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- Will Kejriwal seek Punjab govt's resignation, BJP asks after HC stay on pharma officers' recruitment
- BJP has nothing but money left to win UP polls, says Akhilesh; party leader hits back
- Arunachal makes PRC, tribal language proficiency must for govt jobs
- BJP-led govt facing challenges due to liabilities left behind by previous CPI(M) regime: Tripura CM

Fresh clash erupts along Assam-Arunachal border

Police fires in air to disperse mob ● The incident took place at Likabali entry point in Silapathar

NORTH LAKHIMPUR, Aug 13: A fresh clash erupted between protesters from Assam and Arunachal Pradesh in Dhemaji district on Thursday, forcing the police from the neighbouring state to fire in the air to control the mob even as the indefinite economic blockade against the Himalayan state entered its second day.

The Takam Mising Porin Kebang (TMPK), the apex student organisation of Assam's Mising community, and other local groups on Wednesday launched an indefinite economic blockade against Arunachal Pradesh in protest against the alleged firing in which 12 indigenous people from Assam were injured.

"When the blockade was going on, some people from Arunachal Pradesh indulged in stone pelting on protesters from Assam and some persons sustained minor injuries. This led to a scuffle between the two sides," an official said.

The incident took place at Likabali entry point in Silapathar in Dhe-



maji district of Assam, he added.

"Then we saw that police from Arunachal fired three rounds in the air to control the mob on their side," the Assam government official said.

At least 12 people from Assam were injured on Monday after alleged firing by miscreants from Arunachal Pradesh along the inter-state border in Dhemaji district over land encroachment issues.

Along with TMPK, other local social groups like Mising Mimang Kebang (MMK) and Takam Mising Mahila Kebang (TMMK) are supporting the blockade and stopped all vehicles, barring emergency and school transportation, from coming or going to Arunachal Pradesh at the entry points.

The organisations are demanding an early resolution of the Assam-

Arunachal Pradesh border dispute, action against the "miscreants" who had fired two days ago and an end to alleged encroachment on Assam land. As part of the agitation, protesters blocked key entry points along the inter-state border, including roads at Dwarmukh-Banderdewa, Ruksin and Silapathar in Dhemaji, Banderdewa in Lakhimpur, Solengi in Gohpur and Pabhoi in Biswanath.

TMPK secretary Saan Panging said, "Such incidents along the inter-state border are not new, but our government has not taken it seriously. This time, our agitation will continue till all the culprits are arrested and handed over to Assam Police."

To hammer out a solution in respect to withdrawing of the economic blockade, Assam Border Protection and Development Minister Anul Bora and Education Minister Ranaj Pegu will hold a meeting with TMPK leadership at the Circuit House of Dhemaji. On Wednesday, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

SAD chief Sukhbir Badal injured in 'kirpan' attack in M'rashtra, party demands CBI probe

NANDED/CHANDIGARH, Aug 13: Shiromani Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Singh Badal was injured in a 'kirpan' attack by a member of the Nihang order inside a gurdwara on the outskirts of Maharashtra's Nanded town on Thursday, police said.

The former Punjab deputy chief minister, who escaped an attempt on his life at the Golden Temple entrance in December 2024, was rushed to hospital where he received two to three stitches on his right hand. The attacker has been arrested.

SAD leaders termed the attack, which took place around 1.45 pm at the Gurdwara Mata Sahib Devan Ji Mugat, about 15 km from Nanded, an intelligence failure and said the party chief was fine and in high spirits. Senior leaders, including Badal's brother-in-law Bikram Singh Majithia, demanded a CBI probe into the matter.

"A Nihang (member of a martial order of Sikhs) attacked Badal with a kirpan (ceremonial dagger) inside the gurdwara. The attacker has been taken into custody," Nanded Superintendent of Police Neelabh Rohan told PTI. Police officer Santosh Kendre, who was part of the special protection unit, was injured while protecting him. Badal was going down a flight of stairs at the time.

Visuals showed Badal walking inside a hospital building with a cloth wrapped around his right hand.

Badal is protected by Z plus category security. However, he is entitled to CISF cover only in Punjab and Delhi with a deployment of around 40 personnel. Punjab Police personnel were with him when the attack took place.



Earlier in the day, the 64-year-old SAD chief visited the Takht Sri Hazur Sahib, which is one of the five Takhts of Sikhism, along with wife and Akali Dal MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal. Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Harsimrat Kaur, who had been part of the Modi government, to inquire about his health.

Badal had met the prime minister earlier this month, igniting speculation about the possibility of the Punjab-based party joining hands with the BJP again ahead of the Punjab assembly elections due early next year. The SAD left the NDA six years ago following differences over the three agriculture laws that were later withdrawn by the Modi government.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, who has ordered a probe into the attack, also called up the SAD chief to ask about his health. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

BJP accuses Rahul of changing goalposts, says Monsoon Session fell victim to 'one leader's ego'



NEW DELHI, Aug 13: The BJP on Thursday accused Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of repeatedly changing goalposts on discussions in Parliament and alleged that the Monsoon Session had fallen victim to "one leader's ego, indiscipline and insolence".

The party also alleged that hundreds of crores of rupees of taxpayers' money were wasted due to Gandhi's "arrogance and obstinacy".

Lok Sabha was adjourned sine die on Thursday, drawing curtains on a stormy Monsoon Session that saw relentless protests by the Opposition over the police action against agitating students and the alleged theft of Ram temple donations, besides the passage of several key bills without debate.

Addressing a press conference, senior BJP leader and MP Ravi Shankar Prasad alleged that the Opposition did not allow Parliament to function despite the government's readiness for discussions. Calling Gandhi irresponsible and "immature", Prasad accused him of lacking political propriety.

"I would like to repeat that Rahul Gandhi is irresponsible. Rahul Gandhi is yet to mature as a leader in the politics of the country. Rahul Gandhi is delinquent. And Rahul Gandhi has a great sense of arrogance and entitlement," he said.

"The Parliament's Monsoon Session has fallen victim to one leader's ego, indiscipline and insolence," he added. He said that Gandhi and the opposition kept changing the goalposts during the entire Monsoon session.

Prasad said that the opposition had first demanded a discussion on NEET, then Gandhi staged a protest outside the Prime Minister's residence, demanded the resignation of the education minister, and later sought answers from Modi.

He said Gandhi had repeatedly demanded that the home minister respond to the alleged police action in Delhi, but when Amit Shah offered to participate in a debate and respond to every point, the Opposition still did not allow the discussion.

"Yesterday you saw that the Home Minister (Amit Shah) himself came before the media and said, I am ready to listen to the entire debate for 24 hours, and I am ready to answer all these issues. I will answer (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Welcome positive, reassuring remarks of Assam CM on border clash: Khandu

ITANAGAR, Aug 13: Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Thursday appealed to people of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam to maintain harmony and mutual respect, following a firing incident along the inter-state border, and welcomed the "positive and reassuring" statement of his Assam counterpart Himanta Biswa Sarma.

In a post on social media, Khandu said Assam and Arunachal Pradesh share a "deep bond of history, friendship and brotherhood" and stressed that differences between the two neighbouring states should always be addressed through dialogue, mutual understanding and peaceful means.

"I heartily welcome the positive and reassuring statement by Hon'ble Assam Chief Minister Shri @himantabiswa Ji," Khandu said in a post on X.

"Assam and Arunachal Pradesh share a deep bond of history, friendship and brotherhood. Our differences must always be addressed through dialogue, mutual understanding and peaceful means," he said.

The chief minister also appealed to people on both sides of the border not to allow the recent developments to affect the long-standing ties between the two states.



"I appeal to the people of both Assam and Arunachal Pradesh to maintain peace, harmony and mutual respect. Let us not allow differences to overshadow the strong bonds that unite our people," he said.

"Let us not allow differences to overshadow the strong bonds that unite our people," Khandu added. The statement came amid efforts by the two state governments to defuse tension following a firing incident along the Assam-Arunachal border in which several people from Assam were injured. The incident took place in the Bodoti area of Mingmang (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Miscreants from Arunachal fired inside Assam territory; four accused identified, custody sought: Ranaj Pegu

NORTH LAKHIMPUR, Aug 13: The Assam government on Thursday asserted that miscreants from Arunachal Pradesh fired inside Assam's territory in an area that was not disputed, and the state police have identified four accused and sought their custody from the neighbouring state.

Speaking to reporters after a meeting with the leadership of Takam Mising Porin Kebang (TMPK), which is spearheading an indefinite economic blockade of Arunachal Pradesh, at Dhemaji Circuit House, Assam Education Minister Ranaj Pegu said the discussion ended on a positive note, with the protesters also expressing happiness over the stand of the Assam government on the incident.

Leaders of the TMPK, the apex student organisation of Assam's Mising community, issued a 48-hour ultimatum to the Arunachal Pradesh government to apprehend the four identified accused, who have been named in an FIR lodged by Assam Police, and hand them over to the Assam administration, failing which



it would intensify its stir.

"As per information, four people from Arunachal Pradesh fired on people from Assam at Badati village of Mingmang panchayat in Dhemaji district. The incident did not take place in any disputed land, it was clearly Assam's territory as per our records," Pegu said.

Four people from Hime village in Arunachal Pradesh were involved in the incident, he added.

"Assam Police have provided the names and addresses of these four peo-

ple to their Arunachal Pradesh counterparts and sought their custody. Assam Police will arrest them whenever they are found inside our state," Pegu said in the presence of Border Protection and Development minister Anul Bora.

TMPK and other local groups on Wednesday launched an indefinite economic blockade of Arunachal Pradesh in protest against the alleged firing in which 12 indigenous people from Assam were injured.

TMPK president Tilak Doley said the meeting was positive and the organisation presented its demands, which the government promised to look at favourably.

"We have set a target of 48 hours to arrest the four accused in the firing incident. Otherwise, our agitation will intensify in the coming days," he added.

Doley said the agitation was not against any civil society groups of Arunachal Pradesh, such as Galo Welfare Society, Galo Students Union, Adi Students Union and other similar groups, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Himanta appeals for peace along Assam-Arunachal border, says boundaries can never divide hearts

GUWAHATI, Aug 13: With a fresh clash reported from the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday appealed to both sides to maintain peace and said no boundary can divide the hearts of the people who have been living like brothers and sisters for generations.

A fresh clash erupted between protesters from Assam and Arunachal Pradesh in Dhemaji district, forcing the police from the neighbouring state to fire in the air to control the mob even as the indefinite economic blockade against the Himalayan state entered its second day.

"I appeal to the people of Assam and Arunachal to maintain peace and harmony. Boundaries may define our States, but they can never divide our hearts," Sarma said in a post on X.

Tagging his Arunachal Pradesh counterpart Pema Khandu and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the Assam CM said that the two Northeastern states share a bond that goes far beyond boundaries.

"For generations, our people have lived as brothers and sisters, bound by love, affection and mutual respect," he added.

Sarma stressed that the two states have resolved most

of their border differences through dialogue and friendship in recent years.

"Only 52 villages remain, and both governments will continue discussions in the same spirit to resolve the dispute completely," he added.

Arunachal Pradesh was a centrally-administered region initially after Independence and became a Union Territory later, before attaining full statehood in 1987.

After Arunachal Pradesh achieved statehood, a tripartite committee was appointed, which recommended transferring certain territories from Assam to Arunachal Pradesh. Assam contested this, and the matter is in the Supreme Court.

Assam and Arunachal Pradesh share a 804.1-km border in Udalguri, Sonitpur, Biswanath, Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Tinsukia, Dibrugarh and Charaideo districts, and 12 of the adjoining state.

There are 1,200 points of dispute along the inter-state border between the two states. The Assam government on July 29 told the state Assembly that Arunachal Pradesh has encroached upon 16,144.01 hectares of land. Out of this encroached land, Arunachal Pradesh is claiming 858.91 sq km. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

MPs from Assam, Arunachal appeal for peace along border of two states

NEW DELHI, Aug 13: MPs from Assam and Arunachal Pradesh on Thursday appealed to the people living along the border of the two states to maintain peace, live harmoniously and resolve their differences through dialogue.

The appeal was made by the MPs after a meeting was convened to take stock of the situation along the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border where tension gripped following an incident of firing on Wednesday, injuring 11 people.

"MPs of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh appeal for maintenance of peace along the border. We must live together harmoniously as brothers and sisters and settle any land dispute through peaceful negotiation only," Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju, flanked by MPs from Assam, said.

He said the relationship between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh is a deep bond, built over many generations and rooted in brotherhood, affection and mutual respect.

"Through dialogue, we are resolving our differences, and even if every issue does not find a

solution, we will continue to move forward on this path. Perhaps our borders are separate, but our hearts are one," Rijiju, an MP from Arunachal Pradesh, said.

The minister said Arunachal Pradesh had been curved out of Assam and people of the two states live like brothers and sisters.

He said some disputes take place sometimes at the local level, similar to a family dispute, and there cannot be a fight between the two states for that. "It was a total misunderstanding. We jointly appeal that whatever happened should be settled harmoniously."

"I have spoken to both the CMs. They are in touch. Senior state ministers are visiting the spots and talks are going on at the local level," he said. Rijiju said there may be issues but everyone should jointly work to solve the problems.

"We all MPs sat together and discussed the issue. We are always together. Northeast is one family," he said. Tension gripped Assam and Arunachal Pradesh following a firing incident on Wednesday along (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Two arrested with drugs worth ₹ 39.4 crore in Guwahati

GUWAHATI, Aug 13: Two persons were arrested with drugs worth Rs 39.4 crore in Guwahati, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Thursday.

Acting on a tip-off, police intercepted a truck and seized 10 soap cases containing heroin and 1.4 lakh YABA tablets, he said.

"Mirror mirror on the wall, tell me how much drugs in all? Rs 39.4 crore! @GuwahatiPol, in an excellent op intercepted a truck near ISBT carrying 10 soap cases of heroin & 1,40,000 YABA tablets-saving the future of our youth," he said in a social media post.

In the operation, the police also apprehended two suspected drugs traffickers, he added. Sarma asserted that the state government's campaign against drugs (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

I-Day celebrations get regional twist with special menu, offers

One of the highlights will be a performance by band Lost Radio

NEW DELHI, Aug 13: From regional feasts and royal Wazwan to live music and special offers, restaurants and hotels in Delhi and beyond are planning to celebrate India's many flavours and cultural traditions this Independence Day.

As the country marks its 80th Independence Day on Saturday, eateries across Delhi and other states are rolling out festive menus, culinary experiences, live performances and special discounts, giving food lovers plenty to savour over the long weekend.

At THE Park New Delhi, the six-day 'Flavours of Freedom' festival, which began on August 10 and runs through August 15, takes diners on a culinary journey from Kanyakumari to Kashmir, with each evening spot-



lighting a different regional cuisine.

The menu traverses Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil

Nadu before moving to Jharkhand and West Bengal, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, and the royal

cuisines of Awadh, Mughal India and Kashmir. Dishes include 'Chettinad chicken', 'Meen varuval', 'Appam with stew', 'Macher jhol', 'Litti chokha', 'Dhungar gosht', 'Rogan josh' and Kashmiri Wazwan specialities.

