

WORLD
NATION

- Israeli military kills 4 Palestinians after settler killed in West Bank
- Bangladesh President Mohammed Shahabuddin resigns
- RSS leader alleges foreign influence behind Delhi protests, seeks 'positive' politics
- Union Cabinet approves draft bill for stricter punishments in paper leak cases



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Assam flood situation remains grim

47 dead, 40 missing, 7.21 lakh people affected in 11 dists

GUWAHATI, July 24: The flood situation in Assam remained critical on Friday with many rivers continuing to rise following incessant rains, while 47 people died in the deluge and over 7.21 lakh people are affected across 11 districts, officials said.

Around 40 people are still missing and the toll might increase, chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

To review the rapidly deteriorating situation, Sarma will chair a video conference with district commissioners and senior officials stationed across the flood-affected districts to assess the administration's ongoing response in handling the crisis.

"The situation has improved slightly, but we still have not been able to reach around 20 per cent of the affected people. I believe we will be able to reach them by today," he told reporters here.



According to information, around 40 people are missing, and the death toll is expected to rise further, Sarma said.

"The government will stand by the flood victims and will help as far as possible. A central government team will visit the state to assess the flood damage on July 25,"

he added.

A spokesperson of the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) said that the river Dikhow at Sivasagar town continues to flow "above the severe flood condition" at 9 am on Friday.

"Due to the continuous increase

in the water level of Dikhow, citizens have been advised to stay away from the river," she added.

At present, the Buridihing river at Khowang, Disang at Nanglamuraghat, Dikhou at Sivasagar, Dhansiri at Numaligarh and Kushiara at Sribhumi are flowing above the danger level.

According to the ASDMA flood bulletin issued on Thursday night, six people have lost their lives in the deluge during the last 24 hours.

Sivasagar district has witnessed four people, including one woman and one child, drowning in flood waters; followed by two, including one child, in Charaideo, it added.

With these fatalities, the total number of deaths in this year's floods has increased to 47 across the state.

According to the authority's flood report, more than 7,21,000 people have been affected in Charaideo, (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

CJP to continue protest

Wangchuk ends 26-day fast following govt assurance



NEW DELHI, July 24: Activist Sonam Wangchuk ended his indefinite hunger strike after the government assured him that his demands would be met.

He announced the end of his fast after Union Ministers JP Nadda and Jitendra Singh met him at the Medanta Hospital in Gurugram around Thursday midnight and conveyed the government's assurances.

"Just now in the presence of Union Ministers JP Nadda, Dr Jitendra Singh and the senior leaders of Apex Body of Leh Ladakh, I finally broke my fast after 26 days," Wangchuk said in a post on X.

After Wangchuk announced the end of his hunger strike, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a post on X, "I urge Sonam ji to follow his daily routine as advised by

the doctors and regain his weight as soon as possible."

"I pray to the Almighty that Sonam ji remains healthy," the prime minister added.

Reading out the government's assurances to Wangchuk in the presence of his wife Gitanjali Angmo and others at the hospital, Nadda said, "The government is positive on not registering cases against those protesting peacefully at Jantar Mantar in Delhi and those who participated in the march to Parliament on July 20, 2026."

The Union Health Minister further said that the government has already assured discussions in Parliament on paper leaks and education reforms for exams.

"Besides, the government is also positively considering suitable compensation for the suicide victims of recent NEET paper leaks," Nadda added.

Wangchuk said that a total of 65 Members (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Over 80,000 flood-hit yet to get relief: CM

GUWAHATI, July 24: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday said his government is yet to deliver relief materials to at least 80,000 flood-affected people, as the administration has not found means to reach all the areas ravaged by the recent wave of the deluge.

Addressing a press conference here, he also said that around 40,000 households do not have electricity connection as of now, although power has been restored to 75 per cent consumers.

"We are trying very hard to reach all the people with relief items, but still many are left out. In Nazira assembly constituency, 30 per cent area or around 50,000 people are not reachable. In Sivasagar, 20 per cent area or 30,000 people are inaccessible. The count may be 10,000 more or less (from the 80,000 affected yet to be reached)," Sarma said.

He said that although water has started receding in most of the places, huge layers of silt and mud lay on the streets, and people there

are virtually disconnected.

"In Charaideo district, relief has been sent to all parts by today," the CM said.

Sarma said the situation is critical, and several ministers have been stationed in the three worst-hit districts of Upper Assam.

"We have tried airdropping, too, but the relief items got damaged in the process. We will discuss with the Eastern Air Command of the IAF today on how to package the relief materials so that these do not get damaged while airdropping," he said.

Sarma stated that while a few areas remain inaccessible, the administration is working on war footing to reach every affected location.

With additional boats, relief materials and essential supplies being mobilised from other districts of Assam, he expressed confidence that assistance will reach the remaining cut-off areas at the earliest.

"We have explored the use of drones as well, but our experience on the (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Speaker considers releasing video of Akhil Gogoi climbing desk in Assam Assembly

GUWAHATI, July 24: Taking a stern view of unparliamentary behaviour by any legislator in the Assam Assembly, speaker Ranjeet Kumar Dass on Friday said that he is contemplating releasing the video of Rajior Dal MLA Akhil Gogoi climbing on his desk in the House when asked to wind up his speech at the end of the stipulated time.

Dass also maintained that the Assembly should not engage in any discussion on what transpires on social media and confine itself to the happenings inside the House.

The Speaker's comments came during a point of order raised by Leader of Opposition Wazed Ali Choudhury of the Congress at the end of Question Hour in the Assembly.

"For whatever reason, the adjournment motion was disallowed. But a social media narrative was created that



Congress opposed it. As we had stood in Gogoi's support, I wanted to bring this issue to your notice," Choudhury said.

Parliamentary Affairs minister Pijush Hazarika claimed that Gogoi has been making statements outside the Assembly that create a different impression than what transpired in the House.

"Some discussion needs to take place on it," he added.

Dass said that conversations and narratives on social media are not a concern of the Assembly, and it does not have to discuss the matter.

The Speaker also said that he had disallowed two adjournment motions on flood, one by the Congress on

Wednesday and the other by the Rajior Dal on Thursday, as such motions are not admissible when voting on supplementary grants is scheduled.

"I had to ensure that the Budget is passed so that funds can be made available for the flood-ravaged people. So, the adjournment motions were not allowed. But still, since Gogoi is the MLA of Sivasagar which is among the worst-hit, I allowed him to raise the matter for two minutes," Dass said.

The Speaker said the behaviour of the Rajior Dal president when he was asked to wind up at the end of the allotted two minutes was unbecoming of a legislator and demeaned the dignity of the House.

"I have been an MLA since 2011, but I had never seen such behaviour as climbing on the desk. I am thinking of urging the Assembly secretary to release (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Assam govt facing issue of finding appropriate land for rehabilitation of calamity-hit people: Minister

GUWAHATI, July 24: The Assam government was faced with the issue of finding appropriate land for rehabilitating those rendered homeless by natural calamities despite having laws and policies for such allocations, a minister informed the Assembly on Friday.

Revenue and Disaster Management minister Keshab Mahanta, while replying to a private member's resolution in the Assembly seeking rehabilitation of people rendered landless due to natural calamities, said various steps were being taken to address the issue, including survey of 'char' (riverine) areas.

The minister said various legal provisions, including 'The Assam Land and Revenue Regulation of 1886', are already in place for allotment of plots to landless citizens.

Moreover, different governments have also formulated various policies during their regimes for land allotment and many citizens have been rehabilitated, he added.

Mahanta maintained that chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has a sympathetic approach towards allotting land to the landless people, and cited the Assam Land Policy, 2019, which prioritises allocation of plots to those rendered (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Assam Cong MLA urges state govt to formulate welfare board for gig workers

GUWAHATI, July 24: Congress MLA Zubair Anam Mazumder on Friday urged the Assam government to constitute a welfare board for gig workers and put in place a comprehensive social security framework for them.

Raising the issue through a private member's resolution in the Assembly, Mazumder said gig and platform workers constitute a "parallel economy" but are not given due recognition and professional safety nets.

He urged the government to formulate and implement a comprehensive social security framework for gig and platform workers, including those engaged in app-based transport, food delivery, e-commerce delivery, logistics, home (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Floods ravage Karbi Anglong, two killed

DIPHU, July 24: Heavy flooding has disrupted life across Karbi Anglong and affected two major revenue circles—Phuloni and Silonijan—between July 20 and July 23, 2026.

Official reports indicate that a total of 17,155 people across 25 villages have been affected by the deluge.

The worst-hit areas fall under the Phuloni Revenue Circle, where 23 villages with 17,110 residents were affected, while the Silonijan Revenue Circle reported flooding in two villages, affecting 45 residents.

The floods claimed two lives—one each in Phuloni and Silonijan.

The Phuloni region also reported significant livestock losses, with 225 large animals and 118 small animals affected. Of the total affected population, 12,195

people have been recorded as non-camp inmates, while thousands have taken refuge in temporary relief camps.

Meanwhile, rescue teams comprising the Fire & Emergency Services (F&ES), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), Assam Police, District Disaster Response Force (DDRF), and local volunteers have been actively deployed across the inundated areas.

A total of 67 people have been safely evacuated using boats, while 10 medical teams have been stationed in Phuloni to prevent the outbreak of waterborne diseases and respond to medical emergencies.

Authorities have set up 17 Relief Distribution Centres in Phuloni to distribute essential supplies, including 203 quintals of rice, 35 quintals of dal, 10 quintals of salt, 1,047 litres of mustard

oil, 1,483 packs of sanitary napkins, 1,483 packs of mosquito coils, 1,483 candles, and 202 tarpaulin sheets. In addition, the authorities are providing 1,500 packs of solid baby food through the District Social Welfare Office (DSWO) and 39.59 quintals of green fodder through the Veterinary Department.

The PHE Howraghat Division has also supplied 3,000 water pouches along with water tankers to the affected villages.

The floods have severely disrupted regional connectivity and damaged public infrastructure. Eight roads under the Phuloni Revenue Circle (PWD Roads, Dokmoka Sub-Division) have suffered extensive structural damage. Under the Public Health Engineering (PHE) Department, seven facilities/assets have been damaged, (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

NEET paper leak: NTA terminates 47 officials, to initiate legal action



NEW DELHI, July 24: In a major crackdown in the NEET paper leak controversy, the National Testing Agency terminated 47 officials and is set to pursue legal and criminal action against some, officials said on Friday.

The move comes a day after Higher Education Secretary Vineet Joshi was shunted out to the Panchayati Raj Ministry. "The NTA is set to undergo an overhaul and more reformative actions will follow. At least 47 officials have been terminated, and legal and criminal action will be initiated against some of them," a senior official said.

Outrage surrounding paper leaks and the CBSE digital evaluation glitches has triggered a series of shunting of top officials.

Students' anger has spilled out in the form of a huge protest that is taking place at Jantar Mantar.

The protesters and the opposition parties have been demanding Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation over the issue.

The NTA has issued advertisements for a set of professional appointments at the level of General Manager and has separately opened the engagement of sixteen Young Professionals through the Pratibha Setu portal of the Union Public Service Commission.

"Further recruitment and empanelment actions across the ten functional verticals recommended by the High-Level Committee of Experts will follow in the coming weeks.

"The measures notified today, together with the Expression of Interest for a fresh empanelment of Subject Matter Experts and Translators issued separately, are part of a systematic strengthening of the academic, operational, technological and integrity capabilities of the NTA," the official added. (PTI)

India to fund portal for UN for global ICT security

UNITED NATIONS, July 24: India has said it will fund a portal for the UN for global ICT security, which will bridge the capacity gap that continues to separate developed and developing States.

India also said digital technology benefits can only be fully realised when accompanied by robust security and the capability to defend against emerging threats.

Scaled, demand-driven capacity-building for Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) for the Global South is both achievable and effective when pursued with sustained political will, India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish said.

He was addressing the Plenary Session of the Global Mechanism on ICTs in the Context of International Security on Thursday when he also welcomed the establishment of a Dedicated Thematic Group on cyber capacity building.

The first substantive plenary meeting from July 20-24 of the

UN's permanent cyber mechanism advanced plan for the global cyber capacity-building system with member states discussing topics, including funding, implementation and fellowships for women.

"It is with particular happiness that my delegation recalls that the proposal for a dedicated Global ICT Security Cooperation and Capacity-Building Portal was originally an Indian initiative, first tabled in 2022," Parvathaneni said.

"We are pleased to announce today that, having seen this idea through years of deliberation to consensus and eventual adoption, India will be providing the entire funding towards the operationalisation of this Portal as a Portal of the United Nations so that concrete, tangible action can finally follow years of discussion," he said.

India's support will help enable the technical establishment of the Portal and its maintenance, ensuring that the platform envisaged, comprising a repository of re-

sources, a capacity-building calendar, a needs-based catalogue of opportunities and an interactive discussion board, can move from design to reality, he said.

CERT India will undertake the technical consultancy work required for the Portal's testing and infrastructure development, he announced. CERT-In is India's national nodal agency for responding to computer security incidents as and when they happen.

"We believe this platform can play a meaningful role in bridging the capacity gap that continues to separate developed and developing States in the domain of ICT security, provided it is treated by all of us as a living tool rather than a static repository," Parvathaneni said.

For Global South, digital technology has been transformative - a genuine enabler of economic prosperity and accelerated progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), he said. India's own experience (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

The minister clarified that health is a state subject

No reports on nationwide shortage of anti-rabies vaccine: Nadda tells LS

NEW DELHI, July 24: Union Health Minister JP Nadda on Friday told the Lok Sabha that the government has not received any reports indicating a nationwide shortage of anti-rabies vaccine (ARV).

However, temporary local shortages may occur in some health facilities due to increased demand, procurement delays or supply chain issues, and such situations are addressed by the concerned state and Union Territory governments through redistribution of available stocks, emergency procurement and strengthening of supply chain management, he said.

Nadda clarified that health is a state subject and the primary responsibility for procurement, distribution and ensuring uninterrupted availability of anti-rabies vaccine (ARV) and rabies immunoglobulin (RIG) in public health facilities rests with the re-



spective state and UT governments.

"The Government of India has not received reports indicating any nationwide shortage of Anti-Rabies Vaccine," he said.

The minister said the Centre continuously reviews the imple-

mentation of the National Rabies Control Programme (NCRP) through periodic review meetings with states and union territories.

He said advisories are issued from time to time to all states to maintain uninterrupted supply of ARV and RIG through funds allo-

cated under the National Free Drug Initiative (NFDI).

Under the National Health Mission (NHM), the Centre provides technical and financial support to states for strengthening their healthcare systems based on proposals submitted by them in their Programme Implementation Plans, subject to norms and availability of resources, Nadda said.

Under the NCRP, funds have been allocated through the NHM to states and UTs under the NFDI for procurement of ARV and RIG. Procurement of the vaccines and immunoglobulin is decentralised, he informed.

Support under the NCRP includes procurement of ARV and RIG, establishment and strengthening of anti-rabies clinics and wound-washing facilities, strengthening rabies diagnostic laboratories, training of medical officers and (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Stock markets extend losses for 5th straight day on US trade tariffs, West Asia tensions

MUMBAI, July 24: Market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended lower on Friday, extending the losing streak for the fifth consecutive session, as investors remained cautious due to rising oil prices amid geopolitical tensions in West Asia and renewed concerns over US trade tariffs.

Fresh foreign fund outflows and selling in blue-chip HDFC Bank also dented market sentiment.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 331.62 points, or 0.43 per cent, to settle at 76,059.77. During the day, it tanked 916.96 points, or 1.20 per cent, to 75,474.43.

The 50-share NSE Nifty dipped 102.15 points, or 0.43 per cent, to end at 23,767.45.

From the Sensex pack, Eternal, Mahindra & Mahindra, Bajaj Finance, Bharti Airtel, Asian Paints and Infosys were among the major laggards.

IT services company Infosys declined 1 per cent after it tempered the upper end of its full-year revenue forecast to between 1.5 per cent and 3 per cent amid continued macroeconomic uncertainty.

HCL Tech, ITC, Axis Bank and Tata Consultancy Services were among the winners.

"Indian equity markets extended their losing streak to a fifth consecutive session as investors remained cautious amid lingering geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and renewed concerns over US trade tariffs. Weakness across Asian markets reinforced the risk-off mood, prompting broad-based selling despite signs of easing pressure in energy markets," Ponnudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and



wealth tech firm, said.

"Markets traded volatile and ended lower on Friday, extending their losing streak for the fifth consecutive session amid persistent geopolitical concerns, elevated crude oil prices and disappointing earnings from select large-cap companies," Ajit Mishra – SVP Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

Investor sentiment remained subdued as Brent crude prices surged above the USD 100 per barrel mark following a fresh escalation in tensions in the Middle East, reviving concerns over inflation and its impact on the domestic economy, he added.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, dropped 3.66 per cent to USD 96.98 per barrel on Friday, after surpassing USD 100 per barrel in the previous session.

