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- Rajasthan Assembly adjourned sine die; UCC Bill introduced
- Legal battle between NCP factions is about Constitution, morality, not individual: Sule
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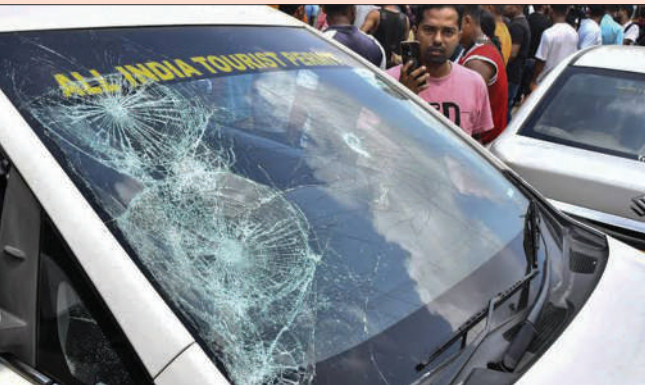
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GUWAHATI, SATURDAY, AUGUST 22, 2026

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Arson, petrol bomb hurling incidences on in M'laya

Four CRPF and one RAF approved in the state till August 25 to assist state police



SHILLONG, Aug 21: Incidents of arson and petrol bomb attacks on government properties were reported across Meghalaya on Friday, as tensions prevailed following violence during the Khasi Students' Union flag-bike rally two days ago.

An office that housed the National People's Party previously at Lachumiere was targeted with a petrol bomb around 5 am, but it did not explode, police said.

A police and forensic team reached the spot, collected evidence and registered a case, they said.

In West Khasi Hills, two government vehicles were gutted after miscreants set them ablaze at Nongstoin on Thursday night.

Petrol bombs were also hurled at the offices of the Superintendent Engineer, PWD, at Mawkhlang, Nongpyndeng, and the SDO, Mawshynrut Civil Sub-Division and minor damages were reported.

In Shillong, a petrol bomb was hurled at the Nongmenseong police outpost around 9.30 pm on

Thursday.

It landed inside the premises and set a chair on fire. No injuries were reported.

In Ri-Bhoi, two government vehicles and a motorcycle were set ablaze at the Water Resources Department premises in Saida around 2 am.

Two vehicles and the motorcycle were gutted, while another government vehicle was partially damaged.

In South West Khasi Hills, a petrol bomb was lobbed at the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Officer's office at Mawlangwir around 1 am.

The device landed on the roof but did not cause damage.

The Centre has approved the deployment of five companies of central forces -- four CRPF and one RAF -- in the state till August 25 to assist the state police in maintaining law and order.

Police have so far registered 15 FIRs in connection with Wednesday's violence in Shillong, East Khasi Hills SP Vivek Syiem said. (PTI)

Pralhad Joshi meets Himanta

NEW DELHI, Aug 21: Union Education Minister Pralhad Joshi on Friday met Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and discussed ways to further strengthen and streamline the implementation of the Samagra Shiksha scheme in the state.

Sarma visited Joshi's Delhi residence for the first time since taking oath for his second consecutive term as Assam chief minister, the education minister said in a post on X.

The two leaders also discussed ensuring robust and seamless financial support for teachers under the scheme and ensuring seamless fund flow under the SNA-SPARSH mechanism, in line with the scheme's framework, he said.

"This will facilitate timely salary disbursement and strengthen the delivery of quality and equitable school education across Assam," Joshi said. "We discussed ways to further strengthen and streamline the implementation of #SamagraShiksha (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Guwahati-based cab operators unhappy over telephonic talk between two CMs ● Assam govt opens helpline numbers

Jorabat blockade enters 2nd day; several vehicles stranded

GUWAHATI, Aug 21: A traffic blockade by Guwahati-based cab operators against Meghalaya continued for the second day on Friday following alleged attacks on people from Assam during a students' rally in Shillong two days ago.

With reports of people from Assam being stranded in Meghalaya, the state police activated helpline numbers and urged those in need of assistance to reach out.

Violence erupted during a bike rally organised by the Khasi Students' Union (KSU) in Shillong on Wednesday.

At least 31 vehicles, including those from Assam, were damaged, 16 people injured and two vehicles set ablaze, Meghalaya Police had said.

Following the incident, commercial vehicle operators in Guwahati blocked traffic to Meghalaya at



Jorabat and Khanapara, the main entry points to the neighbouring state, from Thursday.

The protest forced travellers to

change vehicles at the inter-state border, while goods-carrying vehicles remained stranded on both sides.

The protestors, however, maintained that vehicles engaged with essential services were not being stopped.

"We will continue this protest till a permanent solution is found. It is a recurring issue of vehicles and drivers from Assam facing harassment in Meghalaya," a cab-operator at a sit-in protest at Jorabat said.

He questioned the outcome of the telephonic discussion between the chief ministers of the two states.

"The CMs said they have spoken over the phone. But our fears have not been assuaged. We want safety of our lives and vehicles ensured there," the cab operator added.

Another protester blamed the Assam government for "not taking pro-active (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Himanta discusses key issues of Assam with Sitharaman, Joshi



GUWAHATI, Aug 21: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday called on Union ministers Nirmala Sitharaman and Pralhad Joshi in the national capital and discussed issues concerning key sectors of the state.

He also updated Sitharaman on the state government's response to the flood situation and the roadmap to rehabilitate the affected people. "It is always a pleasure to meet Hon'ble Finance Minister Smt @nsitharaman Ji, who has (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Amit Shah alleges previous Mamata govt blocked new criminal laws to protect 'syndicate raj'

SILIGURI, Aug 21: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday alleged the previous Mamata Banerjee-led TMC government did not notify the new criminal laws passed by Parliament, alleging that it wanted to protect the "syndicate, cut-money and extortion regime".

He asserted the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA), implemented by the Suwendu Adhikari-led BJP government, was a "decisive" step towards "replacing the environment of fear (bhoy) with that of trust (bharosa)".

The BNS, BNSS and the BSA, which came into effect in the country on July 1, 2024, replaced the British-era Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act, respectively.

Addressing a gathering in Siliguri where Shah inaugurated an exhibition on the three criminal laws, he said, "While the entire country had begun implementing the new criminal laws, Banerjee never notified them. She knew that the laws would sound the death knell for her syndicate, cut-money and extortion regime."

The Union home minister said Suwendu Adhikari signed the file for notifying the new laws as one of his first moves after taking charge as chief minister, enabling

replacement of the British-era laws in the state.

"You will now see how the three new criminal laws will protect citizens and safeguard property. These laws will ensure that justice can be delivered even up to the Supreme Court within three years. The Bengal Police will do what is required," Shah said.

He insisted the new criminal laws will fast-track the justice delivery mechanism and allow zero-FIRs to be lodged at any police station.

Asserting that the BJP government has brought in the rule of law in the state, Shah claimed the regime change in Bengal and the introduction of various new rules have brought about positive changes in people's everyday lives.

"Earlier, all you could hear was the sound of bombs," he said as he took a swipe at previous administrations, alleging the "cadre raj" during the Left Front's rule was replaced by "goonda raj" under the Trinamool Congress.

"The state is now witnessing the rule of law," he said.

Reiterating his resolve to curb infiltration from across the international border, Shah said, "I repeat my firm stand to unearth every single infiltrator in this state, throw them out, using the detect-delete-deport mechanism."

The Union home minister assured (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

India rejects remarks by USCIRF officials

NEW DELHI, Aug 21: India on Friday trashed remarks by senior officials of US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) calling for sanctions against the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and asked Washington not to extend diplomatic courtesies to its leaders.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, rejecting the remarks described the USCIRF as a "biased" organisation.

"We are all aware that the

organisation that you are referring to has been making disparaging and inflammatory remarks about India," he said at his bi-weekly media briefing.

"It is a biased organisation. I would say that we should keep away from such organisations as they have their own agenda and lack any credibility," he said.

Jaiswal was responding to a question on the remarks by the USCIRF officials.

USCIRF Commissioner Gene Mills said RSS leaders, even when affiliated with the

Indian government, should not be honoured with high-level meetings or diplomatic courtesies.

"Instead, the USG (US Government) should focus on imposing sanctions on RSS members found responsible for ForB (freedom of religious belief) violations," Mills said.

USCIRF chair Asif Mahmood described RSS as an umbrella organisation whose sub-groups have perpetrated attacks on religious minorities. USCIRF posted the remarks (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Pseudo-secular chieftains indulging in communal lynching of Vande Mataram: Naqvi slams Congress

NEW DELHI, Aug 21: BJP leader Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi launched a scathing attack on the Congress over the Vande Mataram issue on Friday, saying "pseudo-secular chieftains" are indulging in a "communal lynching" of the national song.

Speaking with reporters here, Naqvi said the Congress's stance on Vande Mataram is a "self-goal" and instead of correcting the "sin" committed in 1937, the party is still engaged in foolishness by justifying that act.

Following the restoration of the full spirit of Vande Mataram in Parliament,

the Congress had an opportunity to rectify the "criminal misdeed" it had committed against the national song under pressure from the Muslim League, but it is still indulging in appeasement, the former Union minister alleged.

He further alleged that the insult to the national song is not a coincidence but a communal ploy.

Vande Mataram does not endanger anyone's religious faith, rather, it demolishes the design to denigrate democracy, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader said.

The Congress on Wednesday decided to abide by the 1937 (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

USISPF coordinating industry response to India's draft nuclear regulations

US nuclear industry to make comprehensive submissions to India on SHANTI rules



WASHINGTON, Aug 21: The US nuclear industry is set to make a comprehensive submission to India on the draft rules and regulations to implement the SHANTI Act, which has opened up the atomic energy sector for private participation.

Last week, the Department of Atomic Energy released the draft rules and regulations of the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Act and sought comments by September 4.

The US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF), which led a delegation of US nuclear industry representatives to India earlier this year to explore opportunities in the civil nuclear sector, held discussions on Thursday with legal experts

in India and the Nuclear Energy Institute based here.

"USISPF is coordinating a comprehensive industry submission to the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), Government of India (GOI) by the September 4 deadline," the USISPF said in a social media post.

USISPF also held a virtual briefing for its Nuclear Industry Committee on the recently released draft SHANTI rules and regulations.

"The virtual session convened senior industry leaders from across the nuclear value chain and covered: key provisions of the Draft SHANTI Rules and Draft SHANTI Regulations - what they mean for industry; implications for private (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

কৃষি আৰু কৃষক কল্যাণ মন্ত্ৰণালয়
ভাৰত চৰকাৰ

“আমাৰ ধান খেতি, মাটিমাহৰ খেতি আদিৰ খনিহে ক্ষতি হয়, তেওঁ আমি এই বীমাৰ জৰিয়তে ক্ষতিপূৰণ পাই বাওঁ। যদি সকলোৱে ফচল বীমা কৰাই লয় তেন্তে তেওঁলোকেও আমাৰ দৰে ক্ষতিপূৰণ পাব আৰু তেওঁলোকৰ খেতি-পথাৰো নিৰাপদ হৈ ব'ব।”

হিভাৰ্ষিতাৰী কৃষক
অনীতা বাণী দাস
বৰপেটা, অসম

“প্রধানমন্ত্রী ফচল বীমা যোজনাৰ বতৰৰ অনিশ্চয়তাৰ সৈতে জড়িত ক্ষতিৰ শংকা কম কৰি পৰিশ্ৰমী কৃষক ভাই-ভনীৰ আৰ্থিক সুৰক্ষা প্ৰদান কৰাত গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ ভূমিকা পালন কৰি আহিছে। এই বীমাৰ দ্বাৰা কোটি কোটি কৃষক উপকৃত হৈছে।”

- নৰেন্দ্ৰ মোদী, প্ৰধানমন্ত্ৰী

মই পালোঁ ভৰসা, ফচলে পালে সুৰক্ষা

ফচল বীমা কৰাওক সুৰক্ষা কবচ পাওক

প্ৰধানমন্ত্ৰী ফচল বীমা যোজনাৰ ১০ বছৰৰ সাফল্যসমূহ

- ৯২+ কোটি কৃষক আৱেদন প্ৰাপ্তি
- ২২ লাখ কোটিত কৈও অধিক দাবীৰ ধন কৃষকক পৰিশোধ
- ২৫+ কোটি কৃষকৰ আৱেদনৰ ফচল বীমাৰ ক্ষতিপূৰণ লাভ
- ৰাষ্ট্ৰীয় ফচল বীমা প'ৰ্টেল-ৰ দ্বাৰা স্বচ্ছ আৰু দ্ৰুতভাৱে দাবীৰ ধন পৰিশোধ

পঞ্জীয়নৰ শেষ দিন ১৫ ছেপ্টেম্বৰ, ২০২৬

সমগ্ৰ দেশ জোৰা হেল্পলাইন **১৪৪৪৭**

আপোনাৰ ফচলৰ বীমা কৰোৱাৰ বাবে আজিয়েই যোগাযোগ কৰক

১-৯৬ জুলাই, ২০২৬

শস্য বীমা
মাহ

সমগ্ৰ দেশ জোৰা হেল্পলাইন **১৪৪৪৭**

প্ৰধানমন্ত্ৰী ফচল
বীমা যোজনা

১-৯৬ জুলাই, ২০২৬

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প্ৰধানমন্ত্ৰী ফচল
বীমা যোজনা

Villagers protest against demand to retain 10-km ESZ around Kaziranga

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 21: Residents of Bagori, Diring, Kohora and Dolamara villages on the fringes of Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve (KNPTR) took out a protest procession at Kohora on Friday, opposing the demand of Karbi Anglong District Congress Committee (KADCC) president Raton Engti and Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president and Deputy Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi to retain the proposed 10-km Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) around the park.

The protesters accused the Congress leaders of overlooking the interests and concerns of communities that have been living in the fringe areas of KNP for decades.

The procession was led by VDC chairman Sarkoi Rongphar, Duarbagori BJP Mandal Committee president Amoron Terang, Dolamara Town Committee chairman Mongoling Terang and former Executive Member of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Benteng Terang.

The protest came days after Engti and Gogoi led a demonstration at Kohora Chariali on August 17, demanding that the proposed ESZ around KNPTR should not be reduced from 10 km to 1 km.

The Congress leaders had alleged that reducing the ESZ could facilitate the return of commercial activities, including sand and stone

Residents of Bagori, Diring, Kohora and Dolamara oppose Congress leaders' stand; say proposed reduction would protect local livelihood interests

mining and adversely affect the water, soil and air quality of the region.

The Assam government has proposed reducing the ESZ around KNPTR from 10 km to 1 km, citing Supreme Court guidelines.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had said on August 8 that the State government would approach the Centre regarding the proposal.

Welcoming the proposed reduction, KAAC Executive Member in charge of Education Richard Tokbi said the move was in the interest of people living in the fringe areas of the national park.

"I gladly welcome the decision of Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma to reduce the ESZ. I have always supported and stood shoulder to shoulder with the people of Dolamara, Diring, Kohora and Bagori in their legitimate demand for survival," Tokbi said.

