussed strategies to revitalise the SKA central committee to better serve the Karbi population spread across multiple districts of Assam and other northeastern states.

The gathering concluded with a resolution to strengthen the organisation's structure and secure a permanent venue for future meetings.

Working president Pitor Phangcho, retired forest range officer Sikari Teron, Suresh Timung, Tingkeng Rongpi, Bidya Sing Intgi, Mohendra Teron, along with SKA and KSA members from Dima Hasao and others, attended the foundation day programme.



Along with the rest, Govt Hindi Teachers Training Centre, Diphu also took part in the Plantation drive, urged Citizens not only plant trees but also care them to grow. HT Photo

## Dr Tridib Kumar Goswami to receive Luit-Gist Sahitya Jyoti Vidyagaurav Sanman

**HT Correspondent**

**NAGAON, June 5:** The Luit-Gist Communications Educational Trust has announced the organisation of the "South-East Asia Madhav Kandali Ramayana Meet 2026" in collaboration with Assamese social organisations based in Kashi (Uttar Pradesh), Rameswaram (Tamil Nadu) and Kolkata (West Bengal).

The inaugural ceremony of the cultural and literary event will be held on June 7, 2026, at the Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra Complex, Panjabari, Guwahati, as part of the 2nd National Ayodhyananand Jannotsav 2026 celebrations.

On this occasion, distinguished educationist and writer Dr Tridib Kumar Goswami, Associate Professor, Department of English, Batadroba Sri Sri Sankardev College, Nagaon has been selected for the "Luit-Gist National Sahitya Jyoti Vidyagaurav Sanman 2026" in recognition of his outstanding contributions to Assamese language, literature and socio-cultural activities.

The organisers stated that the honour is being conferred on Dr Goswami for his significant role in promoting Assamese literary heritage and educational development through research, writing and cultural engagement.

## NFR marks World Environment Day

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, June 5:** Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) observed World Environment Day 2026 through a series of environmental awareness and sustainability initiatives conducted across all its divisions and units from May 15 to June 5 under the theme, "Inspired by Nature. For Climate. For Our Future."

Throughout the campaign period, railway employees, passengers, students, Scouts and Guides, social organisations and members of the public participated enthusiastically in various activities promoting environmental conservation and sustainable development.

The observance culminated on June 5, with officers and staff across all divisions and units of NFR participating in the World Environment Day programme organised by the Railway Board through video conferencing under the leadership of Satish Kumar, Chairman and CEO of the Railway Board.

During the programme, participants collectively took the Environmental Pledge, reaffirming their commitment to environmental protection, climate action and sustainable development.

As part of the campaign, a wide range of activities, including plantation drives, cleanliness campaigns, awareness rallies, seminars, nukkad natak, waste management initiatives and public outreach programmes were organised across railway stations, hospitals, colonies, office premises, workshops, training institutes, railway tracks, trains and other railway establishments through-

out the NFR network.

Special emphasis was placed on environmental awareness related to water conservation, efficient water usage, energy-saving practices, waste segregation, e-waste management, recycling and composting in alignment with the Mission LIFE (Lifestyle for Environment) initiative.

These efforts aimed to encourage sustainable habits and responsible environmental behaviour among railway employees, passengers and the general public. Awareness drives were also conducted to promote the reduction of single-use plastics and the adoption of eco-friendly alternatives.

As part of the observance, extensive cleanliness drives were carried out at railway stations, trains, railway colonies, hospitals and office premises to promote a clean and healthy environment. Plantation drives were also conducted at various Railway Health Units, offices and other railway establishments across the NFR zone.

At the NFR headquarters in Maligaon, Scouts and Guides organised nukkad natak performances to spread awareness about environmental protection and the harmful effects of plastic pollution. Eco-friendly alternatives such as jute bags, cloth bags and biodegradable products were also distributed among railway employees and members of the public.

Northeast Frontier Railway continues to implement various environment-friendly initiatives aimed at building a cleaner, greener and more sustainable future.

## ATSA felicitates meritorious students in Howraghat

**HT Correspondent**

**HOWRAGHAT, June 5:** Under the initiative of the All Tiwa Students' Association (ATSA), Karbi Anglong District Committee and in collaboration with the Diphu Regional Committee, a felicitation ceremony was organised in Howraghat town on Thursday to honour students who successfully cleared the High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) and Higher Secondary (HS) examinations.

This year, over a hundred students from the eastern part of Karbi Anglong district achieved success in the board examinations. To celebrate their academic achievements, the Tiwa Students' Association presented each student with a traditional Tiwa scarf (Phali), a certificate of appreciation and a sapling.

The event witnessed the presence of several prominent leaders and intellectuals from the community, including Prabhat Darphang, president of the Tiwa Employee Association; Janardan Pator, central assistant general secretary of the Tiwa Sahitya Sabha; Sunath Damlong, secretary of Naraji; Jayanta Amchi, former central cultural secretary of ATSA; Bakul Machrang, advisor to the Karbi Anglong District Committee and Pankaj Senapati, assistant professor at Howraghat College.

Representatives from the Tiwa Cultural Society included Ritu Machrang, Arup Bordoloi, Punakon Koch and Bhaben Senapati, along with ATSA members Momita Pator, Pranab Machrang and Mongita Deuri, as well as members of other organisations.

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REVENUE OFFICER  
DIPHU REVENUE CIRCLE  
KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL, DIPHU**

**NO. KAAC/ARO/RLA/Corrigendum/1228** **Dated: 05/06/2026**

**CORRIGENDUM**

In partial modification of the Notification No. KAAC/ARO/Railway Land Acquisition/1208 dated 22/05/2026 issued under Section 3A of the National Highways Act, 1956, regarding acquisition of land for the Railway Doubling Project from Nirmal T.E to Matipul Block No. 2 which appeared in two newspapers namely, Samphri Kimi & The Hills Times on dated 23/05/2026, it is hereby clarified that due to inadvertent omission/commission, the villages namely Nirmal T.E, Lahorijan T.E and Ghoriyal Dubi Block No.1, were not properly reflected/included in the notification that appeared in the newspaper on the said date. Therefore, the particular villages shall be included in the original notification as a part of the scheduled.

All other terms and conditions of the original notification issued vide No. KAAC/ARO/Railway Land Acquisition/1208 dated 22/05/2026 shall remain unchanged and continue in force. Any person interested in the said land may raise claims and objections within Twenty-one (21) days from the date of publication of this corrigendum before the competent authority, namely the Assistant Revenue Officer & Land Acquisition Officer, Diphu Revenue Circle, stating the grounds thereof in writing.

The land plans and other particulars relating to the additional plots/village included through this corrigendum shall be available for inspection in the office of the undersigned.

**SCHEDULE**

Brief description of land to be acquired with or without structures falling under Railway Doubling Project covering a stretch of 4.47 KM from Nirmal T.E to Matipul Block No.2 in the district of Karbi Anglong, Assam.

Sl. No	Village	Mouza	District	Dag No/Patta No	Type of Land	Class of Land	Area acquired (in Hectre)
1	Nirmal T.E	Borjan	Karbi Anglong	4-Nil	Govt. Land	NH-29	0.0669
Sl. No	Village	Mouza	District	Dag No/Patta No	Type of Land	Class of Land	Area acquired (in Hectre)
2	Lahorijan T.E.	Borjan	Karbi Anglong	25-PP-3	Private	Tea	0.3239
3				24-Nil	Private	Bari	0.4538
4				21-Nil	Govt. Land	Road	0.0455
5				17-Nil	Private	Fishery	0.8969
6				18-AP-1	Private	Bari	0.0267
7				19-AP-1	Private	Bari	0.1165
8				16-AP-1	Private	Commercial	0.5622
9				61-PP-3	Private	Bari	0.0468
10				14-AP-1	Private	Bari	0.4404
11				13-PP-3	Private	Fishery	0.5274
12				15-PP-3	Private	Fishery	1.2008
13				62-PP-3	Private	Tea	0.2717
14				10-PP-3	Private	Fishery	0.0147
15				11-PP-3	Private	Sali	0.0267
16				63-PP-3	Private	Tea	0.2543
17				6-PP-3	Private	Sali	0.3668
Sl. No				Village	Mouza	District	Dag No/Patta No
18	Ghoriyal Dubi Block no. 1	Borjan	Karbi Anglong	78-PP-93	Private	Bari	0.1499
19				353-PP-94	Private	Bari	0.1499
20				354-PP-98	Private	Bari	0.1197
21				355-PP-99	Private	Bari	0.1196
22				81-Nil	Govt Land	Road	0.0267
23				82-Nil	Private	Bari	0.0267
24				84-PP-95	Private	Sali	0.1874
25				85-PP-96	Private	Bari	0.1472
26				205-PP-97	Private	Bari	0.1673
27				86-AP-22	Private	Bari	0.1646
<b>Total</b>							<b>6.901</b>

Sd/-  
Assistant Revenue Officer  
&  
Land Acquisition Officer  
Karbi Anglong Council, Diphu

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

*The will is a beast of burden. If God mounts it, it wishes and goes as God wills; if Satan mounts it, it wishes and goes as Satan wills; Nor can it choose its rider... the riders contend for its possession.*  
-Martin Luther

## Will oil prices return to pre-war levels?

Oil prices are unlikely to return to pre-war levels in the short to medium term at least, a shift that could keep inflation elevated, delay interest-rate cuts, and reshape investment returns across global markets. Oil prices rose on Monday last after Israel ordered troops to push deeper into Lebanon, renewing concerns that clashes with the Iran-backed Hezbollah group could threaten a fragile ceasefire between Washington and Tehran. Brent crude traded around \$93 a barrel before the latest escalation in the Middle East and has previously in this crisis surged above \$112 as traders priced in the growing risk of supply disruptions. Although prices have eased from peak levels, markets are underestimating the lasting impact of geopolitical tensions on energy costs. Around 20% of global oil consumption passes through the Strait of Hormuz, making it one of the world's most important energy arteries. Many investors are assuming oil could quickly fall back toward pre-war levels when tensions do ease. But that assumption is becoming increasingly difficult to justify. Energy markets are pricing a new reality in which supply security carries a significant premium. The implications stretch far beyond oil producers. Global oil demand remains close to record highs at more than 103 million barrels per day, while spare production capacity remains limited relative to historical averages. A tighter supply-demand balance means relatively small disruptions can have an outsized impact on prices. Higher oil prices also feed directly into inflation. Economists estimate that every sustained \$10 increase in crude prices can add between 0.2 and 0.4 percentage points to inflation in advanced economies.

Fuel costs affect transportation, manufacturing, logistics, food production and consumer goods, making oil one of the most influential inputs across the global economy. This raises the prospect for investors that central banks may be slower to cut interest rates than markets anticipate. Higher-for-longer borrowing costs would have implications for government bonds, growth stocks and other assets that benefit from lower rates. Energy equities are among the clearest beneficiaries of a prolonged period of elevated crude prices. History teaches us that energy stocks have outperformed broader equity markets during major oil rallies as higher commodity prices boost revenues, margins and cash generation. Commodity-exporting economies could also benefit. Countries with significant energy exports often experience stronger fiscal revenues, improved trade balances and support for local equity markets during periods of sustained oil strength.