Similarly, The Claridges will celebrate India's rich and evolving culinary heritage with a special Independence Day brunch, 'Saffron to Sage'. "Through 'Saffron to Sage', we wanted to showcase the depth and diversity of India's culinary heritage while giving it a contemporary expression."

"The menu brings together regional flavours, cherished recipes and modern techniques to create a dining experience that feels both familiar and (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

US states issue special proclamations to commemorate August 15

NEW YORK, Aug 13: States across the US are issuing special proclamations to commemorate August 15, 2026, as 'India Day' to mark the country's independence, highlighting its heritage, diversity as growing contributions of its diaspora to the American fabric.

Delaware is the latest US state, after New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts, to issue a proclamation on the occasion of India's independence day, declaring August 15, 2026, as 'India Day'.

The proclamation, signed by Delaware Governor Matthew Meyer, notes that the US state is "strengthened" by the many cultures and traditions represented throughout its communities, including the growing Indian American community whose presence has helped shape the character of the State.

"Delawareans of Indian heritage have enriched our State through their work, leadership, and service in communities across Delaware, contributing to our shared prosperity and creating opportunities for future generations," it said.

"India's history is rooted in a remarkable diversity of languages, traditions, faiths, and customs, and generations of Indian Americans have carried these traditions forward while building lives and communities in the United States."

The proclamation notes that 'India Day' offers an opportunity to honour India's independence, celebrate the heritage and achievements of Delaware's Indian American community, and recognise the lasting connections between the communities and the people of India. Through the proclamation, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Signatories seek speedy action on pending commitments, including release of jailed former NDFB leaders

High-level meeting reviews implementation of 2020 BTR Accord



HT Correspondent
KOKRAJHAR, Aug 13: A high-level review meeting on the comprehensive and speedy implementation of the 2020 BTR Accord was held at the official residence of Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityananda Rai in New Delhi on Thursday.

The meeting was attended by Neeraj Bansod, IAS, Joint Secretary, North East, Ministry of

Home Affairs, along with a delegation comprising representatives of the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU), United Bodo People's Organisation (UBPO) and former NDFB.

Rajya Sabha MP and former CEM of BTR Pramod Boro and Lok Sabha MP Joyanta Basumatary were also present.

The meeting discussed several pending issues related to implementation of the accord, including

the proposed 125th Amendment to the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, granting ST (Hill) status to Boro-Kachari communities in Karbi Anglong, welfare and development of the Bodoland Kachari Welfare Autonomous Council (BKWAC), withdrawal of cases against former NDFB members and ex-gratia assistance to families of martyrs.

The participants also raised the demand for the release of Ranjan

Daimary and five other former NDFB members, provincialisation of schools, special recruitment drives for local youths and establishment of institutions and infrastructure under the Special Development Package.

Setting up a Centre of Excellence in the name of Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma was also among the issues discussed at the meeting.

The participants stressed the need for coordinated efforts and speedy action to ensure comprehensive implementation of the commitments made under the 2020 BTR Accord.

Speaking about the meeting, Pramod Boro described the discussions as meaningful and focused on expediting implementation of the accord.

He said issues including the proposed 125th Amendment, Boro-Kachari concerns in Karbi Anglong, welfare of the BKWAC, withdrawal of cases against former NDFB members, ex-gratia for martyrs' families, release of Ranjan Daimary and five others, special recruitment drives, the Special Development Package and the proposed Centre of Excellence were discussed.

Governor urges mass participation in 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign

Lakshman Prasad Acharya says Tricolour should rise in every home and every heart



HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Aug 13: Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya on Thursday called upon people across the State to participate enthusiastically in the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign and hoist the National Flag with pride and respect at their homes, establishments and institutions.

The Governor was addressing a public meeting and cultural programme organised in connection with the campaign at the Shri Shri Damodardeva International Auditorium here.

The 2026 edition of the nationwide campaign is being observed from August 9 to 17 and is dedicated to marking the 150th anniversary of the national song 'Vande Mataram'.

Acharya said the campaign provides citizens an opportunity to express their love, respect and sense of duty towards the nation and renew their collective resolve to contribute towards building a Viksit Bharat. He described the Tricolour as a symbol of India's sovereignty, dignity, self-respect, pride and honour.

Responding to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call, the Governor urged the people of Assam to hoist the National Flag at their

homes and strengthen the collective resolve towards building a Viksit Bharat.

Recalling the sacrifices of millions of freedom fighters, Acharya said the dignity of the Tricolour rests on their courage and supreme sacrifices.

He also highlighted the significance of 150 years of 'Vande Mataram', noting its role in awakening patriotism during the freedom struggle and continuing to inspire unity, integrity and progress.

Referring to the campaign's message of "Har Ghar Tiranga, Ghar-Ghar Tiranga and Har Man Tiranga," the Governor said the spirit of the Tricolour should extend beyond homes and find expression in the thoughts, actions and resolve of every citizen.

Highlighting Assam's tradition of patriotism and sacrifice, Acharya recalled the contributions of Veer Lachit Barphukan, Veeranga Kanaklata Barua, Mukunda Kakoti and other heroes who dedicated their lives to the nation.

He said building a Viksit Bharat and a Viksit Assam was a collective responsibility requiring participation from all sections of society.

The Governor also expressed

condolences to families who lost loved ones in the recent floods in Assam and appreciated the resilience of those affected.

He expressed gratitude to people from across the country for extending relief materials, financial assistance and humanitarian support during the crisis.

He also acknowledged the efforts of the Central and State governments, institutions, voluntary organisations and citizens involved in relief and rescue operations.

"Let the Tricolour rise in every home and every heart," Acharya said, emphasising that the National Flag represents the unity of the country despite differences in languages, traditions and faiths.

Calling upon the youth to imbibe the values represented by the Tricolour, he said the National Flag teaches courage, discipline, unity and a sense of duty.

He noted that the Tricolour truly rises higher whenever citizens sincerely contribute to society through their respective responsibilities.

Acharya appealed to residents of Assam to participate actively in the campaign and hoist the National Flag with due respect.

He also encouraged citizens to share their Tiranga Yatra and expressions of national pride through social media to promote wider participation.

Finance Minister Jayanta Malabaruah, Guwahati Municipal Corporation Mayor Mrigen Sarania, Vice-Chairman of Srimanta Sankaradeva Kalakshetra Society Pranjal Saikia, Guwahati Commissioner of Police Dr PS Mahanta, Kamrup Metropolitan District Commissioner Swapnil Paul and Director, Department of Cultural Affairs Rahul Chandra Das were among those present at the programme.

ABS contributes ₹1.10 lakh to CM's Relief Fund

HT Correspondent
MORIGAOON, Aug 13: A six-member delegation of the central committee of the Assam Brahman Samaj (ABS) met Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma recently and contributed ₹1.10 lakh to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

The amount was donated by Brahmin families and handed over to the Chief Minister by the delegation on behalf of the organisation.

The delegation comprised ABS president Amulya Nath Sarma, vice-president Kamakhya Prasad Sarma, secretary general Tulul Barthakur, cashier Lakhikanta Sarma, office secretary Prabhat Goswami and Guwahati Mahanagar Zila Brahman Samaj secretary Gautam Kumar Sarma.

During the meeting, the delegation also submitted an application to the Chief Minister concerning key issues that had been discussed on July 5, 2026.

KKHSOU celebrates National Librarians' Day

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Aug 13: Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University (KKHSOU) observed the 134th National Librarians' Day recently with a programme organised by the Central Library in collaboration with the Discipline of Library and Information Science, GPDSoIVS.

The programme commemorated the birth anniversary of Padma Shri Dr SR Ranganathan and was centred on the theme "Reading as a Tool for Personal Growth."

Renowned Assamese writer, literary critic and motivational speaker Mayur Bora delivered a lecture on the theme, highlighting the importance of reading in developing critical thinking, creativity, emotional maturity and a deeper understanding of society and culture.

He noted that while artificial intelligence provides quick access to information, the habit of reading remains essential for personal and intellectual development.



Bora also reflected on Assam's rich literary heritage and encouraged young readers to cultivate a lifelong reading habit.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Gobinda Deka, Director (i/c), GPDSoIVS, emphasised the vital role of libraries in supporting open and distance learning and promoting lifelong education.

Prof NN Sharma, Director, MDSOM, BKCIKS, encouraged students and researchers to experience the value of reading printed books for deeper learning and reflection.

Prof Pranab Saikia, Registrar, KKHSOU, was also present as a distinguished dignitary.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by Dibyajyoti Patgiri, Assistant Librarian, Central Library, KKHSOU, reaffirming the university's commitment to promoting a culture of reading and lifelong learning.

Bongaigaon Refinery sponsors high-tech instrumentation centre at Bodoland University

HT Correspondent
KOKRAJHAR, Aug 13: The inaugural ceremony of the Bongaigaon Refinery (IOCL)-sponsored High-Tech Instrumentation Centre was held at the Technology Incubation Centre of Bodoland University in Kokrajhar on Thursday.

The centre has been established under the Corporate Environmental Responsibility initiative of Bongaigaon Refinery for the project titled "Green Energy Powered Analytical Equipment for Quality Assurance and Marketing of Diverse Mushroom and Value-Added Mushroom Products."

BTC Deputy Chief Rihon Daimary attended the programme as the chief guest. Bodoland University Vice-Chancellor Prof (Dr) BL Ahuja, Bongaigaon Refinery Executive Director and Refinery Head Nayan Barua, BTC Executive Member Derhasat Basumatary and Bodoland University Registrar Dr Prahlad Basumatary were also present.

Senior officials of Bongaigaon Refinery, faculty members, undergraduate and postgraduate students, PhD scholars and rural entrepreneurs from different parts of the BTC attended the event.

The facilities sponsored by Bongaigaon Refinery include eight Capillary Genetic Analysers (DNA Sequencers), a Liquid Chromatography-Quadrupole Time of Flight-High Resolution Mass Spectrometer (LC-QToF-HRMS) and a 75-kilowatt hybrid solar

power system with a battery house. The new centre is expected to create an ecosystem for advanced research, collaboration and skill development.

The facilities will support research in biotechnology, food science, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, environmental science, genomics, proteomics, metabolomics and other multidisciplinary fields.

During the programme, certificates were distributed to the first batch of the Certificate Course on Rural Technology and Advanced Mushroom Farming.

A total of 21 farmers from different parts of Assam received certificates. The high-tech facilities are expected to benefit farmers, researchers, faculty members, students and entrepreneurs in Assam, the Northeast and other parts of the country.

They will also support the development of value-added food products and productive utilisation of biomass.

The LC-QToF-HRMS and other advanced equipment will facilitate high-resolution analysis and identification of complex biomolecules, metabolites, chemicals and pharmaceutical compounds.

The facilities are expected to support research in drug discovery, natural product research, clinical diagnostics, precision medicine, environmental studies, food science, agricultural research, microbial studies, genomics, proteomics and systems biology.

Hojai Nagarik Samaj donates ₹1.01 lakh for Upper Assam flood relief

HT Correspondent
HOJAI, Aug 13: The Hojai Nagarik Samaj has contributed ₹1,00,500 to support relief efforts for people affected by the recent floods in Upper Assam.

A delegation of the organisation met District Commissioner Sanjay Dutta and handed over a bank draft of the amount, requesting that it be forwarded to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. The delegation was led by Hojai Nagarik Samaj secretary and social worker Kamal Dutta. Pramod Ranjan Das, Ranjan Bora, Newazuddin Ahmed, Babul Saha and Ashim Mazumdar were among those present.

In a letter submitted to the District Commissioner, the organisation highlighted the extensive damage caused by the floods, which it said had left thousands of people homeless and resulted in widespread loss of property, household belongings and livestock. The organisation said the contribution was made in view of the difficulties faced by flood-affected families and expressed hope that it would support the government's ongoing relief and rehabilitation efforts.

PWD (R) Morigaon organises training on quality assurance

HT Correspondent
JAGIROAD, Aug 13: The PWD (Roads), Morigaon Road Circle, organised a training programme on quality assurance, work progress and construction methodologies for ongoing works under the circle on Thursday.

The training focused on ensuring quality, durability and adherence to prescribed technical standards in road and other construction works.

Detailed discussions were held on quality control measures, construction methodologies, material testing, proper execution of works and monitoring of progress at different stages.

Technical officers of the department and contractors associated with various works under the Morigaon Road Circle participated in the programme.

The participants stressed the importance of maintaining prescribed quality standards, following approved specifications and adopting appropriate construction practices for the timely and sustainable completion of works.

The initiative aimed to strengthen coordination between departmental technical officers and contractors and ensure that development works undertaken in the district are executed with quality, transparency, technical precision and durability.

NFR announces further train cancellations, rescheduling amid restoration work

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Aug 13: Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has announced further changes in train services in view of ongoing restoration work near New Harangajao station following the settlement of railway tracks on Line-1 and Line-2 of the Lumding-Badarpur Hill Section. Train operations in the affected section are currently being maintained through Line-3 with enhanced safety measures.

The Guwahati-Silchar Express (Train No 15615) scheduled to commence its journey on August 14 has been cancelled. Its return service, Train No 15616 (Silchar-Guwahati Express), scheduled for August 15, has also been cancelled.

Several other trains have been rescheduled. Train No 15650 (Narangi-Agartala Express) on August 14 will depart Narangi at 10.30 pm, while Train No 15649 (Agartala-Narangi Express) will depart Agartala at 11.30 pm.

Train No 15609 (Guwahati-Sairang Express) will depart Guwahati at 11.30 pm, while Train No 15610 (Sairang-Guwahati Express) will depart Sairang at 9.30 pm, both on August 14.

Train No 15611 (Rangiya-Silchar Express) will depart Rangiya at 11.30 pm on August 14.

Train No 15612 (Silchar-Rangiya Express) will depart Silchar at 5 am on August 15.

Train No 20507 (Anand Vihar Terminal-Sairang Express) commencing its journey on August 14 has also been rescheduled to depart from Sairang at 9.10 pm.

Meanwhile, Train No 20502 (Anand Vihar Terminal-Agartala) Tejas Express, commencing its journey on August 12, will be regulated en route suitably. NFR said the changes have been made as restoration work continues in the Lumding-Badarpur Hill Section.

Seminar on yoga held at Central Jail, Nagaon

HT Correspondent
NAGAON, Aug 13: A seminar on "Yoga for Self Transformation & Rehabilitation" was organised for inmates of Central Jail, Nagaon, at the jail's Yoga & Wellness Centre by Arogya Care Foundation under the National AYUSH Mission, Assam.

The programme aimed to create awareness among inmates about the role of yoga in promoting physical and mental well-being, emotional balance, self-discipline, positive behavioural change and rehabilitation.

Dr Rima Bhattacharya, DNO, AYUSH, Nagaon, attended the programme as the guest of honour.

Addressing the gathering, she highlighted the importance of yoga for physical and mental well-being and encouraged the inmates to practise it regularly as part of their journey towards positive transformation and rehabilitation.