He also criticised opposition to the proposal, saying that the concerns and sentiments of local residents should be taken into consideration.

VDC chairman Sarkoi Rongphar said residents of the fringe areas had been demanding the with-

drawal or reduction of the ESZ for nearly a decade, claiming that restrictions associated with the proposed zone could adversely affect



their livelihoods.

Rongphar said several Karbi villages in Bagori, Diring, Kohora and Dolamara could fall within the proposed ESZ.

According to him, villagers fear that restrictions could affect their access to forests for collecting firewood and traditional construction materials such as bamboo, timber, grass and reeds.

He further claimed that the restrictions could affect agricultural activities and make it difficult for villagers to construct houses and carry out their daily livelihood ac-

tivities.

Rongphar said the proposed reduction of the ESZ from 10 km to 1 km had therefore been welcomed by residents of the affected areas.

"We thank the Chief Minister for considering the concerns of the people living in these areas," he said.

Criticising the August 17 Congress-led protest at Kohora, Rongphar alleged that the opposition

Protest staged in Sivasagar over alleged misbehaviour with DC

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Aug 21: Members of the All Assam District Administrative Employees Association, Sivasagar unit, staged a one-hour sit-in demonstration in front of the District Commissioner's Office on Friday and observed a pen-down strike for the remainder of the day in protest against the alleged misbehaviour of Sivasagar MLA Akhil Gogoi with District Commissioner Mridul Yadav, IAS.

The protest was reportedly linked to a disagreement over matters concerning the distribution of flood relief in the district.

Speaking to our correspondent at his office, District Commissioner Mridul Yadav said he had been working in accordance with rules and administrative policy but alleged that Gogoi had misbehaved with and intimidated him intentionally, which he said was not expected from an elected representative.

Yadav further claimed that despite his request, the MLA did not come to his office chamber and allegedly misbehaved with him in the presence of members of the public.

He also alleged that the incident was recorded by videographers from different angles and subsequently circulated on social media.

Members of the employees' as-



sociation said their protest was against what they described as the rough and indecent manner in which the District Commissioner was allegedly treated.

Dipjyoti Chetia and Rumin Baruah, members of the organisation, said they had nothing to comment on the differences of opinion between the MLA and the District Commissioner, but objected to the alleged manner of conduct.

Association secretary Jitendra Mili said the alleged misbehaviour with the District Commissioner amounted to an insult to the entire administrative employees' community and was condemnable.

The employees also said that the District Commissioner and administrative staff were not the only people working for the welfare of the public and that government employees and others had been working day and night for

people affected by the recent floods. They said the association would also write to the MLA regarding the matter.

Akhil Gogoi, MLA, Sivasagar, could not be contacted over the phone for his response.

According to reports, the disagreement was related to the inclusion of additional beneficiaries in the list for the government's ₹15,000 flood relief assistance. Gogoi had reportedly sought the inclusion of around 2,000 additional beneficiaries from his constituency, while approximately 32,000 names had already been included.

The administration reportedly maintained that the relief list could not be expanded disproportionately for a single constituency, particularly in view of the State government's earlier announcement of immediate food relief for one lakh flood-affected families across Assam.

AASU, Asom Sena stage rally in Jorhat demanding drug-free district

Students seek stringent action against drug peddlers and dismantling of narcotics supply networks

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, Aug 21: A large rally organised by the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and Asom Sena in Jorhat on Friday demanded a drug-free district, stringent action against drug peddlers and stronger measures to dismantle networks involved in the supply and sale of narcotics.

Hundreds of students took to the streets carrying placards and raising slogans demanding a "drug-free Jorhat".

The protesters urged the authorities to take decisive action against those involved in the drug trade and identify and dismantle the supply networks and their sources operating in and around the district.

Addressing the gathering, AASU Jorhat unit president Pritam Jyoti Saikia said the people of Jorhat took pride in the district's cultural heritage, but alleged that

the activities of drug peddlers and substance abusers were tarnishing its image.

Saikia also alleged that the authorities had been informed on several occasions about incidents related to drug abuse in the district, but the problem had continued to grow.

AASU Literary Secretary Niharika Saikia alleged that lax enforcement at some police stations had contributed to the spread of drugs.

Referring to the killing of student leader Animesh Bhuyan in Jorhat, she said the incident had occurred around 300 metres from Sadar Police Station and involved youths who were allegedly under the influence of narcotic substances.

Chief convenor of Asom Sena Bijoy Shankar Bordoloi also alleged that some police officials had

failed to take adequate action against the drug trade.

Bordoloi called for stronger implementation of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, arguing that drug suppliers often return to the trade after securing bail or being released from custody.

He also stressed that tackling the drug menace could not be left to the police alone and called for greater participation from local communities in preventing the spread of substance abuse.

The protesters said the continued availability of drugs was increasingly affecting young people and alleged that several youths had lost their lives after becoming victims of substance abuse.

They demanded coordinated and sustained action by the authorities to curb the drug trade and protect young people from its impact.

Programme promotes scientific interventions to enhance Muga and Eri sericulture

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Aug 21: A Scientist-Farmer Interaction Programme under Mera Resham Mera Abhimaan (MRMA) 2.0 was organised at Kazigaon in Parbatjora, Kokrajhar, with the objective of strengthening the linkage between scientific institutions, the Department of Sericulture and farming communities and promoting the adoption of improved technologies in Muga and Eri sericulture.

The programme was coordinated by Dr Suraksha Chanotra, Scientist-B, Central Silk Board, Muga Eri Silkworm Seed Organisation (MESSO), P3 Unit, Kowabil, Kokrajhar, in association with Kalpojita Basumatary, Extension Officer, Department of Sericulture, Adabari. Bhanulata Mushahary, Director, Department of Sericulture, BTC, Kokrajhar, attended the programme as the Special Guest.

Officials of the Department of Sericulture, Kokrajhar, also participated in the interaction.

A major technical focus of the programme was the promotion of the C2 improved Eri breed along with the traditional Kokrajhar Eri race, with emphasis on enhancing productivity while retaining locally adapted genetic resources.

Farmers were also sensitised to the NBR-2 hybrid variety of castor, aimed at improving host-plant productivity and strengthening the Eri rearing system.

Scientific management practices for Muga silkworm rearing were discussed in detail, particularly the selection and preparation of suitable brushing plots to ensure better larval establishment and crop performance.

The participating farmers were also apprised of essential dos and don'ts at different stages of Muga and Eri rearing.

The discussions covered sanitation, hygiene, disinfection, bed cleaning and preventive measures to minimise disease incidence and pathogen transmission.

The interactive session provided farmers with an opportunity to raise technical issues encountered at the field level.

Their queries relating to the appropriate use and application of disinfectants, ventilation and microclimatic management in cocooning rooms and other aspects of rearing management were addressed through scientific and practical guidance.

The participating farmers expressed satisfaction with the technical clarifications and solutions provided during the interaction.

Various government schemes and support interventions aimed at promoting, expanding and developing sericulture, besides encouraging technology adoption, were also discussed. The session enabled farmers to gain a better understanding of the available opportunities and institutional support.

The programme highlighted the farmer-centric approach of MRMA 2.0 in translating scientific knowledge into field-level practices.

The initiative is expected to support improved technology adoption, enhance productivity, strengthen disease and hygiene management and contribute to the sustainable development of Muga and Eri sericulture in Kokrajhar district.

Drugs worth over ₹80,000 seized in Nagaon; two arrested

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Aug 21: Nagaon Police seized drugs worth more than ₹80,000 and arrested two alleged drug peddlers during an operation based on a tip-off in the town on Friday.

The operation was led by Town Sub-Inspector Biman Gogoi of Nagaon Sadar Police Station.

A police team intercepted the two accused near the State Bank of India's main office on the old NH-37 road and took them into custody.

According to police sources, the two accused were allegedly transporting the drugs into Nagaon town from Katimari, on the outskirts of Nagaon, on a Honda Dio scooter bearing registration number AS 02 AR 7625.

The arrested persons have been identified as Islam Malik and Sahin Malik, both residents of Fauzdaripatti.

Police have taken the duo into custody and are questioning them to gather further information about their alleged drug network.

During the operation, police recovered 30 containers containing suspected drugs, with the total seized quantity weighing 35.5 grams.

The value of the seized substances has been estimated at more than ₹80,000.

Police sources alleged that the two accused had been involved in drug peddling in Nagaon town and adjoining areas for some time.

A case has been registered in connection with the seizure and further investigation is underway, police sources said.

NFR announces further changes in train services amid restoration work

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 21: Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has announced further changes in train services in the Lumding-Badarpur Hill Section amid ongoing restoration work near New Harangajao station following the settlement of railway tracks on Line-1 and Line-2.

Train operations in the affected section are currently being maintained through Line-3 with enhanced safety measures, NFR said.

According to the latest notification, Train No. 15617 (Guwahati-Dullabcherra) Express, scheduled to commence its journey on August 22, 2026, has been cancelled.

Consequently, Train No. 15618 (Dullabcherra-Guwahati) Express, scheduled to commence its journey on August 23, has also been cancelled.

Similarly, Train No. 15615 (Guwahati-Silchar) Express, commencing its journey on August 22, and Train No. 15616 (Silchar-Guwahati) Express, commencing its journey on August 23, have been cancelled. NFR has also rescheduled two trains in view of the restoration work.

Train No. 15650 (Narangi-Agartala) Express, scheduled to commence its journey on August 22, will now depart from Narangi at 6:30 pm.

Assam Sahitya Sabha seeks rescheduling of third phase of Gunotsav

Literary body says overlap with 78th biennial session at Duliagan could create difficulties for teachers, delegates and district administration

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Aug 21: The Assam Sahitya Sabha has urged Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to review and reschedule the third phase of Gunotsav after its dates were found to overlap with the 78th biennial session of the literary organisation, scheduled to be held at Duliagan in Dibrugarh district.

According to a memorandum submitted to the Chief Minister, the Sabha's 78th biennial session is scheduled from January 31 to February 4, 2027, following an earlier decision of the organisation.

However, a recent Education Department notification has scheduled the third phase of Gunotsav for February 2 to 5, 2027, in 10 districts, including Dibrugarh.

The Sabha said the overlapping schedules could create difficulties for teachers, who are central to the implementation of Gunotsav as well as closely associated with the organisation of its biennial session.

In a press release issued on Friday, Principal Secretary of the Sabha Debojit Bora said many teachers across the State have long been involved in the literary, cultural and organisational activities of the Sabha.

The organisation apprehended that the simultaneous scheduling of the two programmes could result in a shortage of teachers and delegates required for various activities of the biennial session and could also affect the smooth implementation of Gunotsav.

The Sabha further pointed out that both programmes coinciding in Dibrugarh district could place an additional burden on the district

administration, schools and local teaching community.

Their cooperation would be required for arrangements relating to travel, accommodation and cultural programmes for delegates and guests expected to attend the biennial session from different parts of the State.

The literary body, however, clarified that its request should not be construed as opposition to Gunotsav.

It described Gunotsav as an important government initiative aimed at improving the quality of school education and said it was equally interested in ensuring that teachers are able to discharge their responsibilities under the programme without hindrance.

In its memorandum, the Sabha highlighted its century-long role in preserving, developing and promoting Assamese language, literature and culture.

It said the organisation has a wider socio-cultural responsibility and that its biennial sessions have become significant occasions in the cultural life of Assam.

The upcoming session at Duliagan, the Sabha said, is particularly important in this context.

The organisation has therefore urged the Chief Minister to "sympathetically reconsider" the Gunotsav schedule so that the two programmes do not clash.

The Sabha expressed hope that the Chief Minister's intervention would enable teachers to fulfil their responsibilities towards both the Education Department and the Assam Sahitya Sabha with equal commitment and sincerity.

Bangali Parishad Assam condemns violence during Meghalaya agitation

HT Correspondent

HAFLONG, Aug 21: The Dima Hasao District Committee of Bangali Parishad Assam has strongly condemned the vandalism of the statues of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and Swami Vivekananda and attacks on innocent people during the Khasi Students' Union agitation in Meghalaya on August 19.

In a statement, the organisation described the incidents allegedly carried out during the agitation by a student organisation as unfortunate and condemnable.

It said that no movement or protest should turn violent and that

grievances and demands in a democratic society must be expressed through peaceful and democratic means. The organisation said the violence in Meghalaya had not only tarnished the values of a civilised society but had also sent a disturbing message.

It maintained that there was no place for violence, vandalism or attacks on innocent people in a democratic and peaceful society.

The Bangali Parishad Assam, Dima Hasao District Committee, appreciated the Meghalaya administration for taking stringent action in connection with the incidents,

saying prompt action was essential to maintain peace and uphold the rule of law.

The organisation also appealed to Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma to ensure that all those involved in the violent incidents of August 19 are identified and arrested without delay and that strict legal action is taken against them in accordance with the law.

It further appealed to all sections of society, particularly student and youth organisations, to maintain peace and communal harmony and ensure that such incidents are not repeated in Meghalaya.

Forest Department intensifies patrolling and enforcement; habitat restoration and wildlife monitoring also strengthened

Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary steps up protection against illegal activities

HT Correspondent

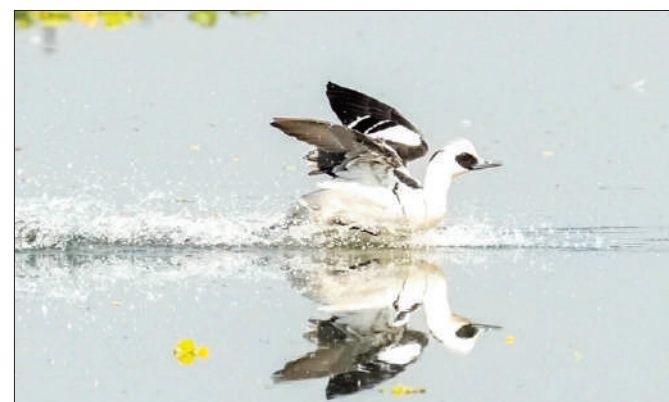
NAGAON, Aug 21: The Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary has intensified its conservation and protection measures with a series of operational initiatives focusing on wildlife monitoring, enforcement against illegal activities and habitat restoration, official sources said on Friday.

During the 7th Kaziranga Waterbird Count 2026, sanctuary staff recorded a high overall bird count and rich species diversity across major wetlands, including Rowmari, Dondowa and Muamari Beels.

The survey also recorded the first-ever sighting in the sanctuary of the rare migratory Smew (Mergellus albellus), along with the Bengal florican, highlighting the importance of Laokhowa as a habitat and wintering ground for waterbirds.

Meanwhile, the Forest Department has stepped up enforcement to protect the sanctuary's wetland ecosystems.

An individual involved in illegal



fishing inside sanctuary waters was arrested during a recent enforcement drive.

The Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Nagaon Wildlife Division, along with concerned range officers, has initiated additional measures to prevent such violations.

These include increased patrolling in vulnerable beels, surprise checks, installation of monitoring points and legal action against repeat offenders.