At the same time, several sectors face increasing pressure. Fuel typically accounts for between 25% and 35% of airline operating costs, making the industry particularly vulnerable to higher crude prices. Transportation companies, logistics operators and energy-intensive manufacturers also face margin compression as operating expenses rise. Consumer-facing businesses could encounter additional headwinds if households devote a larger share of disposable income to fuel and utility bills, reducing spending elsewhere.

(On the occasion of Tezpur Litchi Festival – 6 and 7 June)

# Tezpur Litchi: Uniqueness and Potential

Tezpur litchi has long occupied a distinct and prestigious position as an unparalleled and glorious asset of Assam's agricultural sector. The soil and climate of this special region on the northern bank of the mighty Brahmaputra, rich in historical significance, are a rare gift of nature for litchi cultivation. With the onset of summer, the mention of red, juicy, and delicious litchis brings a unique fragrance to the minds of people. The special natural combination of alluvial and sandy soil found along the banks of the Brahmaputra in Tezpur is not easily available anywhere else in the world. This unique geographical location has provided Tezpur litchi with an incomparable environment for nourishment and growth. As a result, every litchi produced here is not only considerably large in size but also attractively bright in colour and nectar-like in taste. The greatest characteristic of Tezpur litchi is its extremely thin outer skin and very small seed, enabling consumers to enjoy the maximum fleshy and juicy portion of the fruit. Not only in taste and size, but also in fragrance, this fruit is so intense and appealing that it can easily attract anyone's attention. Enriched by natural and geographical factors, this litchi has established itself not merely as an ordinary fruit but as a living testimony to the climate and fertility of a specific region of Assam. Owing to these environmental advantages, Tezpur litchi has successfully expanded its distinct dominance not only within the state but also at national and international levels.

It was during the tenure of Padmanath Gohain Barua, one of Assam's eminent literary stalwarts, who served as the first Assamese Chairman of the Tezpur Municipality from 1919 to 1924, that the foundation of commercial litchi cultivation was laid in the region. As a result of his strong and farsighted vision, a beautiful litchi orchard was established in 1922 on the banks of Rohdhol Pukhuri in Tezpur, a pond that later came to be known as Paltan Pukhuri and is presently famous as Litchi Pukhuri. Such a practical and agriculture-oriented initiative by a literary figure undoubtedly brought a new message to society at that time. Following the same model and inspiration, Surjya Prasad Singha established another large litchi orchard in 1954 at a place called Parowa in Tezpur, thereby carrying this tradition forward. Gradually, the scope of this commercial cultivation expanded and, combined with the qualities of Tezpur's soil, created a permanent economic foundation. The remarkable fact is that each litchi tree in these historic orchards can have a lifespan of approximately 60 to 70 years, presenting a clear picture of their durability and productive capacity. These long-living trees not only produce fruit but also serve as a dependable and strong source of livelihood for local economies and farmers. At present, many enthusiastic farmers in nearby areas of Tezpur such as Bhoralichuk, Haldhiabari, and Kaliabhomora continue this cultivation successfully as a tradition. The orchards in these regions mainly produce six specific and superior varieties of litchi, each possessing its own characteristics and market value. Farmers are not limited to selling fruits alone; they



also prepare grafted saplings of various superior varieties, which are sold in the market at prices ranging from ₹300 to ₹500. Through this, they have been able to create an additional source of income. However, a matter of concern has emerged in recent times, as the overall production and fruit size of Tezpur litchi have declined somewhat compared to the past. Factors such as climate change, unplanned urbanisation, declining productivity of older trees, and reduced soil fertility may be responsible for this trend. Nevertheless, despite reduced production, the demand for Tezpur litchi remains intact because of its exceptional taste and quality, proving the strength of its brand value.

The Geographical Indication (GI) Tag recognition received by Tezpur litchi on 31 March 2015 marked a historic and highly significant milestone for Assam's agricultural economy and identity. The primary purpose of this special recognition is to legally protect the unique quality, distinctiveness, and historical heritage of products closely associated with a particular geographical region. With the acquisition of the GI Tag, Tezpur litchi gained a global shield of protection, meaning that producers of litchis from other regions of the world can no longer falsely market their products as Tezpur litchi. This protection safeguards the interests of local farmers while also assuring consumers of authentic products. It is generally observed that products associated with a GI Tag enjoy special trust among consumers and therefore command higher prices. This has proven equally true in the case of Tezpur litchi, resulting in a significant increase in its local and international market value. Tezpur litchi has already begun to be successfully exported to international markets, including London, which is a matter of immense pride for the farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs of Assam. This recognition has elevated Tezpur litchi from being an ordinary fruit to becoming an internationally recognised premium product, creating a

golden opportunity for increasing the inflow of foreign currency into Assam's rural economy.

However, making proper and full use of this international prestige associated with the GI Tag remains the greatest challenge of the present time. Since litchi is an extremely perishable fruit, maintaining its quality, colour, and freshness for a long period after harvesting is quite difficult. A strong infrastructure is urgently required to provide a permanent solution to this problem. In particular, without adequate cold storage facilities, modern packaging systems capable of preventing spoilage, and rapid transportation arrangements, it will be impossible to compete with products from other countries in international markets. To preserve freshness, an uninterrupted cold-chain system must be established from the farm to the consumer. In addition, farmers need scientific training in harvesting, storage, and preparing the fruit for transportation. Such large-scale infrastructural development can only be achieved through the combined efforts of government and private sectors. If these logistical and infrastructural shortcomings can be addressed, the volume of Tezpur litchi exports will increase manifold, and the direct benefits will enable local farmers to become economically self-reliant.

In today's highly competitive global market, merely producing a high-quality product is not enough; an efficient and modern marketing system is equally important. In the age of technology and the internet, there is tremendous scope to establish Tezpur litchi as a globally recognised product through the effective use of digital platforms. Online marketplaces and social media can inform consumers around the world about the quality, uniqueness, and heritage associated with Tezpur litchi. Attractive documentaries, stories of farmers' tireless efforts, and campaigns highlighting the significance of the GI Tag can strengthen both consumer interest and

emotional connection with the product. Furthermore, regular participation of Tezpur litchi in national and international trade fairs and food festivals can secure a unique position for it in the global premium fruit market. Improved and secure packaging systems can extend the fruit's shelf life while making it more attractive to consumers. Throughout this process, harmonious understanding and coordination among local farmers, business establishments, and government agencies are essential. Only then can Tezpur litchi truly emerge as a successful global identity.

At the same time, the possibility of developing agri-tourism centred around litchi cultivation could become an extremely beneficial avenue for Assam's tourism sector and rural economy. The taste and quality of Tezpur litchi are shaped not only by soil and water but also by the long-standing experience and traditional knowledge of local farmers passed down through generations. Special plans can be formulated to attract domestic and international tourists to the orchards during the harvesting season. Visitors can enjoy the experience of plucking fresh litchis directly from the trees while also becoming acquainted with the natural beauty of Tezpur and the rich culture of its local communities. Organising special festivals during the harvesting season featuring local music, traditional dances, and indigenous cuisine can open new avenues of economic growth for the entire region. Such initiatives can generate substantial employment opportunities for local youth as tour guides, hospitality workers, and sellers of local products. This form of tourism would help establish not only the litchi but also the historical and natural heritage of Tezpur itself on the global stage.

In recent times, there has arisen a need to place special emphasis on processing industries based on litchi rather than relying solely on the sale of fresh fruits. Since litchi production is confined to a short seasonal period, processing has become essential for preserving its economic value throughout the rest of the year. There is considerable demand for products such as pure litchi juice, jam, jelly, and dried litchi. Through the establishment of such industries, local entrepreneurs can bring about substantial economic transformation. Furthermore, considering the growing global awareness of organic farming practices, farmers of Tezpur should focus on natural cultivation methods by completely eliminating the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides. Organically produced litchis would gain higher value and acceptance in international markets. This would not only protect soil fertility and environmental balance but also demonstrate responsibility towards consumer health. In conclusion, the immense potential of Tezpur litchi can only be realised through continuous and deep coordination among the government, agricultural scientists, farmers, and the business community. With adequate research, the application of modern agricultural techniques, and well-planned marketing strategies, Tezpur litchi is certain to emerge as one of the most powerful driving forces of Assam's economy in the future.

## Donald Trump's indictment of Raúl Castro is pretext for War on Cuba

By: CJ Atkins

After kidnapping Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro in January and killing Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei the following month, President Donald Trump declared "Cuba is next." With the unsealing of a criminal indictment against former Cuban President Raúl Castro on May 20, the administration in Washington is preparing to make good on its threat.

The US Department of Justice filed murder and conspiracy charges against Castro in relation to the 1996 downing of two planes operated by a Cuban-American exile group over the waters near Cuba's northern shore. Four people died in the incident. The planes were shot down by the Cuban Air Force, which was under the command of Castro, who served as minister of defense at the time.

While portrayed as a pursuit of justice by Trump's DOJ officials, the indictment is more about justification. It is the latest weapon in Washington's decades-long war against the Cuban Revolution, solidarity activists say, and a signal of things to come across Latin America.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio joined in the effort with a Spanish-language message to Cubans Thursday aimed at turning them against their leaders. He pitched the US-imposed embargo and blockade of energy imports as the fault of the Cuban state.

"The reason you are forced to survive 22 hours a day without electricity is not due to an oil 'blockade' by the US," Rubio said. "The real reason you don't have electricity, fuel, or food is because those who control your country have plundered billions of dollars, but nothing has been used to help the people."

The charges against Castro are intended to provide the US with a pretext for an operation to capture him and depose the revolutionary government, similar to the raid in Venezuela that deposed Maduro and ushered in more cooperative leadership in that oil-rich country. Following the attack on Caracas and at multiple points during his Iran war, Trump has signalled that overthrowing the Cuban government is his next objective.

The indictment against Castro centres on the Feb 24, 1996, downing of two Cessna planes operated by a Cuban exile group called Brothers to the Rescue (Hermanos al Rescate). Washington presents the incident as cold-blooded murder, but the facts tell a very different story.

Brothers to the Rescue was founded by José Basulto, a veteran of the failed Bay of Pigs invasion and a CIA collaborator with a history of violent actions against Cuba. In 1961, Basulto was involved in a plot to bomb a base in Havana. A



year later, he helped position a boat armed with a 20mm cannon off the coast of Havana and fired on the Hornedo de Rosita hotel, where it was believed revolutionary leader Fidel Castro was dining.

During court testimony in 2001, Basulto confirmed he had gained his skills from the CIA and that he had indeed launched the cannon and machine gun attack on the Cuban hotel. "I was trained as a terrorist by the United States," Basulto once admitted in an interview with a documentary filmmaker.

