

**6** **WORLD**  ● Trump threatens more strikes on Iran, and other developments in the Middle East

**8** **NATION**  ● Nepal's Nims, soldier-turned-climber who lived by the mountains, dies on one

● Stricter punishment, speedy probe as tweaked anti-paper leak law kicks in

● DMK chief Stalin alleges CM Vijay stands 'isolated' in TN on Cauvery issue

## Death toll 82; 1.92 lakh people remain affected Himanta launched 'Orunodoi 3.0'

*Sivasagar, Golaghat, Jorhat, Nagaon and Charaideo still under water*

**GUWAHATI, Aug 1:** Assam's Sivasagar, Golaghat, Jorhat, Nagaon and Charaideo districts continued to reel under flood, with 1.92 lakh people in the state still affected, while two fatalities took the death toll to 82, officials said on Saturday.

The flood situation has improved since Thursday, when more than two lakh people in eight districts were affected.

However, Dikhow and Dhansiri rivers were reported to be in "severe flood situation" at Sivasagar and Numaligarh in Golaghat, with the authorities urging the people to stay away. Officials said that around 13,000 people were sheltered in 54 relief camps. Another 26 relief distribution centres were open, catering to 5,384 people. Multiple agencies, including the NDRF and SDRF, were carrying out relief operations.

The state government has decided to approach insurance companies and non-banking financial compa-



nies (NBFCs) for expeditious disposal of claims and providing a moratorium to their customers from these areas. It was also focusing on swift assessment of damage so that funds for repair are disbursed at the earliest. Officials said two more deaths have been reported in the

floods this year, one each from Sivasagar and Charaideo districts, taking the toll to 82.

Sivasagar, Golaghat, Jorhat, Nagaon and Charaideo districts continued to reel under the deluge. The number of affected people was at 1,92,799, with Charaideo being the

worst-hit with 77,456 people hit by the deluge, followed by 63,492 in Sivasagar and 34,067 in Jorhat.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the state cabinet on Friday decided to convene a meeting with private and government insurance companies on August 5 to urge them to expeditiously settle claims against insured damaged vehicles, livestock and other properties.

The government will also meet the NBFCs the same day, requesting them to grant a moratorium to borrowers from these four districts.

The announcement came a day after the chief minister chaired a special meeting of the State Level Bankers' Committee (SLBC), in which it was decided that a six-month moratorium would be offered to all flood-affected people in four districts to repay loans. The measures have been announced for the worst-hit four districts of Sivasagar, Charaideo, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

**GUWAHATI, Aug 1:** Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday asserted that his government's flagship programme 'Orunodoi' has emerged as a dependable social security framework that empowers families, especially women.

He said that the scheme has also ensured financial inclusion for the beneficiary families as he launched Orunodoi 3.0 here.

Over 37 lakh women will receive a monthly amount of Rs 1,250 in their bank accounts under the scheme, which was launched by the BJP-led state government in 2020 as one of its core poverty alleviation programmes.

"Over the years, #Orunodoi has evolved beyond a welfare programme into a dependable social security framework that empowers families while ensuring financial inclusion," Sarma said in a post on X after the launch.

"Today, we resumed the monthly financial assistance under Orunodoi 3.0 to over 37 lakh women, our first Budget announcement implementa-



tion and the first scheme kicked off after receiving the people's mandate in May," he added.

The chief minister said that the Orunodoi architecture has been strengthened by giving beneficiaries greater convenience and choice.

Aadhaar-based beneficiary verification to ensure that assistance reaches only genuine beneficiaries while eliminating duplication has

been introduced, he said.

Further, dedicated Orunodoi Sarathis will be deployed in every Assembly constituency to assist beneficiaries with enrolment, grievance redressal and any other support they may require.

"But that's not all, we have a comprehensive plan to expand the scheme and make it more robust. As promised (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Census 2027: Self-enumeration exercise to commence in Assam today

**GUWAHATI, Aug 1:** The self-enumeration exercise for the first phase of Census 2027 will commence in Assam on Sunday, officials said.

The facility, which will remain available till August 16, will enable citizens to provide their household and individual information online through the dedicated self-enumeration portal, se.census.gov.in.

After the conclusion of the process, house-listing operations and housing Census will commence on August 17. The process has been postponed for the districts of Sivasagar and Charaideo, which have been the worst-hit by the current wave of floods.

Addressing a press conference on Saturday, Director of Census Operations, Assam, Biswajit Pegu said self-enumeration marks an important step towards making Census 2027 more participatory and citizen-centric. He urged people to make use of the online facility and actively participate in the process. Pegu said citizens can provide their information through the self-enumeration portal during the 15-day window.

The facility has been introduced to enable citizens to furnish their household information conveniently ahead of the commencement of the Houselisting Operations and Housing Census, which will continue till September 15, he added.

During the houselisting phase, trained enumerators will visit the households and collect or confirm the requisite details. Pegu also highlighted the safeguards in place for protecting the confidentiality of information (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## 14 infiltrators apprehended in Assam, appropriate action initiated: CM Sarma

**GUWAHATI, Aug 1:** Assam Police have apprehended 14 "infiltrators", and appropriate action has been initiated against them, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

He, however, did not divulge any details. "Each day, while infiltrators try to execute their nefarious designs in Assam, we keep on thwarting their plans and taking action against them," the chief minister said in a post on X on Friday.

"Fourteen such infiltrators have been apprehended by Assam Police, and appropriate action has been taken against them. Assam remains alert," he added.

The state government had recently informed the Assembly that nearly 2,100 illegal foreigners, of which 2,023 were from Bangladesh, have been deported, expelled or sent back from Assam in the past 10 years. (PTI)

## KA observes Statehood Demand Martyr's Day



HT Bureau

**DIPHU, Aug 1:** Karbi Anglong on Friday observed Statehood Demand Martyr's Day, paying tribute to Rahul Singnar, who was killed in police firing during the statehood movement on July 31, 2013.

To mark the occasion, the Karbi Anglong Fine Arts and Crafts-men Association (KAFACA), the All Karbi Anglong Talent Hunts Society (AKATHS) and Sot Pherangke jointly organised a series of events, including a painting competition and mural paintings depicting the statehood movement.

The murals, created by local artists Longkiri Rongpi Lindokpo, Paul Ingri, Nogs Kathar and Rajen Rongpi at the ITI area in Rongchedon and the Diphu Government College campus, became the focal point of the commemorative programme.

Rahul Singnar was killed during protests demanding an autonomous state for Karbi Anglong following the Centre's announcement granting statehood to Telangana in 2013. The movement for a separate state under Article 244(A) of the Constitution has been a long-standing (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



# OUR CENSUS, OUR DEVELOPMENT

(First Phase of Census 2027)

Houselisting and Housing Census by the Government of India is about to begin in your State/Union Territory

Before this, a 15-day special facility is being provided where you can fill in your information online yourself

I am Pragati



## SELF-ENUMERATION

Simple and Secure Digital facility

I am Vikas



### How to do Self-Enumeration?

- 1 Visit the official portal ([se.census.gov.in](https://se.census.gov.in))
- 2 Login via OTP using your mobile number
- 3 Select your State, District and Local details
- 4 Mark your house location on the Digital Map
- 5 Fill in information related to the house and family
- 6 You will receive an SE ID after submission
- 7 Keep the SE ID safe
- 8 Provide the SE ID to the enumerator when they visit
- 9 The enumerator will confirm the information

### It's Benefits

-  Time-Saving
-  Accurate Information
-  Fast Data Processing

**Remember: Self-enumeration is a special facility**

If you are unable to self-enumerate, do not worry; an enumerator will definitely visit your home during the scheduled period to record the information

**All your information will remain completely confidential and secure**

### Assam

## Self-Enumeration

## 2<sup>nd</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> August

## Houselisting

## 17<sup>th</sup> August – 15<sup>th</sup> September

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[CensusIndia2027](https://censusindia2027.gov.in)

CBC 19108/13/0156/2627

# Gross GST mop-up grows 15.4 pc to over ₹ 2.11 lakh cr in July on higher imports, sales

**NEW DELHI, Aug 1:** Gross GST collections grew 15.4 per cent to over ₹ 2.11 lakh crore in July on higher mop-up from sales and imports, reflecting sustained domestic consumption.

Gross GST collections were ₹ 1.83 lakh crore in July 2025 and ₹ 1.95 lakh crore last month.

Tax collection from domestic transactions grew 10.1 per cent to over ₹ 1.44 lakh crore, while gross revenues from imports were up 29 per cent to ₹ 66,511 crore.

Deloitte India Partner M S Mani said the GST collection reflects continued economic resilience despite challenges in the external environment.

“Steady growth in GST collections each month on domestic consumption indicates that overall domestic consumption is becoming largely insulated from seasonal variations and external headwinds,” Mani said, adding that GST collections in July increased in major manufacturing states like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Telangana.

KPMG, Indirect Tax Head &



Partner, Abhishek Jain said much of the July GST revenue growth was driven by imports and it would be worth digging into whether that's finished goods or raw materials, and how much of it simply reflects a weaker rupee rather than higher volumes.

Gross Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) revenue during the month stood at ₹ 39,835 crore, while State GST (SGST) and Integrated GST (IGST) mop-up were ₹ 47,881 crore and over ₹ 1.23

lakh crore, respectively.

Total refunds during July grew 13.1 per cent to ₹ 29,968 crore.

After adjusting refunds, net GST revenue stood at over Rs 1.81 lakh crore.

Grant Thornton Bharat Partner and Tax Controversy Management Leader, Manoj Mishra said domestic GST grew a robust 10.1 per cent, reflecting resilient household consumption, formalisation and industrial activity.

Strong gains across Maharashtra,

Gujarat, Karnataka, Haryana, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh confirm broad-based momentum across India's largest manufacturing, services and consumption hubs, he added.

EY India, Tax Partner, Saurabh Agarwal, said the sustained double-digit growth in GST collections is a strong affirmation of the underlying resilience of the Indian economy, and reflects a consumption story that continues to hold firm despite global headwinds.

“That said, one cannot ignore the elevated levels of import GST collections, which remain a nagging concern. This points to a persistent gap in domestic manufacturing capability despite the range of successful PLI and Atmanirbhar Bharat interventions rolled out over the past few years,” Agarwal added.

As per the GST data released on Saturday, gross tax collection grew 10.1 per cent to about ₹ 8.43 lakh crore in April-July. Net collections rose 9.2 per cent to ₹ 7.21 lakh crore during the period. (PTI)

## Flipkart and Netflix partner to offer earned entertainment benefits

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Aug 1:** Flipkart and Netflix on Saturday announced a partnership that enables Flipkart Plus members to earn a Netflix Mobile Plan every month through their regular shopping, without a separate subscription or bundled recharge, said an official statement.

The partnership brings together two experiences that are already part of customers' everyday lives, in a simple and rewarding way.

“It is the first time in Indian e-commerce that Netflix, the world's leading entertainment service, can be earned through everyday shopping rather than purchased separately or bundled with another service,” the statement added.

The statement further said that the partnership also reflects the changing expectations of India's young digital consumers, adding, “For Gen Z in particular, shopping and entertainment are deeply interconnected parts of everyday life. As digital natives, they increasingly seek experiences alongside value, making loyalty programmes that go beyond transactional rewards more relevant than ever.”

As per the statement, by bringing shopping and entertainment together, Flipkart Plus offers customers another meaningful way to get more from their everyday purchases. The partnership is designed to be accessible to customers across India. Whether shopping for groceries, daily essentials or other everyday needs on Flipkart, Flipkart Grocery and Flipkart Minutes, customers can unlock Netflix's beloved films and series across the globe through shopping habits that are already part of their routine.

“By rewarding everyday purchases rather than additional spending, the programme extends the value of Flipkart Plus to customers across metros as well as Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities,” it added.

Commenting on the same, Ravi Iyer, CFO and SVP, Strategic Partnerships, Flipkart said that as grocery, daily essentials and quick commerce become an increasingly important part of how customers shop, “We see a significant opportunity to make those everyday interactions more rewarding. Completing four orders a month is already a natural shopping pattern for many of our customers.”

## Sebi bars ZEEL for 2 months, Subhash Chandra, Punit Goenka for 1 year in Hyderabad land pledge case

**NEW DELHI, Aug 1:** Sebi has prohibited Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL) from the securities market for two months and its Chairman Emeritus Subhash Chandra and MD & CEO Punit Goenka for one year over unauthorised pledge of the company's Hyderabad land to secure loans availed by promoter-linked Essel Group entities.

Additionally, the regulator imposed a total penalty of ₹ 1.48 crore on them, according to a 150-page final order passed late on Friday.

Individually, the regulator imposed penalties of ₹ 30 lakh on ZEEL, ₹ 60 lakh on Chandra, and ₹ 58 lakh on Goenka.

The case relates to the execution of a Deposit and Declaration Agreement (D&A) on December 27, 2018, under which the original title deeds of ZEEL's Hyderabad property were handed over to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd (IHFL) as security for loans taken by Essel Home and other borrowing entities linked to the Essel Group.

Sebi noted that the deployment of ZEEL's property constituted a related-party transaction and the company failed to obtain prior approval from its audit committee, thereby violating LODR (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) regulations.

The regulator further observed that ZEEL failed to make necessary disclosures in its financial

statements despite Goenka and Chandra having knowledge that the Hyderabad land had been deployed as security and the title deeds remained with the lender until June 2020. In its findings against Chandra, Sebi said he misused his position as chairman by handing over the original title deeds of ZEEL's Hyderabad property to IHFL after falsely representing that the action had the approval of ZEEL's management.

“Notice No.3 being the chairman of ZEEL, misused his position and authority in ZEEL and handed over the original title deeds of the asset (Hyderabad Land) of ZEEL to IHFL by falsely declaring that the said action had the approval of the management of ZEEL. Through such actions, the noticee put the material asset of ZEEL at risk for his personal benefit,” Sebi said in its order.

It further said the true nature of the transaction was never disclosed and was instead portrayed as a case of misplaced documents, despite becoming the subject of litigation and arbitration.

According to Sebi, Chandra failed to act in good faith, exercise due diligence and safeguard interests of ZEEL and its shareholders, amounting to abuse of his position and authority.

Sebi directed ZEEL, Chandra, and Goenka to pay the penalties within 45 days. The order came into force with immediate effect. (PTI)

## Punjab GST revenue rises 20 pc to ₹10,447 crore in April-July: Cheema

**CHANDIGARH, Aug 1:** Punjab Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema on Saturday said the state's gross GST revenue grew by 20 per cent during the first four months of the 2026-27 financial year to ₹ 10,447.9 crore, compared with ₹ 8,708.48 crore in the corresponding period last year.

In a statement, Cheema attributed the increase to improved tax compliance, intelligence-based enforcement and technology-driven tax administration.

He said Punjab collected gross GST revenue of ₹ 2,614.45 crore in July 2026, up 8.31 per cent from ₹ 2,413.91 crore collected in July last year.

The minister said the state's SGST cash collection increased from ₹ 815.84 crore in July 2025 to ₹ 948.29 crore in July 2026, registering a growth of 16.23 per cent. He claimed the increase was among the highest in the country and reflected better voluntary tax compliance and higher actual tax payments by businesses.

Cheema said the Punjab government had also focused on facilitating compliant taxpayers by ensuring timely GST refunds. More than ₹ 200 crore in GST refunds were sanctioned during July to improve liquidity and support ease of doing business, he said.

He added that while genuine taxpayers were being assisted, the Excise and Taxation Department had intensified its action against tax evasion and fraudulent practices. According to the minister,

enforcement drives carried out across the state during July resulted in penalties exceeding ₹ 200 crore.

He said the department used data analytics and risk profiling to identify tax evasion and fake input tax credit (ITC) networks.

Cheema said a major action during the month involved registration of an FIR in Jalandhar in connection with an alleged bogus billing scam involving transactions worth about ₹ 55.35 crore. The main accused was arrested under the Punjab GST Act, he added.

The minister said the department had also launched a campaign against fake GST registrations obtained by misusing Rule 14A. Following field verification and scrutiny, more than 100 GST registrations were cancelled to prevent fraudulent claims and misuse of the registration system, he said.

Cheema further said the department had stepped up recovery of long-pending VAT arrears. During the current financial year, ₹ 12.39 crore was recovered through attachment and auction of properties belonging to chronic VAT defaulters, he said, adding that the recovery drive would continue.

He said the Excise and Taxation Department would continue strengthening compliance through advanced analytics, digital governance, targeted enforcement and taxpayer-centric initiatives to improve revenue collection while ensuring transparency and ease of doing business. (PTI)

## Commercial LPG prices cut by ₹ 192, ATF rates up ₹ 5/litre

**NEW DELHI, Aug 1:** The prices of commercial LPG -- used in establishments such as hotels and restaurants -- were on Saturday cut by a steep ₹ 192 per 19-kg cylinder while aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices were hiked by ₹ 5 per litre in line with divergent trends in benchmark rates.

While a 19-kg commercial LPG cylinder in Delhi now costs ₹ 2,738 as against ₹ 2,930 previously, ATF rates have been raised to ₹ 115 per litre from ₹ 110, according to price information from state-owned oil firms.

This is the second straight monthly reduction in commercial LPG rates following a ₹ 183.5 cut on July 1. In case of ATF, the revision reverses the reduction by a similar proportion that was effected on July 1.

The two reductions in commercial LPG rates on July 1 and August 1 followed the West Asia crisis pushing rates to record highs in June. After the outbreak of the conflict in late February, commercial LPG rates had risen by a massive ₹ 1,373 per 19-kg cylinder -- from ₹ 1,740.50 in February to ₹ 3,113.50 in June.

Alongside, prices of 5-kg market priced LPG cylinder were cut to ₹ 762 from ₹ 808.50.

These prices -- revised on the first of every month, based on benchmark international prices and foreign exchange rates -- vary from state to state depending on local taxes such as VAT. Rates of domestic LPG used in household kitchens remain unchanged at ₹ 942 per 14.2-kg cylinder. Prices of domestic LPG were last raised by ₹ 29 per 14.2-kg cylinder on June 7. Rates had gone up by ₹ 60 in March after the West Asia crisis led to supply disruptions and a surge in international energy prices.