Manjula Laskar, the resource person, conducted an insightful session on the role of yoga in self-transformation and rehabilitation.

The programme was attended by the Jailor and Assistant Jailor of Central Jail, Nagaon, along with inmates and members of the yoga team. Yoga instructors Dipesh Dey, Nijara Bora, Payel Debnath and Suprotiv Das participated in conducting and supporting the programme. A group yoga demonstration by the inmates was also held, showcasing their active participation and enthusiasm.

The seminar concluded with an emphasis on regular yoga practice as a means of developing inner harmony and positive thinking.

'Har Ghar Tiranga' bike rally held in Nagaon

HT Correspondent
NAGAON, Aug 13: The Nagaon district administration organised a bike rally here on Thursday as part of the Union Government's 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign ahead of Independence Day.

The rally began from the District Commissioner's office and passed through Clock Tower, Uriagaon Charioli and Borghat before culminating at Nehrubali field.

National flags were displayed on all the bikes participating in the rally.

District Commissioner Devashish Sharma formally inaugurated the rally and also participated in it.

Addressing the gathering, Sharma urged citizens to be responsible towards their own safety and that of others, besides respecting the national flag.

He called upon motorists to follow road safety rules, avoid speeding and ensure that all two-wheeler

riders wear helmets.

Additional District Commissioner Mridul Boro, District Transport Officer Simanta Bora and District Information and Public Relations Officer Bikash Sarma were also present.

In a video message released on the occasion, Sharma appealed to the people of Nagaon to hoist the national flag with due respect at their homes, institutions and public transport vehicles to mark the 80th Independence Day and the 150th anniversary of 'Vande Mataram'.

He also urged citizens to participate in collective singing of 'Vande Mataram' and other patriotic programmes.

As part of the campaign, a 'Har Ghar Tiranga' exhibition has also been organised at Swahid Bhavan, Nagaon.

The exhibition features photographs depicting significant moments from India's freedom struggle.

Electronic interlocking, automatic block signalling, CCTV and digital communication systems commissioned across railway network

NFR advances safety modernisation with technology-driven signalling initiatives

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Aug 13: Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has accelerated the modernisation of its railway network through a series of technology-driven Signalling and Telecommunication (S&T) initiatives aimed at strengthening safety, operational resilience, communication reliability and passenger services.

During the period from January 1 to July 31, 2026, NFR commissioned several major S&T interventions across its jurisdiction.

As part of efforts to strengthen railway safety, Electronic Interlocking was commissioned at nine stations, while 40 Level Crossing Gates were interlocked and 39 Sliding Booms commissioned.

These measures are aimed at enhancing protection at critical interfaces and supporting smoother train operations.

The railway simultaneously ex-



panded its technology-enabled surveillance network, commissioning CCTV systems at 74 stations and 24 Level Crossing Gates.

The systems are expected to strengthen real-time monitoring

and enhance safety and security across the network.

In another step towards operational digitalisation, the VoIP-based Train Control Communication System (TCCS)

was installed and commissioned in the Lumding and Tinsukia divisions to facilitate reliable communication and more efficient train control operations.

NFR also upgraded RCIL Passenger Reservation System circuits at 10 Tier-I locations from 2 Mbps to 10 Mbps, increasing network capacity and reliability.

Integrated Passenger Information Systems were provided at eight stations to improve the availability of timely information to passengers.

The railway said the technology-led interventions are aimed at creating a more resilient and efficient railway ecosystem by integrating advanced signalling, digital communication, surveillance and passenger information systems, thereby strengthening safety and improving the overall quality of railway operations and passenger services.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

The trouble with the rat race is that even if you win, you're still a rat. - Lily Tomlin

UP polls: Congress initiates alliance talks

Congress leadership has initiated within party discussion for an alliance with Samajwadi Party to defeat BJP and dislodge Yogi Adityanath government in 2027 assembly polls. Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge convened the meeting to discuss the issue with Rahul Gandhi, AICC UP incharge Rajendra Kumar Gautam, UPCC president Ajay Rai and CLP leader Mona Mishra. Besides the conditions for the alliance, the complex issue of seat sharing with Samajwadi Parties and other smaller parties and groups was also discussed. Realising the weak organisation as compared to Samajwadi Party the senior leaders are more keen to have an allied at the earliest. But the problem is that Congress leaders are now asking for equal and respectable share in the seats for assembly from Samajwadi Party. AICC UP incharge Rajendra Pal Gautam said publicly that his party would like to have equal number of seats from Samajwadi Party for assembly polls. UPCC president Ajay Rai also supported him.

Congress leadership repeatedly said that the party is preparing in all the 403 assembly constituencies but at the same time they are preparing the pool of 150 seats to bargain with Samajwadi Party. There is a realisation in Congress that it was only due to alliance with Samajwadi Party the party got six seats in Lok Sabha in 2024 polls while Samajwadi Party got 37 seats. Akhilesh Yadav and Rahul Gandhi are also banking on transfer of votes based on their public image and capacity to transfer votes to other parties. On the other hand, Akhilesh Yadav and his Samajwadi Party behave like big brothers and they want to have a major share in seats so that they can claim the position of CM and more say in government formation if voted to power. The manner in which Akhilesh Yadav joined hands with Rahul Gandhi in Jantar Mantar protest by students and later on inside and outside Parliament demonstration and protest, the possibility of alliance has grown stronger.

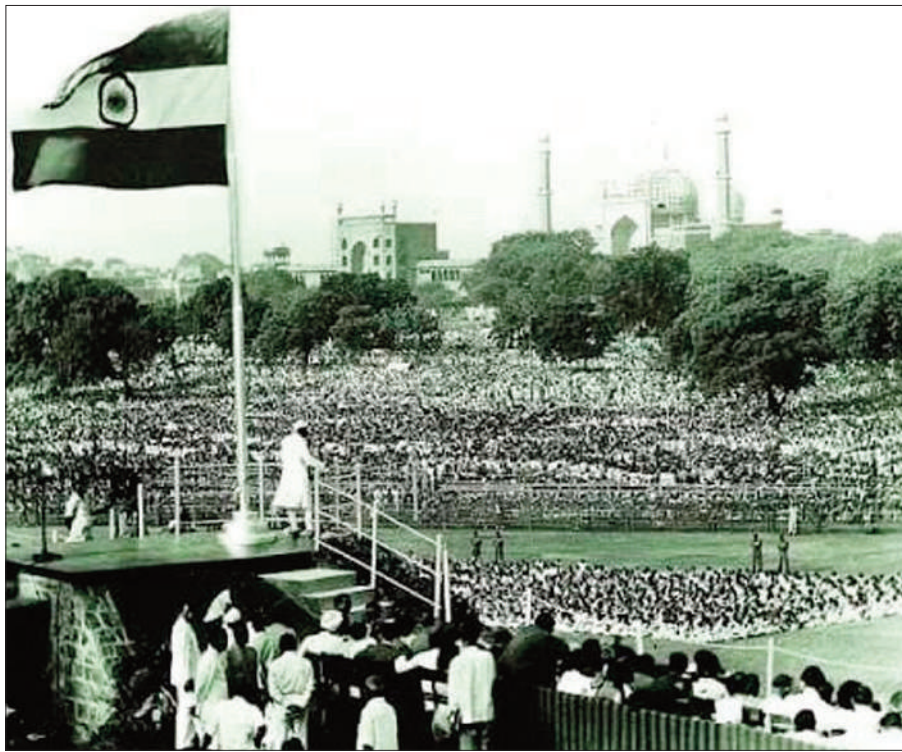
Akhilesh Yadav wants to broaden the social base of the party that is why he keeps defining P of PDA. Sometime P becomes Pichda (backward) and it also becomes pidit (harassed or exploited). But on August 5 during the birth anniversary of former union minister and great socialist leader Janeshwar Mishra, Samajwadi Party organised a meeting of brahmins at party headquarters and Akhilesh Yadav announced P of PDA stood for Pandit. There is a realisation in Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav that unless they join hands it would be very difficult to defeat BJP and prevent Yogi Adityanath becoming Chief Minister for a third time. Akhilesh Yadav and Rahul Gandhi combine are looking towards Brahmins (upset with BJP on issue of donation theft at Ayodhya temple), backwards, dalits and Muslims.

August 15: The unspoken truth

The story of August fifteenth, nineteen forty seven, is often pictured through a glowing, nostalgic lens. Standard history books showcase a jubilant moment of national liberation, defined by brilliant tricolor flags, historic speeches, and crowds celebrating the fall of British colonial rule. The full truth of that day was far more complex, emotional, and fraught with profound human heartbreak. As the nation approaches eighty years of freedom, looking back at its very first day of independence reveals a raw, deeply human reality. That hot August Friday in New Delhi and across the vast subcontinent was not merely a grand party; it was a dizzying blend of euphoric hope and devastating tragedy, extraordinary courage and chaotic uncertainty.

The road leading up to the final midnight was marked by an exhausting race against time. Lord Mountbatten, the final British viceroy, had unexpectedly moved the transfer of power forward by nearly a year. Suddenly, a complex, centuries old empire was forced to dismantle itself in just a few chaotic weeks. When August fourteenth began to slip into August fifteenth, the atmosphere inside the Constituent Assembly in New Delhi was charged with electric tension and solemn reverence. Members gathered under heavy ceiling fans, their white khadi garments glowing under the warm lights. Just before the stroke of midnight, Jawaharlal Nehru rose to deliver his iconic Tryst with Destiny address. His voice echoed through the hall, speaking of a long suppressed soul finding utterance as the world slept. Outside, midnight crowds waited patiently in the muggy night air, roaring with joy as the clock struck twelve. The conch shells sounded, freedom had finally arrived, and the birth of a sovereign nation was officially proclaimed.

Morning brought an astonishing surge of human emotion to the streets of the new capital. Hundreds of thousands of people flooded the open lawns around the India Gate complex, eager to catch a glimpse of their new leaders and the symbol of their free nation. The sheer volume of the crowd shattered all official protocols and security arrangements. Royal carriages carrying foreign dignitaries were completely engulfed by cheering citizens. Mountbatten and his family found themselves surrounded by a sea of smiling faces, with Nehru himself eventually climbing onto the roof of a vehicle to help clear a path. When the moment came to raise the first official national flag, a sudden summer rain shower broke out over the capital, accompanied by a bright rainbow stretching across the sky. The crowd viewed the rain as a divine blessing, a refreshing cleansing of two hundred years of foreign subjugation.



A detail that often surprises people today is that the famous Red Fort flag hoisting tradition had not actually begun on that first morning. Millions now associate Independence Day with the Prime Minister addressing the nation from the historic ramparts of the Old Delhi fort, but on August fifteenth, nineteen forty seven, that ceremony did not take place. The formal unfurling of the national flag at the Red Fort occurred the following day, on August sixteenth. On the actual day of independence, the main public events were centered around the Constituent Assembly, Parliament House, and the open grounds near India Gate, making the day feel spontaneous, evolving, and completely unprecedented.

Distance yourself from the political center in New Delhi, and the scene transformed into something far more quiet and solemn. The man most responsible for inspiring the non violent struggle for freedom was entirely absent from the grand stage in the capital. Mahatma Gandhi spent August fifteenth, nineteen forty seven, in Kolkata, living in a dilapidated, rain soaked house in a neighborhood scarred by recent communal violence. He refused to wear new clothes, rejected invitations to attend official celebrations, and spent the entire day in prayer, fasting, and silence. For Gandhi, freedom achieved through the painful division of his country was a heartbreaking compromise. He walked barefoot through muddy lanes, urg-

ing Hindu and Muslim neighbors to put down their weapons and protect one another. His quiet presence in Bengal achieved what thousands of armed troops could not, keeping a fragile peace intact while other regions tore themselves apart.

Further north, across the green fields of Punjab, August fifteenth looked like an absolute nightmare. The tragedy of partition was unfolding with unprecedented horror. Millions of families woke up on their very first day of independence without knowing which country they actually belonged to. Cyril Radcliffe, a British lawyer who had never set foot in India before, had drawn the border lines dividing Punjab and Bengal in just thirty six days. The official boundary maps were deliberately kept secret until August seventeenth to prevent early panic, leaving entire towns in agony. In border cities like Lahore, Amritsar, and Gurdaspur, people raised different flags on their rooftops, guessing wildly which side of the line their homes would fall on.

The reality on the ground in the north was defined by dust, blood, and unimaginable human displacement. Endless foot columns of refugees, stretching for miles along sun baked roads, carried small bundles of possessions on their heads. Parents held their children tight as they walked toward an uncertain future, leaving behind ancestral properties, fertile lands, and generations of rich family history. Trains carrying terrified families across the newly invented borders were frequently attacked, arriving at stations as silent carriages of sorrow. Neighbor turned against neighbor in a sudden

fit of madness, and millions of lives were shattered in a matter of weeks. For these displaced millions, August fifteenth was not marked by speeches or fireworks, but by the desperate struggle to keep their loved ones alive.

Away from the refugee roads, the new government faced an administrative crisis of staggering proportions. The country was not just geographically divided; its entire operational infrastructure had to be split down the middle. Civil servants spent the days leading up to independence dividing everything from railway tracks, military regiments, and police uniforms down to library books, typewriters, office chairs, and central treasury reserves. Even instruments in police brass bands were painstakingly inventoried and split between the two new nations. On top of this logistical nightmare, more than five hundred semi autonomous princely states were scattered across the map. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and his team worked around the clock, using a delicate mix of persuasion, political strategy, and sheer willpower to integrate these diverse territories into a single, cohesive republic. Economic conditions on that first day were equally daunting. Two centuries of economic extraction had left the country severely impoverished, with a life expectancy barely reaching thirty two years. Widespread illiteracy, recurring famines, and a lack of modern industrial infrastructure meant the young democracy was stepping into the world with immense vulnerabilities. Foreign commentators and geopolitical analysts openly predicted that the nation would collapse within a few short years under the weight of its internal contradictions, poverty, and vast cultural diversity.

Understanding what August fifteenth, nineteen forty seven, really looked like requires holding two contrasting truths together in your mind. It was a triumph of human spirit, non violent resistance, and political courage that inspired anti colonial movements across the globe. It was also a profoundly painful human catastrophe that left deep, permanent scars on millions of hearts. The people who celebrated on that historic Friday did so with full knowledge of both realities. They cheered for the flag because it represented their dignity and self determination, even as they wept for the loved ones they had lost along the way.

That complicated, chaotic, beautiful, and heartbreaking day laid the ultimate foundation for the nation we see today. The democratic institutions built in the shadows of partition proved far more resilient than the skeptics ever imagined. The sheer determination of ordinary citizens turned a shattered post colonial territory into a thriving, vibrant power. As the nation marks nearly eight decades of freedom, remembering the true human face of August fifteenth, nineteen forty seven, serves as a powerful reminder. Liberty was never a simple gift; it was a deeply complex, dearly bought inheritance that continues to shape the soul of the country.