He established Brothers to the Rescue in 1991, a time when Cuba's economy was hit by the fall of its socialist trading partners in Eastern Europe. The hardships prompted many people to attempt migration to the United States via boat. Brothers to the Rescue claimed to be a humanitarian organization assisting and rescuing raft refugees by spotting them from the air and directing the U.S. Coast Guard to their locations. Basulto and his associates had also flown similar missions during the 1980 mass migrations from Cuba's Mariel Harbor.

The group flew a military version of the Cessna 337 aircraft, the O-2 Skymaster, which had been retired from military service in the 1980s. Ricardo Alarcón, Cuba's retired foreign

minister and former president of its legislature, alleges that the group used planes that had been deployed in U.S. wars in Vietnam and El Salvador and that they may have been provided to Basulto's organization by the US Air Force.

After a 1994 immigration accord between the US and Cuba reduced the flow of migrants, Brothers to the Rescue shifted from its rescue work to overt provocation. "They started to carry out a political agenda of harassing and threatening the Cuban government," recalled Richard Nuccio, then White House special advisor on Cuba.

On the day of the shutdown, three Brothers to the Rescue Cessnas took off after filing a false flight plan claiming they were searching for rafters at sea. As the aircraft approached Cuba, Cuban controllers warned them not to cross into their airspace. "We are ready to do it," Basulto responded. Two planes were eventually shot down; the third, piloted by Basulto himself, managed to return to Miami.

A former Brothers to the Rescue pilot, Juan Pablo Roque, said two days after the shutdown that Basulto and his cohorts were "longtime CIA agents who engaged in terrorist actions in Cuba and Central America," as reported by People's World editor Tim Wheeler in March 1996.

Roque's revelations, along with official US documents, show that Washington's own officials saw this coming.

Declassified FAA records show that starting a year before the shutdown, the Cuban government filed multiple protests over repeated violations of its airspace. High-level US officials, including Nuccio, State Department Undersecretary Peter Tarnoff, and Secretary of Transportation Federico Peña, repeatedly expressed concerns to the FAA about Brothers to the Rescue flights.

An internal FAA memo from January 1996—released this week by Cuba's embassy in Washington—warned that "the worst-case scenario is that one day the Cubans will shoot down one of these planes."

In the 20 months preceding the incident, the group had penetrated Cuban airspace on 25 occasions, each of which was denounced by the Cuban government. On several of those missions, they dropped hundreds of thousands of leaflets over Havana calling for an insurrection against the socialist government.

Cuba formally reported each violation in writing to the State Department, the FAA, and the International Civil Aviation Organization. "No one can claim ignorance," Cuba's embassy stated.

Pastors for Peace, an interfaith religious group, said at the time that the methods of Brothers to the Rescue "continue a long tradition of invasion and violence launched on Cuba from Florida." Communist Party USA Chairman Gus Hall said the "answer to these provocations is to end the... blockade of Cuba and establish full diplomatic and trade relations."

Washington went in the opposite direction, however, wasting no time exploiting the incident. The Helms-Burton bill to tighten the US embargo on Cuba had first been introduced in early 1995 but was stalled by Democratic filibusters. After the downing of the planes, it was immediately reintroduced and rushed through both houses of Congress. President Bill Clinton signed the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act—known as the Helms-Burton Act—just days after the shutdown.

The law dramatically strengthened sanctions on Cuba and remains to this day the primary legal foundation of the U.S. blockade. It stripped the president of the authority to ease any part of the embargo without an act of Congress, denied visas to Cuban government employees and Communist Party members, and prohibited lifting trade restrictions until Cuba dismantles its political system on Washington's terms.

The indictment of Castro this week is aimed at speeding up that dismantlement, through force if necessary.

Cuba has responded to the indictment with defiance. In an official statement carried on television and published in Granma, the Cuban government called the charges "a despicable and infamous act of political provocation, based on the dishonest manipulation of the incident that led to the downing over Cuban airspace of two aircraft operated by the terrorist organization 'Brothers to the Rescue,' based in Miami, whose repeated violation of Cuban airspace for hostile purposes was a matter of obvious public knowledge."

The statement also noted that "it is highly cynical that this accusation is made by the same government that has murdered nearly 200 people and destroyed 57 vessels in international waters of the Caribbean and the Pacific, far from the territory of the United States, with the disproportionate use of military force"—a reference to the U.S. bombing of boats on unfounded claims they are transporting drugs.

The Cuban people, the statement concluded, "reaffirm their unwavering determination to defend the Homeland and its Socialist Revolution."

Cuban Americans for Cuba, a US-based group demanding an end to the embargo and cooperation between the two governments, posted a statement about the 1996 shutdown, saying, "Raúl Castro's indictment over this incident is a flimsy pretext for war."

In New York, the Communist Party USA dismissed the indictment as another example of an imperialist strategy that "seeks to remove from power anyone the US cannot control" in the Western Hemisphere. It said that attempts to criminalize the Cuban leadership "while ignoring the violence and suffering carried out by U.S. imperialism reflects not a commitment to justice but rather the desperate acts of a system in crisis trying to reclaim its lost global dominance."

The CPUSA condemned the charges against Castro and said "it is the people of Cuba alone who have the right to determine their destiny." China voiced its opposition to the indictment, as well. In response to a question from a reporter Thursday in Beijing, Guo Jiakun, spokesperson for the foreign ministry, said, "The United States should cease using sanctions and its judicial apparatus as tools of coercion against Cuba and refrain from making threats at every turn."

The Trump administration's argument that the indictment of a 94-year-old man who cannot be extradited is about justice is thus being seen by many as cover for an effort to justify further interference in Cuba's internal affairs. Washington is building a legal-political case for the next phase of aggression against Cuba, taking a page from the same playbook it used against Venezuela. (IPA Service)

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# How to know if it's time to quit your first job

By: Anthony Klotz

Actor Emily Blunt was recently asked for advice for young women who hate their jobs. Her response – to quit and pursue what you want or love to do, even if it earns no money – generated polarised reactions.

Many people bristled at the financial impossibility of following this advice. Others rightly pointed out that this question is too complex to be answered in a brief interview reply.

At any stage of your career, it can be challenging to know why, when and how to quit. These decisions are especially tough when considering leaving your first “real” job. You’ve never made the leap, and the stakes can be high.

Thankfully, there are signposts that can help. These come in the form of jolts: events that cause us to stop and rethink our relationship with work. As an organisational psychologist, I’ve spent the past 15 years studying how people quit their jobs, including the jolts that lead them to look for the exit door.

Jolts are typically (but not always) negative events. They may happen directly to us at work, but can also come from events in the lives of those around us – for example, a major work failure, a small slight from your boss, or the departure of a well-liked coworker.

While they can happen any time, they are especially common in the first year of a new role, in moments where you realise that the reality of a job doesn’t line up with your expectations. Outside of work, good or bad news in your personal life can also jolt you into reevaluating the time and energy you’re investing in work.

The key question is: when is a jolt an insignificant moment of doubt, and when does it signal a real problem that needs addressing?

Determining the answer requires perspective that comes from separating yourself from the emotional aftermath of jolts. So, when they happen, it’s typically best not to respond right away, but instead have a plan to revisit them at a later time.

By scheduling a recurring check-in on your relationship with work, perhaps every three to six months, you’ll free yourself from the pressure of having to think through every jolt immediately – which can be a recipe for discontentment and burnout. In “batching” your jolts, you’ll find that many fade away over time, allowing you to see the ones that signal a real problem in your relationship with work.

To determine whether a jolt points to a real problem, it helps to mentally zoom in and out of your relationship with work. Is the cause of the jolt an everyday drain



on your positive energy? Has it revealed that your job is no longer fulfilling its purpose in the broader scheme of your career?

Finally, think about all of the positive aspects of your job, and ask yourself: does this problem outweigh them? If the answer is yes to one or more of these questions, then it’s worth taking action.

**Stick or twist**  
So, what do you do when you realise a jolt is a real problem?

The first step is to speak up to see if the problem can be resolved. Too often, especially early in their careers, people don’t ask for changes at work because they assume the answer will be no, or that

complaining will harm their reputation. Bringing up problems to your boss can indeed be a career-limiting move. Research has found that managers tend to rate employees who raise problems lower than those who don’t speak up, or who only speak up with positive suggestions for improvement.

However, speaking up is less likely to backfire when workers offer a realistic solution that benefits not only themselves but also the organisation.

Speaking up is sometimes all it takes to get your relationship with work back on track. And even if it fails, it is still valuable. You can move on to considering quitting with the knowledge that the

cause of your departure was unresolvable, which will reduce future feelings of regret over “what could have been”.

The next step is to weigh up your alternative career options. It’s critical not to rush this process. Spending weeks, months or even years on a career plateau, looking for the right next move, is common. During this time, beware of the tendency to withdraw a bit at work and give other behavioural “tells” to observant colleagues that you’re eyeing the exit door.

However, once you locate and secure what’s on the other side of that door, it’s time to resign.

**The best way to resign**  
In almost all cases, it’s best to deliver

your resignation in a face-to-face (or video) meeting with your boss, during which you share why you’re leaving and give a reasonable notice period. What constitutes reasonable notice differs by country, industry, profession and company. Check your contract and do some research to determine what is right for your situation.

Resigning via email or other messaging platforms is tempting, but it elicits more negative responses than communicating face-to-face. During the resignation, there is little value in disparaging the company or those in it. It’s best to focus on the opportunity ahead rather than problems in your current job.

The way you leave your first job can have lasting implications for your career. The goal should be to avoid burning bridges while leaving in a way that minimises disruption to your team. That means remaining fully engaged during your notice period, and providing the best possible handover of your tasks and projects.

You may even consider giving more notice than necessary and expressing gratitude as you leave. Doing so will not only make for a more enjoyable notice period and a smoother transition, it could also set you up for a future job move that is becoming increasingly common: boomeranging back to your former employer. (Courtesy: *The Conversation*)

## Punjab & Sind Bank Apprentice Recruitment 2026 – 635 Posts, Online Apply

Punjab & Sind Bank has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 635 Apprentice vacancy under the Apprentices Act 1961 (as amended from time to time). Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here.

Minimum educational qualification is to be a graduate and last date of submission of application is 6th June 2026.

### Punjab & Sind Bank Apprentice Recruitment Details

Name of post: Apprentice

No of training vacancy: 635 seats

Name of organisation: Punjab & Sind Bank

Stipend: Rs. 12300 per month. No daily allowance/conveyance allowance/conveyance or travelling allowance, etc. will be paid to the Apprentices.

### State-wise Vacancy Details

Sr. No.	State / UT	Total
1	Andhra Pradesh	20
2	Arunachal Pradesh	5
3	Assam	5
4	Bihar	40
5	Chandigarh	15
6	Chhattisgarh	10
7	Delhi (NCT)	30
8	Gujarat	20
9	Haryana	50
10	Himachal Pradesh	20
11	Jammu & Kashmir	10
12	Jharkhand	10
13	Karnataka	10
14	Kerala	5
15	Madhya Pradesh	20
16	Maharashtra	30
17	Manipur	5
18	Mizoram	5
19	Nagaland	5
20	Odisha	15
21	Punjab	90
22	Rajasthan	30
23	Sikkim	10
24	Tamil Nadu	20
25	Telangana	20
26	Tripura	5
27	Uttar Pradesh	100
28	Uttarakhand	10
29	West Bengal	20
Total		635

### Eligibility Criteria

Educational Qualification: Candidate must be a Graduate in any discipline from a recognised University/ Institute as on 6th June 2026.