A S Sahney, Chairman of Indian Oil Corporation -- the nation's largest oil firm -- on Friday said there was an under-recovery or loss of ₹ 503 per 14.2 kg domestic LPG cylinder as rates were way below cost. Petrol and diesel prices, which were hiked by about ₹ 7.50 a litre each in May, too, remained unchanged. (PTI)

## West Bengal GST collection rises 2 pc in July to ₹ 5,564 crore

**KOLKATA, Aug 1:** West Bengal's GST collection rose 2 per cent year-on-year to ₹ 5,564 crore in July, while registering a 9.5 per cent increase over the previous month, official data showed on Friday. The state collected ₹ 5,564 crore this July, compared with ₹ 5,471 crore in the corresponding month last year and ₹ 5,082 crore in June this year.

The July figures mark the second consecutive month of year-on-year growth since the BJP assumed office in the state in late May. In June, GST collections had risen 1 per cent annually to ₹ 5,082 crore, according to official data. On a sequential basis, the state's GST mop-up increased by ₹ 482 crore over June.

However, West Bengal's growth lagged the national trend. Gross domestic GST revenue (excluding imports) across the country rose 10.1 per cent year-on-year to ₹ 1,44,695 crore in July. (PTI)

## Apex Bank staff association extends flood relief to affected communities

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Aug 1:** Apex Bank Staff Association, representing the majority of the officers of The Assam Co-operative Apex Bank Ltd, donated one day's salary of all its members towards flood relief efforts for those affected by the recent floods in Assam.

As per an official statement, a six-member team of the Association led by Association's Advisor, Prasanta Samah, with the support of the NHM Sivasagar District, distributed essential relief materials in the form of provisions like Baby Food and cloths, Notebooks, Food items, Cloths, Undergarments, Mosquito nets, Sanitation items, etc., among flood-affected families on 1 August 2026.

“The relief drive covered several flood-affected areas, including Mout Gaon, Bonua Gaon, Dwarka Gaon near Simaluguri, Sivasagar District, and other nearby affected regions. A total of 300 families were covered in the flood affected village,” the statement

added.

It further said that the relief materials included essential household items aimed at providing immediate assistance to families facing hardships due to the floods.

Speaking on the initiative, Manidip Sarmah, president, and Dipankar Sarma Neog, general secretary, Apex Bank Staff Association, stated that the Association remains committed to standing beside communities during emergencies. They emphasized that contributing to relief efforts is part of the Association's social responsibility and expressed hope that the assistance would provide meaningful support to those affected by the disaster.

The Apex Bank Staff Association reaffirmed its commitment to extending support to society whenever required and expressed gratitude to the NHM Sivasagar District for its cooperation in successfully carrying out the relief distribution programme.

## Ather Energy rolls out Pothole+ Alerts for Gen 2 scooters

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Aug 1:** Ather Energy has started rolling out Pothole+ Alerts for customers with Gen 2 and above scooters, including the Ather 450 Apex, 450X and Rizta Z, said an official statement on Saturday.

As per the statement, the feature leverages data generated by Ather's connected scooter fleet to warn riders about potholes, broken road sections, uneven surfaces and speed breakers ahead while navigating. It also goes a step further,

suggesting the smoothest route before a ride begins, beyond just the fastest one. Announcing the rollout on X, Ather Co-founder and CEO Tarun Mehta said the feature had been nearly nine years in the making. “The challenge was never the idea. It was the data,” Mehta wrote. He further explained that building the feature required a large connected fleet travelling the same roads over time, allowing Ather to generate the scale of fleet intelligence needed to accurately identify road

conditions. “Every Ather scooter comes equipped with onboard computer and connectivity, enabling the company to continuously gather real-world riding data and deliver new capabilities through over-the-air software updates,” he added.

According to Mehta, Pothole+ Alerts represents one of the first large-scale applications of this connected ecosystem, transforming millions of kilometres of ride data into a feature that benefits riders every day.

## RBI says USD 40.82 bn mobilised under forex swap facility till July 31

**MUMBAI, Aug 1:** The Reserve Bank on Saturday said its concessional swap facility, introduced to encourage foreign currency inflows, has attracted USD 40.82 billion till July 31.

The swap facility has seen avid interest and attracted steady forex inflows since June 8, 2026, the central bank said in a statement.

A strong mobilisation was witnessed through Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank) or FCNR (B) deposits. Of the total inflows, FCNR (B) deposits accounted for USD 36.725 billion, while Overseas Foreign Currency Borrowings (OFCBs) contributed USD 2.575 billion while External Commercial Borrowings (ECBs) amounted to USD 1.516 billion.

With a view to strengthening the country's balance of payments and incentivising capital inflows, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had announced a series of measures, including a facility for offering concessional swaps for fresh FCNR (B) deposits, OFCB and ECB inflows on June 5.

Based on the data received from authorised dealer banks, the position of forex inflows mobilised till July 31, 2026, under the swap facility was USD 40.816 billion, the central bank said in a statement.

The facility was operationalised on June 8, 2026, and is available up to September 30, 2026, for the FCNR (B) deposits and up to December 31, 2026, for the OFCBs and ECBs. The measures were announced as part of the RBI's efforts to strengthen India's external sector position and support foreign exchange liquidity amid global market uncertainties. (PTI)

## Odisha's export can reach USD 50 billion by FY 2029-30: Study

**BHUBANESWAR, Aug 1:** Odisha's exports have the potential to grow up to USD 50 billion by financial year 2029-30, according to a recent study.

The study was conducted by the Export Import (Exim)

Bank of India, and the report was released by its deputy managing director Tarun Sharma here on Friday evening.

Odisha's merchandise exports stood at USD 10.8 billion in the 2025-26 fiscal, constituting 2.4 per cent of India's exports for the year.

Exports witnessed a year-over-year growth of 7 per cent over FY 2024-25. During 2016-17 to 2025-26, Odisha's exports registered a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6.6 per cent, the report said. Under the base case scenario, assuming Odisha's exports grow at the same CAGR during the next four years as during 2019-20 to 2025-26, Odisha's exports are estimated to reach USD 14.9 billion by 2029-30.

In the optimistic scenario, if Odisha's exports grow at the same envisaged CAGR during 2025-26 to 2029-30 as India's (22.7 per cent), Odisha's exports may reach USD 24.4 billion by FY 2029-30. In the ambitious scenario, if India achieves USD 1 trillion export target by 2029-30 and Odisha's share in India's exports more than doubles to 5 per cent

from the current share of 2.4 per cent, Odisha's exports may reach USD 50 billion by 2029-30, the study said.

Over the past decade, the composition of Odisha's export basket has remained largely unchanged, with exports heavily concentrated in metal and mineral products. In the financial year 2025-26, Odisha's top exported category was aluminium and its articles, accounting for 38.2 per cent of total exports, followed by iron and steel, inorganic chemicals; ores, slag and ash; and mineral fuels and oils, it said.

Regarding export destinations, China was the top export destination during the financial year 2025-26, with exports at USD 1,973.8 million (18.3 per cent of Odisha's exports). Other major export destinations were Vietnam, South Korea, the United States of America (USA), and the United Kingdom (UK). “Odisha is uniquely positioned to play a significant role in India's export journey and contribute substantially towards India's goal of achieving USD 2 trillion in exports by 2030,” Sharma said. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

## Death toll 82; 1.92 lakh people

Jorhat and Golaghat. In a social media post, Sarma said that over ₹ 41 crore has been approved under the PM Surya Ghar pending state subsidy for the flood-affected areas.

“As floods affect four districts of Assam, our government stands firmly with every affected family. Along with other relief and assistance, we have approved ₹ 41.67 crore under the PM Surya Ghar pending state subsidy for 9,289 beneficiaries in the affected areas,” he said.

Sarma added that the Power Department has been directed to ensure that Assam Power Distribution Corporation Ltd transfers the amount directly to their bank accounts by Tuesday. (PTI)

## Himanta launched ‘Orunodoi 3.0’

to my mothers & sisters, the scope of Orunodoi will be expanded, and the amount will be gradually increased,” Sarma maintained.

He added that it has been planned to allow beneficiaries to have access to interest-free small loans against their annual Orunodoi entitlement, with repayments adjusted from future monthly assistance.

“The annual borrowing limit currently stands at ₹ 15,000, and beneficiaries will not have to pay any interest. Those who prefer may also avail loans through banks, with repayments seamlessly deducted from their monthly Orunodoi assistance,” Sarma added.

The chief minister affirmed the government's commitment to “continuously strengthen Orunodoi, making it more accessible, more responsive and more empowering for every family it serves”. (PTI)

## Census 2027: Self-enumeration

furnished by citizens. “The information collected during the Census is protected under the provisions of the Census Act, 1948, ensuring statutory safeguards for individual information,” he said.

He further said due to the prevailing flood situation, training programmes and other preparatory activities related to the Census in Sivasagar and Charaideo districts have been postponed until further order.

The secretary, General Administration Department, Narsing Pawar, said the state government is committed to extending all necessary support for the smooth and successful conduct of Census 2027. He emphasised the need for coordinated efforts among departments and widespread public awareness to ensure effective participation in the Census process. (PTI)

## KA observes Statehood

demand of the Karbi people.

Leaders, including All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC) president and retired IAS officer Jones Ingti Kathar, paid floral tributes to Singnar and lauded the organisers for portraying the history of the movement through the murals.

A candlelight vigil was later held at the ITI area, where participants renewed the demand for an autonomous state for Karbi Anglong and paid homage to the martyr. During the programme, Kathar criticised the State and Central governments over what he described as their continued neglect of the long-pending statehood demand.

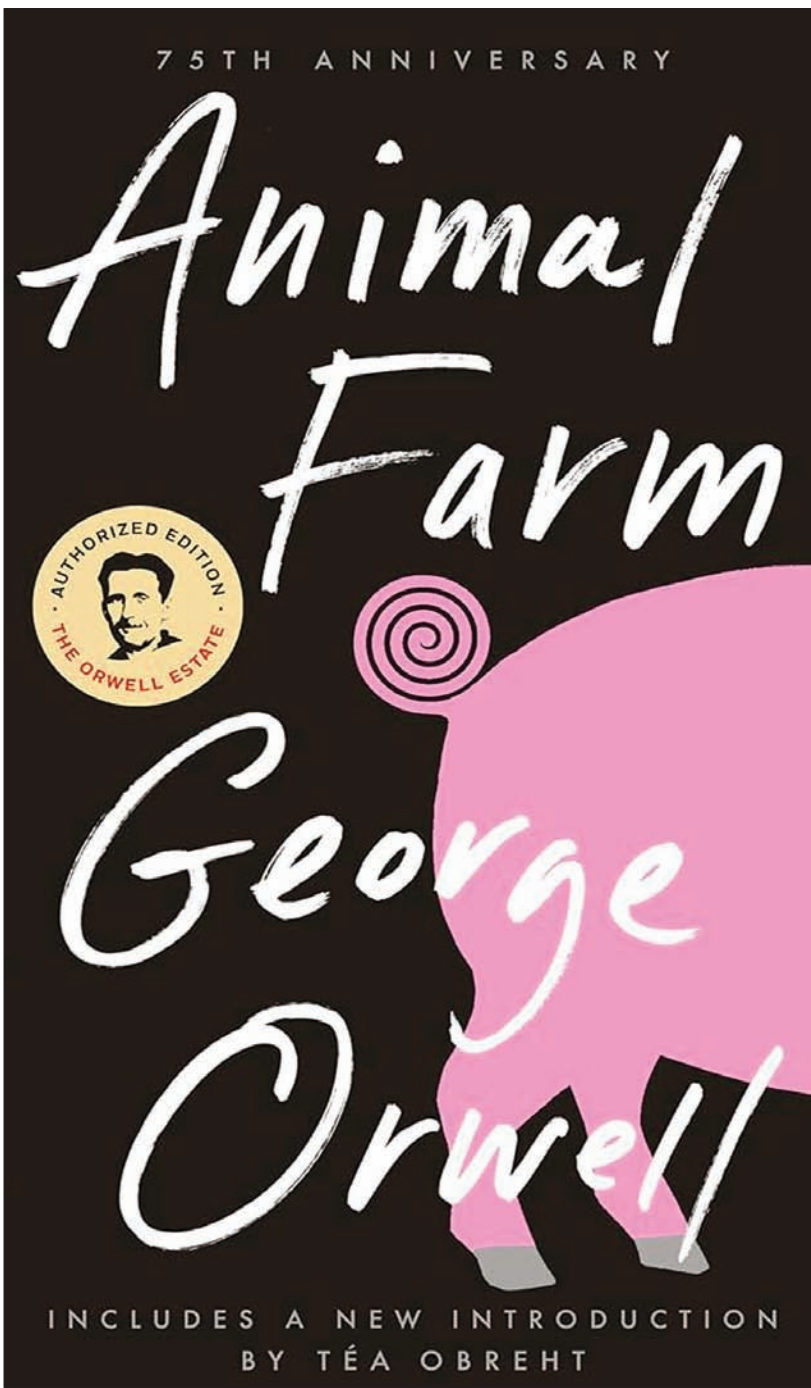
**ASSOCIATE S&T WORKS**  
E-Tender No.: SNT-22-LMG-2026-27, Date: 30-07-2026. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work. Name of work & Place: Associate S&T works in connection with the provision of CCTV in the Goods yard to monitor Loading/Unloading activity at Jirania station of Lumding Division. Tender Value: ₹71,41,737.59; Bid Security: ₹1,42,800.00. E-tender will be Closed at 15:00 hrs. on 21-08-2026 and Opened at 15:30 hrs. on 21-08-2026. For details visit: [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)  
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| SL No. | Lot No./Category                       | Description                                    |
|--------|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| AA/1   | 15611-SLR-R1-RNY-SCL-26-3 (Parcel-SLR) | Parcel Space in SLR Coach (Single Compartment) |

Auction Closing Date/Time : At 12:30 hrs. on 13-08-2026. Initial Cooling off period is 30 minutes. Successful lots closing interval 10 minutes. Note: Prospective Participant/bidders are requested to visit e-Auction module of IREPS website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) for more details.  
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By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

George Orwell's novel 'Animal Farm' has secured a unique place in world literature as a ruthless document of the nature of power and its continuous decline. Within a political system, the conflict between the exploiter and the exploited is not merely an external war; rather, it is a continuous process of greed and expansion of dominance hidden deep within the human mind. Although Orwell has symbolically portrayed the backdrop of the Russian Bolshevik Revolution through a simple animal farm, the appeal of this story is not confined to any specific country or time. When the common toiling masses in a society stand up against injustice prevailing for ages and dream of liberation, an intense desire awakens in their hearts to build an egalitarian and exploitation-free world. But the most terrifying truth is that the very leaders who spearhead this rebellion, one day tasting power, embrace the form of the former tyrannical ruler. While reading the novel, it feels as though we are seeing our surrounding political environment in a mirror, where crafty politicians shamelessly exploit the simplicity and ignorance of the common people for their own interests. This story reminds us of the harsh reality that merely changing rulers does not change the system. In every era, exploiters with new faces emerge, who deceive the people with promises of liberation. This is a vivid portrayal of the mentality of humans blinded by the intoxication of power.

The inception of the story takes place through a dream of an idealistic and aged pig named Major, which dream actually represents the communist aspiration of any exploited class in the world. Major explains to the rest of the animals on the farm that the sole cause of all their suffering, misery, and

poverty is man, who produces nothing himself yet enjoys the fruits of others' labor alone. This speech creates an unprecedented awakening in the minds of the animals, and they resolve to eradicate human rule and build a free society. After Major's death, two sharp-witted pigs named Napoleon and Snowball shoulder the leadership of this rebellion. Finally, one day, unable to bear the oppression by the master, the animals unite, drive away humans, and take the farm into their own possession. In the initial period, this new system instills hope in everyone's minds. Everyone works together in the fields, sharing the harvested crops equally. They jointly formulate seven rules, the core of which was—all animals are equal and no animal can adopt human-like behavior. This condition signifies that preliminary phase of political revolution where revolutionaries possess intense idealism and a spirit of sacrifice. But the intoxication of power is very dangerous. Very soon, the pigs taking charge of managing the farm begin to consider themselves wiser and superior to the other animals. From this arrogance, new seeds of class division begin to germinate in the society again, which proves that even if external enemies are defeated through revolution, controlling the lust for power hidden inside the human mind is extremely difficult.

The process by which governance gradually shifts to the hands of a power-hungry pig named Napoleon in the post-revolution phase is essentially an accurate portrayal of the rise of dictatorship. Unable to defeat his rival Snowball in open debate, Napoleon ultimately resorts to brute force. He trains some puppy dogs very ruthlessly from a small age as his personal guard unit and unleashes those dogs to banish Snowball from the farm forever. This age-old conspiracy of eliminating political opponents is extremely common in today's world as well. Right after

## George Orwell's widely read novel - 'Animal Farm'

*The process by which governance gradually shifts to the hands of a power-hungry pig named Napoleon in the post-revolution phase is essentially an accurate portrayal of the rise of dictatorship. Unable to defeat his rival Snowball in open debate, Napoleon ultimately resorts to brute force. He trains some puppy dogs very ruthlessly from a small age as his personal guard unit and unleashes those dogs to banish Snowball from the farm forever. This age-old conspiracy of eliminating political opponents is extremely common in today's world as well. Right after driving away Snowball, Napoleon cancels all kinds of democratic discussions and voting rights on the farm. Concentrating all power of governance solely in his own hands and those of a few loyal followers, he creates an atmosphere of terror. This event proves that once established in power, leaders cannot tolerate open debate and opposing opinions at all. Napoleon's dogs are actually symbols of the repressive force of the modern state, which silences the voice of ordinary citizens at the ruler's command*

driving away Snowball, Napoleon cancels all kinds of democratic discussions and voting rights on the farm. Concentrating all power of governance solely in his own hands and those of a few loyal followers, he creates an atmosphere of terror. This event proves that once established in power, leaders cannot tolerate open debate and opposing opinions at all. Napoleon's dogs are actually symbols of the repressive force of the modern state, which silences the voice of ordinary citizens at the ruler's command. In the blind intoxication of power, Napoleon gradually erases the core principles of the revolution and starts changing the rules according to his own convenience. For any disaster or failure occurring on the farm, he starts blaming the fugitive Snowball. Through this political strategy of creating imaginary enemies to hide one's own failures, leaders control the emotions of the common people. Through Napoleon, Orwell has made it clear that when a leader begins to consider himself above society or the state, justice and morality completely vanish from his rule.

