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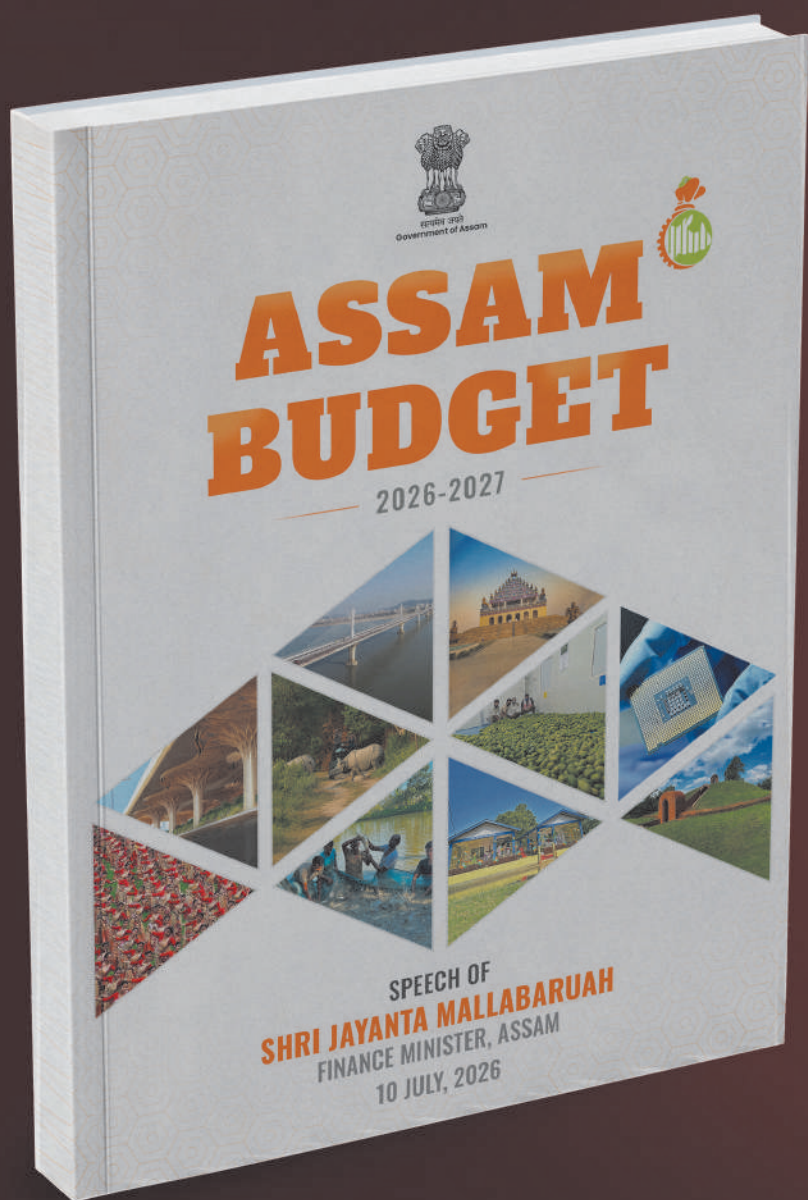
- Flood toll rises to seven in Arunachal
- Nagaland Guv reviews AYUSH healthcare services, tribal welfare initiatives
- Adityanath targets SP, Congress over Ayodhya
- Food safety law has stringent provisions, but enforcement a challenge: Minister

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Government of Assam



## A People-Centric Budget for Public Welfare

This budget also brings a message of happiness, prosperity and inclusive development for you.

Scan this QR Code to view the Assam Budget 2026-27



## REC signs ₹15,000 crore MoUs for Tripura power projects

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, July 10:** REC Limited, a Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Power, has signed two Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with the Government of Tripura to provide financial support for power and renewable energy projects worth ₹15,000 crore.

The agreements were signed during the Destination Tripura Business Conclave 2026, underscoring REC's commitment to strengthening power infrastructure and promoting sustainable development in the Northeast.

Under the first MoU, REC will provide financial assistance of up to ₹5,000 crore for renewable energy projects to be implemented through the Tripura Renewable Energy Development Agency (TREDA).

The agreement was signed by REC Regional Office, Guwahati Chief Programme Manager Subhendu Roy and TREDA Director General (In-charge) D.S. Das.

TREDA, the state's nodal agency for renewable energy development, will facilitate the implementation of clean energy projects, while REC will finance investments aimed at expanding renewable energy generation and accelerating Tripura's transition to green energy.

## Govt receives WhatsApp's reply on 'username' feature notice; response being examined

**NEW DELHI, July 10:** The government has received WhatsApp's reply to the notice on 'username' feature and is examining it, according to sources.

The notice was issued to the Meta-owned messaging platform last Wednesday, questioning WhatsApp's proposed username feature, as the government flagged concerns that it could materially increase online fraud, phishing, digital arrest scams, and impersonation attacks. The Centre had also directed the platform not to launch the feature until consultations on the issue are completed "to the satisfaction of the government".

The username feature essentially allows people on the messaging platform to communicate without sharing their phone numbers.

Subsequently, WhatsApp had sought some more time to submit its response on the proposed 'username' feature and had assured the government that it would not roll it out in India until discussions are complete.

According to sources, WhatsApp's reply was received on Thursday night and is under examination as of now.

There is no official word yet from WhatsApp on the submission made to the IT Ministry.

Earlier on Thursday, IT Secretary S Krishnan - speaking on the sidelines of the CII GCC Business Summit - had said that WhatsApp's reply on username notice is due. On whether two other messaging platforms, Telegram and Signal, had reverted on the notices sent to them on the 'username' feature, Krishnan had said: "There is still a little more time, so the replies have not yet been received...we will examine this issue".

Last Friday, a team from Meta met officials in the IT Ministry following the notice summoning them.

In the notice, the government had asked Meta to explain why action



shouldn't be initiated under the IT Act and rules over WhatsApp's new feature that may increase cybercrimes. It also reminded Meta that WhatsApp, as a significant social media intermediary, is bound by due diligence obligations under the IT Act and rules.

A WhatsApp spokesperson, last week, said that the ability to use a username is not yet live and will roll out slowly later this year.

"To protect against impersonation, we've held the highest-profile names - think public figures, government entities, celebrities, verified Meta accounts - so they can only ever be claimed by their legitimate owners and lookalike derivatives of known names are held as well," the spokesperson had said.

Users still require a phone number to use WhatsApp, the company had said and added that it has built multiple layers of defence against scams into usernames.

"Other users need to know the exact username to message you. We will limit how many new people an account can contact, block repeated attempts to guess someone's username key, and have systems to detect and remove activity showing common impersonation and abuse patterns," the company had said.

WhatsApp will show whether a first-time sender is a new account, contact, mutual group member or from another country before users respond.

"When the feature becomes available, and someone sends a message for the first time via your username, we will show you if they're a new account, if they're your contact, if you have groups in common, and if they're based in a different country, so you can decide whether to respond," WhatsApp had said.

After sending a notice to WhatsApp, the IT Ministry had shot off notices to Telegram and Signal too, raising questions on their existing 'username' feature and asking how the platforms are addressing concerns related to fraud and impersonation risks. While WhatsApp has 50 crore users in India, Telegram's reach is a fraction of that.

Notably, over the last few days, Meta and Telegram have also faced regulatory scrutiny on other issues.

While the government issued a stern notice on Meta on child sexual abuse material in Instagram ads on Saturday, Telegram was served a notice directing it to crack down on the "widespread dissemination" of pirated films, OTT content and other audio-visual material through its platform. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 3...

## ₹ 419.26 cr deficit budget

state, the Budget mentioned. During his budget speech, Baruah said welfare measures should not only reach the deserving but also enforce "inclusivity, integrity and moral ethos" in society. "To promote women's empowerment and gender justice, any male practising polygamy shall not be eligible to avail benefits under any government welfare scheme," he added. The budget proposed amending the Assam Services (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 1964, to dismiss from service any government servant practised polygamy. "To promote integrity and responsible citizenship, I propose that any person convicted of an offence under any criminal law shall not be eligible to avail benefits under notified government welfare schemes," Baruah said.

Since a regular budget was not available during the election held earlier this year, the government shall resume the basket of welfare schemes from August onwards, he added. "The august House will appreciate the introduction of an unprecedented basket of welfare schemes by our government covering various levels of beneficiaries. I propose to allocate over ₹6,000 crore under different grants for these welfare schemes," he said.

Talking about polluting sectors, the finance minister said guided by the principle that those who contribute to environmental degradation should also contribute towards its mitigation, the government will introduce a 'Green Cess' on identified polluting activities and assets. The 'Green Cess' will be levied on stone crushers, coke-based industries, brick kilns, transfer of second-hand vehicles, commercial extraction of groundwater, and other environmentally sensitive industries and activities as may be notified by the government.

The budget, however, did not mention how much tax will be levied as 'Green Cess'.

"The proceeds from this cess will be utilised for afforestation, pollution control, biodiversity conservation, climate adaptation, green energy, water resource management and other environmentally sustainable infrastructure," he said. Baruah said that the government had provided over 1.64 lakh appointments in the last five years.

"Building on this achievement, we are now entering the next phase of employment generation. Over the next five years, the government will target 2 lakh employment opportunities across the broader public sector ecosystem of the state," he added.

These new recruitments will take place in government departments, universities, medical colleges, statutory bodies, societies, Sixth Schedule councils and companies with substantial state government shareholding.

"A dedicated task force under the chairmanship of the chief secretary has already been constituted to prepare a comprehensive roadmap. This will also help in timely promotions of existing employees as part of the process to create more vacancies at the base level," he added. Baruah said the government will examine the creation of new posts in the police force, educational institutes, healthcare institutions, forest and other departments.

"We are determined to create employment opportunities for our younger generation during the tenure of this government as per the promises made in the 'Sankalp Patra' (BJP manifesto)," he added. (PTI)

## Drawings in public places

Interestingly, Garg, who was known for his vocal stance against various issues, had publicly proclaimed that he is a follower of Che Guevara, Charlie Chaplin and Assamese iconic artist Bishnu Prasad Rabha -- all belonging to the communist school of ideology.

The half-erased mural was repainted by the original artiste Marshall Baruah and others, with massive crowds gathering at the spot under the Ganeshguri flyover in the city over two days during the controversy in mid-June. The beautification drive, during which the two painters erased the mural partially before abandoning halfway as people gathered, was ahead of an anticipated visit of the Japanese Prime Minister to Assam.

Claiming that the repainted mural doesn't resemble Garg, Sarma maintained that all paintings, pictures of the singer should be based on an approved portrait by his wife, Garima Saikia Garg.

He also affirmed the government's respect towards the singer-composer, who died while swimming in the sea in Singapore on September 19 last year, and said it was doing its bit for Garg, from developing his cremation ground to setting up a fast-track court to hear his death case. Sarma said the group involved in drawing the particular mural are SFI members, who first opposed the construction of flyovers or felling of trees for the purpose, but later came to showcase their art on these structures to gain free publicity.

"I won't allow this party to draw on the flyovers they oppose. I was silent then as we were hoping that the Japanese PM would be coming. I have ordered the officials to arrest them if they try to draw again," Sarma added. "It should be in the style of our luminaries like Bishnu Rava, Jyotiprasad Agarwala, Bhupen Hazarika," he added. Sarma also maintained that the location of such paintings is also important, pointing out that the Ganeshguri flyover was a site of the 2008 serial blasts in the state, and the memories of the victims are linked with it.

"Anti-violence pictures should be drawn there. Garg's photos can be drawn at the Chandmari flyover some distance away," he added. (PTI)

## NDA hails as growth-oriented

He also claimed that all infrastructure development was Guwahati-centric, and the bare minimum was given for other parts. Das further said that though tourism remains a high revenue-earning sector, there was no mention of specific schemes for the important spots like Kaziranga, Majuli or Manas.

"All are old announcements repeated in the budget, with the government trying to hoodwink the people," the Congress leader claimed. Rajjor Dal chief and MLA Akhil Gogoi said the government has become heavily dependent on loans and about 20 per cent of revenue receipts were shown through loans in this budget.

"This is my seventh budget as an MLA, and I have to say that this is the most ineffective one. There are mostly beneficiary schemes, with nothing for development of the people. The only developmental projects proposed involve land acquisition and evictions," he claimed. He also criticised the government for mentioning Central government projects in the budget, accusing it of trying to pass off these as its own. Trinamool Congress MLA Sherman Ali Ahmed, while thanking the government for a biomass gas project in his constituency, maintained that the budget lacked overall inclusive developmental proposals. He said the education sector, erosion and rehabilitation of erosion-hit people are among issues not adequately mentioned in the budget. Ahmed also questioned the proposal of surveying 'char' areas (riverine areas) and allocating it to the tribal population, whereas Muslims have been living in these areas for generations. (PTI)

## Assam budget 'revenue neutral'

be filled, but new positions will also be created. "Under the chief secretary, a task force has been formed. So far, 1.15 lakh posts have been identified, but we want to take it to 2 lakh. For that, posts will be created in revenue-earning departments like health and education," Sarma said. The CM said transportation has been a thrust area in the budget, with ₹10,000 crore proposed under Asom Mala 4.0 for constructing 800 km of new roads in the next five years. He said a proposal for a rail link to Umrangso in Dima Hasao district has been made in the budget. Airways have also been given importance with plans for development of Dulu and Rupsi airports in Cachar and Dhubri districts as world-class ones, as it will boost the state's passenger and cargo traffic with neighbouring states as well as other countries, Sarma said.

The power sector will witness investment of ₹ 77,000 crore through various projects, including in public-private-partnership mode, with work in many schemes already underway, the CM said. He also highlighted the Guwahati satellite city, to be constructed around the airport, as a key proposal in the budget, which will have the scope of transforming the economy of the state. Sarma said the agriculture and water resources departments were jointly preparing a strategy for the sectors, and compressed pipe systems would henceforth be used for irrigation along with the existing canal network. "We intend to make available water through the compressed pipes from the sources where it is available round the year to our fields," he said.

The chief minister also said the budget envisaged producing 2,300 doctors annually by 2030, which would help the state avoid a shortage of physicians and enable deployment of doctors at health sub-centres.

In the education sector, the government has plans to develop two "growth centres" where medical college, engineering college, university and such institutions are housed together in a single premise, he added. He further said Mission Basundhara 4.0 will be rolled out on December 25, with consultations with stakeholders to be held for two months leading up to it.

"Without imposing any new tax, this budget is to transform Assam into a high-growth state in the next five years. Our next step is to implement it in totality," Sarma added.

Baruah on Friday presented a ₹ 2,85,084 crore budget for the 2026-27 financial year, proposing to raise the tax exemption limit for small tea growers by four times and cut VAT on piped natural gas by almost 10 per cent points. He also announced continuance of all major schemes rolled out during the last five years, while stating that he aims to cut the Budget deficit to Rs 419 crore. (PTI)

## Woman arrested in Ahmedabad

with help from the Gujarat Crime Branch, arrested the woman in Ahmedabad and recovered all the gold ornaments. Sharma said that further investigations were in progress. (PTI)

## Assam cabinet approves

of posts created under Assam Venture Educational Institution (Provincialisation of Services) Act, 2011 and as amended in 2013 as a boost to educational manpower, the CM added. (PTI)

## Draft Electoral Rolls for Two

comprising 1,205 male and 1,243 female electors. The official further stated that the electoral rolls will be available for public inspection at the offices of the Electoral Registration Officers of the 21-Borholla and 22-Bajalkata constituencies, located at the office of the Co-District Commissioner, Titabor Co-District, where electors can verify their names.

Alternatively, electors can check/search for their names on the portal: <https://ermsec.assam.gov.in>. Claims and objections regarding the draft electoral rolls may be submitted in Form 2, 3, or 4 to the respective Electoral Registration Officer on or before July 25, 2026.

## Heavy rains predicted

monitoring the situation and emergency response systems are being kept on alert. "In view of the situation, Assam State Disaster Management Authority requests all people of Guwahati city to take all necessary precautions and remain vigilant," the release stated.

Daily commuters and long-distance travellers are requested to plan their routines accordingly, avoiding unnecessary movement during periods of intense rainfall. Residents in low-lying and hillside areas were also urged to stay alert for any signs of flooding or landslides.

The ASDMA also advised people to stay tuned to official weather updates and follow advisories issued by local authorities to ensure safety during this prolonged spell of rain. (PTI)

## Central team in Assam

The central team suggested that the state take up mitigation projects under the State Disaster Mitigation Fund (SDMF), including dredging and channelisation of smaller rivers and tributaries to improve water-carrying capacity and reduce flood runoff.

It also suggested restoration of wetlands in flood-affected districts to help in floodwater absorption, the release added. (PTI)

**BEAUTIFICATION OF MECHANISED LAUNDRY**  
**E-Tender Notice No. M-TSK-2026-26; Dated: 08-07-2026. Tender No.: M-TSK-2026-26. Name of work:** New Tinsukia- Beautification of Mechanised Laundry and its surrounding areas at New Tinsukia. **Location of work:** New Tinsukia. **Tender Value:** ₹56.94.469.97. **Earnest Money:** ₹1,13,900.00. **Last date and time for submission of tender:** Up to 13:00 hrs. of 30-07-2026. **Date and time of opening of tender:** After 15:00 hrs. of 30-07-2026. Website particulars where complete details of the tender can be seen and downloaded: [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)  
**Sr. DME, Tinsukia**  
**NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY**  
*"Serving Customers with a smile"*

**ASSAM POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY LIMITED**  
 (A Govt. of Assam Public Limited Company)  
**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
 This is to inform the general public of area of MAILLOO, BELBARI-1, BELBARI-2, WATIZUR NO.1, WATIZUR EKRAHOLA, WATIZUR BENGALI BASTI, DIKHLEM MAJ GAON, WASHAIKONG-1, WASHAIKONG-2, BOROWASHILING, MONBU NEPALI BASTI, JANGPHANGLANGSO NEPALI BASTI, DISMAO-1, CHOTOWASHILING-1 that the newly constructed 21.00 Km, 33kV overhead line from 33kV at Mailloo 33/11kV Sub-Station, West Karbi Anglong district to the newly constructed 33/11kV Block Bazar Sub-Station, Dima Hasao district, Assam under the ADSELR Scheme funded by AILB is ready and proposed to be charged and energized on Dtd. 06-07-2026 at 9:00 AM or onwards at any time. Therefore, all concerned, and the general public are hereby cautioned not to approach, touch, climb or interfere with the said line and its associated equipment and keep safe distance from the 33kV line. Any unauthorized contact with the line may result in serious injury, electrocution, or loss of life. If any eventuality caused due to violation of this notice, APDCL will not be responsible under any circumstances. This notice is issued in the interest of public safety.  
**Sd/- Chief Executive Officer**  
 KANCHI Electrical Circle, APDCL (CAR), Diphu  
 Please pay your energy bill on time and help us to serve you better!

**ELECTRICAL WORKS UNDER TINSUKIA DIVISION**  
**E-Tender Notice No. TSK/Elect/247; dated: 08-07-2026. Works tender through E-Tendering System are invited by the undersigned for the following works: SN.1. Brief Description of Item: Electrical Work for Provision of Power Supply to Signages/Station name Board at Stations Dibrugarh, New Tinsukia, Mariani Jn., Jorhat Town, Simalguri Jn., Sibsagar Town, Amguri, Namrup, Duliajan, Naharkatiya, Tinsukia, Golaghat, Ledo & Makum Jn. (Tender No. LV-T-14-TSK-949). Tender Value: ₹71,00,151/-; Earnest Money: ₹1,42,000/-. E-tenders will be closed at 13:00 hrs. on 29-07-2026 and opened at 15:00 hrs. on 29-07-2026. The complete information with the tender document of above a tender will be available upto 13:00 hrs on 29-07-2026 in website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>  
**DRM (Elect.) Tinsukia**  
**NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY**  
*"Serving Customers with a smile"***

**E-AUCTION FOR CATERING STALL ASSETS OVER LUMDING DIVISION**  
 E-Auction for 13 nos catering stall assets over Lumding Division. **Rate Unit:** Annual Licensing Fee. **Trips/Days:** 1826.  
**Auction Catalogue No. CATER-LMG-05-26**

Seq No.	Lot No./Category	Description
AA/1	Catg-LMG-BPB-GMU-146-26-1 (Catering - General Minor Unit (GMU))	Provision of Catering Service at General Minor Unit (GMU) number BPBTS-2 at PF-1 of BADARPUR Railway Station of 'D' Category for a period of 05(five) Years only.
AA/2	Catg-LMG-BHRB-GMU-119-23-1 (Catering - General Minor Unit (GMU))	E-auction for Provision of catering service on General Minor Unit (GMU) tea stall No. BHRBTS-1 at platform-1 of Bhairabi Railway station.
AA/3	Catg-LMG-BHZ-GMU-186-26-1 (Catering - General Minor Unit (GMU))	Provision of Catering Stall at platform-1 of Bihara Railway Station, Stall No. BHZTS-1 (GMU), under the Unreserved Category for a Period of Five (5) Years."
AA/4	Catg-LMG-CPK-GMU-5-22-1 (Catering - General Minor Unit (GMU))	E-auction for provision of catering services on General Minor Unit (GMU), Tea Stall (CPKTS-3), of Chapamukh Railway Station at PF-1.
AA/5	Catg-LMG-KXJ-GMU-174-25-1 (Catering - General Minor Unit (GMU))	Provision of catering service on General Minor Units (GMU), Tea stall (KXJTS-1) at platform-1 of Karimganj Railway station for a period of 5 years only (Sketch plan uploaded).
AA/6	Catg-LMG-CNE-GMU-187-26-1 (Catering - General Minor Unit (GMU))	"Provision of Catering Stall at platform-1 of Chandranathpur Railway Station, Stall No. CNETS-1 (GMU), under the Unreserved (Women) Category for a Period of Five (5) Years."
AA/7	Catg-LMG-KUGT-GMU-149-26-1 (Catering - General Minor Unit (GMU))	Provision of Catering Service at General Minor Unit (GMU) KUGTTS-1 at PF-1 of Kumarghat Railway Station of 'D' Category for a period of 05(five) Years only.
AB/1	Catg-LMG-JMK-SMU-183-26-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Provision of catering service (SMU tea stall No. JMKTS-1) at PF-1 of Jamunamukh Railway Station for a period of five (5) years only.
AB/2	Catg-LMG-GHY-SMU-123-24-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Provision of Fruit stall (Fruit, Juice & other packed items as approved by zonal Railways), stall No. 'GHYFS-2' at PF 4/5, between pillars No 14 & 15 at Guwahati Railway station.
AB/3	Catg-LMG-SANG-SMU-181-25-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Provision of catering services on Special Minor Units (SMU), Tea stall (SANGTS-1) at platform-1 of Sairang Railway station for a period of 5 years only (Sketch plan uploaded).
AB/4	Catg-LMG-MYD-SMU-173-25-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Provision of catering services on Special Minor Units (SMU), Tea Stall (MYDTS-2), at PF-1 of Mandardisa Railway Station for a period of 5 years only (Sketch plan uploaded).
AB/5	Catg-LMG-LKA-SMU-48-23-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	E-auction for Provision of catering service on Special Minor Unit (SMU) tea stall No. LKATS-3 at platform-1 of Lanka Railway station.
AB/6	Catg-LMG-JMK-SMU-184-26-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Provision of catering service (SMU tea stall No. JMKTS-2) at PF-1 of Jamunamukh Railway Station for a period of five (5) years only.

**Auction Start Date & Time:** 12.30 hrs. & **Closing at:** 15.00 hrs. on 27-07-2026. Initial Cooling off period is 30 minutes. Lot wise closing time can be viewed in e-Auction module of IREPS.  
**Note:** Prospective bidders are requested to visit E-Auction Leasing Module on IREPS website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) for more details.  
**Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager, Lumding**  
**NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY**  
*"Serving Customers With A Smile"*

## India's forex kitty jumps USD 7.26 bn to USD 674.19 bn

**MUMBAI, July 10:** India's forex reserves jumped USD 7.26 billion to USD 674.193 billion during the week ended July 3, the Reserve Bank of India said on Friday. In the previous reporting week, the forex kitty had dropped by USD 5.654 billion to USD 666.933 billion. The kitty had expanded to an all-time high of USD 728.494 billion during the week ended February 27 this year before the onset of the Middle East conflict, which led to several weeks of a drop as the rupee came under pressure and the RBI had to intervene in the forex market through dollar sales. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also made multiple public appeals starting May 11 to countrymen to conserve forex by cutting down on foreign travel, limiting fuel use and refraining from gold buys for a year. For the week ended July 3, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased USD 4.51 billion to USD 545.578 billion, the central bank's data showed. (PTI)

## VIDA launches long-range VX2 Plus electric scooter

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, July 10:** VIDA, the electric mobility brand powered by Hero, has expanded its product portfolio with the launch of the VIDA EVOOTER VX2 Plus 4.4 kWh, a long-range electric scooter designed to strengthen the company's vision of making electric mobility accessible to every household.