Local Language Proficiency: The apprentice should be proficient in local language (Reading, Writing, Speaking & Understanding) of State / UT. The apprentice should produce 8th/10th/12th or Graduate Level standard mark sheet / certificate evidencing having studied one of the languages as local language.

Age Limit: Age of the candidates must be minimum 20 years and maximum 28 years as on 01.05.2026.

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

# SC/ST: 5 years

# OBC: 3 years

# PwD (Unreserved): 10 years

Duration of Training: Duration of training is of one year.

Selection Process

#Final Selection will be subject to verification of eligibility for the post and information furnished in the online application and Merit as per HSC/10+2 marks.

#Candidates have to furnish their selected state and district in application itself.

#Merit List will be drawn State-wise, District wise and Category wise.

#Candidates that qualify the minimum eligibility criteria will be placed according to their 10+2 marks in descending order in respective Category, State and District.

#In case more than one candidate scores same marks as cut-off marks in the merit list such candidates will be ranked in the Merit List according to their Age in descending order in respective category, state and district.

#Application Fee of Punjab & Sind Bank Apprentice Recruitment

Category-wise application fee is as under.

Category Fee

SC/ ST/ PwBD Rs. 100/- + Applicable Taxes + Payment Gateway charges

UR/ EWS/ OBC Rs. 200/- + Applicable Taxes + Payment Gateway charges

How to Apply for Punjab & Sind Bank Recruitment ?

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for these vacancy through online mode by visiting official Punjab & Sind Bank Recruitment Portal. Candidates may follow below mentioned steps to apply for Punjab & Sind Bank Apprentice recruitment.

# Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .

#Click on the "Online Application Form" and complete the registration process.

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

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

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

Important Dates of Punjab & Sind Bank Apprentice Vacancy 2026

Starting Date for Online Registration & Payment of Fee: 21st May 2026

Last Date for Online Registration & Payment of Fee: 6th June 2026

## Bank of Baroda Apprentice Recruitment 2026 – 5000 Posts, Online Apply

Bank of Baroda has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 5000 Apprentice Posts under the Apprentices Act 1961 (as amended from time to time). Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here.

Minimum educational qualification is to be a graduate and last date of submission of application is 8th June 2026.

### Bank of Baroda Recruitment Details

Name of post: Apprentice

No of training seats: 5000 seats

No of training seats @ Assam: 29 seats

### Category-wise vacancy:

SC: 717, ST: 441, OBC: 1208, EWS: 486, UR: 2148

Stipend: The apprentices are eligible for a stipend of ₹15,000/- per month during their engagement period of 01 (one) year. The apprentices are not eligible for any other allowances/ benefits.

### Eligibility Criteria

Educational Qualification: Candidate must be a Graduate in any Discipline from a recognized University or any equivalent qualifications recognized by the Central Government.

Local Language Proficiency: The candidates applying for training seats of a particular State/UT, should be proficient (reading, writing, speaking, and understanding) in any one of the specified local languages of that State/UT, as mentioned below.

Local Language for Assam: Assamese Bengali and Bodo .

Age Limit: Age of the candidates must be minimum 20 years and maximum 28 years as on 01.05.2026.

Duration of Training: Duration of training is of one year.

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

SC/ST: 5 years, OBC: 3 years, PwBD (Unreserved): 10 years

PwBD (OBC): 13 years, PwBD (SC/ST): 15 years

Application Fee: Category-wise application fee is as under.

Category Fee

SC/ ST/ PwBD Rs.200/- plus GST

UR/ EWS/ OBC - Female / Transgender candidates Rs.600/- plus GST

UR/ EWS/ OBC - Male candidates Rs.800/- plus GST

### How to Apply for Bank of Baroda Recruitment ?

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for these vacancy through online mode by visiting official Bank of Baroda Recruitment Portal. Candidates may follow below mentioned steps to apply for Bank of Baroda Local Bank Officer recruitment.

#Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .

#Click on the "Online Application Form" and complete the registration process.

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

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

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

### Important Dates of Bank of Baroda Apprentice Vacancy 2026

Starting Date for Online Registration & Payment of Fee: 19th May 2026

Last Date for Online Registration & Payment of Fee: 8th June 2026

### Selection Process

Selection for engagement of apprentices would be based on the basis of following stages:

i) Online Examination

ii) Document Verification and

iii) Test of local language of the State

Online Examination

Section	Questions	Marks	Duration
General / Financial Awareness	25	25	-
General English	25	25	-
Computer Knowledge	25	25	-
Quantitative & Reasoning Aptitude	25	25	-
Total	100	100	60 minutes

Note: There will be NO negative marks for wrong answers in the Objective tests.

### Test of Local Language

#The candidates applying for training seats of a particular State/UT, should be proficient (reading, writing, speaking, and understanding) in any one of the specified local languages of that State/UT, as mentioned below.

#The test for knowledge of specified opted local language will be conducted as a part of selection process. It will be conducted after qualifying the online examination. Candidates who fail to qualify this test will not be eligible to be engaged for apprenticeship.

#Candidates who produce 10th or 12th standard mark sheet having studied the specified opted local language of the State/UT will not be required to undergo the language test.

## BSNL JTO Recruitment 2026 – 100 JTO (Telecom) Vacancy, Online Apply

Organization BSNL

Name of Post Junior Telecom Officer (JTO)

No of Posts 100 posts

Qualification B.E/B.Tech

Age Limit 20-30 Years

Application Fee Rs 2000/-

Start Date 04th June 2026

Last Date 03rd July 2026

BSNL JTO Recruitment 2026

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. (BSNL) has released an employment notification for

the recruitment of 100 Junior Telecom Officer (Telecom) posts in BSNL. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here.

Minimum educational qualification is to be a engineering graduate and last date of submission of application is 3rd July 2026.

### BSNL JTO Recruitment Details

Name of post: Junior Telecom Officer (Telecom)

No of posts: 100 posts

Scale of Pay: Rs. 16400 - 40500/- (IDA Pay Scale E-1)

Name of organisation: Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. (BSNL)

### Circle-wise Vacancy Details

Circle-wise vacancy details of Junior Telecom Officer (Telecom) posts are as mentioned below.

Circle	Total
A&N	1
Andhra Pradesh	1
Assam	2
Kolkata TD	2
Chennai TD	5
Chhattisgarh	1
Gujarat	3
Haryana	1
J&K	1
Karnataka	26
Kerala	15
Madhya Pradesh	10
Maharashtra	16
NE-II	3
Odisha	6
Rajasthan	1
Sikkim	1
Tamil Nadu	1
Telangana	2
Uttarakhand	1
UPW	1
Total	100 posts

### Eligibility Criteria

Educational Qualification: Candidates must possess a Bachelor of Engineering (B.E. / B.Tech) degree or equivalent from a recognized University or Institution in any of the following streams: Telecommunications, Electronics, Radio, Computer, Electrical, Information Technology (IT), or Instrumentation.

OR

M.Sc. in Electronics or M.Sc. in Computer Science.

Age Limit: Candidate shall not be below 18 years and not exceed 30 years as on the last date of receipt of Online applications from the candidates.

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

SC/ST: 5 years

OBC: 3 years

PwBD (Unreserved): 10 years

PwBD (OBC): 13 years

PwBD (SC/ST): 15 years

Eye-sight: The applicant must be capable of distinguishing principal colours and should have binocular vision.

### Helpline Nos for BSNL Recruitment

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. (BSNL) has released a set of telephone numbers as well as email id for providing assistance to job-seekers. Candidates may contact these helplines from 10 AM – 6 PM (Monday-Saturday).

Type	Details
Telephone	8744058995
Telephone	011- 35808328
Email Id	helpdesk.bsnl@cbtexam.co.in

### Mode of Selection

The selection is based on a three-stage process. There is no personal interview.

Computer-Based Test (CBT):

Section	Particulars	Questions	Marks
I	Engineering Stream	50	200
II	Engineering Stream	50	200
III	General Ability Test	20	80
Total		120	480

Document Verification: Shortlisted candidates from the CBT merit list will be called for document verification. All original certificates, mark sheets, and category certificates must be produced.

Medical Examination: Candidates cleared at document verification will undergo a medical exam as per BSNL's prescribed medical standards.

### Application Fee

Category-wise application fee is as under.

Category Fee

SC/ ST/ PwBD Rs.1000/-

UR/ EWS/ OBC Rs.2000/-

### How to Apply for BSNL JTO Recruitment ?

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for these vacancy through online mode by visiting official BSNL Recruitment Portal. Candidates may follow below mentioned steps to apply for BSNL JTO Recruitment 2026.

#Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .

#Click on the "Online Application Form" and complete the registration process.

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

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

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

### Important Dates of BSNL Vacancy 2026

Starting Date for Online Registration & Payment of Fee: 4th June 2026

Last Date for Online Registration & Payment of Fee: 4th July 2026

Date of CBT examination: August 2026

Jain Shwetambar Terapanthi Sabha, Delhi holds grand oath-taking ceremony of new executive team

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, June 5:** The oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected president of Jain Shwetambar Terapanthi Sabha, Delhi, Vimal Kumar Baingani, and his executive team was held with religious fervour, dignity and enthusiasm at Innovative Banquet Hall, Kirti Nagar, on Friday.

The ceremony was graced by the presence of Buddhashrut Munishri Udit Kumar, Munishri Jay Kumar and Dr Munishri Abhijit Kumar, who are followers of the guidance of Acharyashri Mahashraman. Their spiritual discourses inspired and moved the members of the Terapanthi community present at the event.

The programme was presided over by Kanhaiyalal Jain Patwari, Vikas Maloo attended as the chief guest, while Samaj Bhusan Mangilal Sethia was present as the guest of honour. Several distinguished personalities, including Tejkaran Surana, Sanjay Khatred, Suman Nahta and Sukhran Sethia, also attended the function.

The ceremony commenced with the Sabha song presented by Cultural In-charge Jai Singh Dugad along with other members of the organisation.

During the event, newly elected president Vimal Kumar Baingani, General Secretary Pradeep Sancheti and members of the executive team took the oath to work towards social service, organisational development and the promotion of the ideals and values of the Terapanthi religious order.

## Digvijaya Singh writes to PM, calls for govt white paper on exam leaks

**NEW DELHI, June 5:** Senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the NEET-UG paper leak issue, urging the government to issue a white paper documenting the instances of paper leaks or irregularities in the last eight years and the action taken on them.

Singh, who is also the chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports, said that at a time when lakhs of students are under heavy pressure, it is critical to reinforce their faith in the system.

"I am writing to you to raise a very important concern which several students have relayed to me in the last few weeks. At a time when the cancellation of the NEET-UG 2026 examination has wreaked havoc on the mental health of lakhs of students, one critical stressor for them has been the lack of clarity on how previous paper leaks, etc. have been investigated," Singh said in his letter to Modi.