In this entire process of degradation, the role of a pig named Squealer is the most terrifying and important. Squealer is actually a living symbol of government propaganda and the misuse of media. His sole job was to weave nets of beautiful words around every unjust and selfish decision of Napoleon and present it to the ordinary animals as a grand and indispensable act. When the pigs misappropriate the farm's most nutritious food, such as milk and apples, solely for themselves, Squealer argues that since pigs are brain-working animals, they need these more, and if they do not eat them, the management of the farm will fail and human rule will return. Mixing fear and false arguments, he removes all doubts from the minds of the animals. Squealer's character exemplifies how the ruling class uses language as a sharp weapon to cripple the thinking power of the general public. He progressively alters the farm's core seven rules. In the darkness of night, by adding the words "with sheets" to the end of the rule "No animal shall sleep in a bed," the act of pigs sleeping in beds like humans is legitimized. This is a fine illustration of how politicians later alter pre-election promises with wordplay. Squealer frequently presents false statistics to try to convince the animals that their lives are now much better than before, even though in reality the animals had to live half-starved despite backbreaking labor. When complete control over truth and information is established by rulers in a society, ordinary people become unable to understand the difference between dreams and reality.

The most tragic and realistic character in the novel is the gigantic horse named Boxer. Boxer represents those countless hardworking and simple working classes whose blood and sweat build the foundation of a nation. His physical strength was immense, but

his capacity to think was very limited. He always believed that whatever the problem might be, working harder would fix everything. The way Boxer sacrificed his rest time to build the farm's windmill is a reflection of the silent sacrifices made by workers in the interest of building the nation. But the sad part is that the exploiting class never understands this value of sacrifice; they only know how to squeeze and exploit the labor of workers. Boxer's two core mottos of life were—"I will work harder" and "Napoleon is always right." The terrifying consequences of this blind loyalty and unquestioning devotion are seen in Boxer's own life. He never understood that he was sweating not for his own liberation, but to increase Napoleon's luxury. Finally, when Boxer's body becomes crippled due to overwork and he reaches a state where he can no longer work, Napoleon sells him to a slaughterhouse owner instead of getting him treated. With that money, the pigs buy expensive liquor for themselves. This cruel act exposes that extremely inhumane aspect of the political system where an individual is used merely as a machine, and discarded like garbage once usefulness ends. Boxer's death reminds us that without being conscious of one's own rights and without knowing how to speak out against injustice, the life of the working class can never be secured merely through hard labor.

The distortion of history and the obliteration of the common people's memory is another terrifying weapon of dictatorial rule. When the animals of the farm begin to experience boundless suffering, questions arise in their minds whether their condition has truly improved compared to the days of human rule. But under the influence of Napoleon's relentless brainwashing, the animals are gradually forced to forget the true picture of the past. The ruling class knows very well that if the people remember the truth of the past, they can rebel against present injustice. Therefore, they recreate history in a new form through propaganda machinery. Brave revolutionaries like Snowball are branded as traitors, and all their contributions are erased. Gradually, the distinction between truth and falsehood ceases to exist. Even in present times, political leaders repeatedly present specific historical events in new forms for their own self-interest, so that division and hatred can be created in society. When a society fails to learn from its true history and past mistakes, it has to face the same terrifying situations repeatedly. The very final scene of the novel represents the ultimate stage of this entire political degradation. Years after years passing by, one day the animals astonishingly see that the pigs are walking on two legs like humans and holding whips in their hands. Erasing all the rules written on the farm wall, only one sentence was written—"All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others." This single

sentence exposes the class division and hypocrisy of society. Late at night when the pigs sit together with humans and feast, the animals peeking from outside can find no difference between humans and pigs. The very nature of power is to exploit, whether it is the capitalist master or the new leader risen through revolution.

In the contemporary political con-

tendency of elected governments to misuse power and silence the opposition is also analogous to Napoleon's rule. The widening gap between the rich and the poor reminds us that the system described in Orwell's book is a realistic reflection of our own society. In conclusion, it can be definitively said that 'Animal Farm' is not just a political critique; it is an eternal document



text, the relevance of this novel has increased manifold compared to before. In today's world, dictatorial tendencies are seen raising their heads under the cloak of democracy. Although physical labor like animals is not exacted today, powerful weapons like information technology are available in the hands of rulers to control human minds. Characters like Squealer are scattered around us today, creating confusion in the minds of the general public through constant false news. The strategy of diverting attention from core problems of people by creating emotional environments in the name of religion or nationalism is prevalent everywhere. The

of human nature and the ugly form of power. Freedom and equality cannot be gifted by any government; the mental awakening and courage to question of every single citizen are indispensable for this. As long as people in a society blindly follow leaders with closed eyes, new exploiters will continue to be born in society. The only way to curb the degradation of political power in this struggle called life is education, awareness, and a strong democratic mindset. Reading this book is extremely essential for conscious people of every generation so that they can tear apart the artificial veil of politics and see the true reality.

## VOICES ACROSS BORDERS

By: Mowsam Hazarika

In an increasingly interconnected world, the boundaries of national discourse are no longer confined within geography. Questions raised in one corner of the globe can resonate across continents, especially when they concern universal democratic values such as freedom of the press and human rights. A recent instance involving a journalist from Norway raising concerns before Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has once again brought these issues into sharp focus. The episode is not merely a diplomatic moment; it is emblematic of a larger global conversation about the state of democratic freedoms in contemporary societies.

• The Context of the Exchange:

India, often celebrated as the world's largest democracy, has long prided itself on a vibrant press and a constitution that guarantees fundamental rights. However, in recent years, concerns have been raised by international observers, media watchdogs, and civil society organizations about the shrinking space for dissent and independent journalism in the country. It is within this backdrop that the Norwegian journalist's questions gain significance.

During an official interaction, the journalist reportedly raised issues concerning press freedom, the safety of journalists, and the broader human rights climate in India. Such questions, though not unprecedented, carry symbolic weight when posed on international platforms. They reflect a growing perception that democratic values must be constantly scrutinized and upheld, regardless of a nation's stature or achievements.

• Press Freedom Under Scrutiny:

Freedom of the press is often regarded as

the cornerstone of any functioning democracy. It ensures that power is held accountable, citizens remain informed, and diverse viewpoints can coexist. In India, the media landscape is vast and dynamic, encompassing thousands of newspapers, television channels, and digital platforms. Yet, this plurality does not automatically translate into freedom.

Critics argue that there has been an increasing trend of pressure on journalists through legal mechanisms, economic constraints, and, in some cases, intimidation. Laws related to sedition, defamation, and national security have occasionally been invoked against journalists and activists. Additionally, the concentration of media ownership and the influence of corporate interests have raised questions about editorial independence.

The Norwegian journalist's query thus reflects a broader international concern: whether the institutional safeguards for press freedom in India are being eroded. It also underscores the importance of transparency and accountability in addressing such perceptions.

• Human Rights Concerns:

Closely linked to press freedom is the larger framework of human rights. A free press often serves as the first line of defense against human rights violations, bringing issues to public attention and prompting corrective action. When journalists face restrictions, the ability to report on human rights issues is inevitably compromised.

In India, debates around human rights have intensified in recent years, particularly in relation to issues such as freedom of expression, minority rights, and the treatment of dissenters. International organizations have occasionally highlighted concerns regarding the use of stringent laws, internet shutdowns, and the detention of activists.



The Norwegian journalist's intervention can be seen as part of a global effort to hold governments accountable to international human rights standards. While such questions may sometimes be perceived as intrusive, they are also indicative of the shared responsibility that nations bear in upholding universal values.

• Diplomatic Sensitivities and Sovereignty:

It is important to acknowledge that questions on internal matters can be sensitive in diplomatic contexts. Governments often emphasize the principle of sovereignty and non-interference, arguing that domestic issues should be addressed within national frameworks. From this perspective, external criticism may be viewed as an overreach.

India has consistently maintained that its democratic institutions are robust and capable of addressing challenges internally. Government representatives have often highlighted the country's independent judiciary, active civil society, and electoral processes as evidence of its democratic resilience.

However, in a globalized era, the line between domestic and international concerns is increasingly blurred. Nations engage with each other not only through trade and diplomacy but also through shared commitments to human rights and democratic norms. As such, questions raised by foreign journalists, while sensitive, are part of an evolving global dialogue.

• The Role of International Media:

The involvement of a Norwegian journalist also highlights the role of international media in shaping perceptions. Journalists operating beyond national boundaries often bring an external perspective, which can both enrich and complicate the discourse. On one hand, they can highlight issues that may not receive adequate attention domestically. On the other, their interventions may sometimes lack the nuanced understanding of local contexts.

Nevertheless, the presence of international scrutiny can act as a catalyst for introspection. Democracies, by their very nature, thrive on

debate and self-correction. Engaging constructively with criticism, rather than dismissing it outright, can strengthen institutional credibility.

• The Way Forward:

The episode serves as a reminder that freedom of the press and human rights are not static achievements but ongoing commitments. For India, this means reaffirming its constitutional values and ensuring that its institutions remain independent and transparent. Measures to protect journalists, promote media plurality, and safeguard freedom of expression are essential in this regard.

At the same time, it is important for international actors to approach such issues with sensitivity and respect for national contexts. Constructive dialogue, rather than confrontational rhetoric, is more likely to yield positive outcomes.

• Conclusion:

The questions raised by the Norwegian journalist to Narendra Modi are more than a momentary exchange; they are part of a larger narrative about the health of democracy in the 21st century. They highlight the interconnectedness of global concerns and the shared responsibility of nations to uphold fundamental freedoms.

For India, the challenge lies not only in addressing external perceptions but also in strengthening internal mechanisms that ensure the protection of press freedom and human rights. As history has shown, the true strength of a democracy lies in its ability to listen, respond, and evolve.

In this sense, the episode is not merely a critique but an opportunity—an opportunity to reaffirm commitments, bridge gaps, and reinforce the principles that form the bedrock of democratic governance.

## National Sisters Day (2 August 2026) and the 'Beti Terapanth Ki' Conference

# Sister: The Foundation of culture, compassion, and an empowered India

By: Lalit Gargg

In the vast world of human relationships, if there is one bond that epitomizes selfless love, unwavering trust, sacrifice, affection, and lifelong companionship, it is the bond of a sister. A sister is not merely a member of the family; she is its emotional heartbeat, the guardian of values, the soul of the household, and the torch-bearer of society's humane consciousness. National Sisters Day is an occasion to celebrate this extraordinary relationship, recognize its dignity, and acknowledge its invaluable contribution to family, society, and the nation. Observed every year on the first Sunday of August, the day reminds us that only when the love, values, and nurturing spirit embodied by sisters remain alive within families can harmony flourish in society and human values continue to illuminate the nation. At a time when materialism, fierce competition, and self-centered lifestyles are eroding the warmth of relationships, National Sisters Day is far more than a ceremonial observance. It is a reaffirmation of India's timeless cultural ethos, where women are regarded as the axis of the family, the custodians of civilization, and the architects of the future. A sister's role extends far beyond her immediate family; she shapes the values of future generations. Through her compassion, resilience, service, patience, self-discipline, and dedication, she enriches society with humanity and moral strength.

This broader vision found a remarkable expression in the Fourth National 'Beti Terapanth Ki' Conference, organized by the Jain Shwetambar Terapanthi Mahasabha on 1 August 2026 at Jain Vishva Bharati, Ladnun, under the auspicious presence of Rashtrasant Acharya Shri Mahashramanji. Reflecting the very spirit of National Sisters Day, the conference was not merely an event but a powerful movement for the resurgence of feminine consciousness, the culture of sisterhood, and enduring family values. The enthusiastic participation of thousands of daughters and sisters from across the country reaffirmed that Indian women are not merely witnesses to change—they are its most dynamic catalysts. Every participant arrived carrying not only enthusiasm but also a renewed

commitment to values, service, leadership, and social responsibility. The gathering offered a hopeful vision of India's future, where women are not simply respected but are active partners in nation-building.

One of the conference's greatest strengths was its holistic understanding of women's empowerment. Rather than limiting empowerment to the language of rights alone, it emphasized responsibility, character, leadership, values, and spiritual awareness. It conveyed the inspiring message that true empowerment is that which instills self-confidence, strengthens families, unites communities, and elevates the nation. The inspiring presence of Rashtrasant Acharya Shri Mahashramanji imparted profound spiritual significance to the conference. His entire life has been devoted to promoting the dignity of women, moral values, education, self-discipline, and the awakening of human consciousness. Through his guidance and numerous initiatives, society has increasingly recognized that women are not merely the strength of the home but the very foundation of national character. His teachings consistently affirm that when women are educated, value-oriented, confident, and morally grounded, families become stronger, societies become healthier, and nations become more prosperous.

On this occasion, Shri Mahendra Nahata, President of the Jain Shwetambar Terapanthi Mahasabha, expressed a deeply meaningful perspective: "No nation can achieve complete progress without the participation and empowerment of women. The societies that have provided their daughters and sisters with opportunities, dignity, and values have always advanced toward sustainable development. The various women-centric initiatives being carried forward under the guidance of Acharya Shri Mahashramanji are not merely empowering women; they are laying the foundation for moral awakening and cultural renaissance across society." He further remarked that 'Beti Terapanth Ki' is not simply a conference but an enduring intellectual and cultural journey that connects daughters and sisters to the mainstream of nation-building through self-respect, leadership, service, and values. Indeed, the soul of India resides in its culture, and the finest expression of that culture is reflected in its family relationships.

The bond of a sister extends far beyond the sacred thread of Raksha Bandhan. It represents trust, encouragement, cooperation, and moral strength—an enduring force that keeps families united. Every daughter illuminates a family through her values, and every sister expands the horizons of compassion and sensitivity through her conduct.

Today, the need is not merely to provide women with opportunities but to place them at the center of decision-making, social leadership, cultural preservation, and national development. When daughters are empowered through education, values, self-reliance, and spiritual wisdom, India's aspiration to become a global moral leader can truly become a reality. Economic progress is undoubtedly important, but without moral development, it remains incomplete. And the greatest custodians of this moral development are our daughters and sisters.

The true message of National Sisters Day is, therefore, not fulfilled merely by exchanging greetings. It calls upon us to ensure that every sister receives education, dignity, equal opportunities, security, and an environment that enables her to lead with confidence. Families must encourage daughters to participate in decision-making; society must provide platforms for their talents; and the nation must recognize them as equal partners in progress. The 'Beti Terapanth Ki' Conference has demonstrated that when spiritual values, social awareness, and visionary leadership converge, transformation transcends ideas and becomes a living movement. It will remain a lasting source of inspiration for future generations, reminding us that a sister is not merely a relationship but one of the most powerful representatives of culture itself.

In Indian civilization, a sister is far more than a familial relation. She is the living embodiment of affection, sacrifice, dignity, compassion, nurturing care, and auspicious blessings. She is revered as the Lakshmi of the home, the pride of the family, the custodian of values, the sacred stream of love, and the emotional strength that binds generations together. Her affection is unconditional, her blessings are priceless, and her faith provides strength during life's most challenging moments. She inspires, comforts, and



sustains, forging bonds not merely of blood but of profound emotional connection. Indian tradition regards a sister as the symbol of prosperity, goodwill, affection, and protection. Festivals such as Raksha Bandhan and Bhai Dooj elevate this sacred relationship to even greater heights, where a sister does not simply tie a ceremonial thread but illuminates her brother's life with her love, trust, and heartfelt blessings. She is the custodian of family culture, the guardian of cherished values, and an ever-flowing river of affection. No words of praise can fully capture her significance, for a sister is truly one of God's most beautiful gifts, enriching life with love, belonging, compassion, and purity.

On this National Sisters Day, let the entire nation resolve that every daughter shall be respected, every sister shall be empowered with

opportunities, and every woman shall enjoy the freedom to realize her full potential. This is the strongest foundation for a truly developed India. The day every daughter of this nation advances with confidence, values, education, and leadership, India will reach unprecedented heights of progress. Honouring sisters should never be confined to a single day of celebration; it must become a national commitment. For wherever sisters are respected, families blossom with values, society thrives with compassion, and the nation moves confidently toward a brighter and more enlightened future. That is the enduring message of National Sisters Day, the lasting achievement of the 'Beti Terapanth Ki' Conference, and the most powerful pathway toward building a stronger, more compassionate, and culturally enriched India.

## The Cry of the wilderness and a daring quest: A critical reflection on the book 'Mandalay'

By: Beauty Hazarika

Mrinal Talukdar is a luminous star in the intellectual and journalistic world of Assam. The fearlessness of his pen and his philosophy of clean journalism have always stirred and inspired many inquisitive minds in society. A fruit of his unique vision and tireless labor is the extraordinary book 'Mandalay', published by the 'Nanda Talukdar Foundation'. This book is not just a colorful travelogue or a conventional account of wildlife; rather, it is a literary documentation of a deep, mysterious, and earth-shattering international crime syndicate operating behind the smuggling of rhino horns.