Priced at ₹ 1,43,990, the new variant is equipped with dual removable 2.2 kWh batteries, offering a combined capacity of 4.4 kWh and an IDC-certified range of 187 km on a single charge.

The scooter comes with a 1 kW portable charger, capable of charging the battery from 0 to 80 per cent in three hours and 30 minutes.

It also supports DC fast charging, which can replenish the battery from 0 to 80 per cent in 65 minutes.

Powered by a 6 kW peak motor producing 26 Nm of torque, the VX2 Plus has a top speed of 90 kmph and offers three riding modes—Eco, Ride and Sport—along with a Boost mode for overtaking.

The scooter features a 4.3-inch TFT display, smartphone connectivity, turn-by-turn navigation, over-the-air software updates, 27.2 litres of under-seat storage and a Combined Braking System (CBS).

Riders will also have access to VIDA's network of over 6,000 fast-charging stations and 700 service touchpoints across the country.

Speaking on the launch, Kausalya Nandakumar, Chief Business Officer, Emerging Mobility Business Unit, Hero MotoCorp, said the new variant addresses the growing demand for longer range and faster charging while expanding the company's electric scooter lineup to cater to diverse customer requirements.

VIDA also announced that the new VX2 Plus 4.4 kWh has entered the Asia Book of Records for completing the longest journey by an electric scooter.

The record was achieved during a 12,111-km, 52-day expedition from Bengaluru to Delhi, covering all Kolkata Knight Riders match host cities with rider Girish Shet to demonstrate the scooter's endurance and charging capabilities.

The company said the VX2 Plus 4.4 kWh will be available at authorised dealerships across the country by the end of July.

VIDA will also continue offering its Battery-as-a-Service (BaaS) plans to make electric mobility more affordable and flexible for customers.

## Budget 2026-27

Tax sops to small tea growers ● VAT cut on PNG ● Continuation of major schemes assured ● 'Green cess' proposed on polluting industries ● Govt goes tough against polygamy

# ₹ 419.26 cr deficit budget tabled in Assembly



**GUWAHATI, July 10:** The Assam government on Friday presented a ₹ 2,85,084 crore budget for the 2026-27 financial year, proposing to raise tax exemption limit for small tea growers by four times

and cut VAT on piped natural gas by almost 10 percentage points. Presenting his maiden Budget, Assam finance minister Jayanta Malla Baruah also announced the continuance of all the major

schemes rolled out during the last five years, but said those practising polygamy will not be eligible for any benefits and government staff found guilty of this practice will face dismissal.

Proposing a 'green cess' on polluting sectors, the government announced that two lakh people will be recruited over five years by filling existing vacancies and creating new posts across various departments. With a deficit of ₹ 419.26 crore, Baruah tabled a ₹ 2,85,084.45 crore budget and aimed a fiscal deficit of 3 per cent of the state's projected GSDP.

"To provide relief to small tea growers, I propose to enhance the agricultural income tax exemption threshold from ₹ 2.5 lakh to ₹ 10 lakh of annual agricultural income," he added.

At the same time, the tax will be restored for larger assessments with effect from April 1, 2026, and the additional revenue generated shall be dedicated exclusively to the welfare of tea garden communities, Baruah said. He said orthodox tea production has increased from 4.39 crore kg in 2021-22 to nearly 8 crore kg in 2025-26, recording a strong growth of over 80 per cent in four years.

"Assam has taken a significant step towards value addition in the tea sector with the successful production of premium Matcha tea. The first lot was sold through the Guwahati Tea Auction Centre at nearly ₹ 3,000 per kg," the minister said.

To further incentivise value addition and boost Assam Tea exports, Matcha tea shall be included within the eligible category of orthodox and specialty tea, he added.

"The production subsidy for orthodox and specialty tea will be enhanced from ₹ 10 per kg to ₹ 15 per kg," he added. "Further, a new subsidy of ₹ 3 per kg will be introduced for export-oriented and premium-quality Assam CTC tea that is exported directly through recognised export channels, contributing to the foreign exchange earnings," Baruah said.

According to the budget document, the government is committed to expand clean and affordable energy across Assam, as piped natural gas networks are being developed in key areas like Guwahati, Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Tezpur, Darrang, Baksa, Kokrajhar, Nagaon and the Barak Valley.

"To reduce household energy costs, promote cleaner fuel and support city gas expansion, I propose to reduce VAT on piped natural gas from 14.5 percent to 5 percent," it added.

Over 13,500 domestic piped gas connections have already been provided, along with 46 CNG stations across the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Assam budget 'revenue neutral'; focus on jobs, women empowerment: CM



**GUWAHATI, July 10:** Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday described the state budget as "revenue neutral", saying the state's revenue expenditure, capital expenditure and revenue receipts were balanced.

Addressing a press conference after Finance Minister Jayanta Malla Baruah presented his maiden budget in the Assembly, Sarma said the fiscal plan reflected the BJP's 'Sankalp Patra' commitments, with a focus on employment, women's welfare, power, connectivity and agriculture. "It is a revenue-neutral budget. It means salary, interest, pension, and committed liabilities, which form revenue expenditure, and revenue earnings are balanced," he said.

The chief minister highlighted that in 2015-16, capital expenditure was ₹ 2,951 crore, which has increased to ₹ 29,000 crore this time. On the tax front, he said, "Barring the green cess, it is a tax-neutral budget. It is in sync with the state's financial health."

Green cess has been proposed to discourage industries from continuing pollution-causing actions and encourage sustainable practices, Sarma said.

Highlighting various budget-

ary proposals, the chief minister said ₹ 6,000 crore has been earmarked to implement flagship welfare schemes such as Orunodoi and Nijut Moina.

He added that implementation of all welfare schemes will resume from August after being stalled due to the process of formation of the new government.

He further said the state government was working with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to develop a ₹ 1,200-crore semiconductor ecosystem, so that local MSMEs can produce items to meet requirements of such industries.

On the technology front, Sarma said an AI module will be introduced in state government offices in a phased manner, set to four to five departments to implement it soon.

Asserting his government's tough stand against criminals and polygamy, the chief minister warned that "government employees will lose their jobs for polygamy, and those with criminal antecedents won't get benefits of any schemes." He said the government will keep its promise of providing two lakh jobs, and for the purpose, not only vacancies will (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Drawings in public places should be of Assamese 'revolutionaries' like ULFA chief: CM Himanta

**GUWAHATI, July 10:** Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday said that locals wishing to paint pictures of "revolutionaries" at public places should do so of Assamese people like Paresh Baruah, head of the banned militant outfit ULFA(I), rather than that of Communist leader Che Guevara, who is not linked to this state.

Sarma asserted that he does not accept Baruah's ideology and even condemns him, though he also pointed out that the ULFA(I) leader has been carrying out his "struggle" for 30 long years, leaving his family behind.

Mentioning the controversy over erasing of a mural of the deceased singer Zubeen Garg by the authorities during a Guwahati beautification drive a month ago, Sarma said that if someone wants to draw the picture of a revolutionary in Assam, it should be of someone local, in an apparent reference to the use of images linked to Che in paintings of Zubeen.

"If you want to draw a revolutionary, then draw Paresh Baruah. He has been continuing his struggle for 30 years, whether it is for good or bad is a different matter. He has to live away from his family. Draw pictures of Parag Das," the CM said.

"I may not accept Baruah and even condemn him, but if someone has to draw of revolutionaries, let

them do so of Assamese ones," he added.

Baruah leads the secessionist ULFA(I) carrying out an armed struggle, while Das, a journalist and human rights activist, was gunned down in Guwahati in 1996 by unidentified assailants.

He said public murals will be allowed with due permission but "not in Che Guevara-style".

Sarma said that he was unaware of the Cuban Revolution leader and read about him only after seeing the pictures.

"Who is Che Guevara? I have visited Cuba and have studied about them. Most drug trade happens there. What link do we have with him? People cannot go to Cuba; the Indian embassy runs with the help of a single solar power source. There are no roads, no water supply. How can Assam be compared to such a country?" the CM added.

On erasing of Garg's Mural, the CM said that no such order was passed by the government.

"The two painters recorded their statement in the police station that they erased the mural as it did not look like Zubeen Garg's. They are not Muslims or Bangladeshi-Miyas, they are Assamese painters. The contractor who had undertaken the job is also an Assamese and all three are fans of Zubeen," he said. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## NDA hails as growth-oriented; oppn claims no new announcements

**GUWAHATI, July 10:** The BJP-led NDA partners on Friday welcomed the Assam Budget 2026-27 as a forward-looking one with a roadmap for the state's development, while the opposition parties claimed that it lacked any new schemes and heavily relied on loans.

Finance Minister Jayanta Malla Baruah presented a ₹ 2,85,084 crore Budget for the 2026-27 financial year, and proposed to raise the tax exemption limit for small tea growers by four times and cut VAT on piped natural gas by almost 10 percentage points.

He also announced to continue all the major schemes rolled out during the last five years, but said persons practising polygamy will not be eligible for any benefits and

government staff found guilty of the practice will face dismissal.

State BJP president Dilip Saikia termed the budget as "visionary, transformative and all-encompassing roadmap" and structured to fulfil the electoral commitments made by the party.

He said the state has registered an increase in per capita income and heralds a new chapter in employment generation by setting a target of providing two lakh jobs.

Saikia lauded the proposals made for connectivity, power, health, revenue, tourism, agriculture and education sectors, among others.

Cabinet Minister and Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) president Atul Bora welcomed the budget as a reflection of long-term develop-

ment for the state.

He maintained that all core sectors, like infrastructure, employment generation, health, education and social security, have been addressed in it.

"This budget will further strengthen the developmental outlook of the BJP-led NDA government and accelerate inclusive growth in the state," Bora added.

However, opposition parties criticised the budget as holding no new assurance for the public.

Congress' deputy leader in the Assembly Joy Prakash Das said, "We were hoping for a good budget. But this has nothing new. The government has said about giving two lakh jobs, but there is no mention of how many new jobs will be created." (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Woman arrested in Ahmedabad for cheating Tezpur jewellery shop

**TEZPUR, July 10:** A woman was arrested in Ahmedabad for allegedly cheating a jewellery shop here and taking gold ornaments worth around ₹ 58 lakh, police said on Friday.

The police have also recovered all the stolen jewellery. Deputy Superintendent of Police Angkita Sharma said the incident took place on July 4 at a jewellery Tezpur when the accused, Priyanka Patil, came to the shop with her father, Shivarjanjan Das, who is a relative of the shop owner's family.

They selected gold ornaments and, instead of making immediate payment, gave three cheques even though the shop does not accept cheque pay-

ments, the police officer said.

The woman convinced the owner by claiming they were relatives and promised to transfer the remaining money via RTGS.

The shop owner handed over the jewellery, but the cheques were found to be fake when deposited at the bank. Sharma said the bank account had no money and had been inactive since 2024.

After the shop owner filed a police complaint, an investigation was started, and it was found that the woman had already returned to Ahmedabad.

The police traced her when she tried to sell the gold ornaments at a jewellery shop in Gujarat. The Tezpur police, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Assam cabinet approves amendment to Assam Land Policy

**GUWAHATI, July 10:** The Assam cabinet on Friday approved an amendment to a policy to redefine eligibility of 'landless person' for settlement of government land, chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

According to the amendment, only those people whose families have resided in Assam for at least three generations will be eligible to be categorised as "landless persons" for government land allotment, the chief minister said in a post on X.

People who migrated to Assam prior

to March 24, 1971 as refugees were, however, exempted from this condition, provided they produced valid documentary evidence.

The cabinet also approved revalidation of administrative approval of Rs 474.25 crore for construction of 4-lane flyover at Mission Chariari for easing connectivity in Tezpur.

The Council of Ministers has approved reconstitution of Assam State Higher Education Council (ASHEC), Sarma said. The cabinet approved the permanent retention (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Draft Electoral Rolls for Two SKAC constituencies published in Jorhat

HT Correspondent

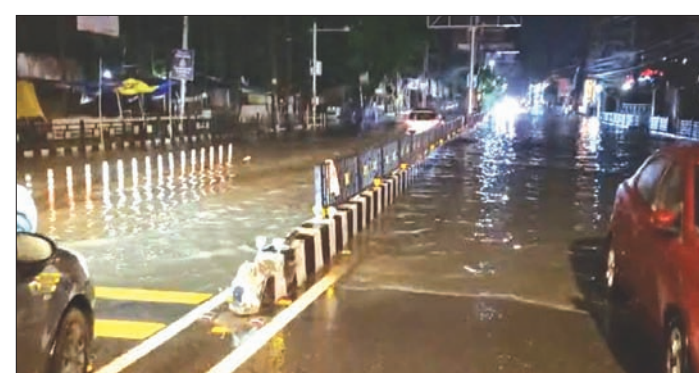
**JORHAT, July 10:** In connection with the ensuing Sonowal Kachari Autonomous Council (SKAC) elections, the draft electoral rolls for two constituencies in Jorhat district — the 21-Borholla constituency and the 22-Bajalkata constituency — were published today, with January 1, 2026, as the qualifying date.

A Jorhat district administration official informed that, as per the draft electoral rolls, the total number of electors in the 21-Borholla constituency is 2,908, comprising 1,404 male and 1,504 female electors. The total number of electors in the 22-Bajalkata constituency is 2,448. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Daily commuters and long-distance travellers are requested to plan their routines accordingly Heavy rains predicted in Assam, people urged to take precautions

**GUWAHATI, July 10:** The Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) on Friday urged the people to take precautions following the IMD's prediction of widespread rainfall along with thunderstorms in the city and across the state from Friday and for the next few days due to current meteorological conditions and the state's monsoons.

The weather pattern suggests that thunderstorms with lightning, with a few spells of moderate rainfall, and isolated occurrences of heavy rainfall are very likely in Guwahati and in the southern and central districts of the state over the next two to three days.



This may cause waterlogging, flash floods, slow vehicular movement, and increase the risk of localised landslides in vulnerable

pockets, the ASDMA said in a statement on Friday. The district authorities and ASDMA are closely (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Central team in Assam to review flood damage

**GUWAHATI, July 10:** A six-member inter-ministerial central team on Friday held a high-level meeting with Assam chief secretary Ravi Kota as part of its assessment visit to review flood damage in the state during 2025 and 2026, an official release said.

The team, comprising officials from various central government ministries, was divided into two groups to visit flood-affected districts.

The first team, led by joint secretary in the ministry of home affairs, Praveen Kumar Rai, visited flood-affected areas in Dhemaji, Lakhimpur and Biswanath districts.

The second team visited Cachar district and was scheduled to visit Chirang and Bajali districts.

The meeting chaired by the chief secretary was attended by senior state government officials, representatives of central agencies including the NDRF, Indian Army, Indian Air Force, NHAI, NF Railways, FCI, BSNL and the Department of Telecommunications, besides officials from the six affected districts through video conferencing.

The central team reviewed the extent of damage to property and livelihoods in the affected districts.

The state government informed the team that as the monsoon season was still underway and assessment of damages was continuing, the final flood memorandum would be submitted to the Centre after the end of the flood season. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Yaba tablets worth over ₹ 3 cr seized, 3 arrested

**GUWAHATI, July 10:** Three persons have been arrested and Yaba tablets worth ₹ 3 crore seized from their possession in Assam's Sribhumidistrict, chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Friday. The police seized around 30,000 Yaba tablets during the operation.

"Every shipment has a destination; this one was the police station. Kudos to @sribhumipolice for seizing 30,000 Yaba tablets worth approx ₹ 3 cr and apprehending three accused," the chief minister said in a social media post.

"Business intercepted, courtesy: @assampolice," he added.

Yaba is illegal in the country because it contains methamphetamine, a Schedule II substance under the Controlled Substances Act. (PTI)

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

*A smile is a curve that sets everything straight*  
-Phyllis Diller

## Impact of extreme heat on children

The impact of natural disasters, climate crises and environmental changes is never experienced equally across society. Children, women and economically vulnerable communities often bear the greatest burden of such crises. For children, rising temperatures are not merely a matter of seasonal discomfort; they directly affect their health, education, mental development and future. Climate change and extreme heat, therefore, can no longer be viewed only through an environmental lens. They must also be understood as critical child rights and child development concerns. Over the past few years, the nature of summer in India has been changing rapidly. Heatwaves are lasting longer, temperatures are breaking new records, and normal life has been disrupted across both urban and rural areas. According to the India Meteorological Department's (IMD) Annual Climate Statement 2025, 2024 was India's warmest year on record since 1901. The decade from 2016 to 2025 has also been recorded as the warmest ever. The greatest concern is that the impact of this growing climate crisis is falling most heavily on the generation that represents India's future.

Against this backdrop, CRY – Child Rights and You recently conducted a rapid assessment titled *Feeling the Heat: Children's Voices on Heat, Well-Being and Learning in India*. Conducted during May and June 2026, the assessment gathered responses from 3,096 school-going children aged 10–17 years across 27 States and Union Territories. The assessment is significant because it seeks to understand the impact of rising temperatures through children's own voices and lived experiences. The findings reveal that extreme heat is increasingly becoming an education crisis for children. As many as 88 percent of the respondents felt that this year's summer was hotter than previous years. Nearly 68 percent reported missing school or routine activities because of heat-related distress, while 76 percent said the heat had made it difficult for them to concentrate on their studies. A 17-year-old girl from Jharkhand shared, "On a particularly hot day, I found it difficult to concentrate at school because the temperature was extremely high."

The classroom felt warm and uncomfortable, and I became tired more quickly than usual. During lessons, it was hard to focus on what the teacher was explaining, and I felt thirsty." Nearly half the children identified the afternoon as the most difficult part of the day, while 45 percent said school hours were particularly uncomfortable. These findings suggest that rising temperatures are affecting both children's ability to learn and their regular participation in education. The impact of extreme heat extends far beyond the classroom. Nearly 63 percent of the children reported dehydration, 51 percent suffered headaches, and 44 percent experienced extreme fatigue. More than half said frequent power interruptions or overheated living spaces disrupted their daily lives, while nearly one in three reported water shortages.

# From Farm to Market: Assam Budget 2026–27 charts a new Agricultural vision

The Assam Budget 2026–27, presented under the banner of "Team Assam," signals a strategic shift in the state's development approach, with agriculture and allied sectors placed firmly at the centre of growth. Moving beyond conventional support measures, the budget lays out a forward-looking framework built on value addition, market integration, technological modernization, and export orientation. Its broader objective is clear: to transform Assam's rural economy while ensuring sustainable income growth for farmers.

A key pillar of this vision is the strengthening of value chains for Assam's premium agri-horticultural produce. Products such as Tezpur litchi, Assam lemon, ginger, turmeric, pineapple, Joha rice, and red rice are set to receive targeted support. In parallel, the government's push for additional Geographical Indication (GI) tags aims to protect the uniqueness of these commodities, enhance their market credibility, and expand their footprint in national and international markets.

Equally significant is the renewed focus on achieving self-reliance in protein production. The budget outlines a comprehensive strategy to expand poultry and piggy sectors through better breeding infrastructure, modern veterinary care, and direct farmer assistance. Assam's ambition to produce 6 million eggs daily—building on a remarkable 51 percent growth in recent years—reflects a determined effort to bridge the demand-supply gap and reduce dependence on external sources.

The fisheries sector, too, occupies a prominent place in this growth narrative. With a target of reaching 10 lakh metric tonnes of fish production by 2030–31, Assam is positioning itself as the fisheries hub of Northeast India. The sector's recent 33 percent growth underlines its potential not only as a source of livelihood but also as a critical contributor to nutritional security.

Access to institutional credit remains a cornerstone of agricultural progress, and the budget addresses this challenge head-on. By formulating a coordinated action plan with banks to resolve ₹1,935 crore worth of Kisan



Credit Card (KCC) NPAs, the government aims to restore credit flow to nearly 3.38 lakh farmers. This intervention is expected to revive rural investment and strengthen financial inclusion at the grassroots.

Export promotion emerges as another major thrust area. The emphasis on organic certification for high-value crops aligns with global demand trends, while proposed improvements in export logistics—including an air cargo facility in Guwahati with NABARD support—are likely to enhance Assam's competitiveness. Strengthening Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) under the Mukhya Mantri Utkarsh Yojana further reinforces the move towards collective mar-

keting and better price realization.

Infrastructure development, particularly in irrigation, reflects a shift towards efficiency and sustainability. The introduction of a Pressurized Piped Distribution Network marks a departure from traditional open-channel systems. By minimizing water loss and ensuring timely delivery, this initiative is poised to make agriculture more resilient in the face of climate variability.

At the same time, the budget continues to prioritize the welfare of small and marginal farmers. Ongoing support under the Chief Minister's Agricultural Instrument Scheme will facilitate greater mechanization, while the provision of ₹11,000 annually to beneficiaries of the

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi offers crucial income support.

The allied sectors of dairy and sericulture also receive substantial attention. A ₹500 crore dairy expansion programme aims to raise daily milk production to 5.7 million litres, advancing the goal of self-sufficiency. Meanwhile, Mission Senehori, with an outlay of ₹400 crore and support from the Ministry of DoNER, seeks to establish Assam as a global hub for GI-tagged Golden Muga Silk—blending heritage with economic opportunity.

Emerging high-value sectors like agarwood have not been overlooked. The constitution of a Cabinet Task Force to prepare a comprehensive roadmap—from plantation to export—signals the government's intent to unlock the full potential of this niche industry and position Assam as a leader in premium agarwood products.

In a move that balances growth with equity, the budget enhances support for small tea growers by raising the Agricultural Income Tax exemption threshold to ₹10 lakh. At the same time, the reintroduction of taxation for larger entities, with revenues earmarked for tea garden community welfare, reflects a nuanced and inclusive fiscal approach.

Interestingly, the budget also connects agriculture with culture and entrepreneurship. Efforts to regulate and promote traditional Assamese beverages, alongside the introduction of 'Assam Made Liqueur,' aim to formalize local industries and curb illegal practices. The proposal to establish Assamese cuisine outlets across major Indian cities further expands market opportunities while celebrating the state's culinary identity.

Overall, the Assam Budget 2026–27 presents a comprehensive and reform-oriented blueprint for agricultural transformation. By integrating production, processing, marketing, and cultural branding, it envisions a more resilient and globally competitive rural economy. The real test, however, will lie in effective implementation—ensuring that these ambitious initiatives translate into tangible benefits for farmers and stakeholders across the state.

## DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By Mowsam Hazarika

## World Population Day: Balancing consumption, not just numbers

By: Satyabrata Borah

The story of humanity is etched in the numbers that track our presence on this planet, and every year World Population Day offers a designated moment to pause and reflect on what those numbers truly mean. We often look at the global tally as a scoreboard, watching it tick past seven billion, then eight billion, and wondering how many more souls the soil and seas can sustain. But focusing solely on the grand total misses the real narrative, which is not about a massive, uniform crowd, but about billions of individual lives, each searching for dignity, safety, and a meaningful future.

To understand where we are today, we have to look back at how quickly the human family grew. For most of our history, our numbers climbed at a crawl, kept in check by disease, famine, and the harsh realities of wilderness life. It took all of human existence until the early nineteenth century for the global population to reach its first billion. Then, the industrial revolution, breakthroughs in medicine, cleaner water, and better farming techniques changed everything. The second billion arrived in just over a century, and the intervals shrank rapidly after that. The leap from seven to eight billion took a mere twelve years, a breathtaking acceleration that showcases our ability to survive and multiply.

This rapid growth brings immense challenges that we must confront daily. The natural world feels the strain of our expansion everywhere we look. Forests are cleared to make room for crops, fresh water sources are stretched to their limits, and the atmosphere carries the heavy burden of our industrial output. We are using the resources of the planet faster than the earth can replenish them, creating a deficit that threatens the very stability of our ecological systems. It is easy to view this through a lens of pure scarcity, worrying that we will simply run out of space and food.