Forest officials also alleged that

following the crackdown, some illegal fishermen attempted to create confusion by circulating what the department described as fake news through certain newspapers.

The Forest Department clarified that enforcement actions were being carried out in accordance with the Wildlife Protection Act and warned that legal action could be taken against attempts to spread misinformation with the intention of obstructing conservation activities.

Habitat restoration has also been taken up following an anti-encroachment drive in the Singimari Sub-Beat area in June 2026, during which illegal agricultural land was cleared.

As part of the subsequent restoration effort, forest teams planted more than 2,500 native saplings across 1.5 hectares to restore green cover and strengthen the core wildlife habitat.

Forest officials reiterated that protection, wildlife surveys and habitat restoration would continue to be strengthened in Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary.

"Our priority is to protect biodiversity and wetland health. We will not allow illegal activities or attempts to derail conservation through false propaganda," a senior forest official said.

The department also urged local communities and media organisations to verify information with official sources before publication, particularly on matters concerning conservation and enforcement activities.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Doubt kills more dreams than failure ever will
— Suzy Kassem

Oil shock ahead?

Oil markets are beginning to treat the disruption in the Strait of Hormuz less as a temporary geopolitical shock and more as a structural constraint on global energy supply. That shift matters particularly for India, where the immediate consequences of higher crude prices intersect with a weaker rupee, more expensive shipping, narrowing refinery margins and an economy that remains overwhelmingly dependent on imported petroleum. Brent crude has climbed back above \$91 a barrel, reversing much of the decline that followed brief optimism earlier in August that negotiations could produce a durable settlement between Washington and Tehran. The market had temporarily entertained the prospect that diplomatic progress, coupled with a partial return of tanker traffic through Hormuz, would restore substantial volumes of Gulf crude. Those assumptions are now being steadily unwound. A June memorandum intended to create a pathway towards a permanent settlement has effectively run out of political space. The 60-day period envisaged for a broader agreement expired without resolving the central disputes over sanctions, Iran's nuclear programme, the US naval blockade and, most critically for oil markets, control and navigation through Hormuz. Washington has ruled out simply extending the arrangement, while Tehran insists the waterway will not return to normal operations unless its conditions are met.

Iran's warning that it is prepared to move towards a "fully offensive" military posture has therefore altered the risk calculation. Tehran has indicated that it could take military action if diplomacy fails and the blockade continues. At the same time, President Donald Trump has sharpened his rhetoric towards Oman, threatening military action if Muscat obstructs Washington's objectives as Oman and Iran discuss arrangements governing shipping through the strait. The dispute is no longer merely about whether Hormuz is technically open or closed. The economically significant question is how much oil can move through it safely, predictably and at commercially acceptable insurance rates. Before the war that began with US and Israeli strikes on Iran on February 28, roughly 18 million barrels of oil a day moved through the strait. Current movements are only a fraction of that level. Shipping data have shown exceptionally thin traffic on several days, including periods when virtually no commodity vessels passed through the waterway.

That distinction is crucial for India. India imports more than 90 per cent of the crude oil it consumes, making the economy unusually exposed to sustained increases in international prices. The disruption has already altered the geography of Indian sourcing. Russian crude accounted for more than half of India's oil imports in July, reaching about 2.47 million barrels a day, as refiners compensated for lower Middle Eastern availability. The Middle East's share of Indian imports has fallen substantially, while purchases from Latin America and other distant suppliers have increased.

Kaziranga's eco-sensitive zone: Coexistence of conservation and development

Kaziranga holds a unique place in Assam's natural identity and the global wildlife conservation landscape. World-renowned for the one-horned rhinoceros, Kaziranga is not merely a national park; it is a thriving ecosystem in the Brahmaputra valley where diverse wildlife, wetlands, grasslands and forests are deeply interconnected. Therefore, safeguarding Kaziranga cannot be confined within the boundaries of the park alone. It is equally vital to bring the surrounding natural environment, animal corridors and local communities under the purview of conservation.

This necessity highlights the importance of the Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ). An Eco-Sensitive Zone is essentially a designated buffer area around protected forests or national parks where activities capable of causing environmental harm are regulated. Its objective is not to halt development entirely, but rather to direct growth in harmony with ecological carrying capacity and local requirements. In essence, it is an endeavour to establish a secure threshold between conservation and development.

However, in the context of Kaziranga, the issue is particularly complex. Human settlements, agriculture, commerce and a tourism-driven economy have flourished around its periphery for generations. The livelihoods of many are intricately linked to Kaziranga and its surrounding ecosystem. Consequently, when enforcing ESZ norms, equal weight must be given to the rights to life, livelihood and development of the local populace alongside wildlife protection.

Among the foremost challenges facing Kaziranga are unregulated construction and rapid land-use transformation. As roads, hotels, resorts, commercial establishments and other infrastructure proliferate along the fringes of the park, environmental pressures escalate. In particular, when animal movement routes and corridors are obstructed, the impact reverberates across the entire ecosystem rather than affecting a single species. For wildlife, contiguous migratory paths, water bodies and connecting natural zones outside the park are indispensable parts of their natural life cycle.

This requirement becomes critically evident during annual floods. Every year, wildlife moves beyond the park's borders to-



ward higher ground to escape inundation. During these times, the significance of contiguous forests and safe passage routes increases manifold. If these corridors shrink due to human encroachment, construction, or other activities, human-wildlife conflict inevitably escalates. Thus, an Eco-Sensitive Zone must not be viewed merely as a line drawn on a map, but as a living ecological framework.

On the other hand, infrastructure and economic growth are equally imperative for Assam and Kaziranga. Local communities require improved roads, healthcare, education, connectivity, electricity, water and sustainable livelihood opportunities. Furthermore, the tourism sector centered around Kaziranga plays a pivotal role in the local economy. Therefore, any policy that unnecessarily burdens the daily lives of local residents under the guise of conservation cannot be considered sound. Hence, the core question is not whether we choose development over conservation, or vice versa. The fundamental question is, what form of development can harmoniously coexist with

Kaziranga's environment? Development achieved through the destruction of nature cannot be sustained over the long term. Conversely, conservation that excludes local communities will lack permanence. For Kaziranga, the need of the hour is to seek synergy rather than conflict between the two.

In this regard, sustainable eco-tourism warrants special emphasis. A proliferation of hotels and concrete structures does not inherently guarantee qualitative tourism. Low-impact eco-tourism—which actively involves local residents, utilizes local produce and services, implements waste management and adopts eco-friendly infrastructure—can simultaneously safeguard both Kaziranga's economy and its fragile ecology.

Simultaneously, empowering local inhabitants as active stakeholders in conservation is paramount. Communities residing on the fringes of Kaziranga for generations must be nurtured as partners in preservation rather than being subjected solely to regulatory constraints. Promoting alternative livelihoods, skill development, eco-friendly agri-

culture, eco-tourism and local micro-enterprises can significantly mitigate human-wildlife friction.

The ongoing discourse regarding Kaziranga's Eco-Sensitive Zone encompasses far more than disputes over land, borders, or commercial expansion. It touches upon a profound question concerning our vision for the future: What kind of Kaziranga do we wish to pass on to upcoming generations? Shall it be merely a national park serving as a sanctuary for the famous one-horned rhino, or a vibrant, living ecosystem nurturing rhinos along with elephants, tigers, deer, birds, grasslands and wetlands? And adjacent to it, an environment where the livelihoods of people who have coexisted with nature for ages remain secure?

Ultimately, protecting Kaziranga extends beyond saving the rhinoceros; it means preserving an entire natural world of which human beings are an integral part. The time has come to view development and conservation not as opposing forces, but as indispensable components of a shared future. Stagnating progress offers no solution, yet building an unviable future at the expense of ecological balance is equally detrimental. What is required is not conflict, but collaboration—grounded in scientific planning, transparent policies, land-use management, active community participation and a long-term environmental vision. In this light, Kaziranga's Eco-Sensitive Zone is not a barrier standing against development; rather, it can serve as a protective shield that bridges human progress with the resilience of nature.

Kaziranga is not only the pride of Assam but also an irreplaceable natural heritage for the world. Consequently, the responsibility of preserving it cannot rest solely on the shoulders of the government or the Forest Department; it is a shared duty encompassing local communities, the tourism industry, entrepreneurs and every conscious citizen. If present-day development imperils the very existence of Kaziranga tomorrow, both the trajectory and purpose of such development must be re-evaluated—for no progress achieved by subduing nature can endure. True sustainability lies in walking hand in hand with nature, ensuring that Kaziranga remains protected for generations to come.

DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Lalit Nath

Inner Line Permit (ILP) and Assam

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

The demand for an Inner Line Permit (ILP) in Assam has returned to the centre of public debate because questions of migration, land, employment, indigenous rights and cultural identity remain deeply connected in the state. The demand is not new. The Inner Line system originated under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873, which created a regulatory boundary beyond which movement into protected frontier areas required official permission. The system was designed during the colonial period to regulate outside commercial and administrative influence in areas inhabited largely by tribal communities. After Independence, the system continued in parts of the Northeast and today operates in Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur. An ILP is essentially a government-issued permit that allows an Indian citizen from outside a protected state to enter or remain there for a specified period and under specified conditions. Assam, however, has never been covered by the modern ILP regime, despite sharing borders with all four northeastern states that have such arrangements. This difference has become increasingly difficult to ignore as concerns about demographic change and indigenous rights have intensified. In July and August 2025, the Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuba Chatra Parishad organised protests in different parts of Assam demanding the introduction of ILP and stronger protection for indigenous land rights. The organisation argued that an ILP system could help regulate the entry and residence of outsiders and protect the demographic interests of Assam's indigenous communities. The argument deserves serious examination but it should not be reduced to a simple question of whether outsiders should be allowed into Assam. Assam is not an isolated frontier territory. It is the principal economic and transport gateway to the Northeast and has extensive connections with the rest of India. Guwahati is a major centre for education, healthcare, trade, administration and transportation, while thousands of people from other states work in construction, transport, hospitality, retail and other sectors. A permit system would therefore affect ordinary economic and social movement as well as questions of population control. The distinction between internal migration and illegal international immigration is equally important. Census data classify migration according to place of previous residence, duration and reasons such as employment, education, marriage and other circumstances. The 2011 Census recorded Assam's population at 312.05 lakh, with a decadal growth rate of 17.07 per cent between 2001 and 2011. These figures demonstrate demographic change, but they cannot by themselves establish the scale of illegal immigration. Assam's policy debate must therefore distinguish between Indian citizens moving from another state, people migrating within Assam and foreign nationals entering the country illegally. Treating all three categories as the same would produce a weak policy response. The real question is whether Assam requires an additional mechanism to regulate legitimate internal movement while protecting indigenous communities and if so, what form that mechanism should take.

The strongest case for ILP rests on the protection of indigenous interests, particularly land, political representation, employment and

cultural identity. Assam has experienced demographic and social changes over several decades and these changes have shaped the state's political history. The Assam Movement, the Assam Accord, the citizenship debate and the National Register of Citizens all emerged from concerns about migration and the perceived threat to the state's social and political balance. Yet ILP cannot replace the legal framework created by the Assam Accord. The Accord established 25 March 1971 as the cut-off date for identifying foreigners in Assam, making the question of illegal international migration fundamentally different from the regulation of Indian citizens entering the state from elsewhere in India. An ILP system would address movement within India, whereas citizenship and foreigner laws address nationality and illegal entry. This distinction matters because an ILP cannot, by itself, prevent illegal entry across the international border. Border management, documentation, citizenship verification and enforcement of immigration laws would remain necessary even if Assam received ILP protection. The state also already possesses special constitutional and statutory mechanisms for protecting particular communities and areas. The Sixth Schedule provides autonomous administrative arrangements in certain tribal areas, while Assam's land laws contain special provisions concerning tribal belts and blocks. These mechanisms reflect the constitutional recognition that Assam's diverse communities require different forms of protection. Supporters of ILP argue, however, that existing safeguards have not created sufficient protection across the entire state. The experience of neighbouring states provides some evidence for this argument. Arunachal Pradesh requires ILP for Indian citizens entering the state from outside, and authorities continue to verify whether people residing or working there possess valid permits. In 2025, authorities detained 39 people during an ILP verification drive for allegedly staying or working without valid permits. Mizoram has also maintained an active permit system, with government figures showing that more than 35,000 ILPs were issued between 2022 and July 2025. These examples show that ILP can create a formal record of visitors, workers and other non-residents. It can give the state information about who enters, why they enter and how long they intend to stay. That administrative value may be particularly relevant for Assam. However, the system should not be presented as a complete answer to demographic change. A permit can regulate entry, but it cannot automatically protect land from illegal transfer, create jobs for local youth, preserve Assamese language and culture or prevent international infiltration. Those problems require separate policies. Assam must therefore avoid confusing an administrative instrument with a comprehensive solution. If ILP is considered, its objective should be clearly defined before implementation. The government would have to decide whether the system would apply to tourists, workers, students, businesspersons, professionals, long-term residents or all non-domiciled Indian citizens. It would also have to determine how permits would affect employment, property transactions, business registration and long-term settlement. Without these answers, ILP could create administrative uncertainty rather than genuine protection.

The economic consequences of an ILP regime deserve as much attention as its demog-

raphic implications. Assam cannot be separated from the wider Indian economy because its geographical position makes it the principal link between the Northeast and the rest of the country. The state needs investment, skilled workers, entrepreneurs, professionals, tourists and commercial networks to expand its economy. Large infrastructure projects, manufacturing, construction, healthcare and services often depend on labour and expertise from outside the state. A complicated permit regime could increase compliance costs and discourage some forms of investment if businesses believe that recruiting workers or establishing operations will become unnecessarily difficult. At the same time, economic development cannot mean unrestricted movement without safeguards for local communities. Assam's challenge is therefore to find a balance between economic openness and indigenous protection. The existing ILP states offer useful lessons because their systems are not simply blanket prohibitions on outsiders. Nagaland, for example, provides different categories of permits for tourists, workers, businesspersons, students and professionals, demonstrating that movement can be regulated according to purpose rather than treated as a single category. Assam could study such models and develop a system suited to its own circumstances instead of mechanically copying another state's rules. A digital permit system could also reduce administrative delays. Identity verification, online applications, employer registration and time-bound permits could make the system more transparent and reduce opportunities for arbitrary decision-making. The government could maintain stronger requirements for long-term workers and commercial establishments while keeping procedures simple for tourists, students and patients. Such differentiation would be particularly important in Guwahati and other major urban centres, where interaction with people from across India is an ordinary part of economic life. Census records themselves demonstrate that migration is not a single phenomenon. The official migration tables classify people according to previous residence, duration of residence, age, sex and reasons for migration, including employment. This suggests that government policy should also distinguish between different forms of movement. Assam should not treat a visitor staying for a week, a student studying for several years, a construction worker employed for a project and a businessperson establishing a company as identical administrative categories. At the same time, the state should strengthen its existing land and labour laws rather than assuming that ILP alone will protect local interests. Better land records, strict enforcement against fraudulent transfers, protection of tribal belts and blocks, effective labour registration and stronger action against illegal encroachment would complement any future permit regime. The same principle applies to employment. If local youth lack adequate opportunities, restricting outsiders will only provide limited relief unless Assam simultaneously improves education, vocational training, entrepreneurship and industrial development. Indigenous protection becomes sustainable when local people gain stronger economic capacity. An ILP may provide regulatory control, but economic strength and institutional capacity provide lasting protection.