From Jakhalabandha to Vietnam: The Mystery Saga of a Thorny Journey

Every page of the book takes the reader on a thrilling and unimaginable journey. Joining as a co-traveler in the Indo-Assam Car Rally, the author commenced a journey from Guwahati that extended through the mountainous twists and turns of Myanmar, Thailand, and Laos, reaching all the way into the heart of distant Vietnam. The relentless passion to unearth the roots of the illicit rhino horn trade by venturing into the epicenters of the black market—like Shanghai, Kunming, Mong La, Siem Reap or Mandalay—is truly rare. The vividness of the author's narrative style not only captivates readers but makes them feel as though they are walking as his shadow

through those distant, mesmerizing, yet perilous alleys. The realism of the narrative instills an intense thrill in the reader's mind at every moment.

The Reality of Kaziranga and the Canvas of International Crime

The author has not confined himself merely to the beauty and mysteries of international borders; he has also painted a living picture of the long-standing bloodshed occurring within the green heart of Kaziranga. Drawing from twenty-five years of journalistic experience and deep deliberations with fellow forest officials, he presents a heartbreaking account of the rhinos killed in Kaziranga between 2006 and 2017.

This book shatters our conventional notions and uncovers a new socio-logical truth. Those whom we locally condemn as 'poachers' are only partially to blame when compared to the international black market; the real mafias remain hidden behind the facade of sophisticated society. In parallel, the author respectfully describes the battle of self-sacrifice fought by our ordinary forest guards to protect the pride of the motherland, braving bone-chilling cold, scorching sun, and torrential rain. In the context of this struggle, remembering the contributions of wildlife conservationist Dharanidhar Boro Sir and 'Wild Grass' is profoundly relevant.

The book also leaves readers aggrieved by exposing the ugly reality of tiger farming and

illegal trade carried out under the guise of religion within the sacred precincts of Buddhist monasteries in Thailand. Similarly, through the character of a notorious poacher from Assam's Sootea named 'Bucha', the author delivers a major truth to society—people of the underworld cannot be judged by their outward appearance; they are extremely amiable, polite in conversation, and seemingly devout. However, if the poachers operate cunningly like branches (dale-dale), dedicated protectors like Dharanidhar Boro or Deben Borah remain alert at every leaf (pate-pate) to keep our forests safe.

The Rhino: Our Proud Emotion

There is a popular belief that on the global stage, Assam's identity and heritage are represented by three primary elements—the one-horned rhinoceros of Kaziranga, the world-renowned maestro Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, and the mouth-watering Bailahi-Bou (tomato and rohu fish) sour curry. Therefore, the rhino is not just a wild animal; it is our heartbeat, a national emotion of our existence.

Mrinal Talukdar's 'Mandalay' is not merely an investigation; it is the awakening of a deep consciousness. It is highly desirable that this information-rich book, magnified by its literary beauty, becomes an ornament in the library of every educational institution, so that the new generation can fathom this epic struggle behind nature conservation.



## Monsoon Foot Care

By: Shahnaz Husain

The soft rhythm of raindrops, lush greenery, and earthy aromas—monsoon is easily the most romantic season of the year.

While the season is a rainbow of happiness for your heart, our feet are soaking up something else—rainwater, muck, and bacteria.

If you've ever peeled off wet socks only to discover itchy feet, painful foot cracks, or white, flaky skin, you're not alone.

Navigating through puddles and enduring constant humidity creates the perfect breeding ground for fungi, bacteria, and a host of foot ailments.

Wet feet create an ideal environment for fungal infections like athlete's foot, which thrive in warm, damp conditions. Closed shoes, which are often worn during this season, can trap moisture, further increasing the risk of infections.

Soggy shoes, smelly feet, and surprise cracks on your heels are just part of the many skin concerns this rainy season brings with it.

A little extra care tendered to your feet during monsoon and rainy seasons can help prevent shoe bites & serious foot conditions

1. Keep your feet dry  
Everyone knows to keep feet dry, especially between the toes, but technique matters. After washing or exposure to rain, pat your feet dry thoroughly with a separate, clean towel.

Pay special attention to your feet, while bathing. After washing them well, dry them thoroughly and apply talcum powder.

Wash your feet with a liquid wash every time you come home from outside.

As soon as you get indoors, remove wet shoes and socks.

Never wear the same damp shoes two days in a row.

Wearing the same pair of shoes on back-to-back rainy days can trap moisture, leading to unpleasant odours and fungal infections.

Let them air-dry in sunlight to kill bacteria and avoid foul odour.

Avoid storing wet footwear in closed spaces like shoe racks or under the bed.

Keep your shoes in a shaded, well-ventilated area and avoid direct sunlight to prevent the leather from cracking

2. Choose the Right Footwear  
Selecting appropriate footwear is crucial to maintaining foot health during the monsoon. Avoid wearing heels in the monsoons as roads get wet and slippery. If unavoidable, wear footwear that is resistant and has a little heel as possible.

Switch your heels for simple footwear such as flip-flops, slippers, rubber boots, sandals, etc., as they allow maximum ventilation and help the perspiration evaporate. But open footwear also attracts dirt and therefore, foot hygiene becomes all the more important. Don't forget to wear gum boots if you live in a region prone to heavy rainfall and floods. If you wear closed shoes, talcum powder can be sprinkled inside the shoes.

3. Choose the Right Socks and Liners

If socks are a must, wear clean, breathable cotton ones to lock in moisture and protect from friction. Change socks regularly, especially if they become wet. Cotton or moisture-wicking socks are ideal.

Opt for high-performance socks crafted from bamboo, merino wool blends, or moisture-wicking fabrics. Odour-control liners with silver ions or activated charcoal. Quick-drying athletic socks for days with unavoidable moisture

In fact, during the hot and humid season, the feet should be exposed to the air as much as possible.

4. Toenails

Keeping your toenails short makes cleaning easier and reduces the risk of dirt and grime build-up under the nails.

Take extra care while trimming your toenails; cut them straight and file the corners to remove sharp edges.

Avoid cutting nails too short or rounding the corners, as this can lead to ingrown toenails, which are prone to infections.

If you experience any skin damage during a nail trim, use an antiseptic and antibiotic cream for a few days.

Keeping your toenails groomed by cutting them to an optimal short length is a way of making sure that an unnecessary amount of dirt doesn't accumulate in your toenails. Additionally, moisture causes toenails to become brittle, so a regular trim keeps it under check.

Here are some home remedies for Monsoon foot care:

Foot Soak: In one-fourth bucket of warm water, add half a cup of coarse salt and 10 drops of lemon or orange essential oil (if you cannot get essential oil, use half a cup of lemon or orange juice). If your feet tend to sweat a lot, use a few drops of tea tree oil, as it has germicidal properties. It helps to deal with bad odour. Soak the feet for 10 to 15 minutes.

Foot Lotion: Mix 3 tablespoons of rose water, 2 tablespoons of lemon juice and one teaspoon pure glycerin. Apply on feet and leave on for half an hour.

Foot Care for Dryness: In one-fourth bucket of cold water, put 2 tablespoons of honey, one tablespoon herbal shampoo, one tablespoon almond oil. Soak feet in it for 20 minutes.

Cooling foot bath: Add rose water, lemon juice and a splash of eau de cologne in cold water and soak feet in it. Cools, cleans and removes odour.

Cooling Massage Oil: Take 100 ml olive oil and add 2 DROPS eucalyptus oil, 2 DROPS rosemary oil and 3 DROPS khos, or rose oil. Mix and keep in an airtight glass jar. Use a little of this for a foot massage. It cools and protects the skin and keeps it healthy.

Make a mix of three tablespoons of rose water with two tablespoons of lemon juice and one teaspoon of pure glycerine. Apply this daily after washing and drying the feet.

Turmeric ----Paste of turmeric, which is well known for its antibacterial, antifungal and antiviral properties, can be applied around the toes to get rid of fungal infections too.

## Home

By: Himadri Shekhar Bordoloi

Home.....

When can I go Home, again?

I long for my hometown, which is far away, like the clouds and the seven seas,

Sometimes, that specific, introspective melancholy, gets reflected, in my eyes,

And, hiraeth fills the heart and turns it into boundless pandemonium,

The surging emotions, then blend into one,

Making my ardent yearning, to go to my domicile, even more overpowering,

Thus, creating a never ending abyss, more painful than death itself,

I am a person, who is bit rough, around the edges,

Who, could not express his feelings, conveniently,

And these physical sensation, lie deep inside, overwhelming my innocent heart and soul,

Ostensibly, the delicate apricot flowers, with dew, predominantly soft pinks and white like snow, And the unique, fuzzy clusters of dioecious willow flowers, blooming by the road,

All have witnessed partings, just like me,

A thought then crossed my mind -

How good it will be, if I was a dandelion, the widespread, resilient, perennial flowering plant,

That flies when the winds blow, so that I could reach my abode,

To replenish and rejuvenate my soul, with the love and warmth, from my loved ones, Home

When can I go Home, again?

## Don't be over the moon, black spots catch all eyes

By: Bipul Chandra Kalita

Gold diggers, don't be over the moon

After looting people's dreams;

Ruining pious missions,

Your existence poisons visions

And deeply stains your white apron...

All are widely eying your fallen images:

Lost originality,

Lost rays of personality,

All speak aloud how you've lost yourself!

Wisdom beautified your original simplicity

When you were a freshman,

Baring everything to honesty

Dazzling yourself without any hard labour;

I loved your virgin smile and its meaning,

Adoring carelessly your gesture's solemnity...

Greedy eyes winked at you to change your mindset:

No corrigendum at all

To correct or safeguard your originality,

Only intentions to sideline my noble desires!

Sparky success makes you blind to your bleak status,

Winging the careless bird in you

To fly to the height of forgetfulness

To get hidden behind its thickest bush;

Don't be over the moon, black spots catch all eyes:

Distorting beauty's comfortable zones,

Greedy eyes winked at you to divert your esteemed originality

And lead you to your intellectually framed fake world...

# *'The US will hit Iran very hard until they can't take it anymore'* Trump threatens more strikes on Iran, and other developments in the Middle East

CAIRO, Aug 1: US President Donald Trump threatened more strikes on Iran as the United States presses for the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz.

Hours later on Saturday, Kuwait said it responded to a new round of drone attacks from Iran while a tanker was struck in the strategic waterway.

Meanwhile, Israel heavily struck the Gaza Strip after the Palestinian militant group Hamas agreed to disarm.

Speaking to reporters Friday during a meeting with members of his Cabinet at the Camp David presidential retreat in Maryland, Trump said "we just want to win" in Iran and signaled that he expected U.S. military action to continue for some time.

He said the U.S. will hit Iran "very hard" until they can't take it anymore.

Later that day, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt expressed the U.S. administration's frustration anew, charging that Tehran last month signed a



memorandum of understanding with the U.S. on a truce but then quickly "broke it, shot at commercial ships, and killed American soldiers."

"President Trump is not going to stand by and allow this terrorist behavior to occur," Leavitt said in a statement on Friday evening. "Iran will continue to pay until they come to the table in, what President Trump deems, a meaningful way."

Kuwait's military said Saturday that its forces were responding to drone attacks, which were part of

Iran's assaults on the country.

In a statement, Maj. Gen. Saud Abdulaziz Al-Otaibi, spokesman for Kuwait's Defense Ministry, said the drones hit "a number of vital facilities," including a government structure in the country's north. He said there were no casualties.

The British Navy said Saturday that a tanker was struck and a separate explosion hit close to a vessel in the Strait of Hormuz off the coast of Oman. No casualties were reported in either incident, it said. The United Kingdom Maritime

Trade Organization said an unknown projectile hit the vessel on Friday 11 nautical miles northeast of Lima, Oman. The attack damaged the vessel's engine room.

The group said that on Saturday a large splash and an explosion were reported close to another tanker while it was sailing 21 nautical miles northwest of Khasab city.

Iran has repeatedly attacked vessels attempting to transit through the Strait of Hormuz without its authorization as part of its ongoing conflict with the U.S.

Intense Israeli strikes Friday night killed at least two people in central Gaza and injured dozens more, according to local health officials.

The strikes came after Hamas confirmed Friday that it will disarm in a potential breakthrough for ending the war in Gaza, though major obstacles remain. Israel has not officially commented on the Hamas deal, which is part of a U.S.-brokered ceasefire announced last October. (AP)

## Nepal's Nims, soldier-turned-climber who lived by the mountains, dies on one

KATHMANDU, Aug 1: "Broad Peak, I ask for nothing but safe passage up and back down. I take zero mountains for granted. Not one," Nirmal Purja posted on his X account three days before he went missing on the 8,051-metre peak in the Karakoram Range.

But it was not to be for Purja, the Nepali-British climber, popularly known as Nims or Nimsdai.

Purja, 43, was among 10 climbers swept away by an avalanche that struck Broad Peak, located in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir's Gilgit-Baltistan, at an altitude of around 7,000 metres on Thursday.

Purja's death was confirmed on Saturday in a statement issued by Elite Exped, the expedition company he founded. It further said that no member of the expedition survived the avalanche.

The Broad Peak expedition marked the end of Purja's illustrious mountaineering career. Broad Peak is the world's 12th-highest mountain and is considered one of the most challenging peaks to climb.

Purja had successfully climbed all 14 peaks above 8,000 metres



around the world in just six months and six days, setting a new record in 2019. He was about to complete his mission of climbing all 14 eight-thousanders twice after completing the Broad Peak.

Ang Tshering Sherpa, former president of Nepal Mountaineering Association, termed Purja as "one of the best climbers" in the world. "He has climbed eight thousanders for most of the time," he added.

The list of Purja's achievements, apart from the fastest ascent of the world's 14 tallest mountains using supplemental oxygen, includes the fastest summits of the world's three highest mountains - Everest, K2 and Kanchenjunga - and being

among the first mountaineers to summit K2 during winter in January 2021.

However, for the highly skilled mountaineer that he was, Purja didn't grow up in the shadow of the Himalayas. He was born on July 25, 1983, in Myagdi district of Gandaki Province but raised in Chitwan in the country's flatlands.

According to his own website, although he performed well at school, there was no yearning to climb mountains, instead he wanted to become a Gurkha in the British military like his father and brothers before him.

Beginning in 2003, Purja had a distinguished 16-year military career, of which he spent six years as a Gurkha and 10 years with the UK Special Forces (SBS).

Purja was appointed Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in 2018.

According to the UK's Gurkha Museum, Purja was the first ever Gurkha to join the UK Special Boat Service, a unit predominantly made up of Royal Marines.

The SBS is regarded as one of the most elite units in the British Military. (AP)

## Britain's new leader shifts power from Downing Street to Manchester with 'No. 10 North'

MANCHESTER, Aug 1: Britain has a new hub of power: a bland modern office block about 260 km from the prime minister's official London office and residence at 10 Downing St.

The Manchester low-rise is home to "No. 10 North," the flagship of new Prime Minister Andy Burnham's pledge to be a different kind of UK leader.

Burnham was mayor of Greater Manchester before vaulting back into national politics, and one of his first acts was to set up a branch office in the city. It's both symbol of and engine for his pledge to give local leaders more powers and spread economic growth around the country.

Burnham calls it "a North Pole that balances the South Pole" of Westminster politics in London. Critics have called it a gimmick.

It's certainly a novelty. While past British leaders have spent weekends in their local constituencies, or at the prime minister's official Chequers country retreat, none in living memory has had a large-scale office outside London.

Burnham plans to work there at least one day a week, alongside a full-time staff of aides, experts and civil servants.

"It's not another office," Burnham said Friday. "It is a fundamental change to the way the country thinks about growth and investment."

Burnham believes Manchester holds the key to avoiding the fate of Keir Starmer, his predecessor as Labour Party leader and prime minister.

Starmer stepped down in July after two years in office, following missteps, policy U-turns and his failure to get Britain's sluggish economy growing.

During nine years as Manchester mayor, Burnham was praised standing up to central government on behalf of a proud, battle-scarred northern city that gave birth to the Industrial Revolution, movements for social change and a dynamic music scene. He gained the nickname King of the North for his championing of the city — and his political ambition.

Burnham promoted what has been called "Manchesterism," a form of business-friendly socialism that involves harnessing private investment for major projects and decentralising government to give communities more control over housing, transport, training and public services.

The city centre boomed during his mayoralty. Skyscrapers sprouted from vacant lots, service industries grew, a thousand coffee shops bloomed and a municipally run network of bright yellow buses and trams crisscrossed the city.

Now Burnham wants to replicate the approach across the country, using No. 10 North as the engine room for redistributing wealth and economic opportunities to areas blighted by shuttered industries, lost jobs and an exodus of young people.

In a first step, Burnham announced Friday that mayors will get to keep a greater share of income and business tax revenue from their areas, calling it the "biggest transfer of power, funding and responsibility from Westminster in a generation."

Many of the details haven't been announced, however, including how much new money mayors will be getting.

Rob Ford, professor of political science at the University of Manchester, said Burnham's bold early moves suggest "he does mean business in terms of changing the overall mechanics of government."

"We have one of the most centralised countries out of all developed democracies in terms of how much money and decision-making power gets hoovered into the centre, how little there is for the provinces to do," Ford said. "He does seem quite determined to change that, but that's a huge job."

Burnham's critics point out that Manchester's boom hasn't spread to all its outskirts, and the anti-immigration party Reform UK has been a beneficiary of voters' discontent. It's envisioned that No. 10 North will eventually get a brand-new headquarters as part of an inner-city redevelopment project. For now, it shares a building with a chain pub, a civic register office and a branch of the cyber-intelligence agency GCHQ.

It's very different to cramped, stuffy 10 Downing St, a 350-year-old townhouse awkwardly converted into the hub of a government that has grown too big for it. (AP)

## Sri Lanka Navy, Air Force launch search for missing fishermen amid rough seas

COLOMBO, Aug 1: The Sri Lankan Navy and Air Force have launched a joint search-and-rescue operation for fishermen reported missing or in distress after venturing into the sea before a fishing ban was imposed due to rough weather, officials said on Saturday.

Director General of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Susantha Kahawatta said several fishermen who had gone to sea before authorities announced the ban were now in distress.

A fishing boat that left the northwestern coastal town of Chilaw with two fishermen on board has gone missing, officials said.