There is presently no consolidated public record of cases relating to paper leaks and how they are being prosecuted by the CBI and other investigative agencies of the Centre and state governments, the Rajya Sabha MP said.

Amidst the absence of official information, there are plenty of reports and rumours that have taken their place, Singh pointed out.

"For instance, one repeated complaint I have received is that the main accused in the NEET-UG 2024 paper leak in Hazaribagh, Mr. Sanjeev Kumar alias Mukhiya, is reportedly out on bail. Similarly, the CBI has reportedly filed a closure report stating that no irregularities occurred in the UGC-NET exam of 2024 which had been cancelled by the National Testing Agency (NTA) back then," he said.

When asked by a Delhi court to provide a written explanation for its closure report, the CBI has asked for more time, Singh pointed out.

## NCR industrial emission data fragmented, undermining pollution control efforts: CSE

**NEW DELHI, June 5:** Despite multiple regulatory mechanisms to monitor and control industrial emissions in the National Capital Region (NCR), the information needed to evaluate their effectiveness remains fragmented and often difficult to access, according to a new analysis.

The analysis by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) has revealed that emission monitoring data is inconsistently available across public portals, and ambient air quality monitoring reports are often dispersed across different administrative systems.

This has led to significant gaps in transparency and traceability of industrial emissions in the region, according to CSE's report, 'Behind the Smoke: Industrial Fuel Use, Emission Monitoring and Regulatory Blind Spots in the National Capital Region'.

Speaking to PTI on Friday, Nivit Kumar Yadav, programme director at CSE's sustainable industrialisation unit, said the analysis shows that the root of the region's pollution problem was not just the winter spike but also the lack of data-driven action taken during the summer months.

"Until regulatory bodies are strengthened with the capacity to compile, understand, and make data-driven decisions and

'Conventional politics is going through a churn all over the world'

## Annamalai's exit no loss for party, says TN BJP chief

**CHENNAI, June 5:** Former Tamil Nadu BJP president K Annamalai's exit will not be a loss to the party, its state chief Nainar Nagenthran said on Friday.

Annamalai's decision to quit the party and launch his own outfit would not be a setback to the BJP, he said.

"There will be no loss to the BJP due to his (Annamalai's) resignation. There won't be any setback to the BJP, which is the biggest party in the world. The party will remain steadfast on its ideology," Nagenthran told reporters here.

On Annamalai's decision to launch his own political party, Nagenthran said everyone was free to start a political party in a democracy.

The allegation that importance was not being given to the state was incorrect as whenever Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited any country, he spoke about Tamil Nadu, its heritage and greatness, the BJP president said.

MDMK leader Durai Vaiko hailed Annamalai's decision to quit the BJP and launch his own party.

"I wish my brother Annamalai all success and hope that he goes by the Dravidian ideology," Durai told reporters here.

Earlier in the day, Annamalai, who quit the BJP, said his goals are bigger and that he would launch a new political party with an inclusive agenda and fight the



next polls in Tamil Nadu.

Senior Congress leader Karti Chidambaram told PTI Videos that Annamalai's exit from the saffron party was a "natural culmination of events", asserting that the BJP has always had "very limited purchase" and acceptance in the state.

The Congress MP also described it as a "bally and bold move".

Karti highlighted that Annamalai, a former civil servant and police officer, did not come from an ideological background rooted in the RSS or the Sangh Parivar.

"He was looking around for various political parties... and then he decided to join the BJP. His experiment with the BJP has come to a natural end because he

has come to the conclusion, which we all knew from the beginning, that the BJP does not understand Tamil Nadu culturally and politically," he said.

When asked if there is viable scope for a new political party in the state, Karti acknowledged that while certain segments remain unrepresented or underrepresented, the political landscape is highly competitive.

"Conventional politics is going through a churn all over the world, and it will also go through a churn in Tamil Nadu," the Congress leader remarked, adding that it remains to be seen whether Annamalai will form an alliance or contest solo like NTK leader Seema.

Karti also said while the BJP's

ground footprint cannot shrink much further, Annamalai's departure will heavily diminish the out-sized media attention the party previously enjoyed in Tamil Nadu.

Meanwhile, VCK chief and MP Thol Thirumavalavan told reporters that nobody can deny the fact that during the period Annamalai was in charge as the Tamil Nadu BJP President, he worked actively.

"But we do not know what grievances he had within the BJP. Since the circumstances under which he was removed from that responsibility or why he resigned are not known, there is nothing to comment on it. In case he does launch a new party, my best wishes to him," Thirumavalavan said.

In a social media address, Annamalai, who had been with the BJP for about six years, said: "I have quit BJP in a dignified manner, to usher in a new kind of politics."

The goals are bigger and more people have to be taken along and "from today onwards, a new path, a new movement, a new political movement," he said, adding a new party would be launched which would fight the next polls in the state.

The new movement proposed to be launched must, from the foundation level, have new dimensions and a new perspective, he said. (PTI)

## TMC's Firhad Hakim resigns as Kolkata mayor, says he wants to leave with 'head held high'

**KOLKATA, June 5:** Senior TMC leader Firhad Hakim on Friday resigned as the mayor of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC), saying he was unable to function properly.

Hakim said he stepped down from the post with his "head held high" after he obtained the consent of party supremo Mamata Banerjee.

One of the TMC's most prominent minority faces and a key pillar of the party's urban organisation, Hakim submitted his resignation amid continuing political turbulence within the TMC following its defeat in the West Bengal assembly elections. In a pre-resignation press conference, Hakim reflected on his nearly seven-and-a-half-year tenure at the helm of the civic body and thanked KMC officials and the people of Kolkata for helping him steer the city through some of its most challenging periods.

"During my tenure as mayor, Kolkata faced several difficult situations, including cyclone Amphan and the COVID-19 pandemic. We successfully overcame these challenges with the support of KMC officials and the citizens of the city," he said. Hakim said he had sought permission from Banerjee before deciding to demit office.

"I wanted to leave with my head held high. I sought permission from my leader, and she granted it," he said.

Recalling his appointment as

mayor in November 2018, Hakim said he had initially doubted whether he could live up to the legacy of some of the city's most distinguished former mayors.

"When I first became mayor, I was confident about working for the city, but I never thought I could become a worthy successor to stalwarts like Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, who once occupied this chair," he said. Hakim submitted his resignation to the office of KMC Chairperson Mala Roy.

His exit comes at a time when the TMC is grappling with organisational strains and a series of resignations by councillors in the Kolkata Municipal Corporation in the last few weeks, adding to uncertainty within the party's civic and political structure. Hakim, also an MLA, had handled several key ministerial portfolios in the TMC governments over the years.

The KMC has been under Trinamool Congress control since 2010 and is regarded as one of the party's most important institutional power centres.

In the 150-year history of the civic body, the mayor's office has been occupied by several iconic figures of Bengal's political and nationalist movement, including Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and former West Bengal chief minister Bidhan Chandra Roy. (PTI)

### AXOM SARBA SIKSHA ABHIJAN OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT MISSION CO-ORDINATOR, SSA, KARBI ANGLONG

No SSA/KAAC Esstt/Apptt/DMO & BMO staff/51(Pt-II)/2022-23/472

Dated:05/06/2026

#### Engagement under Samagra Shiksha, Karbi Anglong

The Authority of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Samagra Shiksha, Karbi Anglong invites application for a **Walk-in-Interview** from eligible candidates who are permanent residents of the administrative jurisdiction of KAAC for the following positions, engaging individuals in the posts as mentioned below. The engagement will be purely contractual for 11 Months period.

SL. No	Name of the Post	Vacancy Position	Qualification	Age
1.	Asst. Teacher (Part Time), Hindi, under KGBV Nilip  (Reserved for Female Candidate)	Hindi-01	<b>Minimum Educational qualification:</b> Master's degree with Hindi as one of the main subjects in Graduation, along with a B.Ed. from a recognised institution, and Higher Secondary TET qualification.  <b>Preference:</b> Experience in teaching in UP/HS/HSSS level.  On non availability of Higher Secondary TET qualified candidate.  <b>Minimum Educational qualification:</b> Master's degree with Hindi as one of the main subjects in Graduation, along with a B.Ed. from a recognised institution.	<b>Age Limit:</b> Not less than 18 years and more than 45 years as on 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2026.
2.	Grade-IV Staff at Howraghat BMO	Grade-IV - 01	<b>Minimum Educational qualification:</b> Minimum Class-VIII Passed  <b>Preference:</b> Experience in same field will be given preference.	

- Relaxation of upper age limit will be applicable for SC, ST, ST(P), ST(H), OBC & PH Candidates for another 5 years as per Govt of Assam OM No. ABP 06/2016/104 dtd 03/03/2016
- Salary will be payable as per the norms of Samagra Shiksha, Assam

#### How to Apply :

- Application in plain paper stating (i) Name of the post applied for (ii) Name of Applicant (iii) Permanent Address (iii) Address for communication (iv) Contact Telephone Mobile no. (v) Age as on 1 January, 2024 (vi) Educational Qualification (vi) Working Experience along with one attested copy of passport size photograph and Self attested copies of certificates/testimonials relating to Educational Qualification. Experience etc. should be submitted to District Mission Co-ordinator, Samagra Shiksha, Karbi Anglong, Diphu on the date of walk-in-interview.
- The candidates will have to appear in the verification cum walk-in-interview on the date 16-06-2026 at 11:00 AM onwards with all original testimonials. No separate call letter will be issued and no TA/D A will be provided for attending the verification cum interview.

Sd/-  
District Mission Co-ordinator  
SS, Karbi Anglong

Memo No. SSA/KAAC/Esstt/Apptt/DMO & BMO staff/51(Pt-II)/2022-23/472A Dated 05-06-2026



The remaining 84 facilities (59.2 per cent) either showed no data availability or had access restrictions that prevented data retrieval.

"This substantial data unavailability raises concerns about monitoring effectiveness and regulatory compliance," said the analysis.

The authors also looked at how the industries' ambient air quality monitoring data is recorded in the NCR region and disclosed in practice.

For this, they filed RTI applications with 18 State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) regional offices across Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Rajasthan.

Thirteen of these offices provided a documented response, while five, Haryana State Pollution Control Board (HSPCB) Nuh, HSPCB Palwal, HSPCB Mahendragarh, HSPCB Bahadurgarh, and UP Pollution Control Board (UPPCB) in Meerut, had no response recorded.

And, even among the offices that responded, the nature of disclosure remained limited.

The HSPCB Faridabad was the only office to provide ambient and workplace air quality monitoring reports, while the remaining twelve offices did not furnish such data. (PTI)

plan accordingly, the massive monitoring network remains practically useless," he added.

For the analysis, the authors examined continuous emission monitoring system (CEMS) data from the real-time data monitoring system platform for 142 industrial units in the NCR region of Rajasthan and Haryana during the period November 10-20, 2025.

CEMS data is supposed to show pollutant releases from industries' air emissions and effluent discharges.