The debate should now move from political

slogans to a careful constitutional and administrative examination of what Assam actually requires. The question is not simply whether Assam should receive the same arrangement as Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur. Assam has a different demographic structure, a larger population, stronger economic links with other parts of India and a unique history of migration and identity politics. Any proposal must therefore consider its relationship with the Constitution, the Assam Accord, citizenship laws, the Sixth Schedule, existing land protections and the fundamental freedoms of Indian citizens. The government should examine the issue through an independent process involving constitutional experts, administrators, economists, representatives of indigenous communities, businesses and civil society. Such an assessment should rely on updated demographic evidence rather than political assumptions. The 2011 Census remains the last completed population census with detailed nationwide migration tables, and the absence of newer comprehensive Census data makes it particularly important to distinguish established facts from political claims. The official Census database provides detailed migration tables for Assam based on place of last residence, duration and reason for migration, offering a useful foundation for evidence-based analysis. The government should also recognise that illegal international immigration and internal migration require different responses. Stronger border management and enforcement of citizenship and immigration laws are necessary for the former, while an ILP would primarily address the latter. Land protection requires effective land administration, and employment protection requires economic policy. Cultural protection requires investment in language, education and institutions. No single permit can perform all these functions. If Assam eventually receives an ILP regime, it should therefore operate as one component of a broader indigenous-rights and migration-management framework. The system should be transparent, digital, time-bound and based on clearly defined categories. It should prevent arbitrary discrimination while giving the state greater information and control over long-term settlement and commercial activity. Assam should remain connected to India because its economic future depends on that connection. But connectivity should not mean that legitimate concerns about land, identity and indigenous rights receive no institutional protection. The purpose of ILP should not be to close Assam's doors. It should be to create a fair system through which entry, residence and economic activity can be regulated without undermining constitutional rights or Assam's role as the gateway to the Northeast. The demand deserves serious consideration because it reflects genuine concerns that have shaped Assam's public life for decades. Yet serious consideration must also include serious scrutiny. Assam needs reliable data, clear legislation and effective administration before adopting another regulatory system. If those conditions are met, an appropriately designed ILP could become part of a wider strategy to protect indigenous interests while preserving legitimate economic and social mobility. If they are ignored, ILP could become another politically powerful slogan without solving the problems that created the demand in the first place.

Roadblock to progress: The Shillong violence fallout

By: Satyabrata Borah

The recent outbreak of violence in Shillong and the subsequent blockade enforced by transporters along the Assam border at Jorabat mark a deeply troubling escalation in a long standing pattern of regional friction. What began as a black flag motorcycle rally organized by the Khasi Students Union quickly descended into widespread vandalism, targeted assaults, and property destruction. Masked participants riding motorcycles with concealed registration plates swept through the streets of the Meghalaya capital, leaving a trail of smashed windshields, burnt property, and injured bystanders. The explicit targeting of vehicles registered in Assam, alongside non local residents, highlights an unsettling strain of xenophobic aggression that periodically disrupts the social fabric of the hill state.

The swift retaliatory action by the Assam State Drivers Association along the crucial Guwahati Shillong highway illustrates how quickly civil unrest in one state can paralyze vital transport arteries connecting the broader region. By halting Meghalaya registered transport, while responsibly allowing medical emergencies through, the drivers sent a strong signal that the repeated targeting of non local transport workers will no longer be tolerated without consequence. This economic chokehold hits at the very lifeline of Meghalaya, which relies heavily on seamless transit through Assam for its daily commerce, food supplies, and tourism influx.

At the heart of the original rally was a long standing demand surrounding the enforcement of travel permits and residence security laws designed to restrict the movement and settlement of non tribal populations. While the protection of indigenous identity and demographic balance remains an important political discourse across the North East, the method chosen by agitators on the ground abandoned all democratic norms. Attacking tourists, thrashing commercial drivers, and vandalizing local heritage symbols like statues of national figures does nothing to advance a political cause. Instead, it breeds hostility, alienates neighboring communities, and severely diminishes public sympathy.

The police response in Meghalaya, culminating in the arrest of top student leaders following raids on their offices, is a step toward restoring judicial credibility. The administration had granted permission for the rally based on formal assurances that order would be maintained, assurances that were shattered within hours. When public gatherings degenerate into intimidation and arson, law enforcement must act decisively to uphold the rule of law. Failing to hold organizers accountable creates a dangerous culture of impunity, encouraging radical factions to hold entire cities hostage whenever their demands are not immediately met.

The immediate casualty of this lawlessness is the local economy, particularly the fragile tourism sector that sustains thousands of families across Meghalaya. Small business owners, homestay operators, taxi drivers, and local vendors rely heavily on visitors traveling up from the plains of Assam and other parts of the country. Images of burning cars and frightened tourists fleeing Shillong trigger massive accommodation cancellations and long term damage to the region's reputation as a welcoming haven. Calls for economic boycotts from neighboring states serve as a stark reminder that regional safety is directly tied to local prosperity. Intimidating visitors effectively starves the local ecosystem of the revenue needed to support its own communities.

The joint condemnation issued by Meghalaya tour operators and hoteliers highlights a growing internal divide between peaceful citizens striving for economic progress and fringe groups resorting to mob tactics. Ordinary residents understand that a community cannot isolate itself while simultaneously seeking economic growth. Rebuilding trust will require more than formal apologies or temporary suspensions of protests. It demands a sustained, genuine commitment from state leaders, community elders, and student bodies to reject violence as an instrument of political persuasion.

Governments in both Meghalaya and Assam must establish clear, permanent communication protocols to manage border transit security and protect commuters. Ensuring the safety of transport workers and visitors on national highways is a fundamental duty of the state. If citizens cannot travel safely across state borders without fear of physical assault, the vision of an integrated, prosperous North East remains severely compromised. True security for any community comes from fostering mutual respect, robust law enforcement, and constructive dialogue, rather than relying on masked intimidation on public streets.

These 3 charts show female dominated jobs are actually the most exposed to AI

By: **Leonora Risse and Elise Stephenson**

As the impacts of artificial intelligence (AI) sweep across the labour force, it's understandable for workers to be concerned about which jobs are most at risk of being replaced by technology.

Women make up the majority of workers in the care sector where human interactions matter most – child care, nursing and aged care. So, policymakers might reasonably presume that women's jobs are largely shielded from the impacts of AI.

But our analysis of recent data from government agency Jobs and Skills Australia shows that it's actually female-concentrated segments of the workforce that are most exposed to AI-fuelled automation.

Which jobs are most at risk?

The agency calculated an "automation

exposure score" for every occupation in the workforce, measuring the potential for a worker's tasks to be done by AI technologies.

Clerical and administrative jobs are among those with the highest automation exposure scores. This aligns with economists' expectations that AI is well suited to alleviate human effort for repetitive routine tasks.

Yet this sector, which is highly exposed to automation, is also more than 70% female and provides almost one in five jobs for all women in the Australian workforce.

This gender pattern shows up when we look at the 20 top occupations most at risk of automation. 15 of these jobs are female-dominated. Of these, five would be classified as highly female-dominated, comprised of at least 80% women.

Secretaries, receptionists, bookkeepers, and accounting, human resources and payroll clerks are all among these top 20

occupations most at risk of being displaced by automation.

Only one occupation on this top 20 list is moderately male dominated: financial dealers. The remaining four are gender-balanced.

Contrast this to the 20 occupations that are least exposed to automation. Seventeen of these are male-dominated. Female-concentrated jobs make up just three of these jobs most sheltered from being displaced by AI.

Is AI already replacing these jobs?

A slowdown in job vacancy numbers could signal that these effects of AI are being felt in the economy.

Internet job vacancy data, also collected by Jobs and Skills Australia, shows that vacancies for many of these jobs highly exposed to automation have been shrinking over the past three years. And by a larger magnitude than the slowdown across the wider workforce.

For instance, vacancies for personal

assistants and bookkeepers for the month of June 2026 were around 22% lower than at the same time a year earlier. Openings for general clerks were down by around 9%.

By comparison, total workforce vacancies were only around 1.7% weaker.

Among the occupations less exposed to AI, vacancies for concreters were up by 5.5%, while electricians were up by 14.3%. At this stage, trades and labourer jobs are less exposed to automation. These hands-on jobs still require human judgement and dexterity to navigate physical conditions that can be unpredictable and differ site by site.

Checking for blind spots

All kinds of groups – tech companies, governments, education providers and researchers – are trying to predict how AI will disrupt different jobs across the workforce.

Our analysis shows that unless we intentionally apply a gender lens, we could



end up ignoring gender patterns in AI's impacts.

The federal government already requires all new policy proposals to undergo a gender analysis. This requirement should therefore also apply to policies and decisions by the newly announced Office of AI.

In particular, applying a gender lens can inform the design of policies to support the labour market's adaptation to and adoption of AI.

This puts us on the front foot to design smart policies to proactively address AI's disruption, instead of waiting to respond after the fallout.

For instance, having detected the higher risk of these heavily female jobs to AI automation, we can set up systems to recognise the skills of clerical and administrative workers that can be easily transferred, to match them to new opportunities.

This could include the new and emerging jobs being created by AI, as well as human-centred jobs and tasks requiring critical judgement that AI can't replace.

Applying this gender lens to Australia's AI policies will support a dynamic, adaptive labour market hand-in-hand with a gender equitable economy. (Courtesy: The Conversation)

Sonitpur Recruitment 2026 – 43 Gaon Pradhan Posts

Name of Post	Gaon Pradhan
No of Posts	43 posts
Qualification	HSLC
Age Limit	30 to 65 years
Application Fee	Nil
Start Date	19th August 2026
Last Date	15th September 2026
Sonitpur Recruitment 2026	

District Commissioner, Sonitpur has released a recruitment notification for the recruitment of 43 Gaon Pradhan posts under various revenue circles of the Sonitpur district. Candidates who have passed HSLC may apply for these posts latest by 15th September 2026.

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

Vacancy Details

Name of post:	Gaon Pradhan
No of posts:	43 posts
Name of revenue circle:	Tezpur, Dhekiajuli, Thelamara, Chariduar and Naduar
Name of organization:	District Commissioner, Sonitpur
Pay:	Rs 14000/- per month

Revenue Circle-wise Vacancy

Revenue Circle	No of posts
Tezpur	12
Dhekiajuli	7
Thelamara	6
Chariduar	10
Naduar	8
Total	43 posts

Eligibility Criteria of Sonitpur Gaon Pradhan 2026

Age Limit: The candidates must not be less than 30 years and not more than 65 years of age as on 01/01/2026.

Educational Qualification

The candidate must have passed 10th standard or matriculation from a recognized institution or board.

Other Criteria of Sonitpur Recruitment

Nationality: Candidate should be a citizen of India and a permanent resident of the specified village or group of villages and a Gaon Pradhan lot in respect of which he/ she seeks appointment.

Property: Candidate should have land or immovable property in his/ her name in the area in which he/ she intends to be appointed as Gaon Pradhan.

Children: Candidate should not have more than 2 (two) living children from a single or multiple partner. Candidate should furnish a self-affidavit that the applicant does not have more than two living children from a single/ multiple partner.

Government Employee: The candidate should not be a government employee. Political Party: The candidate should not be a member of any political party. Physical Fitness: Candidate should be physically fit and have sound mind. Insolvency: Candidate should not have been declared as an insolvent or defaulter in payment of Govt. dues.

Application Fee

Candidates need not pay any application fee.

How to Apply for DC Sonitpur Recruitment ?

Interested and eligible candidates may apply in the Standard Format as published with the official notification. Duly filled application along with other documents may be deposited to Kanungo Branch of District Commissioner, Sonitpur office latest by 5 PM of 15 September 2026.

Documents to be Enclosed

- Copies of following documents are to be submitted along with the application.
- 3 passport sized photograph.
- Permanent Resident-ship Certificate.
- Copies of all educational certificates, Mark sheets, Admit Card of HSLC/ Age proof certificate.
- Govt. dues and Bakijai clearance certificate.
- Certificate from Mouzadar.
- Documents relating to land property in his/ her name.
- The Applicant should furnish an affidavit that he/ she has not more than 2(two) living children from a Single or multiple partners. etc

Important Dates of Sonitpur Vacancy 2026

Starting date of application submission: 19th August 2026
Last date of application submission: 15th September 2026, 5 PM

UPSC EPFO Recruitment 2026 – 80 Posts, Online Apply

Name of Post	Assistant Provident Fund Commissioner
No of Posts	80 posts
Qualification	Graduate
Age Limit	35 years
Application Fee	Rs. 25/-
Start Date	22nd August 2026
Last Date	11th September 2026

UPSC EPFO Recruitment 2026

Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has released a short recruitment notification for the recruitment of 80 Assistant Provident Fund Commissioner posts under Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO), Ministry of Labour & Employment. Candidates with Graduation may apply for these posts latest by 11th September 2026.

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

Vacancy Details

Name of post:	Assistant Provident Fund Commissioner
No of posts:	80 posts
Category-wise vacancy:	

UR: 29, EWS: 8, OBC: 18, SC: 15, ST: 10
Pay: Level-10 in the Pay Matrix as per 7th CPC.

Eligibility Criteria

Age Limit: Category-wise upper age limit is as mentioned below.

UR/ EWS: 35, OBC: 38, SC/ ST: 40, PwBD: 45

Educational Qualification: Candidates must have a Bachelor's Degree in any subject from recognised university or institute.

Desirable: Diploma in Company Law/Labour Laws/Public Administration.

Application Fee

Category	Fee
UR/ OBC	Rs 25/-
Female/ SC/ST/PwBD	Nil
Payment Mode:	Visa/ Master/ RuPay Credit/ Debit Card or by using Internet Banking.

How to Apply for UPSC Recruitment ?

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

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

Important Dates

- Starting date to apply online: 22nd August 2026
- Last date to apply online: 11th September 2026

AIIMS Guwahati Recruitment 2026 – 63 Faculty Posts, Online Apply

Name of Post	Faculty (Group A)
No of Posts	63 posts
Qualification	MBBS + etc
Age Limit	50 years/ 58 years
Application Fee	Rs. 1500/-
Start Date	August 2026
Last Date	15th September 2026
AIIMS Guwahati Recruitment 2026	

All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Guwahati has released an advertisement for the recruitment of 63 Faculty Group-A Posts in various Departments of AIIMS, Guwahati, Assam. Last date of submission of online application is 15th September 2026.

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

Vacancy Details

- 1. Professor
- No of posts: 17 posts
- Essential for Medical Candidates:

Qualification:

1. A medical Qualification included in the I or II schedule or part II of the third schedule to the Indian Medical Council Act of 1956 (Persons possessing qualifications included in part II of third schedule should also fulfil the conditions specified in section 13(3) of the Act.)