In a separate incident, the body of a fisherman from the coastal town of Negombo washed ashore after his boat reportedly struck a rock in rough seas. The Sri Lanka Air Force deployed a surveillance aircraft to assist Navy search teams in the operation, officials said.

Separately, authorities warned fishermen about 17 empty shipping containers floating about 17 nautical miles off Colombo port after they reportedly fell into the sea from a cargo vessel travelling from Male to Colombo. The containers pose a danger to fishing boats, officials said. Meanwhile, the Department of Meteorology warned that sea areas off the northwestern, eastern and southern coasts would remain very rough at times, with waves expected to reach heights of two to three metres. (PTT)

## Spain to put containment fence on Ceuta's border with Morocco after frontier rush that killed 67

CEUTA (SPAIN), Aug 1: Spain announced it was installing a 500-metre-long (1,600-foot) containment barrier on the sea border between its North African territory of Ceuta and neighbouring Morocco after between 50,000 and 60,000 migrants breached the frontier earlier this week.

The death toll has climbed to 67, including some who drowned and others who were killed in a stampede to cross a breakwater barrier, the Spanish government said Saturday.

A handful of exhausted migrants who swam to Ceuta's urban Tarajal beach Saturday morning were met by soldiers who escorted them back across the border. Spain's interior ministry says the majority of those who entered the Spanish territory in North Africa have already returned to Morocco.

"We are relentless against those who break the law," Spanish Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska told journalists in Ceuta on Saturday.

Questioned how this massive border breach could have happened given the heavy security on both sides of the border and

whether Morocco posed a threat to Ceuta, Marlaska defended the government in Rabat.

"The events require an evaluation by Spain and Morocco," he said. But it was the cooperation with its neighbours that allowed Spain "to revert the situation in 24 hours."

"Morocco is not a threat to Ceuta, or to the rest of Spain. It is a reliable partner," Marlaska emphasized.

After days of chaos and streets packed with people who had hoped for a better life in Spain, residents of Ceuta woke up Saturday to an uneasy calm.

Even so, security in the autonomous city of 84,000 remained bruised.

"Life in this city has been disrupted as a result of the border incident," said Ceuta's President Juan Jesús Vivas.

"The return of people has begun satisfactorily but the process must be completed," he said. "The city has not yet returned to normal."

In the Moroccan city of Tangier, about 75 kilometres (46 miles) west of Ceuta, the main railway station was busy with people re-

turning from Ceuta or the border. Some slept on the ground, exhausted, as passersby watched from a distance.

"I tried to cross, but I failed. I stayed near the border with Ceuta for two days, but I couldn't find anything to eat," said Abdallah, an aspiring migrant who asked that his last name not be published out of fear of retaliation for trying to cross illegally.

On the road leading to the Moroccan town of Fnideq, which borders Ceuta, many migrants were seen walking toward the fence, some barefoot, apparently hoping to try their luck.

Taxi drivers and bus operators were refusing to take them, fearing retaliation from authorities.

Police officers were deployed along the road, stopping and checking every vehicle heading toward Fnideq.

But some who made it to Ceuta were determined to stay. Among them was Mohamed Hatiri, a 23-year-old Moroccan.

"They've closed everything down so that we can't buy anything to eat, to force us to return to our country," he said. (AP)

## Hamburg Pride gets underway with increased security a week after fatal attack in Berlin

BERLIN, Aug 1: Hamburg's Pride parade, one of Germany's biggest, got Saturday underway with increased security a week after a fatal extremist attack near its counterpart in Berlin.

Dozens of trucks were making their way through the centre of Germany's second-biggest city, and organisers expected about 250,000 people to attend. Hamburg's police chief said earlier this week that roughly twice as many officers as last year would protect the event.

The Hamburg event's motto this time is "Queer in solidarity. Take a stand — for a future without fear."

A late addition to the trucks taking part was one representing the Berlin Pride event — or Christopher Street Day, CSD for short, as the parades are known in Germany. People on that truck were asked to wear dark clothing as a sign of respect for the victims of last week's attack.

Late on July 25, a driver ploughed a van into people a few hundred meters (yards) from the closing party of the Berlin Pride event before cutting others with what appears to have been a ma-

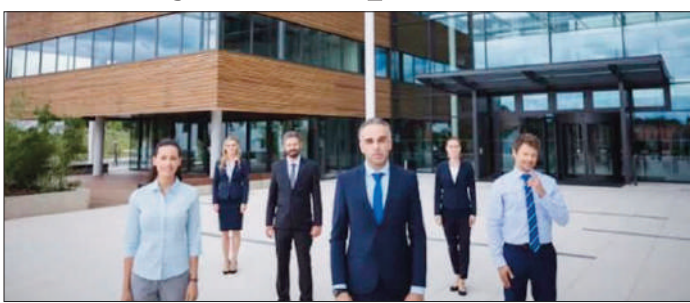


chete. A woman was killed, and many other people were injured.

The 21-year-old suspect, Abdul Ballout, was killed in a confrontation with police on Sunday. Investigators later found a video in which a person believed to be the suspect claimed responsibility and pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group.

Prosecutors have said Ballout, who was born in Germany and has Lebanese roots, travelled to Lebanon in 2025 with the goal of going to Syria to join IS. He made contact with several people who were presumed members. (AP)

## Puerto Rico authorises USD 2 billion coastal luxury development that activists oppose



SAN JUAN, Aug 1: Puerto Rico's government has authorised construction of a USD 2 billion luxury development in the island's south-west region that environmentalists have decried, warning it would strain the US territory's resources and threaten wildlife.

The project known as Esencia would be built on 2,000 acres in the coastal town of Cabo Rojo. It would include 500 luxury hotel rooms, 1,200 private residences, two golf courses, an equestrian centre, a school from kindergarten to 12th grade and a 24/7 medical centre, among other things.

Global investment firm Reuben

Brothers and real estate development company Three Rules Capital said in a statement Friday that more than 75 per cent of the project would be dedicated to conservation and green space, including restoring roughly 33 acres of wetlands and rehabilitating coastal dunes and mangrove ecosystems.

They also said the development would be entirely powered by renewable energy and would have its own water and energy infrastructure. Hotel brands joining the project so far are Mandarin Oriental and Rosewood Hotels & Resorts.

Environmentalists decried the approval, which Puerto Rico's Ad-

junct Board of the Permit Management Office issued late Thursday. The approval was shared with The Associated Press on Friday.

"We are going to fight this in every forum possible," said Braulio Quintero, executive director of the Puerto Rico-based Institute for Socio-Ecological Research. He is among those opposing the project.

Quintero criticised officials for approving construction "without a public hearing, without governmental transparency."

Quintero also called on the developers to face Puerto Ricans.

"These individuals must be subjected to public scrutiny," he said. "These are serious threats to our sustainability as a people."

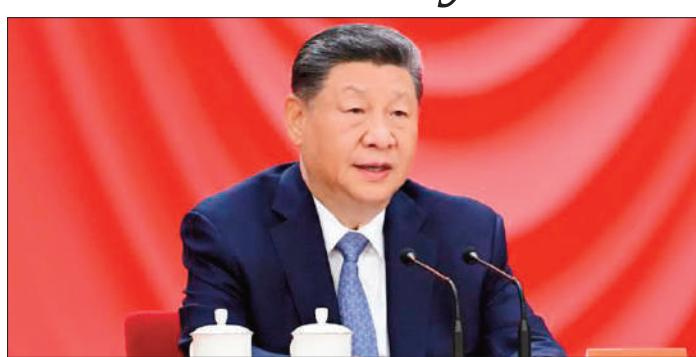
The developers have stressed that they will protect the environment and uphold public access to the beach. They noted that the project is expected to generate more than 17,000 jobs and asserted it would set a benchmark for "environmentally conscious luxury development." (AP)

## The PLA Strengthen the military application of unmanned intelligent technologies Enhance use of AI to develop 'intelligent military': Xi tells PLA

BEIJING, Aug 1: Chinese President Xi Jinping has called on the armed forces to enhance use of AI as part of a drive to develop an "intelligent military system" and asked them to enhance combat capabilities as a testing criterion for promoting high-quality modernisation.

Speaking ahead of the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) 99th anniversary celebrated on Saturday, Xi said the military has made "significant progress" in modernisation and called for "decisive" advances to achieve its objectives.

Xi, who also heads the military, told a Politburo group study session on Thursday that the PLA should "strengthen the military application of unmanned intelligent technologies, deepen the development and application of network information systems, and gradually build an intelligent military system," the state-run Xinhua news agency reported.



Unmanned technologies broadly mean AI tools.

Combat capabilities remain the ultimate objective and testing criterion for promoting the high-quality modernisation of national defence and the armed forces, Xi said.

It is vital to strengthen the systematic integration of combat capabilities, conduct rigorous combat-oriented test and evaluation and bolster military training

and combat readiness, thereby effectively safeguarding national sovereignty, security and development interests, he said.

Xi heads the Central Military Commission, which is the overall high command of the PLA. Since he took over power in 2012, Xi has increased real time exercises to test their strength.

Since 2012, he said, the PLA made historic achievements and undergoing historic transforma-

tions in the cause of building a strong military.

He called for efforts to fulfil the goals for the centenary of the PLA in 2027 and make "decisive progress" in realising the modernisation of national defence and the armed forces.

He said the PLA should provide strong strategic support for advancing the cause of building a great country and achieving national rejuvenation on all fronts through Chinese modernisation.

It is imperative to uphold and strengthen the Party's absolute leadership over the armed forces and fully implement the policy of enhancing political loyalty in the military in the new era, he said.

Xi also urged efforts to continue the fight against corruption, improve the supervision system for major projects, and ensure that all initiatives are underpinned by quality, capability and integrity. (PTT)

## India-China border trade at Nathula resumes after six years



**GANGTOK, Aug 1:** The border trade between India and China through the Nathula Pass resumed on Saturday after six years, marking the revival of one of the oldest trading corridors along the ancient Silk Route, officials said.

The trade had remained suspended since 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent strain in India-China border relations.

A formal reopening ceremony was held at Nathula in East Sikkim, where officials from the two neighbouring nations participated, signalling the return of seasonal trade through the strategically significant mountain pass at over 14,000 feet.

Announcing the resumption, Sikkim's Commerce and Industries Department Secretary Karma D Youtso said the seasonal trade will be conducted

from Monday to Thursday until November under the existing bilateral trade protocol.

"Thirty-eight registered traders have been issued trade passes this year. Around 36 notified items, including handicrafts, handloom products, traditional religious articles, ready-made garments and other approved goods, will be traded through the route," Youtso said.

She added that elaborate security arrangements have been put in place, with the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) enforcing the Standard Operating Procedure. Additional ITBP personnel have been deployed at Nathula, including a women's platoon for the first time.

The reopening is expected to inject fresh momentum into the local economy by generating business for registered traders, transport operators and other stakeholders dependent on border trade. (PTI)

## Recommendations of SCRPCR convention to shape child protection policies: NHRC member

**ITANAGAR, Aug 1:** National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Member Priyank Kanoongo has said the policy recommendations and deliberations emerging from the two-day Regional Convention of the State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR) will shape child protection policies and strengthen institutional mechanisms across the country for the next two decades.

Addressing the valedictory session at the Kalawangpo Convention Hall here on Saturday, Kanoongo expressed confidence that children benefiting from these measures would grow into empowered, responsible citizens capable of contributing to the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

The two-day regional summit, organised by the Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (AP-SCPCR), brought together chairpersons, members, and senior officials from SCPCRs across the North Eastern states. (PTI)

## Centre's advance tax devolution of ₹ 1,476 crore will strengthen Arunachal's finances: Khandu

**ITANAGAR, Aug 1:** Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Saturday said the Centre's advance tax devolution of ₹ 1,476 crore to Arunachal Pradesh will strengthen the frontier state's finances, enabling faster implementation of capital projects, infrastructure development and public welfare initiatives.

The Union Government on Saturday released tax devolution of ₹ 1,09,019 crore to state governments, as one advance instalment to accelerate their capital and developmental expenditure.

Khandu expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for the advance release, describing it as a reflection of the Centre's commitment to cooperative federalism.

"Heartfelt gratitude to Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji and Hon'ble Union Finance Minister Smt Nirmala Sitharaman Ji for releasing an advance instalment of tax devolution to the states, reinforcing the spirit



of cooperative federalism," Khandu said in a post on X.

The chief minister said the allocation is particularly significant for Arunachal Pradesh, given its strategic location and challenging geographical conditions.

"Arunachal Pradesh has been allocated ₹ 1,476 crore as part of this advance release, an amount that is particularly significant for a small, strategically important, and geographically challenging frontier state," he said.

Khandu further observed that on a per capita basis, Arunachal Pradesh continues to receive one

of the highest shares among Indian states, reflecting the Finance Commission's recognition of our vast terrain, sparse population, infrastructure needs, and strategic importance.

He said the timely release would further strengthen the state's finances and speed up the execution of key development projects.

"This timely release will strengthen the state's finances, enabling faster implementation of capital projects, infrastructure development, and public welfare initiatives that directly benefit our people," the chief minister added. (PTI)

## Congress's Arunachal unit urges Rahul Gandhi to raise state's issues in Parliament

**ITANAGAR, Aug 1:** The Arunachal Pradesh Congress urged Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi to take up four issues concerning the state in Parliament, alleging that the BJP-led governments at the Centre and in the state have failed to address them.

The demands were made in a memorandum submitted by state Congress president Bosiram Siram to the party leadership during an All India Congress Committee (AICC) review meeting in New Delhi, a statement said on Saturday. The state Congress sought an amendment to Article 371(H) to bring it on a par with Article 371(A) applicable to Nagaland and Article 371(G) applicable to Mizoram, arguing that the existing provisions do not adequately protect the state's land, customary laws and natural resources.

The state unit said stronger constitutional safeguards, on the lines of the Sixth Schedule, were needed to strengthen tribal self-governance and protect indigenous communities. The state Congress also reiterated its opposition to the proposed Siang Upper Multipurpose

Project (SUMP), alleging that the mega dam in the seismically sensitive region could trigger large-scale ecological damage.

Claiming that the project could affect more than 2 lakh people and submerge ancestral land and heritage sites such as Kekar Monying, the state Congress said national security concerns over China's upstream activities should not override the principle of free, prior and informed consent of local tribal communities.

The memorandum also raised concerns over Chinese activities along the international border, accusing the BJP of "selective nationalism" and demanding a White Paper from the Centre on the border situation. The state Congress also demanded the restoration of the Old Pension Scheme (OPS), criticising the National Pension System (NPS) and alleging that it leaves government employees financially insecure.

Siram urged Gandhi to strongly raise these issues in Parliament, asserting that Arunachal Pradesh should not be treated merely as a resource-rich region but as the homeland of indigenous communities. (PTI)

## Urban committee visits Dimapur to strengthen urban governance

**HT Correspondent**

**DIMAPUR, Aug 1:** The Committee on Urban Local Bodies and Nagaland Village Councils vis-à-vis the Nagaland Municipal Act, 2023 and the Nagaland Village and Tribal Council Act, 1978, as amended up to 2022, conducted a spot visit to Dimapur on Friday.

The seven-member committee held two separate stakeholder consultations to review the implementation of the two legislations and gather recommendations for strengthening urban governance.

Chairing the meetings, adviser for food & civil supplies and chairperson of the committee K Tokugha Sukhalu said the committee had come to Dimapur to listen, investigate and understand how the newly elected municipal council, traditional urban gaon buras, colony chairmen and the district administration were coordinating on the ground.

He said the committee's mandate was to review the implementation and intersection of the Nagaland Village and Tribal Councils Act, 1978 and the Nagaland



Municipal Act, 2023, noting that the two laws represent the dual reality of Nagaland. Describing Dimapur as the commercial hub and gateway to the state, Sukhalu said what happens in the city has a bearing on the entire state.

He noted that after more than two decades without an elected municipal body, the newly elected Dimapur Municipal Council marked a historic transition under the Nagaland Municipal Act, 2023, while urban gaon buras continued to play a vital role in maintaining customary authority, law and order, and community mediation.

Sukhalu acknowledged that urban governance and customary

institutions often overlap as towns expand, creating practical challenges.

He called upon the Dimapur Municipal Council councillors to share areas where the 2023 Act empowers or restricts them and identify the administrative support required for its effective implementation.

He also sought feedback from urban gaon buras on adapting to the new ward committees and from colony chairmen on coordination, sanitation, security and areas where the DMC could provide greater support.

Sukhalu further urged the participants to candidly present grievances, coordination issues and practical recommendations so that the committee could submit concrete suggestions to the Nagaland Legislative Assembly.

He said the ultimate goal was to ensure harmony between statutory municipal governance, traditional institutions and grassroots colony leadership to make Dimapur a clean, safe, efficient and prosperous city.

## Army distributes solar lamps to students in Arunachal

**ITANAGAR, Aug 1:** The Indian Army's Spear Corps distributed solar lamps to students across multiple educational institutions in the forward border town of Tuting in Arunachal Pradesh's Upper Siang district as part of its civic outreach in remote frontier sectors.

The distribution drive was carried out by troops of the Spear Head Division in close coordination with local school administrations to address the persistent challenge of erratic power supply in the region, an official report said.

The beneficiaries included students from Siang Valley Residential English Medium School, Kindergarten Primary School, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose School, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, Kendriya Vidyalaya Tuting, GTSS Tuting, Higher Secondary School Tuting, and Government Primary Schools in Pekong, Ningguing, Kugging, and Norbulling.

"The initiative directly addresses a long-standing constraint in this remote region, where unreliable electricity historically limited students' study hours beyond daylight," a military official said, according to the report.

The provision of solar lamps will allow students to extend their study hours into the evening, supporting academic performance and reducing dependence on the local power grid.

Reaffirming its commitment to community welfare, the Army highlighted that its role along the frontier extends beyond national security to encompass educational support, medical outreach, and local infrastructure assistance.