"Market sentiment is likely to remain under pressure in the near term, as sustained oil prices in a higher range could begin to adversely impact key macroeconomic indicators and growth dynamics. Washington's new tariffs on imports added another headwind for export-driven

economies, with technology-heavy markets having been hit the most as higher rates weigh on growth and investors are increasingly seeking to diversify their concentrated exposure to other emerging market opportunities," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Ltd, said.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹ 2,999.23 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data.

The BSE MidCap Select index climbed 0.46 per cent, while the SmallCap Select index edged higher by 0.08 per cent.

Among sectors, Auto declined 0.96 per cent, Telecommunication 0.90 per cent, Power 0.67 per cent, Consumer Discretionary 0.65 per cent, Oil & Gas 0.65 per cent, Realty 0.54 per cent, Metal 0.50 per cent and Energy 0.39 per cent.

Focused IT jumped 1.30 per cent, IT 0.66 per cent, PSU Bank 0.65 per cent, MidSmall Private Banks Quality Tilt 0.46 per cent, Insurance 0.43 per cent and FMCG 0.20 per cent.

In the last five trading days, the BSE benchmark tanked 2,091.68 points, or 2.67 per cent, and the Nifty declined 566.85 points, or 2.32 per cent.

In Asian markets, South Korea's KOSPI tanked 5.72 per cent. Japan's Nikkei 225, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index also ended lower.

Markets in Europe were trading higher. US markets ended lower on Thursday.

On Thursday, the Sensex declined 363.66 points, or 0.47 per cent, to settle at 76,391.39. The Nifty dipped 126.65 points, or 0.53 per cent, to end at 23,869.60. (PTI)

TAC InfoSec to acquire Israel-based B2C cybersecurity firm Safehouse Technologies

AFFIDAVIT

I Sri Pranab Barman resident of Matikola Dimasa Gaon, Hovraghat, Karbi Anglong would like to mention that in my daughter Aadhaar Card bearing No. 531580936750, her name wrongly recorded as Desri Daudinglangtha instead of her correct name Desri Barman and my name also wrongly recorded as Kishan Daudinglangtha instead of correct name Praban Barman. This is true.

LOST

I, Vidhya Laxmi Singhvi resident of Diphu lost my original B.COM Marksheet bearing Roll No.973, Registration No. 7373 (1981-82) of North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Shillong.

AFFIDAVIT

I, Sultana Rejia, W/O-Abu Bakkar Siddique, R/O-Village-Baruajhar, P.O-Bachimari, P.S-Dalgaoon in the Dist. Darrang (Assam) do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that I am a permanent resident of the above mentioned address and citizen of India by birth. That my mother's actual and correct name is Fatema Begum. But my mother's name has been recorded in my HS Pass Certificate vide Roll: 0206 No.10161 in the year of 2011 issued by Assam Higher Secondary Education Council as Fatema Khatun in place of Fatema Begum. That Fatema Begum and Fatema Khatun are the same and one person who is my mother.

Sd/-
Sultana Rejia

AFFIDAVIT

I do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that in my father PAN card bearing PAN No- BNSPB4304A and Aadhaar Card vide Aadhaar No- 2654 9180 8155 his name has been correctly recorded as Jogen Basumatary. But in my Passport bearing Passport No- N9787250, my father's name has been recorded as Jogen Basumatary instead of Jogen Basumatary. The above names Jogen Basumatary and Jogen Basumatary are not of different individuals but the same and single person i.e. the name of my father. I swear this affidavit before the Notary Public, Diphu, Karbi Anglong on 22nd July, 2026, and declare that the above statement made are true to the best of my knowledge and belief and to with view to submit to the concern authorities in support of this document.

Name: Jugal Basumatary
S/O Jogen Basumatary
Address: Diphu Police Reserve, P.O. & P.S., Diphu, District: Karbi Anglong, Assam, Pin Code – 7822460. Mobile No. 8135066269.

AFFIDAVIT

I, EKRAMUL HUSSAIN, S/O Makul Hussain, R/O- Vill- Nagajan, PO & PS, Kharupetia, Dist- Darrang (Assam) do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that my actual and correct name is Ekrumul Hussain which has been recorded in all my relevant documents except school testimonials. That my name has also been recorded in my school certificate of HSLC vide Roll: R9-100 No. 0007 issued by SEBA as Md. Ekrumul Hussain in place of Ekrumul Hussain. That Ekrumul Hussain and Md. Ekrumul Hussain are the same and one person.

Sd/-
EKRAMUL HUSSAIN

CHANDIGARH, July 24: Cybersecurity company TAC InfoSec Ltd will acquire 100 per cent of Israel-based Safehouse Technologies Ltd, marking its strategic entry into the business-to-consumer (B2C) cybersecurity segment, the company said on Friday.

Safehouse will become a wholly-owned subsidiary of TAC InfoSec Limited after the completion of the deal, the company said in a statement. Safehouse Technologies operates in the digital security and consumer cybersecurity space.

The acquisition consideration is proposed at ₹ 1 crore, payable in a combination of cash and TAC Security stock. The transaction represents a significant expansion of TAC Security's cybersecurity platform from enterprise, government, and technology customers into the fast-growing consumer digital protection market, the company said.

As part of the proposed transaction, TAC will acquire Safehouse's intellectual property, including source code, product designs, trademarks, trade secrets, know-how, and other IP developed in connection with Safehouse's business.

Trishneet Arora, Founder and CEO, TAC Security, said, "TAC Security has built its global cybersecurity presence by serving enterprises, governments, and technology companies. With Safehouse, we are taking a strategic step into consumer cybersecurity."

Liad Herman, Co-founder, Safehouse Technologies, said, "Safehouse was built with the belief that digital security should be simple, accessible, and trusted by everyday users. Joining hands with TAC Security gives us the scale, cybersecurity expertise, and global platform required to take this vision to the next level. Together, we aim to build consumer cybersecurity products that can protect millions of users in India and across global markets." (PTI)

Assamese film Rudra premieres on Reeldrama

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 24: The Assamese feature film Rudra has premiered on the OTT platform Reeldrama, making the critically acclaimed regional production accessible to a wider digital audience.

The film has already earned recognition on the awards circuit, with veteran Assamese actor Ravi Sharma receiving the INCA Award and the Filmfare Assam Best Actor Award for his performance in the lead role.

Sharma's portrayal in Rudra has been widely appreciated for its emotional depth and restrained performance, with critics citing it as one of the film's major strengths. Commenting on the digital release, the makers said the OTT premiere would enable audiences beyond Assam to experience contemporary Assamese cinema.

"We are excited that the film is available on Reeldrama. The OTT premiere provides a chance for audiences outside Assam to experience contemporary Assamese storytelling at scale," the team said in a statement.

The release of Rudra reflects the growing visibility of regional cinema on digital platforms, with Assamese films increasingly finding audiences across the country and abroad.

Adequate life insurance coverage remains a challenge despite rising awareness: Bandhan Life



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 24: Despite growing awareness about life insurance among Indian households, ensuring adequate financial protection remains a major challenge, according to Bandhan Life Insurance, the life insurance arm of the Bandhan Group.

Citing data from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI), the company said life insurance premium collections grew by 6.73 per cent during FY 2024-25.

While fewer new policies were purchased during the year, many existing policyholders opted to enhance their coverage to better safeguard their families and financial goals. Bandhan Life noted that India continues to remain significantly underinsured. It said the average annual spending on life insurance in the country is around ₹6,200 per person, compared with the global average of ₹33,300, indicating the need for greater awareness and wider adoption of adequate life cover.

Satishwar B, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Bandhan Life Insurance, said the discussion on

life insurance should move beyond mere ownership of policies to the adequacy of financial protection.

"Life insurance should fundamentally be seen as an income replacement tool. The question is no longer whether families have insurance, but whether they have enough protection to secure their financial future," he said.

The company offers a range of protection, savings, retirement and investment-linked insurance products, including term insurance plans and unit-linked insurance plans (ULIPs), aimed at supporting long-term financial security and wealth creation.

Satishwar B said India has made significant progress in expanding access to life insurance over the past decade through increased financial awareness, deeper financial inclusion and government initiatives such as the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY).

He added that with millions of households now covered under some form of life insurance, the industry's focus is gradually shifting from expanding coverage to ensuring that families have adequate financial protection.

Contd. from Page 1...

Assam flood situation

Dibrugarh, Golaghat, Hojai, Jorhat, Kamrup, Kamrup Metropolitan, Karbi Anglong, Nagaon, Sivasagar and Tinsukia districts. Sivasagar is the worst-hit district with nearly 3.8 lakh people affected, followed by Charaideo with almost 1.9 lakh people and Jorhat with more than 1.2 lakh people reeling under floodwaters.

The flood situation has worsened significantly since Wednesday, when more than 6.53 lakh people were affected across 11 districts. The ASDMA stated that the administration has been operating 358 relief camps and relief distribution centres in nine districts, currently caring for 24,124 displaced individuals.

Multiple agencies like the Army, NDRF, SDRF, Fire & Emergency Service, police and civil agencies have rescued around 5,000 people from different parts of Golaghat, Jorhat and Sivasagar, it added.

At present, 883 villages are under water, and 25,375.44 hectares of crop areas have been damaged across Assam, the ASDMA said. Embankments, roads, bridges and other infrastructure have been damaged by flood waters in different districts of the state. On account of widespread flooding, 3,71,609 domestic animals and poultry are affected across the state. (PTI)

Wangchuk ends 26-day

of Parliament from different political parties had visited or signed letters urging him to break the fast. "This was done after long negotiations on various conditions and in view of possible violence in the country. I will explain the conditions in detail in a separate video very soon. Meanwhile, I urge you all to stay very vigilant about not allowing violence of any kind anywhere," he said in his post on X.

The Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) on Friday said it was "relieved and grateful" that activist Sonam Wangchuk had ended his 26-day hunger strike, but asserted that its peaceful protest at Jantar Mantar would continue until Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigns. In a post on X, CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke thanked Wangchuk for his "extraordinary courage and sacrifice".

"We are relieved and grateful that Sonam sir has ended his hunger strike after 26 days. Thank you, sir, for your extraordinary courage and sacrifice. By putting your own life on the line, you awakened the conscience of an entire nation. Your life is far too precious to this country," Dipke said. "The Cockroach Janta Party's peaceful protest at Jantar Mantar will continue until Dharmendra Pradhan resigns," he added.

Besides seeking Pradhan's resignation, the outfit has demanded accountability over alleged irregularities in competitive examinations, reforms in the education system, ₹ 1 crore compensation for families of students who died by suicide following the alleged NEET paper leak, and withdrawal of all FIRs and legal action against peaceful protesters who participated in the movement. Wangchuk joined the CJP-led agitation at Jantar Mantar on June 28. He began an indefinite hunger strike in support of students demanding accountability over alleged irregularities in competitive examinations, reforms in the education system and the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. Over the next 26 days, he lost around 11 kg and repeatedly appealed for the movement to remain peaceful despite the police crackdown on the July 20 'Sanskad Chalo' march.

On July 18, the Delhi Police shifted Wangchuk from the protest site to Safdarjung Hospital, stating he required medical attention. His wife, Gitanjali Angmo, challenged the move before the Delhi High Court, contending that he was being kept in the government hospital against his wishes. The high court subsequently facilitated his transfer to Medanta Hospital in Gurugram, where he continued his fast.

During his stay at Medanta, Wangchuk said he wanted to return to his students and his work as an educator but could not end his fast without safeguards for the young protesters. (PTI)

Assam govt facing

homeless due to natural calamities. He added that the chief minister has suggested some amendments in the policy and work was underway on those.

The minister said that finding government land for allotment is also an important part of rehabilitation.

He claimed that available government land has been encroached, including some by landless people.

Mahanta said that with the survey of the 'char' areas commencing, land allotment can be started in those parts after due processes are completed, and it will help in addressing the issue of rehabilitation to a large extent. Earlier, speaking during the discussion, Congress MLA Abdul Rahim Ahmed said short- as well as long-term measures are required to address the problem. He said 'char' dwellers are deprived of rehabilitation packages as they do not have land rights, and the departments concerned are hesitant to provide them with 'erosion-affected' certificates, which would help them in getting government benefits.

Ahmed also maintained that the need to submit proof of being dwellers of the area for at least the last three generations is also a problem as there is no clarity on which papers will serve as legal proof.

Echoing him, another Congress legislator, Jakir Hussain Siddar, said that erosion-hit displaced people are often treated as foreigners in other parts of the state when they go to settle in those areas.

"The government should provide these people with erosion-affected certificates and provide rehabilitation," he said. Mehboob Muktar of Rajar Dal cited the economic hardships families face when they lose their homes to erosion and said that on top of it, they are branded as 'foreigners' and go through social and administrative injustices. Opposition AIUDF's Mujibur Rahman and TMC's Sherman Ali Ahmed, while highlighting the plight of the landless people, also criticised the Congress for not addressing the issue of rehabilitation when it was in power. (PTI)

Speaker considers releasing

the video," Dass added. Gogoi had climbed atop his desk while protesting the Speaker's rejection of his adjournment motion seeking a discussion on the flood situation in the state on Thursday, leading Dass to suspend him for the day. (PTI)

Over 80,000 flood-hit

ground suggests that conventional methods remain the most effective way to deliver relief to affected families as of now," Sarma said. The scale of flooding in Sivasagar and Charaideo has been unprecedented, affecting nearly seven lakh people in the two districts, the chief minister said. He said the state government is working closely with the Army, Air Force, NDRF and local officials to reach every affected family. (PTI)

Assam Cong MLA

services and other digital platforms. "The gig workers are not an invisible force; they are a parallel economy. They are people of flesh and blood, but we do not acknowledge them. Many apartments do not allow the delivery agents to use the lifts, but pet dogs are," he said. Mazumder lamented that the dignity of labour was yet to receive due recognition in the country and that respect was often measured by a person's financial status.

"They do not have any social security. They do not have any grievance redressal system. Their entire work is determined by some algorithm," he said. He maintained that while it will take time to change people's mentality, a faster way to ensure dignity for gig workers is by framing laws for them.

He claimed that states such as Karnataka, Telangana, Bihar and Rajasthan have welfare boards to address problems of gig workers, and urged the Assam government to also form such a body.

Labour Welfare minister Rameswar Teli, replying to the resolution, said laws governing the gig workers, who are classified under unorganised workers, are formulated by the central government.

He said the central government has been working on labour law reforms, which were reflected in the new labour codes introduced last year. (PTI)

Floods ravage Karbi

including two Hume pipes under the Dokmoka Sub-Division and five Pipe Water Supply Schemes (PWSS) under the PHE Howraghat Sub-Division.

India to fund portal

with open, inclusive digital public infrastructure has shown that technology's benefits can only be fully realised when accompanied by robust security and the capability to defend against emerging threats, Parvathaneni said. "This is precisely why India has consistently emphasized that capacity-building cannot be treated as a residual or secondary pillar; it must be targeted, needs-driven, context-specific, politically neutral and transparent," he added. The Ambassador gave the example of the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme, through which in the last five years alone, India has offered close to 50,000 fully funded training opportunities to professionals from Global South countries.

These training programmes spanned nearly 400 courses at over 100 premier Indian institutions, with a substantial and growing share dedicated specifically to ICT, cyber security, e-governance and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and big data analytics, he said.

"We share this experience to underline that scaled, demand-driven capacity-building for the Global South is both achievable and effective when pursued with sustained political will," the Ambassador added.

India, therefore, warmly welcomes the establishment of a Dedicated Thematic Group focused specifically on Cyber Capacity Building, a structural recognition of the priority this issue deserves within the Global Mechanism, he said. (PTI)

No reports on

healthcare workers on rabies case management, strengthening surveillance and reporting of human rabies, information, education and communication (IEC) and behaviour change communication (BCC) activities, and programme monitoring and review. The minister said the National Action Plan for Dog-Mediated Rabies Elimination by 2030 was conceptualised under the NRCP and jointly launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in collaboration with the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying.

Responding to another question, Nadda said data on the number of persons who have received anti-rabies vaccine is not maintained centrally. He said states and UTs have been advised to notify rabies as a notifiable disease and report rabies cases and deaths on the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme-Integrated Health Information Platform. However, state-wise data on human rabies deaths is not maintained centrally.

Nadda said measures taken under the NRCP at the central level include launch of the National Action Plan for Dog-Mediated Rabies Elimination by 2030 (NAPRE-2030), financial support to states and UTs for procurement of ARV and anti-rabies serum (ARS), establishment of model anti-rabies clinics and wound-washing facilities, strengthening of surveillance, monitoring, IEC activities and capacity building.