However, the authors found that of the industrial facilities examined, only 58 facilities (40.8 per cent) had CEMS data available for download and analysis.

## 3 killed after assailants attack village in Kangpokpi; CM condoles deaths

CM directed the state police to apprehend the perpetrators

IMPHAL, June 5: Three people, including a woman were killed after armed assailants launched an attack at a village in Manipur's Kangpokpi district early on Friday, officials said.

At least seven houses were also gutted in a fire during the attack around 4 am at Loibol Khullen village in Saitu-Gamphazol subdivision of the district, they said.

The three died amid exchange of fire between rival groups for several minutes, which prompted villagers to run for shelter in nearby forest areas, an official said.

The deceased have been identified as Lethongam Haokip, Tinmyary Haokip and Jangminlal Haokip.

Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh condemned the attack, calling it "heinous and cowardly".

"The deliberate targeting of unarmed civilians is completely unacceptable and the government will not spare those responsible for this barbaric act," Singh said in a



statement.

The CM also directed the state police and other security agencies to apprehend the perpetrators at the earliest and enhance security in vulnerable areas and asked authorities concerned to provide necessary relief to the affected families, it said.

Deputy Chief Minister Nemcha Kipgen said those responsible for the attack will be dealt with as per law.

"The killing of three innocent persons and the burning of homes by unknown armed miscreants is a tragic and unacceptable act. My thoughts and prayers are with the

bereaved families and all those who have been affected.

"The government is taking this incident very seriously. Necessary steps are being taken, and those responsible will be dealt with as per law. The safety and security of our people remain our priority," she said in a statement.

Kipgen also appealed to people to remain calm and "not be provoked by those who seek to create fear and division".

Meanwhile, the Kuki Inpi Manipur (KIM), the apex body of Kuki tribes in the state, also denounced the attack and demanded an investigation to apprehend the perpetrators.

"KIM unequivocally denounces this barbaric act of violence against unarmed civilians. The deliberate killing of innocent persons and the destruction of homes and livelihoods constitute a serious violation of human dignity and fundamental human rights," it said in a statement. (PTI)

## Smart borders to come up soon, new security grid to feature cutting-edge tech: Amit Shah

AGARTALA, June 5: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said the government's "smart border" project is in the final stage and the new security grid will feature cutting-edge tech, local administration and border sentinels.

Shah, addressing BSF personnel at Lankamura Border Outpost in Tripura, said wherever troops of the force is deployed, "we will build smart borders there".

"Smart borders will be introduced soon with a new security grid to include cutting-edge tech, local administration and border sentinels," the home minister said.

"The concept of smart border will be implemented in seven to eight places of the country as a pilot project. I request the Union home secretary and the director general of the BSF to visit border areas, and hold talks," Shah said.

Shah said every border has its own challenges, from human trafficking and arms smuggling to drug supply, "but the BSF jawans do their best to face these challenges".

"To make India a 'viksit' (developed) nation by 2047, we have to stop the entry of fake notes, human



trafficking and drugs smuggling from across the borders," the senior BJP leader said.

Shah had in May said the government will launch a tech-enabled "smart border" project by the next year to make the 6,000-km fronts with Pakistan and Bangladesh impenetrable and ensure that the "conspiracy" to change the demography of the country is defeated.

"The government of India has decided that not only will we stop infiltration, but we will find each and every infiltrator and send them out of the country," the home min-

ister had said.

"I want to assure BSF troops that we will launch the smart border project within the 60th year of its raising, and we will make the Bangladesh and Pakistan borders impenetrable through major technical assistance," Shah had said in New Delhi on May 22, while delivering the annual Rustamji Memorial lecture hosted by the BSF.

The "smart border" will use technology, drones, radars and smart cameras to help create an impenetrable border, he told the gathering. (PTI)

## Arunachal govt sets up 4 panels on infiltration, indigenous rights issues

ITANAGAR, June 5: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Friday said his government has constituted four high-powered committees to examine infiltration issues, strengthen the Inner Line Permit system, re-verify ST certificates and protect the rights of indigenous people.

Khandu said the panels were formed in line with the resolutions adopted at consultative meetings, held on May 27 and May 29 under his chairmanship on issues concerning indigenous tribal rights, Arunachal Pradesh Scheduled Tribes, the ILP framework and related concerns.

Khandu said the panels bring together representatives of the All India Tribal Federation (AITF), All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union (AAPSU), Arunachal ST Bachao Andolan Committee, legal experts, scholars and government officials to ensure a broad-based and participatory approach in addressing the issues.

Addressing concerns over infiltration and illegal immigrants, the government has formed a high-powered committee headed by Environment and Forests Minister Wangki Lowang, an official order stated.

The committee has been tasked with studying the prevalence of infiltration and immigration in the state and recommending measures for stronger border control, biometric and digital verification systems and action against forged identity documents and undocumented set-

tlement networks.

The panel has also been mandated to suggest administrative and legal measures to curb illegal immigration and strengthen existing safeguards within the constitutional and legal framework.

It will submit its recommendations to the government within six months of its first meeting.

To further strengthen the Inner Line Permit regime, the government has constituted another committee headed by Agriculture and Horticulture Minister Gabriel D Wangsu.

The committee will examine the existing system of issuance, monitoring and verification of ILPs, review the 2026 ILP guidelines and recommend restructuring measures to strengthen the framework.

It has also been tasked with proposing technology-driven mechanisms for ILP issuance and monitoring, developing a robust verification process and recommending suitable categories for issuance of such permits to tourists, visitors and workers.

The government has also constituted a panel headed by Education Minister Pasang Dorjee Sonu to examine the re-verification of APST certificates and related matters.

The panel will review the existing system of issuance, monitoring and verification of APST certificates, including the guidelines notified in 2022.

The committee will recommend a robust methodology for APST verification, suggest amendments

to existing guidelines and propose advanced security features, digital and biometric verification systems, village-level scrutiny mechanisms and district-level verification procedures.

It has also been asked to recommend legal and administrative measures against forged or illegally obtained APST certificates and fraudulent claims of tribal status.

Another committee, headed by Law Minister Kento Jini, has been constituted to examine issues relating to non-APST lineage claims, protection of indigenous rights and related matters.

The panel will study the existing system governing acquisition and protection of tribal rights, identify loopholes that allow misuse or indirect acquisition of such rights, and recommend legal and administrative safeguards concerning tribal identity, inheritance, lineage verification, indigenous land protection and reservation benefits.

It has also been tasked with suggesting measures to prevent misuse of tribal protections through manipulated documentation or indirect claims and recommending legal action against illegally acquired tribal rights. The government orders stated that all four committees have been empowered to seek reports, data and status updates from departments and district administrations and are required to submit their recommendations within six months of their first meetings. (PTI)

## Special Gram Sabha marks World Environment Day in Pedung

HT Bureau

PEDUNG, June 5: A Special Gram Sabha was convened at Pedung Village on Friday to commemorate World Environment Day 2026, bringing together government officials, armed forces personnel, Panchayati Raj Institution members, village elders and local residents in a collective commitment towards environmental conservation and sustainable development.

The programme was graced by Dr Dilip Kumar, Deputy Commissioner, West Kameng, as the Chief Guest. Among the distinguished attendees were Colonel Pankshit Das, Commanding Officer, 2 Arunachal Scouts; Ashok Tajo, District Panchayat Development Officer (DPDO); Phuntso Tashi, AC & Town Magistrate; heads of various government departments; the Gram Panchayat Chairperson; Panchayat leaders; Gaon Burahs and a large number of villagers from Pedung.

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner highlighted the significance of World Environment Day as a global movement to raise awareness and inspire action for the protection of the environment. He stressed the need for active community participation in preserving forests, water resources and biodiversity, particularly in ecologically sensitive regions such as West Kameng. He called upon the villagers to adopt sustainable practices and contribute towards build-



ing a greener and cleaner future.

Dr Kumar also emphasised the importance of collective responsibility in combating environmental challenges such as deforestation, climate change, solid waste generation and loss of biodiversity. He encouraged every household to actively participate in tree plantation and environmental stewardship initiatives, underscoring that conservation efforts must begin at the grassroots level.

Speaking on the occasion, Colonel Pankshit Das reiterated the commitment of the Indian Army towards environmental protection and community engagement. He highlighted the importance of maintaining ecological balance and encouraged citizens to contribute towards conservation efforts through responsible and sustainable

practices. During the Gram Sabha, discussions were held on environmental protection, sustainable natural resource management, afforestation, solid waste management and the role of local communities in safeguarding the environment. The programme was followed by a plantation drive in Pedung Village as a symbolic gesture of commitment to environmental conservation. The initiative was undertaken in line with the national campaign "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam", encouraging citizens to plant and nurture trees in honour of their mothers. The event concluded with a collective pledge by all participants to protect the environment, promote sustainable development and work together towards creating a greener and healthier future for generations to come.

## Sikkim CM pushes for organic farming, infra and highway solutions at Shillong NEC meet

GANGTOK, June 5: Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang highlighted the state's key development priorities, including organic agriculture, infrastructure, tourism and connectivity, during the 73rd Plenary Meeting of the North Eastern Council held in Meghalaya's capital Shillong, an official statement said on Friday.

The meeting held on Thursday was chaired by Union Home Minister and NEC chairman Amit Shah and was attended by Union Minister for Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, governors and chief ministers of the north-eastern states.

According to the statement, Tamang in his address said Sikkim's development agenda is aligned with the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 and focuses on sectors such as organic farming, education, skill development, MSMEs, innovation, tourism and infrastructure.

He stressed the need to strengthen agricultural value chains and market linkages across the Northeast and sought continuation of the Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region (MOVC-DNER) scheme to sustain the momentum of organic farming.

The CM also requested the Centre to extend the benefits of the North East Industrial and Investment Promotion Policy (NEIIPP) beyond 2027 to support industrial growth and investment in the region, it said.

The statement said that as convener of the High-Level Task Force on Agriculture and Horticulture for Addressing Gaps in Value Chains and Market Linkages in the North Eastern Region, Tamang presented the task force's recommendations aimed at improving market access, boosting agricultural productivity, promoting value addition and ensuring sustainable growth in the agriculture and horticulture sectors.

It said that Tamang raised concerns over recurring flash floods in the state and pressed for a permanent solution to connectivity issues along National Highway 10, the state's lifeline. (PTI)

## Forest fires major cause of environmental degradation in Nagaland: John

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, June 5: Highlighting environmental challenges in Nagaland, environment, forests & climate change minister CL John identified forest fires, particularly jungle burning for cultivation purposes, as a major cause of environmental degradation.

Addressing a programme to mark the World Environment Day at the Kohima Peace Memorial & Eco Park on Friday, John expressed concern over the continued prevalence of hunting, noting that forests require birds and wildlife to maintain ecological balance.

Calling for a conservation movement, he said just as the practice of headhunting in the state had been abandoned, society should also work toward ending the hunting of animals and birds.

He said students and youth must play a leading role in creating awareness and driving positive change.

The minister further pointed out that rising temperatures in Kohima, Dimapur and other parts of the state were visible effects of global warming.