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Strategies of the Independence movement

India's struggle for independence developed through several strategies rather than a single method of resistance. The national movement changed its political approach as the character of British rule, public participation, and the international situation changed. Early nationalists largely relied on constitutional methods, petitions, public meetings, legislative representation, and political education. They believed that exposing administrative injustice and demanding reforms could gradually expand Indian participation in government. The emergence of more assertive nationalism after the partition of Bengal in 1905



DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

introduced boycott, Swadeshi, national education, and mass mobilisation as stronger instruments of political pressure. Revolutionary groups also appeared in different parts of India and used secret organisations, political violence, and armed resistance against colonial authority. These approaches differed sharply, but they reflected a common objective: ending foreign political control. After Mahatma Gandhi emerged as a major national leader, non-violent mass action became the central strategy of the Congress-led movement. Satyagraha transformed political resistance from an activity dominated by educated political groups into a broader form of public participation. Non-Cooperation, Civil Disobedience, and the Quit India Movement each represented a different stage in this strategy. Gandhi used boycotts, strikes, marches, refusal to cooperate with colonial institutions, and deliberate violation of selected laws to weaken the moral and administrative authority of British rule. The Non-Cooperation Movement of 1920-22 marked a major expansion of this approach, while the Civil Disobedience Movement beginning in 1930 demonstrated how a specific issue such as the salt tax could become a nationwide political campaign. Historical accounts describe Satyagraha as a political method that included non-cooperation, picketing, marches, civil disobedience, and other forms of disciplined resistance. The strength of this strategy lay in its ability to involve ordinary people while making repression politically costly for the colonial government. At the same time, the movement faced limits because mass mobilisation could produce violence, internal disagreements, and uneven participation. Gandhi's decision to withdraw the Non-Cooperation Movement after the Chauri Chaura incident showed that maintaining non-violence remained central to his strategy. The national movement therefore depended not simply

on protest but also on organisation, discipline, political communication, and the ability to maintain public participation over long periods.

The strategy of mass mobilisation became increasingly important because British rule depended not only on military power but also on the co-operation of Indian society with colonial institutions. Government offices, courts, schools, commercial networks, police structures, and administrative systems required large numbers of Indians to function effectively. The nationalist leadership gradually recognised that

withdrawing cooperation could challenge colonial authority without attempting to defeat the British militarily. The Non-Cooperation Movement used this principle by encouraging Indians to boycott government schools and colleges, courts, foreign cloth, and other colonial institutions. The objective was not simply to organise demonstrations; it was to create a political situation in which British authority would become increasingly difficult to sustain. Boycott also had an economic dimension because the promotion of Swadeshi encouraged Indians to reduce dependence on imported British goods and support indigenous production. The strategy linked political freedom with economic self-reliance. Khadi and the spinning wheel consequently became important symbols of participation, although their political significance extended beyond clothing and handicrafts. They represented an attempt to connect the national movement with everyday life. Civil Disobedience later developed the strategy further. Instead of merely withdrawing cooperation, participants deliberately violated laws regarded as unjust. Gandhi's Salt March in 1930 provided a simple and powerful example because the salt tax affected ordinary people and allowed citizens from different social backgrounds to understand the issue. The movement expanded through salt-making, boycotts, picketing, refusal to pay certain taxes, and other forms of resistance. Its effectiveness came partly from its simplicity. A complicated constitutional argument could remain distant from ordinary citizens, whereas making salt became an easily understood act of defiance. The British government responded with arrests and repression, but imprisonment itself often strengthened nationalist mobilisation by demonstrating the willingness of participants to accept personal costs. The strategy also created opportunities for women, students, workers, peasants, merchants, and other sections of society to participate in political action. This broader participation changed



the nature of Indian nationalism. It became less dependent on a small political class and more closely connected with social groups across the country. The expansion of participation did not eliminate differences among these groups, but it gave the independence movement a wider social base and made British rule increasingly difficult to present as legitimate or permanently sustainable.

The national movement also relied on constitutional politics, negotiations, political institutions, and international opinion. These methods sometimes appeared less dramatic than mass protests, yet they played an important role in developing the political framework of the freedom struggle. Indian leaders used legislative councils to criticise colonial policies, demand greater representation, raise questions about taxation and administration, and expose discriminatory practices. Political organisations built networks through newspapers, public meetings, associations, and conferences, allowing national ideas to circulate across regions. Negotiation with the British government also remained part of the struggle, even during periods of intense confrontation. The Congress did not always reject constitutional participation; instead, it repeatedly adjusted its approach according to political circumstances. The Government of India Act of 1935 created provincial legislatures with expanded elected representation, and the Congress eventually participated in provincial governments after the 1937 elections. This experience gave Indian leaders practical knowledge of administration and demonstrated that Indians could govern major departments and institutions. At the same time, constitutional politics exposed the

limitations of colonial reform because ultimate authority remained with the British government. The independence movement therefore combined institutional participation with pressure from outside the legislature. Negotiations, political campaigns, public agitation, and elections operated alongside one another rather than as completely separate strategies. International developments also affected nationalist calculations. The two World Wars weakened European powers economically and politically, while anti-colonial movements elsewhere challenged the legitimacy of imperialism. The Second World War created a particularly difficult situation because Britain involved India in the war without securing the consent of Indian political leaders. The failure of the Cripps Mission in 1942 strengthened the argument within the Congress that British rule had to end immediately rather than through indefinite constitutional promises. This led to the Quit India strategy, which demanded an immediate British withdrawal. Thus, the independence movement used both pressure and negotiation. Leaders understood that mass mobilisation could create political pressure, while constitutional engagement could prepare Indians for self-government and demonstrate the practical limitations of colonial rule. The eventual achievement of independence resulted from the cumulative effect of these methods rather than from one campaign or one political leader.

Revolutionary nationalism formed another important strand of the independence movement. Revolutionary groups emerged particularly among young nationalists who believed that petitions and gradual reforms could not end colonial

rule. Organisations in Bengal, Maharashtra, Punjab, and other regions developed secret networks and sought to challenge British authority through armed actions, political assassinations, attacks on government institutions, and attempts to secure weapons. Figures such as Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekhar Azad, and their associates represented a political tradition that placed direct resistance at the centre of their strategy. Their methods differed fundamentally from Gandhi's commitment to non-violence, yet their activities contributed to the wider political pressure surrounding British rule. Bhagat Singh and his comrades also used revolutionary action to communicate political ideas, particularly among young people. Their trials and executions generated widespread public attention and strengthened the symbolic power of sacrifice within the nationalist movement. Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Army represented another distinct strategy. Bose believed that the international circumstances created by the Second World War could provide an opportunity to challenge British power through military means. The Indian National Army sought to fight alongside Japan against the British in Southeast Asia and attempted to enter India with the objective of supporting the liberation struggle. Although the INA did not achieve its military objective, the trials of its officers after the war created significant political repercussions in India. The British authorities had to confront widespread public sympathy for the INA personnel, including among sections of the armed forces and political organisations. These developments mattered because the stability of colonial rule depended heavily on the loyalty of the military and administrative machinery. The independence movement therefore operated through multiple forms of pressure. Non-violent mass movements challenged legitimacy and administrative cooperation, constitutional politics developed political capacity, revolutionary groups challenged colonial authority through direct action, and the INA challenged British power through military organisation. These strategies sometimes conflicted with one another, and historians should not treat them as a single coordinated programme. Their importance lies in the fact that they represented different responses to the same colonial structure. The British government had to manage political agitation, public mobilisation, revolutionary activity, wartime pressures, economic difficulties, and growing demands for self-government simultaneously. The diversity of resistance made the independence struggle more complex and difficult to suppress permanently.

The Quit India Movement of 1942 represented the most direct mass challenge to British rule before independence. The

Congress adopted the Quit India resolution in August 1942 after the failure of negotiations and the worsening wartime situation. Gandhi called for "Do or Die," making clear that the objective was immediate freedom rather than another limited constitutional concession. The British government responded by arresting Gandhi and other senior Congress leaders almost immediately. This created an unusual situation because the movement had to continue without its central leadership. Demonstrations, strikes, attacks on communication networks, underground activities, and local resistance appeared in different parts of the country. The movement was not completely uniform, and some actions became violent despite the Congress leadership's commitment to non-violence. The British administration used extensive repression to suppress the uprising, but the movement demonstrated the depth of popular opposition to colonial rule. The Press Information Bureau describes the Quit India call as a decisive demand for complete independence, while historical accounts note that the arrest of Congress leaders led to spontaneous mobilisation in many places. Underground communication also became significant. Usha Mehta's secret Congress Radio, for example, helped circulate nationalist messages and uncensored information after the government restricted political communication. The strategic importance of Quit India therefore extended beyond its immediate organisational results. It demonstrated that the British could arrest leaders but could not easily eliminate the wider demand for independence. After the Second World War, Britain faced severe economic and political pressures, while the political situation in India had become increasingly difficult to control. The cumulative impact of decades of resistance had altered the relationship between rulers and the ruled. The independence movement had begun with constitutional demands among a relatively limited political class, but it eventually developed into a broad national struggle using negotiations, elections, boycotts, non-cooperation, civil disobedience, revolutionary activity, underground networks, and mass mobilisation. No single strategy alone explains the end of British rule. The movement succeeded through the interaction of political organisation, public participation, economic pressure, ideological mobilisation, constitutional experience, and sustained resistance. Its central achievement was to transform independence from an elite political demand into a mass national objective. By 1947, British withdrawal was no longer simply a question of administrative reform. It had become the unavoidable political outcome of a long struggle that had progressively weakened the foundations of colonial authority.

Youth Empowerment: Promise of India's 80th Independence Day

By: Dr Ratan Bhattacharjee

India's Independence Day has never been merely a celebration of the past. Every 15 August is an occasion when the nation looks simultaneously backward and forward—remembering the sacrifices that secured freedom and asking what that freedom should achieve in the future. The 80th Independence Day on 15 August 2026 acquires a particularly evocative significance. India stands at an important point in its journey towards the centenary of independence in 2047, and the national imagination is increasingly shaped by two powerful ideas: "Yuva Shakti" or Youth Power, as the driving force behind the vision of Viksit Bharat, and the commemoration of 150 years of "Vande Mataram," Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's immortal invocation of the motherland. The song is the clarion call for awakening the youth power. These two themes may appear to belong to different historical worlds. Vande Mataram emerged in nineteenth-century colonial India, while Yuva Shakti speaks to the aspirations of twenty-first-century India. Yet they are deeply connected. One represents the emotional awakening of a nation struggling for freedom; the other represents the energy of a young nation determined to transform that freedom into development, opportunity and global leadership. One awakened the spirit of patriotism; the other must translate that spirit into nation-building.

The story of Vande Mataram is inseparable from the evolution of Indian nationalism. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay composed the song in the nineteenth century, and it later became an enormously influential expression of patriotic feeling during the freedom movement. Its words transformed the idea of the motherland into an emotional presence. India was no longer simply a geographical territory; she became Mata, a mother deserving love, sacrifice and reverence. The song travelled beyond the pages of literature and entered the streets, meetings and political imagination of a people seeking freedom. The 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram therefore invites us to reflect on the extraordinary

power of literature and culture in shaping national consciousness. Before political independence became a reality, there had to be a psychological liberation—a realisation that India belonged to her people and that they possessed the moral right to determine their own destiny. Songs, poems, novels, speeches and newspapers played an enormous role in creating that consciousness.

The freedom struggle was powered not only by political strategies but also by imagination. A nation had to imagine itself as a nation before it could become one. Vande Mataram contributed to that imaginative process. Its historical importance lies in its ability to turn patriotism into a deeply felt emotional experience. Today, however, the meaning of patriotism must be expanded from sacrifice for freedom to responsibility for development. The generation that fought colonial rule had a clear objective: independence. The generation of 2026 faces a different challenge. Political independence has been achieved; the task now is to ensure that freedom produces prosperity, dignity, equality, knowledge and opportunity for every citizen. This is where Yuva Shakti becomes crucial. India possesses one of the world's largest young populations. This demographic reality can become a tremendous national advantage if young Indians are educated, skilled, healthy, innovative and socially responsible. But youth power is not simply a matter of numbers. A large youth population becomes a demographic dividend only when young people have access to quality education, productive employment, entrepreneurship, technology and opportunities for meaningful participation in national life.

The Viksit Bharat vision for 2047 must therefore be, above all, a youth-centred vision. The India that reaches its centenary of independence will largely be built by the young people of today. They will become scientists, teachers, entrepreneurs, engineers, doctors, artists, administrators, farmers, researchers, soldiers, writers and social leaders. Their imagination will determine what kind of India emerges in 2047. The most important investment India can make is therefore an investment in its



young people. Education must occupy the centre of this national transformation. The education system of the future cannot be limited to preparing students for examinations. It must prepare them for an unpredictable world in which artificial intelligence, automation, biotechnology, robotics, climate change and digital transformation will reshape employment and social relations. Young Indians must acquire technical competence, but they also need creativity, critical thinking, communication skills, ethical judgment and empathy.

A Viksit Bharat will require a generation that can innovate rather than merely imitate. India's young people should not be trained only to seek employment; they should also be encouraged to create employment. Entrepreneurship, startups, research and innovation can transform the country's economic landscape. From a village-based enterprise to a technology company working on global problems, every young Indian should have the possibility of turning an idea into an opportunity. Technology has already altered the meaning of youth power. A young person in a small town can now communicate with the world, acquire knowledge

from global sources, build a digital enterprise or collaborate with people thousands of kilometres away. The smartphone and the internet have created unprecedented access to information. But information alone is not knowledge, and knowledge alone is not wisdom. The challenge before young India is to use technology intelligently rather than become enslaved by it.

Artificial intelligence will intensify this challenge. It will create new professions and transform existing ones. The youth of India must therefore become technologically literate without losing their humanity. Machines can process information, but compassion, moral judgment, imagination and the capacity to understand human suffering remain profoundly human qualities. The Viksit Bharat of the future should be technologically sophisticated but ethically sensitive. Youth power must also extend beyond metropolitan India. India's villages, small towns and border regions contain enormous reservoirs of talent.

The same spirit must extend to India's linguistic and cultural diversity. Young Indians should be able to embrace modernity without abandoning their cultural roots.

India's strength lies in its extraordinary plurality. Bengali, Assamese, Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, Marathi, Kashmiri, Punjabi, Telugu, Kannada, Odia and many other languages enrich the national imagination. Youth power should therefore become a bridge between India's traditions and its global future. This is especially relevant when we reflect upon Vande Mataram. Its endurance reminds us that language can become a force of collective identity. Literature has the ability to reach where political slogans cannot. Contemporary writers, poets, filmmakers, musicians and digital creators therefore have a major responsibility. They can help young Indians understand that patriotism does not require uniformity. One can love India precisely because India contains many voices.