School authorities and students expressed gratitude for the initiative, emphasising that the intervention will significantly ease daily study routines in an area where basic infrastructure remains a hurdle. (PTI)

## Four militants arrested in Manipur



**IMPHAL, Aug 1:** Four militants belonging to different proscribed outfits were arrested from three districts of Manipur, police said on Saturday.

Kangleipak Communist Party member Khunthoklemba Oinam (30) was arrested in Imphal West district on Friday for his involvement in lobbing a hand grenade at a house at Yumnam Leikai on July 28, an official said.

The same day, security forces arrested a cadre of PREPAK (PRO) identified as Ningthoujam Nanao Meitei (41) in Imphal East district.

Moreover, two members of PREPAK were apprehended near the India-Myanmar border in Tengnoupal district on Thursday, police added. (PTI)

## Assam man held with brown sugar in Manipur's Jiribam

**IMPHAL, Aug 1:** A man from Assam was arrested allegedly with 5.21 kg of brown sugar in Manipur's Jiribam district, police said on Saturday. A four-wheeler was intercepted at Leingangpokpi in the Jiribam police station area, close to the border with Assam's Cachar district, they said.

On subsequent search of the vehicle, the drugs were recovered. The vehicle's driver, identified as Bhima Panika (42) of Panika Basti in Karbi Anglong, was arrested, they added.

Police said they have registered a case and are investigating the source of the drugs and their destination. (PTI)

## Arunachal Dy CM meets Himanta in Guwahati

**ITANAGAR, Aug 1:** Arunachal Pradesh Deputy CM Chowna Mein met Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma in Guwahati on Saturday.

Mein said the meeting was held at the Lok Sewa Bhawan.

"We had a warm and meaningful interaction, and I look forward to further strengthening the spirit of cooperation and shared progress between Arunachal Pradesh and Assam," he said in a social media post.

The two leaders have regularly held discussions aimed at improving inter-state coordination, enhancing connectivity, and fostering socio-economic ties, officials said. (PTI)

## Nagaland to distribute relief to disaster-hit people through DDMA



**HT Correspondent**

**DIMAPUR, Aug 1:** The Nagaland State Disaster Management Authority (NSDMA) on Friday said all relief and rescue operations will be coordinated only through the respective District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) at the district level.

The NSDMA notified all NGOs,

church organisations, civil-based organisations, and well-wishers of this following the extensive damage caused by heavy rainfall, landslides, and flash floods across the state, and to ensure the smooth, equitable, and accountable distribution of relief materials.

It said this is necessitated to avoid duplication, and to ensure

that the relief items reach all the affected families and villages.

The NSDMA further said all individuals, NGOs and organisations intending to provide relief in cash or kind may contact and route their assistance through the office of the respective District Disaster Management Authority chairman.

It asked all concerned to treat the matter as most urgent and ensure compliance.

Meanwhile, the Longleng district administration and District Disaster Management Authority, along with Phomla Hoichem and the Phom Students' Conference, disbursed emergency relief fund assistance and ration relief to the landslide-affected families of Alayung, Yaongyimchen, Yachem, and Nokosang villages of the district on Thursday.

The relief was provided to families whose houses were damaged and/or rendered unsafe due to landslides and ground subsidence that occurred from July 19 onward.

A total of 55 households/families across the four villages have been affected by landslides and rainfall.

## 'Historic feat': Tripura CM congratulates judoka Asmita Dey for winning Commonwealth gold



**AGARTALA, Aug 1:** Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha congratulated judoka Asmita Dey for winning the gold medal in the women's 48 kg category at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, describing her achievement as a historic moment for both the state and the country.

Saha said Dey, a resident of Dakshin Sonacharri in South Tripura's Belonia, became the first Indian woman judoka to win a Commonwealth Games gold medal.

"Tripura's daughter Asmita Dey creates history! A daughter of Tripura has once again brought glory to the state on the international

stage. The talented judoka from Belonia has achieved a historic feat by winning the gold medal in the 48 kg judo category at the Commonwealth Games," he said in a social media post on Friday night.

The CM said Dey's dedication, hard work and self-confidence would inspire the younger generation across the country.

"Heartiest congratulations and best wishes to the talented athlete born on the soil of Tripura. Her success is a matter of pride for the entire state and the nation," he added.

Sports Minister Tinku Roy also congratulated Dey, saying her victory had opened a new chapter in the history of Indian women's judo at the Commonwealth Games.

"Her remarkable victory has filled the nation with pride. Congratulations to Asmita Dey for this historic achievement. Her dedication, determination and exceptional performance will inspire aspiring sportspersons across the country," Roy said in a social media post.

The 23-year-old Asmita became the first Indian judoka to win a Commonwealth Games gold after producing a stirring comeback to beat Canada's Heidi Quach in the women's 48kg final. (PTI)

## Manipur: Body of man, who went missing in Churachandpur flood, found after two days

**CHURACHANDPUR, Aug 1:** The body of a 33-year-old man, who was swept away by flood water in Manipur's Churachandpur district, was recovered on Saturday, officials said.

Thangjohnson of New Lamka Vengnuam South was swept away by the swollen waters of the Lanva river on Thursday evening when he was attempting to retrieve construction materials that had been washed away by the strong current during embankment construction work, they said.

Search operations had been underway to find him since Friday morning.

His body was recovered by volunteers of a local organisation in the Tuitha river near Khominthang village, officials said. (PTI)

## Centre's advance tax devolution of ₹ 682 crore will accelerate Manipur's growth: CM

**IMPHAL, Aug 1:** Manipur Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh on Saturday said the Centre's advance tax devolution of ₹ 682 crore will accelerate the progress of the state and strengthen development initiatives.

Singh, in a social media post, expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for the ad-

vance tax devolution of Rs 682 crore to Manipur.

"This timely support will significantly strengthen our development initiatives and accelerate the state's progress," he said. Singh, on behalf of the people of the state, conveyed thanks to the Centre for its continued support.

The Union government released an additional instalment of tax devolution

to the state governments amounting to ₹ 1,09,019 crore on August 1 in addition to the normal monthly devolution to be released on August 10, an official statement said on Saturday.

The release is in line with the Centre's commitment to strengthen the finances of states to accelerate their capital and developmental expenditure, it said. (PTI)

No./JDB/15<sup>th</sup>-FC/13/Pt-II/2025-26/8658

### NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Date 30/07/2026

Sealed Tenders affixing a non-refundable Court fee stamp amounting Rs. 8.25 (Rupees eight & twenty five paise) only with a validity period of 180 Days which will subsequence to be converted and drawn up in the printed of F-2 form are invited from the registered Contractor of Class-I (A, B, C), Class-II, Class-III category of Assam PWD (Roads & Building) and BTC for the following works under 15<sup>th</sup>-FC(Tied) fund for the year 2025-26 during 2026-27 under Jalab Dev. Block of BTC area. The Tenders will be received by the undersigned up to **2.30PM on 21/08/2026** and will be opened on the same date & place at 3.30PM.

| Sl. No. | Name of Scheme                                                                  | Tender Value (In Rs.) | Bid Security                                                       | Cost of BID documents (D/D) @ 0.03% (Approx.) | Time of Completion                                    |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 1       | Const. of Community Toilet at Jalagaon Balabari Janashewa Sangha (AC-128533844) | Rs. 17,85,833/-       | Rs. 17,85,833/- @ 1% for ST/SC/OBC & Rs. 35,717/- @ 2% for General | Rs. 540/-                                     | 3 (Three) months from the date of issue of work order |

Details NIT may be seen at the office of the undersigned from 30/07/2026 to 21/08/2026 up to 1.00PM.

**IPR(BTC)/C/2026-27/985**

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

## Stricter punishment, speedy probe as tweaked anti-paper leak law kicks in

Now, investigations into paper leak cases are to be completed within two months

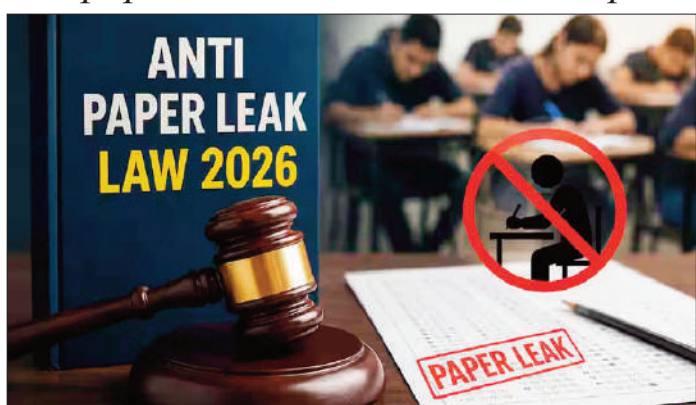
**NEW DELHI, Aug 1:** An amended law that empowers states to set up fast-track courts for speedy trials of accused and enhance punishment in public examination question paper leak cases has received the assent of President Droupadi Murmu.

In a gazette notification issued on Friday, the law ministry said President Murmu has given her assent to the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026, after it was cleared by both Houses of Parliament earlier this week.

Now, investigations into paper leak cases are to be completed within two months.

According to the legislation, individuals involved in paper leaks or unfair means in exams will get jail terms for a minimum of five years and a maximum of 10 years, and a fine of up to ₹ 50 lakh.

For organised crimes, the



amended law proposes a minimum sentence of seven years and a fine of up to ₹ 10 crore.

The government pushed for an early passage of the Bill by Parliament amid massive protests here and in other parts of the country by students against the NEET 2026 paper leak.

The new law amends a two-

year-old Act by enhancing fines and imposing stricter punishments on paper leak convicts.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had promised the law and fast-track courts amid the recent student protests. The law outlines 15 illegal acts, including leaking question papers, tampering with OMR sheets, creating fake web-

sites and issuing fake admit cards.

The 2024 law was brought in when the government faced raging paper leak controversies. Before the 2024 legislation, there was no specific substantive law to deal with unfair means adopted or offences committed by various entities involved in the conduct of public examinations by the Central government and its agencies.

The previous Act aimed to prevent unfair means in public examinations conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), the Staff Selection Commission (SSC), the Railways, banking recruitment examinations and the National Testing Agency (NTA), among others.

Under the amended law, all the states and UTs will be directed to set up fast-track courts, which will complete the trial within three months of filing of the chargesheet. (PTI)

## Protest for Amit Shah's resignation over July 20 action will continue: AISA chief Neha Bora

**NEW DELHI, Aug 1:** Demanding Union Home Minister Amit Shah's resignation over the July 20 crackdown on anti-paper leak protesters in Delhi, AISA president Neha Bora said the movement has evolved into a wider campaign seeking accountability from the Centre over the alleged police action.

Bora, who observed a 23-day hunger strike during the agitation, told PTI that the demand for Shah's resignation and the removal of Delhi Police Commissioner Anurag Kumar would continue alongside efforts to secure the release of arrested protesters. She emphasised that accountability cannot be limited to low-ranking officials.

"The buck stops at Amit Shah. The buck stops at the commissioner of police. If somebody has to resign or has to be sacked, it is these two people. No low-ranking official's suspension is enough for us," she said.

Questioning the alleged use of



pellet guns and excessive force during the July 20 march to Parliament, the chief of the left-wing students' organisation affiliated with the CPI(ML) Liberation said the government failed to explain why security personnel were equipped with pellet guns and "sticks covered with nails".

"We are still seeking answers. Why did you use pellet guns on protesters on July 20? Why were security forces given pellet guns? Why were sticks covered with nails, with which protesters were injured," she asked.

Bora argued that regardless of whether the alleged actions were ordered by a magistrate or senior

authorities, political responsibility ultimately rests with the Union home minister.

"If it happened on the magistrate's order, then what kind of home minister are you?... And if it happened on your order, then what kind of a criminal state are you running where pellet guns can be fired on ordinary citizens," she asked.

Bora noted that the alleged police actions fundamentally changed the nature of the movement, transforming it from a focus on the paper leak issue into a broader political campaign against the government's handling of the protests.

"A very large section of people used to come to us every day and say that they kept voting for the BJP government, but today, because of their vote, we have to sit on a hunger strike. They would say that because of their vote, students are committing suicide, and now they are very ashamed," the AISA national president said. (PTI)

## VHP, Bajrang Dal hold protest in Bhopal against Oppn's Ram Temple 'chanda chori' skit



**BHOPAL, Aug 1:** Activists of Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Bajrang Dal on Saturday staged a protest in Madhya Pradesh capital Bhopal against the Opposition's skit at the Parliament complex over the alleged embezzlement of donations at the Ayodhya Ram Temple.

Saffron-clad Independent MP Pappu Yadav along with other Opposition MPs had enacted "theft" of donations at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya in Parliament complex on Friday. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and former party chief Rahul Gandhi were part of the protest against the theft of donations.

The agitation by the VHP and Bajrang Dal here saw participants raising slogans against Rahul Gandhi. They tried to march from

Vyapam Square to Link Road but were stopped by police barricades. Some activists tried to cross the barricades, leading to brief jostling with police personnel.

However, the situation remained under control and no untoward incident was reported, police said.

The Opposition's drama in Parliament complex has hurt the religious sentiments of millions of devotees because it insulted Lord Ram and the faith of Hindus, the VHP and Bajrang Dal leaders who took part in the protest said.

As part of a skit enacted by the Opposition on Friday, several MPs, including Rahul Gandhi, put money inside the boxes, as Yadav slipped money into his pockets to symbolise the alleged theft at the Ram Temple. (PTI)

## DMK chief Stalin alleges CM Vijay stands 'isolated' in TN on Cauvery issue

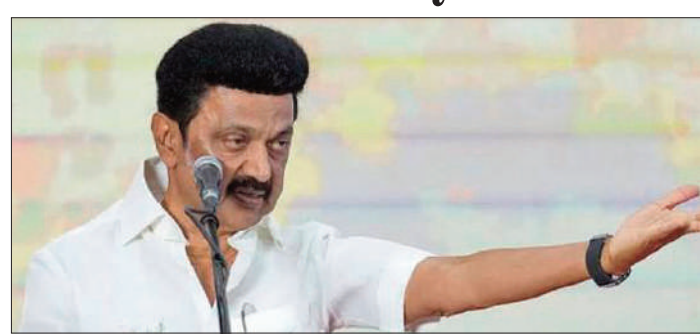
**CHENNAI, Aug 1:** DMK President M K Stalin on Saturday alleged that Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay stood "isolated" in Tamil Nadu over the Cauvery issue as he tried visiting Karnataka despite opposition to the proposed trip.

The former chief minister also demanded to know if Vijay would convene or not an all-party meeting on the issue and asked Vijay to consult stakeholders within the state.

In a statement, Stalin said leaders of parties and farmers' associations in Tamil Nadu warned that holding talks with Karnataka on the Mekedatu issue would yield no results and requested Vijay to not visit Karnataka.

The Dravidian party chief with sarcasm said that ignoring warnings, the new Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu sent emissaries to visit Karnataka perhaps thinking that he could bring the Cauvery river back with him.

Alleging that Karnataka viewed Tamil Nadu merely as a region to absorb surplus water from Cauvery river, the former chief minister said the state had learned from past experience that legal recourse was



the only way to deal with its neighbour which flatly refused to release water.

As soon as the Cauvery Water Management Authority ordered the release of water to Tamil Nadu, Karnataka closed its gate telling Vijay that he need not visit them now. Anticipating such situations beforehand, everyone in Tamil Nadu warned him.

At least from now onwards, the chief minister must approach the Cauvery issue, the lifeline of Tamil Nadu and a high-stakes issue, by holding consultations.

"After telling our chief minister not to come, the CM of Karnataka (D K Shivakumar) convened an all-party meeting on August 2,

demonstrating through his actions that they are all united," Stalin said and demanded to know from CM Vijay when he was going to convene an all-party meeting. "Can you do it or not," he asked.

"By trying to do a solo act, CM stands isolated," Stalin said.

On July 31, 2026, DMK's official organ "Murasoli," in an editorial criticised Vijay alleging he intended to hold talks with Karnataka merely to claim that he had done something on the Cauvery issue.

Vijay's trip to Karnataka might be useful for shooting a video in front of a dam. However, it would never bring down to the farming community, the daily claimed. (PTI)

## Higher educational institutions must intellectually empower students: Rajasthan Governor

**JAIPUR, Aug 1:** Rajasthan Governor Haribhau Bagde on Saturday said higher educational institutions must focus on intellectually empowering students alongside imparting quality education to help build a stronger and more capable nation.

Addressing the 40th foundation day ceremony of Swami Keshwanand Rajasthan Agricultural University and the Dr K.N. Nag Memorial Lecture Series in Bikaner, Bagde said the youth's contribution towards the nation would play a crucial role in strengthening the country.

He noted that the university has made significant achievements over the past four decades, with more than 28,000 students having completed agricultural education and obtained degrees. He also suggested maintaining a record of alumni who have brought recognition to the university nationally and internationally.

The governor encouraged students to appear for competitive examinations such as UPSC and RPSC to become part of policymaking bodies. Emphasising the need for intellectual development, he highlighted the contributions of noted educationist Sudha Murty and biochemist Ka-

mala Sohoni, while also advocating equal opportunities for girls.

Bagde underlined the importance of practical education and called for moving towards a "copy-free examination" system. He also spoke about provisions in the National Education Policy aimed at enhancing students' intellectual capabilities.

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal said that under the India AI Mission, the university has been approved for a Centre of Excellence in agriculture under Industry 4.0, with an outlay of Rs 20 crore. He said the initiative would benefit farmers and agricultural researchers in the region.

During the event, the governor conferred the university's highest academic honour, Doctor of Science, on Meghwal. He also released books published by the university.

Earlier, Bagde inaugurated a drone training centre authorised by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and operated by the university's Remote Pilot Training Organisation. He also planted a sapling on the campus and visited an exhibition showcasing the university's activities and achievements. (PTI)

## Agitation over student union polls intensifies in Rajasthan; NSUI leaders to meet Dy CM

**JAIPUR, Aug 1:** Three student leaders who climbed a water tank here as part of a protest demanding the restoration of student union elections in Rajasthan will meet deputy chief minister and Higher Education Minister Premchand Bairwa on Saturday, even as the agitation on the issue intensifies across the state.