The Centre has also strengthened 14 rabies diagnostic laboratories, issued advisories to states and UTs for notifying rabies as a notifiable disease and ensuring uninterrupted availability of ARV and ARS, constituted a National Joint Steering Committee for Rabies Elimination, developed national guidelines, standard operating procedures and training modules, undertaken community awareness campaigns and launched a dedicated NRCP website. He said the Rabies Helpline (15400) has been launched in five states -- Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Assam and Puducherry. At the state level, seven states and UTs -- Puducherry, Rajasthan, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka -- have developed State Action Plans for Rabies Elimination (SAPRE), he said. (PTI)

ATSU submits six-point charter to CM, seeks early action on Tiwa issues

Himanta Biswa Sarma assures consideration of key demands, including TAC and land rights

HT Correspondent
MORIGAO, July 24: A delegation of the All Tiwa Students' Union (ATSU) on Friday met Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and submitted a six-point charter of demands concerning the welfare and rights of the Tiwa community.

According to ATSU, the Chief Minister held detailed discussions with the delegation and gave a positive response to the issues raised during the meeting.

The organisation said the Chief Minister assured it that the State government would pursue the inclusion of the Tiwa Autonomous Council (TAC) under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

The delegation was also informed that elections to the Tiwa Autonomous Council would be held after the completion of the verification of electoral rolls for the 113 newly included revenue villages, reverification of the exist-



ing voter list and the delimitation of constituencies.

ATSU further claimed that the Chief Minister agreed to reconsider the State government's pro-

posed hydroelectric power project in Karbi Anglong in view of the concerns raised by the organisation.

The Chief Minister also assured

the delegation that action would be taken against alleged encroachers and illegal settlers occupying Professional Grazing Reserve (PGR), Village Grazing Reserve (VGR) and Non-Cadastral (NC) lands after the forthcoming parliamentary by-election, ATSU claimed.

The delegation also sought land pattas for indigenous tribal families residing in hill areas and along the outskirts of water bodies beyond one kilometre from urban limits.

According to the organisation, the Chief Minister assured that the demand would be examined.

ATSU further alleged misuse of funds in the Tiwa Autonomous Council through fake work orders.

The organisation claimed that the Chief Minister expressed concern over the allegations and assured that a CID inquiry would be conducted and appropriate action taken against those found responsible.

Tasa, Margherita tour flood-hit Upper Assam districts

HT Correspondent
JORHAT, July 24: Kaziranga MP Kamakhya Prasad Tasa and Union Minister of State for Textiles and External Affairs Pabitra Margherita have been touring the flood-affected districts of Charaideo, Sivasagar, Jorhat and Golaghat to assess the impact of the ongoing floods and monitor relief operations.

A BJP State functionary said the two leaders were directed by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to visit the affected areas, assess the extent of damage caused by the floods and review the ongoing rescue and relief measures.

According to the party functionary, the leaders are also monitoring relief operations to ensure that affected families receive necessary assistance.

They are expected to submit a detailed report on the situation to the Chief Minister after completing their tour.

Meanwhile, the Assam Sahitya Sabha continued its humanitarian efforts by distributing relief materials among flood-affected families in Solmara and Sengelijati on the outskirts of Jorhat.

Earlier in the day, a Sabha delegation led by its president Dr Basanta Goswami visited Baliati and Gowalgaon in neighbouring Golaghat district, where relief materials were also distributed among flood victims.

Lakshman Prasad Acharya calls for stronger emergency response and disease prevention measures

Governor reviews Red Cross flood relief operations in Assam

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, July 24: Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya, who is also the President of the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS), Assam State Branch, on Friday reviewed the organisation's ongoing flood relief and rehabilitation efforts during a high-level meeting at Lok Bhavan.

The meeting was attended by IRCS Assam State Branch General Secretary Deba Prasad Mishra and other senior office-bearers, who briefed the Governor on the humanitarian assistance being provided to flood-affected people, particularly in the districts of Upper Assam.

The officials informed the Governor that district branches of the Indian Red Cross Society had been activated in the affected areas and trained volunteers had been mobilised to provide timely relief.

They said rapid needs assessments were being carried out in co-ordination with the respective district administrations, the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) and the Indian Red Cross Society Headquarters to ensure an effective response.

The Governor was also apprised of the challenges involved in providing emergency shelter, house-



hold relief materials, safe drinking water, healthcare, first aid and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) support to flood-affected communities.

Emphasising the need for a robust and proactive response, Acharya urged the organisation to further strengthen its emergency response mechanism to ensure timely delivery of relief to all affected people. He also stressed the importance of preventive measures to contain the possible outbreak of water-borne and vector-borne diseases after floodwaters recede.

Appreciating the services rendered by the Indian Red Cross Society and its volunteers, the Governor assured the organisation of his full support in strengthening its humanitarian initiatives.

He also said that any assistance required from the Central Government would be pursued through appropriate channels to facilitate relief and rehabilitation efforts.

The meeting was also attended by Joint Secretary to the Governor Arindam Barua, PPS to the Governor Dr S N Bhowmick, and other members of the Indian Red Cross Society, Assam State Branch.

Centre committed in protecting future of students: Himanta

Staff Reporter
GUWAHATI, July 24: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma recently welcomed the Centre's decision to establish fast-track courts for the speedy trial of cases related to the alleged NEET paper leak, saying the Narendra Modi government is committed to protecting the interests and future of students.

Sharing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's message on social media, Sarma said the proposed fast-track courts would help ensure swift justice against those accused of compromising the integrity of one of the country's most important entrance examinations.

"The interests and future of the youth of the country remain the highest priority of the double-engine government. Fast-track courts will be established to ensure the expeditious disposal of cases related to the NEET paper leak so that those responsible are brought to justice at the earliest," the Chief Minister said in a post on X.

He further stated that the Prime Minister has directed the concerned authorities to initiate all necessary measures for implementing the decision without delay.

According to Sarma, the move reflects the Centre's resolve to safeguard students and maintain the credibility of the country's examination system.

"This is an important step towards protecting the interests of students. Anyone attempting to play with the future of the youth will face strict legal consequences," he added.

The Chief Minister's remarks came against the backdrop of continuing protests by students and opposition parties over the alleged irregularities in the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET), one of India's largest medical entrance examinations.

The issue has triggered widespread political debate, with opposition parties demanding

accountability from the Centre and calling for the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over the alleged lapses in the conduct of the examination.

The Prime Minister's announcement on setting up fast-track courts follows recent demonstrations in the national capital, including the 'Sansad Chalo' march organised by the Cuckooch Janta Party (CJP), during which students and supporters demanded a transparent investigation into the alleged paper leak and stricter action against those involved.

The Central government has maintained that it is committed to ensuring a fair investigation into the alleged examination malpractice and has reiterated that all individuals found guilty would face stringent legal action.

The proposed fast-track courts are intended to accelerate the judicial process and ensure timely disposal of cases arising out of examination-related offences.

KKHSOU distributes postgraduate certificates at Mangaldai College

HT Correspondent
MANGALDAI, July 24: The Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University (KKHSOU) Study Centre at Mangaldai College organised a certificate distribution ceremony on Friday for students who successfully completed their postgraduate programmes through the university's open and distance learning mode.

The Vice Chancellor of KKHSOU, who attended the programme as the chief guest, presented the original certificates to the graduates and congratulated them on their academic achievement.

He also extended his best wishes for their future academic and professional pursuits.

Tree plantation drive by Muslim Rashtriya Manch successfully culminates in Hojai

HT correspondent
DOBOKA, July 24: In a bid to protect environment and greenery, the Assam Pradesh unit of Muslim Rashtriya Manch, successfully concluded a tree plantation drive in Hojai district on Friday.

The drive was carried out under the leadership of Nazmul Islam, Co-Convenor of Assam Pradesh MRM and in-charge of Hojai district. As part of the concluding event, saplings were planted simultaneously across various parts of the district.

According to sources, the plantation campaign has been going



on for the past few days in different areas of Hojai district under Nazmul Islam's leadership. Rubul Islam, Hojai district convenor, local workers and the general public participated in today's con-

cluding programme.

Speaking on the occasion, organisers opined that the initiative taken up by Muslim Rashtriya Manch, aims to make the district greener and pollution-free while also raising environmental awareness among people.

"Protecting the environment is everyone's responsibility. Muslim Rashtriya Manch has always played a leading role not only in social development but also in nature conservation. Such programmes will continue in the future as well," said Nazmul Islam.



movement.

The railway zone has also reported strong freight loading across its divisions. The Alipurduar Division loaded six rakes

comprising 252 wagons of maize, generating freight revenue of ₹4.22 crore, while the Katihar Division handled 39 rakes of maize, earning ₹23.53 crore.

Centre releases ₹175.10 crore for ST post-matric scholarships in Assam

HT Correspondent
KOKRAJHAR, July 24: The Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs has informed the Rajya Sabha that it has released ₹175.10 crore to the Assam government under the Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme for Scheduled Tribe (ST) students during the 2026-27 financial year, as of July 20, 2026. The information was provided by Minister of State for Tribal Affairs Durgadas Uikhey in a written reply to an unstarred question raised by Rajya Sabha MP Rungwa Narzary.

Narzary had sought details on the release of scholarship funds to Assam, the amount sanctioned during the past five years and whether the Centre was considering increasing scholarship rates in view of rising educational and living costs.

In its reply, the Ministry stated that the Centre releases its share of funds under the scheme based on proposals submitted by the State government.

According to the Ministry, Assam received ₹10.93 crore in 2021-22, ₹68.45 crore in 2022-23, ₹35 crore in 2023-24, ₹79.71 crore in 2024-25, and ₹175.10 crore in

2026-27. The Ministry said no funds were released during 2025-26 because the State government had an unspent balance from previous allocations and had not fulfilled certain mandatory compliance requirements. The Centre also informed the House that it has proposed a revision of scholarship rates under the Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme as part of the 16th Expenditure Finance Committee cycle covering 2026-27 to 2030-31.

According to the Ministry, the proposal seeks to enhance scholarship amounts in view of increasing educational expenses and the rising cost of living faced by students.

It added that the proposal is currently under consideration and will require approval from the Department of Expenditure and the Union Cabinet before implementation.

The Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme is one of the Centre's flagship initiatives aimed at supporting Scheduled Tribe students pursuing higher education by helping them meet educational expenses and encouraging them to continue their studies.

The Lumding Division registered significant freight movement by loading 1,712 wagons of stone chips, generating ₹6.97 crore in revenue.

It also transported 2,420 wagons of cement, earning ₹9.89 crore, while the loading of 444 wagons of petroleum, oil and lubricants (POL) generated an additional ₹4.08 crore.

According to NFR, the initiatives are part of its ongoing efforts to improve customer experience by expanding freight handling facilities, strengthening logistics infrastructure and ensuring faster and more efficient cargo movement.

The railway zone said the measures are expected to provide greater opportunities for businesses to utilise rail transport while supporting regional trade, economic growth and reliable freight services across the Northeast.

Cachar reviews plan to expand role of cooperative societies

District administration focuses on business diversification and improved farmer services through PACS



HT Bureau
SILCHAR, July 24: The Cachar district administration on Friday reviewed measures to expand the role of Primary Agriculture Credit Societies (PACS), with a focus on business diversification, improved farmer outreach and better coordination among government departments to strengthen the cooperative sector.

The issues were discussed at a meeting of the District Cooperative Development Committee (DCDC) held at the District Commissioner's Office and chaired by District Commissioner Rahul Kumar Gupta.

The meeting was attended by District Development Commissioner Rajib Roy, Assistant Commissioner Arunabh Choudhury, and officials from various departments, while District Deputy Registrar of Cooperative Societies Dr Nasiruddin Ahmed presented the agenda.

Representatives from NABARD, the Food Corporation of India (FCI), the Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary, Fisheries, Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs departments, and other line departments also participated in the meeting.

The committee reviewed proposals to diversify the activities of PACS by linking them with major government initiatives, including the World's Largest Grain Storage Plan, Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samridhi Kendras (PMKSK), Common Service Centres (CSCs), Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and Kisan Credit Card (KCC) loans.

Officials said expanding the business portfolio of cooperative societies would enhance their financial sustainability while making a wider range of services available to farmers at the grassroots level.

The meeting also discussed measures to strengthen dairy cooperatives in the district.

Farmers and shareholders were encouraged to supply milk directly to cooperative societies instead of selling through middlemen, a move officials said would ensure assured procurement, enable farmers to receive the full benefit of the ₹25 per litre dairy subsidy, and reinforce the cooperative network.

Chairing the meeting, Gupta expressed satisfaction with the initiatives undertaken by the Cooperative Department and directed all concerned departments to resolve pending inter-departmental issues promptly.

He also urged cooperative societies to take up fertiliser distribution and other commercially viable activities to generate additional revenue and become financially self-reliant.

The meeting concluded with a call for closer coordination among government departments and cooperative institutions to ensure effective implementation of welfare schemes and strengthen the role of cooperative societies in the district's rural economy.

NFR introduces customer-centric measures to boost freight services

New parcel facilities and higher freight loading strengthen rail cargo operations

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, July 24: The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has introduced a series of customer-centric initiatives aimed at improving freight services, enhancing logistics efficiency and increasing freight revenue across its network.

As part of the measures, Narangi Railway Station under the Lumding Division has been opened for booking and handling inward and outward leased parcels, advance booking of parcel space in SLRs and parcel vans, and indented parcel traffic with effect from June 10, 2026.

In another initiative, NFR has approved the chargeable inter-distance for the newly constructed broad-gauge stations on the Balurghat-Hilli section under the Katihar Division with effect from June 23, 2026, a move expected to facilitate smoother freight

QUOTE OF THE DAY

It is never too late to be what you might have been.
- George Eliot

Cong, SP support to CJP stir

The manner in which the leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi and Samajwadi Party national President Akhilesh Yadav were detained by the police for their protest in support of the ongoing students' agitation has boosted the morale of leaders and workers of their parties in Uttar Pradesh before crucial state Assembly elections scheduled early next year. The leaders and workers of both the parties were so agitated they came out on the streets and staged demonstrations and courted arrest. The detention of Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav conveyed the message in the state that they were united on the issue of student movement and other related issues to dislodge BJP from power. The outreach of Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh to students all over the state will change the political climate in the state. UP witnessed large scale demonstrations from leaders and workers from both the parties after a long time. The planning of future struggle of Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav will also attract smaller parties and groups which were hesitating to join them so far. The manner in which Akhilesh and Dimple Yadav joined the struggle of students and the entire Gandhi family Sonia, Rahul and Priyanka came out in open to be with the students sent a unique message of solidarity.

The joint participation of Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav in the students' struggle will also strengthen INDIA block in UP. Now it will be very easy for Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav to sit with other leaders to discuss the complex issue of seat sharing. It would be worth mentioning here that ever since AICC UP Incharge Arvind Pande was replaced by Rajendra Pal Gautam MLA president All India SC and ST wing of the party, the issue of seat sharing became a very hot topic. Soon after taking over as UP incharge Rajendra Pal Gautam made it clear that seat sharing with Samajwadi Party will be on equal basis and honourable terms. His sentiments were supported by UPCC president Ajai Rai who also said that although the final decision on seat sharing will be taken by the central leadership, he also wanted Congress to be treated on equal terms during the discussion.

It may be mentioned that with the replacement of Avinash Pande with Rajendra Pal Gautam Rahul Gandhi sent a message for a dalit outreach for the party with decline in vote share of BSP. There is a broad consensus that BSP was functioning as B team of BJP. There is a fight between SP and Congress to win over influential dalit voters in UP. Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav both gained dalit support in 2024 Lok Sabha polls increasing the number of seats while causing great damage to BJP reducing its seats half of its strength in UP.

The Last Dance: Saying goodbye to Neymar



By: Indranil Gayan

Every generation inherits a footballing hero.

Some remember the brilliance of Pelé. Others grew up with the genius of Diego Maradona or the elegance of Zinedine Zidane. For my generation, especially those who waited every four years for Brazil to conquer the world again, that hero was Neymar.

His story was never meant to be ordinary.

When the curly-haired teenager from Santos burst onto the scene, the world saw more than another promising footballer. It saw the rebirth of Brazilian flair. He danced past defenders with fearless confidence, smiled through impossible situations, and played as though football was meant to be enjoyed rather than merely won.

Neymar reminded us that the game was an art before it became a science.

For over a decade, he carried the hopes of a football-crazy nation. Every World Cup became another chapter in Brazil's search for redemption after 2002, and every campaign seemed to rest on Neymar's shoulders.

Sometimes he dazzled.

Sometimes he suffered.

Too often, he suffered alone.

There were injuries that denied him defining moments. There were defeats that broke not only his heart but the hearts of millions who believed he would finally bring football's greatest trophy back to Brazil. The dream always seemed within reach, only to disappear at the cruellest moment.

Statistics tell only part of Neymar's story.

Yes, he became Brazil's leading goalscorer. Yes, he won league titles, continental trophies, and individual honours. Yet numbers cannot capture what happened whenever he received the ball. Stadiums leaned forward. Defenders panicked. Fans expected something extraordinary.

That expectation is perhaps the greatest compliment any footballer can receive.