The celebration of 150 years of Vande Mataram should thus become an opportunity to rediscover India's literary heritage. Bankim Chandra's song belongs to a historical moment, but its larger question remains relevant: Yuva Shakti must become a force for green development—renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, responsible consumption, cleaner cities and

conservation of natural resources. The Viksit Bharat vision must also be judged by social justice. A developed country is not merely one with high GDP or advanced infrastructure. It is one where citizens can live with dignity. Poverty, hunger, discrimination, unemployment and educational inequality weaken the foundations of development. Young Indians must therefore be encouraged to see nation-building as a moral enterprise. Volunteering, social entrepreneurship, community service and civic participation can transform patriotism into everyday action. India's youth must also understand that democracy is not merely the right to vote. It involves dialogue, tolerance, constitutional responsibility and respect for disagreement. A confident young India should be capable of debating fiercely without hating those who disagree. The Constitution's ideals of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity must become lived values rather than merely words in a textbook.

There is also an important relationship between Yuva Shakti and national unity. India's diversity can sometimes appear complicated, but it is precisely this complexity that makes India unique. Young Indians travelling, studying, working and interacting across state and linguistic boundaries can build bridges that politics alone cannot create. The young generation can make national integration a lived experience through friendship, collaboration and cultural exchange. The 80th Independence Day therefore offers a remarkable symbolic convergence. 150 years of Vande Mataram reminds India of the emotional power that helped awaken national consciousness. Yuva Shakti reminds India that the future cannot be inherited; it must be created. Between the two lies the entire journey from freedom to development. The freedom fighters gave India political independence. The youth of today must give that independence a fuller social and economic meaning.

The India of 2047 should be an India where a child receives excellent education regardless of birthplace; where healthcare is accessible; where women feel safe and empowered; where farmers benefit from technology and fair

opportunities; where cities are liveable and villages are connected; where scientific research flourishes; where entrepreneurs can innovate; where the environment is protected; and where every citizen feels that the nation belongs to them. Such an India cannot be built by government alone. It requires a partnership among government, institutions, industry, universities, civil society and, above all, citizens. The young must not remain passive beneficiaries of development. They must become active participants in it. Perhaps that is the deepest meaning of Yuva Shakti. Youth power is not merely youthful enthusiasm. It is energy disciplined by knowledge, ambition guided by ethics, innovation guided by responsibility and patriotism expressed through service. And perhaps that is the contemporary meaning of Vande Mataram. Viksit Bharat 2047 can become the destination. The journey from Vande Mataram to Viksit Bharat is therefore not a journey away from the past. It is a journey in which the sacrifices, dreams and cultural memory of the past are transformed into the knowledge, courage and creativity of the future.

On this 80th Independence Day, India's message should be clear: the freedom earned by yesterday's heroes must become the opportunity of tomorrow's youth. The patriotic song of the past must become the developmental commitment of the present. And the India imagined by generations of freedom fighters must become the India built by millions of young citizens. "Vande Mataram is the voice of India's awakening," Yuva Shakti is the energy of India's becoming. Viksit Bharat is the promise of India's future. "May the tricolour continue to fly not only above our heads, but also within our hearts—and may every young Indian become a builder of the India that will celebrate its centenary of independence in 2047. (International Tagore Awardee multilingual writer Dr. Ratan Bhattacharjee is a former Affiliate Faculty of English Virginia Commonwealth University Richmond and President of Kolkata Indian American Society India. He can be reached at prafatanbhattacharjee@gmail.com)

Picturing freedom in Indian newspapers

By: Zahid Ahmed Tapadar

From Gandhi's Salt March and Bhagat Singh's iconic portrait to Netaji and the Bengal Famine, photographs carried through the pages of Indian newspapers did more than record history. They brought the freedom struggle before millions of readers, transforming distant events, national leaders and human suffering into a shared visual experience of a nation moving towards independence.

Long before television brought history into living rooms and digital media made images instantaneous, newspapers offered millions of Indians their most immediate window onto the freedom struggle. Readers not only followed political events but increasingly saw the people and moments shaping the nation's destiny. Photographs of Mahatma Gandhi—at the spinning wheel, on the march and among ordinary people—gave a familiar human face to mass resistance. Images of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, from his Congress years to his leadership of the Indian National Army, projected another powerful vision of defiance and freedom. Alongside them appeared Bhagat Singh's resolute portrait and images of protest, the Bengal Famine, the INA trials and, finally, Independence. Indian newspapers were doing more than illustrating the news; they were helping a nation see its struggle for freedom.

The transformation did not happen overnight. Nineteenth-century newspapers relied largely on engravings, lithographs and drawings because reproducing photographs remained technically difficult. The development of halftone printing in the 1880s made photographic reproduction alongside ordinary text increasingly practical. In India, advances in photoengraving, block-making and printing gradually enabled newspapers to use photographs more regularly. Upendrakishore Ray Chowdhury's pioneering experiments in halftone reproduction and block-making stand out as an important example of indigenous innovation in this technological transition. Such advances helped prepare the ground for photographs to be-



come reproducible news rather than occasional visual embellishments. By the early twentieth century, photography was becoming an increasingly important element of newspaper journalism, just as the national movement was gathering mass momentum.

Newspapers used this emerging medium in ways that reflected their political character. In Bengal, Amrita Bazar Patrika combined nationalist advocacy with increasing visual reporting of leaders, movements and public events. In western India, the Bombay Chronicle was regularly incorporating photographs by the 1920s, including Congress sessions, political leaders and demonstrations; its journalism under Benjamin Guy Horniman also symbolised resistance to colonial censorship. In Madras, The Hindu represented a more measured, documentary tradition, combin-

ing sustained coverage of the national movement with photographic reporting. Different in temperament and geography, these newspapers showed how photography was entering the political vocabulary of the Indian press.

Its power became dramatically evident in 1943. On 22 August, The Statesman broke through wartime restraint by publishing stark photographs of Bengal Famine victims whose suffering could no longer be reduced to official statements or statistics. Under editor Ian Stephens, such visual evidence transformed public understanding of the catastrophe, stimulated relief efforts and intensified criticism of the colonial administration. The images demonstrated with extraordinary force how photography could expose a humanitarian reality that censorship and official narratives had obscured. From Delhi, Hindustan Times was reg-



ularly publishing photographs by the late 1930s and early 1940s, while in Bengal, Anandabazar Patrika brought nationalist politics to a vast Bengali readership while participating in the expanding culture of visual journalism. Photography was becoming not merely illustration, but evidence and an instrument of public conscience.

Nor was this transformation confined to the metropolitan English-language press. In Kerala, Mathrubhumi brought Gandhian politics, social reform and the national movement before Malayalam readers through photographs of leaders, public meetings and movements such as the Vaikom and Guruvayur Satyagrahas. Gandhi received particular visual attention, while portraits of national figures, including Subhas Chandra Bose, connected Kerala's political awakening with the wider struggle. Malayala Manorama likewise incorporated photographs into political reporting, although its suppression by the Travancore Government in 1938 interrupted that record until 1947. In Telugu journalism, Andhra Patrika made news photographs a regular part of political reporting. Circulation through village libraries carried such images beyond urban subscribers into collective reading spaces in smaller towns and villages.

Some photographs travelled beyond the events they recorded to become enduring symbols. Few did so more powerfully than images of Gandhi during the Salt March of 1930. As he walked from Sabarmati to Dandi, press photographers recorded the familiar figure with his staff, the disciplined procession and gathering crowds. Reproduced in leading newspapers, these photographs transformed civil disobedience into a visual narrative of mass resistance far beyond Gujarat.

A year earlier, Bhagat Singh's famous hat portrait had demonstrated the power of a single newspaper image: published in Bande Mataram and soon afterwards in Hindustan Times, it helped turn the young revolutionary's face into an enduring symbol of defiance.

A different visual language emerged around Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and the INA. Photographs of Bose reviewing INA troops projected military discipline and armed resistance, while their circulation, particularly during the INA Trials of 1945-46, strengthened his presence in the public imagination. From Gandhi walking towards Dandi and Bhagat Singh's resolute portrait to Bose standing before the Azad Hind Fauj, newspaper photography gave India memorable visual symbols of resistance.

The influence of these photographs lay in making politics immediate and personal. They allowed readers to encounter the faces, crowds, suffering and determination behind the news. Repeated images made national leaders recognisable far beyond the places they travelled, while photographs of marches and demonstrations revealed the scale of popular participation. Images could also challenge official narratives: the Bengal Famine photographs exposed what statistics and censored reports could conceal. As newspapers circulated beyond cities into smaller towns and shared reading spaces, photography helped create a common visual memory of the struggle. It gave geographically dispersed readers a visual vocabulary through which national events could be recognised as part of a shared political experience.

Those photographs have long outlived the immediate news they accompanied. Today they form part of India's visual memory of freedom—a record of leaders and ordinary people, mass movements, suffering, resistance and liberation. Their value lies not only in what the camera captured, but in the newspapers that selected, printed and carried them to readers. The Indian press thus helped transform photography from an illustration of events into a witness to history. The freedom struggle was fought in streets, villages, prisons and political forums; through newspaper photography, it was also fought in the public imagination, one printed image at a time.



The plea contended that an organised cheating racket had vitiated the examination

Will Kejriwal seek Punjab govt's resignation, BJP asks after HC stay on pharma officers' recruitment

NEW DELHI, Aug 13: The BJP on Thursday attacked AAP national convenor Arvind Kejriwal and said the high court's stay on the appointment of 454 pharmacy officers in Punjab has raised serious questions over the state government's conduct in the recruitment process.

The remarks came a day after the Punjab and Haryana High Court stayed the appointment of pharmacy officers in Punjab till the next date of hearing on September 17.

Talking to reporters here, BJP MP and national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said the court's order raises a "very serious question" on the recruitment process. He asked Kejriwal whether he will now seek the resignation of the Punjab government.

"So now we want to ask Kejriwal ji, who remained silent on the issues from Jharkhand to Punjab. When your government's lie is proved in court, will you now seek its resignation?" Trivedi said.

Justice Sandeep Moudgil passed



a stay order on a plea filed by Keshav Kamboj and others, who sought cancellation of the written examination conducted on July 19 for recruitment to posts under the Punjab Health and Family Welfare Department.

The plea contended that an organised cheating racket had vitiated the examination.

Trivedi also attacked the opposition over disruptions in Parliament, saying it is the country's highest constitutional forum for discussion and dialogue.

Targeting Kejriwal and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, Trivedi

said the two leaders are silent on issues concerning students in Punjab and Jharkhand.

"The morality of the so-called champions of students' interests -- Kejriwal, who has remained silent on Jharkhand and Punjab, and Rahul Gandhi, who has turned a deaf ear to these issues -- has collapsed in the face of constitutional values," he said.

In an apparent reference to the Cockroach Janta Party, he asked why the "newly emerged flag-bearers" of students' interests and those associated with protests at Jantar Mantar are not speaking

about the difficulties faced by students in Jharkhand and Punjab.

"The BJP also expects to know where the newly emerged flag-bearers of students' interests and the Jantar Mantar protesters are today. Can they not see the difficulties and power cuts being faced by students in Jharkhand? Can they not hear the judgment delivered by the Punjab and Haryana High Court?" he said.

Trivedi asked Kejriwal, Gandhi and "those associated with the Jantar Mantar protests" why they are maintaining silence on the issues.

"From Punjab to Jharkhand, students have a great sense of anguish. The court's decision raises several questions, and to escape those questions, there is this ruckus in Parliament," he said.

"It is very clear that these politicians pretending to champion students' interests and all those who have declared themselves as flag-bearers of students' interests have no real concern for students' interests," he added. (PTI)

BJP has nothing but money left to win UP polls, says Akhilesh; party leader hits back

LUCKNOW, Aug 13: Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Thursday alleged that the BJP has been left with "nothing but money" to win the 2027 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, reacting to media reports about a possible announcement of ₹ 20,000 dole for women in the state.

BJP Uttar Pradesh vice-president Neeraj Singh hit back at Yadav, saying his party has made no such announcement and accused the SP chief of making a "deceptive" promise of giving ₹ 40,000 to women.

Yadav, in a post on X, described the reported proposal as "another juma" of the BJP and alleged that the money being offered was "the earnings of its sins."

"The BJP has nothing left except money to win elections. That too is the BJP's ill-gotten money, which the religious-minded women of Uttar Pradesh will never accept," he said. The SP chief also questioned the BJP's record in states where, he claimed, similar financial assistance was announced before elections.

"Awakened women of Uttar



Pradesh are asking that in the other states where elections were won after announcing money for women, on one hand they are reluctant to give it, while on the other they are demanding the money back. And against women who are unable to return it, the BJP is taking the reprehensible route of police stations, courts and cases," Yadav said.

"Today, the BJP government is talking about giving ₹ 50,000 annually, but it could have given this money during the last 10 years as well, but it did not," he said.

Yadav also repeated the news reports' claim to say that Chief Min-

ister Yogi Adityanath's government spent "thousands of crores of rupees meant for the rights and entitlements of women" on publicity.

He calculated that ₹ 50,000 annually over 10 years would amount to ₹ 5 lakh and said the ₹ 20,000 proposal would be only four per cent of that amount.

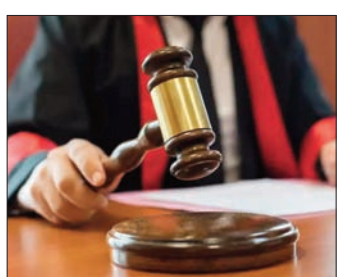
"The BJP's corrupt government has eaten up ₹ 5 lakh belonging to women over the last 10 years and is now serving the juma of giving only ₹ 20,000. ₹ 20,000 is only four per cent of ₹ 5 lakh, which means these BJP people have swallowed 96 per cent of women's share," he alleged. (PTI)

'Overwhelming incriminating material' to suggest accused formed syndicate to leak NEET paper: Delhi court

NEW DELHI, Aug 13: A Delhi court, while taking cognisance of CBI's charge sheet in the NEET paper leak case, has said that there is "overwhelming incriminating material" to prima facie suggest that the 13 accused formed a syndicate to leak and circulate the question paper for illegal monetary gain. Special Judge Ajay Gupta took cognisance of the agency's final report against the 13 accused on Wednesday.

In the order, made available on Thursday, the court said, "It is prima facie clear from the overwhelming incriminating material collected by the CBI through an extensive investigation that all the aforementioned accused persons, in one manner or the other, formed part of the NEET (UG) 2026 Exam leak syndicate and each one of them have played an active role in dissemination and circulation of the aforesaid exam question paper of all three subjects (Physics, Chemistry and Biology)."

It said that prima facie it appeared that alleged kingpin P V Kulkarni



was fully aware that there was no practice of frisking of the subject experts at the designated place. Therefore, he took advantage of the situation and took along with him the chits or short notes prepared by him discreetly while doing the translation work for his subject (chemistry).

"Further, it is clear from the record that all these three experts (Kulkarni, Manisha Sanjay Havaladar for physics and Manisha Gurunath Mandhare for biology) had given their written undertaking before they were engaged for this work that they will not share any part of the NEET

(UG) 2026 exam related material with anyone in any manner," the court said.

It said violation of the undertaking prima facie shows that these accused persons have committed the criminal breach of trust with the National Testing Agency (NTA) authority, which engaged them for translation of NEET (UG) 2026 Exam question paper of their respective subjects.