The protesters, associated with the National Students' Union of India (NSUI), had climbed the tank near Tonk Phatak in the Gandhi Nagar railway station area on Thursday and came down late Friday night after nearly 40 hours, following assurances from a government delegation.

Student leaders Vijaypal Kudi and Viona Jat said the government has been given a seven-day ultimatum to decide on their demands, including holding student union elections in universities and colleges.

"If our demands are not met within the stipulated time, a bigger agitation will be launched," they said.

They also demanded that no cases be registered against protesting students and sought a public apology from Union Home minister Amit Shah over the alleged lathi-charge on youths at Delhi's Jantar Mantar.

The leaders said the government has assured them of facilitating a meeting with Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma and Bairwa to discuss the issue.

On Friday, a large number of students and NSUI workers blocked Tonk Road, leading to traffic disruption for about an hour. Police later cleared the road and detained 11 protestors for breach of peace. (PTI)

## Delhi court convicts 3 in 2001 ₹ 7-crore Uco bank fraud case, acquits bank official

**NEW DELHI, Aug 1:** A Delhi court has convicted three former directors of a textile company for cheating UCO Bank of ₹ 7 crore in 2001 by submitting forged documents to obtain a loan that was later diverted. The court also underlined that the accused persons "cannot wriggle out of the criminal liability by conveniently arguing that they have entered into a settlement with the bank."

Special Judge Sudhanshu Kaushik held Amit Chaturvedi, Sanjay Chaturvedi, and Parvin Juneja, ex-directors of Dwarkadhish Spinners Ltd (DSL), guilty of criminal conspiracy, cheating, and using forged documents as genuine. The court, however, acquitted a former UCO Bank official, Bikash Basu, saying that the prosecution failed to prove his involvement in the conspiracy and that there was no evidence that he received any illegal gratification or acted with criminal intent.

The case stems from a 2009 FIR by CBI, according to which the officials conspired to obtain a loan of ₹ 7 crore from UCO Bank's Parliament Street branch in 2001. Initially, they claimed the funds were for prepaying a loan from the Industrial Financial Corporation of India (IFCI).

After the loan was sanctioned, the directors misrepresented to the bank that

IFCI had refused the prepayment. They persuaded the bank to convert the loan into a machinery-financing scheme under the government's Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUFSS), the CBI said.

It said that to secure the disbursement, the accused submitted a forged Chartered Accountant (CA) certificate and a fake invoice from a dummy firm to show they had purchased and installed new machinery.

The CBI probe revealed that no machinery was ever purchased, and the funds were siphoned off to the group's associate companies, according to the FIR. In a 160-page order pronounced on July 29, the court said, "There are circumstances to indicate that the criminal intention to cheat the bank was present since inception and the accused persons acted together to achieve the desired object of diverting the sanctioned funds."

"There is astounding evidence to establish that accused persons cheated the bank and diverted the disbursed loan amount," the court added.

It said there is evidence to conclude that all the accused persons entered into a criminal conspiracy to cheat UCO Bank to obtain a loan for financing the purchase of machinery under the TUFSS

by making a false representation that the sanctioned funds would be used for installing new machines.

"There is evidence to show that each one of the accused was fully aware of the steps involved in obtaining the loan as well as its disbursement and diversion of funds," the court said. On the defence's argument that DSL entered into a "one-time settlement" with the bank, the court said the case cannot be categorised as a simple matter where the borrower committed default in payment of the loan amount.

"It has been established that the accused persons deceived the bank and obtained the disbursement of the loan based on a fabricated CA certificate and a forged invoice. It has been established that the disbursed funds were intentionally diverted by the accused persons," the court said.

It said the diversion of the loan carries civil as well as criminal consequences, more particularly, when the diversion is intentional and fraudulent.

"The accused persons did not use the funds for the purpose for which the same were disbursed, causing huge financial loss to the bank. They cannot wriggle out of the criminal liability by conveniently arguing that they have entered into a settlement with the bank," the court said. (PTI)

## 10 Odisha districts on alert as Hirakud dumps water in Mahanadi CM says floods hit 8 lakh people

**BHUBANESWAR, Aug 1:** Ten Odisha districts in the downstream of the Mahanadi have been put on high alert as the Hirakud Dam kept discharging water into the river through 22 gates, with Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi saying the floods have impacted eight lakh people.

While Majhi said the flood situation in northern Odisha was showing signs of improvement, the administration was focused on the "highly vulnerable" Cuttack, Puri, Khurda, Jagatsinghpur and Kendrapada districts in the Mahanadi delta area amid sustained water release from the Hirakud Dam.

The chief minister undertook an aerial survey of Bhadrak, Jajpur, Balasore, Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar districts in the northern parts of the state along with Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari and Special Relief Commissioner Rajesh Prabhakar Patil.

He later told reporters that flood waters have started receding in the region and the situation was improving in these five districts. "The flood situation may improve further in maybe two more days."

As many as 2.69 lakh people have been evacuated from low-lying areas and sheltered in 700 relief camps, the

chief minister said while asserting that his government was closely monitoring the situation.

"The recent floods have impacted around 8 lakh people and many villages are still marooned even though water levels in different rivers were coming down."

The deluge this year hit 20 districts of the coastal state, damaging civic infrastructure and hectares of cropped land.

This apart, floods caused by the overflowing Salangi, Brahmani, Baitarani, Jalka and Budhabalang rivers in north Odisha damaged over 1,300 houses in north Odisha, officials said. Bhadrak was the worst-affected district, followed by Jajpur, Balasore and Mayurbhanj.

Majhi has directed the officials to assess the damage caused by the deluge within 72 hours of water receding and said the affected people will get a comprehensive package from the government. While there were signs of the flood situation alleviating in north Odisha, the Hirakud Dam dumping excess water into the Mahanadi caused the river and its tributaries to swell again and inundate low-lying areas of Khurda, Puri, Kendrapara and Jagatsinghpur districts in the coastal region. (PTI)

## NSUI protests in DU against police harassment of students who participated in CJP march



**NEW DELHI, Aug 1:** The National Students' Union of India (NSUI) said on Saturday that hundreds of its members and Delhi University (DU) students held a protest march against alleged police harassment of students who participated in the Cockroach Janta Party's July 20 "Sansad Chalo" march.

NSUI members said protesting students demanded an apology from DU Vice-Chancellor Yogesh Singh over the university's advisory, issued a week ago, asking students and faculty members to refrain from par-

ticipating in any unlawful assemblies or demonstrations at Jantar Mantar.

According to the NSUI -- student wing of the Indian National Congress -- the march began from gate number 4 of the Faculty of Arts at Delhi University, with protesters raising slogans against the university administration and the Centre.

The student organisation alleged that police action had been used to intimidate students and sought accountability from the university administration.

"A university is meant to be a space for dialogue, disagreement and democratic expression, not a place where students are intimidated through police action. The Delhi University administration cannot remain silent when its own students face such treatment. Vice-Chancellor Yogesh Singh must take responsibility and apologise to the students," NSUI National Media In-charge Ravi Pandey said in a statement.

Pandey alleged that attempts to suppress peaceful protests would not deter the student community.

The NSUI said it would continue its "democratic struggle" until the concerns of Delhi University students are addressed. There was no immediate response from the Delhi University administration.

The "Sansad Chalo" protest march turned violent, with more than 118 police personnel, including several senior officers, sustaining injuries; police reported that around 60 protesters were injured and approximately 70 were detained. (PTI)

## The first proposal envisages the development of a plug-and-play industrial park Himachal submits 2 industrial park proposals worth ₹ 234 crore under BHAVYA

**SHIMLA, Aug 1:** The Himachal Pradesh government has submitted proposals for two industrial parks worth ₹ 234 crore to the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under the Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna, a Central scheme aimed at building world-class industrial parks across India.

These initiatives would further strengthen Himachal's industrial ecosystem, facilitate ease of doing business and contribute significantly to employment generation and economic growth, officials said on Saturday.

The first proposal envisages the development of a plug-and-play industrial park spread over 150 acres in the Majholi Industrial Area in Solan district, with an estimated project cost of ₹ 154 crore, an official statement said.

The second proposal has been submitted for the development of



a plug-and-play industrial park spread over 75 acres in the Beetan Industrial Area in Una district, with an estimated cost of ₹ 80 crore. The proposed park is strategically located in proximity to the upcoming Bulk Drug Park at Haroli, Una, and is expected to serve as a key support ecosystem to it, the statement said.

The Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna (BHAVYA) seeks to create investment-ready industrial

ecosystems equipped with world-class infrastructure, multimodal connectivity, reliable utilities, digital governance systems, sustainability features and worker-support amenities through a competitive challenge-based selection process, officials said.

Under the scheme, the approved projects are eligible for Central assistance at the rate of ₹ 1 crore per acre. The DPIIT had invited applications for the first phase of 20 in-

dustrial parks under BHAVYA on or before July 31.

The sanctioned projects under the scheme would be implemented jointly by the state government and the National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC).

Himachal Industries minister Harshwardhan Chauhan said the state government is committed to creating robust industrial infrastructure that supports sustainable economic growth, attracts quality investments and generates large-scale employment opportunities for the youth.

Principal Secretary (Industries), M Sudha, said that besides these two proposals, the Department of Industries is also in the process of identifying additional land parcels across the state for the development of industrial areas with modern plug-and-play infrastructure. (PTI)

# Doval played pivotal role in transforming India's defence capabilities: Amit Shah

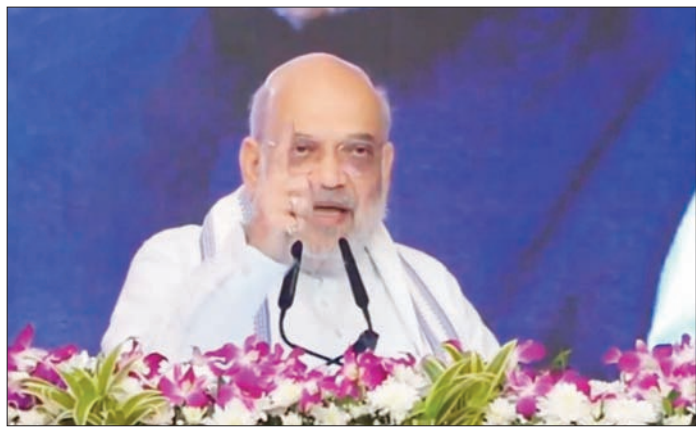
**PUNE, Aug 1:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday credited National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval with playing a pivotal role in transforming India's defence capabilities over the past 12 years, saying the country's armed forces have undergone a major shift in both defensive and offensive strength.

Addressing a programme after presenting the Lokmanya Tilak National Award 2026 to NSA Doval here, Shah said the NSA has also played a great role in strengthening India's foreign policy and has had a 'role and advice' in the background of every decision taken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for national security.

He said India has embarked on the path of cultural nationalism envisioned by Tilak, and asserted that there would be no reversal from that course.

"In the last 12 years, the Narendra Modi government has transformed our armed forces' security capabilities as well as their offensive capabilities, and Doval Sahab has made a pivotal contribution to this transformation," Shah said.

The Union minister said the first selection PM Modi made after assuming office in 2014 was to appoint Ajit Doval as NSA.



He said PM Modi took several major decisions to modernise the armed forces, bring structural transformations, fine-tune the use of technology and valour of Indian armed forces and strengthen their operational capabilities, and Doval played a key advisory role in these initiatives.

"NSA Ajit Doval has played a great role in strengthening India's foreign policy. In every decision of PM Modi for national security, Doval has had a 'role and advice' in the background," Shah said.

He hailed Doval's distinguished career in the Intelligence Bureau and national security, crediting him with laying a strong foundation for the Multi-Agency Centre, which

today serves as the backbone of the country's internal security.

Shah said much of Doval's work can never be fully revealed because of the nature of intelligence operations.

Recalling his association with Doval during his tenure as Gujarat home minister, Shah said then chief minister Narendra Modi introduced him to Doval after serial bomb blasts rocked Gujarat in 2008.

"Based on his inputs, the Gujarat police not only investigated the Gujarat serial blasts but also solved 13 other bomb blast cases across the country. It was a major achievement," Shah said.

He said that after retiring from

government service in 2005, Doval continued to work on strengthening India's internal and external security as president of the Vivekananda International Foundation.

"Between 2005 and 2014, he deliberated extensively on strengthening the country's internal and external security. Those ideas remained confined to books until 2014. After Narendra Modi became Prime Minister and appointed him National Security Advisor, those ideas were translated into action," Shah said.

The Union minister said that when the history of PM Modi's tenure is written, a "golden chapter" would have to be reserved for Doval's contribution to India's national security architecture.

Hailing Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak's seminal work "Gita Rahasya", Shah urged the youth to read the Bhagavad Gita through Tilak's perspective. "If the youth of the country read the Gita through the perspective of Tilak Maharaj, they will never commit mistakes in life," Shah said.

He also exhorted the younger generation to read Tilak's work, saying, "Tilak Maharaj's writings will never go out of fashion. They are eternal and will continue to guide the nation." (PTI)

## Heavy rain, landslides kill four in Kerala; rescue operations launched



**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM (KERALA), Aug 1:** Heavy rains lashed several parts of Kerala on Saturday, triggering landslides, inundating low-lying areas, swelling rivers and dams, and prompting authorities to launch large-scale rescue and evacuation operations in affected regions.

Four people were killed and several others rescued in separate landslides in Idukki and Kottayam districts.

The deceased was identified as Sumathi (65), a resident of Adoomala near Kudayathoor in Idukki district.

Her husband Ravi and their son Ratheesh were rescued and admitted to hospital, officials said.

A youth died, and his mother was trapped under debris after a landslide at Payyanthottam in Poonjar in Kottayam district.

The deceased was identified as Josephine, son of Johnny. His mother, Rejina Johnny (46), was trapped under debris, officials said.

In another incident, Prabhakaran Nair (77) of Vaikom died after a landslide hit the house of his relative in the Vagamon area of Idukki district.

Following the landslides and flooding, Kerala Chief Minister V D Saheesan directed ministers in charge of rain-hit districts to camp in their respective districts and coordinate rescue and relief operations as heavy rain continued across the state. He reviewed the situation with ministers and district collectors.

Ministers C P John, P C Vishnunadh, Mons Joseph and Anoop Jacob will camp in the rain-affected districts of Thiruvananthapuram, Pathanamthitta, Kottayam and Idukki, respectively.

The revenue minister will coordinate disaster management and relief operations at the state level, a statement from the CMO said.

Landslides and flooding were reported from several parts of the Idukki district.

At Upputhara, a parked police jeep was damaged in a landslide. Heavy rain also disrupted traffic at multiple locations.

Vehicle movement on the Kochi-Dhanushkodi National Highway was affected following a landslide near Cheeyapara in Idukki district.

Rising water levels in the Chottupara stream at Vandiperiyar led to waterlogging on National Highway 183.

In neighbouring Kottayam district, heavy rain triggered widespread flooding in Erattupetta, Kanjirappally, Kootickal, Erumeli and Pala, inundating commercial and residential areas, disrupting traffic and prompting rescue operations.

Four houses were damaged in a landslide at Teekoy village, but residents escaped unhurt, officials said.

Around 2,500 chickens died after floodwaters entered a poultry farm at Pala in Kottayam.

The poultry farm, owned by Jineesh Alex of Mulaykkal House, has been operating for the past 18 years. In Kootickal and Mundakkayam, water levels continued to rise after the Manimala and Pullakayar rivers overflowed.

More landslides were reported from the hilly areas of Pathanamthitta district.

Ranni MLA Pazhakulam Madhu, in a social media post, said heavy flooding had been reported in Ranni and adjoining areas. As water entered shops and houses, people were shifted to relief camps.

Several parts of Ranni, Kozhencherry and Aranmula, located along the banks of the Pampa river, were cut off due to flooding. (PTI)

## Pro-Channi slogans raised in presence of Baghel, Warring at Cong event in Patiala



**PATIALA, Aug 1:** Infighting in the Punjab Congress shows no signs of easing as supporters of former Punjab chief minister Charanjit Singh Channi on Saturday caused an uproar by raising slogans in his favour during the address of state Congress chief Amrinder Singh Raja Warring at a programme of its district unit in Patiala.

AICC general secretary in charge of the state Bhupesh Baghel, who was present during the incident, asserted that the Congress high command will decide the party's chief ministerial candidate and ministers after the Punjab Assembly elections, which are due early next year.

As the leadership tussle intensified, Baghel, who had on Friday dismissed any factionalism in the party's state unit, warned that whosoever indulges in indiscipline will be shown the door.

Several other senior leaders, including MP Amar Singh and Brahm Mohindra, were present at the party's 'Har Booth, Congress Mazboot' programme.

Soon after Warring began his speech, Channi's supporters started raising slogans such as "Charanjit Singh Channi zindabad", "Channi teri soch te pehna deyanthe thok ke" and "Channi liyao, Punjab bachao", briefly disrupting the proceedings.

A visibly angry Warring repeatedly appealed to the workers to maintain discipline and allow the meeting to continue. But despite his requests, slogan shouting con-

tinued for some time before the programme could resume.

Senior leaders, including Baghel, were seen observing the developments, while other leaders tried to pacify the workers.

The state Congress has been struggling with factionalism, despite repeated assertions by the party leadership that efforts are underway to strengthen organisational unity ahead of the 2027 Punjab elections.

Baghel is currently on a tour of the poll-bound state, where he will visit several assembly constituencies and hold meetings with the party's district and block-level leaders.

On Friday, he launched the 'Har Booth, Congress Mazboot' campaign during his visits to Fatehgarh Sahib and Mohali.

Addressing the programme in Patiala, Baghel pitched for unity and said the responsibility of party leaders and workers was to ensure the Congress returns to power in Punjab, while making it clear that the CM face will not be picked up before the polls.

Later, speaking to reporters in Patiala, Baghel asserted that whosoever indulges in indiscipline, he or she will be shown the door from the party irrespective of the position one holds.