Modern football often rewards discipline over imagination. Neymar refused to abandon creativity. He attempted the impossible because he believed football should inspire. Every flick, every nutmeg, every daring dribble was a reminder that entertainment still belonged in elite sport.

Not everyone appreciated it. He was criticised for diving, questioned for his lifestyle, and judged more harshly than most of his contemporaries. But even his harshest critics rarely denied his talent. Love him or dislike him, Neymar demanded attention every time he stepped onto the pitch.

Perhaps that is what true icons do.

As his international journey reaches its end, Brazil says goodbye to more than a footballer. It says goodbye to a style, an attitude, and a generation that still believed in "joga bonito". There will be new stars. There always are.

But some players cannot be replaced because they represent an emotion rather than a position.

For countless supporters—including those of us watching from distant corners of the world—Neymar was the reason to stay awake through the night, to believe until the final whistle, and to wear the yellow jersey with pride.

He did not leave the World Cup with the medal he deserved.

He leaves with something equally enduring: the admiration of millions who discovered the beauty of football through his feet.

The final whistle has blown.

The dance has ended.

But the echoes of Neymar's football will remain wherever children chase a ball with imagination instead of fear.

Legends are not remembered only for the trophies they lift.

Sometimes, they are remembered for the dreams they inspire.

Farewell, Neymar.

The stage will miss its greatest entertainer.

Assam's Flood and the National Media

The recent sudden and devastating floods in the districts of Sivasagar, Charaideo, and Jorhat in Upper Assam have created a grave situation. The primary cause of these floods is the heavy rainfall and sudden cloudburst that occurred in the neighbouring state of Nagaland. The powerful flow of water descending from the hilly regions of Nagaland caused an abnormal rise in the water levels of the Dikhow, Disang, Jaji, Dorika, and Bhogdoi rivers in Upper Assam. Under the tremendous pressure of the water, embankments collapsed in many places, leaving vast areas submerged. Agricultural land, residential houses, transportation networks, and public institutions went underwater, bringing normal life to a complete standstill. According to official statistics, lakhs of people have been directly affected by these floods. Along with thousands of hectares of agricultural land being submerged, there has also been extensive loss of livestock. The situation created by these floods has had a profound impact on the state's economy. The disruption of transportation has also adversely affected the delivery of flood relief and essential commodities. The silt and debris carried by the water flowing down from the hilly regions have raised the riverbeds, gradually reducing the water-carrying capacity of the rivers. As a result, even moderate rainfall causes the rivers to rise above the danger level and inundate adjoining areas. The flood situation in Upper Assam is a complex combination of natural and human-induced factors, requiring urgent and proper analysis as well as effective solutions.



DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

The role of the national media during this devastating flood situation in Upper Assam has undoubtedly been extremely disappointing. Artificial flooding caused by moderate rainfall in metropolitan cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, or Bengaluru receives far greater attention from the national media than the catastrophic floods in Assam. It hardly needs to be said that this discriminatory attitude of the national media is one of the primary reasons why Assam's flood crisis has failed to become an important issue at the national level. News organisations generally present stories based on viewership and commercial profitability. Over time, a perception has been created that news related to floods in Assam fails to attract nationwide audience attention. Consequently, while political controversies and entertainment news receive significant coverage, this disaster affecting the lives and livelihoods of lakhs of people receives comparatively little importance. This continued neglect by the national media also fails to create any meaningful pressure on the Central Government. Unless an issue gains national prominence, it becomes difficult to secure adequate central funding and attention for its resolution. Whenever natural disasters occur in other parts of the country, the national leadership often visits the affected areas immediately and announces substantial financial assistance. Such responses are rarely witnessed in the case of Assam. During floods in Assam, the Central Government's response generally remains confined to allocations from the State Disaster Response Fund. This persistent bias of the national media has reduced Assam's flood crisis to an ordinary annual occurrence, preventing the true scale of its devastation and losses from receiving national attention.

A few days before the recent flood situation in Upper Assam, the districts of Dhemaji and Lakhimpur had also witnessed an equally devastating flood. The torrential rivers flowing down from Arunachal Pradesh, particularly the Jadhoh, Ranganadi, and Subansiri rivers, cause extensive destruction in these two districts every year. One of the principal reasons behind flooding in this region is the problem of rising riverbeds. Water rushing down from the mountains at tremendous speed carries enormous quantities of sand, stones, and silt. As soon as these rivers enter the plains, the speed of the current decreases, causing these sediments to settle on the riverbeds. This continuous process over the years has rapidly reduced the depth of the rivers. With the decline in their water-carrying capacity, even moderate rainfall during the monsoon causes the rivers to overflow and inundate nearby areas. Alongside the rising riverbeds, erosion has also assumed alarming proportions. Every

year, the powerful river currents erode thousands of bighas of agricultural land and wash away numerous villages into the rivers. The frequent changes in the course of the Brahmaputra and its tributaries have further complicated the flood situation. Even during the devastating floods and erosion in Dhemaji and Lakhimpur, the national media paid virtually no attention. The plight of thousands of people forced to abandon their homes and land and live in relief camps failed to generate any national response. Along with these scientific and geographical factors, the indifference of the media has made the flood crisis increasingly prolonged and unbearable.

Apart from natural causes, various human-induced factors have made the flood situation in Assam even more severe. One of the principal reasons is the large-scale destruction of forests in the river catchment areas and on mountain slopes. The indiscriminate felling of trees has accelerated soil erosion, and the eroded soil is carried by rainwater into the rivers, where it accumulates on the riverbeds. Furthermore, embankments constructed without scientific planning have become causes of flooding rather than instruments of flood control. Many of these embankments, built several decades ago, have not received proper maintenance or management and therefore collapse easily under water pressure. When embankments suddenly breach, floodwaters enter inhabited areas without giving people sufficient time to prepare, resulting in abnormally high levels of damage. Wetlands and water bodies that once functioned as natural reservoirs have gradually been filled up.

These water bodies previously retained excess rainwater during the monsoon and played a significant role in flood control. However, encroachment and unplanned urbanisation have destroyed these wetlands, blocking the natural drainage of water. Urban areas also suffer from artificial flooding due to the absence of proper drainage systems. Unplanned earth cutting and road construction carried out in the name of infrastructure development have obstructed the natural flow of water. These human-induced activities have completely disrupted the ecological balance and pushed the flood problem towards an uncontrollable situation. Although strict measures should have been implemented by both government and non-government agencies to address these human-induced causes, their implementation has remained extremely slow.

The adverse impact of floods on Assam's economy every year has still not been properly assessed at the national level. The agricultural sector suffers the greatest damage due to flooding. During the monsoon, paddy cultivation is submerged, pushing farmers into severe financial distress. Thousands of hectares of cultivated land are destroyed, while agricultural fields become covered with sand, rendering them unsuitable for future cultivation. Assam's tea industry, one of the principal pillars of the state's economy, is also severely affected by floods. Waterlogging in tea gardens causes tea bushes to die and reduces production. Fisheries and livestock sectors also suffer extensive losses. The death of livestock and the shortage of animal feed seriously affect the rural economy.

Simultaneously, the damage to roads, bridges, educational institutions, hospitals, and other public infrastructure amounts to thousands of crores of rupees. The necessity of spending enormous sums every year on rebuilding damaged infrastructure hampers the state's developmental activities. Despite these massive economic losses, Assam has consistently faced inadequate financial assistance from the Central Government. The process of obtaining grants from the National Disaster Response Fund remains lengthy and complicated. Even after submitting accurate assessments of the damage, the release of entitled financial assistance is often significantly delayed. From the perspective of the national media, these enormous economic losses remain merely statistical figures, creating no meaningful pressure on the Central Government to announce special financial packages.

Alongside floods, the alarming scale of riverbank erosion in Assam has also remained completely neglected at the national level. After the floodwaters recede, erosion intensifies



and washes away vast stretches of riverbanks. Over the past several decades, erosion has swallowed lakhs of bighas of agricultural land and thousands of villages across Assam. Lakhs of people have become homeless after losing their homes and farmland. These displaced families are compelled to live in temporary shelters on embankments or roadsides under inhuman conditions. These people can rightly be described as climate refugees, yet no specific national policy has been formulated for their rehabilitation. Having lost their land and livelihoods, they are forced to migrate to urban areas in search of employment, thereby placing additional pressure on the demographic and economic structure of towns and cities. Riverbank erosion has destroyed not only private property but also numerous historical sites and public institutions. The Central Government has still not recognised erosion as a national issue. Although the national media occasionally show visuals of floodwaters, they rarely report the long-term destruction caused by erosion. The struggle and uncertain future of people who have lost everything to riverbank erosion continue to remain an ignored issue at the national level. The rights and rehabilitation of these climate refugees have failed to secure any meaningful place in national political discourse.

The situation that emerges after the floodwaters recede is often even more serious and frightening. Once the water level declines, flood-affected areas face an acute shortage of safe drinking water. Wells and ponds become contaminated by floodwater, rendering traditional water sources unusable. Sanitation systems collapse completely, resulting in unhygienic conditions and outbreaks of epidemics. Diseases such as cholera, typhoid, jaundice, and other waterborne illnesses assume epidemic proportions. Hospitals and healthcare centres damaged by floods are unable to provide adequate medical services. At the same time, when farmers return to their fields after the floodwaters recede, they find their crops completely destroyed and their land buried under thick layers of sand. Crops cultivated through borrowed money are lost, placing farmers under immense financial and psychological pressure. They face enormous hardship in repairing damaged houses, arranging feed for livestock, and preparing for the next cultivation season. However, as soon as the floodwaters recede, the cameras of the national media disappear from these locations. The severe struggles that people endure during the post-flood period never receive attention in the national media. Government relief efforts also generally remain confined to providing temporary assistance during the floods. Long-term reconstruction and rehabilitation rarely receive adequate attention, forcing flood-affected people to rebuild their lives largely through their own efforts.

Several political and geographical factors lie behind the continued neglect of Assam's flood crisis at the national level. Assam's geographical distance from the national capital, New Delhi, has influenced the mindset of national policymakers. An old tendency to view the northeastern states as separate from mainstream India still persists. Since Assam has comparatively fewer representatives in Parliament, its issues often fail to exert decisive influence on national politics. Moreover, because floods occur every year in Assam, they have come to be regarded as an ordinary natural phenomenon. This process of normalisation has caused the greatest damage. Every year, the nature of floods changes and the scale of destruction increases, yet the Central Government's approach remains unchanged. Since national media organisations operate largely from a commercial perspective, floods in Assam do not appear to be attractive news

content for them. They generally prioritise political controversies, elections, sports, and entertainment over humanitarian disasters such as Assam's floods. The perception that flood-related news from Assam cannot generate national television ratings has further distanced the media from the issue. This prolonged neglect has created a deep sense of deprivation and resentment among the people of Assam. At the same time, the political leadership of the state has often failed to play the strong role necessary to establish Assam's concerns prominently at the national level. The combined effect of all these factors has ensured that Assam's flood crisis continues to remain neglected.

A permanent and effective solution to Assam's flood problem requires long-term scientific measures rather than temporary relief alone. As a first step, the water-carrying capacity of rivers should be enhanced through carefully planned and scientifically executed dredging. Removing the accumulated silt from the Brahmaputra and its tributaries and increasing their depth would significantly reduce the tendency of rivers to overflow. However, such dredging must be carried out with utmost caution so that it does not threaten the environment. At the same time, traditional earthen embankments should be replaced with stronger and more durable structures built using modern technology and materials. Scientific methods of riverbank protection and the use of geobags are essential for controlling erosion. Since the sources of Assam's floods lie in neighbouring states and countries, effective inter-state and international coordination is indispensable. A well-structured agreement should be implemented with Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya, and Bhutan regarding water management and the regulated release of water from dams. Modern and accurate early warning systems should also be established to prevent sudden flooding caused by the abrupt release of water, enabling downstream communities to prepare in advance. Simultaneously, large-scale afforestation should be undertaken in river catchment areas to prevent soil erosion and reduce the flow of sediment into rivers.

Equal importance must be given not only to flood control but also to flood management and public awareness. Rural communities should be educated about strategies for living alongside recurring floods. Farmers should be encouraged to cultivate flood-resistant and short-duration crop varieties. In terms of public policy, sustained pressure must be exerted on the Central Government to declare Assam's flood crisis a national disaster. Political parties, intellectuals, student organisations, and the general public of the state should collectively raise their voices on this issue. In contrast to the indifference of the national media, local media and citizen journalism should assume a more active role. Through the effective use of social media and information technology, the true picture of Assam's floods and the accurate extent of the damage should be presented before the entire nation. If the severity of Assam's flood crisis can be effectively communicated through accurate information and analysis, a strong national public opinion can be created. Once such public opinion emerges, both the Central Government and the national media will be compelled to address the issue with greater seriousness. Assam's flood crisis is not merely the problem of one state; it is intrinsically connected with the economy and development of the entire country. Therefore, only strong political will, a scientific approach, and active national-level participation can rescue Assam from this annual devastation. There is no alternative to recognising the gravity of the situation and taking timely as well as decisive action.

Spain's World conquest and football's new Era

By: Lalit Nath

Every World Cup final does more than crown a champion—it reshapes the entire trajectory of global football. The historic final of 2026, where Spain secured a hard-fought 1-0 victory over Argentina, was not merely about lifting a golden trophy. Rather, it presented to the world a compelling masterclass in modern sports philosophy, structural discipline and long-term strategic vision. To evaluate this victory strictly through the lens of a ninety-minute contest would be a profound miscalculation, as behind this triumph lies decades of methodical planning, the systematic cultivation of emerging talent, high-performance scientific conditioning, tactical adaptability and an unyielding footballing ethos. Spain's return to the pinnacle of world football is neither accidental nor sudden, but rather represents the maturation of an ecosystem built to endure over time.

Spain's rise as a footballing superpower first reached its peak between 2008 and 2012, an era defined by back-to-back European Championships and the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. During that decade, their brand of play—characterized

by intricate positional control and short passing—redefined how the game was played globally. However, international football is a rapidly evolving sport and in the years that followed, results dipped as critics argued that traditional possession football had grown predictable. Yet, the Spanish Football Federation and its grassroots networks never abandoned their core philosophical foundation. Instead of dismantling their system, they modernized it by integrating vertical speed, pressing intensity and physical resilience into their foundational technical skill, adapting to the demands of contemporary football without losing their identity. Their victory in 2026 is the direct result of this patient, continuous investment in youth academies, domestic leagues and technical harmony.

One of the most significant insights provided by this World Cup is the definitive shift from individual starlight to collective synergy. In previous decades, international football was often dictated by the singular brilliance of iconic superstars capable of carrying a nation on their shoulders. Modern football, however, has grown too fast, too tactical and too physically demanding for any single individual to consistently

overpower well-organized defenses. Spain's current squad demonstrated that a cohesive unit operating with shared intelligence will routinely overcome isolated individual talent. By prioritizing positional fluidity, high-tempo ball circulation, immediate counter-pressing and tactical flexibility, the team operated as a high-precision machine where every player served as a crucial cog rather than relying on a central talisman.

In the modern era, football has transformed into an exact science and success at the highest level requires an advanced integration of technology, data analytics, and sports science. Spain's preparation highlighted how off-field innovation directly dictates on-field success. Through the use of advanced biometric monitoring and match analytics, technical staff can predict physical exhaustion before it manifests as a mistake on the pitch. Furthermore, artificial intelligence algorithms analyze thousands of hours of opponent footage to identify defensive vulnerabilities that human eyes might overlook. Spain's strategic adoption of these technologies elevated their performance to unprecedented levels of efficiency and consistency, proving that modern preparation extends far beyond

the training pitch.

A complete assessment of the 2026 final also requires acknowledging the heroic effort of Argentina, whose journey reinforced the emotional core of the sport. Despite coming up short in the final moments, their resilience, tactical grit and unwavering determination showcased the traditional virtues of South American football. Sporting triumphs derive their value from the caliber of the opposition, and the fierce, high-stakes battle presented by Argentina elevated the final into an instant classic. Victory and defeat are intrinsic to sports, but mutual respect, competitive integrity and sportsmanship remain the ultimate benchmarks of athletic greatness.

Beyond the pitch, a tournament of this magnitude serves as a massive socio-economic engine that transcends geographic boundaries, uniting billions of people across diverse linguistic, cultural and political backgrounds. It drives international commerce, boosts global tourism, encourages cross-border technological collaboration and fosters a unique sense of global community. In an increasingly polarized world, international football remains one of the few universal languages capable of evoking shared human emotion

on a global scale. For emerging sports nations like India, Spain's blueprint offers invaluable lessons. India possesses an immense and passionate football fan base, yet the national team continues to struggle on the global stage due to structural deficits at the foundational level rather than a lack of potential talent. To build a competitive national football system, India must focus on establishing accessible, high-quality grassroots infrastructure, training thousands of certified coaches equipped with modern tactical knowledge, and creating an integrated ecosystem combining schools, regional academies and national federations. Without a long-term, scientifically backed vision, talent alone cannot bridge the gap to world-class competition.