He reminded citizens that the government has already banned single-use plastics as part of efforts to reduce environmental pollution.

Expressing concern over poor waste disposal habits, he observed that while Nagas are known for their good dressing sense, civic sense often remains lacking, citing the widespread littering of plastic bottles, tobacco sachets and other waste in public places. He urged citizens to adopt responsible habits and work collectively toward maintaining a cleaner and greener Nagaland.

The Nagaland municipal affairs department conducted "Waste-to-Resource" drive at the Secretariat Plaza in Kohima on the day to promote sustainable waste management practices and strengthen public awareness on environmental conservation through resource recovery and recycling.

Various government departments and the public participated in the exercise for responsible waste disposal while supporting the transition towards a circular economy.

The day was also observed in other parts of the state.

## Modi's 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' initiative transformed tree planting into mass movement: Nadda

SHILLONG, June 5: Union Health Minister JP Nadda on Friday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' initiative has transformed tree planting into a mass movement, as he participated in a World Environment Day plantation drive here.

After planting a sapling, Nadda said the campaign launched by Modi had linked environmental conservation with personal responsibility and inspired crores of people across the country to contribute towards a greener future.

"Modi initiated a programme called 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam'. As part of this, lakhs of BJP karyakartas across the country are planting saplings on the occasion of World Environment Day," he told reporters. The Union minister said the campaign reflects the government's commitment to environmental protection, ecological security and sustainable development.

In a post on X, he said, "...the initiative that began with a single plant in the form of the 'One tree in the name of mother' campaign is today turning into a people's movement with the participation of crores of people, which is



strengthening public awareness and the sense of collective responsibility towards environmental conservation."

"In 2024, the PM had called for environment protection, environment security and a sustainable environment. This campaign is a continuation of that vision," he said.

Nadda said the campaign encourages citizens to plant a tree in honour of their mothers, combining an emotional connection with a larger environmental purpose.

"The idea behind 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' is simple yet powerful. It urges every citizen to plant a tree in the name of their mother and contribute to ecological restoration and environmental sustainability," he said.

Nadda noted that the campaign had since evolved into a nationwide public movement, with people from different walks of life participating in plantation drives aimed at increasing green cover and raising awareness about climate action. (PTI)

## Arunachal Guv calls for strengthening network of advanced landing grounds

ITANAGAR, June 5: Arunachal Pradesh Governor K T Parmaik has stressed the need to strengthen the network of advanced landing grounds (ALGs) across the state to boost national security, disaster management and connectivity. Parmaik also lauded the Indian Air Force for its crucial role in humanitarian assistance and disaster response in remote areas of the state.

During a meeting with Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Eastern Air Command, Air Marshal Inderpal Singh Walia, in Shillong on Thursday, the governor highlighted the strategic importance of Arunachal Pradesh and said well-maintained ALGs are vital for national security, disaster management, improved connectivity and the development of border areas.

Parmaik, who was in Shillong to attend the plenary session of the North Eastern Council (NEC), held detailed discussions with Walia on issues related to air connectivity, border infrastructure and disaster re-

sponse, an official statement said.

He commended the IAF for carrying out ration-dropping operations, airlifting essential supplies, evacuating patients during medical emergencies and providing timely assistance during natural disasters and other emergencies. Walia also reaffirmed the Eastern Air Command's commitment to humanitarian assistance, emergency response, connectivity and national security, the statement said.

Another statement issued by the Lok Bhavan on Friday said the governor had a detailed discussion with Assam Rifles Director General Lt Gen Vikas Lakhera on issues concerning border management.

Lakhera assured Parmaik that the Assam Rifles would continue to work closely with the state government and local communities to strengthen border security, while preserving the longstanding goodwill and bonhomie with the people, it said. (PTI)

### Kendriya Vidyalaya Bokajan, Karbi Anglong, Assam

Place:- Kendriya Vidyalaya CCI Bokajan

#### WALK IN INTERVIEW NOTICE

Applications are invited from interested and eligible candidates for the preparation of a panel of teachers on a purely part-time contractual basis for the academic session 2026-27 at Kendriya Vidyalaya Bokajan, Karbi Anglong District, Assam, for the following posts

Post	Date, Time, and Venue of the Interview
PRTs, Game Coach, Balvatika teachers, PGT (Maths) & TGT(Maths)	16.06.2026 from 8 AM Place:- Kendriya Vidyalaya CCI Bokajan

Note: Interested and eligible candidates may apply online through the Samvida Sathi Portal <https://samvida-sathi.kvs.gov.in/> from 06.06.2026 to 14.06.2026 (upto 10 PM) . Candidates must register on the Samvida Sathi Portal, without registration on the portal candidature will not be accepted.

Candidates must appear at the school on the day of the interview with the application form, a recent passport-sized photograph, and all original documents. For details regarding the educational qualifications required for the posts, please refer to the website of Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (Headquarters): [Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan \(KVS\) Official Website](https://www.kendriyavidyalaya.org/) .

For more information, please visit our website: [Kendriya Vidyalaya CCI Bokajan Official Website](https://www.kendriyavidyalaya.org/)

Note:- PGT(Maths) for PM SHRI KV Diphu, TGT(Maths) for KV CCI Bokajan and PRTs, Game Coach & Balvatika teachers for newly opened KV Bokajan

Principal

# Ahead of WTC games, India search for missing links against gritty Afghanistan

**MULLANPUR, June 5:** Battling demons of a horrendous home Test run in the not so distant past but nevertheless a formidable unit, India are pitted against a plucky Afghanistan in a one-off Test here that might help the hosts figure out a balanced combination, starting Saturday.

In 2018, Afghanistan lost 10 wickets in a session between lunch and tea on the second day of the Test against India. The next 10 fell by the wayside between tea and end of day's play which also was end of the game.

In 2026, Hashmatullah Shahidi would want his team to at least stretch the home side which is going through a tough transition phase and will be in experimental mode during this game trying different combinations.

However, the Indians would not have forgotten the 0-2 drubbing handed by a meticulously prepared South Africa last year and would do well to not take the opposition lightly despite the gulf in experience.

## Sai to get long rope

A stable No.3 and Ravindra Jadeja's potential successor in red ball cricket are the two pieces of the jigsaw puzzle that head coach Gautam Gambhir and skipper Shubman Gill need to fix during this

game before the important two-match Test series against Sri Lanka in August.

The choice has been between Sai Sudharsan and the stylish Devdutt Padikkal. Gambhir on Friday made it clear that Sudharsan would be persisted with, insisting that he deserves a fair chance.

## Hunt for Jadeja's successor

Ravindra Jadeja has been rested for this match but this is a fact that the Indian selectors and team management are trying to look at options to prepare themselves for life beyond the Rajkot all-rounder.

The reason for this search is his bowling form, which has deteriorated considerably and he hasn't been as incisive as the team management would have liked.

What remains Jadeja's USP is his Test match batting in overseas conditions, which is still top notch and hence he still has some breathing space.

But Indian cricket has zeroed in on two potential successors.

The choice is now between a classical slow left-arm orthodox bowler from Rajasthan named Manav Suthar and the more utility 'bits and pieces' Vidarbha cricketer Harsh Dubey.

If net sessions of the past couple of days were an indication, Suthar, with a



more classical action and ability to make the ball hang in the air, looks to be the man for the future. He seems to possess the ability to challenge both outside and inside edge of the bat.

Dubey, on the other hand, looks a more defensive bowler, mostly bowling straight lines. But he does come across a clean hitter, something that makes him a package like Jadeja for foreign condi-

tions. The choice will be a tricky one and an indicator of the team management's tactical philosophy.

## Afghans have nothing to lose

The mismatch between the two sides is more evident when one looks at some numbers.

Since Afghanistan's first ever Test against India in 2018 in Bengaluru, which the hosts won inside two days, it has played 11 more games till June 2026.

And India, in this same period, have played 67 Tests with Rishabh Pant alone being a part of 49 of them. Incidentally Pant hadn't yet made his Test debut when Afghanistan last played India.

From the 2018 squad, only KL Rahul is a part of this current Indian Test team while Afghanistan skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi and batter Rahmat Shah were also the ones who played that game.

Afghanistan's entire batting line-up has a combined total of nine Test tons compared to the 39 that this new-look Indian team has logged.

Shahidi's men had a camp in Afghanistan's Jalalabad but training sessions alone cannot prepare a team for a Test match.

## 'Testing' weather for Test match

Given the punishing North Indian heat in the month of June, the match seems fairly ill-timed for both the sides.

And it has been sandwiched between two months of IPL and a month long white ball tour of the United Kingdom.

During the training sessions, the Indian players, after fielding drills inside the main arena, would hop into SUVs one at a time and would be driven half a kilometre to the adjacent ground for net practice, a walkable distance if not for the scorching afternoon sun.

## Squads:

**India:** Shubman Gill (captain), Yashasvi Jaiswal, KL Rahul (vc), Sai Sudharsan, Rishabh Pant (wk), Washington Sundar, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Harsh Dubey, Kuldeep Yadav, Prasad Krishna, Mohammed Siraj, Manav Suthar, Dhruv Jurel (wk), Gurnoor Brar, Devdutt Padikkal.

**Afghanistan:** Hashmatullah Shahidi (captain), Abdul Malik, Rahmanullah Gurbaz, Rahmanullah, Afsar Zazai (wk), Ikram Alikhil (wk), Sediqullah Atal, Rahmat Shah, Azmatullah Omarzai, Sharafuddin Ashraf, Nangeyalia Kharote, Bilal Sami, Qais Ahmed, Mohammed Saleem, Ziaur Rahman.

Match Starts: 9:30 am. (PTI)

## Rashid's availability uncertain as Afghanistan eye bigger Test future



**MULLANPUR, June 5:** Afghanistan head coach Richard Pybus is keen to have a conversation with star leg-spinner Rashid Khan about his long-term red-ball future but admitted that the bowler's chronic back issue and packed global schedule make his immediate Test availability uncertain.

On the eve of Afghanistan's one-off Test against India, Pybus said managing Rashid's workload would be a priority as the team looks to build a sustainable Test programme despite an erratic fixture list.

"Rashid has got this long-standing back complaint. He's got such a huge volume of cricket, you know, he's got to manage himself," Pybus said.

"I look forward to having that conversation to see how we can support him, not only just with the opportunity to maybe continue to play some red-ball cricket if there is potential for that, but generally make sure he can play as long and as healthy as possible for Afghanistan," the Englishman said.

Rashid's absence has once again highlighted the challenges

Afghanistan face in balancing the demands of franchise cricket and the Test format, a subject Pybus repeatedly returned to during his first media interaction since taking charge of the national side.

The former West Indies director of cricket, overseeing his maiden assignment with Afghanistan, stressed that the larger issue was not merely player availability but the lack of a consistent Test calendar.

"When a country gets full membership, it's one thing to get full membership, but then you need to get a full fixture list," Pybus said.

"I'd like to see going forward that the other senior full members also start to build out the list. We need to be in a situation now where there's a proper fixture list."