"Besides, by their aforesaid act, they have also prima facie committed criminal misconduct (by a public servant) in terms of Section 13 of the Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act," the court said.

It said it is also prima facie clear from the record that all these three subject experts, in active conspiracy with other co-accused persons to obtain the illegal monetary gain, sold the exam-related material (the leaked questions of their respective subjects) to the co-accused persons as well as several candidates "in the guise of providing coaching to them". (PTI)

Cong MP Gaikwad seeks action against those who 'purified' Kharge's rally venue in Uttarakhand

MUMBAI, Aug 13: Mumbai Congress president Varsha Gaikwad on Thursday demanded strict action against those who allegedly performed a "purification" ritual at a venue in Uttarakhand's Haldwani town, where her party's national chief Mallikarjun Kharge had addressed a rally.

Earlier in the day, Kharge alleged that people associated with the BJP purified the stage at Ramlika Maidan in Haldwani where he had made a speech. The Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha demanded that cases be registered, under the Untouchability Act, against those who purified the stage and they be arrested and sent to jail.

In a statement in Mumbai, Gaikwad maintained the alleged incident was not merely an insult to Kharge but also an affront to the values of equality and the Constitution. Kharge addressed a public meeting in Haldwani on August 8.

According to Gaikwad, members of a right-wing outfit, Shri Ram Sena, subsequently performed a purification ceremony at the venue.

"After 80 years of Independence, if purification rituals are still being performed to insult a Dalit leader, then it reflects the persistence of Manuvadi thinking (rigid caste-based social hierarchy)," she said and demanded stringent action against those involved in the alleged act. (PTI)

Cong to hold 10-day training camp for district party chiefs in Nashik from Aug 24

MUMBAI, Aug 13: Maharashtra Congress will hold a 10-day residential training camp for its district presidents in Nashik from August 24 as part of its organisational revamp exercise, with party MP Rahul Gandhi scheduled to address the participants on the last day of the convalesce.

The camp is being organised under the leadership of the training department of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) as part of the party's 'Sangathan Srujan Abhiyan', under which district Congress committee presidents are being selected and appointed.

Gandhi, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, will address the participants on the last day of the camp that will conclude on September 2, a statement by the state Congress said.

The training programme will focus on the Congress' vision and direction for the coming years, challenges before the party, organisational preparedness, its ideology and its role in the country's politics, it said.

The programme will also provide a platform to discuss questions, expectations, issues and political perspectives of younger-generation party workers, the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress said in the statement.

Scholars and experts from various fields at



the state and national levels will address the participants. AICC National War Room chairman and MP Shashikant Senthil will conduct special sessions for three days.

Maharashtra Congress president Harshwardhan Sapkal and other senior leaders from the party's national and state units will also interact with the trainees.

The AICC training team, led by Sachin Rao, will oversee the programme.

The training has been designed around the broader theme of "new generation, new leadership and a strong organisation", with emphasis on developing organisational skills, ideological clarity, leadership abilities and direct engagement with people, the statement said. (PTI)

HKRN has become a hub of exploitation of youth and employees: Haryana Cong chief

CHANDIGARH, Aug 13: Haryana Congress president Rao Narendra Singh on Thursday launched a scathing attack on the BJP government over the Haryana Kaushal Rozgar Nigam (HKRN), alleging that the body, established to provide employment to youth and to end the contract system, has become a means of insecurity and exploitation.

He claimed the government made tall claims, promising 'equal pay for equal work' and better facilities for employees, but the ground reality is completely different, he said. Notably, the HKRN, established in 2021 and began functioning in 2022, provides contractual manpower to all government departments in the state.

The Congress leader also claimed the employment figures released by the government were false and that the BJP did not fulfil its promise of providing around 1.20 lakh as per its 2024 election manifesto.

"By February 2026, around 14.63 lakh youth had registered with HKRN, while only 1.13 lakh people had been deployed. Of these, 97,051 were employees who were already working. Therefore, the actual number of new jobs being created is extremely low compared with the employment figures being projected by the government," he said. Singh claimed that the number of new employments was only 7,367 in 2024, 1,034 in 2025 and just 66 so far in 2026.

"These figures clearly show that despite millions of registered youth, the government has completely failed to provide employment," he said.

The Congress leader said that presenting the limited deployments in departments such as Public Health, Education and Health as large-scale employment generation is nothing more than misleading the youth.

Singh announced that a dharna and protest would be held on August 19 outside the HKRN office under the 'Yuvaon Ki Goonj' campaign, with Congress MLA Ashok Arora being the convenor.

Senior Congress leaders, MPs, MLAs, district and block presidents, along with a large number of employees and unemployed youth, will participate in the protest, he said.

He said that just as Rahul Gandhi has strongly raised the voice of students and youth across the country, Haryana Congress will also continue its struggle for employment, dignity and social security for the state's youth, from the streets to the State Assembly.

Congress MLA Aditya Surjewala questioned the HKRN figures, saying that despite 14.63 lakh youth registering by February 2026, only 1.13 lakh people had been employed.

"Even among them, 97,051 were already working employees," Surjewala said, claiming that HKRN employees were given a 'deployment letter' instead of permanent appointment letters.

Surjewala asked the government how much money had been collected department-wise through the 1 per cent service charge charged from employees since 2022 and where it was spent.

He demanded that the government make a department-wise white paper public. "A large number of temporary employees were regularised during the Congress government's tenure. HKRN employees should also be provided job security on the same lines, the Congress leader said. Surjewala said the government has repeatedly made tall claims about job security, but by May 2026, not a single HKRN employee had received the actual benefit of job security.

He asked the government why the benefit had not reached employees if the law had already been enacted.

Surjewala took a dig at the government's online process, saying employees were initially asked to get their documents and papers verified in their respective departments. "Later, the government created a portal, but its condition is such that the server is down in some places, login does not work in others, and OTPs are not being received elsewhere," he said.

Congress leaders demanded that the government conduct regular recruitment against sanctioned posts and create permanent positions and regularise employees who have been working for a long period.

Rao Narendra Singh also attacked the state government over the 'deteriorating' law-and-order situation in Haryana. He alleged that frequent reports of crime have created an atmosphere of fear and insecurity among the people of the state. News of murders, violence and other serious criminal incidents is emerging almost every day, he said. (PTI)

Plea in SC seeks action against online content allegedly insulting Sanatan Dharma



NEW DELHI, Aug 13: A PIL has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking directions to the Centre and social media platforms to identify, remove and block online content allegedly insulting Sanatan Dharma and Hindu deities and disturbing communal harmony.

The public interest litigation filed by Gujarat-based social worker Hitendra Kumar Parsotambhai Gadhiya has made the Union ministries of home affairs and electronics and information technology, the Delhi government, Google/YouTube, Meta Platforms

(Facebook and Instagram), X Corp and WhatsApp respondents.

"Issue a writ of mandamus commanding the Respondents to block/remove the social media posts published on social media platforms which have a tendency to incite the general public against communal harmony, national integrity, and judicial independence, and to undermine the authority of constitutional functionaries through an uninformed mob," the plea said.

It seeks directions for identification, prevention, removal or block-

ing of unlawful, provocative, hateful, abusive, derogatory and misleading digital content, including fake news, incendiary speeches and anti-national slogans disseminated through social media platforms. The petitioner said he approached the top court in public interest for protection of communal harmony and enforcement of statutory obligations relating to unlawful digital content.

According to the petitioner, the plea is aimed at seeking action against videos, memes, manipulated content, abusive posts and other electronic material uploaded on internet platforms that allegedly "insult, vilify and promote hatred" against Hindu religious beliefs, Sanatan Dharma and revered Hindu deities.

The PIL alleged that social media platforms have failed to adequately discharge their obligations under the Information Technology Act, 2000, and the rules framed thereunder by not acting against content that allegedly promotes enmity, hatred and public disorder. (PTI)

BJP's R P Singh condemns attack on Sukhbir Badal, says 'violence completely unacceptable'

CHANDIGARH, Aug 13: Senior BJP leader R P Singh strongly condemned the attack on Shiromani Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Singh Badal in Maharashtra's Nanded on Thursday and said such an act of violence is completely unacceptable. He appealed to Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis to ensure that this incident is thoroughly and impartially investigated.

Akali Dal chief and former Punjab deputy chief minister Sukhbir Singh Badal was injured in a knife attack, police said. A man attacked Badal with a knife when he was visiting the Gurdwara Mata Sahib Devan Ji Mugat, police said.

One person has been detained in connection with the attack.

"I strongly condemn the attack on S. Sukhbir Singh Badal Ji in Nanded. Such an act of violence is completely unacceptable and has no place whatsoever in a democratic society. Political differences and disagreements are a natural part of democracy, but resorting to violence can never be justified," R P Singh, national spokesperson of BJP, said in a post on X.

"Punjab and the Punjabi community have already suffered immensely during the dark and painful years of violence and militancy. Generations of Punjabis have borne the deep scars left by that period. We cannot, under any circumstances, allow those dark days to return. Peace, brotherhood, constitutional values and the rule of law must always prevail," he said. The BJP leader further appealed to Fadnis to take strict action against those responsible in accordance with law.

"There can be strong political disagreements, criticism and differences of opinion, but there must always be respect for democratic institutions and the rule of law. Violence cannot be allowed to become a means of expressing political or personal differences," he said.

"At a time when Punjab and the entire country are moving forward with aspirations of peace, development and progress, incidents like this must be dealt with firmly so that a clear message goes out that violence has no place in public life," he added. (PTI)

Himachal Pradesh BJP leader meets PM

SHIMLA, Aug 13: Himachal Pradesh BJP general secretary Sikandar Kumar on Thursday met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi and was assured of all possible assistance from the Centre for losses suffered by the state due to torrential rains, a statement said.

Describing the meeting as extremely fruitful, Kumar, also a Rajya Sabha MP, said in the statement issued here that he held discussions with the PM regarding the damage caused by the recent heavy rains, floods and natural disasters in Himachal Pradesh.

PM Modi expressed concern for the affected areas and people, and assured all possible support from the central government, he said.

According to the statement, Kumar also held detailed discussions with Modi on the current political and administrative situation in Himachal Pradesh, socio-economic issues, state development and organisational activities. (PTI)

BJP to sing full Vande Mataram at 15,000 centres in Kerala on I-Day

'Vande Mataram is a song closely associated with the history of India's freedom struggle'

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Aug 13: The BJP will organise programmes to sing the full version of the national song Vande Mataram at 15,000 centres across Kerala on August 15, the party's state president Rajeev Chandrasekhar said on Thursday.

His remarks came days after ruling Congress leaders, including a Kerala minister, said only the first two couplets of the national song would be sung in state government events.

Further, on Thursday, Chief Minister V D Sathesan said that the government has a clear policy regarding the singing of the national song and that the same will be clear during the Independence Day celebrations on August 15.

Chandrasekhar said the national flag would be hoisted and Vande Mataram sung in full at BJP programmes organised at booth, panchayat, constituency and district levels.



"By holding the tricolour high, the BJP will remain at the forefront of the struggle to protect India's unity and sovereignty and to build a developed India," he said.

His announcement came days after Health Minister K Muraliedharan and Congress MP Rajmohan Unnithan said that the full version of Vande Mataram would not be sung in Kerala.

Muraliedharan told reporters on Sunday that only the first two cou-

plets of the national song would be sung in state government programmes, as has been the practice so far.

"In all state government programmes only the first two couplets were sung in the past, and that practice will continue even now," he said.

The CPI(M) has also urged the UDF government to withdraw the order relating to the rendition of Vande Mataram.

Chandrasekhar said the BJP's programme was aimed at creating a strong public response against those who insult Vande Mataram and support "anti-national forces".

"Vande Mataram is a song closely associated with the history of India's freedom struggle. It is the responsibility of every Indian to uphold its significance," he said.

"By singing Vande Mataram in unison at 15,000 centres across Kerala on Independence Day, the BJP is sending a strong message of nationalism and patriotism," the Nemon MLA added.

He also attacked the Congress and CPI(M), alleging that they were taking positions that supported forces trying to weaken the country.

The BJP leader said the programme in Kerala was part of a nationwide initiative under which Vande Mataram would be sung at lakhs of centres on Independence Day. (PTI)

AAPSU has been demanding mandatory PRC and APST certificates for state recruitment

Arunachal makes PRC, tribal language proficiency must for govt jobs

ITANAGAR, Aug 13: The Arunachal Pradesh cabinet on Thursday approved uniform eligibility criteria for direct recruitment to all government posts, making a Permanent Residence Certificate (PRC), ST certificate and proficiency in a tribal language mandatory for candidates.

The decision will apply to direct recruitment through competitive examinations under state government departments, public sector undertakings, autonomous bodies and local bodies, among others, an official statement said. The new provisions will take immediate effect and will be incorporated into the Recruitment Rules and Service Rules for Group A, B and C posts and their equivalents, it said.

Under the new criteria, candidates must be Indian citizens and inhabitants of Arunachal Pradesh possessing a valid PRC. They must also be original inhabitants of the state and hold an Arunachal Pradesh Scheduled Tribe certificate in accordance with the list of STs notified by the Centre.

Candidates will also have to demonstrate



proficiency in at least one indigenous tribal language of Arunachal Pradesh from a notified list, the statement said.

The Arunachal Pradesh Public Service Commission (APPSC) and the Arunachal Pradesh Staff Selection Board (APSSB) have been directed to incorporate the eligibility provisions, along with a post-joining language test mechanism, in future recruit-

ment advertisements and rules.

The cabinet decision comes amid sustained demands from various organisations, including the All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union (AAPSU), for the abolition of the existing 80:20 recruitment ratio in government jobs and stronger safeguards for employment opportunities for indigenous youths.

The 80:20 ratio was a long-standing recruitment policy, reserving 80 per cent of state government jobs for local ST candidates and leaving the remaining 20 per cent open to general competition.

AAPSU has been demanding mandatory PRC and APST certificates for state recruitment and had submitted its recommendations to the High Power Committee examining the issue. The committee accepted the union's recommendations, including the requirement for proficiency in an indigenous language.

AAPSU has given the state government an ultimatum till August 15 to announce its decision on the 80:20 recruitment issue and warned of a 12-hour statewide bandh on August 17 if its demand is not met.

The Arunachal Frontier Tribal Front (AFTF) has also sought complete abolition of the 80:20 ratio and demanded mandatory ST and PRC certificates for government recruitment. It has also called for proficiency in an indigenous tribal language or dialect to be included in the recruitment process. (PTI)

BJP-led govt facing challenges due to liabilities left behind by previous CPI(M) regime: Tripura CM

AGARTALA, Aug 13: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Thursday said his government has been facing several challenges because of financial liabilities left behind by the previous CPI(M) regime.

Addressing a programme at Kailashahar in Unakoti district, where projects worth ₹ 45.18 crore were unveiled, Saha said the BJP-led government inherited a debt burden of ₹ 13,000 crore when it came to power in 2018, leaving it with limited financial resources to undertake new projects.