The challenge is often less about absolute scarcity and much more about how we distribute what we have. We live in a world where a small fraction of the population consumes a vast majority of the wealth and resources, leaving others to scrape by on the bare minimum. The environmental footprint of a citizen in a wealthy, industrialized nation is many times larger than that of someone living in a developing region. Therefore, the anxiety surrounding population growth should not be directed solely at the birth rates in poorer nations, but at the unsustainable consumption habits of affluent societies.

The demographic map of the world is splitting in fascinating and complicated ways. We no longer see a single global trend of explosive growth. Instead, we see two entirely different realities playing out simultaneously. In many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, populations are young and expanding rapidly. These regions face the monumental task of educating millions of children, creating jobs for young adults, and building infrastructure from scratch. If these countries can invest successfully in their people, they stand to benefit from a demographic dividend, using a massive, energetic workforce to drive economic development.

In stark contrast, a different quiet crisis is unfolding across Europe, East Asia, and parts of the Americas. In these places, birth rates have plummeted well below the replacement level, and societies are aging at an unprecedented pace.

Countries like Japan and Italy are navigating uncharted territory, where schools are closing for lack of pupils and a shrinking pool of working-age adults must support a growing population of retirees. This shift strains healthcare systems, challenges the continuity of pension programs, and forces economies to rethink how they function when growth is no longer the default setting.

These contrasting realities show that there is no one size fits all solution to population issues. A policy that makes sense in a country with a median age of twenty would be disastrous in a nation where the median age is forty-five. The conversation must move away from top-down control and toward creating conditions where individuals can make informed choices about their lives. History shows that when people gain access to quality education, dependable healthcare, and economic opportunities, birth rates naturally stabilize.

Empowering women stands as the most effective factor in this entire equation. When girls are allowed to stay in school, when women can pursue careers and gain financial independence, they tend to marry later and choose smaller family sizes. Providing comprehensive reproductive healthcare and family planning services is not just a matter of managing numbers, it is a fundamental human right. It allows families to invest more deeply in each child, ensuring better health, education, and



long-term prospects for the next generation.

We must also recognize the shifting urban landscape when discussing our collective future. The growth of our population is happening predominantly in cities. Rural areas are emptying out as people move in search of jobs, modern amenities, and a better life. This migration has given rise to megacities, urban hubs with tens of millions of residents. Managing these sprawling urban centers requires visionary planning. Without smart investments in public transit, affordable housing, sanitation, and green spaces, cities can become centers of inequality and environmental degradation rather than engines of progress.

Feeding a growing world requires a complete overhaul of our agricultural systems. We cannot simply clear more forests for traditional farming without causing catastrophic biodiversity loss. The future of food lies in innovation, using technology to grow more on less land while reducing our environmental impact. Vertical farming, lab-grown proteins, and drought-resistant crops are no longer science fiction, they are essential tools for our survival. Reducing food waste is equally critical, considering that a significant portion of the food produced globally today spoils in transit or is thrown away in households while millions go hungry.

Water security is another flashpoint that will define the coming decades. Clean water is the

lifeblood of human civilization, yet millions already live in water-stressed regions. As populations grow and climate change alters weather patterns, competing demands for water between agriculture, industry, and domestic use will intensify. Resolving these tensions requires international cooperation and a shift toward conservation, recycling, and efficient technologies like drip irrigation.

The concept of borders and migration will inevitably evolve alongside these demographic shifts. As some regions face intense environmental pressures and economic stagnation, and others grapple with labor shortages due to aging populations, the movement of people across borders will become even more vital. Instead of viewing migration through a lens of fear and exclusion, nations will need to find ways to manage human mobility safely and humanely, recognizing that the exchange of talent and labor can be mutually beneficial.

Technology and automation will play a wildcard role in shaping the future of work for this growing population. The rise of artificial intelligence and robotics means that economies may no longer need the same massive quantities of manual labor that drove the industrial era. This shift presents a challenge for young, developing nations that need to create millions of traditional jobs. Education systems worldwide must pivot away from rote learning and focus on creativity, adaptability, and digital literacy, preparing the workforce for a rapidly changing job market.

World Population Day reminds us that numbers are ultimately human stories. A statistic about poverty represents a child missing school to work in a field. A figure on maternal mortality represents a family losing a mother due to lack of basic medical care. When we talk about the global population, we are talking about our collective capacity for empathy, innovation, and cooperation. The goal should never be simply about matching resources to mouths, it should be about ensuring that every person born has the opportunity to thrive.

The future is not a predetermined path that we must passively accept. The choices made by governments, businesses, and individuals today will determine whether an eight- or nine-billion-person world is a place of conflict and depletion or a world of shared prosperity and resilience. We have the knowledge, the technology, and the wealth to solve these problems. What we need is the political will and the moral imagination to see ourselves as a single human family sharing a fragile, beautiful home.

We can find hope in the steps already being taken by communities around the globe. Grassroots organizations are working to bring clean energy to remote villages, educators are finding innovative ways to teach girls in marginalized communities, and scientists are developing new ways to clean the oceans and restore degraded lands. These efforts show that human ingenuity is our greatest renewable resource.

When we celebrate our shared humanity on this day, let us commit to a vision of the future that values quality of life over raw statistics. Let us strive to build a world where progress is measured not by how much we can extract from the earth, but by how well we take care of one another. The story of our population growth is a testament to our incredible success as a species. Now, the next chapter requires us to show that we can be equally successful at living in balance with the planet and with each other.

## The unequal burden of a warming India

By: Siddharth Roy

India's climate crisis is no longer a future threat. It is a present reality unfolding through recurring heatwaves, devastating floods, prolonged droughts, cyclones and landslides. Yet while climate change affects everyone, it does not affect everyone equally. The impacts of a warming planet are distributed along existing lines of social and economic inequality, creating what may be described as a new geography of vulnerability. In India, climate change is increasingly becoming not only an environmental challenge but also a question of justice.

The summer of recent years has repeatedly demonstrated the severity of the crisis. Record-breaking temperatures have disrupted daily life across large parts of the country. Outdoor workers, including construction labourers, street vendors, sanitation workers and agricultural labourers, face direct exposure to extreme heat. For millions employed in the informal economy, staying indoors during heatwaves is not an option. Their livelihoods depend on daily wages, making climate resilience a luxury they cannot afford. As temperatures rise, the burden falls disproportionately on those who contribute the least to global greenhouse gas emissions.

Climate inequality is also evident in access to adaptation. Wealthier households can shield themselves from extreme weather through air conditioning, better housing, insurance coverage and access to healthcare. Poorer communities often lack such protections. In urban areas, residents of informal settlements are particularly vulnerable because of overcrowded housing, inadequate water supply and limited public services. During heatwaves, these neighbourhoods frequently experience temperatures significantly higher than those recorded in greener and more affluent parts of cities. The urban heat island effect thus magnifies existing inequalities.

Rural India presents a similar picture. Agriculture remains heavily dependent on weather conditions despite technological advances. Small and marginal farmers face growing uncertainty as rainfall patterns become erratic and extreme weather events become more frequent. Crop failures, declining productivity and rising input costs are increasing economic stress in rural communities. While large landowners may possess the resources to adapt through irrigation, mechanisation or crop diversification, small farmers often lack the financial capacity to respond effectively. Climate change is therefore accelerating agrarian distress in many parts of the country.

The consequences extend beyond agriculture. Internal migration is increasingly shaped by environmental pressures. Drought-prone regions, flood-affected districts and areas facing declining agricultural productivity are witnessing growing outmigration. Migrants often move to cities where they encounter precarious employment and inadequate housing. In this way, climate change contributes to cycles of economic insecurity that span both rural and urban spaces. The challenge is not merely environmental degradation but the social dislocation that follows.

India's coastal communities illustrate another dimension of climate inequality. Rising sea levels, coastal erosion and increasingly intense cyclones threaten livelihoods dependent on fishing, tourism and agriculture. Communities living along vulnerable coastlines face repeated displacement and economic losses. Yet they frequently possess limited political influence and

receive insufficient attention in national development debates. The same pattern is visible in mountain regions where changing rainfall patterns, glacial retreat and landslides are creating new risks. The Himalayan ecosystem, including parts of the Northeast, has become increasingly fragile even as developmental pressures intensify.

The Northeast offers a particularly instructive example of the unequal impacts of climate change. The region contributes minimally to global emissions and remains less industrialised than many other parts of India. Yet it experiences severe flooding, landslides, riverbank erosion and biodiversity loss. Assam's annual floods continue to displace thousands, while hill States face growing environmental vulnerabilities linked to changing weather patterns. Communities that have historically depended on forests, rivers and traditional livelihoods are finding their resilience tested by forces largely beyond their control.

These realities expose a fundamental weakness in India's climate discourse. Policy discussions often focus on mitigation targets, renewable energy expansion and international negotiations. These objectives are important, but they can overshadow the equally urgent challenge of adaptation. Climate policy cannot be measured solely by reductions in carbon emissions. It must also be evaluated by its ability to protect vulnerable populations from the impacts that are already unavoidable. Adaptation is not merely a technical issue; it is a social and political imperative.

A climate-just approach would require significant public investment in resilience-building measures. Heat action plans, climate-resilient infrastructure, flood management systems, sustainable agriculture and early warning mechanisms must be prioritised. Social protection programmes should account for climate-related vulnerabilities, particularly among informal workers and small farmers. Urban planning must address inequalities in access to green spaces, water and housing. At the same time, local communities should play a greater role in designing adaptation strategies because they often possess valuable knowledge about environmental change.

The transition to a low-carbon economy must also be managed carefully. Renewable energy expansion is essential, but it should not reproduce existing patterns of exclusion. Land acquisition, resource use and employment generation associated with green development require democratic oversight and community participation. Otherwise, the benefits of climate action may be concentrated among those who are already privileged.

Climate change is often described as a global challenge requiring collective action. While this is true, its impacts are profoundly local and deeply unequal. In India, the climate crisis is increasingly redrawing the map of opportunity and vulnerability. Those with the fewest resources are bearing the greatest risks, while those with greater means are better positioned to adapt. Recognising this reality is the first step towards meaningful climate policy. A warming India is not only an environmental concern. It is a test of the country's commitment to equity, inclusion and social justice. (The author is a civil engineer, consultant (invitee) to Rashtriya Raksha University under the Ministry of Home Affairs, short story writer, columnist (for various leading publications) and a contemporary affairs commentator. The views are personal. He can be reached at [siddharth001.roy@gmail.com](mailto:siddharth001.roy@gmail.com))

# How to Ask for a Raise: A Step-by-Step Guide

By: Corey Dutina

Ready to ask for a raise but not sure where to start? Our step-by-step guide helps you master salary negotiation. Discover how to document your achievements, research market rates, and use proven, word-for-word scripts to confidently request the salary increase you deserve.

You feel like you've been doing a great job at work. Your manager's feedback confirms this feeling. You've even taken on new responsibilities. Now would be the perfect time to ask for that raise, right? But something always seems to get in the way.

Maybe you worry that asking for more money will come across as ungrateful. Maybe you're not sure you've done enough to justify it. Maybe you keep rehearsing the conversation in your head and it doesn't quite feel right. Or maybe you're absolutely afraid they'll say no, and absolutely no one wants to deal with that rejection.

We promise it's worth it. Asking for a raise is a truly fantastic investment. If you receive a salary bump now it means you've raised the floor for your next negotiation, and your next one after that (and hopefully a few more, we know you deserve it!). But why do so many people fail to ask? Well, because it's super uncomfortable.

This guide attempts to make this all a bit less uncomfortable. We'll cover everything: when to ask, how to prep your case, exactly what to say (literally, word for word), and what to do when the answer isn't a clean yes.

When Is the Right Time to Ask for a Raise?

The timing matters almost as much as the ask. Here are the moments that work in your favor (and a few that don't).

**After a clear win**

If you just landed a major client, led a project that delivered real results, or received strong positive feedback, that's the moment to strike. Your value is top of mind, and the conversation has natural momentum.

**Before your annual performance re-**

view

Most people wait for their review to find out if they're getting a raise. Don't make this mistake. By the time your review arrives, budget decisions may already be done. Request a separate conversation about your compensation a few weeks before the formal cycle begins, so you're part of the discussion before the numbers are set.

**After taking on more responsibility**  
Have your duties grown significantly since your salary was last set? That's a legitimate case. If you're doing the work of a more senior role you should be paid for it.

**When you have a competing offer (but be careful)**

A competing offer is leverage, but it's a double-edged one. If you bring it up, be prepared to actually leave if the company can't match it. Using a fake offer as a bluff almost always backfires and damages relationships.

**When you should wait**

If your company just went through layoffs, had a rough quarter, or if your manager is navigating a crisis, now is the time to hold off. Asking for a raise in those moments signals a poor read of the room. Patience here is a strategy, not a surrender.

**How to Build Your Case Before the Conversation**

Not being able to explain your case is a non-starter. Here's how to arrive ready:

**Know what you should be making**

This is the classic 'write it on a piece of paper and slide it over' moment. Do your research so you know what your role pays in your market. Put an exact number on your value to the company. You know your worth, and make it easy for them to decide they agree.

**Document your contributions in concrete terms**

Let's be realistic, your manager probably doesn't remember everything you've accomplished this year, so go ahead and make it hard for them to forget.

- Revenue: "I led a campaign that generated \$..."
- Growth: "When I joined, I managed



three accounts. I now manage eight."

- Impact: "I took the lead on the relaunch and we hit our targets two weeks early."

Numbers are your friend here. Even estimations are more compelling than nothing when you're defining your organizational impact.

**How to Make the Ask (step-by-step guide)**

There are three steps in this process: requesting the meeting, making your case, and handling the response. We'd suggest sending an email to request a compensation-specific meeting with your manager, then having the actual conversation face-to-face. Here are some examples on how to handle each step (remember to make these your own!)

**Requesting the Meeting**

Don't forget your manager is also a person with their own set of responsibilities and worries. Let's not ambush them at the end of a 1:1, let's give them a bit of a heads-up so they can come prepared to have a meaningful conversation:

"Hey [Manager], I'd love to set up some time to talk about my compensation."

I've been reflecting on my contributions this year and I've done some market research. I'd like to share what I'm thinking, do you have 30 minutes this week or next to chat?"

**Opening the Conversation**

When the meeting arrives, lead with your value:

"Thanks for making time. I want to

start by saying that I genuinely enjoy this work and I'm proud of what we've accomplished together.

Over the past [timeframe], I've [highlight 1-2 specific contributions]. I've also taken on [additional responsibilities], and I feel like my role has grown meaningfully."

**Making the Ask**

After you've laid the groundwork, name your number clearly and directly: "Based on my research and what I've contributed this year,

I'm targeting a salary of \$[X].

I believe that's in line with what this role commands in the market and reflects the impact I've made on our organization.

I'd love to hear your thoughts."

Then stop talking. The silence after the ask may be a bit uncomfortable, but sit with it. You're not in the wrong to want to be fairly compensated.

**Remember, they will likely need time**

It's not often they can approve a raise right on the spot. This isn't a 'no', it's just part of the process:

"I totally understand, and I appreciate you taking my request seriously. Can we set a time to follow up? I want to make sure we have a clear path forward."

**What to Do If Your Manager Says No**

A no isn't always the end of the conversation. In many cases, it's the beginning of a useful one.

**Ask what 'no' actually means**

Is it a 'no, not ever' or a 'no, not now'?

The difference is huge.

"I appreciate your honesty. Can you help me understand what's driving the decision?"

Is this more about timing and budget, or is there something specific about my performance?"

Their answer will tell you a lot about whether to stay, wait, or start exploring other options.

**Get a clear roadmap**

"That makes sense. What would need to be true [in terms of my performance, the company's financials, or timing] for this conversation to have a different outcome in six months?"

Not receiving a clear answer to this may be all the clarity you need.

**Document the conversation**

To keep both parties accountable, send a brief follow-up email after the meeting summarizing what was discussed and decided.

"Thanks for meeting with me. I'm going to focus on [feedback provided] and we'll plan to revisit this in [timeframe]."

**What to Do If Your Manager Says 'Not Now'**

This is super common. It's not a firm no, but it delays the decision. What should you do in the meantime?

- Get the timeline in writing. A vague 'we'll revisit this' is not a commitment. Ask for a specific date. Before you leave the room make sure the follow up meeting is booked.

- Keep building your case. Use the time to document more wins, take on projects, and make your value known.

- Be honest with yourself. Does it feel like they're putting this off and not taking your request seriously? This is a good time to reflect on your future with the organization.

**Common Mistakes That Can Cost You Leading with a personal need**

"I need more money because rent went up" is not a compelling argument. Your employer is paying for your contribution to their business, not your life expenses. Always anchor your ask in your value, not your needs.

**Accepting vague feedback**

If a manager says 'you're doing great but it's not the right time,' ask them for specifics. Vagueness can be a deflection, accepting it leaves you stuck in limbo.

**Giving up after one no**

Employees who ask again after an initial no, but with a stronger case and better timing, are more likely to succeed. One no isn't the end of the conversation, it usually means it's just not the right time.

**Not researching the market**

Walking in with no data all the leverage on your employer's side. Your company's HR team has done their salary-band research, so should you.

**Asking at the wrong moment**

Pick a moment when your manager is calm and not distracted with other pressing matters. Timing is crucial here.

**FAQs**

**How often should I ask for a raise?**  
This doesn't always happen, but ideally you'd have this conversation once a year, aligned with annual review cycles. That said, we know this is not the case for many. If your role has changed significantly or you've taken on substantial new responsibilities, that is a good time to initiate the conversation.

**What's a reasonable raise to ask for?**

It depends on your market, industry, and how long it's been since your last adjustment. Typical annual raises range from 3-5% at most companies, but if you're underpaid relative to the market or have taken on a substantially different role, asking for 10-20% is not unreasonable. Let the market data guide your number.

**How do I ask for a raise if I'm remote?**

Video calls work just as well for this conversation. Request a dedicated meeting rather than squeezing it into a regular check-in. The format matters less than the preparation.

**What if there is no room for negotiation on salary?**

There are other ways to receive additional value! Consider opportunities for increased bonuses, equity, extra PTO, remote flexibility, and title changes. (Courtesy: *The Muse*)

## Gauhati High Court Recruitment 2026 – 40 Posts, Online Apply

Name of Post Stenographer Grade-II, Private Secretary (Stenographer Grade-I), Chauffeur (Driver), and

Multi-Tasking Staff

No of Posts 40 posts  
Qualification Graduate/ Class XII/ Class VIII  
Age Limit Upper age limit 40 to 50 years (-)  
Application Fee Rs 250/- to Rs 500/-  
Start Date 10th July 2026  
Last Date 30th July 2026  
Gauhati High Court Recruitment 2026

Gauhati High Court has released three (3) employment notifications for the recruitment of 40 posts of Stenographer Grade-II, Private Secretary (Stenographer Grade-I), Chauffeur (Driver), and Multi-Tasking Staff. These vacancies are available under the Principal Seat of the Gauhati High Court at Guwahati, district courts of Assam, and the Law Research Institute, Gauhati High Court, Guwahati.

Interested and eligible candidates may check this article for detailed official notification, educational qualification, age limit, salary details, and application procedure to be followed.

Gauhati High Court Recruitment Details

1. Private Secretary (Stenographer Grade-I)

No of posts: 3 posts  
Pay: PB-4, ₹30,000 – ₹1,10,000 GP: ₹13,300  
Age Limit:  
OBC/ MOBC: 41 years  
STP/ STH: 43 years  
PWBD: 48 years  
Educational Qualification: Candidate must possess a Bachelor's degree from a recognized University, preferably with a diploma in Stenography in English with minimum speed of 120 wpm in shorthand and 50 wpm on a computer. Due weightage is given to a law graduate.

2. Chauffeur (Driver)

No of posts: 1 post  
Pay: PB-2, ₹14,000 – ₹70,000 GP: ₹5,200  
Age Limit:  
UR: 40 years  
OBC/ MOBC: 43 years  
SC/ ST: 45 years  
PWBD: 50 years  
Educational Qualification: Candidate must possess minimum educational qualification of Class X (HSLC) from a recognized Board and a valid LMV driving licence issued by competent authority.

3. Multi Tasking Staff (MTS)

No of posts: 1 post  
Pay: PB-1, ₹12,000 – ₹52,000 GP: ₹3,900  
Age Limit:  
UR: 40 years  
OBC/ MOBC: 43 years  
SC/ ST: 45 years  
PWBD: 50 years  
Educational Qualification: Candidate must possess minimum educational qualification of Class VIII (8th) standard and those who have passed HSSLC (Class 12) or above are ineligible.

4. Stenographer Grade-II

No of posts: 35 posts  
Pay: PB-3, ₹22,000 – ₹97,000 GP: ₹9,700  
Age Limit:  
UR: 18 to 40 years  
OBC/ MOBC: 18 to 43 years  
SC/ STP/ STH: 18 to 45 years  
PWBD: 18 to 50 years  
Educational Qualification: Candidate must possess a Bachelor's degree from a recognized University. Candidates should also possess Diploma/ Certificate in Stenography/Shorthand from an ITI, Polytechnic or other recognized institute.

**Other Criteria of Gauhati High Court Recruitment**  
Citizenship: Candidates must be a citizen of India as defined under Article 5 and 6 of the Constitution of India.  
Employment Exchange Registration: Candidates must have a valid Employment Exchange Registration Number for the State of Assam.  
Official Language Proficiency (Stenographer Grade-II): The candidate should

have knowledge of the Official Language of the State of Assam (Assamese).

Application Fee of Gauhati High Court Recruitment  
Candidates have to pay the application as mentioned below according to their caste:

Category	Application Fee
SC/ST (P)/ ST (H)	Rs.250/-
PwBD	Nil
UR/ OBC	Rs.500/-

How to Apply for Gauhati High Court Recruitment ?

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

- Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .
- Click on the "Online Application Form" and complete the registration process by clicking "Click here for New Registration".
- In the next stage, click on "Online Application Form" Link and Login.
- Fill your all personal and educational details and upload necessary documents.
- Pay the necessary application fee as per your category .
- At the end, submit the application form and take a print out of the application form .

Starting date for submission of online application: 10th July 2026

Last date for submission of online application: 30th July 2026

## IIT Guwahati Recruitment 2026 – 12 Computer Trainee & Junior Technician Posts

Organization	Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati (IITG)
Name of Post	Computer Trainee & Junior Technician (Trainee)
No of Posts	12 posts
Qualification	Three-year Diploma / ITI
Age Limit	18 to 25 years / 28 years
Application Fee	Nil
Start Date	24th / 30th June 2026
Last Date	11th / 21st July 2026

IIT Guwahati Recruitment 2026

Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati (IITG) has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 12 Computer Trainee Posts in the Computer and Communication Center of the Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati. Interested and eligible candidates may check this article for detailed official notification, educational qualification, age limit, salary details, and application procedure to be followed.

IIT Guwahati Recruitment Details

1. Computer Trainee  
No of posts: 06 posts  
Nature of engagement: Temporary  
Duration: 1 year  
Stipend: Rs. 18,000 per month.  
Educational Qualification: Candidates must possess three years polytechnic diploma in Computer Science/ Computer Science and Engineering/ IT/ EEE/ ECE/ Electronics from a recognized University/ Institute.  
Age Limit: Candidates should be preferably between 18 to 25 years of age as of midnight of 11-07-2026.  
Last date: 11th July 2026

2. Junior Technician (Trainee)

No of posts: 06 posts (Turner: 02 Nos.; Machinist: 02 Nos.; Fitter: 01 No.; Welder: 01 No.)  
Nature of engagement: Temporary  
Duration: Contractual Appointment for 11 Months (may be extended for another 2 terms of 11 months each based on satisfactory performance)  
Stipend: Rs. 25,000 per month.  
Educational Qualification: Candidates must have ITI Certificate in the trades of Turner/Machinist/Fitter/Welder from a NCVT/SCVT recognized Institute with minimum 60% marks or equivalent.  
Age Limit: The maximum age limit of the candidate should be 28 years on the last date of receipt of the application.

Last date: 21st July 2026

How to Apply for IIT Guwahati Recruitment ?

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for these vacancy. They may follow below mentioned steps to apply online.

- Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .
- Click on the "Online Application Form" and complete the registration process.

- In the next stage, click on "Online Application Form" Link and Login.
- Fill your all personal and educational details and upload necessary documents.