2. A postgraduate qualification e.g. MD/MS or a recognized qualification equivalent thereto in the respective discipline/subject.

AND/OR

3. M.Ch. for surgical super specialties and D.M. for Medical super specialties (2 years or 3 years or 5 years recognized course) or qualification recognized equivalent thereto.

Experience:

Fourteen years teaching and/or research experience in recognized Institution in the subject of speciality after obtaining the qualifying degree of M.D./M.S. or qualification recognized equivalent thereto.

OR

Twelve years teaching and/or research experience in recognized Institute in the subject of speciality after obtaining the Degree of M.Ch./D.M. (2 years or 5 years course recognized after MBBS) in the respective discipline/subject or a qualification recognized equivalent thereto.

OR

Eleven years teaching and/or research experience in recognized Institution in the subject of speciality for the candidates possessing 3 years recognized Degree of D.M./M. Ch in the respective discipline/subject or a qualification recognized equivalent thereto.

Essential for Non-Medical Candidates:

- 1. Postgraduate qualification e.g. Master degree in the discipline/allied subject.
- 2. A Doctorate degree of a recognized University in concerned discipline.

Experience: Fourteen years teaching and/or research experience in the discipline/subject concerned after obtaining the Doctorate degree.

2. Additional Professor

No of posts: 16 posts
Essential for Medical Candidates: 1 to 2 same as for Professor (Medical)

Experience:

Ten years teaching and/or research experience in recognized Institution in the subject of speciality after obtaining the qualifying degree of M.D. /M.S. or qualification recognized equivalent thereto.

Essential for super speciality disciplines:

- 1) Same as Professor (Medical)
- 2) D.M. in the respective discipline/subject for medical super specialties and M.Ch. in the respective discipline/subject for surgical super specialties (2 years or 3 years or 5 years recognized course) or a qualification recognized equivalent thereto.

Experience: Eight years teaching and/or research experience in a recognized Institution in the subject of speciality after obtaining the qualifying degree of D.M./ M.Ch. (2 years or 5 years recognized course after MBBS) in the respective discipline/subject or a qualification recognized equivalent thereto.

OR

Seven years teaching and/or research experience in a recognized Institution in the subject of speciality for the candidates possessing 3 years recognized degree of D.M. / M.Ch. in the respective discipline/subject or a qualification recognized equivalent thereto.

Essential for Non-Medical Candidates:

1 & 2 are same as for Professor (Non – Medical)

Experience: Ten years teaching and/or research experience in the discipline/subject concerned after obtaining the Doctorate degree.

3. Associate Professor

No of posts: 13 posts
Eligibility Criteria:

Essential for Medical Candidates (for General Discipline): 1 to 2 same as for Professor (Medical).

Experience:

Six years teaching and/or research experience in recognized Institution in the subject of speciality after obtaining the qualifying degree of M.D. / M.S. or a qualification recognized equivalent thereto.

Essential for super speciality disciplines:

- 1. Same as Professor (Medical)
- 2. D.M. in the respective discipline/subject for medical super specialties and M.Ch. in the respective discipline/subject for surgical super specialties (2 years or 3 years or 5 years recognized course) or a qualification recognized equivalent thereto.

Experience:

Four years teaching and/or research experience in a recognized Institution in the subject of speciality after obtaining the qualifying degree of D.M./M.Ch. (2 years or 5 years recognized course after MBBS) in the respective discipline/subject or a qualification recognized equivalent thereto.

OR

Three years teaching and/or research experience in a recognized Institution in the subject of speciality for the candidates possessing 3 years recognized degree of D.M. /M.Ch. in the respective discipline/subject or a qualification recognized equivalent thereto.

Essential for Non-Medical Candidates:

1 & 2 are same as for Professor (Non – Medical).

Experience:

Six years teaching and/or research experience in the discipline/subject concerned after obtaining the doctorate degree.

4. Assistant Professor

No of posts: 17 posts

Essential for Medical Candidates (For General Disciplines): 1 to 2 same as for Professor (Medical).

Experience:

Three years teaching and/or research experience in recognized Institution in the subject of speciality after obtaining the qualifying degree of M.D. /M.S. or qualification recognized equivalent thereto.

Essential for super speciality disciplines:

- 1. Same as Professor (Medical)
- 2. D.M. in the respective discipline/subject for medical super specialties and M.Ch. in the respective discipline/subject for surgical super specialties (2 years or 3 years or 5 years recognized course) or a qualification recognized equivalent thereto.

Experience:

One years teaching and/or research experience in a recognized Institution in the subject of speciality after obtaining the qualifying degree of D.M./M.Ch. (2 years or 5 years recognized course after MBBS) or qualification recognized equivalent thereto. However, no experience is necessary for the candidates possessing the 3 years recognised degree of D.M/M.Ch. or qualification recognised equivalent thereto.

Essential for Non-Medical Candidates: 1 & 2 are same as for Professor (Non – Medical).

Experience:

Three years teaching and/or research experience in the discipline/subject concerned after obtaining the Doctorate degree.

Pay Scale

Name of post	Scale
Professor	Rs.37,400-67,000+AGP Rs.10,500/- as per 6 th CPC
Additional Professor	Rs.37,400-67,000+AGP Rs.9,500/- as per 6 th CPC
Associate Professor	Rs.37,400-67,000+AGP Rs.9,000/- as per 6 th CPC
Assistant Professor	Rs.15,600-39,100+AGP 8,000/- as per 6 th CPC
Other Criteria	

Age Limit: Upper age limit as on the last date of the online application are as follows.

Name of post	Age Limit
Professor/Additional Professor	58 years
Associate Professor/ Assistant Professor	50 years

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

Category	Age Relaxation
SC / ST	5 years
OBC-NCL	3 years
PwBD	10 years

Application Fee

Category wise application fee is as under.

Category	Fee
UR / OBC/ EWS	Rs. 1500/-
SC / ST	Nil
PwBD/ Women	Nil

How to Apply For AIIMS Guwahati Recruitment ?

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

- Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .
- Click on Online Application Form link .
- A new webpage will be opened .
- Enter all your personal and educational details as required .
- Upload your passport sized photograph and signature and other required documents.
- Pay the examination fee as per your category and at the end click on submit button .
- Don't forget to take a print of submitted application form .
- Candidates who apply online will have to send the signed copy of online application and self-attested copies of certificates/documents in support of fulfilling the essential criteria of age, educational qualification, teaching/research experiences etc. besides others in support of their candidature within 15 days from the cut-off date for online application.

The Administrative Officer,
All India Institute of Medical Sciences,
Silbharal, Changsari, Guwahati, Assam -781101.

The envelope containing the application should be super-scribed with "Faculty recruitment - Application for the post of.....in the Department of.....".

The documents should be sent through Speed Post/Courier etc. within the stipulated period.

Important Dates of AIIMS Guwahati Vacancy 2026

- Starting date of submission of online application: August 2026
- Last date of submission of online application: 15th September 2026

Rajasthan Assembly adjourned sine die; UCC Bill introduced

The Question Hour could not be held due to the disruption

JAIPUR, Aug 21: The Rajasthan Assembly was adjourned twice on Friday amid continued sloganeering by Congress MLAs over the alleged denial of entry to them through the regular gate of the House on the opening day of the Monsoon Session, before the proceedings were finally adjourned sine die.

The Question Hour could not be held due to the disruption, while proceedings during the Zero Hour were also affected by the opposition's protest.

As soon as the House assembled in the morning, Leader of Opposition Tika Ram Jully raised the issue of Congress legislators allegedly being prevented from entering the Assembly building through the regular entrance on Thursday.

Jully demanded an inquiry into the incident and said the opposition wanted to raise issues concerning the people in the House.

Assembly Speaker Vasudev De-



vnani, however, did not allow him to raise the matter during the Question Hour and said it could be discussed after the Question Hour.

Following this, Congress MLAs stood up and started raising slogans, leading to an uproar in the House. Members from the treasury benches also objected to the opposition's conduct.

Devnani repeatedly appealed to the members to maintain order and allow the proceedings to continue. However, with the disruption persisting, he adjourned the House

until noon.

The first sitting lasted for around five minutes.

When the House met again, Congress members continued their sloganeering during the Zero Hour. Jully sought to raise the issue of entry, but Devnani said he would give both sides an opportunity to speak after the Zero Hour.

Despite repeated appeals from the Speaker, the opposition members continued their protest. Some legislators also raised their issues through adjournment motions, fol-

lowing which the proceedings were adjourned until 1 pm.

The second sitting lasted for around 20 minutes.

When the House met for the third time, Congress MLAs continued raising slogans. The House, however, proceeded with several legislative businesses amid the protest.

The government introduced the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill in the Assembly.

Devnani repeatedly appealed to the Congress members to return to their seats and participate in the proceedings. The opposition members continued their sloganeering, following which Jully announced that Congress would walk out of the House.

After the Congress members staged a walkout and the legislative business was completed, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Jogaraj Patel accused the opposition party of having "internal differences". (PTI)

Legal battle between NCP factions is about Constitution, morality, not individual: Sule

MUMBAI, Aug 21: NCP (SP) working president Supriya Sule on Friday said the ongoing legal battle with the party's rival faction was not a fight against an individual, but a struggle to uphold constitutional principles and ensure that rules and laws were followed.

Addressing reporters here, Sule expressed confidence in the Sharad Pawar-led faction's legal standing, asserting that the Election Commission's decision to award the original party name and symbol to the rival faction led by her sister-in-law, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Pawar, will fail to stand in court.

"Rules are made to be followed. Rules and laws should not be meant for arbitrariness. The country will run according to the Constitution given by Bharat Ratna Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar and within the framework," she said. This is a fight of morality, she said.

"Injustice has happened to Pawar Saheb. Tomorrow, they can do it to anyone in the country," she said, referring to the ECI handing over the party name and symbol to



Ajit Pawar's faction in 2023.

Sharad Pawar was not just a founder member, but the president of the party, and a reading of the NCP's constitution would show that the case against her faction had little merit, she said.

The ECI may have ruled in favour of the rival faction, "but they cannot win in court," she said.

On a legal notice challenging the election of Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Pawar as NCP national president, Sule said it was an internal matter of the rival faction.

"We are fighting our party's battle. What happened to us after our

party was broken can happen to them too. The real NCP president is Sharad Pawar," she said.

NCP 'national secretary' Sachchidanand Singh has sent a fresh notice questioning Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Pawar's election as the party's national president, claiming that the organisational election held on February 26 was invalid.

On Rahul Gandhi's dharna in Delhi seeking an FIR over a pellet gun victim's complaint, Sule questioned the BJP's criticism of the Congress leader and referred to RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's statements praising Gen Z. (PTI)

Body of US climber who died in avalanche on Pok's Broad Peak recovered

LAHORE, Aug 21: The body of US climber Sarah Mallory Geis, one of the 10 mountaineers caught in a deadly avalanche on Broad Peak in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir last month, was recovered from the mountain on Friday, the Alpine Club of Pakistan (ACP) said.

Geis, 39, was part of an international expedition led by renowned British-Nepali mountaineer Nirmal Purja, which was struck by an avalanche on July 30 at an altitude of around 7,000 metres while attempting to summit Broad Peak, one of the most demanding peaks in Karakoram range.

The avalanche severed contact with all 10 members of the expedition, triggering a difficult search and rescue operation.

The bodies of eight climbers were recovered in subsequent search missions, but Geis and Nepali climber Nawang Thindu Sherpa remained missing despite sustained efforts to locate them.

In a statement, ACP president retired Major General Irfan Arshad

Khan said on Friday that Geis' body had been located on the slopes of Broad Peak by local rescue volunteers.

"The body has been identified as Geis. It is being shifted to base camp and will subsequently be airlifted to Skardu by Pakistan Army helicopters," he said, adding that efforts to locate the remaining missing climber would continue.

The 10-member expedition comprised six Nepali climbers and one each from Pakistan, Oman, the United States and China.

Apart from Purja, those whose bodies have been recovered include Pur Bahadur Gurung, Kili Pemba Sherpa, Nima Sherpa and Gyalu Sherpa from Nepal; Omani climber Nadhira Ahmed Abdullah Al Harthy; Chinese climber Wang Zhong; and Pakistani mountaineer Sohail Sakhi.

At 8,051 metres, Broad Peak is the world's 12th-highest mountain. Located near K2, it remains a major challenge for even experienced high-altitude climbers. (PTI)

Akhilesh alleges police brutality against farmer leaders, seeks probe into Meerut incident

LUCKNOW, Aug 21: Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Friday alleged that farmer leaders were subjected to "third-degree" torture in police custody in Uttar Pradesh and demanded a thorough probe and strict action against those responsible.

His remarks came in response to allegations by SP worker Digvijay Bhati of Amroha, who claimed that he was brutally assaulted following his involvement in a protest in Meerut over the murder of a Dalit girl.

Yadav also shared a photograph of Bhati with an injured eye while posting about the incident on X.

"Insulting a farmer is an insult to the country," the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister said in his post.

"The BJP has committed the unforgivable act of threatening farmers across the country by getting a farmer kicked in the face," he alleged.

He further alleged that the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh was



"torturing farmer leaders by subjecting them to third-degree beatings in police stations", claiming that the government was rattled by the fear of defeat.

Bhati, in a video shared on social media, alleged that he was assaulted two days ago by then-Meerut SSP Avinash Pandey over his participation in the protest.

Bhati further claimed that members of the Special Operations Group (SOG) took him to an undisclosed location and tortured

him for several hours. In the video, Bhati appeared with his left eye heavily swollen.

Pandey was transferred to Lucknow on Thursday evening as part of a reshuffle of IPS officers in Uttar Pradesh.

In response to Yadav, Meerut police meanwhile said the matter had been taken cognisance following allegations of misbehaviour and assault involving visitors at the office of the senior superintendent of police on August 19. (PTI)

Tewari puts out cryptic post stressing criticism is necessary, could prove fatal if suppressed

NEW DELHI, Aug 21: Lok Sabha MP Manish Tewari who has been critical of the Congress leadership and has sometimes taken a stand on certain issues at variance with the party line wrote a cryptic post on Thursday, stressing that criticism is necessary and could prove fatal if suppressed.

In his post on X a day after the Congress Working Committee meeting, the Congress leader quoted former UK Prime Minister Winston Churchill to say that criticism may not be agreeable, but is necessary as it fulfils the same function as pain in the human body.

"Criticism may not be agreeable, but it is necessary. It fulfils the same function as pain in the human body; it calls attention to the development of an unhealthy state of things. If it is heeded in time, danger may be averted; if it is suppressed, a fatal distemper may develop. - Winston Churchill January 7 th 1939," Tewari said in his post while quoting former UK Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

"the word fatal is underscored...," he said without elaborating further.

Asked to explain what he meant by his post, Tiwari merely said, "Samajhdaar ko ishaara kaafi hota hai" (a hint is enough for the wise).