Ultimately, Spain's 2026 World Cup victory marks the beginning of a new chapter in global football history by establishing that sustainable success is built upon the pillars of long-term planning, technological integration, physical discipline, and unselfish teamwork. As the curtains fall on this tournament, the global game moves forward into an era where collective intelligence and structural excellence supersede individual brilliance.

Space, Telecom, Biotech and Beyond India's technological triumphs

By: Dr Manish Mohan Gore

Science and technology form a dynamic duo, unlocking nature's mysteries and simplifying human existence. This powerful synergy propels us forward, shaping our society, economy, and nation. From telecom gadgets connecting the world to medical breakthroughs saving lives, technology enhances efficiency and convenience. For example, Artificial Intelligence streamlines processes, renewable energy fights climate change, and smart devices optimise tasks. Together, they bridge gaps, foster innovation, and drive societal progress.

Why is National Techno-logy Day Celebrated?

India commemorates May 11 as National Technology Day, marking significant milestones in scientific and technological advancement. On this day in 1998, India conducted nuclear tests in Pokhran, boasting its technological prowess. Additionally, the first indigenous aircraft Hansa-3 and the missile Trishul were successfully tested on the same date. The establishment of the Technology Development Board (TDB) under the Department of Science and Technology aims to bolster technological potential and promote self-reliance. TDB supports entrepreneurs and fosters innovation, driving India towards excellence on the global stage.

Pokhran Atomic Test (1998): India conducted nuclear tests at Pokhran Test Range in Rajasthan on May 18, 1974, under 'Operation Smiling Buddha', marking its nuclear capabilities. Further tests on May 11 and 13, 1998, dubbed 'Operation Shakti', demonstrated advancements with five nuclear detonations, including a hydrogen bomb. These tests, prompted by the security concerns, mainly emanating from China and Pakistan at that time, were conducted to assert India's strategic autonomy. Although it sparked international condemnation and sanctions, it solidified India's status as a nuclear power, making it a major stakeholder in the global debates on proliferation and arms control.

Hansa-3: Developed by National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL) in Bengaluru, Hansa-3, a two-seat aircraft, made its maiden flight in 1993. Featuring a low-wing monoplane design and composite materials, it offers economical flying with a cruising speed of 105 knots and a range of 600 nautical miles. Its second prototype, introduced on May 11, 1998, incorporated refinements such as a variable pitch propeller, leading to its selection for production.

Trishul Missile: Developed by DRDO, the Trishul missile, capable of engaging aerial threats, was successfully test-fired at Pokhran on May 11, 1998. It forms part of India's Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme, along-side systems like Agni, Prithvi, and Akash.

Commercialising Home Grown Technology

The Technology Development Board (TDB) was established by the Government of India in September

1996 under the Department of Science and Technology (DST) to promote the advancement and commercialisation of indigenous technologies.

A primary function of TDB is to provide financial assistance and support to individuals, research organisations, academic institutions, and industries involved in technology development projects. Through schemes like the Technology Development and Demonstration Programme (TDDP), TDB facilitates the transition of innovative concepts into commercially viable products and processes.

TDB also facilitates collaborations between industry and academia, fostering knowledge exchange to address techno-logical challenges. Additionally, it promotes the establishment of technology incubators, parks, and transfer offices to nurture innovation ecosystems and support technology driven enterprises.

Furthermore, TDB engages in policy advocacy and strategic initiatives to create an environment conducive to technology development and commercialisation. It collaborates with government agencies, regulatory bodies, and industry associations to formulate policies and incentives that promote technology innovation.

Independent India's Technological Milestones

India's journey in technological development over the past 77 years has been remarkable, witnessing significant progress across various sectors. From the post-independence era to the digital age, India has embraced innovation, research, and development, reshaping its socio-economic landscape. Here's a concise overview of key milestones and advancements:

Space Technology: India's space journey began on November 21, 1963, with the launch of the first sounding rocket from Thumba, Kerala, marking the inception of the Indian space programme. Scientists like Dr. Vikram Sarabhai and Dr. Abdul Kalam played pivotal roles in this endeavour.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) was established in 1969 to foster space science and technological re-search. ISRO achieved significant milestones, including the launch of the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE), facilitating community TV viewing in remote areas. The introduction of Indian National Satellite (INSAT) and Indian Remote Sensing Satellite (IRS) in the 1980s revolutionised mass communication, remote sensing, and weather forecasting.

In 1980, India successfully launched its first satellite launch vehicle, SLV-3, followed by sending the first Indian astronaut, Rakesh Sharma, into space in 1984. In the 2000s, India developed its own rockets, leading notable missions like Chandrayaan 1 and the Mars Orbiter Mission. ISRO achieved a world record with the launch of 104 satellites and made history with the soft landing of Chandrayaan 3 on the Lunar South Pole surface on August 23, 2023.

India's space sector continues to evolve in the 21st



century, with initiatives like the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Center (IN-SPACe) facilitating public-private partnerships in space exploration.

Agricultural Technology: Technology has been instrumental in India's agricultural development and sustainability. Following independence, the Government prioritised scientific research, leading to initiatives like the Green Revolution. This bolstered the agricultural economy, making India self-reliant in food production. Operation Flood, launched in 1970, marked the world's largest dairy development programme. Re-search in high-yielding wheat varieties at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (ICAR) in the 1960s and the development of indigenous technology like the Swaraj tractor and agro-pesticides by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in 1974 further strengthened India's agricultural prowess. Today, with interventions from around 100 R&D institutes of ICAR, India has increased agricultural productivity, ensuring food security for its growing population in the 21st century.

Defence Research & Technology: India established the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in 1958 to enhance the defence sector and fortify India's borders with advanced defence techno-logy. Since then, DRDO has developed various critical technologies, including aircraft, artillery systems, electronic warfare systems, tanks, armed vehicles, sonar systems, command and control systems, and missile systems.

In the 1980s, India initiated the Integrated Guided Missile Programme under the leadership of defence

scientist Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. This led to the development of strategic missile systems like Prithvi, Trishul, Akash, Nag, and Agni. The successful testing of the Agni missile in 1989 marked a significant achievement. India has since developed and deployed super-sonic combat aircraft like Tejas, the nuclear missile BrahMos, ballistic missiles, and the world's fastest supersonic cruise missile. Additionally, India has operated missile submarine INS Arihant and aircraft carrier INS Vikrant. DRDO continues intensive research on integrating technologies such as quantum systems, hypersonic systems, advanced materials, and Artificial Intelligence into the defence sector. The successful testing of the Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle (HSTDV) in 2020 positioned India as the fourth country to demonstrate this technology.

Health Technology: In 1986, India achieved a milestone with the birth of the country's first test tube baby, 'Harsha'. This accomplishment, coupled with pioneering work in vitro fertilisation by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), propelled India into the forefront of health technology. In 1991, DNA fingerprinting was first used as evidence in a legal dispute, credited to CSIR's Hyderabad-based laboratory Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB).

Today, India boasts indigenous diagnostic kits for various diseases, including HIV, and produces vaccines for diseases such as rotavirus, dengue, malaria, and COVID-19. Medical devices like Soham, for early detection of hearing loss in children, and Neo-Breathe, a foot-operated resuscitation device for in-

fant, have significantly contributed to improving life expectancy and reducing maternal and infant mortality rates. India's robust efforts in vaccine development have made it the largest vaccine producer globally. Health-related startups are also driving innovation in the sector.

Telecom and IT: India's telecommunications sector has undergone a revolutionary transformation since the 1990s, driven by government liberalisation policies. The introduction of mobile phones has democratised communication, while the IT industry has flourished, establishing India as a global hub for software services, outsourcing, and technology solutions. Biotech and Pharma: India has emerged as a global player in biotechnology and pharmaceuticals, making significant strides in healthcare, agriculture, and environmental sustainability. The country's biotech industry is renowned for its generic drug manufacturing capabilities, supplying affordable medicines to both domestic and international markets.

Digitalisation and E-Governance: The proliferation of digital technologies has led to the digitalisation of various sectors, including governance and public services. Initiatives like Digital India and Aadhaar have revolutionised service delivery, financial inclusion, and access to information, promoting transparency and efficiency in governance.

Drone Technology: India is rapidly advancing in drone technology, with applications in defence, agriculture, health, and transportation. The government aims to establish India as a global drone hub by 2030, with initiatives to simplify regulations and incentivise local manufacturing.

National Quantum Mission (NQM): Launched in 2020, NQM aims to advance research, development, and application of quantum technologies in India. Key objectives include promoting fundamental research, accelerating technology development, fostering human resource development, facilitating industry collaboration, and enhancing national security through quantum cryptography.

Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy (STIP) 2020: STIP 2020 provides a comprehensive framework to guide India's science, technology, and innovation ecosystem, emphasising inclusive, sustainable, and transformative development. Key features include promoting open science and technological innovation, increasing R&D investment, facilitating technology commercialisation, ensuring ethical research practices, and promoting inclusivity and diversity in the STEM fields. STIP 2020 charts a forward-looking roadmap to harness the transformative power of science, technology, and innovation for sustainable development and global competitiveness.

(The author is a Scientist, CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Policy Research. Feedback on this article can be sent to feedback.employmentnews@gmail.com)

AIIMS Nursing Officer Recruitment 2026 – 2218 Posts, Online Apply

All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi has released an employment notification to conduct Nursing Officer Recruitment Common Eligibility Test (NORCET) 11 for the recruitment of 2218 Nursing Officer Vacancy for AIIMS New Delhi and all other AIIMS. Interested and eligible candidates may check this article for detailed official notification, educational qualification, age limit, salary details, and application procedure to be followed.

Name of post: Nursing Officer

No of posts: 2218 posts

Name of exam: Nursing Officer Recruitment Common Eligibility Test (NORCET) 10

Advertisement No: Notice No.103/2026 Date:24.07.2026

Category-wise vacancy:

- UR: 899 posts
- OBC/NCL: 599 posts
- SC: 323 posts
- ST: 157 posts
- EWS: 40 posts

Pay: Pay Matrix pre-revised Pay Band-2 of Rs.9300-34800 with Grade Pay of Rs.4600/-

Name of AIIMS No of posts

AIIMS Avantipora	75
AIIMS Bathinda	47
AIIMS Bhopal	12
AIIMS Bilaspur	89
AIIMS Bhubaneswar	197
AIIMS Deoghar	223
AIIMS Gorakhpur	61
AIIMS Guwahati	188
AIIMS Kalyani	53
AIIMS Mangalagiri	32
AIIMS Nagpur	48
AIIMS Rae Bareilly	81
AIIMS New Delhi	121
AIIMS Patna	201
AIIMS Rishikesh	38
AIIMS Raipur	60
AIIMS Vijaypur	29
AIIMS Rewari	10
CAPFIMS Maidangarhi	6
NITRD	57
AIIPMR, Mumbai	1
CIP, Ranchi	4
JIMPER, Pudicherry	39
RHPT, Nazafgarh	36
KSCH Hospital	2
SJH Hospital	5
Dr. RML Hospital	31
ESIC, New Delhi	523

Age Limit: Age of the candidates must be between 18- 30 years as on the last date of closing of application form.

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

- SC/ST: 5 years,
- OBC: 3 years
- PWBD: 10 years
- PWBD + OBC: 13 years
- PWBD + SC/ST: 15 years

Educational Qualification:

a. B.Sc. (Hons.) Nursing / B.Sc. Nursing from an Indian Nursing Council/state Nursing council recognized Institute or University OR B.Sc. (Post-Certificate) / Post-Basic B.Sc. Nursing from an Indian Nursing Council/State Nursing council recognized Institute/ University.

b. Registered as Nurses & Midwife with State / Indian Nursing Council

OR

c. a. Diploma in General Nursing Midwifery from an Indian Nursing Council/State Nursing council recognized Institute / Board or Council

b. Registered as Nurses & Midwife in State / Indian Nursing Council.

c. Two Years' Experience in a minimum 50 bedded Hospital after acquiring the educational qualification mentioned above as applicable.

d. The category-wise application fees are as under.

Category	Fee
General/OBC	Rs.3000/-
SC/ST/EWS	Rs.2400/-
Persons with Disabilities	Exempted

e. # Payment Mode: Through Online by using Debit/ Credit Card/ Net Banking.

f. Application Fees of SC/ST candidates who appear in the Examination will be refunded after declaration of results in due course of time after verification of SC/ST certificate. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for these vacancy through online mode by visiting official AIIMS Recruitment Portal. Candidates may follow below mentioned

steps to apply for AIIMS Nursing Officer recruitment.

- Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .
- Click on the "Online Application Form" and register your self by clicking "New Registration".
- Next again click on "Online Application Form" and log in .
- Fill your all personal and educational details and upload necessary documents.
- Make payment of application fee as per your category and submit the form.
- At the end, take a print out of the application form .
- Starting date of online application submission: 24th July 2026
- Last date of online application submission: 13th August, 2026 (Upto 5:00 PM)
- Date of release of admit card: 09th September 2026
- Online (CBT) for Stage I: NORCET Preliminary, Date: 12th September 2026
- Online (CBT) for Stage II : NORCET Mains, Date: 30th September, 2026

RRB Technician Recruitment 2026 – 6565 Posts, Online Apply

Railway Recruitment Board (RRB), Ministry of Railways, Govt. of India has released an employment notification CEN No. 02/2026 for the recruitment of 6565 Technician Posts in various RRBs. The online application process for RRB Technician Vacancy 2026 starts from 30th June 2026 to 29th July 2026.

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

Name of post: Technician

No of posts: 6238 posts

Cadre-wise vacancy break up:

- Technician Grade-I Signal: 323 posts
- Technician Grade-III: 6242 posts

No of posts under RRB Guwahati: To be updated

Name of organisation: Railway Recruitment Board

Advertisement No: CEN No. 02/2026

Pay scale:

- Technician Grade-I Signal: Level-5 of 7th CPC, Rs.29200/-
- Technician Grade-III: Level-2 of 7th CPC, Rs.19900/-

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

• # Technician Grade-I Signal: Candidates age must be between 18 to 33 years as 1st July 2026.

• Technician Grade-III: Candidates age must be between 18 to 30 years as 1st July 2026.

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

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

Educational Qualification:

- # Technician Grade-I Signal:

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

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

(OR)

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

- # Technician Grade-III:

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

(OR)

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

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

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

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

Email: rrb.help@csc.gov.in

Time: 10 AM to 5 PM

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

Category	Fee
SC/ST	Rs 250/-
Ex-Serviceman	Rs 250/-
Female	Rs 250/-
Transgender	Rs 250/-

Minorities Rs 250/-

Economically backward class. Rs 250/-

Others Rs 500/-

Payment Mode: Candidates can pay their exam fee through online mode using options like Internet Banking, Debit Card, Credit Card, or UPI.

RRB Technician recruitment process consists of multiple stages including a Computer Based Test and subsequent document and medical verification.

Stage 1: Computer Based Test (CBT)

Stage 2: Document Verification

Stage 3: Medical Examination

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for these posts by visiting the official portal of RRB. They may follow below mentioned steps .

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

• Click on Online Application Form link .

• A new webpage will be opened .

- Enter all your personal and educational details as required.

• Upload your passport sized photograph and signature and other required documents.

• Pay the examination fee as per your category and at the end click on submit button

• Don't forget to take a print of submitted application form .

• Starting date of submission of online application: 30th June 2026

• Last date of submission of online application: 29th July 2026

MHRB Assam Recruitment 2026 – 492 Posts, Online Apply

Medical and Health Recruitment Board (MHRB), Assam has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 492 Registrar / Demonstrator / Resident Physician etc. posts in Government Medical College & Hospitals under Medical Education & Research Department. Interested and eligible candidates may check this article for detailed official notification, educational qualification, age limit, salary details, and application procedure to be followed.

Name of post: Registrar / Demonstrator / Resident Physician etc

No of posts: 492 posts

Name of departments: Anatomy, Anaesthesiology, Bio-Chemistry, Cardiology, CTVS, Dermatology, Dentistry, ENT, Emergency Medicine, FSM, Hematology, Microbiology, Medicine, Medical Oncology, Neurology, Neurosurgery, Nephrology, Nuclear Medicine, Orthopaedics, Ophthalmology, O&G, Physiology, Psychiatry, Pathology, Plastic Surgery, Paediatrics, PM & R, Pulmonary Medicine (TB & Chest), Radiology, Radiotherapy, Surgery, SPM (Community Medicine), Urology

Pay: Rs.57,700/- - Rs.1,82,400/- PM (Academic level 10) plus other allowances as admissible under Rules.

Age Limit: Candidate should not be less than 21 Years and more than 45 Years as on 01/01/2026, irrespective of category of applicants (As per Govt. OM No.ABP.55/2023/25 dated 04/07/2023).

The upper age limit is relaxable by (if applicable) :

(i) For Persons with Disabilities (PWD) by 10 years irrespective of SC/ST/OBC and General Category of candidates as per Govt. Notification No.ABP.144/95/121 dated 28/10/2015.