"We started our journey with a huge debt burden, which resulted in financial constraints in taking up new projects," he said.

Accusing the previous government of taking faulty decisions, Saha said his government was receiving directions from the high court and the Supreme Court to extend financial benefits to people affected by alleged lapses committed during the earlier regime.

Reacting to former chief minister Manik Sarkar's recent statement, Saha said the CPI(M) appeared to have become restless



to regain power after being out of office for eight-and-a-half years.

"We are working under the guidance of our guardian, Prime Minister Narendra Modi. No play or movement can dislodge the BJP government in the northeastern state," he said. At a rally on Monday, Sarkar had threatened that people would launch a movement with a "militant mindset" if the BJP-led government failed to address their grievances.

The rally was organised to press for an 11-point charter of demands, including 200 days of employment at a daily wage of ₹ 700, reduction in fuel and essential commodity prices, and measures to ease the financial burden on people. (PTI)

Tranglaobi IED attack accused involved in 5 other firing cases: Manipur Police



IMPHAL, Aug 13: The accused arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in connection with an IED attack at a residential house in Manipur's Bishnupur District that killed two children in April, was the "finance head" of a banned outfit and involved in five other firing cases, police said on Thursday.

The NIA on Wednesday apprehended S Palal Thadou, marking its first arrest in the improvised explosive device attack, which took place in Tranglaobi Awang Leikai

locality of Moirang town on April 7. The blast resulted in the death of two minors and injuries to another person.

Thadou was earlier arrested by the Churachandpur and Bishnupur Police in connection with separate cases. During the course of investigation, the accused admitted that he was the "finance head" of the proscribed outfit UKNA, the Manipur Police said in a statement.

"During the last couple of weeks, through diligent and sustained investigation coupled with

human intelligence, interrogation techniques with technical indicators provided by digital forensics experts, security forces successfully uncovered subversive plans and operations conducted by the individual with other UKNA operatives," it said.

Thadou was also "found involved" in a bomb blast at Tranglaobi on December 16 last year, as well as in a firing incident on the intervening night of February 3 and February 4, 2026 at Molnom, the statement said.

"He was also involved in a firing incident at Kaprang area on July 4, on the eve of Chief Minister Y Khechand Singh's visit to Churachandpur, as well as in firing incidents on July 4... and March 26 this year," it said.

The investigation into the April 7 IED attack was taken over by the NIA and re-registered on April 23, under provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Explosive Substances Act, and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, a statement issued by the agency said. (PTI)

One dead, six injured as vehicle falls into river in Arunachal's Anjaw

ITANAGAR, Aug 13: One person died and six others were injured when their vehicle fell into Lohit River in Arunachal Pradesh's Anjaw district on Thursday, officials said.

The incident occurred around 9:30 am near government residential school, Sarti, when the driver lost control of the vehicle, Anjaw deputy commissioner Millo Kojin said.

He said the driver fled the scene immediately after the accident.

The DC said the district administration requisitioned the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) personnel stationed in Tezu in neighbouring Lohit district.

He said police and locals are conducting search and rescue operations and managed to pull seven passengers out of the river, confirming one fatality on site, while four individuals sustained severe injuries.

Active search operations are underway to ascertain if any individuals were swept away by the river currents. (PTI)

AAPSU launches 'Taksing Chalo' march to frontier village in Arunachal

ITANAGAR, Aug 13: The All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union (AAPSU) on Thursday began a march to the frontier village of Taksing in Upper Subansiri district, raising concerns over border security in the area.

The march, held under the banner "Taksing Chalo, Bharat Bachao", is scheduled to conclude on August 15 with the hoisting of the national flag at Taksing on Independence Day.

AAPSU president Meje Taku flagged off the delegation from the union's headquarters at the NEFA Club building here. The team is being led by general secretary Mato Bui, a statement said here.

Taku said the people and youth of Arunachal Pradesh would not accept any attempt to undermine India's territorial integrity and asserted that the state would remain an integral part of India.

He called for stronger security and infrastructure along the frontier.

"Arunachal Pradesh was, is, and will forever remain an integral and



unalienable part of India," Taku said, adding that the people of the state would continue to stand with the armed forces and border communities.

The AAPSU president said the concerns raised by residents of remote frontier villages required urgent attention from both the Centre and the state government.

He stressed that improving security, connectivity and basic infrastructure in border areas should remain a national priority.

"Our borders are not just lines on a map; they are our collective responsibility," Taku said, adding

that frontier residents were playing a key role in safeguarding the country's territorial integrity.

The union has directed its federal units, community-based organisations, student bodies and citizens, particularly those in Upper Subansiri, to extend cooperation and participate in the programme.

During the visit, the AAPSU delegation will hold interactions with village leaders, youth groups and community organisations to understand their concerns and document issues faced by people living in the remote border region. (PTI)

Mass social service, pencil pine plantation held at Biiri



HT Correspondent

ZIRO, Aug 13: A mass social service-cum-pencil pine plantation programme was organised at Biiri Model Village under Diibo North-02 on Thursday, with active participation from villagers.

The programme was conducted under the leadership of ZPM Leegang Tatang and Biiri Welfare Committee chairman Liagi Tacho.

It was initiated by Biiri Welfare Committee secretary Ligang Tamang with the support of Social Service Secretary Tage B Laling and the cooperation of villagers.

The initiative aimed to promote village cleanliness, environmental conservation, plantation and a sense of community responsibility.

As part of the programme, villagers undertook a mass social service and planted Pencil Pine Cypress trees at various locations

in and around the village.

The villagers highlighted through their collective participation that development was not limited to infrastructure but also included maintaining a clean, green, healthy and sustainable environment. The plantation drive is expected to enhance the natural surroundings of the village and contribute to a greener environment for future generations.

The programme also reflected the commitment of the village leadership and residents towards sustainable development and the overall progress of Biiri Model Village. The initiative concluded with the villagers reaffirming their commitment to continue working together for cleanliness, environmental protection, sustainable development and community welfare.

Lalduhoma welcomes Centre's decision to refer FCRA Bill to JPC

AIZAWL, Aug 13: Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma on Thursday welcomed the Centre's decision to refer the contentious Foreign Contribution (Regulation) (FCRA) Amendment Bill to a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC).

The chief minister also thanked Union Home Minister Amit Shah for the development, and said the move would allow wider consultation and careful consideration of concerns raised by stakeholders, including those from Mizoram.

Lalduhoma, along with church leaders, recently met Shah and urged him to refer the bill to the JPC.

The bill seeks to significantly tighten the oversight of foreign-funded organisations, proposing creation of a powerful new authority to seize and manage the assets of non-profit groups that lose their licence.

The proposed amendments have drawn attention in Christian-majority Mizoram, where churches and civil society organisations have expressed concerns over provisions they believe could affect groups receiving foreign contributions.

"I welcome the motion in the Lok Sabha to refer the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026 to a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC)," Lalduhoma said in a Facebook post.

The committee has been asked to submit its report to the Lok Sabha by the last day of the first week of the Winter Session of Parliament in 2026.

"I hope the JPC will ensure a transparent, inclusive and consultative examination of the Bill," he added. (PTI)

Legal awareness programme held at Arunachal Pradesh University

HT Correspondent

PASIGHAT, Aug 13: The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), East Siang district, under the aegis of the Arunachal Pradesh State Legal Services Authority (APSLSA), in collaboration with the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), Arunachal Pradesh University, organised a legal awareness programme at the university here recently, on the occasion of International Youth Day 2026.

Held on the theme "Empowered Youth, Stronger India," the programme was attended by faculty members, research scholars and postgraduate students.

Bido Sora, APJS, Secretary, DLSA, East Siang, addressed the gathering on "Legal Empowerment and Constitutional Citizenship: Rights, Responsibilities and Access to Justice."

He explained the legal services framework under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, the role of Legal Services Authorities and the availability of free

legal aid. Sora also spoke about basic legal rights relating to FIRs, arrest, detention, bail, fair trial and access to legal assistance.

On youth empowerment, he emphasised responsible exercise of rights, digital citizenship, artificial intelligence and academic integrity.

Referring to the recent clarification by Chief Justice of India Justice Surya Kant concerning remarks in the context of alleged fake, false or unrecognised law degrees, he highlighted the importance of integrity and credibility in academic and professional life.

He also stressed the need to understand statements in their proper context, particularly when short clips and incomplete information can spread rapidly through social media.

Advocate Denzing Sonowal, resource person, spoke on "Right to Expression, Defamation and the POC SO Act in the Social Media Age."

He sensitised participants to responsi-

ble exercise of freedom of expression, the legal consequences of defamatory content and the need for caution while dealing with children and child-related content on social media.

Advocate Sunny Tayeng, another resource person, addressed the participants on "Law, Dignity and Safety in Educational Institutions: Ragging, Harassment and Gender Sensitisation."

She highlighted the importance of dignity, safety, mutual respect and responsible conduct within educational institutions.

The technical sessions were followed by an interactive session during which participants raised queries and discussed various legal issues with the resource persons.

The programme concluded with an emphasis on the need for young people to remain legally informed, exercise their rights responsibly and use their education and knowledge for the larger good of society.

Mizoram Police seizes drugs worth over ₹ 2.41 cr in 5 days

AIZAWL, Aug 13: Mizoram Police has seized 1.16 kg of heroin and 18.52 kg of ganja (cannabis) worth over ₹ 2.41 crore and arrested four persons for allegedly trafficking the contraband in a series of operations in Saitual district over the past five days, officials said on Thursday.

In a joint operation on Thursday, a special team of Saitual police and Assam Rifles intercepted a truck and

recovered 868 grams of heroin packed in 73 soap cases, valued at around ₹ 1.74 crore, a statement said. The vehicle's driver, Monwar Singh Barbhuiya, and helper Abdul Kayum Munna, both residents of Cachar district in Assam, were arrested, it said.

A case has been registered at Saitual police station under the NDPS Act, and further investigation is on, it said. (PTI)

Security tightened across Tripura

AGARTALA, Aug 13: Security has been tightened across Tripura ahead of Independence Day celebrations, though there is no specific threat, a senior police officer said on Thursday.

Inspector General (Law and Order) Manchak Ipper told reporters that police are checking public places, including bus stands, railway stations and other vulnerable locations, to prevent any untoward incident during the celebrations.

The BSF, police and Tripura State Rifles have already been put on alert to ensure peaceful celebrations, he said. (PTI)

Awareness programme on women, child protection laws held in Pasighat

HT Correspondent

PASIGHAT, Aug 13: A one-day district-level awareness-cum-sensitisation programme on key women and child protection laws was organised by the Department of Women and Child Development (WCD), East Siang district, at the DC's Conference Hall here on Thursday.

The programme was organised by the Deputy Director ICDS-cum-Protection Officer, PWDVA, and focused on the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA), Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (POSH) Act, Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, Adoption Regulations and laws concerning crimes against women.

Deputy Commissioner of East Siang Sonalika Jiwani, IAS, attended the programme as the chief guest. District Medical Officer, women police officers, Child Development Project Officers (CDPOs) and Presiding Officers of Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs) from various government departments were also present.

Welcoming the participants, Deputy



Director (ICDS)-cum-Protection Officer (PWDVA) M T Padung stressed the importance of regular legal awareness programmes.

She said spreading basic legal knowledge across East Siang was essential to ensuring that victims received timely justice, protection and legal assistance.

In her keynote address, Jiwani urged participants to disseminate the knowledge gained during the programme in their offices and local communities.

She directed all Heads of Departments and Heads of Offices to immediately report cases of workplace sexual harassment to the respective ICCs.

The Deputy Commissioner further directed government and private institutions that have not yet constituted Internal Complaints Committees to establish them in accordance with the POSH Act without delay.

During the technical sessions, advocate Nyame Dabi delivered a multimedia presentation on the POSH Act, PWDVA and Dowry Prohibition Act.

Advocate Sunny Tayeng explained the legal provisions and enforcement mechanisms under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act and guidelines governing Adoption Regulations.

The resource persons explained the legal provisions in an accessible manner, focusing on their practical application and implementation.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by CDPO Pasighat Minam Taloh, who expressed gratitude to the district administration, resource persons, police personnel and participants for their contribution towards strengthening women and child protection mechanisms in the district.

No.: JDB/MPL/RS/2024-25/8682

Date: 05/08/2026

NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT)

Sealed tenders in F-2 Form, affixing a non-refundable Court Fee Stamp of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees Eight and Twenty-Five Paise) only, are invited from registered contractors of Class-I (A/B/C), Class-II and Class-III of Assam PWD (Roads & Building) and BTC for the following work under the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS-RS) for the year 2024-25 during 2025-26 under Jalah Development Block.

The tender shall remain valid for 180 (One Hundred Eighty) days from the date of opening. Sealed tenders will be received in the office of the undersigned up to 2:30 PM on 24/08/2026 and will be opened on the same day at 3:30 PM in the presence of the intending bidders or their authorized representatives.

Name of Scheme	Tender Value	Bid Security	Cost of BID documents (D/D) @ 0.03% (Approx.)	Time of Completion
Construction of road at Simlaguri village from paniram house to simlaguri L P school under Bhabhari VCCD under MP-LAD fund for the year 2024-25	Rs. 15,00,000/-	Rs. 15,000/- (1%) for SC/ST/OBC bidders and Rs. 30,000/- (2%) for General bidders	Rs. 450/-	3 (Three) months from the date of issue of Work Order

The detailed NIT and bid documents may be obtained from the office of the undersigned during office hours up to the last date of submission.

Sd/-

Block Development Officer
Jalah Development Block, Jalahghat

IPR(BTC)/C/2026-27/1181

Dhruv Jurel's preparation: Talking to Rahul, watchful against spin at nets

GALLE, Aug 13: Dhruv Jurel was a picture of concentration in the nets at the sweltering Galle, mulling almost everything that came his way from pacers and spinners alike.

Prior to that, he was an active presence in the fielding practice session, taking some tumbling catches at the cordon.

Jurel's enthusiasm actually belied the career cross-road that he is standing currently. After a rather assured 100 against the West Indies at Ahmedabad in October last year, his next Test outings have produced — 44, 6, 14, 13, 0, 2, 19.

More worryingly, he has been dismissed five times by spinners in those seven outings, and he will face an even more daunting task in the first Test here against the Sri Lankan tweakers, led by the irrepressible Prabath Jayasuriya.

The inclusion of Sarfaraz Khan, who bats at the same slot as Jurel, is a warning

for the wicketkeeper batter to tidy up his act or get replaced.

Sarfaraz has a wider range of shots against spinners — sweep, reverse sweep, shimmy down the track mixed with those late dabs and cuts past the point or gully fielders.

In contrast, Jurel waits for spinners to err to punish them, as he prefers a more risk-free approach. It may have its own advantages on rather flat pitches, but on a deck that offers variable bounce or turn, like the one at Galle, it is fraught with danger.

It's not really much about lack of skill sets but rather more about changing the modus operandi to suit the conditions.

So, it was not surprising to watch Jurel spending a bit of time with senior batter KL Rahul, who is the only batter to have Test experience on these shores, at nets.