- Next submit the form .
  - At the end, take a print out of the application form .
- Important Dates of IIT Guwahati Recruitment 2026  
Computer Trainee  
• Starting date of submission of online application: 24th June 2026  
• Last date of submission of online application: 11th July 2026  
Junior Technician (Trainee)  
• Starting date of submission of online application: 30th June 2026  
• Last date of submission of online application: 21st July 2026

## NHIDCL Recruitment 2026 – 100 Associate Vacancy, Online Apply

Name of Post	Associate
No of Posts	100 posts
Qualification	B.E/B.Tech in Civil Engineering
Age Limit	30 Years
Application Fee	N/A
Start Date	8th July 2026
Last Date	5th August 2026
NHIDCL Recruitment 2026	

National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 100 Associate Vacancy. Interested and eligible candidates may check this article for detailed official notification, educational qualification, age limit, salary structure and application procedure to be followed.

Candidates with Degree in Civil Engineering may apply for these posts. The last date for submission of application is 5th August 2026.

NHIDCL Recruitment Details

Name of post: Associate  
No of posts: 100 posts

Pay: Rs.70,000 to 80,000 /- per month

Age Limit: Not exceeding 30 years as on date of issue of advertisement.

Educational Qualification: Candidates must have a Degree in Civil Engineering from from IIT, NIT or top 100 in the engineering category of NIRF rankings for the year of graduation, or the preceding year in case the candidate is completing their graduation.

Experience: Candidates must have experience of 0-2 years after essential educational qualification.

State-wise Vacancy

S.No	State / UT	Number of posts
1	Assam	10
2	Arunachal Pradesh	10
3	J&K (Jammu)	5
4	J&K (Srinagar)	5
5	Manipur	10
6	Meghalaya	10
7	Mizoram	08
8	Nagaland	5
9	Sikkim	5
10	Tripura	10
11	Uttarakhand	5
12	Ladakh	2
13	West Bengal	08
14	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	07
	Total	100

How to Apply for NHIDCL Recruitment ?

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

- Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .
- Click on the "Online Application Form" and complete the registration process by clicking "Register Now".
- In the next stage, fill your all personal and educational details and upload necessary documents.
- At the end, submit the form.
- Don't forget to take a print out of the application form .

Important Dates of NHIDCL Deputy Manager Recruitment 2026

- Starting date of submission of online application: 8th July 2026
- Last date of submission of online application: 5th August 2026

# BTC conducts orientation for newly appointed MBBS doctors

## Medical officers posted in rural Chirang and Kokrajhar urged to strengthen public healthcare

**HT Correspondent**  
**KOKRAJHAR, July 10:** The Health and Family Welfare Department of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) on Friday organised an orientation programme for newly appointed MBBS Medical Officers posted for one-year rural service in Chirang and Kokrajhar districts.

The programme was held at the Administrative Staff College, Bodofa Cultural Complex, Chandamari, Kokrajhar.

BTC Executive Member for Health and Family Welfare, Derhasat Basumatary, attended the programme and extended his best wishes to the newly appointed doctors as they begin their careers in public service.

Addressing the participants, Basumatary emphasised the crucial role of Medical Officers in strengthening the public healthcare system and ensuring equitable ac-



cess to quality healthcare services in rural and remote areas.

He urged them to discharge their duties with sincerity, compassion, professionalism and a strong commitment to patient care.

He also encouraged the doctors to actively participate in national health programmes, disease prevention initiatives, maternal and child healthcare services and community-based health interventions.

Stressing the importance of ethical medical practice, teamwork and continuous learning, he called for close coordination with healthcare workers and local communities to improve health outcomes.

The orientation programme was aimed at familiarising the newly recruited Medical Officers with the healthcare delivery system, administrative procedures, public health programmes and their responsibilities during their rural postings.

Senior officials of the BTC Health and Family Welfare Department, district health officials, faculty members and resource persons also attended the programme and interacted with the participants.

The department expressed confidence that the newly appointed Medical Officers would play a significant role in strengthening healthcare services and improving the health and well-being of people in Chirang and Kokrajhar districts.

## Demow Anchalik Karmachari Parishad forms new committee

**HT Correspondent**  
**DEMOW, July 10:** The Demow Anchalik Karmachari Parishad constituted its new working committee for the 2026-2028 term at a meeting held at Rajabari Government A-Class Primary School on Friday.

The meeting was presided over by Rajen Changmai, while Sekhar Jyoti Dowari outlined the objectives of the meeting.

Akhil Borgohain, Keshab Deori, Jugal Prasad Gogoi and Deba Kakoty were elected as advisers to the Parishad.

Rajen Changmai was elected president. Hari Prasad Sahu, Ritu-parna Gogoi, Ruhini Deori and Porokh Gogoi were chosen as vice-presidents, while Sekhar Jyoti Dowari was elected secretary.

Radhanath Suri, Dipti Borah, Mohammad Manjur Ali, Jintu Chetia, T Borgohain and Diganta Chetia were elected assistant secretaries.

The newly formed committee will serve the organisation for the 2026-2028 term.

## AIDSO protests renaming of Swahid Ratan Kachari Road



**HT Correspondent**

**TEZPUR, July 10:** The Sonitpur district committee of the All India Democratic Students' Organisation (AIDSO) staged a protest in Tezpur on Friday against the reported renaming of the Dhekiajuli-Batasipur connecting road, originally named after freedom fighter Swahid Ratan Kachari, as Shyama Prasad Mookerjee Road.

The protest was held at Nikamul Chariali, where AIDSO members and supporters organised a sit-in demonstration, expressing opposition to the government's decision.

Raising slogans, the protesters said

the road commemorates Swahid Ratan Kachari, who was martyred in British police firing during the Quit India Movement at Dhekiajuli in 1942, and demanded that its original name be retained.

Addressing the gathering, AIDSO State Council member and Sonitpur district president Nayan Moni Chowdhury alleged that renaming the road amounted to disrespecting a martyr of India's freedom movement.

He asserted that the people of Assam would oppose the move and demanded that the government immediately restore the name of the road to Swahid Ratan Kachari Road.

## Hojai senior citizens seek more police personnel

**HT Correspondent**  
**HOJAI, July 10:** The Hojai District Senior Citizens' Association on Friday submitted a memorandum to the District Commissioner and the Senior Superintendent of Police, urging immediate steps to address an alleged shortage of police personnel and improve law and order in the district.

A seven-member delegation of the association met the district officials and expressed concern over inadequate police strength at Hojai, Lanka, Jamunamukh, Lumding and other police stations, stating that the shortage has affected crime prevention and public safety, particularly in Hojai town.

The association alleged that rising incidents of theft, robbery and drug abuse have created fear among residents and called for an increase in the number of police officers and constables at local police stations.

The memorandum also urged the authorities to regulate the movement of e-rickshaws and dumpers in urban areas to ease traffic congestion and reduce accidents, remove illegal encroachments from footpaths to ensure

## Intensive ticket checking drives generate ₹14.44 crore in fare and excess charges

### NFR detects over 1.14 lakh ticketless, irregular passengers in June



**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, July 10:** Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) detected 1,14,633 passengers travelling without valid tickets or with irregular tickets during June 2026 as part of an intensified ticket checking campaign aimed at curbing ticketless travel and ensuring fair travel for genuine passengers.

According to an official statement, the figure marks a nearly 25 per cent increase over the 91,717 cases detected during the corresponding month last year.

The ticket checking drives resulted in the collection of ₹14.44 crore through fare and excess charges during June, registering a 59 per cent increase from ₹9.10 crore realised in June 2025.

Of the total detections, 81,744 passengers were found travelling without tickets, generating ₹11.85

crore in fare and excess charges, while 32,889 passengers were detected with irregular tickets, contributing ₹2.59 crore. NFR also realised ₹46.84 lakh through non-penalty cases during the month, while luggage checking added to revenue by ensuring compliance with railway luggage booking rules.

To strengthen enforcement, NFR conducted 377 intensive ticket checking drives during June, compared to 349 drives in the corresponding period last year.

Ticket checking staff inspected 3,289 trains during the month, a significant increase from 2,217 trains checked in June 2025. The railway's cumulative performance for the first quarter of the 2026-27 financial year also showed substantial growth.

Between April and June 2026, NFR detected 3,35,040 cases of ticketless and irregular travel, generating ₹39.56 crore through fare and excess charges, compared to 2,37,256 cases and ₹22.78 crore during the same period of the previous financial year.

An additional ₹1.42 crore was realised through non-penalty cases during the quarter.

NFR attributed the improved performance to regular surprise inspections and special drives conducted by its Commercial Department, ticket checking staff and field officials.

The railway appealed to passengers to travel only with valid tickets, carry proper travel authority and book excess luggage in accordance with railway rules to ensure safe, transparent and hassle-free travel.

## Sattriya dance workshop begins at Nityalaya Demow

**HT Correspondent**  
**DEMOW, July 10:** A Sattriya dance workshop is underway at Nityalaya Demow as the institution enters its silver jubilee year, marking 25 years of promoting the classical dance form.

The workshop, which began on July 6, was inaugurated with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp by Dr. Pranjal Bezboruah.

Renowned Sattriya exponent Prabhakar Goswami is conducting training sessions for the participants, while Padma Bhushan awardee and eminent classical dancer Jatun Goswami is also imparting training during the workshop.

As part of its silver jubilee celebrations, Nityalaya Demow will formally inaugurate its year-long observance at the Jyoti Bishnu Cultural Building in Demow on July 11. Padma Bhushan Jatun Goswami will attend the inaugural programme as the chief guest.

The institution has been working to promote and preserve the Sattriya dance tradition in the region over the past 25 years.



safe movement of pedestrians, and intensify action against theft, robbery and the illegal drug trade.

Association secretary Anup Kumar Barthakur said the District Commissioner and the Senior Superintendent of Police acknowledged the concerns raised and assured the delegation that immediate steps would be taken wherever possible.

Barthakur also said the associ-

ation would soon meet State Home Minister Pijush Hazarika and the State Home Commissioner to press its demands.

The delegation was led by Barthakur and included executive president Dr Samsul Haque, vice-president Mukut Dev Goswami, Krishna Kant Dutt, executive member Dayanand Neg, Vinod Bihari Singh and Sankar Bhandari.

## Two held after alleged beef seized in Jorhat

### 24 kg of suspected banned meat recovered; samples sent for forensic examination

**HT Correspondent**  
**JORHAT, July 10:** Two persons were arrested in Jorhat on Friday after police recovered 24 kg of suspected banned animal meat, believed to be beef, from their residence during a raid.

According to police sources, acting on specific information, a police team recovered the suspected meat from the residence of Bablu Ansari, a goat meat seller, located behind his meat outlet on JB Road near

the century-old Puja Mandir. The second accused, identified as Sonu Ansari, was also residing in the same house. Both have been booked under relevant provisions of the law.

Police said officials of the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department, following a preliminary examination, suspected the seized meat to be that of a cow.

Samples have been sent to the State Forensic Science Laboratory in Guwa-

hati for confirmation. A commotion broke out during the raid as Bablu Ansari and his family allegedly shouted at and abused media personnel who had arrived to cover the operation.

This is the second such seizure in Jorhat within the past two months. On May 26, police had recovered suspected beef from an illegal slaughterhouse on Kabristan Road and arrested one person in connection with the case.

The organisers recalled that Sikhism has a long association with

## Indigenous Sikhs to hold Gana Sabha for 206-year settlement celebrations

**HT Correspondent**  
**NAGAON, July 10:** Indigenous Sikhs of Assam will hold a Gana Sabha at Borkola Central Gurdwara on July 12 to discuss the future of the Assamese Sikh community and initiate preparations for celebrating 206 years of the community's permanent settlement in the state.

According to the organisers, the meeting will focus on the present condition of the Assamese Sikh Santha, the community's traditional social organisation, and deliberate on measures to strengthen it.

It will also begin the process of constituting a state-level organising committee for the proposed celebration.

The organisers recalled that

Assam. Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism, visited the state during his first Udasi in 1505, while the ninth Sikh Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur, travelled to Assam in 1667.

The permanent settlement of Sikhs in Assam dates back to the Burmese invasion between 1818 and 1822, when Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab sent 500 Sikh soldiers under the leadership of Chaitanya Singh to assist Ahom king Swargadeo Chandrakanta Singha in fighting the Burmese forces.

Following the Battle of Hadirachaki, many of these soldiers settled permanently in Assam, laying the foundation of the indigenous Sikh community.

The organisers noted that although the bicentenary of the community's

settlement should have been celebrated in 2020, based on the establishment of Gurdwara Mataji at Chaparmukh in 1820, the event could not be organised due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent Lok Sabha and Assembly elections.

A special general meeting held at Borkola Central Gurdwara on June 7 resolved to organise a grand celebration of the community's settlement in Assam and entrusted senior members with convening a wider meeting to form a state-level organising committee.

The convening committee has appealed to indigenous Sikhs from across Assam to participate in large numbers and contribute to the successful organisation of the proposed celebration.

## One killed, two injured in road mishap

**HT Correspondent**  
**BAKALIAGHAT, July 10:** A youth was killed and two others sustained critical injuries after a scooter reportedly went out of control and met with an accident at Bakaliaghat in the early hours of Friday.

The deceased was identified as Sarman Teron, who died on the spot.

The injured, Khorsing Rongpi and Sarman Ingti, were rushed to Diphu Medical College and Hospital (DMCH), where they are undergoing treatment.

Their condition is stated to be critical. According to preliminary information, the three were travelling from Nagaon to Diphu on a scooter when the rider allegedly lost control of the vehicle, resulting in the crash.

Sources said the scooter did not have a registration number plate.

Police have registered a case and launched an investigation into the incident.

## CM's FIFA Fan Park opens in Silchar



**HT Correspondent**

**SILCHAR, July 10:** Football enthusiasts in Barak Valley got their own World Cup viewing arena recently with the inauguration of the Chief Minister's FIFA Fan Park at the District Sports Association (DSA) Stadium in Silchar.

The Fan Park, jointly organised by the Assam Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC) and the Cachar district administration, was inaugurated by Rajya Sabha MP Kanad Purkayastha.

The venue witnessed a large turnout of football fans, students and local residents, with the live screening of the FIFA World Cup 2026 quarter-final between France and Morocco drawing a packed crowd.

Spectators cheered their favourite teams as the giant LED screen recreated the excitement of a stadium atmosphere.

Inaugurating the Fan Park, Purkayastha congratulated the organisers for creating a platform that enables people from all walks of life to experience the

FIFA World Cup together. He said the initiative would strengthen community participation while celebrating one of the world's most popular sporting events.

Describing sports as an important tool for character building, the MP said games instil discipline, teamwork, determination and mutual respect.

He noted that football transcends barriers of language, religion and nationality, bringing people together through a shared passion for the game.

Encouraging the youth to draw inspiration from the tournament, Purkayastha said the values displayed on the football field, including commitment, perseverance and teamwork, are equally important for achieving success in life.

The district administration has made comprehensive arrangements at the venue, including seating, lighting, security and crowd management, to ensure a safe and comfortable viewing experience throughout the tournament.

Among those present were Cachar Zilla Parishad President Kankan Narayan Sikdar, Additional District Commissioner Devid Kumar Borah, Assistant Commissioner Arunabh Choudhury, District Sports Association President Shibabrata Dutta, Assistant Nazir and Sadou Asom Zilla Prashasan Karmachari Sangha, Cachar District Unit Secretary Bikash Dutta, senior officials, representatives of sports organisations and a large number of football enthusiasts.

The Chief Minister's FIFA Fan Park will remain open throughout the FIFA World Cup 2026, allowing football fans across Barak Valley to watch the remaining matches, including the semi-finals and final, on the giant LED screen in a community setting.

## Aaranyak promotes scientific beekeeping in Manas landscape

### Training equips rural youth with sustainable livelihood and market skills

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, July 10:** Conservation organisation Aaranyak has organised a three-day hands-on training programme on scientific beekeeping for communities living around Manas National Park, aiming to strengthen biodiversity conservation while promoting sustainable livelihoods.

The programme brought together 12 farmers and rural youth from fringe villages adjoining the national park and trained them in scientific beekeeping practices using Apis cerana, an indigenous honeybee species well suited to the ecological conditions of Northeast India.

The training was conducted by experienced beekeeper Naba Mahanta, who provided technical guidance on hive establishment, colony management, seasonal maintenance, multiplication, honey harvesting, processing, filtration, storage and quality management.

Participants were also trained in preventing and managing pests, predators and diseases affecting bee



colonies.

The inaugural session was attended by Bhuyanpara Range Forest Range Officer Mrinal Daimary, who encouraged participants to adopt scientific beekeeping as a sustainable livelihood that supports biodiversity conservation while enhancing household income.

Recognising the importance of

market access, the programme also included sessions on honey value chains, packaging, labelling, record-keeping, enterprise planning and market linkages to help participants develop beekeeping into a viable rural enterprise.

The first two days featured classroom sessions and practical demonstrations, while the final day included

an exposure visit to Dakshin Makhra, where participants observed both traditional and scientific beekeeping systems.

They also received practical training on colony division, hive maintenance, transferring bee colonies into scientific bee boxes and the management of stingless bees, whose honey has growing commercial value.

Aaranyak said it would continue to support participants through regular field visits and a dedicated WhatsApp group to provide technical guidance, mentoring and knowledge sharing.

The programme was coordinated by Aaranyak's Detsung Basumatary with support from Momita Narzary, Bijay Basumatary, Daimalu Basumatary and Pankaj Das.

The training was organised under the IUCN-KfW-supported project, "Securing Population of Tigers, Habitats and Biological Corridors in Assam, India," which aims to promote community-led conservation and nature-based livelihoods in the Manas landscape.

## Missing woman's body recovered Flood toll rises to seven in Arunachal

**ITANAGAR, July 10:** The death toll in the current wave of floods in Arunachal Pradesh has risen to seven after the body of a woman, who had gone missing along with another person, was recovered in Papum Pare district, an official report said on Friday.

Police on Thursday recovered the body of 43-year-old Taw Ajini from the Lichi area in the district.

She was swept away in the flash flood at Possa in Keyi Panyor district on June 24 and had remained untraced despite continued search efforts, according to a report from the State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC).

One woman is still missing after the monsoon deluge struck the district.

Two labourers from Bihar were killed, and four others injured after a rain-triggered landslide hit a construction site in Lohit district on Wednesday.

Earlier, one person was killed in a landslide at Sarti village in Anjaw district on June 28, while three others died in the flash flood at Possa in Keyi Panyor district.

Meanwhile, houses, roads and crops were damaged as fresh floods and landslides were reported across three districts of the northeastern state.

The fresh incidents were reported from West Kameng, Upper Subansiri and Tirap during the last 24 hours, the SEOC said.

The affected villages included Khellong and Pangma in West Kameng; Riamukhi, Tachiring, Baring,



Nungnu, Esso, Gingo, Maling, Kamsar, Kamda, Dupit, Ayeng, Rigia and Duchok in Upper Subansiri; and Khonsa town in Tirap.

In the ongoing spell of rain-triggered floods and landslides, at least 94,201 people have been affected across 333 villages in 237 circles spread over 26 districts, the report said.

Floods and landslides have caused extensive damage to agriculture and public infrastructure across the state.

A total of 334.2 hectares of crop area has been affected, including 185.5 hectares under horticulture and 148.7 hectares under agriculture, while 1,010 hectares of forest area have also been impacted.

Infrastructure losses include damage to 131 roads, 19 bridges, 21 culverts, 191 water supply systems, 58 government buildings, 21 power lines, 224 electric poles,

four hydel projects, seven retaining walls, seven flood protection walls, two hospitals and three schools, besides drainage networks and other public assets.

Hundreds of houses have also been damaged across the state, the report said.

Four relief camps continue to operate in Keyi Panyor, where 252 people are currently taking shelter. Rescue and relief operations are continuing in the affected districts.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), rainfall is expected to continue across the state till Tuesday, with the weather office issuing an orange alert (Be prepared) for East Kameng on Friday, warning of heavy rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms and lightning.

A yellow alert (Be aware) has been issued for West Kameng, Tawang, Lower Subansiri, Papum

Pare, East Siang and Tirap on Friday, while the remaining districts have not been placed under any major weather warning.

On Saturday, a yellow alert has been issued for Tawang, East Kameng, Pakke-Kessang, Papum Pare, Lower Subansiri, West Siang, Siang, Lower Dibang Valley, Lohit, Anjaw, Namsai, Changlang and Longding, while the rest of the state is likely to remain free from any significant weather warning.

The IMD has forecast a further improvement in weather conditions on Monday, with yellow alerts confined to Tawang, West Kameng, East Kameng, Pakke-Kessang, Papum Pare, Lower Subansiri, Lower Siang, West Siang, Siang, Lower Dibang Valley, Lohit, Anjaw, Namsai, Changlang and Longding.

On Tuesday, isolated heavy rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms and lightning is likely over West Kameng, Tawang, East Kameng, Pakke-Kessang, Papum Pare, Lower Subansiri, Lower Siang, West Siang, Siang, Upper Siang, Dibang Valley, Lower Dibang Valley, Lohit, Anjaw, Changlang and Longding, while no warning has been issued for the remaining districts. (PTI)

## Nagaland Guv reviews AYUSH healthcare services, tribal welfare initiatives



**KOHIMA, July 10:** Nagaland Governor Nand Kishore Yadav on Friday reviewed the functioning of a 50-bed AYUSH hospital near Kohima and stressed strengthening healthcare delivery.

During his visit to the hospital, the governor said the medical establishment has emerged as a centre of healing and hope for the people of Nagaland and noted that the institution, inaugurated on March 4, 2022, is the third Integrated AYUSH Hospital in the country, reflecting the government's commitment to promoting holistic and integrative healthcare, an official statement issued by the Lok Bhavan said.

The governor said the hospital served as Nagaland's first designated COVID-19 hospital, providing critical healthcare services during one of the state's most challenging periods.

Highlighting the importance of India's traditional systems of medicine, he said AYUSH complements modern healthcare by emphasising preventive care, holistic wellness and healthy living.

With growing awareness of integrative healthcare, he said institutions such as the Integrated AYUSH Hospital have an increasingly important role in providing accessible, affordable and patient-centric services.

ices.

Hospital officials informed the governor that the facility, located about 24 km from Kohima on the Phek-Meluri-Zunheboto Road, serves eight surrounding villages and offers ayurveda, yoga and naturopathy, and homeopathy services with a workforce of 43 staffers.

Since its inception, the hospital has recorded more than 10,050 outpatient consultations and treated 560 inpatients up to June 2026.

On Thursday, Yadav chaired a review meeting of the Tribal Affairs Department at Lok Bhavan to assess the department's ongoing programmes, achievements and future plans.

Officials presented the progress of major schemes, including projects under Article 275(1), Development Action-Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan (DA-JGUA) and Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAAGY), besides community infrastructure projects across tribal areas.

The meeting also reviewed the progress of Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) in the state.

Officials said three EMRSes are currently functional with a total enrolment of 751 students, and all three schools recorded a 100 per cent pass percentage in the HSLC Examination 2026.

The governor was also briefed on the construction of new EMRS campuses in various districts and the challenges affecting timely completion, including land-related issues and inadequate power and water connectivity. Yadav emphasised the need for coordinated efforts to ensure the timely completion of projects and effective implementation of tribal welfare programmes. (PTI)

## Mizoram battles rain fury; over 80 families moved to safer places



**AIZAWL, July 10:** Over 80 families have been evacuated to safer locations after the Khawthlangtui river overflowed in Mizoram's Lunglei district bordering Bangladesh following incessant rainfall over the past week, officials said on Friday.

Landslides, rockfalls and other rain-related incidents have also been reported at more than 29 locations across the state, though no casualty or loss of life has been reported so far, they said.

In Tabung town of Lunglei district, located close to the Bangladesh border, 42 families were evacuated after their houses were fully or partially submerged due to the rising water level of the Khawthlangtui river, officials said.

Similarly, around 40 families have been evacuated to safer places from Tipperghat village under Tabung sub-division due to floods, they said.

Officials also said National Highway 54 has been blocked due to a massive landslide on the out-

skirts of Bualte village in Lunglei district, where several tourists have been stranded for the past four days.

The landslide continues to cut off the southern districts of Lawngtlai and Sialha from the rest of the state.

The Aizawl-Thenzawl-Lunglei highway has also been blocked due to massive rockfall or landslides at Ngaizel on the southern outskirts of Aizawl, officials said.

Meanwhile, state Disaster Management and Rehabilitation (DM&R) Minister Lalnilawma urged residents to remain vigilant as continuous rainfall has triggered disasters at several locations across the state. The minister inspected a landslide site near the Ngaizel filling station on Thursday and expressed concern over the difficulties faced by families.