Educational Qualification:

Broad Speciality:

• A Post Graduate qualification MD/ MS/ DNB/MDS in the concerned subject from an institute under any Indian University recognised by National Medical Commission (previously MCI) / National Board of Education (NBE)/ Dental Council of India for the following Departments – Anaesthesiology, Dentistry, Dermatology, ENT, Emergency Medicine, FSM, Medicine, Microbiology, Orthopaedics, Ophthalmology, O&G, Pharmacology, Pathology, Psychiatry, Paediatrics, PM & R, Radiology, Radiation Oncology, Surgery, SPM (Community Medicine), TB & Chest (Pulmonary Medicine), Nuclear Medicine.

• A Post Graduate qualification MS (Anatomy) / M.Sc (Medical Anatomy) with Ph.D in Medical Anatomy for Anatomy Department, as per latest notification of NMC, New Delhi.

• A Post Graduate qualification MD (Biochemistry) / M.Sc (Medical Biochemistry) with Ph.D in Medical Biochemistry for Biochemistry Department, as per latest notification of NMC, New Delhi.

• A Post Graduate qualification MD (Physiology) / M.Sc (Medical Physiology) with Ph.D in Medical Physiology for Physiology Department, as per latest notification of NMC, New Delhi.

Super Speciality:

• A Post Graduate qualification MD/DNB in General Medicine for Medical Super Specialty (Cardiology, Neurology, Endocrinology, Nephrology, Medical Oncology)

• A Post Graduate qualification MS/DNB in General Surgery for Surgical Super Specialty (Plastic Surgery, CTVS, Neuro-Surgery, Urology, Paediatric Surgery) Candidates having DM/ M.Ch./ DNB in the concerned super specialty subject will be given preference/ weightage

• Candidates have to pay a certain amount as application fee depending up on their category. The details are as given below:

Category	Fee
UR	Rs 250/-
OBC/MOBC/SC/ST	Rs 150/-
PWD	Nil

Application fee may be deposited, through Treasury Challan in the Head of Account "0210-Medical and Public Health-01-Urban Health Services-800-Other Receipt".

Israeli military kills 4 Palestinians after settler killed in West Bank

'The security forces must be allowed to act freely and with full force against terrorism'

NABLUS, July 24: The Israeli military shot and killed four Palestinians in the village of Tell in the northern West Bank, the Palestinian Health Ministry said Friday, raising tensions in the occupied territory after an Israeli settler was killed in a confrontation with local residents.

Two other Israelis and four more Palestinians were wounded, health officials said, and the Israeli military announced it was preparing for an "extensive" counterterrorism operation in the West Bank, with troops surrounding the town of Nablus.

"The security forces must be allowed to act freely and with full force against terrorism," said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a joint statement with Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz. They called Friday for more troops to the West Bank and the razing of the homes of the accused in Tell as well as collecting



weapons and revoking work permits in the village.

Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich went farther, saying that the villages of Tell, Iraq Burin and Beit Furik "need to look exactly like the refugee camps in Nablus and Tulkarm," referring to the mass demolition campaign that displaced tens of thousands in the West Bank towns last year.

"It is necessary to evacuate the population there for their protection and to clear these villages of terrorist infrastructure," Smotrich said. "A sharp, determined, and unequivocal military action is required here and now."

Five Palestinian villages surrounding Nablus were attacked by Israeli settlers on Friday, according to the Palestinian news agency

Wafa.

The towns and villages surrounding Nablus sit in one of the most violent parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank. In addition to newly approved settlements, at least nine farming outposts dot the area and attacks by Israeli settlers, army incursions and confrontations have become frequent.

Palestinians and human rights groups have increasingly documented armed settlers entering villages in the area. Livestock theft, arson and the defacement of mosques are routinely reported.

Israeli deaths have repeatedly been followed by revenge against nearby Palestinian communities called "price tag" attacks. That pattern followed the March 21 death of 18-year-old Yehuda Sherman, who was killed when a Palestinian vehicle struck his ATV near Beit Imrin. Senior politicians, including Smotrich, attended Sherman's funeral and called for vengeance. (AP)

Bangladesh President Mohammed Shahabuddin resigns

DHAKA, July 24: Bangladesh President Mohammed Shahabuddin, a longtime ally of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, resigned on Friday, citing health complications, two years ahead of the end of his tenure.

In his resignation letter addressed to Parliament Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmed, the 76-year-old leader said he is "seriously ill" and suffering from heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and kidney complications.

"Recently, medical tests detected a disease called Autonomic Neuropathy. Due to this illness, I sometimes lose consciousness briefly. Because of the prevalence of these diseases, I am physically and mentally incapable of discharging the responsibilities of such an important constitutional post of President," he wrote in his resignation letter.

Speaker Ahmed, who cut short his visit to Bangkok where he was undergoing medical treatment and returned to Dhaka on Friday, said he accepted the president's resignation.



He was elected to the highest of-

Ahmed would serve as Acting President in accordance with the Bangladesh Constitution until a new President is elected.

Shahabuddin's resignation comes amid speculations that Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's government was uncomfortable with the largely titular head of the state, according to media reports.

A 1971 Liberation War veteran and former lower judiciary judge, Shahabuddin had taken the oath in April 2023 for a five-year term. He was elected to the highest of-

fice by the previous parliament and was the only person still holding his constitutional position, long after the violent July-August 2024 student-led street protest that toppled Hasina's Awami League government.

Hasina fled to India and has been living there since August 5, 2024.

Shahabuddin's departure comes days after the deposed premier announced she was preparing to return home by December despite a pending death sentence, causing a political uproar in Bangladesh.

Some reports claimed that Shahabuddin recently contacted Hasina over the phone, disappointing the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party's top leadership.

In an interview with The Daily Star on Thursday evening, Shahabuddin dismissed the reports as "baseless."

He was the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, though the role was largely ceremonial with executive power resting with the prime minister. (PTI)

China slaps export controls on 14 EU entities in retaliation for Russia-related sanctions



BEIJING, July 24: China announced on Friday it was adding 14 European entities to an export control list in retaliation for the European Union penalising 14 Chinese enterprises as part of its latest round of sanctions against Russia.

Chinese companies will not be allowed to export dual-use items, which can be used for both civilian and military purposes, to the 14 European organisations, China's Commerce Ministry said in a statement.

Additionally, foreign companies are barred from providing to the 14 entities dual-use items made in China.

The European companies affected include Czech vehicle manufacturer Tatra Trucks, Italian electric motor maker Lafert SpA, German manufacturer Sindlhauser

Materials GmbH and French drone manufacturer Cavok UAS.

A Chinese Commerce Ministry spokesperson said the measures were taken in retaliation for the EU on Thursday adding 14 mainland Chinese and Hong Kong enterprises to its latest list of sanctions against Russia over its war in Ukraine.

The measures are intended "to safeguard national security and interests, and to fulfil international obligations such as non-proliferation, in response to the EU's egregious actions," the spokesperson said.

The EU on Thursday adopted its 21st package of sanctions against Russia targeting banks, cryptocurrency companies and military equipment manufacturers among other categories. (AP)

Drones target northern Iraqi city where US forces are based as US-Iran fighting escalates

IRBIL (IRAQ), July 24: Drones carrying explosives targeted a city in northern Iraq where US forces are stationed and sirens rang out in Bahrain on Friday, hours after the American military said it finished its 13th night of strikes against Iran.

The conflict has flared again over the past week, as the US pounded Iran while Tehran attacked ships in the Strait of Hormuz and targeted US assets and allies in the region.

The Strait, which is a crucial passage for the world's energy supplies, is at the centre of the latest fighting since Iranian attacks can effectively shut the waterway, sending fuel prices soaring worldwide and causing widespread economic turmoil.

The Iranian-allied Houthi rebels added further pressure this week by targeting two Saudi tankers in the Red Sea, making good on a threat to cut off an alternative route for the region's oil.

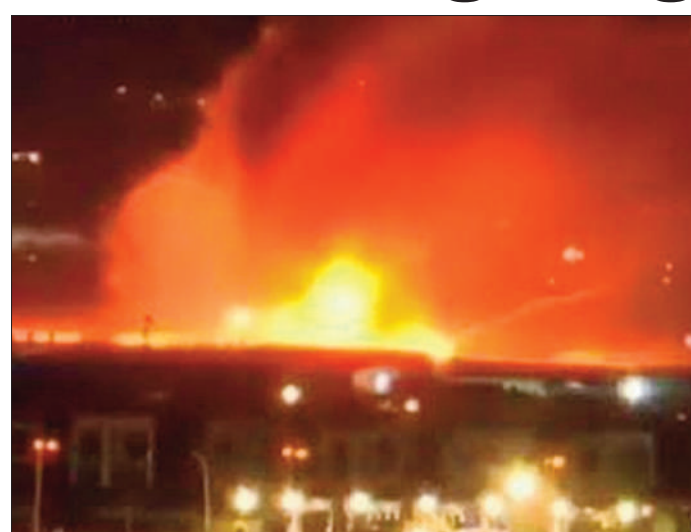
Despite the war's unpopularity — and its widespread damage to Iran and the global economy — the latest round of fighting has no clear off-ramp. Iran's Health Min-

istry said 55 people have been killed and over 600 wounded in strikes in recent weeks.

The US and Israel attacked Iran on February 28 and have offered shifting goals for the war, including toppling Tehran's government and eliminating its nuclear programme. But the conflict has devolved into a fight for control of the Strait of Hormuz — with Iran apparently hoping to win concessions by inflicting damage on the global economy and the US trying to limit that damage.

US-led forces intercepted and shot down five explosive-laden drones over Irbil on Friday morning, according to security officials in northern Iraq. "Fortunately, the incident caused no casualties or damage," they said.

An Associated Press journalist heard at least seven blasts in the city, the capital of Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdish region, and saw at least four plumes of black smoke rising from areas near or inside a base at the city's airport that hosts US forces. Flights continued as normal at the airport, the state-run Iraqi News Agency reported, citing the facility's director.



US military officials in Iraq did not respond to a request for comment.

In recent years, the US maintained about 2,500 troops in Iraq for training and to conduct operations against the Islamic State group with Iraq's military. Many of those have withdrawn, but a small contingent of military advisers and others remains — many of whom have moved to Irbil.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard urged people in neighbouring countries to stay away from bases with American troops while asking people to report the places where they are stationed, according to a statement read out on state TV.

As the US has bombed Iran, Tehran has targeted several countries in the region that host American troops.

Bahrain, which is home to the

US Navy's 5th fleet, said it intercepted and shot down Iranian aerial attacks on Friday. It did not say if there were any casualties or damage.

US strikes overnight hit a naval base for the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard in the north of Iran, the semiofficial news outlets Fars and ISNA reported Friday morning. Blasts from US bombardment overnight were also reported on Iran's Qeshm Island, a base for naval assets including drone boats that Iran can use to attack vessels in the Strait of Hormuz, as well as in Isfahan province, home to a major Iranian air base and one of Iran's nuclear sites.

More strikes reportedly hit Iran's southwest Khuzestan province and southern Fars province.

US Central Command said the latest barrage was designed to "further degrade Iran's ability to threaten civilian mariners and commercial vessels transiting regional waters" as the Americans push to regain control over the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's oil and gas transited in peacetime. (AP)

Trump imposes double-digit tariffs on dozens of countries



WASHINGTON, July 24: President Donald Trump is going ahead with new double-digit tariffs on dozens of U.S. trading partners just as the clock runs out Friday on stopgap levies he imposed after a stinging defeat at the Supreme Court.

The United States will slap taxes of 10 per cent to 12.5 per cent on imports from 60 trading partners accounting for 99 per

cent of US imports, charging that they have inadequately enforced bans on goods produced by forced labour.

"The United States has had a forced labour import ban for nearly a century, and rigorously enforces it; it's well past time for our trading partners to do the same," said US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer.

The new tariffs will take effect just as temporary 10 per cent worldwide tariffs expire at 12.01 am Friday. Trump had turned to those temporary levies after the Supreme Court struck down his biggest and boldest tariffs in February.

Now he's tapping more durable tariffs under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, which permits the president to impose import taxes and other sanctions against countries found to engage in "unjustifiable," "unreasonable" or "discriminatory" trade practices. Trump used Section 301 to impose big tariffs on China in his first term, and they survived court challenges.

More Section 301 tariffs are likely coming: The US Trade Representative's office has launched a probe into whether 16 countries — accounting for 70 per cent of US imports — have overproduced goods, pushing down prices and putting US companies at a disadvantage in global markets. The administration has yet to complete that investigation.

German leader Merz reshuffles top posts as he tries to counter far-right advance

BERLIN, July 24: German Chancellor Friedrich Merz reshuffled top posts on Friday as he tries to boost the fortunes of his deeply unpopular government ahead of regional elections in which a far-right party could get its first state governor.

Merz took office less than 15 months ago with pledges to reform and turn around Germany's economy, Europe's biggest, after years of stagnation. But that economic turnaround has been slow to start. And the middle-of-the-road coalition of Merz's centre-right Union bloc and the centre-left Social Democrats, two traditional rivals, has yet to persuade voters that it can produce results.

That has resulted in Merz's popularity sinking to rock-bottom levels, while the far-right Alternative for Germany, or AfD, has gained support on the back of widespread discontent.

Merz took the opportunity to make a series of changes after a senior ally quit as the leader of his party's parliamentary group over personal conduct that undermined his credibility. Merz plans to put his chief of staff, Thorsten Frei, in that job.

The German leader said Health Minister Nina Warken will take Frei's place at the chancellery, a post that is key to the smooth functioning of the government. She will be the first



woman to take that job. Another close ally, Carsten Linneemann, the general secretary of Merz's Christian Democratic Union party, will become health minister.

Merz said there will be further Cabinet changes, but didn't offer details. He said those decisions will take "a few days yet, and perhaps more time." (AP)

'Such interactions would provide valuable opportunities to share experiences'

Murmu urges deeper India-Romania parliamentary ties during Bucharest

BUCHAREST (ROMANIA), July 24: President Droupadi Murmu on Friday visited Romanian Parliament, regarded as one of the largest administrative buildings in the world, and sought deepening of engagement between parliamentary institutions of both the countries.

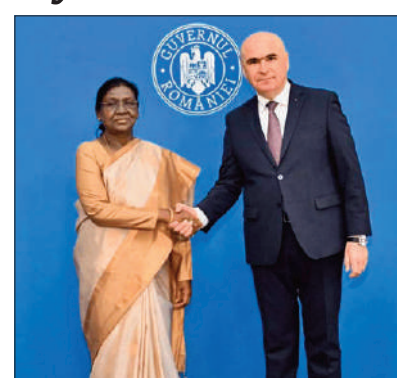
Murmu met President of the Senate of Romania Mircea Abrudean and President of the Chamber of Deputies of Romania Sorin Grindeanu at the Parliament Palace in Bucharest, her office said.

The President also interacted with members of the India-Romania Parliamentary Friendship Group.

Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution Nimuben Jayantibhai Bambhaniya, and Members of Parliament Dinesh Sharma and Vijay Baghel were also present on the occasion. Murmu arrived here on Thursday on a state visit to Romania, the first by any Indian head of state in over three decades.

The President said that as vibrant parliamentary democracies, the two countries should deepen engagement between our parliamentary institutions, the Rashtrapati Bhavan said in a post on X.

"Such interactions would provide valuable opportunities to share experiences



and best practices, and would contribute to further strengthening the India-Romania partnership," Murmu said.

The Palace of the Parliament or Parliament Palace is one of Romania's most iconic landmarks and the seat of the Parliament of Romania, housing both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate.

It is regarded as one of the largest administrative buildings in the world. In addition to hosting parliamentary proceedings, it accommodates the National Museum of Contemporary Art and serves as a venue for major international conferences, state ceremonies and diplo-

matic events.

Earlier during the day, President Murmu paid her respects at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier here.

The monument embodies Romania's gratitude to its fallen soldiers and is a national symbol of patriotism, unity, and peace, the President's office said in another post on X.

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is Romania's principal national memorial dedicated to the soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice in defence of the nation.

Originally inaugurated in 1923 in Carol Park, the monument enshrined the remains of an unidentified Romanian soldier chosen from among those who fell during the First World War, symbolising the courage and sacrifice of all unnamed heroes.

It serves as a place of national remembrance where military honours are rendered on important national occasions and during visits by foreign dignitaries.

The monument embodies Romania's gratitude to its fallen soldiers and stands as a powerful symbol of patriotism, national unity, peace and the enduring commitment to safeguarding the country's freedom and sovereignty. (PTI)

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Union Cabinet approves draft bill for stricter punishments in paper leak cases



NEW DELHI, July 24: The Union Cabinet on Friday approved a draft bill to ensure stricter punishments for paper leaks, including a fine of up to ₹ 10 crore, hours after Prime Minister Narendra Modi made an announcement to this effect, official sources said.