Rahul prepared extensively for this



tour on specially prepared muddy pitches at Mumbai, and Jurel would certainly have wanted to pick his brain.

India's bowling coach Morne Morkel underlined Rahul's role as a senior pro in the side.

"You can explore and discuss and come up with the best combination. Experience is always handy. I think KL, the last couple of years the way he's been leading up front with batting has been exceptional.

"That's a sort of communication that we expect from him, to speak to the guys here in the preparation at the nets as to what to expect here," said Morkel.

But the former South African pacer knows that Jurel will have to find his own path in the middle.

"I think the guys have learned a lot about their games individually over the last couple of months and that's one of the reasons why we've come out here 10 days earlier to give them the best opportunity to prepare.

"Now it is all about figuring out how they're gonna score on the surface here," Morkel said, alluding to the spin-friendly

nature of the Galle surface.

Jurel has shown some spark in the lead up to the series, scoring a hundred and fifty for India A at this very same venue against a capable Sri Lanka A side, and those memories should instil some confidence into him.

There is a flip side to it, though, as it is a familiar trait of Jurel.

The right-hander was in pristine touch in a side game ahead of the 2024-25 Border-Gavaskar Trophy against Australia.

However, his subsequent outing at Perth ended up in disappointment. He now needs to produce better numbers to vindicate his selection as a pure batter with Rishabh Pant being the first-choice wicketkeeper batter.

Will Jurel be able to buck that trend against Sri Lanka? He has to, as it holds key to his immediate future in Tests. (PTI)

India ponder three left-arm spinners for Galle Test, Morkel sees skill and variety in them

GALLE, Aug 13: Bowling coach Morne Morkel on Thursday indicated that India could field three left-arm spinners in the upcoming first Test against Sri Lanka here, as Kuldeep Yadav, Manav Suthar and Ravindra Jadeja offer unmatched variety and wicket-taking skills.

Kuldeep bowls magic and mystic through his left-arm wrist spin, Jadeja's pinpoint accuracy can trouble even the best, but Suthar is a throwback to the days of loopy classical left-arm spin.

"Kuldeep is there, and he's the attacking sort of bowler and for us, his experience and class can't look past. So yeah, I think for us they're all different in their way," Morkel told the media here on Thursday.

"So one (Suthar) turns a bit more, one (Jadeja) is slightly more accurate and I don't think it's a (three left-arm spinners) massive concern for us.

"It's just how Gill is going to use those guys at certain times. But yeah, I mean in terms of skill they've got the skill to get the 20 wickets for us," he added.

Morkel said India's spin line-up



gave them a very attacking option, also considering the nature of the Galle pitch that may favour spin as the match progresses.

"Traditionally also if you look at the venue how it stacks and how it's been played up, that's sort of the way (three spinners) to go I think. The way we go with our spin bowling attack or spinners, it's a very attacking option.

"But looking at the surface, you know, to me, looks like a good surface, and I think as the Test goes on, you know, something will start

to happen.

"So, we've prepared for all that can come our way, as it is more about the mental challenge in playing these conditions, batting time, bowling those spells and getting the ball in the right areas," he detailed.

Apart from the seasoned Siraj, India will have to take either Gurnoor Brar or Prasidh Krishna, who have limited Test experience, as support pacer.

Morkel said whoever gets the final nod — Prasidh or Brar —

will be equal to the task.

"I think it's exciting. They've played a lot of cricket back home where it's also tough bowling conditions, and I think coming here the biggest challenge will be the heat and humidity.

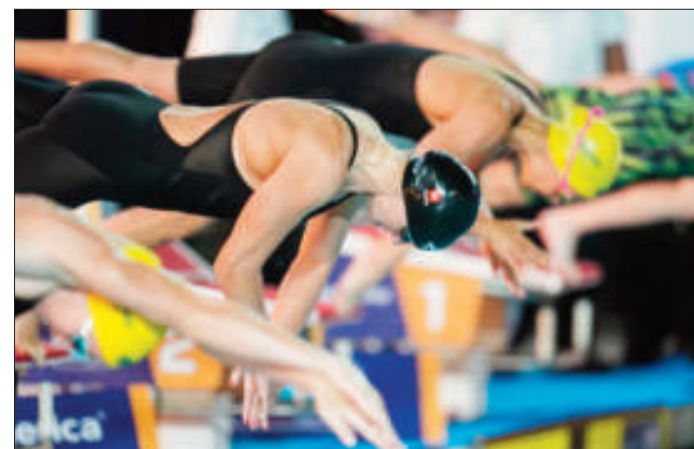
"The kookaburra ball...once it gets softer you know how we can stack up overs together with intensity and create that pressure. So, I'm quite excited about what I have seen over the last week or so, how these guys can stand up."

But beyond all these calculations, Morkel said, it is all about how the bowlers can sustain the intensity for a longer period.

"It's all about your mindset. If you're a fast bowler, you know, the ball will go softer after 20-35 overs but then what is our next step? To be street-smart in terms of how we're going to use the crease? How are we going to use our short ball?

"You know all those conditions and all those sort of situations we need to be able to do something quite quickly. Then, yeah, execute that and you know and with a lot of energy," he signed off. (PTI)

Katie Ledecky surges to 1,500 free win for her first home-soil international medal



IRVINE (CALIFORNIA, USA), Aug 13: Katie Ledecky won the 1,500-meter freestyle on opening night of the Pan Pacific Championships, earning the first international medal of her storied career on home soil on Wednesday.

The U.S. clinched a dominant night with a world record in the 4 x 100 mixed medley relay.

Ledecky, a two-time Olympic champion in the 1,500, was under her own world-record pace in the early stages of the 30-lap race, with young fans holding signs at the outdoor pool in Irvine, California, on their feet cheering throughout.

Ledecky touched in 15 minutes, 36.09 seconds. Lani Pallister of Australia gave chase early before Ledecky opened a body-length lead over her closest pursuer. Pallister took silver in a personal best 15:38.62. Moesha Johnson of Australia earned bronze.

"Not quite the time that I wanted, but again, you can't complain with

gold and getting my hand on the wall first," Ledecky said. "It's great to be in an environment like this."

In the mixed medley relay, the American team of Will Modglin, Van Mathias, Gretchen Walsh and Kate Douglass won in 3:36.70. They beat the old mark of 3:37.43 set by the U.S. at the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Modglin got it started with backstroke before Mathias took over for the breaststroke leg. Walsh handled butterfly and Douglass brought it home on freestyle.

"As we were sitting back there for two hours waiting for this race to come, we kind of threw out the idea of breaking a world record," Douglass said. "I love anchoring relays like this. They kind of do all the work for me. I get to just give my all at the end."

Australia took silver in 3:39.30. Canada earned bronze.

Walsh won the 50 butterfly over Douglass to lead four 1-2 finishes by the United States.

Fabien Barthez reunited with Zinedine Zidane

PARIS, Aug 13: France coach Zinedine Zidane reunited with Fabien Barthez after he was named the national team's new goalkeeper coach on Thursday. Zidane was hired as coach last month on a four-year deal. Zidane and Barthez played together when France won the 1998 World Cup and the 2000 European Championship.

Barthez appeared 87 times for France and his last game was the 2006 World Cup final, where Zidane was sent off in extra time for headbutting defender Marco Materazzi. The 55-year-old Barthez played for Toulouse, Marseille, Manchester United and Monaco during his career.

Zidane chose David Bettoni as his assistant coach on Thursday when France's backroom staff was revealed. Bettoni was Zidane's assistant coach at Real Madrid, where Zidane guided the Spanish club to three straight Champions League titles from 2016-18.

France is away to Turkey in the Nations League on Sept. 25 and plays in Belgium three days later. (AP)

Indian women's hockey team has real chance of a podium finish in World Cup: Goalkeeper Savita

NEW DELHI, Aug 13: Seasoned goalkeeper Savita Punia believes India's FIH Nations Cup triumph has given the women's hockey team the confidence and belief to challenge the world's best and finish on the podium at the upcoming World Cup.

India head into the showpiece event on the back of their Nations Cup title, where they beat a competitive field to claim their first major international gold in a long time.

"Winning the FIH Nations Cup was a big achievement because all the top teams were there. It was a competitive tournament, and coming out on top gave us a huge boost and winning a gold medal after a long time has lifted the team's morale and belief," Savita told JioStar.

The veteran feels India's performances against top sides in the FIH Pro League have also shown that the team is capable of competing with the best.

"In recent years, during the FIH Pro League, we have played close matches against top sides like Argentina, Netherlands, and Germany. Those games showed us that we can match the best teams in the world," she said.

"I can confidently say about this Indian women's hockey team that while all the teams are world-class, there is no team we cannot compete with. We have the skill, the fitness, and the mindset to challenge anyone on our day."

India will open their World Cup campaign against China on August 16 before taking on South Africa and England in Pool D.

Savita, however, is wary of the challenges ahead and said India would need to remain focused on their own game rather than being distracted by the quality of the opposition.

"We are going into the Women's Hockey World Cup with a lot of confidence, but our main focus is on our own game. Every team in the World Cup is strong, and there are no easy matches," she said.

"But if we play to our strengths and stick to our plans, we have a real chance of finishing on the podium."

The 36-year-old also pointed to the changing approach within the Indian team, with players taking greater responsibility for their fitness, recovery and preparation.

"The approach has changed over time. Earlier, players used to do only what the coach told them. Now, everyone takes ownership of their fitness and recovery. We pay attention to diet, injury prevention, and extra sessions," she said.

"As goalkeepers, we often have three or four additional sessions in a week, but we stay motivated because we know it will help us perform when it matters most."

For Savita, the tournament will also mark a significant personal milestone as she prepares to feature in her third consecutive World Cup.

"Playing in the World Cup means a lot to me because this is my third World Cup. For any hockey player, the World Cup and the Olympics are the two biggest stages. Every athlete dreams of representing their country on those platforms," she said. (PTI)

Fungus outbreak on field postpones Celta Vigo-Osasuna La Liga opener

VIGO (SPAIN), Aug 13: Celta Vigo postponed its La Liga opener against Osasuna because of a fungus outbreak on the Estadio de Balaídos field on Thursday.

Postponing Sunday's game was mutually agreed by the clubs and the Spanish soccer federation. La Liga said the decision had to be done "due to an illness that has affected the stadium's pitch."

League officials inspected the field on Wednesday. The match will now be played on Aug. 27.

Celta said La Liga had already inspected the field last week and validated the work that was being carried out to eradicate the disease affecting the field.

"However, the recent weather conditions have adversely affected the pitch's progress and led to the decision to postpone the match," the club said. (AP)



From 2011 cricket triumph to hockey World Cup: Upton wants India to 'arrive as champions'

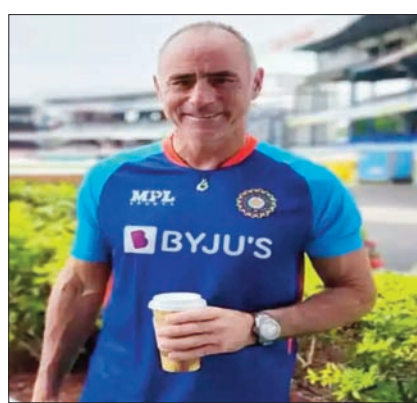
AMSTERDAM, Aug 13: Having been part of India's 2011 ODI World Cup-winning setup and the men's hockey team's bronze-medal campaign at Paris Olympics, mental conditioning coach Paddy Upton believes the team must develop the mindset of champions well before the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup begins.

"One of the keys is that champions arrive at a tournament as champions. They don't wait to win the final to confirm that they are champions," he told PTI in an exclusive interview.

"We have to make sure that we are as fit as any other team, our diet is as good as any team, and our attention to details like sleep and recovery are of world champion standards."

Upton said that the biggest difference between preparing cricketers and hockey players lies in harnessing team dynamics.

"The biggest difference would be that in cricket, a lot more of the work is focused on individual performance, while in hockey there is so much of a team performance. How an individual's mindset is impacting the players around them is very important,"



Upton said.

"In hockey, you are constantly connecting as a group, while in cricket, when two players are batting, the responsibility is on them. Similarly, during bowling, the entire onus is on the bowler at that time."

Upton said the focus has been on preparing for everything that could stand between India and the title.

"We can't focus on winning the final now. We are focusing on everything that gives us

a chance to reach the final. The other key is to prepare for the obstacles and challenges ahead," he said.

Reflecting on the Paris Olympics where India won bronze, Upton said the quarterfinal against Great Britain was among the biggest lessons for the team.

"In the quarterfinal against Britain, India won the match from a situation no other team could have won, because we had prepared for situations like that in the Swiss camp," he said.

The Indian team produced a win to remember for ages beating the Great Britain 1-1 (4-2 SO) in the quarterfinals, despite playing with one player less for most of the contest.

The camp in Swiss Alps, Upton explained, was not designed to strengthen the team's ability to confront adversity together.

"It wasn't driven by addressing weaknesses. It was about creating even more team-building and perspective about challenges and fears. Most of the teams would prepare for the World Cup on a hockey pitch, but we had gone for a much more challeng-

ing situation physically and mentally," Upton said.

"A player's greatest fear might be getting tired or getting injured. When you are at a very high altitude and exhausted, there is no other option — you have to keep going. We pushed players beyond their on-field challenges physically and helped them overcome the fears of injury."

For Upton, the lesson was simple — survival and success depend on the collective.

"(If) you don't work as a team; a few of you can die. Similarly, if you don't work as a team on the field, you could get eliminated," he said.

The behavioural change he now wants to see from the players is equally straightforward.

"Work as a team and protect your teammates. Take that to a new level," he said.

Upton also said India's approach in knockout games must focus on processes. "Knockout games are the most pressure games in any sport. The most important thing is to play your natural game, stick to a game plan, and trust your teammates," he said. (PTI)

Chopra, Gopichand launch Indian School of Coaching Excellence

NEW DELHI, Aug 13: Javelin ace Neeraj Chopra and badminton great Pullela Gopichand on Thursday launched the Indian School of Coaching Excellence, an initiative aimed at strengthening India's coaching landscape and sports ecosystem.

ISCE will focus on developing world-class coaches through multi-disciplinary coach-development programmes. The programmes will integrate areas such as physical literacy, sports science, sports education, technology, and career development, equipping coaches with the knowledge and skills needed to meet the evolving demands of high-performance sport.

"It (ISCE) will serve as a collaborative knowledge-sharing platform, working closely with government bodies, SAI, sports federations, associations, high-performance centres, academic institutions, and the private sector to advance coaching excellence across India," said a release.

Chopra, who recently won a silver



medal at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, said coaches play an integral role in every athlete's journey and stressed the need for a robust ecosystem to develop and nurture quality coaches in the country.

"I firmly believe that every athlete's journey is shaped by the guidance and nurturing of his/her coach, not only as a sports person but also as an individual. Hence, in order to create the next generation of sports heroes in India, it is extremely important that our coaches have access to world-class education, mentorship, and the latest knowledge in sports science and athlete development. (PTI)