Tewari, a three-term MP, has often taken a stand at variance with that of the party and has been part of the G-23 group of leaders who raised questions on Rahul Gandhi's leadership in the past.

His stand during Operation Sindoor was against that taken by the Congress party, as he sought to support the government. He was part of the delegation of parliamentarians picked by the government to speak on India's position during the operation even though the Congress did not nominate him.

He also came out with a recent outburst against the Congress leadership after being ignored on decisions taken in the party in Punjab ahead of assembly polls in the border state. (PTI)

Desecration of Jadavpur University emblem unfortunate: Bengal FM

KOLKATA, Aug 21: Expressing concern over the unrest and group clashes at Jadavpur University, West Bengal Finance Minister Swapna Dasgupta on Friday called for an immediate end to alleged interference by political parties and outsiders in educational institutions in the state.

The lawmaker emphasised that while student politics is not new to the state, early Thursday's clashes between two groups and the desecration of the university's historic emblem bring a "bad name" to the state and the institution, which is a centre of excellence.

Strongly advocating autonomy for the student community, Dasgupta said external political forces should stay away from the university.

"Let students decide their own course of action. It is best if outsiders maintain a non-interference policy," he urged.

Admitting he does not have the specific details of the incident, Dasgupta expressed concern over the internal group clashes, calling them "very unfortunate, very bad



name for the state".

Commenting on the various videos and social media "reels" being circulated by agitated students, he remarked that some of them even came across as "somewhat comic".

The minister said the damage done to the university's emblem was unfortunate.

"What hurt me most is that JU's emblem was targeted in this manner... maybe it is not completely destroyed and can be repaired, but there is no doubt it has been desecrated," he said.

Dasgupta recalled the historical significance of the emblem, noting that it was designed by legendary artist Nandalal Bose.

"The reason Bose created it is that Jadavpur's history is intimately linked to our freedom struggle," he said, adding that the university's origins were directly linked to the National Education movement pioneered by Rishi Aurobindo.

He drew a parallel to religious and cultural events, suggesting that just as political parties should avoid political involvement in

Durga Puja, they must similarly refrain from exerting political influence over students in academic spaces.

Calling Jadavpur University one of the state's premier "centres of excellence," Dasgupta emphasised that his appeal transcends party lines.

He expressed hope that the education system in West Bengal, which he noted has been adversely impacted, can recover and again become a source of national pride.

He urged the students themselves to act responsibly to protect and restore the glory of this prestigious institution. A clash broke out between members of ABVP and Left-leaning student groups at JU on Thursday, with both sides accusing each other of bringing outsiders into the campus.

Several students were injured in the clash, and some of them were taken to a hospital. The confrontation started over a meeting of the Faculty of Engineering and Technology Students' Union (FETSU) on Wednesday and continued late into the night. (PTI)

Cong members raise slogans in Rajasthan Assembly; proceedings adjourned twice

JAIPUR, Aug 21: The Rajasthan Assembly was adjourned twice on Friday as Congress MLAs raised slogans over the alleged denial of entry to them through the regular gate of the House on the opening day of the Monsoon session.

The Question Hour could not be conducted as the opposition members protested the issue, while proceedings during the Zero Hour were also disrupted by continued sloganeering.

As soon as the House assembled in the morning, Leader of Opposition Tika Ram Jully raised the issue of Congress legislators allegedly being prevented from entering the Assembly building through the regular entrance on Thursday.

Jully demanded an inquiry into the incident and said the opposition wanted to raise issues concerning the people in the House.

Assembly Speaker Vasudev Devnani, however, did not allow him to raise the matter during the Question Hour and said the issue could be discussed after it.

Following this, Congress MLAs stood up and started raising slo-



gans, leading to an uproar in the House. Members from the treasury benches also objected to the opposition's conduct.

Devnani appealed to the members to maintain order and allow the proceedings to continue. However, as the disruption continued, he adjourned the House until noon.

Before entering the House, Congress MLAs had staged a protest in the Assembly premises and raised slogans against the state government over various issues.

When the House met again during the Zero Hour, Congress members continued their protest and sloganeering.

Jully sought to speak on the issue, but Devnani said he would give both sides an opportunity to speak after the Zero Hour.

Markets shut, traffic hit at several places as Punjab Bandh draws strong response

PATIALA/EROZEPUR, Aug 21: Shops and markets remained shut while traffic movement was hit on the highways at many places in the state on Friday in the wake of a 'Punjab Bandh' call given by the Qaumi Insaaf Morcha to press for the release of 'Bandi Singhs' (Sikh prisoners).

Heavy police deployment was made at many places across Punjab, including Amritsar, Ludhiana, Mohali and Jalandhar, to maintain law and order.

The call for the bandh was given from 7 am to 2 pm.

Bandi Singhs refers to Sikh prisoners convicted for their involvement in militancy during the Punjab insurgency of the 1990s.

Commuters, including office-goers and travellers, bore the brunt of the bandh call as they got caught up in road blockades by supporters of the Qaumi Insaaf Morcha and various farmers' bodies at several places, including Patiala, Mohali and Jalandhar.

Commuters at some places were seen requesting the protesters to allow them to proceed towards their destinations as tractor-trolleys and other vehicles were parked in the middle of roads, including state and national highways, by the agitators.

Essential services such as medical emergencies, travel to airports, exams and wedding ceremonies were allowed, the Morcha leaders said.

The protesters staged dharnas in Jalandhar, Ludhiana's Ladhawal, Hoshiarpur and Ferozepur to vent their anguish over the non-release of Sikh prisoners. They also took out marches on two-wheeled in cities.

Shops at several places, including Sangrur, Ludhiana and Mohali, remained shut, barring medicine stores.

Private schools remained shut on Friday as the Federation of Private Schools announced a holiday in view of the bandh call. (PTI)

The Supreme Court finds that the subject land forms part of a larger tract of agricultural land acquired in 1986

Legal status of land for Bijwasan Rly project settled by Supreme Court: NGT

NEW DELHI, Aug 21: The National Green Tribunal has disposed of a plea seeking its directions to declare 95 acres of land as deemed forest earmarked for redevelopment of Bijwasan railway station in the Dwarka area here, noting that the Supreme Court had already decided the land's legal status.

The green body was hearing a plea claiming that the 95-acre land, which was part of a larger piece of land measuring 125 acres in southwest Delhi, needed to be protected under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 (VSEA, 1980) and in terms of judicial precedents.

According to the Indian Railway Stations Development Corporation Ltd. (IRSDC), Bijwasan is an existing station on the Delhi Rewari line of the Indian Railways network that is proposed to be redeveloped as a world-class station. It is also aimed at augmenting the number and capacity of terminal stations in the capital city.

In an order dated August 7, made available on Friday, a bench of NGT Chairperson Jus-

tice Prakash Shrivastava and expert member Afroz Ahmad noted that issues raised had been already decided by an apex court ruling of March 20 this year regarding the same project, according to which the land cannot be granted forest status retrospectively.

"The Supreme Court has observed that a mechanical application of the judgment defining 'forest' and 'forest land' without regard to the historical land use and contemporaneous official records cannot be done and due consideration must be given to overall facts of the case," the tribunal said, citing the top court's verdict.

It said the apex court had also considered the nature and significance of the project on the redevelopment of the Bijwasan Railway Station area as an Integrated Metropolitan Passenger Terminal forming part of a broader transport and urban infrastructure framework envisaged for the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi.

The green panel underlined that the legal character of land is determined by official



revenue records and its status at the point of time when a development plan is formulated. It said, "The Supreme Court has found that the subject land formed part of a larger tract of agricultural land acquired in 1986 and allotted for development of Bijwasan Integrated Passenger Terminal and incorporated in Master Plan, 2021 and at the time of formulation of Master Plan, the land was not notified as forest or declared as forest or

treated as deemed forest," the tribunal said. It said that the master plan had statutory force and subsequent change in vegetation and tree species which are not part of natural forest ecosystem cannot alter its legal status.

The tribunal said that the top court had also directed authorities to make earnest efforts to ensure transplantation of native or indigenous trees to the maximum extent possible, and to preserve and protect existing trees in and around the project area.

It cited the judgment according to which, before the commencement of any work on the site, compensatory afforestation had to be undertaken strictly in accordance with the applicable statutory rules and permissions granted by the competent authorities.

"Thus, we find that the issue raised in this original application (OA) is covered by the order of the Supreme Court in the matter (civil appeal Naveen Solanki & Anr vs. Rail Land Development Authority & Ors). Hence, the issue is already concluded," the tribunal said, disposing of the plea. (PTI)

Rally held against appointment of non-Muslims in Manipur Waqf Board

Protesters march around 4 km from Usoipokpi to Lilong Bazar



IMPHAL, Aug 21: Members of the Muslim community on Friday staged a demonstration in Manipur's Thoubal district against the recent appointment of non-Muslim members to the state Waqf Board.

The protesters marched around 4 km from Usoipokpi to Lilong Bazar and raised slogans against the BJP government.

On August 3, the state government appointed seven members,

including BJP state president and Rajya Sabha member A Sharda Devi, to the eighth Waqf Board of Manipur.

"The inclusion of non-Muslim members in the Waqf Board has deeply hurt the sentiments of a large section of the Panggal (Muslim) community in the state. This is not merely an administrative decision but infringes upon religious identity and the historical tradition

of managing our own religious affairs," a protester told reporters.

The Waqf Amendment Act passed by Parliament allows the inclusion of non-Muslim and women members on Waqf management boards. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh said he had met representatives of various civil society organisations from the Panggal community and discussed their grievances concerning the Waqf Board.

In a social media post, Singh said, "Chairman of the WAQF Board, Y Antaz Khan, also attended the meeting. I assured them that the matter will be looked into on priority."

A representative of the Coordination Committee for Protection of Waqf Properties Manipur (CCP-WPM) said, "We thank the chief minister for meeting us to discuss the issues. He was aware of the concerns of the Panggal (Muslim) community over the issue." (PTI)

Manipur: Public transport services resume on NH-2 after 3 years

IMPHAL, Aug 21: Public transport services along National Highway 2 in Manipur resumed on Friday after a gap of three years, with 125 passengers travelling from Imphal towards Dimapur and Guwahati, an official statement said.

The passengers departed Imphal in two buses and five tempo travellers, marking a significant step towards restoring normal life and strengthening connectivity in the state, it said.

One of the passengers, Kiyam Kumarjit Singh from Thoubal district, expressed gratitude to the state government for the initiative and hoped the resumption of the service would usher in "love, peace and harmony" among all communities.

"Let us all forgive and forget the past," he said. Another passenger, Nivedita from Khundrakpam village in Imphal East district, prayed that the journey would bring peace to the state.

The vehicles passed through Kuki-majority Kangpokpi and Naga-dominated Senapati districts without any incident and were en route to Guwahati in Assam via Nagaland, the statement said.

On August 8, Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh announced the reopening of national highways for free movement of people from all communities, and said the Imphal-Dimapur-Guwahati bus service would resume soon. Movement along the national highways had been severely affected following the outbreak of ethnic clashes in the state in 2023, with people from different communities refraining from travelling through areas dominated by other groups due to safety concerns and blockades. (PTI)

Centre sanctions road projects worth over ₹ 2,400 cr

ITANAGAR, Aug 21: The Centre has sanctioned five road projects worth ₹ 2,423.70 crore for nearly 278 km of the Arunachal Frontier Highway, giving a major push to connectivity, officials said on Friday.

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways issued Letters of Acceptance for the five projects between August 11 and August 20 to joint ventures led by Ceigall India Ltd, they said.

The projects involve construction of intermediate lane roads on the Sarli-Huri, Huri-Taliha and Bile-Migging sections of the highway in Upper Subansiri and West Siang districts, respectively.

The largest project entails construction of a 78.38-km stretch of the Sarli-Huri section at a bid cost of ₹ 611.10 crore. It is scheduled to be completed within 36 months, the officials stated. Another project covers a 57.525-km stretch of the Huri-Taliha section at a cost of ₹ 525 crore. The construction period for this work is 48 months, they said.

The Ceigall India-led joint ventures have also secured a ₹ 521-crore contract for a 55.725-km stretch of the Huri-Taliha section.

The fourth project, valued at ₹ 492.52 crore, involves construction of a 49.15-km road on the Huri-Taliha section, while the fifth package relates to a 37.56-km stretch of the Bile-Migging section at a cost of ₹ 274.08 crore, the



officials said.

The Frontier Highway, designated as NH-913, is one of the country's most ambitious strategic road projects, aimed at improving connectivity to remote villages along Arunachal Pradesh's international borders.

The highway is being developed in phases through agencies, including the state PWD, Border Roads Organisation and NHIDCL. (PTI)

Arunachal Guv calls for people-centric, future-ready administrative reforms

ITANAGAR, Aug 21: Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lt Gen (Retd) KT Parnaik on Friday stressed the need for practical, people-centric and future-ready administrative reforms, with a focus on improving last-mile delivery, inclusive development and ensuring responsive and accountable governance for people living in remote border and rural areas of the state, an official said. The governor made the remarks when Arunachal Pradesh Administrative Reforms Commission chairman Pramod Jain called on him at Lok Bhavan here.

The two reviewed ongoing and proposed reforms aimed at strengthening public trust, empowering grassroots institutions, enhancing transparency and accountability, and improving the efficiency and reach of public services, an official statement said.

Parnaik said the state's administrative framework must evolve in line with the aspirations of its people and the changing requirements of governance.

He stressed the importance of

participatory and decentralised governance, transparency, accountability, digitalisation, timely delivery of services and an outcome-oriented administration.

The governor also underlined the need to strengthen grassroots institutions to ensure that decision-making and the benefits of development reach communities more effectively.

Observing the unique challenges faced by Arunachal Pradesh, Parnaik said the state requires an administrative system that is efficient, agile and responsive to local needs. As the largest state in the Northeast by area, Arunachal Pradesh has vast mountainous terrain, scattered settlements, rich tribal and cultural diversity and sensitive international borders, which pose distinct challenges to governance, he said.

Parnaik also called for greater use of technology and data-driven governance to overcome geographical barriers and improve access to public services, particularly in remote areas. (PTI)

Programme highlights dignity, companionship and the contribution of senior citizens to society

Ayi: Ke Ekum celebrates World Senior Citizens Day at Pasighat

HT Correspondent
PASIGHAT, Aug 21: Ayi: Ke Ekum, a non-governmental organisation established on May 5, 2023, observed World Senior Citizens Day at the IJG Government Higher Secondary School Auditorium here on Friday, highlighting the dignity, wisdom and contributions of senior citizens.

Welcoming the gathering, Tigul Megu spoke about the vision behind Ayi: Ke Ekum, which provides a platform for senior citizens above the age of 70 to spend quality time together, share their experiences and overcome loneliness.

She emphasised that wisdom comes with age and experience and said the stories, values and experiences of elders play an important role in shaping society and guiding future generations.

As part of the celebration, senior citizens presented Ka:do Ponnung, an age-old cultural song, adding a



traditional touch to the programme.