The Cabinet meeting chaired by the prime minister at the Parliament House complex approved the draft bill to hand stricter punishments to those involved in paper leaks as compared to the existing law, they said.

The bill will amend 'The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024', proposing

a minimum punishment of five years' imprisonment for individuals involved in paper leaks and/or a fine.

It proposes a jail term of up to 10 years and a maximum fine of Rs 10 crore in case of organised paper leaks, the sources said.

The present law has provisions for three to five years' imprisonment for individuals, and five to 10 years' imprisonment and a minimum fine of ₹ 1 crore for those involved in the organised crime of cheating and paper leaks.

The bill is aimed at preventing organised gangs and institutions that indulge in unfair means for

monetary gains, while protecting the candidates from its provisions.

The existing law is aimed at curbing leaks, malpractices as well as organised malpractices in recruitment examinations like UPSC, SSC, etc., and entrance tests such as NEET, JEE, and CUET.

Sources said the amended bill is likely to come up in Parliament on Monday, as announced by Prime Minister Modi in a video message issued around midnight on Thursday.

In the message, Modi announced that a bill containing provisions for strong action against paper leaks will be introduced in Parliament next week.

The announcement came in the wake of the ongoing protests by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) demanding the resignation of education minister Dharmendra Pradhan, accountability for exam irregularities, reforms in the education system, and ₹ 1 crore compensation to families of those students who committed suicide after the NEET-UG paper leak in May. (PTI)

RSS leader alleges foreign influence behind Delhi protests, seeks 'positive' politics

'Sonam Wangchuk is one person, and the CJP is totally different'

JAMMU, July 24: RSS national executive member Indresh Kumar on Friday urged climate activist Sonam Wangchuk to keep his agitation "Indian" after the latter ended his hunger strike, alleging that "foreign forces" had taken over the movement and warning the youth against becoming "agents" of anti-national elements.

Kumar said Wangchuk and the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) were different entities and alleged that the latter was working as an "agency of foreign forces".

"These are separate in nature. Sonam Wangchuk is one person, and the CJP is totally different. Political parties too have different agendas. They have mixed it together to defame everyone's character. That is why Sonam Wangchuk has distanced himself from it.

"I would say that he should understand that his movement has been taken over by foreigners. Therefore, he should keep his



movement Indian. He should not become a puppet of foreigners," Kumar told reporters here.

Alleging that the CJP was acting on behalf of foreign interests, he said, "I would tell the young people who come there to be cautious. Do not become the puppets or agents of those who betray the country and deceive the nation."

He cautioned political parties against boosting anti-national activities to play politics. "They should do positive politics."

Referring to Wangchuk ending his fast, Kumar alleged that attempts were being made to "spoil the atmosphere of positive politics" in the country. He claimed that while opposition parties had

initially raised the issue of the NEET examination, they later diverted the movement for political purposes.

Without producing evidence, the RSS leader alleged that the agitations were backed by "internal and external forces" that did not want India to emerge as a developed, prosperous and educated nation.

"I want to tell the youth gathered there that one thing must be clear now -- there are some internal and external powers that do not want India to become a developed nation. India is progressing on the path of peace, harmony, development and education, and those who cannot see this progress try to derail it," he alleged.

Kumar urged young people to play a constructive role in nation-building and support India's development, saying the country has emerged as a "global role model" through innovation and thousands of start-ups. (PTI)

Kejriwal on PM's fast-track court promise to punish paper leaks accused



Monday to establish fast-track courts for paper leaks. How hollow this assurance is, was proven yesterday only," Kejriwal said in a video message.

"The mastermind of the 2024 NEET paper leak was declared innocent by the CBI in court yesterday. Is this the kind of investigation will be

HOLLOW ASSURANCES

NEW DELHI, July 24: Aam Aadmi Party national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Friday slammed the Centre's announcement to set up fast-track courts to punish those accused in paper leak cases, saying it was a "hollow assurance".

His remarks came after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced on Thursday that a bill containing provisions for strong action against paper leaks will be introduced in Parliament next week and that he has given directions for setting up fast-track courts.

"Last night at 12 o'clock, the Prime Minister announced that a law will be introduced in Parliament on

done, if you have no evidence to present at all, then why the drama of fast-track courts?" he added.

The former Delhi chief minister also said that there are several other fast-track courts in city, for POCSO and rape cases but it still takes years to get justice.

"If you and your CBI does not present evidence in courts then what is the point of fast-track courts? There is flaw in your very intentions," Kejriwal added.

The AAP has extended full support to the Cockroach Janta Party led protest at Jantar Mantar demanding resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over exam irregularities. (PTI)

SC issues notices to Centre, NMC, NBEMS on plea for transparency in foreign medical graduate exam

NEW DELHI, July 24: The Supreme Court on Friday sought responses of the Centre, National Medical Commission (NMC) and the National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) on a plea seeking disclosure of question papers, response sheets and official answer keys of the Foreign Medical Graduate Examination (FMGE) conducted in June this year.

A bench comprising Justices P S Narasimha and Alok Aradhe took note of the submissions of lawyer Tanvi Dubey, appearing for a group of 12 candidates including Sunil Kumar Meena who appeared in the FMGE in June this year and issued notice to the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, NMC and NBEMS, which conducts the FMGE test.

The FMGE is held to serve as a mandatory licensing test ensuring that Indians who earn medical degrees abroad meet the clinical and educational standards required to practice medicine safely here.

Dubey referred to the main challenge of the petitioners and said that the two clauses of the FMGE information bulletin restrict the candidates from having the option of getting the answer key and question paper. Even the option for revaluation is restricted,



as the question paper is not provided after the examination and the candidates are demanding greater transparency. The response sheet, as filled by the candidate, is also not provided, she said.

Moreover, there was no option of re-evaluation available to the candidates and they were left with no mechanism to verify their scores.

"There is no yardstick to verify their actual and expected score," Dubey said.

She said the impugned act of depriving the candidates of a mechanism which ensures transparency deprives them of their fundamental right guaranteed under Article 14, 19 and 21.

"Issue an appropriate order ... directing Respondent No. 1 (NBEMS)

to provide the petitioners and similarly situated candidates with an effective, fair and transparent mechanism for verification and re-evaluation of the exam process and for correction of any discrepancy, if found, upon disclosure of the response sheets, question papers and official answer keys," it said.

The plea also seeks prospective directions requiring publication of provisional answer keys, consideration of candidates' objections by an independent expert panel, and disclosure of final answer keys in future FMGE examinations. According to the petition, approximately 38,000 candidates appeared in the FMGE examination conducted on June 28 this year, with only around 4,000-4,500 candidates qualifying, resulting in a pass percentage of about 12.3 per cent, which the petition describes as one of the lowest in the examination's history.

The petition alleges that the June 2026 examination introduced around 12 video-based clinical questions without prior disclosure in the information bulletin, affecting candidates' preparation and performance.

It further said that after the results were declared, more than 5,000 candidates expressed concerns regarding the evaluation process by compiling grievances on a Google Form. (PTI)

Punjab BJP leader condemns Barnala police action against sanitation workers

CHANDIGARH, July 24: Punjab Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Gejja Ram Valmiki on Friday strongly condemned the police action against sanitation workers in Barnala, describing it as an "assault on the dignity and self-respect of the Valmiki community."

Speaking to the media here, Valmiki, who is also the national president of the Central Valmiki Sabha, alleged that women sanitation workers were subjected to "inhuman treatment" during the police action on Wednesday.

Several sanitation workers, who have been on strike since July 8, allegedly hurled stones and garbage bags at police in an alleged attempt to thwart a cleanliness drive undertaken by the local municipal corporation and district authorities. They were on strike seeking job regularisation, leading to garbage pile-up.

Police responded by lathi-charging the protesting workers. Four police personnel were injured in the incident, police had said on Wednesday.

The workers also claimed that some of them sustained injuries in the police action.

Accusing the police of using ex-

cessive force, Valmiki alleged that personnel misbehaved with protesters and humiliated women demonstrators.

He demanded the immediate dismissal of two officers and a fair inquiry to ensure justice for the victims.

Valmiki, who was accompanied by party leaders Vineet Joshi and Amarjit Singh, said the Valmiki community played a significant role in supporting the Aam Aadmi Party during the previous elections, but it was now feeling betrayed.

He alleged that instead of addressing the long-pending demand to regularise contractual 'Safai Karamcharis' and sewer workers, the Bhagwant Mann government had responded with police batons.

He further questioned the silence of Dalit ministers and constitutional bodies over the incident, saying they had failed to stand with the sanitation workers in their hour of need.

Valmiki said that a memorandum has been submitted to Punjab Governor Gulab Chand Kataria, seeking action against the officers responsible and demanding justice for the affected workers. (PTI)

Shiv Sena (UBT) leads massive protest in Mumbai to press for Pradhan's resignation



MUMBAI, July 24: Holding tricolours and placards in their hands, thousands of protesters gathered in central Mumbai's Dadar area under the banner of Shiv Sena (UBT) on Friday to demand the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

During the 'Tiranga Morcha', organised by the Uddhav Thackeray-led party at the Shivaji Park, its leader Aaditya Thackeray said he called Cockroach Janta Party

(CJP) founder Abhijeet Dipke, urging him not to return home in Maharashtra until Pradhan steps down from his position.

Speaking at the gathering, Uddhav Thackeray said while the government has the power of 'lathis', the protesters have 'tirangas' (tricolours) in their hands.

The agitation was held amid the ongoing protests led by the CJP in Delhi, Mumbai and other parts of the country over exam irregularities.

ties. In Delhi, the agitation turned violent with security personnel using baton charges, tear gas, and making multiple detentions.

At Shivaji Park, the participants raised slogans of "Azaadi (freedom) from dictatorship and paper leaks" with 'Vande Materam' being played in the background. Some of the protesters carried the posters of freedom fighter Bhagat Singh and chief architect of the Constitution Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar.

Uddhav Thackeray said those in power should see the number of people who have turned up for the protest.

"This is 'jan ki baat' (voice of people) and Delhi has to listen to it. The way students were attacked, tear-gassed, I am cautioning the government - you can have lathis, but we have tirangas. Let's see who wins - those with tirangas or lathis," the former Maharashtra chief minister said. (PTI)

IUML's double standards exposed on Waqf Board stand, alleges CPI(M)

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, July 24: CPI(M) state secretary M V Govindan on Friday alleged that the "double standards" of the IUML has been exposed by the Kerala government's stand on appointing two non-Muslims to the State Waqf Board.

In a press conference here, Govindan alleged that the UDF government's functioning over the past two months showed that it was increasingly moving in line with BJP policies and weakening Kerala's secular tradition.

Govindan alleged that the BJP and the UDF were together attempting to push Kerala towards communal polarisation.

"We cannot refrain from opposing these saffronisation measures where the BJP and the UDF are moving forward with the same slogans and perspectives," he alleged.

On the Waqf issue, Govindan alleged that the UDF government had abandoned the stand taken by

the previous LDF government against the Waqf (Amendment) Act. He said the Kerala Assembly had unanimously passed a resolution opposing the appointment of non-Muslims to the State Waqf Board and that the previous LDF government had challenged the amended law before the Supreme Court.

According to him, while the matter remained pending before the apex court, the present UDF government recently informed the Kerala High Court that it would reconstitute the State Waqf Board by including two non-Muslim members under Section 14 of the amended law.

"The Congress, the Indian Muslim League (IUM) and the UDF government are surrendering to the policies of the BJP-led Centre. The IUML's double standards have been exposed," Govindan alleged.

He alleged that the CM had falsely claimed that the Supreme



Court had dismissed the state's petition challenging the Waqf law, even though the matter was still pending before the court.

Govindan claimed that senior advocate Jaideep Gupta, appearing for the Kerala government before the Supreme Court, had submitted that the State Waqf Board would be reconstituted by including non-Muslims in accordance with the amended law.

He further alleged that an IUML nominee, a member of the Panakkad family and part of the

state's legal team, had appeared alongside Gupta in the proceedings, raising serious questions about the League's stand.

Referring to the league's earlier stand against interfering in the Waqf Board matter, Govindan alleged that it was now supporting the inclusion of non-Muslims in the Waqf Board.

"This is the exact meaning of double standards. The IUML is adopting an approach supporting the appointment of non-Muslims to the Waqf Board," he alleged. (PTI)

India expands medical education; number of medical colleges more than doubled since 2014

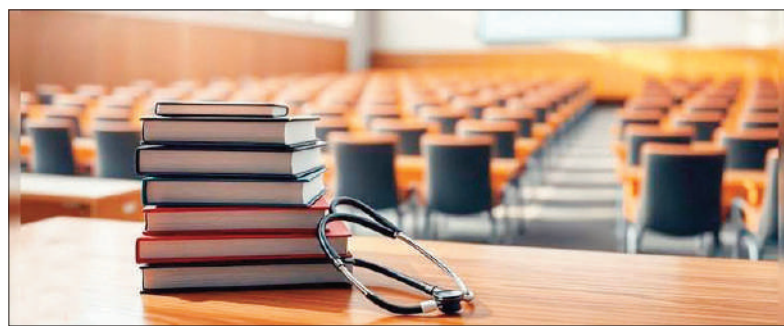
The programme aims to strengthen healthcare services in rural areas

NEW DELHI, July 24: The number of medical colleges in India has increased from 387 in 2014 to 844 now, while undergraduate MBBS seats have grown from 51,348 to 1,39,489, Minister of State for Health Anupriya Patel said on Friday. In a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha, the minister also said that postgraduate medical seats have increased from 31,185 to 86,360 in the same time period.

The minister said the establishment of new medical colleges in remote and underserved regions, along with the expansion of MBBS seats, is expected to improve the availability of doctors and strengthen healthcare delivery across the country.

Patel also highlighted the Family Adoption Programme (FAP), which has been integrated into the MBBS curriculum.

Under the programme, medical col-



leges adopt villages, while MBBS students adopt families within those villages to provide regular follow-up on vaccination, growth monitoring, menstrual hygiene, iron and folic acid supplementation, nutrition, healthy lifestyle practices, vector control and medication adherence.

She noted that the District Residency Programme (DRP), introduced by the

National Medical Commission (NMC), mandates a three-month posting for postgraduate medical students at district hospitals as part of their training.

The programme aims to strengthen healthcare services in rural and underserved areas.

Responding to a question on the impact of Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, Patel said an evaluation commissioned

by NITI Aayog found encouraging outcomes, including improved infrastructure and higher community footfall due to expanded access to comprehensive primary healthcare services.

The study cited better availability of care for non-communicable diseases (NCDs), outpatient services, free medicines and diagnostic facilities.

According to the minister, the deployment of Community Health Officers has strengthened frontline healthcare delivery, while digital platforms such as e-Sanjeevani have expanded access to specialist consultations.

Patel said that under the National Health Mission (NHM), the performance of health programmes is regularly monitored through review meetings, field visits, mid-term assessments, service delivery benchmarks and annual Common Review Missions. (PTI)

RPF not empowered to register cases under BNS: Railway minister

NEW DELHI, July 24: Railway Protection Force is not empowered to register cases under the provisions of Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha on Friday.

Responding to a question regarding the overlapping of functions of the Railway Protection Force (RPF) and the Government Railway Police (GRP), Vaishnaw said the RPF is empowered to register cases under the provisions of the Railway Property (Unlawful Possession) Act, 1966 and the Railways Act, 1989.

These acts relate to prevention of theft, unlawful possession and disposal of railway property.

"Police and public order are state subjects under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India and, as such, state governments are responsible for prevention, detection, registration and investigation of crime and maintaining law and order etc. on railways through their law enforcement agencies viz. GRP/district police," Vaishnaw said.

He further stated that 50 per cent of salary charges of GRP is borne by Railways.



Clarifying that the role and responsibilities of GRP, district police and RPF are clearly defined, he said all cases of crime under the Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) are registered and investigated by GRP or district police as per their jurisdiction demarcated by respective state or Union territories.

According to Vaishnaw, RPF supplements the efforts of GRP/district police to provide better protection and security of passengers and passenger areas.

"Accordingly, cases covered under BNS are reported to GRP or district police for taking further legal action," he said. (PTI)

Shreyas Iyer's India look to continue revival and seal T20I series against Zimbabwe



HARARE, July 24: On recovery path with their maiden win under new captain Shreyas Iyer, India will look to sustain the winning momentum for an unassailable lead against Zimbabwe when the two teams face off in the second T20I here on Saturday.

After being swept away by Ireland (0-2) and England (0-4), three-time T20 World Cup winners India produced a far better show in their series-opener here on Thursday, beating Zimbabwe by seven wickets to take a 1-0 lead.

Young batting sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's 19-ball 50 and Mayank Yadav's fiery 4-0-18-2 set up an important win for India in the opening match here, against an opponent which has thrived in home conditions of late. India chased down a modest 126 wickets to spare, riding on Sooryavan-

shi's fifty, a quickfire 35 from Ishan Kishan and a measured 28 not out from skipper Iyer.