Pybus, who has spent the past few weeks observing Afghanistan's domestic structure after multiple visits to Kabul, said he had been pleasantly surprised by the quality and depth of first-class cricket in the country.

"I've been very impressed watching the quality of the first-class cricket. It was very positive in being

able to benchmark that relative to seeing other first-class cricket around the world and the type of depth there is in the system," he said.

The 61-year-old also paid tribute to his predecessor Jonathan Trott for laying strong foundations.

"I think Jonathan did an outstanding job over four years. It's really about continuing to build on what is already in place."

As Afghanistan prepare to face a transitional Indian side, Pybus acknowledged the enormity of the challenge.

"You come to India and you play India in India, it's one of the great challenges in world cricket and it always has been," he said.

"There is no doubt that India are incredibly challenging to beat at home, not only because of the quality of the players but obviously their understanding of their home conditions."

Assessing the Mullanpur surface, Pybus expected spin to become increasingly influential as the Test progresses despite the wicket's current green appearance.

"It looks like a good cricket wicket. With the heat, the moisture is going to get pulled out very quickly," he said.

"Both sides have got plenty of spinners. Spin is going to play a major part in the game even though it looks pretty green at the moment."

While Afghanistan remain focused on the immediate challenge of taking on India, Pybus made it clear that his larger mission is to ensure the country's remarkable cricket rise is matched by meaningful opportunities in the longest format.

"To play one Test and have a four or five-month break before you play your next Test match, whatever you're going to learn, there needs to be a concentration of learning," he said.

"That's not an Afghanistan question, that's an ICC question, really." (PTI)

## Sai hasn't got a long run so, we will give him fair chance at No 3: Gambhir

**MULLANPUR, June 5:** India head coach Gautam Gambhir on Friday declared that Sai Sudharsan will get an extended run at the No.3 slot in Test cricket as the young left-hander's six underwhelming appearances in the format aren't enough to make a final judgement on his capabilities.

Sudharsan hasn't really looked at home in the six Tests he has played, aggregating 302 runs at a poor average of 27.45 but the head coach said he would be preferred over his nearest competitor, Devdutt Padikkal, who has been waiting in the wings since the 2024 Test match against Australia in Perth. Gambhir believes that since Sudharsan played three of his six Tests in England in seaming conditions, dropping him in favour of Padikkal would be unfair on the Tamil Nadu batter.

"Honestly, Sai hasn't got a fair chance. He's only played what, handful of Test matches. And he started his Test career in England, which we all know is not the easiest place," Gambhir said ahead of the one-off Test against Afghanistan starting here on Saturday.

"He's had a phenomenal run in IPL (722 runs) as well and we're going to give him a fair chance. I still believe that he hasn't got a fair chance," said Gambhir effectively shutting the debate on who will come in at No.3.

The decision also means that Padikkal will have to wait as Sudharsan will play the next 10 Test matches unless there are fitness issues.

"You can only pick 11, unfortunately, sometimes you just have to wait (Devdutt) for the opportunity," Gambhir said, answering a query on whether Padikkal had any chance of making it.

To build a team, one needs to give talented players a longer run, said the former India opener.

"Sai is not in bad form either. He's got what, 700 runs in IPL. If judging players by only four or five Test matches is good enough, then I feel that we will never be able to build something. So, hopefully he will get his time," he said.

But he did have words of encouragement for Padikkal, who he believes will also have his time under the sun.

"Whenever his (Padikkal's) time comes, we'll give him a fair run as well. And it's not about giving someone five Test matches and someone else one Test match. If we give someone a fair run, we'll give the other guy whenever he gets the opportunity, a fair run as well.

"But at the moment, I think we have got to give



Sai a fair run as he is a world-class player as well. He's a quality player and I'm sure he'll come good," the head coach exuded confidence.

## Manav or Harsh? The fourth spinner for SL Tests

Gambhir wasn't very forthcoming as to who among Manav Suthar and Harsh Dubey will get a Test cap on Saturday.

But he was clear about one aspect. Whoever plays this Test will be India's choice as fourth spinner (Ravindra Jadeja, Kuldeep Yadav, and Washington Sundar being other three) going into two-Test away series against Sri Lanka in August.

"Look, to a certain extent they are similar, but also a little different as well...you also see that the release points, you also see what someone gets off the wicket and the trajectories and everything. And who's probably more suited to red ball cricket," Gambhir said keeping cards close to his chest.

"And this probably is the only Test match where we can think of or look at someone who could be a fourth spinner. Because after this we go to Sri Lanka and we might have to carry four spinners as well there."

"So, this is an ideal opportunity to try someone who could be a long-term fourth spinner as well," he added.

## Pant needs to read match situations

Rishabh Pant's free-flowing game has earned him plaudits as well as brickbats but all Gambhir wants from the flamboyant keeper-batter is for him to strike a balance depending on match situation.

"Be it Test cricket, one-day cricket, or T20 cricket. The ultimate aim is to score runs and take wickets. You can never move away from that. How you score them is up to you. But reading the situation and reading the game is very important," he asserted. (PTI)

## Jaspal Rana undergoes medical procedure

**NEW DELHI, June 5:** Renowned shooting coach Jaspal Rana recently underwent a medical procedure after falling ill during the Indian contingent's return flight from the ISSF World Cup in Munich, Germany.

Rana is currently serving as the high-performance coach for Indian pistol shooters.

The Indian team delivered a fine performance in the prestigious tournament, signing off with four medals (two gold and two silver).

"Yes, he (Jaspal) was not feeling well in the flight and after landing in Delhi, he went straight to the hospital where he underwent tests and then got a stent fixed," a source in the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) told PTI on Friday.

After a decorated career as an elite shooter, Rana transformed Indian shooting through his roles as junior national team coach and high-performance trainer.

His coaching contributions include mentoring Manu Bhaker and helping her secure a historic double bronze at the 2024 Paris Olympics.

As a junior pistol coach since 2012, he has groomed teen sensations such as Saurabh Chaudhary, Anish Bhanwala, and Chinki Yadav. His work with the junior programme has created a massive pipeline of international talent.

The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) officially appointed him as the High-Performance coach for the 25m pistol discipline. Rana is credited with instituting rigorous training routines that perfectly replicated the pressure of actual Olympic matches. (PTI)

## Weekend work on putting pays Kochhar rich dividends



**EL JADIDA (MOROCCO), June 5:** Having worked on his game after missing a cut last week, India's Karandeep Kochhar carded a 6-under 66 and placed himself one shot behind the leader, Thailand's Runchanapong Youprayong (65), on the first day of the USD 500,000 IGPL Bharath Classic here.

Stung by last week's reversal, Kochhar spent the weekend at the Mazagan Beach & Golf Resort course working on his short game. It paid off at the same venue.

Another Indian Aryan Roopa Anand, a recent winner at IGPL Congo, was also in the Top-10. He shot 4-under 68 and was tied eighth.

Kochhar, 26, winner of four pro titles in India, added his first IGPL win last year at the IGPL Dubai and has been in good form. He was tied fourth at the Philippine Golf Championship and then tied fifth at the high-profile International Series Japan. He also made cuts at the New Zealand and Singapore Opens.

Kochhar said, "I think the key to this round was putting. I felt like I hit the ball well last week as well but the putter was the main difference.

"The pace on the greens wasn't there. I would say, I was really much more comfortable than I had been the last a week, but yeah, I think, but I think I'd really put in a lot of work over the last few days, trying to sort out my putting, and I'm very happy that it showed."

He added, "I put in a lot of work over the weekend and the first few days on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday as well. So I think all of that, all of that work really showed, in today's round."

"The course wasn't playing that easy, I would say, especially midway through the round. It was really windy and that whole stretch of 12, 13, 14, 15 is not easy."

Some of the bigger names had a rough start and it included four-time IGPL winner and 11-time Asian Tour winner, Gaganjeet Bhullar, who carded 3-over 75 as did six-time Asian Tour winner, SSP Chawrasia. They were T-107 and needed a strong second round to stay on for the weekend.

Leader Runchanapong (65) started from the first tee and had four birdies on either side of the 7,448-yard course that runs along the scenic course. He birdied two of the first three holes before making his only bogey of the day on the par-4 fourth. He was six-under par for his last 11 holes.

"I felt like I hit in good positions quite a lot, and I planned my way around the golf course pretty well," said Runchanapong. "That was the key takeaway that I learned from last week - where I want to leave the golf shot."

Sharing the second place with Kochhar were Florino and Regner. Last year Regner, like Kochhar, won an ADT event in Egypt last year, and has made some swing changes with his coach in Austria. Florino won the Heritage Classic on the PGA Tour of Australasia earlier this season, so he is good form, too. (PTI)

## DDCA Women's T20 League grows to 60 teams, over 700 players for second edition

**NEW DELHI, June 5:** The Delhi & District Cricket Association (DDCA) on Friday launched the second edition of its Women's T20 League, and the expanded version will see participation from 60 teams and over 700 players.

The inaugural season of the league in 2025 had 42 teams in it, and the addition of 18 new teams underlines the growth of women's club cricket in the national capital.

The competition, inaugurated by DDCA President Rohan Jaitley, will feature 10 groups of six teams each, including established clubs such as Delhi Gymkhana CC, Hind CC, Young Friends CC, Delhi Blues CC and City Gymkhana.

"Last year, we started the league as an initiative in which 42 clubs participated. This year, the number has increased to around 60 clubs and more than 700 players," Jaitley told PTI Videos.

"The intent is to give players an off-season platform that combines competition, performance review and complete training. As the league grows with time, performance and development will continue to multiply," he added.

The matches will be played across five venues in the city: Modern School (Grounds 1 and 2) in Barakhamba Road, Shivaji Col-



lege in Rajouri Garden, Guru Gobind Singh College in Pitampura and Modern School Ground in Mohan Garden, Uttam Nagar.

The DDCA vice-president Shikha Kumar attributed the increase in participation this year to growing opportunities in women's cricket and the heightened interest following India's recent success on the global stage.

"There is year-on-year growth.

Going from around 42 teams to 60 teams is a significant achievement for DDCA and for young girls playing cricket," Kumar said.

"Parents are increasingly realising the opportunities available in women's cricket. The response from clubs has been very encouraging."

Kumar also said DDCA intends to expand support structures for women cricketers through addi-

tional training camps and enhanced physical and mental well-being programmes.

The DDCA secretary Ashok Sharma said the league has become an important talent identification platform for the Delhi Premier League (DPL) and future representative teams.

"Last year we had 42 teams and this year we have 60. The league is helping us create a larger database of players, making it easier for franchises and selectors to identify talent," Sharma said.

Sharma revealed that DDCA plans to restructure the women's competition into a divisional format from the 2026-27 season, with teams classified into multiple divisions based on performance.

Sharma also announced that women's teams would receive prize money and facilities on par with men's teams.

"Our president has announced that women's teams will receive the same cash rewards as men's teams. They will also receive the same facilities," Sharma said.

"Our aim is to ensure the women's league continues to grow in Delhi and helps players progress to higher levels, including representing the state and the country," he added. (PTI)