Chief Guest Tapi Darang, HMLA, 38-East Pasighat, appreciated Ayi: Ke Ekum and its members for creating a welcoming space for senior citizens.

He observed that loneliness is among the major challenges faced by elderly people and stressed the collective responsibility of society to ensure that senior citizens spend their later years with happiness, dignity and companionship.

Darang also presented gifts to senior citizens who recorded the highest attendance at the centre.

Guest of Honour M T Padung, Deputy Director (ICDS), appreciated the founders and members of Ayi: Ke Ekum for the initiative.

Emphasising the importance of elders in society, she said, "When the roots are strong, the branches flourish," and urged senior citizens to share their knowledge and life experiences with younger generations.

She described elders as pillars of society and said reaching old age is a blessing that enables people to witness different generations of their families and experience the journey of life.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Pemi Tato Perme, Vice-President of Ayi: Ke Ekum.

The celebration was attended by dignitaries, officers and officials, besides senior citizens and family members of elderly people associated with Ayi: Ke Ekum.

Manipur CM asks Japan-bound state youths not to forget their roots

IMPHAL, Aug 21: Manipur Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh on Friday urged the youths from the state who will undergo overseas skill training in Japan not to forget their roots, an official statement said. The 16 youths will undergo overseas skill training in different parts of Japan under the State Livelihood Empowerment and Entrepreneurship (SLEE) initiative.

Speaking during the interaction, Singh advised the youths never to forget their roots and urged them to always remember that they are Manipuris, even while staying in the East Asian country. The CM said the youths will be exposed to a foreign land, culture, traditions, and development, but they should remain connected to their identity.

He also said that in the past, people of Manipur proudly identified themselves as Manipuris, but now many hesitate to do so, and that mindset needs to be changed. An MoU was also signed between the State Bank of

India (SBI) and SLEE, an undertaking of the Government of Manipur, to provide financial support to the candidates.

The candidates have completed Japanese language training from the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) International Academy and have secured jobs in various parts of Japan, including Tokyo and Okinawa, in the healthcare as well as hospitality sectors.

The CM appreciated the efforts of SLEE and SBI officials for their commendable service in providing skill training and financial support to eligible youths of the state and helping them get suitable jobs abroad.

One of the youth, Dhanapriya Tensubam, who got a job in Miyakojima Tokyu Hotel and Resort in Okinawa, expressed gratitude to the CM for the initiative and pledged to work with professionalism.

She also said that she will never forget her roots and will always be a proud Manipuri. (PTI)

Man held with 6.39 kg of cannabis

ITANAGAR, Aug 21: A 22-year-old man was arrested with 6.39 kg of cannabis in Arunachal Pradesh, police said on Friday.

Tachung Beyong, a resident of Pakke Camp in East Kameng district, was intercepted at Boda Namchi in Nirjuli, Capital Region SP Nyelam Nega said.

A search of Beyong led to the recovery of 34 grams of suspected cannabis packed in three packets, he said.

Police subsequently searched his scooter and recovered another 910 grams of the contraband packed in 74 packets, he added.

A further search of his rented accommodation led to the recovery of another 5.44 kg of cannabis, taking the total seizure to 6.39 kg, Nega said.

Police also recovered ₹ 27,400 in cash from his possession.

In a separate operation, police in Banderdewa arrested two persons with 14.84 gram of suspected heroin, officials said.

The seizure was made at the Banderdewa check gate on Thursday after police received information about the transportation of narcotics.

A vehicle was intercepted, and its occupants searched, leading to the recovery of 12 vials containing orange-coloured powder suspected to be heroin. The substance, along with the vials, weighed 14.84 grams and was valued at around ₹ 1.2-2 lakh in the illicit market, officials said.

The accused were identified as Yorum Soku (24), a resident of Nirjuli, and Nikja Kaya (24), a resident of Koloriang. (PTI)

Natural farming awareness programme held at Gipulin

HT Correspondent
GIPULIN, Aug 21: The Department of Agriculture, Dibrang Valley, organised an Awareness Generation and Orientation Programme on Natural Farming (NF) at the Gipulin Cluster on Friday as part of efforts to promote sustainable and eco-friendly agricultural practices in the region.

The programme was organised under the supervision of Duyu Udi, ADO, and was attended by ZPM Eta Mihui, GP leaders from Gipulin, Angrim Valley, Aliney, Mihundo and Etape, besides farmers and members of self-help groups (SHGs).

During the programme, Neelam Sunny, SMS (Agro-forestry), KVK Dibrang Valley, sensitised the participants on the principles and benefits of Natural Farming.

She particularly highlighted the use of indigenous bio-inputs such as Beejamrit and Jeevamrit, which can help improve soil health and reduce

dependence on external agricultural inputs.

The programme also highlighted measures to facilitate the adoption of Natural Farming among local farmers.

Under the National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF), a need-based Bhartiya Prakritik Bio-input Resource Centre (BRC) will be established at the cluster.

The proposed centre will facilitate the local production and supply of bio-inputs, particularly benefiting farmers who may face difficulties in preparing such inputs individually.

The initiative is aimed at promoting healthier soils, building more resilient farming systems and supporting sustainable livelihoods among farming communities in Dibrang Valley.

It also seeks to strengthen the adoption of environmentally friendly agricultural practices and contribute towards a greener agricultural future for the district.

6 suspected smugglers held with drugs

IMPHAL, Aug 21: Six suspected smugglers were arrested with drugs worth over ₹ 27 crore in Manipur's Jiribam district, a statement said on Friday.

The operation was jointly conducted by Assam Rifles and Manipur Police in the Tupidhar area on Thursday, it said.

Acting on information about the movement of suspected smugglers through the Barak river, Assam Rifles troops intercepted a boat and pursued the occupants after they allegedly attempted to flee, it said.

The suspects were nabbed, and the operation led to the seizure of 90,000 Yaba tablets valued at ₹ 27 crore, along with 48 grams of heroin worth ₹ 28.80 lakh, the statement said.

Those arrested were identified as Elbethel Lungta, Pana Hmar, Denhar Hmar, Laltungliem Hmar, Lal Ramthar Hmar and Thowna Hmar.

The accused and the seized narcotics were handed over to Boro Beka Police for further investigation. (PTI)

Cuban people will not bow to US pressure despite sanctions: Envoy

AGARTALA, Aug 21: Cuban Ambassador to India, Juan Carlos Aguilera, on Friday asserted that people of his country will not bow to any US pressure despite heavy sanctions.

Addressing a programme here to commemorate the birth centenary of iconic Cuban leader and former president Fidel Castro, Aguilera said the US has been "contentiously" imposing sanctions to "disturb the people of Cuba and its sovereignty".

"Despite heavy sanctions, the people who love peace and believe in socialism nurtured by our great leader Fidel Castro, will not bow to any US pressure," he said. (PTI)

Beti Janmotsava observed at Yupia under BBBP scheme

Programme highlights girl child's safety, education, health and empowerment; awareness sessions held on menstrual hygiene and legal safeguards

HT Correspondent
YUPIA, Aug 21: The District Administration, Papum Pare, and the District ICDS Cell, Yupia, in collaboration with various line departments, observed Beti Janmotsava under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme at the SDO's Conference Hall, Doimukh, on Friday.

More than 70 participants, including lactating mothers benefiting under the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) and adolescent girls, attended the programme.

Speaking as the Chief Guest, Nyelam Tan, SDO, Doimukh, appreciated the Women and Child Development (WCD) Department for regularly conducting awareness programmes aimed at promoting the welfare of women and children.

He described the department as a vital institution working towards the welfare, protection and development of children and the empowerment of women.

Tan said Beti Janmotsava was not merely an event but an important social message to value, protect, educate and empower the girl child.

He also encouraged parents and participants to



avail themselves of the benefits of the Sukanya Samridhi Yojana (SSY) through post offices to help secure the financial future of their daughters.

In her welcome address, Jaya Taba, Deputy Director, District ICDS Cell, Yupia, highlighted various welfare schemes and initiatives implemented by the WCD Department for women and children.

She explained the objectives and key messages of the BBBP scheme, stressing the importance of ensuring the safety, education, dignity, health and empowerment of the girl child.

She also urged parents to make use of schemes such as SSY for the long-term financial security of their daughters.

As part of the programme, gift hampers were distributed among mothers with infants, while sanitary napkins were distributed to adolescent girls to promote menstrual hygiene and awareness.

Dr Tilling Pamung, Medical Officer, conducted an informative session on menstrual hygiene, sensitising adolescent girls about the importance of maintaining proper menstrual health and hygiene practices.

Likha Asha, Advocate and member of the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB), conducted an awareness session on the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005.

She sensitised participants about the legal safeguards and remedies available to women facing domestic violence.

The programme concluded with an emphasis on the collective responsibility of families, communities and government departments to create a safe, supportive and empowering environment for girls, ensuring that every girl child is valued, protected and provided equal opportunities to grow, learn and realise her potential.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST		
No. EOI of 2026-2027	Dated: 18-08-2026	
Scope of enquiry: Chief Medical Superintendent, Sub-Divisional Railway Hospital, N.F. Railway, Badarpur, Sribhumi, Assam, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites Expression of Interest (EOI) from qualified Allopathic Specialists in the discipline of Medicine (Physician), General Surgery (Surgeon), Obstetrics and Gynecology, Anaesthesiology and Otorhinolaryngology (ENT) for engagement as Honorary Visiting Specialists (HVS) at Sub-Divisional Railway Hospital, Badarpur, Sribhumi, Assam for 04 (four) hours 06 (six) days a week from Monday to Saturday for a fixed Honorarium of Rs. 1,00,000/- (Rupees One lakh) per month for a period of 01 (one) year.		
Qualification: Post-Graduate degree from a recognized University. Minimum 3 years experience in the professional work related to concerned Specialty after obtaining P.G Degree. Where suitable candidates with PG degree are not available, PG Diploma holders with 5 years experience in the professional work related to concerned Specialty after obtaining P.G diploma.		
Age Profile: (a) During first time engagement, the preferred age is between 30 years to 64 years. (b) Upper age limit of continued engagement is 65 years.		
Honorarium and Daily Rate of deduction of remuneration: (RB's L. No. 2014/H-1/12/8/HVS/Policy/E dated 22.10.2025.) In terms of above quoted RB's Letter, the revised honorarium rates and the deduction rates for any absence beyond 12 days for engagement of HVS are as under:		
Hours of duty	Honorarium for Specialist (Rs. Per months)	Rate of deductions Specialist (Rs. Per day)
4 hours a day for 6days/week	Rs. 1,00,000/- (Rupees one lakh)	Rs. 4,167/- (Rupees four thousand one hundred and sixty seven) only.
Free Railway Passes: One set of complimentary Railway Pass valid all over Indian Railway & Konkan Railway in AC Two Tier including Rajdhani Express and in AC Chair Car of Shatabdi Express for self + spouse and dependent children (as per rules applicable for Railway employees) will be made available as per the entitlement of Selection Grade officers in each calendar year. The complimentary pass can be availed after 3months of engagement for the calendar year. (Authority: Board's letter No. 2001/H-1/12/40 dated 15.12.2005).		
For detailed terms, conditions, scope of work and prescribed format, interested parties are advised to refer to the complete EOI document available in the N.F. Railway website www.nfr.indianrailways.gov.in → General Info → Division → Lumding → Sub-Divisional Hospital BPB.		
Chief Medical Superintendent, Badarpur NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY Serving Customers With A Smile		

NO. PHEE/DIP/RWS/SOPD/481-89		Dated: 21/08/2026
SHORT NOTICE FOR RE-TENDER OF SCRAP/CONDEMNED MATERIALS		
In pursuance to the approval of KAAC/2024-25-Scrap-4-Pt-I/360-(A) dated: 08/07/2026 , the tender invited for the auction of ferrous/scrap/condemned materials has received Two Bids. Therefore, the tender is hereby cancelled and re-tendered.		
The undersigned invites quotations from interested bidders for Auction of Ferrous/Scrap/Condemned materials as per terms and conditions details of which may be obtained from the office of the undersigned. Interested bidders may collect Bid Documents and details from the office of the undersigned during 11 AM to 3 PM from 21st August, 2026 to 11th September, 2026.		
Sd/- Executive Engineer (PHE) Diphu Rural W/S Division		
IPRD/ KAAC/ 2026-27/M13		

England in charge against Pakistan as Root

Brook hits half-centuries in 366-8



LEEDS, Aug 21: England strengthened its grip on the first test against Pakistan on Thursday, with Joe Root and Harry Brook among four batters to make half-centuries in a score of 366-8 that gave the

hosts a first-innings lead of 195 runs after Day 2.

Brook, the world's top-ranked test batter, came closest to reaching a hundred on his home ground of Headingley but fell for 91 — one of those dismissed by Ali Usman (5-92) in the left-arm spinner's first five-wicket haul.

Root (66) and Jordan Cox (73) shared a 150-run partnership after England resumed on 112-2 four hours into the day, with rain causing a long delay to the start of play.

Dan Lawrence, playing his first test in two years, hit 51 at No. 6 and was another England batter likely ruining a missed opportunity to go big against some substandard bowling and erratic fielding.

In general, it has been a poor showing by Pakistan, which was bowled out for 171 in barely two sessions on Wednesday.

Brook dropped on 1 then punishes Pakistan

England rattled along at 4.46 runs per

over — a rate that wouldn't look out of place in the Bazball era that ended with the retirement of captain Ben Stokes and firing of Brendon McCullum as test coach.

What was different was the way the batters went about scoring runs, with Brook in particular less flamboyant but still as punishing with 13 fours. Aside from being dropped on 1 by stand-in captain Salman Agha at second slip, Brook hardly gave up a chance until Usman snuck one through onto the stumps, via Brook's back leg.

It would have been Brook's first century since his 111 against India at The Oval in July last year.

Root will also have regrets

Cox and Root picked up where they left off Wednesday, almost matching each other run for run after play finally resumed.

Cox reached his first half-century in just his second test appearance minutes before Root got to the milestone for the 109th time

in a test career that has seen him score more than 14,000 runs — only behind India great Sachin Tendulkar.

Dropped on 57 by Khuram Shahzad off a presentable caught-and-bowled chance, Cox eventually departed when he edged behind Usman. The batter appealed the decision, perhaps thinking he had struck his own pad, but the nick was clear.

The very next over, Root also departed when he inexplicably missed a straight one from Khuram and was trapped lbw — then wasted a review that showed the ball was hitting middle stump. It was a great chance for England's new captain to score his national record-extending 42nd century.

Smith still in the middle

England wicketkeeper Jamie Smith was in the middle at stumps on 16 not out, playing with caution in gloomy light in the final few overs. Jofra Archer was alongside him on, unbeaten on 0. (AP)

Mandaviya to chair BRICS Youth and Sports Ministers Meeting in Vizag

NEW DELHI, Aug 21: Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya will chair a two-day meeting of BRICS Sports and Youth Ministers beginning on Saturday in Visakhapatnam where a joint declaration focussing on sports manufacturing and indigenous disciplines will be issued on the final day.