Abhishek Sharma, who began his T20I journey here at the Harare Sports Club and struck his maiden hundred in the format in the second game itself two years ago, would be keen to make amends after falling cheaply in the opening game.

Sooryavanshi set the record for being the youngest to score a T20I half-century. The young batter would have been relieved getting the monkey off his back, especially when he was specifically targeted with short balls on England tour.

But more than their batters' strong showing, the collective effort from a young pace attack would have pleased the team management, which has VVS Laxman in charge as the head coach for this series.

India appeared to have adapted well to the conditions as Prince Yadav claimed 2/29 in a much-improved performance, while the debutant Ashok Sharma also cranked up high pace even though he remained wicket-less.

But the biggest takeaway was a successful return to top flight cricket for right-arm pacer Mayank, who spent nearly two years on the sidelines with a string of injuries since making his debut.

Mayank's pace as well as control was top notch in the opening contest, with the dismissal of Zimbabwe batting mainstay Brian Bennett on a delivery that shaped away being the standout.

Zimbabwe, on their part, would rue losing far too many wickets in the powerplay while not being able to handle the pace the Indian bowlers generated. From 26 for three, the hosts put

on a modest 125 for seven which was never going to be challenging enough. There is no gap between the second and the final T20I, which will be played on Sunday in the short series.

Teams:

India: Shreyas Iyer (c), Ishan Kishan (wk), Prabhsimran Singh (wk), Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, Tilak Varma (vc), Abhishek Sharma, Shivam Dube, Harsh Dubey, Suryansh Shedge, Rinku Singh, Ashok Sharma, Prince Yadav, Ravi Bishnoi, Mayank Yadav, Yash Thakur.

Zimbabwe: Sikandar. Raza (c), Ben Curran, Innocent Kala, Tadiwanashe Marumani (wk), Dion Myers, Tafadzwa Tsiga (wk), Brian Benett, Ryan Burl, Brad Evans, Wesley Madhevere, Tanaka Chivanga, Wellington Masakadza, Blessing Muzarabani, Richard Ngarava, Newman Nyamhuri. Match starts at 4:30pm IST. (PTI)

Jürgen Klopp named new Germany coach



FRANKFURT (GERMANY), July 24: Germany has hired Jürgen Klopp to coach its national team, giving the ex-Liverpool manager a daunting task to turn around the fortunes of a squad which failed yet again at the World Cup.

Klopp signed a contract to coach Germany through to the 2030 World Cup, the German soccer federation said as he was presented at a news conference Friday.

"The national team brings us Germans together like almost nothing else can. That's what makes this task so special for me," Klopp said.

He replaces Julian Nagelsmann, who quit after Germany's loss to Paraguay meant it failed to reach the last 16 of a men's World Cup for the third time in a row.

It is Klopp's first coaching job since he left Liverpool in 2024 citing fatigue. He said he was "recharged" in comments while in talks over the German job.

The man known for thrilling "heavy metal football" at Liverpool, Klopp was Germany's preferred candidate as soon as Nagelsmann quit.

Over weeks of talks, the 59-year-old German — 20 years older than Nagelsmann — stayed in the United States as a World Cup pundit for a German-language broadcaster. The federation also held talks with the Red Bull group, where Klopp spent the last year and a half as "head of global soccer" advising its worldwide group of soccer clubs.

Klopp faces a tough introduction to his first national team job with four Nations League games in 11 days against the Netherlands, Greece and Serbia in late September and early October. (AP)

Governor inaugurates State Athletics Championship in Nalbari

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 24: Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya on Friday inaugurated the 47th State Level Senior and Junior Athletics Championship 2026 at Nalbari Stadium, Sarithathi, and called upon young people to embrace sports as a means of building character, discipline, resilience and national pride.

The championship is being organised by the Assam Athletics Association in association with the Nalbari district administration and the Nalbari District Sports Association.

Addressing the inaugural function, the Governor expressed satisfaction over the participation of nearly 1,200 athletes from across the State, describing it as a reflection of Assam's growing sporting culture.

He said such events play an important role in achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047 and provide a platform to identify and nurture future sporting talent.

Acharya said Assam has pro-

duced several distinguished sportspersons who have brought laurels to the State and the country through their determination and hard work.

He cited the achievements of athletes Bhogeshwar Baruah, Hima Das, Amlan Borgohain and Moumita Mondal, boxing champions Lovlina Borgohain and Shiva Thapa, and ace archer Jayanta Talukdar, saying their accomplishments continue to inspire the younger generation.

Describing athletics as the foundation of sporting excellence, the Governor said it helps develop endurance, self-discipline, resilience and commitment.

He urged participants to uphold the values of sportsmanship, fairness and integrity, adding that while medals symbolise success, perseverance and discipline help shape responsible citizens.

Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for sports, Acharya said initiatives such as Khelo India, the Fit India Move-

ment and the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) have transformed the country's sporting landscape.

He also appreciated the efforts of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma in developing sports infrastructure, promoting grassroots talent and creating a vibrant sporting ecosystem in Assam, which has enabled athletes from the State to perform at national and international levels. Expressing confidence that many participants would go on to represent Assam and India with distinction, the Governor said investment in sports is an investment in the nation's future and would contribute to building a healthy, confident and empowered generation.

Sports and youth welfare minister Biswajit Daimary, finance minister Jayanta Malla Barua, MLA Ritubaran Sharma, Deputy Commissioner Nibedan Das Patowary, Superintendent of Police Bibeknanda Das, and several other dignitaries attended the inaugural ceremony.

KA thrash Goalpara 9-1 in Women's Inter-District Football C'ship

HT Bureau

DIPHU, July 24: Karbi Anglong produced a commanding performance to defeat Goalpara 9-1 in the All Assam Senior Women's Inter-District Football Championship 2026 at Bilaspur Ground on Friday.

Organised by the Assam Football Association, the match was dominated by Karbi Anglong, who displayed attacking flair and clinical finishing throughout the contest.

Jirmili Kramsapi opened the scoring in the 12th minute after being set up by Serbirika Terangpi. Just two minutes later, Puja Phon-glosa doubled the lead, finishing off a move created by Ambika Basumatary and Ruma.

Goalpara reduced the deficit just before the break when Sonia



Marak converted a penalty in the 44th minute, leaving Karbi Anglong with a 2-1 lead at half-time.

Karbi Anglong, however, took complete control after the restart. Serbirika Terangpi starred with a superb second-half hat-trick, finding the net in the 47th, 61st and 71st minutes, with assists from Jirmili Kramsapi and Sonali Basumatary.

Sonali Basumatary added another goal in the 74th minute before Ambika Basumatary completed the rout in the 89th minute after being set up by Pusanjali Devi.

The comprehensive 9-1 victory underlined Karbi Anglong's attacking strength and teamwork, making a strong statement in the championship.

Gukesh, Praggnanandhaa, Vaishali to spearhead Indian challenge in Chess Olympiad

NEW DELHI, July 24: World champion D Gukesh, the in-form R Praggnanandhaa and Candidates winner R Vaishali headline a star-studded Indian team for the FIDE Chess Olympiad to be played from September 16 to 27 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. Both the Indian teams of five men and five women are the defending champions, having won the respective titles in 2024 in a historic achievement.

The other members of the team in the Open section are Arjun Erigaisi, Nihal Sarin and Vidit Gujrathi. Sarin is the only new addition to the team that won the 2024 Open title.

The women's team comprises all the top stars of the country — Koneru Humpy, Vaishali, World Cup winner Divya Deshmukh, Van-tika Agrawal and Savitha Shri B.

Humpy was not a part of the title-winning team in 2024 and neither was Savitha.

The 20-year-old Praggnanandhaa has been in top form, winning the Norway Chess tournament in June. He had defeated world No. 1 and five-time world champion Magnus Carlsen and Gukesh, among others, on his way to the title. (PTI)

Bishnoi has realigned his run-up: Sunil Joshi on leg-spinner's better outing against Zimbabwe

HARARE, July 24: India bowling coach Sunil Joshi said a tweak in run-up has helped leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi regain his rhythm against Zimbabwe after a below par outing against England recently.

Bishnoi's spell of 4-0-24-1 here on Thursday in the first T20I read far better than his 4-0-60-0 against England at Manchester earlier this month.

Jacob Bethell hammered him for 29 runs in an over in England's romp at Old Trafford.

"It's important to understand that win was a must, which has happened and I'm very pleased with the bowling performances. Bishnoi hasn't changed anything in his action," Joshi said in the pre-match press conference on Friday.

"He has re-aligned the run-up a bit. We've also communicated with (spin bowling coach) Sairaj (Bahutule). So, we've had good conversations with him."

"Eventually, we've seen that he's not even going close to the return crease, which is very pleasing for him, honestly, and for us also," he added.

Joshi said all-rounder Suryansh

Shedge has promise and he should be allowed time to settle down.

"Suryansh is making his place in the Indian team. Hardik (Pandya) has made his place. Shivam (Dube) has made his place. So, Suryansh is a rising talent. We have to persist with him."

"He's working on good things, good areas. That's what we want in the T20 format," said Joshi, who is standing in for regular bowling coach Morne Morkel during the three-match T20I series against Zimbabwe.

The former India left-arm spinner was also delighted to see the outings of express pacers Mayank Yadav and Ashok Sharma.

Joshi said they have been worthy additions to India's pace talent pool.

"It's very pleasing because he (Mayank) has come back very strong (after injury). His rhythm has been very good. Ashok... we have seen how he is effective in Sri Lanka (during India A tour)."

"He got the opportunity for that. It's a good thing for the Indian fast bowling pool that we have so many fast bowlers. We just have to

prepare them as opportunities can come at any time," he added.

Is there a plan to use Abhishek Sharma, Tilak Verma and Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, who all can roll their arm over, as part-time bowlers going forward?

"I think all three are good bowlers, all-rounders. Abhishek has improved a lot. The coaches always want him to improve every time. Harsh Dubey has also performed well."

"We also have Tilak Verma. In fact, he's also another optional bowler. We have conversations with him about not giving too many runs, giving more dot balls, and focussing on the basics."

Joshi said it's better to focus on Sooryavanshi's batting at the moment, his strong suit.

"Let's focus on his batting. He's been sensational. This is a happy hunting ground for him. He performed well in the U19 World Cup finals."

"Vaibhav has been very comfortable with his batting. Whenever we get time we'll work with him in the BCCI Centre of Excellence," he said. (PTI)

WC medal and LA Olympics hockey star Manpreet's last two goals

NEW DELHI, July 24: Talismanic Manpreet Singh has achieved plenty in his hockey journey, but the veteran midfielder still rues one missing trophy from his cabinet -- a medal in the World Cup -- a feat he wants to attain in the upcoming mega-event before drawing curtains to his illustrious career after the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

To his credit, former captain Manpreet has two Olympic medals -- back-to-back bronze in Tokyo and Paris -- two Asian Games gold (2014 Incheon and 2022 Hangzhou) and a bronze (2018 Jakarta), besides multiple other titles.

But one goal the 34-year-old star midfielder is still chasing is an Indian podium finish at the World Cup after 51 long years. India's last medal at the World Cup was a gold at the 1975 edition. (PTI)

Judoka Tulika Maan suspended for whereabouts failure, withdrawn from CWG

NEW DELHI, July 24: Birmingham Commonwealth Games silver medal-winning judoka Tulika Maan has been withdrawn from the ongoing Glasgow edition after being handed a provisional suspension by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) for three whereabouts failures in the last 12 months.

Maan had won silver in the +78kg category in the 2022 edition and she was a strong medal prospect in Glasgow as well. She now stares at a two-year ban.

"She has committed three whereabouts failures in a 12-month period and NADA has sent notice to her. So, she will be withdrawn from the team," a judo coach told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

The 27-year-old from Delhi is the second judoka to have been withdrawn from Glasgow CWG.

On Thursday, Arun Kumar, who competes in the men's -73kg category, was pulled out of the Games after failing an out-of-competition dope test. He was handed a provisional suspension by the NADA for testing positive for an anabolic steroid.

Maan is one of the most accomplished judokas in the country. She had represented the country in the 2024 Paris Olympics where she made an exit in the round of 32. She also took part in the 2022 and 2024 World Championships.

The Indian judo team has not yet left for the Games as its competition schedule will kick off on July 31. The judokas are scheduled to depart on July 27. India had originally approved a 14-strong judo team, featuring seven men and an equal number of women. (PTI)

Konnichiwa, Japan: SAI Bengaluru introduces Japanese food acclimatisation programme ahead of Asiad

BENGALURU, July 24: Avocado and Cucumber Uramaki, Charred Hamachi, Udon Noodles, Shoyu Chicken Broth, and Japanese Rolls.

A sumptuous menu card at a neighbourhood Izakaya (a casual eatery)?

But these traditional Japanese delicacies are a fresh addition to SAI Bengaluru's food listings for athletes — an attempt to familiarise them with oriental dishes ahead of the upcoming Asian Games at Aichi-Nagoya.

"The Asian Games is going to happen in Japan and our athletes should not find it difficult with the food there and their performance should not suffer because of their diet. That's the primary objective of introducing Japanese cuisine into our culinary and into our menu," V.

Jeyaraj, Executive Chef at the Sports Authority of India (SAI) Netaji Subhas Southern Centre (NSSC) here, told PTI.

Jeyaraj, who has extensive experience as a chef with Army and in overseas destinations like Abu Dhabi, said the idea of adding



Japanese dishes to the menu was on their mind after seeing a few athletes struggle with food during the Tokyo and Paris Olympics.

"Some athletes struggled to adjust to continental type of food in Tokyo and Paris, and we had to send some 1800 energy bars when para athletes went to France (for Paralympics). Now, they are going to Japan, so we thought of including Japanese items in the menu so they should feel free to eat anything there. It will not be exactly like in the Games Village, but we

make sure that we match at least 90 per cent with the food there," he added.

"So we are going with Continental menu — twice a week — for the past one and half years, where they would not get any Indian food."

So, it's very easy for athletes to adapt to a different food culture. We had done this last year when the hockey team went to Chile for a tour," he noted.

But how difficult was it for him to convince the athletes to turn

away from a familiar platter of rice and daal or roti and sabzi (vegetables)?

"It was very difficult initially and we realised that change cannot be brought in straightaway. So at first, we started with a Japanese High Tea, where we gave some desserts like rolls and slowly we introduced some appetisers ahead of lunch and dinner."

"Then slowly we introduced a main course like Sushi and Sashimi and a Ramen counter and then we got some very good feedback from athletes," he said.

Athletes participating in national and international competitions need to ensure a balanced diet that complements their fitness routine.

So, how does Jeyaraj introduce a new cuisine without diluting athletes' strict diet protocol and their individual preferences?

"It's all about variety. We already have a diet chart for each of them. So, we have offered them 20 toppings that can go with Ramen, noodles etc, and they can select from the list, and we make it in front of them at a live counter. (PTI)



NEW DELHI, July 24: The Sports Ministry has provisionally granted the status of National Sports Federation (NSF) to the Federation of Motor Sports Clubs of India (FMSCI), a significant upgrade for the body that is coordinating with the government to bring Formula 1 back to the country.

The FMSCI had applied for recognition on June 11 this year and the approval of its request means that it would now be eligible for financial grants from the ministry.

"...the request of Federation of Motor Sports Clubs of India (FMSCI) for provisional recognition as National Sports Federation (NSF) has been considered and it has been decided to grant provisional recognition to FMSCI as an NSF with effect from the date of issue of this letter," the Ministry order dated July 23 stated.

The Ministry has asked FMSCI, which is based in Chennai and headed by Arindam Ghosh, to amend its constitution/Memorandum of Association (MoA) to conform with the provisions of the National Sports Governance Act and the rules framed in it within stip-

ulated time-lines.

"Government is very keen to do all that is required to host F1 in India. It became important for them to actively involve us as the FMSCI is recognised by world body FIA," FMSCI council member Vicky Chandhok said.

FMSCI has been in regular talks with the ministry on not just the issue of recognition but to also chart the way forward for F1's India comeback.

To grant recognition to the body which came into existence in 1971, the government has relaxed some norms related to the minimum state units affiliation required for NSF status.

The Ministry also stated that it will revoke the recognition if the body fails to comply with its guidelines on financial probity, anti-doping measures, governance structure or if it indulges in misrepresentation of facts.

Last month, Sports Minister Manuskh Mandaviya had announced that a Task Force would be instituted "as soon as possible" to assess the challenges and benefits of hosting major motorsport events here.

The Task Force will evaluate the economic, tourism, and investment benefits arising from hosting major motorsport events in India and also identify key priorities, infrastructure requirements, and operational needs for the sustainable development of the sector.

The Task Force will have representation from FMSCI, Sports Ministry, the state government (in this case Uttar Pradesh as Buddh International Circuit is in Greater Noida), and the facility owners.

The minister is pushing to have a Formula 1 race in India by 2028. (PTI)