He assured that financial assistance and other relief measures for disaster-affected people would be extended promptly and transparently in accordance with prescribed rules and legal provisions. (PTI)

## Manipur CM extends birthday greetings to Rajnath Singh

**IMPHAL, July 10:** Manipur Chief Minister Y. K. Hemchandra Singh on Friday extended birthday greetings to Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on his 74th birthday.

In a social media post, the chief minister said, "Warm birthday greetings and heartfelt best wishes to Rajnath Singh."

"On this special occasion, I pray to the Almighty to bless him with good health, long life, and unwavering strength in his dedicated service to the nation," he said.

He also prayed to God to bestow upon the defence minister "wisdom, vision, and statesmanship to lead with distinction and further strengthen India's progress and security".

"Wishing him abundant peace, prosperity, happiness, and many more years of devoted public service", Singh added. (PTI)

## Fish farmers key pillar of rural economy, food security: Sikkim CM

**GANGTOK, July 10:** Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang on Friday lauded the contribution of fish farmers to the state's rural economy and said his government was committed to transforming the fisheries sector into a modern, self-reliant and sustainable industry.

In a message posted on social media on National Fish Farmers Day, Tamang described fish farmers as "an indispensable pillar of rural livelihoods, food security, and the state's economic prosperity" and extended greetings to fish farmers and fisheries stakeholders across the state and the country.

"The government of Sikkim is committed to the welfare and empowerment of every fish farmer. We firmly believe that a self-reliant fisheries sector is integral to the larger vision of a self-reliant state," Tamang said.

Highlighting the state's recent initiatives, the CM pointed to the successful organisation of the first-ever Sikkim Fish Festival in Siliguri, which showcased the state's premium rainbow trout, indigenous fish varieties and value-added products.

He said the event created new marketing opportunities for local producers and reflected the government's efforts to expand the reach of Sikkim's fisheries sector beyond the state. (PTI)

## East Siang Police concludes internship for JNC students Three-week programme offers hands-on exposure to policing and criminal justice system



**HT Correspondent**

**PASIGHAT, July 10:** The East Siang District Police, in collaboration with Jawaharlal Nehru College (JNC), Pasighat, concluded a three-week Police Internship Programme for 42 students on July 6, providing them with first-hand exposure to policing and the criminal justice system.

Conducted from June 16 to July 6 under the leadership of Superintendent of Police Pankaj Lamba, IPS, the programme aimed to enhance legal awareness, civic responsibility, transparency and police-public relations.

It also complemented the district police's ongoing 'Know Your Police Station: Youth Engagement Programme', which seeks to strengthen engagement between

the police and young people through experiential learning.

During the internship, students gained practical knowledge of police station functioning, including FIR registration, investigation procedures, maintenance of police records and the use of the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS).

They also interacted with investigating officers and police personnel to understand the role of the police in law enforcement, crime prevention and public service.

The participants attended sessions on road safety, traffic management, disaster preparedness, fire safety, CPR and first aid, women and child protection laws, victim-centric policing and the functioning of the Women Police

Station. Demonstrations by the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) and Fire and Emergency Services provided practical exposure to rescue operations and emergency response.

As part of the programme, the interns also visited various branches of the Office of the Superintendent of Police, including the Establishment, Accounts and Wireless branches, where they were introduced to police administration, financial management, communication systems and the use of technology in policing.

Speaking on the occasion, SP Pankaj Lamba said meaningful engagement with students is essential to building trust between the police and the community.

He said such initiatives help young citizens better understand policing, encourage responsible citizenship and promote greater public participation in creating a safe and law-abiding society.

The East Siang District Police thanked the principal, faculty members and students of Jawaharlal Nehru College for their cooperation and participation, and reaffirmed its commitment to organising similar programmes in the future to strengthen community-oriented policing and youth engagement.

## Manipur home minister holds security review meeting with CRPF chief

**IMPHAL, July 10:** Manipur Home Minister Govindas Konthoujam on Friday said he held a "productive discussion" on the prevailing security situation in the state with a team of senior CRPF officers led by Director General Gyanendra Pratap Singh.

The meeting was held on Thursday evening, days after two Assam Rifles personnel were killed in an attack by suspected militants in Ukhrul district.

In a post on X, Konthoujam said, "It was a pleasure to meet Gyanendra Pratap Singh, DG CRPF, along with Vitol Kumar, SDG (Ops), Raja Shrivastava, SDG (NEZ), R.N. Das, IGP (Manipur & Nagaland Sector), and S.K. Singh, DIG, SSO to DG, CRPF."

The minister said they "held a productive discussion on the prevailing security situation in Manipur" and reaffirmed their "shared commitment to strengthening coordination, enhancing operational preparedness, and ensuring lasting peace and security in the state."

He also appreciated the dedication and invaluable service of the CRPF in safeguarding the nation and protecting the people of Manipur.

"Together, we remain committed to a secure, stable, and peaceful Manipur," he added. (PTI)

## NIA-led team arrests two in connection with killing of six Naga civilians in Manipur

**IMPHAL, July 10:** A team of security officials led by the National Investigation Agency arrested two persons from Manipur's Kangpokpi district on Friday morning for their alleged involvement in the killing of six Naga civilians, police said.

According to them, the operation was carried out by a joint team of Manipur Police, NIA and CRPF based on credible inputs.

They launched the operation at Leilon Vaiphei in the early hours of Friday to apprehend two accused who were allegedly involved in the killing of six Naga per-

sons on May 13 in the same village.

Police said that a woman, Ayingbi, and another person, Pradip, were apprehended from the Kuki-Zo village.

The bodies of six Naga civilians were recovered from the vicinity of Leilon Vaiphei village on June 10, triggering protests by Naga and Meitei communities demanding the arrest of the perpetrators.

Naga groups had also blocked all routes to Kangpokpi district, leading to a massive surge in the prices of essential commodities in the Kuki-Zo majority district.

Days after the bodies were found, Kuki Zo Council (KZC) chairman Henlien-

thang Thanglet apologised for the incident and called for an impartial investigation into all acts of violence linked to the ongoing ethnic strife in Manipur.

"I admit the Kuki-Zo people made a grave mistake in killing the six Naga civilians. It was done out of emotion. I strongly condemn it. I am very sorry and apologise on behalf of my people," he had told a press conference.

However, a day later, KZC stated that certain portions of Thanglet's remarks had been "misconstrued as an admission of responsibility by the Kuki-Zo community". (PTI)

## Hapoli Forest Division marks 77th Van Mahotsav

Community participation highlights commitment to conservation in Lower Subansiri

**HT Correspondent**

**ZIRO, July 10:** The Hapoli Forest Division celebrated the 77th Van Mahotsav with a series of plantation drives and awareness programmes across Lower Subansiri district, reaffirming its commitment to environmental conservation and sustainable development.

The celebrations were organised across the Hapoli, Talley Valley, Boasimla, Yachuli, Tale Wildlife Sanctuary and Raga forest ranges, drawing participation from local residents, public representatives, village leaders, students and other stakeholders.

As part of the week-long programme, the Forest Division carried out tree plantation drives and educational campaigns aimed at increasing green cover and creating awareness about the importance of forests in maintaining the ecological balance of Arunachal Pradesh.

A spokesperson for the Hapoli Forest Division said the active involvement of



local communities was central to the success of the programme, adding that engaging village communities and the younger generation would help foster a shared sense of responsibility towards conserving forests and biodiversity.

The division said the celebrations reflected the growing partnership between

the Forest Department and the people of Lower Subansiri in promoting environmental resilience and the sustainable management of natural resources.

The Hapoli Forest Division thanked all participants and stakeholders for contributing to the successful observance of the 77th Van Mahotsav.

## Police seize drugs worth over ₹ 414 cr in first half of 2026 in Mizoram

**AIZAWL, July 10:** The Mizoram Police on Friday said the force has seized narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances valued at more than ₹ 414.66 crore and arrested 312 people, including 57 foreigners, during the first six months of the current year in the state.

The police also registered 219 cases under various provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act between January 1 and June 30, according to a statement.

Methamphetamine accounted for the largest haul, with 315,903 kg of the contraband valued at ₹ 252.72 crore, seized in 38 cases. The operations led to the arrest of 62 people, including 16 foreign nationals.

Police also seized 34,923 kg of heroin

worth Rs 69.85 crore in 156 cases, arresting 211 persons, including 39 foreign nationals.

Other seizures during the period included 20,628 kg of crystal meth valued at ₹ 61.88 crore, 22,286 kg of morphine worth ₹ 22.29 crore, 141,492 kg of opium valued at ₹ 7.07 crore, 60,681 kg of ganja worth ₹ 30.34 lakh, 214.4 kg of codeine valued at ₹ 25.22 lakh, and 30 kg of alprazolam worth Rs 30 lakh.

The total value of all narcotics and psychotropic substances seized during these six months was over ₹ 414.66 crore, the statement said.

The police said the figures reflected the force's sustained efforts to curb drug trafficking but also underscored the magnitude of the narcotics menace confronting the state. (PTI)

No.JDB/15-FC/13/2025-26/8501

Date 08/07/2026

### NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed Tenders affixing a non-refundable Court fee stamp amounting Rs. 8.25 (Rupees eight & twenty five paise) only with a validity period of 180 Days which will subsequence to be converted and drawn up in the printed of F-2 form are invited from the registered Contractor of Class-I (A, B, C), Class-II, Class-III category of Assam PWD (Roads & Building) and BTC for the following works under 15-FC(United) fund for the year 2024-25 during 2025-26 under Jalab Dev. Block of BTC area. The Tenders will be received by the undersigned up to 2.30PM on 30/07/2026 and will be opened on the same date & place at 3.30PM.

Sl. No.	Name of Scheme	Tender Value (In Rs.)	Bid Security	Cost of BID documents (D/D) @ 0.03% (Approx.)	Time of Completion
1	Const. of road with CC Block road from Bugali Boro house to Tungga Kherkatary house at Gwthbani village (ID-246, AC-126134161)	Rs.10,00,000/-	Rs. 10,000/- @ 1% for ST/SC/OBC & Rs. 20,000/- @ 2% for General	Rs. 300/-	3 (Three) months from the date of issue of work order
2	Const. of road with CC Block road from Sena Boro house via Nijay Narzary house to Rajabil Bathou Mandir (ID-337, AC-126134206)	Rs.12,00,000/-	Rs. 12,000/- @ 1% for ST/SC/OBC & Rs. 24,000/- @ 2% for General	Rs. 360/-	3 (Three) months from the date of issue of work order

Details NIT may be seen at the office of the undersigned from 08/07/2026 to 30/07/2026 up to 1.00PM. The contractor should be attested copy of latest Registration certificate, Labour licence, Income Tax, GST, PAN, Aadhar, Caste etc. The BTC authority reserves the right of accepting or rejecting the tender papers without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/-  
Block Development Officer,  
Jalab Dev. Block, Jalahghat

IPR(BTC)/C/2026-27/783

## Adityanath targets SP, Congress over Ayodhya

'They questioned the very existence of Lord Ram, fired bullets at Ram devotees'

**AYODHYA (UP), July 10:** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday accused the SP and the Congress of disrespecting Hindu faith, alleging they had earlier allowed namaz to be offered at the Hanumangarhi temple in Ayodhya.

Addressing a public meeting in Bikapur after inaugurating and laying the foundation stone of 217 development projects worth over Rs 432 crore, Adityanath said those who now claim to speak for faith had committed a "sin" by allowing namaz to be offered on the steps of Hanumangarhi.

"They had namaz offered at Hanumangarhi. Can anyone imagine Hanuman Chalisa being recited inside Jama Masjid? Can any government or the Samajwadi Party or the Congress ever make that hap-



pen? If not, then why was this sin committed at Hanumangarhi? Who was responsible for it?" Adityanath said.

The chief minister was apparently referring to an incident from November 2003 when an attempt was made to offer namaz outside the Hanumangarhi, a temple dedi-

cated to Lord Hanuman, but permission was not granted by the local police.

Stepping up his attack, Adityanath said the SP and the Congress had consistently opposed the development of Ayodhya and had also created hurdles in the construction of the Ram temple.

"They questioned the very existence of Lord Ram, fired bullets at Ram devotees and created an identity crisis for Ayodhya. After the double-engine government came to power, the grand Ram temple was built and no one could stop it. Today, lakhs of devotees visit Ayodhya every year," he said.

The CM alleged that the opposition was uncomfortable with the transformation of Ayodhya because it had failed to undertake similar works while in power.

"They oppose Ayodhya today because they could not do these works themselves. They are unhappy that an international airport has been named after Maharishi Valmiki and that projects have been named after Nishad Raj and other revered personalities," he said. (PTI)

## Digvijaya's padayatra against Ram Temple funds theft not a Cong event: Chaudhary

**INDORE, July 10:** Congress central leadership on Friday sought to distance itself from senior leader Digvijaya Singh's proposed padayatra on the issue of alleged theft of offerings at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, saying it is not a party programme, but a personal and non-political event.

Congress general secretary in-charge of Madhya Pradesh Harish Chaudhary maintained it was up to Singh to explain the objective of his foot march.

Talking to reporters in Indore, he also demanded a Supreme Court-monitored investigation into the alleged misappropriation of offerings at the Ram Temple, which is being probed by a special investigation team (SIT) of the Uttar Pradesh police.

Singh (79) recently announced that he would begin a nearly 1,000-kilometer padayatra from Ujjain's Mahakaleswar Temple to Ayodhya on Dussehra (October 20).

Asked whether the former Rajya Sabha MP had obtained permission from the party leadership for this padayatra, Chaudhary replied, "This is not a Congress yatra. Singh himself has stated that this is his personal and non-political jour-



ney. In such a situation, he has every right to decide for what purpose he will undertake this yatra."

Queried whether he himself will join Singh's 1,000-km padayatra, Chaudhary avoided a direct answer, saying how could he tell today whether he would be able to attend people's private events in the next one year.

"Due to political commitments, I am unable to attend private events of even my friends, acquaintances, and even family," claimed the Congress general secretary.

Alleging large-scale misappropriation of donations to the Ram

Temple, Chaudhary targeted the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), saying this act betrayed the faith of millions of devotees.

He demanded that the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, which administers the Ayodhya shrine, be dissolved with immediate effect and replaced by a new, transparent trust represented by religious leaders, administrative experts, and prominent citizens.

Responding to a question, Chaudhary asserted statements made by state Congress president Jitu Patwari regarding the alleged land scam in Ujjain are the party's "official stand". (PTI)

## Food safety law has stringent provisions, but enforcement a challenge: Minister



**MUMBAI, July 10:** The existing law already has stringent provisions against food adulteration, but enforcement often faces delays due to implementation and laboratory-related constraints, said Maharashtra FDA Minister Narhari Zirwal on Friday.

He was responding in the legislative assembly to a demand for life imprisonment or the death penalty for food adulterators.

To a question by BJP MLA Prakash Solanke over the measures taken against a ghee manufacturing unit in Jalna allegedly involved in adulteration, Zirwal said the government will ensure action in such cases.

"Of the eight samples (collected from the Jalna factory), six were found to be substandard. Accordingly, action has been initiated against the company under the food safety law," the minister said.

To the demand for life imprisonment or the death penalty for food adulterators, Zirwal said

the existing law is already stringent, but enforcement often faces delays due to implementation and laboratory-related constraints.

"The law already provides for punishment ranging from a fine of Rs 1 lakh to life imprisonment, even the death penalty, depending on the severity of the offence. Appropriate provisions will be invoked in this case," he said.

Zirwal said the retail outlets of those companies involved in ghee adulteration would be shut immediately and their licences would be cancelled. Arrests would be made if warranted after the investigation and laboratory confirmation.

Replying during Question Hour, Zirwal said criminal cases had already been registered wherever violations were detected during FDA inspections.

"Once the investigation establishes the offence, appropriate legal action will be taken. If arrest is required under the law, arrests will also be made," Zirwal said.

Members questioned why no arrests had been made despite the alleged adulteration and sought immediate action against the Jalna manufacturer. They also demanded permanent cancellation of the factory's licence, closure of its retail outlet and stricter punishment for habitual offenders involved in food adulteration.

Intervening in the discussion, speaker Rahul Narwekar directed the government to obtain complete information on the case and explain to the House why no arrests had been made if an offence was made out prima facie.

Congress MLA Vikas Thakare raised concerns over "food hygiene in the Vidhan Bhavan premises", claiming that a fly was found in a lunch plate served at the Congress legislature party office. "All 288 MLAs have their meals within the Vidhan Bhavan premises. The food served here must be safe and hygienic," Thakare said. (PTI)

## Time to fulfil 'rajdharm': Cong jabs Bhupendra Yadav after aides' removal

**NEW DELHI, July 10:** The Congress on Friday launched a scathing attack on Environment minister Bhupendra Yadav over the removal of four of his aides from his office, saying ministers must feel the urge to take moral responsibility to quit when their closest of aides are "sacked for corruption" and should fulfil their 'rajdharm'.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh cited the example of former prime minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and hit out at the government. "Is the idea of moral responsibility alive in Indian politics? Lal Bahadur Shastri set the highest standards when he resigned as Railway Minister exactly 70 years ago following a train accident in Tamil Nadu. His example is often recalled and has always drawn great admiration but has been very rarely followed, if at all," Ramesh said on X.

"Ministers must feel the urge to take moral responsibility to quit when their closest of close aides are sacked for corruption and four of them that too," he said. If such ministers were aware of what was happening then they too are culpable, and if they claim ignorance, it is even worse and all the more reason for them to depart, Ramesh said.

"It is time to fulfill their rajdharm, as the then Prime Minister had famously reminded the then Chief Minister of Gujarat fourteen years back. This raj-dharma encompasses both moral responsibility and political accountability," the Congress leader said in an apparent reference to then PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee and then Gujarat CM Narendra Modi. The Congress on Thursday alleged that there has been a "gigantic scandal" that has led to the dismissals.

The party had alleged a collapse of governance in the Union environment ministry after four close aides of Yadav were "sacked" in two days.

Ramesh had alleged that the ministry has done little to protect the environment and forests in the country and that the "Paryavaran Mantralay has become a Pravachan Mantralay" (PTI)

## 'One nation, one election' mechanism may be ready for rollout by 2029: Joint panel chief

**PANAJI, July 10:** The joint committee of Parliament examining the bills on simultaneous elections is working to create a mechanism that could make the 'One Nation, One Election' reform fully operational by the 2029 general elections, its chairperson said on Friday.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the panel's two-day meeting in Goa, PP Chaudhary claimed that nearly 99 per cent of civil society stakeholders consulted so far have backed the proposal, which aims to curb an estimated Rs 7 lakh crore economic loss caused by frequent polls. The committee began its deliberations in Goa on the Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill, 2024, with an interaction with chief minister Pramod Sawant and members of his cabinet, seeking their views on the challenges involved in implementing simultaneous elections and ways to address them.

"We had an informal interaction with the chief minister and cabinet ministers, who represent

the people of Goa. We discussed how 'One Nation, One Election' can be implemented, what challenges exist and how they can be mitigated while maintaining a fine balance acceptable to all," Chaudhary said.

He said that the committee has visited several states, including Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana and Delhi, where it interacted with constitutional experts, civil society organisations, educationists and other stakeholders. An overwhelming majority of those consulted have supported the idea of simultaneous elections, said the BJP MP from Pali in Rajasthan.

"We have found that almost 99 per cent of stakeholders, particularly from civil society and various organisations, favour simultaneous elections. The effort now is to evolve a mechanism that is acceptable to all political parties," he said.

Asked about the timeline for implementation, he said the committee was examining various op-

portunities, indicating that the reform could become operational by the time the next general elections are due in 2029.

He said there is also a possibility of bringing some states into alignment before that if political parties and the chief ministers voluntarily agree to synchronise their electoral cycles.

Highlighting the economic rationale behind the proposal, Chaudhary cited findings placed before the high-level committee headed by former President Ram Nath Kovind.

He said that an economic study submitted to the Kovind committee estimated that holding elections separately across the country results in an economic loss of nearly Rs 7 lakh crore, while synchronised elections could generate equivalent gains for the national economy.

"Elections are now not confined to one state. If elections are held anywhere in the country, they have an impact on other states because the economy is interconnected," Chaudhary said. (PTI)

## BJP MLA takes swipe at govt over 12-year delay for response



**MUMBAI, July 10:** The Maharashtra assembly witnessed a rare, light-hearted moment on Friday when BJP MLA Sudhir Mungantiwar used a unique wildlife analogy to slam the state government for a 12-year delay in submitting a response.

Quipping that the House should officially pitch its record-breaking delay to the Guinness World Records, Mungantiwar noted that the water supply department had out-slept the Eastern Pygmy Possum — famed for its 367-day digestive slumber — by sitting on an issue for more than a decade.

"At least send it to the Guinness World Records through your department. It will become a world record in the name of this House," the MLA remarked, eliciting laughs during the Question Hour. (PTI)

## Maharashtra assembly passes bill to reconstitute Ramtek Ram temple trust

**MUMBAI, July 10:** The Maharashtra assembly on Friday passed a bill to reconstitute the public trust for the historic Ram temple at Ramtek, with the Opposition calling for strict eligibility rules to keep politicians and individuals facing charges of financial misconduct out of the institution's management.

Replying to a debate on the legislation to establish the 'Shri Ram Mandir Trust (Ramtek)' under direct government supervision, minister Ashish Jaiswal said that a dedicated management committee and an executive officer will be appointed to safeguard the temple's movable and immovable properties, currently managed by a sub-divisional officer.

Ramtek is a pilgrimage centre located in Nagpur district. The Opposition urged the government to refer the proposed Shri Ram Temple Devasthan Trust (Ramtek) Bill to a joint select committee, objecting to provisions that allow politicians to be appointed to the temple trust and demanding stronger safeguards to ensure transparency.

Participating in the discussion, senior NCP (SP) leader Jayant Patil cautioned against appointing politicians to the trust,



saying it would lead to the politicisation of the temple's affairs.

He alleged that including political representatives in the trust would result in "so much corruption that even the Ayodhya temple would be left behind".

Patil also objected to the proposal to pay daily and travel allowances to trustees, saying temple service should not be remunerated.

He questioned the requirement that trustees submit an affidavit declaring themselves devotees of Lord Ram, argu-

ing that it was contrary to the constitutional principle of secularism.

The NCP (SP) legislator also sought stronger safeguards for handling devotees' donations, including mandatory CCTV surveillance when donation boxes are opened, a transparent system for counting donations and same-day registration of donations.

He further sought a provision barring legislators or local body representatives from using temple funds for purposes outside the temple precincts. (PTI)

## I'm not 'weak, coward' CM like Mamata, says Suwendu

**REJINAGAR (WB), July 10:** West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari on Friday said he is not a "weak and coward" CM like Mamata Banerjee, and asserted that he will not tolerate reckless remarks from elected representatives that can potentially stoke communal tension.

He was referring to Aam Janata Unnayan Party (AJUP) chief Humayun Kabir, an MLA who recently made certain "inflammatory" remarks. Speaking at a BJP rally ahead of the bypoll in Rejinagar in Murshidabad district, the schedule for which is yet to be announced, Adhikari called his predecessor and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee "weak and coward" and stated that his response to such "irresponsible acts" would be diametrically opposite.

"Make no mistake, I am not a weak and coward chief minister like Mamata Banerjee. I will not tolerate reckless comments from elected representatives. I have asked the local MLA to choose his words carefully, keeping in mind the Constitution of the country," the CM said. Alongside Nandigram, a seat that was vacated by Adhikari after he simultaneously won the prestigious Bhabanipur seat where he defeated the TMC chief, bye-elections are likely to take place in Rejinagar after it was given up by Kabir

who also won the Nowda seat.

"The bypolls in Rejinagar will be held in the next 30 to 45 days. We will usher in development here, with whatever demands the voters here may have as against the Hindu-Muslim politics which has been practised for so long in this region," Adhikari said.

He alleged that people of the region have had to endure endless suffering since the previous TMC-led government allegedly stoked the fire of violence across Murshidabad in the name of protests against issues like CAA-NRC and Waqf Act.

On June 29, while addressing the state assembly during the budget session, Adhikari lashed out at Kabir, accusing the Nowda MLA of making inflammatory statements to polarise voters for a bypoll the AJUP leader's son is likely to fight after he vacated the Rejinagar seat.