The engagements will bring together Ministers and Heads of Delegation from all 11 BRICS member countries to strengthen cooperation in youth affairs and sports.

The Sports Ministers' Meeting will include statements by Heads of Delegation from Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates, followed by the adoption of the Joint Declaration, stated a government press release.

The meetings will be chaired by

Mandaviya, with Minister of State for Sports and Youth Affairs, Raksha Khadse, participating in the proceedings.

Senior officials of the Sports Ministry, including Secretary Hari Ranjan Rao, will also be associated with the engagements.

The BRICS Youth Ministers' Meeting on Saturday will focus on strengthening cooperation in youth development and empowerment, with discussions covering education, skills, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development.

The meeting is expected to culminate in the adoption of the BRICS Youth Ministerial Joint Declaration and the BRICS Youth Cooperation Framework.

At the BRICS Sports Ministers' Meeting on Sunday, member countries would reaffirm their shared commitment to strengthening cooperation in sports. (PTI)

Elena Rybakina stops playing during first set of quarterfinal vs Iga Swiatek at Cincinnati



MASON (US), Aug 21: Elena Rybakina stopped playing during the first set of her quarterfinal match against Iga Swiatek at the Cincinnati Open. With the No. 2-ranked Rybakina serving at 1-4, 40-40, she took a medical timeout to have trainers address her left ankle area and retired from the match moments later.

"Of course I feel not the greatest," Rybakina said. "It's painful to walk. We'll know more tomorrow when we have the MRI. It's been bothering me for a long period of time but felt like I had it under control."

After aggravating the injury during the second set on Thursday, she spent several minutes speaking with trainers before returning to the court. She decided to call it quits after she was unable to put full weight on her leg while attempting a serve.

"It was feeling OK before (Thursday's) match," Rybakina said. "Unfortunately one wrong movement and something happened."

With top seed Aryna Sabalenka losing Thursday night to Sara Bejlik, the 27-year-old Rybakina could have risen to No. 1 in the rankings by reaching the final.

Swiatek, the defending champion, has reached at least the semifinals in each of her last four appearances in Cincinnati. Swiatek beat Rybakina in the semifinals in Cincinnati last year. She'll face American Jessica Pegula in the semifinals. (AP)

Treesa-Gayatri in semifinals, assured of medal at World Championships

NEW DELHI, Aug 21: India's Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand assured themselves of a medal at the World Championships with a come-from-behind win over China's Jia Yi Fan and Zhang Shu Xian in the women's doubles quarterfinal here on Friday.

The unseeded Indian pair, which is on a comeback trail after Treesa recovered from an injury, toiled for one hour nine minutes to produce one of the biggest wins of their career, a 16-21 21-15 21-13 triumph to cruise to the last four stage and be assured of at least a bronze medal.

India last claimed a BWF World Championships medal in women's doubles in 2011, when Jwala Gutta and Ashwini Ponnappa won the bronze in London.

"We were trying our best. But after the first game, we changed our tactics. It was a bit tricky in the beginning. But I think we were calm and managed to win," Gayatri said.

Treesa credited the advice of chief coach Pullela Gopichand to remain composed and stay in the present for helping them negotiate pressure situations.

"He always said just calm down and be in the present moment. I think that really worked today. I think that's the kind of advice we got behind us," she said.

Gayatri said there was no specific plan to target one particular opponent, but admitted the pair were deliberately trying to keep their legs moving and remain patient.

"I think nothing like that. We don't want to reveal too much of the strategy. I think we were just rotating. We just wanted our legs to move and just to be calm on court," she said.

"Because that's the most important thing because they are number 5 or 4 in the world. So they are not going to give easy points. So we just wanted to be patient. It's the most important thing for us."

The Indians came into the match with a 0-3 head-to-head record against their Chinese opponents.

Treesa and Gayatri fell behind 1-6 early on but fought their way back to 8-9 with six successive points before the Chinese entered the interval with a three-point advantage.

The Indians continued to fight, staying within touching distance at 13-15 after some excellent rallies. The duo made the Chinese work hard, engaging them in several intense net battles. Zhang and Jia, however, moved to 17-14 before closing out the opening game.

After the change of sides, Zhang and Jia carried their momentum into the second game, opening up a 5-1 lead and then moving to 10-7. But the Indians responded with a spirited comeback, turning the tables



to move ahead 13-10.

The contest remained tight, with the score reaching 15-14 at one stage. The Indians then produced another decisive burst to open up a 19-14 lead and roar back into the contest.

In the decider, Treesa and Gayatri came out firing, surging to an 11-5 lead before extending it to 14-7 with a flurry of points that the Chinese simply could not negotiate.

There were a few nervous moments, with Treesa sending one shot into the net and Gayatri committing a service error. But the Chinese could not capitalise. Instead, they began to wilt under pressure, making a series of unforced errors at the net as the home favourites raced to a 17-9 lead.

The contrast in body language was striking. Treesa and Gayatri responded to every point with fist pumps and high-fives, while the Chinese shoulders began to drop. Gayatri's fierce flat exchanges with the Jia and Zhang were one of the highlights of the match. The experienced Chinese pair began to crumble under the relentless pressure. At 18-9, they sent another shot wide.

The Indians missed a couple of opportunities at the net, but continued to hold their nerve. They earned nine match points when Jia and Zhang once again failed to negotiate a shot and found the net.

Jia and Zhang saved two match points, but then sprayed another shot wide. Treesa fell flat on the court in celebration, while Gayatri looked in disbelief as the Indians completed a stunning comeback.

In the past, Treesa and Gayatri made it to the All England Open semi-finals in 2022 and 2023. (PTI)

No room for error as India face stern Dutch test in World Cup second-round opener

AMSTELVEEN, Aug 21: India will face their biggest test when they take on co-hosts and reigning Olympic champions the Netherlands in the World Cup second round opener here on Saturday, aware that there is virtually no room for error in their bid to reach the semifinals.

India's biggest concern remains their tendency to lose control after making strong starts. They led Pakistan 3-0 and 4-1 before allowing the arch-rivals to fight back in a 5-3 victory, while a 2-1 half-time lead against England slipped away as they conceded twice in the third quarter and eventually lost 2-4.

On the other hand the Dutch team won all three matches convincingly, defeating New Zealand 5-1, Argentina 3-1 and Japan 4-1.

Against one of the most lethal attacking sides in world hockey, India cannot afford lapses.

The challenge before India is not restricted to just the quality of the opposition. They also have to contend with capacity crowd at the Wagener Stadium.

The 10,000-capacity venue is expected to be full of Dutch supporters, who have turned up in huge numbers throughout the tournament. A sea of orange in the stands, constant chanting and passionate backing for the home side could make the setting intimidating for India.

Under the new format, the top two teams from Pools D and A form Pool E, with the top two advancing to the semifinals. Since India have already lost to England, they will not face them again in this phase, but England carry three points forward, making victories in India's remaining matches all the more important.

The Netherlands also carried



three points in the second round having defeated the Argentina in the first round.

The pool A topper Netherlands won their first World Cup title at this very venue in 1973, defeating India and went on to lift the trophy again in 1990 and 1998. Their consistency at the highest level makes them one of the toughest opponents. But India have shown they are not invincible.

They defeated the Netherlands 3-2 in the final FIH Pro League match in Rotterdam in June, after losing the opening game by the same margin. Jugraj Singh, Abhishek and Rajinder Singh scored in that victory, and all three are part of the Indian World Cup squad.

Abhishek has carried that confidence into the tournament, scoring two superb field goals against Pakistan, while captain Harmanpreet Singh has been in outstanding form with five goals, the most in the tournament so far.

The Indian captain, though, knows that the team must tighten up defensively if it is to go deep into the competition.

"We need to improve our deep

defence for the tough matches ahead. If we get the ball within 25 metres, we need to keep it. We made silly mistakes that allowed Pakistan to score. We need to learn from these and perform better in the future," Harmanpreet had said after the Pakistan match.

His assessment underlines the biggest challenge facing India: converting strong starts into complete performance in each quarter.

The Dutch are well aware of the threat India pose.

"India is a dangerous team as we have played against them in the FIH Pro League. On their day they can beat any team and their captain Harmanpreet Singh looks in top form," the Netherlands captain Thierry Brinkman said after defeating Japan in the last group match.

Against the Netherlands, India will need to be sharper in every department, especially when they lose possession and when the Dutch begin to turn the screw.

Experienced midfielder Manpreet Singh, with 420 international appearances, and forward Mandeep Singh, who has 291 caps, are expected to bring composure. (PTI)

India series dates could move around; BPL unlikely this year: BCB chief Tamim Iqbal

DHAKA, Aug 21: Bangladesh Cricket Board President Tamim Iqbal has said that the dates of a much-awaited home series against India could "move around" as the BCB reworks its calendar which may not feature its flagship T20 showpiece Bangladesh Premier league this year due to heavy financial losses.

Speaking to reporters here, Tamim said the BCB will conduct a Game Development tournament at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium from August 28 to September 9 featuring players from Under-17, Under-19 and Under-23 categories.

"There are discussions regarding the India series, the dates may move around," said Tamim.

"And this tournament is taking place in Mirpur, but if necessary, it can also move to the Bashundhara ground (Dhaka). Once the India series is fixed, we will schedule it accordingly," he was quoted as saying by 'Cricbuzz'.

India have already scheduled a three-match T20 International series against Afghanistan in New Delhi from September 13 to 17. This has all but ruled out an India-Bangladesh series in the September window. The series was postponed last year due to unrest in Bangladesh.

Speaking about the BPL, which has been mired in several controversies including corruption by players and franchises, Tamim said the Board needs to improve



its financial health. He said the BPL has caused losses adding up to 40 crore Bangladeshi Taka (INR 31 crore) in the past two seasons.

"I don't think BPL will be held this year...I don't want to organise the BPL this way...for the last two years, BCB has incurred losses of around 40 Crore Taka," Tamim said.

"Until and unless we fix the issues, it is not absolutely important for us to host this event every

year...Do we have the intention to do it? Hundred percent. Do I want to rush it? Absolutely not," he added.

Tamim said it could take upto two years to fix the current situation.

"A tournament from which the BCB is supposed to make a profit is instead making losses. So until this is corrected, holding it every year is not important to me. If it takes six, 12 or 24 months to do it properly, I will take that time.

"We have started communication with the franchises. The issues involving those who defaulted have to be settled. The issues of missed payments and bank guarantees are being looked at step by step. We will organise the BPL only after taking the BCB to a profit-making position," he said.

Tamim said he hopes to have the franchises ready to go by April-May next year.

"If someone defaults, I want to have three to four months in hand to look for an alternative franchise. I want to ensure that the BCB or Bangladesh cricket does not fall into any trouble."

"I could put five teams together tomorrow if I wanted to, but do you want that? I am willing to face criticism for this. We are working on a formula and have completed around 60-70 percent of the work regarding the domestic calendar. When we announce it, you will see a lot of new things," he added.

Tamim said he is also speaking to the players to ensure that they are taken into confidence.

"I am personally communicating with the players. When I was a player, I would also have been disappointed in such a situation. It is true that they will suffer financial losses, but they also understand that the BPL should be a tournament that the BCB and Bangladesh can be proud of," said Tamim. (PTI)

Deloitte Group to be Transaction Advisor for JLN redevelopment project

NEW DELHI, Aug 21: London-based accounting firm Deloitte Group will be the Transaction Advisor to "guide the redevelopment process" of the national capital's iconic Jawahar Lal Nehru Stadium which the government intends to convert into a multi-purpose Sports City.

The Ministry plans to rebuild the stadium, which is spread over 102 acres, into a Sports City of international standards that will cater to all major disciplines and include lodging facility for athletes.

It is reliably learnt that Deloitte, one of the big four global accounting firms, was picked after a tendering process in which two other companies made it past the technical evaluation phase.

Deloitte was found to be the best in the final round of evaluation and was awarded the bid. The Deloitte group is empanelled in the Department of Economic Affairs' pre-approved list of consultants.

Its brief for the upcoming project would be to prepare feasibility reports, cost estimates and formulate the financial structure of the ambitious project.

The redevelopment of the stadium was first proposed in November last year and the time-line for its completion and the estimated cost are still being worked out.

All offices inside the stadium, including that of the Sports Authority of India (SAI), National Anti Doping Agency (NADA), the National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL) and the Income Tax department will be relocated as and when the project takes off.

The Sports Authority of India

owns the venue. The government's flagship Khelo India project office also operates from the same venue.

The JLN Stadium was built in 1982 for the Asian Games held that year. It later hosted the 2010 Commonwealth Games for which it was refurbished at a cost of over ₹ 900 crore.

It hosted the World Para-Athletics Championship last year for which it underwent another facelift, leading to the laying of the renowned MONDO track, which is considered a faster surface that reduces risk of injury.

Besides being a prime athletics venue, the stadium has a football pitch where national and international-level games have been held.

It is used for non-sporting commercial activities too with concerts by Indian and international singers held regularly. For the redevelopment project, sports cities in Qatar and Australia have been assessed to finalise the modalities.

The Doha Sports City is spread over 617 acres. It has facilities for football, aquatics and 13 different indoor sports besides an academy. It also houses a specialised orthopaedic and sports medicine hospital. Australia's multi-purpose facilities include the Docklands Stadium in Melbourne that can host cricket, Australian rules football, rugby and soccer.

Ahmedabad's Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Sports Complex is an example closer home, having facilities for cricket, aquatics, tennis and athletics among others. It is spread over 250 acres and was built at a cost of ₹ 4600 crore. (PTI)

Upset wins for Guru Prakash, Manav in Asian Jr chess

MUMBAI, Aug 21: Guru Prakash stunned the recently crowned Asian Junior Rapid champion FM Vivaan Vishal Shah in the second round of the Asian Junior Open and Girls Classical Chess Championships here on Friday.

Round two witnessed several upsets as the battle for honours intensified with the 2113-rated Prakash defeating Shah (2339) and Manav Kumar beating the higher-rated FM Arun Katarina in the Open section.

Hardik Shah held FM Aman-muhammed Hommadov of Turkmenistan to a draw, while Mehul Sondhi shared the point with FM Madhvendra Pratap Sharma.

Top seed IM Mayank Chakraborty maintained his perfect start by defeating Vivaan Sardana to move to 2/2. IM Artem Pigin, IM Apoorv Kamble and IM Aaditya Dhingra also registered victories to remain among the leaders with perfect scores.

The Girls section also produced its share of surprises, with Sunetra Dey holding the higher-rated FM Prishita Gupta to a draw. Tripurambika V defeated WCM Anushka Babu Kutwal, while Pranavasi S registered an impressive victory over Uzbekistan's WFM Begmura-tova Sarvinov.

Top seed WFM Pratibha Bordoloi continued her winning run to reach 2/2. Kazakhstan's WFM Mariya Kholyavko and Turkmenistan's WFM Shohradova Lala also maintained perfect scores with victories in the second round.

The championship is being organised by the Maharashtra Chess Association on behalf of the All India Chess Federation and the Asian Chess Federation. (PTI)