"I will not allow you (Kabir) to make such reckless and unrestrained public statements ever again. I will not only make him withdraw his statements, but also ensure he thinks multiple times before making such remarks. I assure this House that this would be the last time he makes such comments in public," Adhikari had said, and added that "time has come to teach the Nowda MLA a lesson". (PTI)

## BJP's picks for RS bypolls signal next phase of Bengal's political realignment

**KOLKATA, July 10:** The BJP nominating three former TMC MPs for the Rajya Sabha bypolls immediately after inducting them into its fold signals the ruling party was now focused on consolidating its position in state politics through selective accommodation of opposition leaders and organisational expansion. Sushmita Dev, Sukhendu Sekhar Ray and Prakash Chik Baraik joined the BJP on Thursday and were named the party's candidates for the Rajya Sabha bypolls from West Bengal within hours.

This was the first major induction of former TMC leaders into the BJP since it swept the Assembly polls, signalling that the party's post-election embargo on Trinamool entrants would not extend to leaders it considers politically credible and free from corruption.

The three Rajya Sabha seats fell vacant after Dev, Ray and Baraik resigned from the Upper House of Parliament and quit the TMC following the party's Assembly election defeat. They are now poised to return to Parliament barely a month later, on BJP tickets this time.

After gaining power in the state, BJP leaders had for weeks publicly main-

tained the party would not induct leaders into its fold from TMC at random after repeatedly accusing the previous regime of corruption and misgovernance.

Thursday's decisions suggest the restraint was tactical rather than absolute. The party now appears to be calibrating entry on political utility, public perception and the absence of serious taint.

State BJP president Samik Bhattacharya termed the inductions an "exceptional" case and insisted that it did not mark a departure from the party's earlier position. He said the BJP's doors remained closed to tainted TMC leaders but were open to those who had not indulged in corruption or power abuse.

"We said the doors are closed for Trinamool leaders. We stand by that. But those who did not indulge in corruption... were always welcome to join us in the fight against the TMC and rebuild Bengal," Bhattacharya said.

For opposition leaders reassessing their political future after the Assembly election, the BJP has demonstrated that politically significant entrants can expect not merely accommodation but visible recognition. (PTI)

As many as 1.51 lakh houses have already been completed in the first 100 days

## Over 11 lakh PMAY houses completed in Chhattisgarh in two and half years: Govt

**RAIPUR, July 10:** More than 11 lakh houses have been built under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) in Chhattisgarh over the last two-and-a-half years, with the state recording the highest single-year completion rate in the country, officials said on Friday.

Marking the milestone at an event in Raipur, chief minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Thursday handed over keys to some of the PMAY beneficiaries and released a progress report on the "Mor Gaon-Mor Pani" (My Village-My Water) campaign.

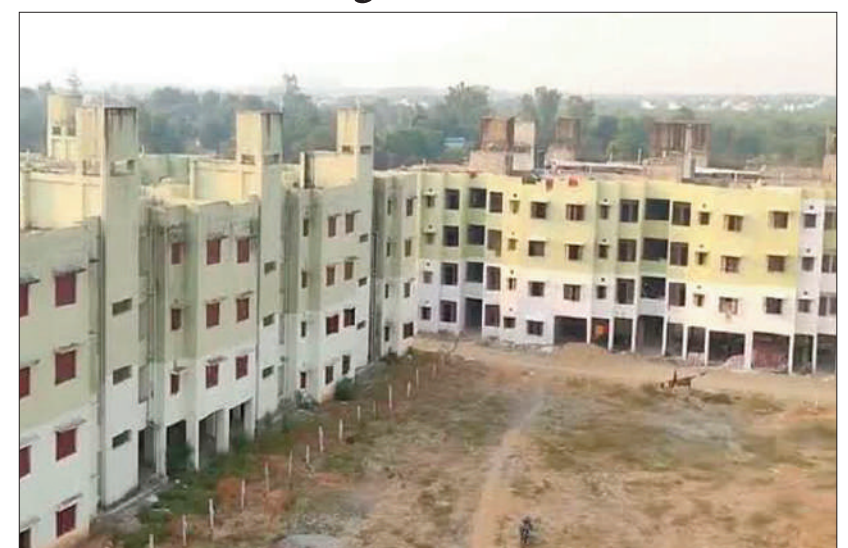
Soon after taking office in December 2023, the state cabinet approved the release of funds for 18 lakh PMAY houses in its first meeting, and sustained efforts have since resulted in the completion of more than 11 lakh houses across the state, an official statement said.

Of these, nearly 6 lakh houses were built in the last financial year, the highest number completed by any state in the country in a single year, it said.

As many as 1.51 lakh houses have already been completed in the first 100 days of the current financial year (April 1 to July 9), with an average of more than 1,500 houses being completed every day, the release said. The chief minister on Thursday also released a compendium highlighting the achievements of the "Mor Gaon-Mor Pani" mega campaign, an official said.

Launched on April 24, 2025, on the occasion of Panchayati Raj Day, the public participation-based campaign aims to promote water conservation and groundwater recharge in rural areas, he said.

Under the campaign, more than one lakh water conservation and augmentation works, worth over Rs 2,000 crore, have been approved and are being implemented through the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) and the state's VB-G-RAM G initiative, he said.



The works include the construction of livelihood ponds, new village ponds, con-

tour trenches and other water-harvesting structures to strengthen water conservation, groundwater recharge and rural livelihoods, the official added. (PTI)

## Bihar to dismiss over 3,000 teachers with fake degrees: Minister



**PATNA, July 10:** Bihar Education Minister Mithilesh Tiwary on Friday said the state government will dismiss more than 3,000 teachers accused of securing appointments using fake degrees and forged educational certificates and initiate disciplinary action against them.

The action follows a detailed investigation by the state Vigilance Bureau into teacher recruitment carried out between 2006 and 2015, he told reporters here.

"The department has been directed to take strict action against more than 3,000 government teachers accused of securing appointments using fake degrees and forged educational certificates. The decision has been taken

following a detailed investigation conducted by the state Vigilance Bureau into recruitment carried out between 2006 and 2015", Tiwary said.

Findings revealed massive irregularities involving fake educational institutions and forged academic documents used during recruitment, he added.

Officials said that based on the report, several FIRs have already been registered against these teachers and they have been named as accused.

"After their dismissal, strict disciplinary action will be initiated against them. The NDA governments at the Centre and in the state follow a policy of zero tolerance towards corruption. I must point out that the vigilance inquiry into the matter was ordered by Nitish Kumar when he was the chief minister," the minister said.

Officials said the education department will recover the salaries and honorariums along with the interest paid to the teachers during their tenure.

"Investigators found that several candidates appointed as teachers had produced certificates issued by fake colleges and several others had used forged educational qualifications to secure teaching jobs," they said.

During the investigation, it was found that some teachers had already resigned before disciplinary proceedings could be initiated against them. (PTI)

## The charge sheet clearly established their roles in the criminal conspiracy NIA chargesheets 6 Kashmiri separatist leaders in 1996 violence case

**NEW DELHI, July 10:** The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Friday filed a charge sheet against six Kashmiri separatist leaders, including Shabir Ahmad Shah, for allegedly instigating large-scale mob violence against police personnel during the funeral procession of a slain terrorist in Srinagar nearly three decades ago.

Besides Shah, three other Hurriyat Conference deceased leaders -- Syed Ali Shah Geelani (the hardline pro-Pakistan supporter), Abdul Ganie Lone, the father of former Jammu and Kashmir minister Sajjad Lone and Mohd Yaqoob Wakeel alias Mohd Yaqoob Wakil -- were also named in the charge sheet filed before the NIA Special Court in Jammu.

Kashmiri separatists Javid Ahmad Mir, former commander of the banned outfit Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), and Shakeel Ahmad Bakshi were also charged.

The charge sheet clearly established their roles in the criminal conspiracy and the common object of unlawful assembly, along with supporting evidence, a statement issued by the probe agency said.

The NIA ascertained during the investigation that all six accused led an unlawful assembly and instigated large-scale



violence against police personnel during the funeral procession of slain terrorist Hilal Ahmad Beigh in Srinagar on July 17, 1996.

Armed terrorists blended with the procession, which was jointly led by the accused Hurriyat leaders, and fired indiscriminately at police personnel during the violence, in which several police officials were injured, the NIA said, adding that government vehicles were also extensively damaged in heavy stone pelting.

As per NIA's findings in the case, the accused Hurriyat leaders had actively in-

cited the violence, raising anti-India, pro-Pakistan and secessionist slogans.

They delivered inflammatory speeches advocating armed struggle, the NIA allegedly further found.

Investigation by the anti-terror agency clearly established that the mob violence was part of a larger, pre-planned criminal conspiracy of the Hurriyat leadership to use the funeral procession as a platform for propagating separatist ideology, mobilising public support against the Government of India, provoking public disorder, and inciting violence against

law enforcement agencies, while demon-

strating the strength of the Hurriyat in Jammu & Kashmir, the statement said.

All six have been charged under relevant provisions of the Ranbir Penal Code, 1989, with criminal conspiracy, attempt to murder, rioting and assault on public servants along with Section 13 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, it said.

The section entails punishment of up to seven years for whoever takes part in or commits, or advocates, abets, advises or incites the commission of any unlawful activity.

The charges against Geelani, Lone and Wakeel stand abated as they passed away during the pendency of the proceedings, the NIA said.

Shah was arrested by the NIA in April this year in the 1996 case, a month after he was released after spending seven years in Tihar jail in a terror funding case. Mir and Bakshi had surrendered before a court in December last year and they are in judicial custody, officials said.

An FIR was initially registered in the case at the Shergarhi police station in Srinagar on the day of the violence. The NIA took over the case in April this year on the directives of the Ministry of Home Affairs. (PTI)

## Govt mandates licensing for medicinal formulations with over 12% alcohol

**NEW DELHI, July 10:** The Centre has withdrawn the licensing exemption for medicinal formulations containing more than 12 per cent of ethyl alcohol and brought them under stricter regulatory oversight, including mandatory licensing and prescription-only sale, to curb misuse and prevent diversion for intoxication, officials said.

Certain medicinal products, including tinctures of cardamom, ginger and other aromatic preparations, have been exempted from licensing requirements under Schedule K of the Drugs Rules, 1945, the ministry said.

Some of these formulations contain high concentrations of ethyl alcohol, in certain cases up to 80-90 per cent volume per volume (v/v), making them susceptible to misuse for intoxication, it said.

References were also received from certain state governments in



this regard, the ministry said.

To address this concern, the government has mandated that all formulations containing more than 12 per cent v/v ethyl alcohol, in quantities exceeding 30 ml, shall no longer be covered under the exemption provided under Schedule K.

Such products will be required to obtain the requisite licences under the Drugs and Cosmetics

Act, 1940, the ministry said.

The amendment also shifts these products to Schedule H1 of the Drugs Rules, 1945, which mandates sale against the prescription of a registered medical practitioner and stricter record-keeping.

"The amendment is expected to strengthen regulatory oversight over those medicinal products containing alcohol, ensuring their supply only through the regulated

pharmaceutical supply chain.

"It will significantly reduce the possibility of diversion and misuse while ensuring their continued availability for legitimate therapeutic use," the ministry said.

The amendments seek to change the part under Schedule K of the Drugs Rules that was misused in certain parts of the country, sources said.

"It allowed certain preparations containing ingredients such as cardamom, ginger and other spices to remain exempt from the prescribed limits on alcohol content. This exemption led to the sale of some products with ethyl alcohol content as high as 80 per cent, despite being marketed as medicinal preparations," a source said.

The proposed changes seek to ensure a uniform regulatory framework across all categories of medicines containing ethyl alcohol. (PTI)

## Fadnavis announces SIT for probe into alleged fraud in Mahatma Phule health scheme

**MUMBAI, July 10:** Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Friday announced the formation of a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe alleged irregularities in Mahatma Jyotirao Phule Jan Arogya Yojana in Nashik district and asserted the guilty would face strict action and misappropriated funds would be recovered.

The announcement was made at a review meeting of the integrated Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana and Mahatma Jyotirao Phule Jan Arogya Yojana held in the state legislature, an official release said.

Fadnavis said the SIT would be headed by Nashik divisional commissioner Praveen Gedam and comprise experts from various departments to conduct a comprehensive probe into the alleged fraud.

Scrutiny carried out by the State Health Assurance Society for the 2024-26 period had identified around 16,000 suspicious insurance claims and surgeries across



the state, of which nearly 9,500 were linked to Nashik district, the CM informed.

The empanelment of five hospitals in the district has already been cancelled in connection with the alleged irregularities, he added.

"The SIT will conduct a thorough investigation. After its report is submitted, strict action will be taken against those responsible and the misappropriated funds will be recovered," the CM said.

Fadnavis said nearly 1.3 million potentially fraudulent cases would

be screened using advanced analytics, with artificial intelligence and data analytics playing a key role in identifying suspicious claims.

Maharashtra Cyber Police would also be involved in tackling cyber-related fraud under the health schemes, he said.

He said the government would carry out special audits of high-value treatment claims, forensic audits of flagged cases and independent verification of suspicious transactions. (PTI)

## ED initiates FEMA investigation against Mumbai-based film producer

**NEW DELHI, July 10:** The Enforcement Directorate has initiated a FEMA investigation and conducted searches against a Mumbai-based film producer and his company on charges of holding undisclosed foreign assets and other alleged irregularities, officials said on Friday.

The central agency conducted searches against Kalanee Impex Ltd. and its director Dharmesh Sangani on Thursday under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA).

The officials alleged Sangani tried to throw his mobile phone from the 13th floor of a building during the search, which was later retrieved by the sleuths. The ED has filed a complaint against Sangani with the Mumbai Police on the charge of destruction of evidence.

Sangani or his company could not be contacted immediately. A response from a film academy he is linked to, is awaited.

It was found during the search that export proceeds from certain overseas buyers were not realised and no extension of time was obtained by the company from the authorised dealer bank, the officials alleged.

They said documents related to "undisclosed" foreign assets and bank accounts was also found during the searches against the company and Sangani, whom they identified as a film producer.

The agency also found "substantial" shareholding of Sangani in an "undisclosed" Canadian company. Officials said "undisclosed" foreign bank accounts in Canada, the US and the UAE have been identified in this case.

The officials claimed that the Customs authorities of the US and the UK were investigating certain transactions of the accused. (PTI)

## 93.95 Cr Ayushman Bharat accounts created: Health Ministry

**NEW DELHI, July 10:** The Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) has emerged as one of the world's largest digital health ecosystems, with over 93.95 crore accounts created, 105 crore health records linked, and 5.33 lakh health facilities and 9.85 lakh healthcare professionals registered on the national digital health registries, the Union health ministry said on Friday.

The initiative has also enabled 2.72 lakh healthcare facilities to adopt ABDM-enabled software, generating around 24 crore scan and register tokens for faster OPD registration and facilitating seamless, consent-based exchange of health information across the healthcare sector, according to an official statement.

The observations were made at the third meeting of the Mission Steering Group chaired by Union Health minister J P Nadda, which reviewed the progress of the Ayush-



man Bharat Digital Mission and deliberated on the roadmap for further strengthening India's digital health ecosystem. Addressing the meeting, Nadda underscored the transformative role of digital public infrastructure in improving access to quality healthcare, enhancing continuity of care and empowering citizens through secure and consent-based access to their health records, the statement said.

He emphasised that technology must continue to serve as a powerful enabler for achieving universal health coverage while ensuring in-

clusiveness, accessibility and ease of use for every citizen.

During the meeting, the Mission Steering Group reviewed the progress on the decisions taken during its previous meeting, including capacity-building initiatives, strengthening of state-level implementation mechanisms, integration of digital health platforms across government programmes, enhanced participation of private healthcare providers and international collaborations for knowledge exchange in digital health.

The Mission Steering Group appreciated the rapid expansion of ABDM across states and Union territories through initiatives such as Model Districts, Model Facilities and Aarogya Setu 2.0, while strengthening integration with flagship government health programmes, including Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY, CGHS, ESIC and Nikshay, the statement said. (PTI)

## Teacher suspended in UP's Ballia for unnatural sexual assault bid on boy

**BALLIA (UP), July 10:** A teacher at a government primary school here has been suspended for allegedly attempting to commit unnatural sexual assault on a 14-year-old boy, an official of the Basic Education Department said on Friday.

District Basic Shiksha Adhikari (BSA) Manish Singh said that Ghulam Mustafa alias Pappu (50), a teacher at the government primary school in Sisotar village was suspended on Thursday.

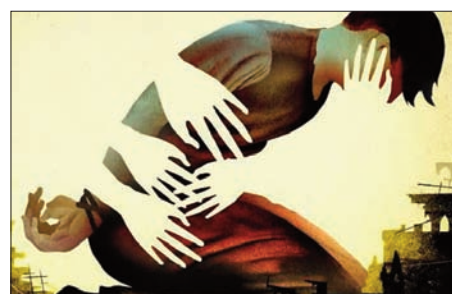
He said orders have been issued for a disciplinary inquiry into the matter. Strict action will be taken against the accused teacher after the inquiry report is received, he added.

According to police, Mustafa called the boy to his house on July 5 on the pretext of some work.

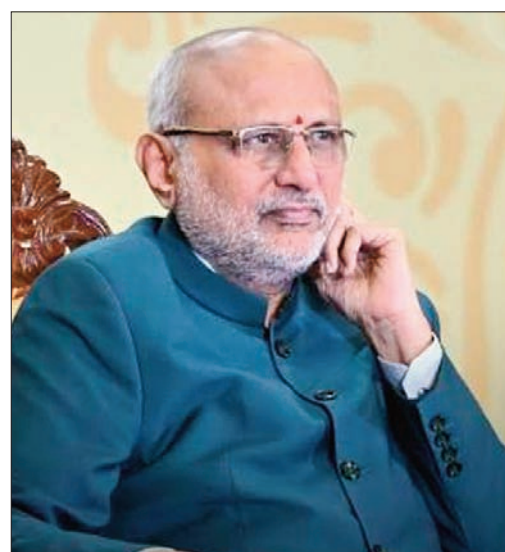
After luring the boy to his house, Mustafa locked the door and attempted to commit unnatural sexual assault on him.

On the basis of a written complaint by the boy, a case was registered against Mustafa under the relevant sections of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

Police said they had arrested the accused teacher on Monday, completed legal formalities and sent him to jail. (PTI)



## He urged citizens to carry forward the timeless message of Vande Mataram Vande Mataram transformed love for motherland into national duty: VP



**SHIMLA, July 10:** Vande Mataram transformed love for the motherland into a sacred national duty, inspiring generations of freedom fighters with courage, sacrifice and hope, said Vice President C P Radhakrishnan on Friday.

He was virtually addressing the inauguration of the Permanent Exhibition on Journey of Vande Mataram and the International Seminar on 'Sardar Patel's Vision: Integration, Unification and Federalism', organised by the Indian Institute of Advanced Study (IIAS), Shimla. Paying tribute to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the VP said that Patel united not only territories but also the hearts of Indians, laying the foundation for one nation, one Constitution and one common destiny.

"Vande Mataram transformed love for the motherland into a sacred national duty, inspiring generations of freedom fighters with courage, sacrifice and hope," he said in a statement issued here. Emphasising that patriotism must be reflected every day through honesty, excellence and unity of purpose, he urged citizens to carry forward the timeless message of Vande Mataram and Sardar Patel's enduring vision by renewing their commitment to a united, confident and inclusive India. Earlier, the VP was to arrive at Shimla to inaugurate a seminar on Sardar Patel's vision, but his programme was cancelled due to bad weather conditions. (PTI)

## MSEDCL restores power to over 2 lakh consumers in flood-hit Vasai-Virar

**THANE, July 10:** Deploying boats to inspect submerged transformers, the Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (MSEDCL) has restored electricity to more than 2 lakh consumers in the flood-ravaged Vasai-Virar region within 12 hours of floodwaters receding, officials said.

Heavy torrential rains pounding the region for five straight days had forced the MSEDCL to suspend supply as a safety measure temporarily, and it launched a round-the-clock restoration operation from Wednesday as the weather cleared, Ajit Iगतपुरिकर, deputy chief public relations officer, Kalyan Region, said on Thursday.

"In several inundated localities, our teams had to use boats to inspect the submerged equipment. We systematically checked the underground cables, transformers, power lines, and poles damaged by the floods, carrying out immediate repairs or replacements wherever necessary," Chandramani Mishra, chief engineer of the Kalyan Zone, said.

As per the MSEDCL release, 528 transformers were submerged under floodwaters, out of which 62 were completely damaged and had to be replaced immediately. Moreover, 91 electricity poles had collapsed, requiring the erection of new poles and the rebuilding of overhead power lines, it stated.

Power was restored to more than 2 lakh consumers only after rigorous testing of all the submerged electrical equipment to prevent any safety hazards, officials said.

Work is underway on a war footing to restore power to the remaining affected pockets, Mishra said.

Incessant rains battered Palghar district earlier this week, inundating several neighbourhoods and submerging railway tracks, affecting Western Railway services. (PTI)

## Maharashtra ATS questions 112 persons over 'links' with Pak-based gangster



**MUMBAI, July 10:** The Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) on Friday launched a statewide operation during which it questioned 112 persons allegedly linked to Pakistan-based gangster Shahzad Bhatti, officials said.

Bhatti is suspected of using social media platforms to allegedly influence youths towards anti-national activities, an ATS official said. He said that teams from all 14 ATS units simultaneously carried out the operation in the morning.

The ATS is questioning the identified individuals to verify the nature of their alleged links with the Pakistan-based gangster and gather further evidence in connection with the probe, the official said. The investigation is underway, and further details are awaited, he added. (PTI)

## BJP councillor, two others booked for assaulting local body official in Raigad

**MUMBAI, July 10:** A case has been registered against a BJP councillor and two others for allegedly assaulting a senior official from the Mahad Municipal Council inside his office in Maharashtra's Raigad district, police said on Friday.

The accused have been identified as BJP councillor Suraj Bamne, Rakesh Patil and Sagar Surve.

On Wednesday, chief officer Dhananjay Sadashiv Kolekar was working in his office at the municipal council's administrative building when the trio allegedly entered the premises and questioned him over ward-related issues.

An argument reportedly broke out between the two sides, which escalated into a physical assault, police said.

Kolekar suffered injuries due to the alleged assault and was admitted to the Mahad Rural Hospital for treatment and medical examination, he said. Acting on Kolekar's complaint, the Mahad City police registered a case against Bamne and others under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, an official said.

The complainant alleged that he was assaulted, abused and threatened with dire consequences by the accused. Following the incident, municipal council staff staged a protest and demanded strict action against those involved, they added. (PTI)



## 'DHAMAAL 4' ACTOR ANJALI ANAND SAYS HER BODY TYPE OFTEN GOT HER ROLES BEFORE TALENT DID

Actor Anjali Anand, best known for her role in "Rocky Rani Kii Prem Kahaani", says she has often been cast because of her body type before filmmakers recognised her acting abilities.

The actor made her acting debut with the OTT series "Untag" and later featured in television show "Dhhai Kilo Prem", among others, where she was often cast in roles centred on her being overweight, with her appearance frequently used as a source of humour.

In Karan Johar's 2023 directorial "Rocky Rani Kii Prem Kahaani", Anand essayed the role of Ranveer Singh's younger sister Gayatri "Golu" Rand-

hawa. "Every opportunity that I have got has always first cast me for my body, then they have seen that she can do more things (referring to her talent) and then they (makers) have given me a different part.

"Untag" was my first part, and it was given to me because of my body, it was later that I got a better part with 'Raat Jawan Hai' and 'Dabba Cartel'." Anand told PTI in an interview.

The actor added that she was yet to receive a film role entirely unrelated to her body, though she was hopeful that things would change in the future.

"In case of films, I'm yet to get something which has nothing

to do with my body," said Anand, who will be seen next in "Dhamaal 4".

Directed by Indra Kumar, "Dhamaal 4" is headlined by Ajay Devgn and also stars Riteish Deshmukh, Arshad Warsi, Sanjay Mishra, Sanjeeda Shaikh, Upendra Limaye, Vijay Patkar and Ravi Kishan, among others.

In the film, Anand is paired opposite Deshmukh.

The actor said she was initially hesitant to take up the film as some of its jokes revolved around body size.

The trailer of the movie also faced backlash for fat-shaming jokes with the makers being criticised for mocking plus-size

women.

"My first instinct was no. I had to marinate with it, sit with it and see how I can make it better," the actor said.

Anand said she chooses to play such characters on her own terms, ensuring they are portrayed as strong rather than as victims.

"The feedback that I got was that some people were triggered that I chose to do something like this because I'm always against people, who are body shaming. I was like if someone is going to do this part, I'm going to do it. I'm not going to give this responsibility to someone else," Anand said.

"I'll never play a part like a

victim, I'll always play a strong (role), even if it is written in a victim kind of way. If there is going to be a fat girl part, I'm going to play it and I'm going to play it so well that I'm going to get more parts like that. The audience perception will change," she said.

Anand described this as a "vicious cycle" and said she took it upon herself to do her bit in the limited opportunities that a plus-size actor like her gets.

"If I don't do 'Dhamaal 4', I'll sit at home. It's not that if I sit at home someone will write a Rs 100 crore film for me, that is not going to happen. So, why would I lose that opportunity to be part of a film and it's on me how I play the part."

Anand said she does not currently feel the need to lose weight to get work, but she might consider it in the future if it became necessary to sustain her career.

"Maybe I'll do it (lose weight) as I've to run my house. I don't think it's necessary for me to do so right now. If I can inspire one or two girls along the way to just see that it is possible (to work without losing weight), then why not do it?" she said.

"Dhamaal 4" is set to release in theatres on Friday. (PTI)

## Aditya Roy Kapur to star in Milap Milan Zaveri's next for T-Series

Actor Aditya Roy Kapur is set to reunite with producer Bhushan Kumar for an "intense, violent, and deeply emotional musical love story", the makers announced on Friday.

The untitled project will be directed by Milap Milan Zaveri, known for movies such as "Satyameva Jayate", "Marjaavaan", "Ek Deewane Ki Deewaniyat" and "Mastii 4".

The film, billed as an intense romantic drama with action elements, will mark another collaboration between Kumar, who heads production banner T-Series, and Kapur after "Aashiqui 2", "Malang", "Ludo" and the recently released "Metro... In Dino".

According to the makers, the project will blend romance, action and music and is expected to go on floors later this year.

Kumar said he was looking forward to collaborating with Kapur once again.

"Our association with Aditya goes back many years and has given us films that audiences continue to love. From 'Aashiqui 2' to 'Metro... In Dino', every collaboration has been special in its own way. We share a great creative comfort, and I'm happy we're coming together once again for a story that's intense, emotional and mounted on a grand scale," the producer said in a statement.

Zaveri said Kapur's screen persona made him a natural choice for the role.

"Aditya has always had a rare ability to portray love with honesty and emotional depth. Ever since 'Aashiqui 2', audiences have connected with him in stories driven by passion and heartbreak. This character is layered, intense, and emotionally complex, and I couldn't think of anyone better to bring that journey to life," the filmmaker said. (PTI)



## Tillotama Shome on 'Satluj' removal: We must have freedom to watch or not watch

Actor Tillotama Shome says the removal of Diljit Dosanjh-starrer "Satluj" from OTT platform ZEE5 is "heartbreaking" and highlights the continuing challenges to creative freedom in Indian cinema.

Based on the life of human rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalra, premiered on streaming platform ZEE5 on July 3 but was taken down two days later.

Government sources later said the film was taken down because of "security concerns" and obligations under IT Rules 2021.

"It is really tough. It is heart-breaking for a filmmaker to put in so much (hard work). In a democracy, we must have the freedom to watch and not watch. We should be adults about it. It is very heart-breaking to not be able to have the freedom to tell the kind of stories that you want to tell," Shome told PTI.

"It is not just about 'Satluj'. This battle and freedom to tell the kind of story, the way we want to tell, has been there since its inception," Shome added.

The film, which was earlier titled "Punjab '95", was stuck in the censorship process for over three years and made headlines after the Cen-

tral Board of Film Certification (CBFC) reportedly sought more than 127 cuts.

On July 3, the film became available on ZEE5 in its original uncensored version before being taken down on July 5.

Shome, best known for her work in films and OTT shows like "Sir", "Lust Stories 2", "Delhi Crime 2", and "Pataal Lok 2", said that filmmaking has always been a complex process.

"When has a film been easy to make? I've not experienced it. But I understand that it's complex, like life, it's an expensive proposition, there will be many opinions, many considerations, not all of which I'll understand or respect, but that doesn't mean it doesn't exist."

Despite the challenges, Shome said that the fundamental human need for storytelling cannot be suppressed.

"The struggle to tell a story

will keep changing its face. We are mad, we love it so much, that it's madness, we will continue telling stories and some will be accepted, some will be rejected," the actor, who features in "Ikka", said.

Directed by Honey Trehan, "Satluj" delves into the life of Khalra who investigated the cremation of thousands of unidentified bodies in Punjab during a 10-year period from 1984 to 1994. He disappeared in 1995.

In 2005, four Punjab Police personnel were convicted for his abduction and murder and sentenced to seven years in prison. Two years later, the Punjab and Haryana High Court enhanced their sentence to life imprisonment.

Shome currently stars in Netflix legal thriller "Ikka", headlined by Sunny Deol and Akshaye Khanna. The movie, directed by Siddharth P Malhotra, was released on the platform on Friday. (PTI)



## Jammu Film Festival sees overwhelming global response, draws 180 entries from 35 countries

The fifth edition of the Jammu Film Festival has received an overwhelming response from filmmakers worldwide, with 180 entries from 35 countries submitted ahead of the July 31 deadline, the organisers said on Friday.

The submissions include 130 short films, 35 documentaries and 17 feature films representing diverse cultures, languages and cinematic traditions from across the world, the organisers said, adding more entries are expected before the close of submissions later this month.

"The milestone 5th edition of the Jammu film festival is scheduled to be held on 28-29 September 2026 in Jammu.

"The festival has received an overwhelming response from filmmakers across the globe. The festival continues its remarkable journey of connecting Jammu with the global film community and has emerged as one of North India's leading international film festivals," jury head Kapil Mattoo told reporters here.

Mattoo said the quality, diversity and international spread of the entries reflected the festival's increasing recognition within the independent film ecosystem.

"The festival has received an overwhelming response from filmmakers across the globe, with 180 film submissions from 35 countries already received well ahead of the submission deadline of 31 July 2026," he said.

Jointly presented by Vomedh and Koshurwood Studio, the festival is expected to bring together filmmakers, delegates, artists and cinema enthusiasts from India and abroad.

He said delegates from several countries, including the United States, have expressed interest in attending the event, while dis-



cussions are underway with performers from Singapore for the festival's cultural programme.

Festival directors Rakesh Roshan Bhat and Rohit Bhat said the festival was conceived with the vision of creating a cultural institution that would connect Jammu with the world through cinema.

Sanjeev Kak of Koshurwood Studio said the organisation was proud to partner with a festival that has evolved into an important cultural bridge between Jammu and the global filmmaking community.

He said the steady growth of the festival over five editions reflected the commitment of its organisers and the increasing appetite for meaningful cinema and cultural engagement in the region.

Meanwhile, the organising committee announced a three-tier jury system for the 2026 edition to ensure a transparent and

merit-based selection process.

The screening committee comprises festival directors Rakesh Roshan Bhat and Rohit Bhat as well as Kamal Razdan, Suman Pandita, Ifra Kak and Manzoor Mir.

The review committee includes Rahul Sharma, Kusum Tickoo, Rani Bhan, J R Sagor, Dr Kuldeep Raina Sudeshi and Shadab Khan.

The final jury will be headed by filmmaker Kapil Mattoo and includes actors Vipin Sharma, Ashwath Bhatt and Tanvir Dar.

The organisers said the first four editions of the festival had witnessed the participation of several noted personalities from the Indian film industry, including M K Raina, Rahul Roy, Yashpal Sharma, Kashmera Shah, Deepika Singh, Ayub Khan, Lalit Parimoo, Mushtaq Kak, Mir Sarwar and Ayaz Khan. (PTI)

## I hope I get roles not defined by my body: 'Dhamaal 4' actor Anjali Anand

Actor Anjali Anand, best known for her role in "Rocky Rani Kii Prem Kahaani", says she is still waiting for a film role that is not defined by her body and is hopeful that things will change soon.

The actor made her acting debut with the OTT series "Untag" and later featured in television show "Dhhai Kilo Prem", among others, where she was often cast in roles centred on her being overweight, with her appearance frequently used as a source of humour.

The actor said she has often been cast because of her body type before filmmakers recognised her acting abilities.

"In case of films, I'm yet to get something which has nothing to do with my body... Every opportunity that I have got has always first cast me for my body, then they have seen that she can do more things and then they have given me a different part.

"I hope I get roles that are not defined by my body. But it's okay, it's a reflection of society. Society is still not ready to accept my body. The day it is, I will get better parts," Anand told PTI in an interview. In Karan Johar's 2023 directorial "Rocky Rani Kii Prem Kahaani", Anand essayed the role of Ranveer Singh's younger sister Gayatri Randhawa.

The actor said the movie gave her wider recognition and she no longer had to introduce herself to people.

"Karan Johar makes great films. I was like, I would rather be a part of something like that... After 'Rocky Rani', I got the series 'Dabba Cartel' and more people know me now. I'm reading more parts now," she said.

The actor is currently awaiting her next film "Dhamaal 4", in which she is paired opposite actor Riteish Deshmukh.

Directed by Indra Kumar, "Dhamaal 4" is headlined by Ajay Devgn and also stars Arshad Warsi, Sanjay Mishra, Sanjeeda Shaikh, Upendra Limaye, Vijay Patkar and Ravi Kishan, among others.

The actor said she was initially hesitant to take up the film as some of its jokes revolved around body size.

The trailer of the movie also faced backlash for fat-shaming jokes with the makers being criticised for mocking plus-size women.

"My first instinct was no. I had to marinate with it, sit with it and see how I can make it better," the actor said.

Anand said she chooses to play such characters on her own terms, ensuring they are portrayed as strong rather than as victims.

"The feedback that I got was that some people were triggered that I chose to do something like this because I'm always against people who are body shaming. I was like if someone is going to do this part, I'm going to do it. I'm not going to give this responsibility to someone else," Anand said. (PTI)

## Aamir Khan to back film on Silkyara tunnel rescue with Kabir Khan as director

Superstar Aamir Khan on Friday announced his new production, "Silkyara 41", a feature film inspired by the 2023 rescue of 41 workers trapped inside the Silkyara tunnel in Uttarakhand.

Acclaimed filmmaker Kabir Khan is attached as the director to the project, which is a co-production between the actor's Aamir Khan Productions, Australia's Mind Blowing Films and Kabir Khan Films.

Written by Australian screenwriter Andrew Anastasios, best known for "The Water Diviner", "Silkyara 41" will chronicle the multi-agency rescue operation that brought all 41 workers to safety after they remained trapped inside the under-construction tunnel for more than two weeks.

The film will also highlight the role played by Australian tunnelling expert Arnold Dix, who was part of the international team that helped plan and execute the rescue operation.

Aamir Khan said the story of the rescue deserved to be told on the big screen.

"The story of the Silkyara Tunnel rescue moved me deeply. It is a story of courage, resilience, ingenuity and humanity in the face of impossible odds. We are especially proud to announce it on this historic day, as India and Australia open a new chapter in their bilateral relationship," the actor-producer said in a statement.

Kabir Khan described the rescue as one of the most extraordinary human stories in recent years.

"What drew me most to the project was its deeply human dimension -- the lives that hung in the balance, the families waiting anxiously, and the remarkable individuals who came together to make the rescue possible. I am honoured to bring this inspiring true story to the screen," the filmmaker said.

Dix said the rescue operation demonstrated what people could achieve by working together.

"The Silkyara rescue was never about one person. It was about people from different disciplines, cultures and backgrounds coming together with a single purpose -- to bring 41 workers home safely," he said.

In November 2023, 41 workers were trapped after a portion of the under-construction Silkyara-Barkot tunnel in Uttarakashi district collapsed.

After a 17-day operation involving multiple Indian agencies and international experts, all the workers were rescued safely in what became one of the country's most complex rescue missions.

Aamir Khan Productions is currently awaiting the release of "Batwara 1947", a Partition drama headlined by Sunny Deol. (PTI)

# 'Big Bash' at Chepauk highlight in India-Australia Sports Collaboration Roadmap



**MELBOURNE, July 10:** India and Australia on Friday unveiled a Sports Collaboration Roadmap to expand cooperation in training, sports science, technology

and the sports industry, with the inaugural match of the upcoming Big Bash League season in Chennai being the highlight of this collaboration.

The opening Australian Men's Big Bash League fixture will see Melbourne Renegades face defending champions Perth Scorchers at the MA Chidambaram Stadium (Chepauk) in December, marking the first time a foreign cricket league match will be staged in India.

The eight-team BBL is one of the most followed domestic cricket leagues in the world after IPL and is usually held in the December to February window.

"I am happy that a Big Bash league match will be organised in India, in Chennai. Any sporting league that conducts games in India is guaranteed to reach a large base and fetch big viewership," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said at the iconic Melbourne

Cricket Ground, flanked by his Australian counterpart Anthony Albanese.

The announcement formed the centrepiece of a week-long "G'Day Namaste" festival across India, featuring Australian cultural, business and sporting events, according to a statement issued by the Australian government.

The India-Australia Sports Collaboration Roadmap, released jointly by Modi and Albanese at the MCG, seeks to promote partnerships in sports training and capacity building, sports science and technology, and sports industry and investment, according to the Ministry of External Affairs.

The event here was attended by Victoria Premier Jacinta Allan, former Australian men's captain and

ODI World Cup winner Steve Waugh, and former Australian women's captain Lisa Stalhekar.

The MEA said the visit highlighted the growing significance of sports, cultural exchanges and people-to-people connections as key elements of the India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

As part of the roadmap, the two countries will also organise an India-Australia Youth Sports Festival to encourage greater interaction among young athletes and strengthen sporting links.

Welcoming the initiative, Modi said sports had a unique ability to unite people and that the roadmap would help diversify the sporting partnership between India and Australia.

He congratulated Australia for winning the Women's Cricket World Cup and said the two countries were entering an important decade in international sports, with India set to host the Commonwealth Games in 2030 and Australia preparing to stage the Brisbane Olympics in 2032.

Modi underlined that these major sporting events offered natural opportunities for closer cooperation between the two countries in sports and related industries.

"Australia and India are united by our love and passion for sport. This sports roadmap will focus on practical priority areas such as capability building, technology and research to strengthen this cornerstone of our bilateral relationship," Albanese said.

The Australian Prime Minister said expanding cooperation in sports would not only bring joy to Australians but also contribute to trade, tourism and investment between the two nations.

During the visit, the two leaders interacted with young athletes taking part in exhibitions involving kabaddi, Australian Football and cricket, showcasing the growing sporting and people-to-people exchanges between India and Australia.

The latest initiative builds on the strong sporting relationship between the two countries, particularly in cricket, while opening avenues for collaboration across a wider range of disciplines, sports innovation and athlete development. (PTI)

## Asunta Lakra seeks Sports Ministry intervention over harassment allegations in hockey

**NEW DELHI, July 10:** Former India captain Asunta Lakra has urged the Sports Ministry to intervene urgently against what she described as the institutional protection of sexual harassment, intimidation and victimisation of women athletes in hockey, a charge that has been denied by the national federation.

In a strongly worded letter addressed to the Sports Ministry, the Sports Authority of India (SAI), Indian Olympic Association president PT Usha and TOPS officials, Lakra alleged that individuals accused of misconduct were being protected while those raising concerns were subjected to intimidation and retaliation.

"I write to you not merely as a former captain of the Indian Women's Hockey Team, a member of the Executive Board of Hockey India, and a selector, but as an Indian woman who chose to speak up when young female athletes were being sexually harassed," wrote Lakra.

"For over a decade, I had the privilege of wearing the India jersey. Throughout my career, I believed that the greatest responsibility of a senior player is not only to win medals but also to protect the next generation.

"It is in that spirit that I brought to the attention of the Government of Jharkhand allegations of sexual harassment by Mr. Sudhir Gola at the Eklaya Hockey Academy in Ranchi. What followed has shaken my faith in the system."

Lakra, who was part of the Indian team during the 2006 and 2010

Commonwealth Games and Asia Cup twice, alleged that she faced threats and smear campaign after raising the issue.

"Instead of protecting those who raised concerns, the machinery of intimidation was set in motion against me. This is not merely about one individual accused of misconduct. It is about those in positions of authority who allegedly enable, shield, reward, and protect such individuals," she wrote in the letter.

"Even after allegations became public and he (Gola) was suspended by the Government of Jharkhand, he entered the academy hostel, assembled young women players, and intimidated them into withdrawing their complaints.

"Equally disturbing was the attempt to discredit me through a false and orchestrated smear campaign after I raised these issues."

Lakra, who captained India during the 2012 Olympic Qualification Tournament in New Delhi, also accused Hockey India Secretary General Bholanath Singh of threatening her over the issue.

"Hockey India Secretary General Bholanath Singh threatened me and told me to 'stay within my limits' during a phone call. He also claimed that no one could remove him -- neither Hockey Jharkhand nor Hockey India," Asunta told PTI.

"If I don't speak up for women athletes, the situation will remain unchanged, yet I am receiving threats for taking a stand. My husband was also threatened. Gola had boasted that in Jharkhand, one can commit murder or rape and still se-



cure a job..." she said.

Bholanath Singh, however, dismissed the allegations as election-related theatrics ahead of the upcoming Hockey Jharkhand polls.

"I never threatened anyone, nor did I witness any such thing. There is a calculated conspiracy to defame us ahead of the Hockey India elections," he said.

Elections to Hockey Jharkhand are scheduled for July 19.

Lakra, however, rejected suggestions that her allegations were linked to the polls.

"We were never informed about the election. We only found out about it later. I am not in the fray but we want the reins of hockey to be in the hands of hockey players," she said.

"I just request the authorities to save our game. Such treatment with players must stop. Are players, who sweat blood for the country, meant only for photo ops?"

Lakra also alleged that Hockey Jharkhand was being run by people

with little connection to the sport. "Wrestlers are running Jharkhand Hockey. The current general secretary used to work as a caterer during my playing days."

Singh rejected the charge and pointed to the association's record under his leadership.

"I have been the president (Hockey Jharkhand) since 2014 and the development is there to see. Asunta has been working with us for long," Singh said when asked if Hockey Jharkhand was being run by wrestlers.

On allegations that Lakra had been shouted at during the Hockey India Special General Body Meeting, Singh said, "You can ask the people who were present there."

**Asunta Lakra is one of the treasures of Indian hockey: Tirkey**

Meanwhile, Hockey India President Dilip Tirkey said that Asunta is one of the treasures of Indian Hockey and he will try to resolve the matter amicably.

"Asunta Lakra is one of the treasures of Indian hockey. She has done a great service to the sport by bringing to light an unfortunate incident related to Jharkhand Hockey. The Jharkhand Government has taken action against Sudhir Gola, and we swiftly removed him from the Under-18 National Team," Tirkey told PTI.

"Sudhir Gola is not associated with SAI or Hockey India, and the Jharkhand Government should take appropriate action against him as per the prevailing laws. I believe they will do so. (PTI)

## Gill logs Top-20 in Asian Development Tour, stays on path to Asian Tour

**TAIPEI, July 10:** India's Pukhraj Singh Gill fired three consistent rounds of three-under 69 each to finish a tidy Tied-19th in the Ever Glory ADT Open on the Asian Development Tour here on Friday.

The Ludhiana star, who won the Am Green IGPL Order of Merit in India in 2025, has been focussing on earning his way into the Asian Tour via the Asian Development Tour.

With 69-69-69, Gill totalled nine-under 204 and was Tied-19th.

Gill, who plays for the Honer Homes Gurugram on the AM Green IGPL, is now sixth on the Merit L1st and stands a great chance of making it to the 2027 Asian Tour as the Top-10 players advance to the higher Tour.

Last year Karandeep Kochhar, a colleague of Gill on AM Green IGPL took the same route.

Nathan Han of the USA birdied the first playoff hole to defeat Sean Ramos of the Philippines and win the Ever Glory ADT Open after Typhoon Bavi forced tournament officials to reduce the championship to 54 holes.

Among other Indians in the field, Khalin Joshi (68-67-69) totalled 12-under and finished Tied-12th. Kartik Singh (74-68) missed the 36-hole cut.

Han carded a seven-under-par 65 in Friday's third and final round at Dong Hua Elite Golf Club to finish tied on 16-under-par alongside Ramos and Korea's Minhyeok Yang.

After officials announced the tournament would conclude after three rounds because of the ap-



proaching typhoon, Han emerged victorious with a birdie on the opening extra hole.

Yang joined Han after matching the American's seven-under 65, while Ramos closed with a five-under 67 to complete the three-way tie on 16 under.

The Tournament Committee reduced the event to 54 holes after forecasts indicated Typhoon Bavi would affect the venue from Friday evening and throughout Saturday, making it impossible to guarantee completion of the scheduled final round.

Under the revised conditions, a playoff was held immediately after regulation play to determine the champion.

Han's victory capped an impressive week of consistency. Following opening rounds of 67 and 68, the American produced one of the

day's best rounds, highlighted by an eagle at the par-five eighth and five birdies before sealing the title in the playoff.

Yang matched Han's seven-under 65 with a spectacular round featuring nine birdies before a costly double bogey on the 15th denied him the outright lead and ultimately forced the playoff.

Ramos, who started the day one shot behind overnight leader Huang Yi-tseng, carded a composed five-under-par 67. Birdies at the third, 11th, 13th, 15th and 16th outweighed his only dropped shot at the second as he earned his place in the playoff before eventually finishing runner-up.

Chinese Taipei duo Shapiyate Mako and Chan Shih-chang shared fourth place on 15 under after rounds of 66 and 68 respectively. (PTI)

## Brook eyes No 1 ranking in T20Is with 4-0 rout of India



**BRISTOL, July 10:** He "probably didn't expect" the series against India to be so lopsided but now that England has a winning 3-0 lead, skipper Harry Brook says his team would go all out for a clean sweep to dislodge the reigning world champions from the top of the ICC T20I rankings.

Chasing a modest 158 for 7, Brook led from the front with an attacking unbeaten 79 off 35 balls and together with Phil Salt (59 not out off 42) shared an unconquered 146-run partnership to power England to a comfortable nine-wicket win in the fourth T20I on Thursday for an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-match series.

If England win the final T20I in Southampton on Friday, they will displace world champions India from the top spot.

"To go (to) world No.1 and England going to the semis, that would be pretty cool," Brook told after Thursday's match.

"We've been told if we win the next game, we go to world No.1 and that's definitely a prize that we're eyeing up. India are a strong side. They probably haven't been as good (in this series) as they have been over the last couple of years, but we're really happy with the way that we've executed our plans.

"To beat India 4-0 would be a pretty special series win, if I'm being honest, and to go No.1 in the world would be even better," he added.

Brook "didn't expect" such a cakewalk against India in the ongoing series but he said the results so far are a fair reflection of England's progress in the shorter formats of the game. (PTI)

## Aditi tied 35<sup>th</sup>, Japan's Iwai leads at Evian Championship

**EVIAN-LES-BAINS (FRANCE), July 10:** Indian golfer Aditi Ashok opened with an erratic one-under 70 to be tied for the 35th position after the opening round of the Amundi Evian Championship, which is a Major on the women's circuit.

Aditi, a five-time winner on the Ladies European Tour, and a champion at Hero Women's Indian Open in 2016, is playing the tournament for the ninth time, but has finished in Top-25 only once.

She trails Japan's Aki Iwai by seven shots. Aditi had two birdies and two bogeys on the front side of the course and then one bogey and back to back birdies on the 14th and the 15th.

Iwai fired a bogey-free opening round of eight-under 63 to hold a two-stroke lead at the end of the first day of action. The 24-year-old teed off in the morning, making her first birdie of the day on the fifth hole followed by birdies on seventh and ninth.

Iwai, who has one LPGA Tour title to her name, made birdies on 11th, 12th, 15th and 16th holes, and she finished with a birdie at the last to sit atop the leaderboard on eight-under-par.

France's Perrine Delacour sits in solo second place on six-under-par after an opening round of 65 -- her lowest in a Major championship.

Five players are in a share of third place at the 18-hole mark with England's Charley Hull, Sweden's Maja Stark, Korean pair Haeran Ryu and Jin Hee Im alongside Mao Saigo on five-under.

The cut will be applied at the top 65 players and ties at the end of the second day. (PTI)

## Challenge is to accept we are underachieving in foreign conditions: Ten Doeschate

**BRISTOL, July 10:** India assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate feels the immediate challenge for the current T20 world champions is to shed the "underachievers" tag in foreign conditions and need to understand the process of adapting quickly to varied playing environments.

After being clean swept by Ireland in the two T20Is, India, under Shreyas Iyer's captaincy, cut a sorry figure in neighbouring England as the hosts thrashed the visitors by nine wickets in the fourth T20 to take an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-match series here on Thursday.

"We have spoken so much about adaptability, it's easy to say we need to adapt, it's easy to say but really it's a point now where we need to understand the process, what is needed to make those adaptations," Ten Doeschate said at the post-match press conference.

For starters, the team needs to accept that they aren't playing well.

"Psychologically and mentally the challenge for the group is to accept the fact that we are underachieving in foreign conditions and tell the players look there is a big prize two years down the line in Australia. "Do we want to be a team that smashes

250 in India and looks great hitting 80m six at Eden Gardens or do you want to come to places like Manchester, Southampton where things are slightly different and further down the line the MCG.

"Those were the places do we want to be the team to excel in different conditions and do we have the mentality to make those adjustments. That's the mental challenge and that's we need the players to take that on," he added.

The Indian batters struggled in seam-friendly Irish and English conditions in the ongoing tour, especially after flying their trade for most part of the year in flat Indian pitches, and Ten Doeschate said quick adjustments is key to success to excel in foreign pitches.

"I think Jofra (Archer) and (Josh) Tongue bowled exceptionally well and we haven't made that adjustment as much as we have spoken about it, we have spoken about the need to evolve and what works in India won't necessarily work here.

"We just haven't quite managed to shift from that mindset where we read on whether we are really strong on good wickets and the little adjustments that were needed. I think all the three wickets were

## Egypt's soccer team gets a warm welcome home after World Cup loss

**EL-ALAMEIN, July 10:** Thousands of fans turned out to greet Egypt's national soccer team on its return home Friday after its World Cup adventure ended with a 3-2 loss to Argentina in the knockout stage of the tournament.

Crowds gathered at the el-Alamein airport, waving photos of star player Mohamed Salah and holding signs celebrating the team's achievements as they cheered the players' return.

Egypt made it to the last 16 teams in the tournament for the first time after beating Australia 4-2 on penalty kicks, led by Salah.

The players are expected to meet Saturday with Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, who thanked the team in a Facebook statement on Tuesday "for their honorable performance and for achieving an unprecedented milestone in the history of Egyptian soccer."

Emotions ran high across Egypt on Tuesday as supporters gathered



in coffee shops, homes and public squares to watch the match against Argentina, with Egyptian flags draped from balconies, storefronts and streets.

The Egyptian Football Association, or EFA, said Wednesday that it's deeply dissatisfied with the refereeing in Tuesday's match and decisions related to the Video

Assistant Referee, or VAR system. Egypt coach Hossam Hassan and several players criticized the referees after Argentina scored three unanswered goals in 13 minutes to pull off one of the biggest comebacks in World Cup history.

"Defending the rights and interests of the Egyptian national team is not a matter that can be ignored, minimized, or treated as secondary," the EFA said in a statement.

In a statement issued later Wednesday, the head of refereeing for soccer's world governing body FIFA, Pierluigi Collina, said the debate over decisions is a natural part of soccer, but stressed that "unfounded allegations have no place in our sport."

"Nobody can question the integrity of the FIFA World Cup match officials," he said. "When this happens, it may provoke reactions that lead to threats against them and their families. This is not right." (AP)



little slower, had a little bit of bounce. You can't play the same way, we try to address but at the same time our performance have been really poor," he said.

Ten Doeschate didn't forget to mention that the only guy scoring runs on this tour is skipper Shreyas Iyer, who wasn't a part of the T20 World Cup winning squad.

"The majority of those guys won a World Cup four months ago, one of the

guys (Shreyas Iyer) who wasn't there is scoring heavy runs. But it is disappointing as it has been, it's really just to take learnings from these games, keep trusting the players and give them that runway given what they have done for the country in the past."

The Dutchman said with a busy schedule back home, India didn't get enough preparation time for the tour.

"Ideally you want to prepare longer for a series but again we came from a series in India. I think I mentioned in the past about balancing freshness and being fair on the players as well, make sure they get to spend a little bit of time at home after World Cup, IPL and then the Afghan series and then we coming here and get four, five days practice is not ideal but one of the takeaways from what you see so far is preparation for different conditions is really important.

"Mentally you have to be prepared to make that shift, ideally you have to identify things that work in one area don't necessarily work elsewhere. You need to be open to make those changes a lot quicker than we have done in the last 2-3 weeks," Ten Doeschate said.

The coach backed T20 skipper Iyer and said he is leading from the front with the bat but needs a bit of time and support to excel as a captain.

"He is one of the guys who has exploited the ability to use the crease and that's how you have to play in these conditions. He has batted really well in all three innings. But again I don't want to stand and defend the players and also be over critical but the onus is on the players to have the mindset to accept that the fact it's really going badly and look at the evidence in front of them."

"Shreyas is a fantastic leader and age wise if you are looking at two years down the line in Australia you have to make some really tough calls, there is going to millions of opinions about it. The immediate backlash of transitioning to a new captain after losing two games against Ireland and 3-0 down in England, I think it isn't very good. It is important to look at things a little realistically," Ten Doeschate said.

Ten Doeschate was clear that once Jasprit Bumrah and Hardik Pandya return to the T20 fold, things will look a bit different. (PTI)

## We realise that what lies ahead is even tougher than what we've been through: Mbappé

# France beats Morocco 2-0 in World Cup quarterfinals

**FOXBOROUGH (US), July 10:** Kylian Mbappé spread his arms out wide and spun around after scoring his eighth goal of this year's World Cup. He later gave the jubilant France fans dotted around the stadium a wave when he left the game because of an injury scare.

Les Bleus, with a star striker who said he's fine despite a right ankle issue, are headed back to the semifinals for the third straight World Cup tournament.

Mbappé had a goal and an assist after missing a first-half penalty kick, Ousmane Dembélé also scored, and two-time champion France beat Morocco 2-0 Thursday in the quarterfinals.

"There's only one way to relax, and that's by winning. Until we've done that, we don't let up," Mbappé said. "We're in the semifinals and we're very happy, but there's still a long way to go."

Mbappé's goal in the 60th minute was the 20th of his World Cup career and came in his 20th match at the tournament, moving him one behind Argentina captain Lionel Messi. Dembélé scored his fifth goal of the tournament in the 66th.

Mbappé went down to the ground in the 76th minute, about 13 minutes after being hit hard by a Moroccan defender, and was taken off for a substitute a minute later. He was then shown sitting on the bench with an ice pack on his right ankle.

After the match and with both shoes on, Mbappé ran and jumped in celebration with his teammates.

"I took a knock to the ankle, but



"I'm fine," Mbappé said. "At that point, JP (Jean-Philippe Mateta) was in better shape than I was to play the final minutes."

France will face either Spain or Belgium in the semifinals in Dallas on Tuesday.

France beat Morocco by the same score in the semifinals of the 2022 tournament in Qatar when the Atlas Lions became the first African team to make it that far. France now remains on track to become only the third nation to play in the final of three consecutive World Cups.

"It is a confirmation of how we've played so far," said France coach Didier Deschamps, who added there is a reason for his team's success in recent World Cups.

"Having great players. Excellent players. My credit goes to the players. But maybe I do my job well," he said. "The only truth is the one on the pitch."

Mbappé got his goal with a perfectly placed shot just inside the far

post after Morocco failed to clear the ball. He received the ball just outside the area, took a couple steps forward and then sent his shot sailing into the net. He extended both arms and ran to the sideline to celebrate with his teammates.

France's second goal came after Mbappé took a pass and tapped it back for Dembélé. Mbappé kept running forward and took defenders with him, opening space for Dembélé's shot.

Dembélé said he wasn't surprised with how Mbappé stepped up after his penalty miss in the first half.

"He's our captain and he has an incredible mentality," Dembélé said. "We're expecting even more goals from him."

France held a 21-4 advantage in shots on goal and 8-1 edge in shots on target for the game.

"We are very disappointed. We wanted to go on," Morocco coach Mohamed Ouahbi said. "When we had ball possession, our transitions

were not great and we had to run a little more. Their players were in their comfort zone."

Mbappé also had the first shot on goal of the game, just missing wide right in the fourth minute. Then, in the 25th, he was running up the left side when he was chopped down in the box by Morocco defender Noussair Mazraoui. Referee Facundo Tello quickly pointed to the penalty spot.

Mbappé lined up waiting for his attempt but was held up by a lengthy video review. He was finally cleared to shoot in the 28th minute, but after a hesitation, Mbappé's shot toward the right corner was corralled by goalkeeper Yassine Bounou, who guessed the direction of the shot correctly.

Deschamps said the long review also included a review for another foul.

Mbappé made his only other penalty attempt at this year's World Cup in France's 1-0 victory over Paraguay in the round of 16.

Still, France was by far the more active team offensively in the first half, holding a 13-1 advantage in shots on goal.

Morocco's best opportunity came just before the halftime whistle when Achraf Hakimi sent a free kick from just outside the box past the right post.

France now has a chance to emulate Brazil and West Germany in reaching three straight World Cup finals.

"We realise that what lies ahead is even tougher than what we've been through," Mbappé said, "but we're ready to face anything." (AP)

## 5th T20I: Clueless India stare at rare T20 'whitewash'



**SOUTHAMPTON, July 10:** An Indian team with its back to the wall, led by a captain, who is equally cornered, will look to prevent England from inflicting a seemingly imminent 4-0 'whitewash' when the two contrasting sides clash in the fifth T20 International here on Saturday.

Led by Shreyas Iyer, the Indian team's journey started in the damp and windy conditions of Belfast. It then covered north of England in Durham to finally be in the southern city of Southampton to close the five-match series in which one game was washed out.

In the six UK cities (including Belfast), one thing has remained common -- Iyer's fortunes have remained wretched as he is still without his first win since becoming captain. This is the longest winless streak for the Indian men's team since it first played a T20 International in 2006.

The Indian team has looked completely out of sorts save the second game at Old Trafford where it was in the game till the start of 17th over (bowled by Ravi Bishnoi).

Nottingham witnessed India's worst batting performance -- 76 all-out and Bristol was a perfect example of being outplayed in every department of the game.

The consolation win will do little to salvage the pride but even then, a die-hard Iyer fan would take a 1-3 defeat any day than the ignominy associated with a 0-4 humiliation in the early days of his captaincy.

Not being able to cope with pace generated by Jofra Archer and Josh Tongue has certainly left the Indian team management worried.

Not to forget, they haven't picked the slower and skiddy variations bowled by left-arm seamer Sam Curran.

With Varun Chakravarthy and Harshit Rana ruled out due to hamstring injuries and Ravi Bishnoi making himself virtually unselectable with a 29-run over, the options in the bowling department are not many.

In the batting department, one would like to give Vaibhav Sooryavanshi a long run despite poor returns against short-pitched bowling, something he will only get better at

dealing in the coming years.

While Sanju Samson's omission from the playing eleven and the Zimbabwe touring party has left everyone baffled and angry in equal measure, the only way he can make it to the squad is if the think-tank removes an out of sorts Tilak Varma.

But then, it would mean both Ishan Kishan and Iyer dropping a place each. Kishan batting anywhere below No. 3 isn't of great benefit for the team.

For England, not just pace bowling but their spinners Will Jacks, Adil Rashid, Liam Dawson (till match No.3) have been brilliant in taking pace off deliveries which their Indian counterparts have failed to do.

In the batting department, everyone from Phil Salt, Jos Buttler, skipper Harry Brook to young Jacob Bethell have dominated the Indian attack and took advantage of familiar conditions.

Iyer would want to avert another abject surrender which looks way more likely than ever.

### Teams:

**India:** Shreyas Iyer (captain), Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, Abhishek Sharma, Ishan Kishan (wk), Tilak Varma, Shivam Dube, Washington Sundar, Axar Patel, Prashidh Krishna, Prince Yadav, Arshdeep Singh, Sanju Samson, Suryansh Shedge, Ravi Bishnoi.

**England:** Harry Brook (captain), Phil Salt, Jos Buttler, Jacob Bethell, Tom Banton, Will Jacks, Sam Curran, Josh Tongue, Jofra Archer, Adil Rashid, Rehan Ahmed, Liam Dawson, Luke Wood, Saqib Mahmood, Sonny Baker, Jordan Cox, James Coles.

Match Starts: 10 pm. (PTI)

## Mandhana's 56 not out carries India women to 122/3 against England at lunch



**LONDON, July 10:** Smriti Mandhana struck an aggressive unbeaten 56 as India overcame regular jolts to post 122 for three against England at lunch on the opening day of the one-off Women's Test here on Friday.

England elected to field once they won the toss, and the decision seemed vindicated as they reduced India to 37 for two, dismissing Shafali Verma and Yastika Bhatia inside seven overs.

But from that point, Mandhana, who remained unbeaten off 67 balls, and Jemimah Rodrigues (35, 38 balls) added 64 runs for the third wicket to lift India.

It was double barrel firing as Mandhana and Rodrigues tore into the English attack in their own inimitable styles.

Mandhana was severe on pacer Lauren Filer, carting her for two fours in a row, before smashing spinner Sophie Ecclestone for a six, a slog-sweep over mid-wicket.

Filer, however, had a wonderful moment when she induced a snick from Verma with a beauty of a delivery that shaped in before moving away to take the corner of her bat in the second over of the day.

Rodrigues sent Ecclestone twice to the ropes in succession as India motored at over six runs an over during their alliance, and it also helped the tourists to maintain a run-rate of over five at the end of first session. (PTI)

## Time for Shreyas Iyer to create his own identity as captain: Saba Karim

**NEW DELHI, July 10:** Former India wicketkeeper-batter Saba Karim believes Shreyas Iyer needs to stamp his authority as captain in international cricket and translate the tactical acumen he has displayed in the IPL into the national side.

Iyer, who took over as India captain from Suryakumar Yadav following the T20 World Cup win, has remained winless as India suffered a 0-2 defeat against Ireland and then lost the last three T20I against England to concede a 0-3 lead with the first game being washed out.

"I feel the time has come for Shreyas Iyer to assert himself as a captain. The tactical captaincy we have seen from him in the IPL is not yet visible in international cricket," Karim said on JioHotstar.

"For example, when he was batting in the middle, Shivam Dube came in at number five, I didn't understand that decision. That is not the Shreyas Iyer we know from the IPL. Logically, if he were captaining in the IPL right now, Tilak Varma would have walked in at number five instead of Shivam Dube.

"Also, when you are batting in the middle as a captain, the messages you send to your partner are very important. Maybe it will take time for him to grow into the role."

The former wicketkeeper said Iyer's form with the bat was a big positive and it will help him in leadership as well.

"But the biggest positive is that he scored runs with the bat. That gives a captain a lot of confidence. When your own performance is good, the captaincy automatically improves. I hope we will see that in the coming matches. I want him to create his own identity. He is ready for it. Now is the time to do it."

Karim feels India needs a right-hander in the playing XI for the fifth T20I and favoured Sanju Samson and Suryansh Shedge.

"I am hoping to see a change in the combination. India needs a right-handed batter in the middle order, and Sanju Samson is the only viable option right now. To break the chain of left-handers, you need a mature, experienced right-hand batter, and there is no better choice than Sanju. The question is who makes way for him."

"If the team management persists with Tilak Varma, then the only option is to replace Shivam Dube with Sanju Samson. That would make the batting deeper and more solid. I also expect another change," he said. "I would like to see Suryansh Shedge come in place



of Washington Sundar. He can bowl two or three overs of medium pace, which would fulfil the role of a sixth bowler."

Karim attributed India's defeat to their inability to adjust to the English conditions.

"You need to read the opposition's bowling plans. If you don't, the results won't go your way. That is exactly what happened with the Indian batters. Jofra Archer and Josh Tongue kept bowling short deliveries. We lost two wickets trying to play attacking shots off the back foot.

"Even Abhishek Sharma got out, though it was off Adil Rashid's bowling, but a wicket is a wicket. India didn't assess the ground dimensions while facing the new ball. The need was to rotate the strike," he said. "If we had been cautious in the opening spells of Archer and Tongue and survived without losing early wickets, we could have accelerated later."

Karim was worried about how India dealt with the middle overs.

"I was particularly concerned about our scoring in the middle overs. Compared to that, England didn't allow our spinners to complete their full quota. This Indian team is not adapting to English conditions," he said.

"We are still playing like we are on Indian pitches with small boundaries. That is not how a World Cup-winning team plays," he concluded. (PTI)

## Women's Hockey: India keep faith in tried and tested for Asian Games

**NEW DELHI, July 10:** India on Friday announced a tried-and-tested women's hockey squad for this year's Asian Games with just a couple of changes to the strike force that helped the side regain its place in the FIH Pro League recently.

The 20-member squad, to be led by regular skipper Salima Tete, will be aiming to qualify for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics by winning a gold at the 20th Asian Games to be held in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan from September 19 to October 4.

Salima will continue to captain the side, having led the team to FIH Nations Cup triumph in New Zealand last month, which ensured that it spent only season in the relegated zone.

"We have a group in which we have a nice balance between juniors, experienced players and seniors who are constantly working to get the best out of each other," said India's chief coach, Sjoerd Marijne, sharing his thoughts on the squad announced here on Friday.

Veteran Savita, who recently received the Padma Shri award, and Bichu Devi Kharibam have been named as the two goalkeepers in the squad.

The defence comprises Sushila Chanu Pukhrabam, Ishika Chaudhary and Jyoti, besides Lalthantluangi and Shiipi Dabas, who made their senior debut during the FIH Nations Cup and were rewarded for their good performance in the tournament.

The mid-field will be manned by captain Salima along side Nikki Pradhan, Sakshi Rana, Sunelita Toppo, Neha and Deepika Soreng. (PTI)

## Emotionally right to give Sooryavanshi chance but logic-defying to drop Sanju: Parthiv



**NEW DELHI, July 10:** Wading into the debate surrounding Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's inclusion in the Indian T20 team at the expense of Sanju Samson, former player Parthiv Patel says accommodating the prodigal teenager can only be called an emotionally right call as axing the senior batter defies logic.

Speaking on JioStar, Patel also acknowledged that in the past, Samson was dropped for his own inconsistency but right now, his omission is not easy to explain.

"Why is it always Sanju Samson who misses out? If you look at Sanju Samson's career over the last 11-12 years, the one question that has always followed him is consistency," Patel said.

"Either the player who isn't scoring quickly enough gets left out, or the one who has been inconsistent. You can't make decisions based on both emotion and logic. So emotionally, yes, it was the right call to give Vaibhav Sooryavanshi a chance.

"But if you go purely by logic, then why has Sanju Samson been left out? So, I think this decision was taken emotionally," he added.

The 15-year-old Sooryavanshi was picked after Samson, who was player of the tournament in the T20

World Cup this year, failed to score in three consecutive games. However, the prodigal batter has not been able to make much of an impact so far.

India have conceded the series 0-3 to England with the fifth and final match scheduled for Saturday.

Patel said there is always a perception that the player left out is the better option.

"This is just how we are. Whenever someone isn't in the team, we automatically feel they're the one who would have done a better job. At the last T20 World Cup, Shreyas Iyer wasn't there, and everyone kept asking, 'Why isn't Shreyas Iyer in the team?'"

"Now that he's back, people are saying Rajat Patidar should be in the side," he said.

**India will not find a quality all-rounder until Impact Player rule is removed**

Patel also believes that IPL's Impact Player rule has hindered the development of quality all-rounders in Indian cricket, contributing to the continued search for a long-term replacement for Hardik Pandya.

"For the past 10 years, we've been saying the same thing, everything will be fine when Jasprit Bumrah comes back. Everything will be alright when Hardik Pandya returns. But it's been 10 years, and we still haven't found a replacement for either Hardik Pandya or Jasprit Bumrah," he said.

"The biggest reason behind that is the IPL's Impact Player rule. Bumrah is a different case, but India will not be able to find the all-rounder they are looking for until the Impact Player rule is removed from the IPL." (PTI)

## BCCI to review T20 poor show in England after ODI series gets over: Saikia

**NEW DELHI, July 10:** The BCCI will be organizing a review meeting of Indian team's poor show resulting in T20 series defeats against minnows Ireland and England once the ODI series gets over on July 19, according to secretary Devajit Saikia, who made it clear that the Board will not take any "knee-jerk" decisions.

The Indian team lost 0-2 against Ireland and is already down 0-3 against England with a match left on Friday. However, it is learnt that there is no imminent threat to head coach Gautam Gambhir's future as he has a contract with the BCCI till 2027 ODI World Cup.

"The BCCI is currently observing the performance of the Indian T20 team which has not been up to the mark in the ongoing series against England." BCCI secretary Saikia told PTI on Friday from the sidelines of the ICC Annual Conference in Edinburgh.

The BCCI secretary said that it will be an overall assessment of the performance but the board won't be taking any knee-jerk reaction.

"However this is not something abnormal and can happen in international

cricket. We consider it as a purely bad phase. Once the ODI series gets over on July 19 and the team comes back, we will have a review meeting with core members of the team to discuss what went wrong in England. Since there is a ODI series, we are hoping that team will be back in good form," Saikia added.

Saikia also stressed that the review meeting will be "strictly about the performance of the team and how course correction can be done with regards to shortfalls. Nothing else will be discussed."

Under head coach Gambhir, Indian team has achieved many "unwanted firsts" --including 0-3 Test whitewash and ODI series defeat at home against New Zealand and first ever T20I series defeat against Ireland. But a potential 0-4 whitewash in T20Is against England is worse than a nightmare.

It is understood that review meeting will be attended by Gambhir, chairman of selectors Ajit Agarkar. T20I skipper Shreyas Iyer is expected to fly to Zimbabwe for the three-match series and hence there is no clarity on his availability.



Similar reviews had also taken place after New Zealand home, Australia away and SA home series debacles too.

It is only four months since India defended their T20 World Cup crown under the tutelage of Gambhir and there is no reason to believe that a double ICC Trophy winning coach will be dumped as a hot potato.

But there is another aspect that also

holds true. Since that night in Ahmedabad, a lot of water had flown through both Sabarmati and the Thames making this current team under new captain Shreyas Iyer look a pale shadow of its original self.

However the former Delhi left-hander might be asked some pertinent questions about the horrendous performance of T20 squad.

**Communication or lack of it?** It is true that Gambhir is not a member of the selection committee that picks the squad. But when it comes to choosing the playing eleven, the man from Delhi's Old Rajender Nagar has had the maximum say in a team that doesn't have too many superstars.

While selection committee can be panned for not selecting Sanju Samson for Zimbabwe T20 series, the question that begs an answer from Gambhir is that why would he drop Samson from the playing eleven to make space for 15-year-old Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, whose time would have come sooner or later.

Recently when the news of Samson's axing from the Zimbabwe-bound squad

masquerading as "rested" was announced, quotes from his old interview where he said that Gambhir had told him that he will only be dropped if he had 21 zeroes had resurfaced.

Cut to India's post match conference after 76 all-out where the head coach said that he has had "conversation" with Samson and he won't reveal the contents respecting the sanctity of their meeting.

But the question that comes up is that even if there is communication, is there clarity? If someone had been told to play freely and 21 ducks won't matter and the same person is told that he is being "rested" having failed in three games post T20 World Cup? If Samson gets conflicting signals, can he be blamed for it.

Similarly second question that can be asked as to why there was no consistency in team selection during the tour. Across six T20I games in Ireland and England (including the abandoned), six different playing eleven was fielded with no two same team for any of these games.

It is a worst kept secret that Gambhir is not on best of terms with either Virat

Kohli or Rohit Sharma when it comes to ODI side but these constant experiments have certainly created an air of uncertainty among players who rather than playing fearless cricket will be try to play for places in the eleven.

The third question that comes to mind is his obstinacy with a batter till No. 8, something that has been signature.

What is Washington Sundar doing in the T20 scheme of things is another polite query which begs an answer.

Former India keeper Deep Dasgupta, who is in UK as a broadcaster feels that with two years left, Gambhir and team management is allowed to look at a broader pool of players.

"Yes it is frustrating and disappointing but there's a bigger picture to look into. So there is no harm in trying players. These young players are not used to these conditions. Suddenly pitches are different. The way you play T20 in UK is different from how you play in India. In IPL, volume of runs in the first six overs becomes important but in England, the approach in Powerplay is more about preservation." Dasgupta said. (PTI)