Baghel cited an example of expelling Navjot Kaur Sidhu earlier.

When asked if the party would take any action against Channi, Baghel replied by questioning what mistake the former chief minister had committed. (PTI)

## CM Shivakumar urges PM Modi to help, save Karnataka

**MYSURU, Aug 1:** Karnataka Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Saturday appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to extend support to Karnataka, saying the country's growth was closely linked with the state's progress and urging greater co-operation under the spirit of cooperative federalism.

Addressing the gathering after the inauguration of the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Youth Centre - Viveka Smaraka - in the presence of the Prime Minister here, Shivakumar said Karnataka and Bengaluru had become India's window to the world and sought the Centre's support for the state's development.

"Today, my Prime Minister is here, and on behalf of the Government of Karnataka and all the people of this state, I request him to be generous in helping Karnataka and saving Karnataka, because the entire world is looking at India through Karnataka and Bengaluru," he said.

Calling the inauguration "a historic event for the youth movement of this

country", the chief minister recalled Swami Vivekananda's words: "Be broad-hearted when you are defeated; be large-hearted when you are victorious".

Referring to former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visit to Bengaluru for laying the foundation stone of the international airport, Shivakumar said Vajpayee had remarked that world leaders had begun visiting Karnataka and Bengaluru before travelling to Delhi.

"That is the strength of our great people," he said as he recalled that S M Krishna, a former chief minister and an alumnus of the Ramakrishna institution, was heading the state at the time.

Appealing for closer Centre-state cooperation, Shivakumar said, "Prime Minister Sir, you can see the weather, you can see the culture. This is the strength of this great state. The entire state stands with you. We want to work together. We want to strengthen the spirit of cooperative federalism. I appeal to you -- let us all work to-

gether".

The chief minister also recalled Swami Vivekananda's vision of making India a centre of science and said that inspired industrialist Jamsetji Tata to seek land from the Maharaja of Mysuru for establishing the Indian Institute of Science in Bengaluru.

"The Maharaja granted more than 300 acres of land in Bengaluru. That land became the Indian Institute of Science. This was the Maharaja's great contribution to the scientific advancement of the nation, and the Tata family supported that vision," he said.

Emphasising Karnataka's role in national development, Shivakumar said, "India must grow with Karnataka, and Karnataka will always stand with India. Let us work together and make this country proud".

Concluding his address, he said he did not wish to take more time as "the Prime Minister's message is far more important for the country", and added, "Let us work together. Let us build Karnataka. Let us build India - a strong India". (PTI)

## BJP leaders file police complaint against Rahul, Pappu Yadav over skit

**NEW DELHI/VARANASI, Aug 1:** BJP leaders, including MP Bansuri Swaraj, filed a police complaint in Delhi on Saturday, demanding action against Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi and MPs Pappu Yadav and Awadhesh Prasad for their skit during a protest on the Ram temple donation theft in the Parliament complex, while an FIR was filed in Varanasi against the three leaders.

Swaraj, the MP from New Delhi, accompanied by BJP MLAs, submitted the complaint at the Parliament Street police station, alleging that actions by Gandhi, Independent MP Pappu Yadav and Samajwadi Party's Awadhesh Prasad were a "mockery" of Santan culture and an attempt to ridicule Indian traditions.

Pappu Yadav, dressed in a saffron outfit, performed the skit along with other Opposition MPs in front of the Makar Dwar at the Parliament complex on Friday to protest the alleged embezzlement of donations at the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

As part of the skit, the MPs, including Gandhi, put money inside the boxes, while Independent MP Rajesh Ranjan, known as Pappu Yadav, slipped money into his pockets to symbolise the alleged theft at the Ram temple.

Varanasi Police also registered a case against the three opposition leaders based on a formal complaint submitted at Kotwali police station by some seers alleging that these MPs have insulted Sanatan Dharma, according to Gaurav Banswal, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Kashi Zone. (PTI)

## Elderly couple die after car hits their motorcycle in Ambala

**AMBALA, Aug 1:** An elderly man and his wife died after a car hit their motorcycle on the Ambala-Kala Amb road here on Saturday, police said.

The deceased were identified as Rajkumar (66) and his wife Jaswant Kaur (63).

According to police, the couple were going to visit their nephew in Hamidpur village when the car allegedly rammed into their motorcycle near Narainagarh.

Both of them fell on the road and suffered head injuries. They died on the spot. The car driver fled the spot after the accident, police said.

Police reached the spot after receiving information about the incident and sent the bodies for post-mortem, they said.

A case has been registered against the unidentified car driver and efforts are underway to trace the accused, police said. (PTI)

## Cadre officers move SC challenging provisions of new CAPF Act

**NEW DELHI, Aug 1:** A group of paramilitary officers have approached the Supreme Court challenging certain sections of the newly-enacted CAPFs (General Administration) Act claiming this law will continue to restrict their career progression, official sources said on Saturday.

The matter has been listed by the apex court for hearing in the first week of August, according to court documents.

Officers and their legal representatives told PTI that a batch of writ petitions have been filed by about 3,000 cadre officials drawn from the five Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) like the CRPF, BSF, ITBP, CISF and SSB.

They said the petitions have been filed under Article 32 of the Constitution that allows citizens to approach the Supreme Court to enforce their Fundamental Rights.

Petitioners said they were "forced" to move the apex court as they feel justice was not served to them by the new Act and the direc-

tives of the Supreme Court's May, 2025 verdict were not implemented.

We feel that the latest Act will not resolve the huge stagnation and career progression of CAPF cadre officers, they said. The petitioners include gallantry medal winners and a few women officers.

The officers have sought declaration of the sections 3 and 4 of the CAPF (General Administration) Act, 2026 as "ultra vires" the Constitution and that the Union government should be directed to give "full effect" to the May, 2025 judgement of the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court, on May 23 last year, said that the deputation of Indian Police Service (IPS) officers up to the rank of Inspector General (IG) in the CAPFs should be "progressively reduced" over a period of two years in order to give more opportunities to cadre officers whose delayed promotions can "adversely" impact the morale of these forces.

The top court had also rejected



a review petition filed by the Centre against this order.

The Union government then brought in the CAPFs (General Administration) Bill in the Parliament which was notified as an Act in April.

Section 3 of the said Act speaks about the regulation of recruitment and conditions of services in the CAPFs while Section 4 deals with central government's power to amend schedules.

These officers are also understood to have sought that the posts in the Additional Director General (ADG) rank in the CAPFs be made available to the cadre officers of the respective forces, on the basis of prescribed eligibility, instead of filling them only through deputation from the IPS.

The government had said the Act seeks to create a unified legal framework governing the service conditions of personnel across the CAPFs, replacing the current patchwork of separate service rule regimes for cadre officers and those coming on deputation from the IPS.

As per the new Act, 50 per cent posts in the IG level, 67 per cent in the ADG rank and 100 per cent posts in the Special DG and Director General (DG) rank are reserved for the IPS officers.

The issue concerns the career progression of about 13,000 CAPF cadre officers whose first promotion is delayed by as many as 15-16 years in the worst cases compared to the four promotions an IPS officer earns during the same time period.

Retired IPS officers have stated in newspaper editorials that being an all-India service, their deputation to the CAPFs was "vital" and "essential" for smooth coordination with state police forces. (PTI)

## Daman and Diu MP Umesh Patel gets 2-year jail in 2011 case

**DAMAN, Aug 1:** A court here on Saturday sentenced independent Lok Sabha member from Daman and Diu, Umesh Patel, and a co-accused to two years of simple imprisonment in connection with a 2011 case of allegedly obstructing government officials during a recruitment process.

The court of Chief Judicial Magistrate Pranita Bharsakade-Wagh at Daman in the Union territory of Daman, Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli sentenced Patel and co-accused Suresh Patel, a former district panchayat member, and imposed a fine of ₹ 5,000 each. It, however, suspended the sentence for one month to enable them to file an appeal in a higher court.

The duo was held guilty under sections 186 (voluntarily obstructing a public servant from doing their duty, and 353 (use of criminal force against a public servant) of the Indian Penal Code. (PTI)

## Vice Admiral A N Pramod assumes charge as new Deputy Chief of Naval Staff

**NEW DELHI, Aug 1:** Vice Admiral A N Pramod, who as the Director General Naval Operations (DGNO) was closely involved in the planning, preparedness and operational readiness of the Indian Navy during Operation Sindoor, on Saturday took charge as the new Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff, officials said.

He also served as the Fleet Operations Officer of the Western Fleet during Operation Snow Leopard following the Galwan incident. The flag officer also participated in Operation Vijay in 1999 and Operation Parakram in 2001, they said.

He succeeds Vice Admiral Tarun Sobti, who superannuated from service on July 31 after more than 38 years of distinguished service.

An alumnus of the 38th Intergraded Cadet Course, Naval Acad-



emy, Goa, Vice Admiral Pramod was commissioned into the Indian Navy on July 1, 1990.

The flag officer is a CAT 'A' Sea King air operations officer and a communication and electronic warfare specialist. He is an

alumnus of the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, and the Naval Higher Command Course at the Naval War College, Goa, the Navy said.

In a distinguished career spanning over 36 years, the flag offi-

cer has held a wide range of command, operational, instructional, and staff appointments, both afloat and ashore, and the important afloat appointments include Executive Officer of INS Rajput, a guided missile destroyer, and command of INS Abhay, an anti-submarine warfare patrol vessel, INS Shardul, a Landing Ship Tank (Large) and INS Satpura, a guided missile frigate.

On elevation to the rank of Vice Admiral, he served as the Director General Naval Operations (DGNO) from December 2023 to July 2026.

As DGNO, he was closely involved in the planning, preparedness and operational readiness of Indian Navy during Operation Sindoor, and conduct of maritime security operations during the ongoing West Asia crisis, a Navy spokesperson said. (PTI)

## Suwendu launches ISKCON mid-day meal kitchen in Kolkata

**KOLKATA, Aug 1:** West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari on Saturday inaugurated ISKCON's kitchen, where mid-day meals will be prepared for 44,000 students of 500 schools in the city, and said his government decided to provide eggs separately following students' demand, and not because of the opposition's criticism.

Speaking on the sidelines of the inauguration programme of the mega kitchen in Kolkata, Adhikari said he did not need to pay heed to the opposition's demands since the people voted the BJP to power with an overwhelming majority of 208 MLAs in the state assembly.

"The menu of ISKCON meals includes dal, rajma, soya bean and paneer, all of which have high protein content and, with the additional seasonal fruits, make up for wholesome nutrition of students. We chose to provide eggs separately because students and guardians requested a non-veg item," the chief minister said.

Adhikari on Wednesday announced his government will separately provide eggs to students in mid-day meal, though the responsibility of cooking and supplying meals in all government and government-aided schools in Kolkata would be undertaken by ISKCON as a pilot project from August 1.

"We will do what the people ask us and not what the opposition or some media person tells us to do. We already have the people's blessing with 208 MLAs," the chief minister said.

The mindset of people had been wired in a particular manner about dietary habits because of governments that ruled the state for the last 49 years - 39 years of Left rule followed by 15 years of TMC - created this misconception, he said. (PTI)

## Netflix announces Aug 28 premiere for comedy series 'Chumbak'



Streaming service Netflix on Friday announced that "Chumbak", a multi-generational comedy series from "Sarabhai vs Sarabhai" and "Khichdi" creators Aatish Kapadia and JD Majethia, will premiere on its platform on August 28. Set in a contemporary urban Indian neighbourhood, the multi-generational comedy follows the lives of five neighbouring families whose everyday interactions, celebrations and crises turn into comic adventures.

The series stars Neena Gupta, Deven Bhojani, Arjun Bijlani, Helly Shah, Manasi Parekh, Sumeet Vyas, Sandeepa Dhar, Sumeet Raghavan, Anant V. Joshi, Amyra Dastur, Delnaaz Irani and Atul Kumar.

Kapadia serves as the writer, director and co-producer, while Majethia is the producer and

showrunner.

Tanya Bami, Series Head at Netflix India, said the show explores how neighbours often become an extended family.

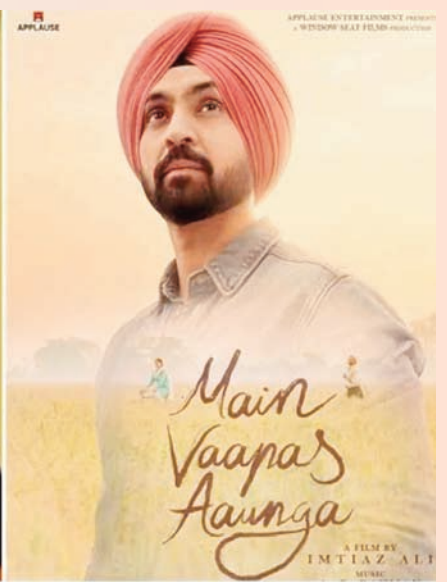
"In our lives today, our neighbours become our extended family and JD & Aatish have created a world to bring this community, its bonds, its oddities, and its dynamics to life! We hope the world of 'Chumbak' and its magnetic characters will feel familiar and lived in as they go through their life grappling with themes like contemporary marriages, modern day parenting, ageing friends and life as a community.

"The flavour and comedic style of JD & Aatish's work always brings the family together because it feels instantly familiar, deeply entertaining and full of heart. Their ability to find humour in the ordinary without

ever losing the emotional core is what makes their storytelling so special," she said in a statement. Majethia and Kapadia said the series celebrates "the beautiful chaos of nostalgic neighbourhoods" where neighbours become family.

"With 'Chumbak', we wanted to celebrate something we've all experienced but perhaps don't appreciate enough anymore - the beautiful chaos of nostalgic neighbourhoods where no one needs an invitation to drop by, and neighbours slowly become family.

"Comedy has always been our way of telling stories about people and relationships, and with Netflix, we found the perfect partner to bring our signature style of family comedy to audiences across the country and around the world," they said. (PTI)



## 'MAIN VAAPAS AAUNGA' COMPLETES 50 DAYS IN THEATRES, IMTIAZ ALI THANKS AUDIENCES

Filmmaker Imtiaz Ali on Wednesday expressed gratitude to audiences for embracing his latest film "Main Vaapas Aaunga" and generating extraordinary word of mouth for the film, which has completed 50 days in theatres.

Starring Diljit Dosanjh, Naseeruddin Shah, Sharvari and Vedang Raina, the film was released on June 12 and had a modest start at the box office in its opening week but positive reviews and a strong word of mouth helped the film grow steadily.

"50 days in cinemas!! This is a rare feat for any film."

"Main Vaapas Aaunga" achieves this today and my first thought is of gratitude towards the audience - the good people that watch cinema, who invested emotionally in the film and convinced others to watch it, who created the extraordinary word of mouth - for no reason except that they liked the film. May the tribe increase!

"The positive reaction of the audience to MVA is a beacon of hope for all contemporary filmmakers. The love that the audience has shown us will always be in my heart and inspire me to make better and more entertaining cinema in its service," the filmmaker said in a statement.

The film, which is currently in its eighth week, has grossed Rs 99.21 crore at the global box office so far, as per a trade tracking website Sacnilk.

"Main Vaapas Aaunga", which has music by AR Rahman and lyrics by Irshad Kamil, is a Partition-era romantic drama that unfolds across two timelines.

It is set in present day India and told through the ramblings of a 95-year-old man old man. His grandson finally pieces together the puzzle to draw a picture of Partition, trauma and love that could never be. Ali thanked the cast and crew, exhibitors and distributors for backing the film despite its slow start at the box office.

"And finally, congratulations to the entire Hindi film industry for the footfalls we are receiving this year at the theatres.



Now the impetus is on us filmmakers to make wonderful films for the audience that seems keen to visit theatres for it," he added.

According to the makers, the film was initially released in 59 countries across 804 screens before expanding to 15 more European territories.

"Main Vaapas Aaunga" also performed strongly in cities such as Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai and Kolkata, apart from the traditional Hindi-speaking markets.

It is produced by Birla Studios & Applause Entertainment and Mohit Choudhary & Shibaish Sarkar of Window Seat Films. (PTI)

## Spider-Man star Jacob Batalon SECRETLY marries girlfriend Veronica Leahov



With the release of Spider-Man: Brand New Day this week, fans have their eyes glued on the star-studded cast of the movie. Actor Jacob Batalon, who is well-known and loved for his role as Ned Leeds, got secretly married. The Spider-Man actor recently tied the knot with his long-time girlfriend, Veronica Leahov.

Marvel fans have loved seeing Jacob play the role of Peter Parker's best friend, Ned, over the past few years. Seeing the news of him getting hitched to his partner, fans were really happy for them. The news of Jacob's marriage was reported by People magazine. Let's dive in to see more about Spider-Man star Jacob Batalon secretly getting married here.

**Spider-Man's Ned, actor Jacob Batalon is married**

The newlywed couple, Jacob and Veronica, recently attended the premiere of Marvel's latest Spider-Man film, Brand New Day, last week. Jacob's wedding update comes after he teased nicknames in an interview with co-stars Tom Holland and Zendaya. As the trio discussed their nicknames, Jacob said, "My wife calls me big dog. She doesn't. I wish she did."

In recent public appearances, including the Spider-Man: Brand New Day premiere, fans spotted Jacob wearing rings. This included various gold bands on his left-hand ring finger, adding spark to

the wedding rumours.

Jacob's wife, Veronica, seemed to have confirmed their wedding rumours as she quietly updated her surname on her website to "Veronica Leahov Batalon." The couple first announced their engagement on Instagram in March 2025 in a dreamy NYC proposal. This proposal came after the two had been dating for several years.

Spider-Man: Brand New Day Breaks Records Spider-Man: Brand New Day hit theatres on Thursday, and in just two days, it has broken two major records. The film crossed the Rs 50 crore mark on its opening day, and on its second day, it crossed the Rs 100 crore mark. It has been delivering a historic box office performance, shattering records in India.

Directed by Destin Daniel Cretton and starring Tom Holland alongside Zendaya, the fourth instalment opened on Thursday with a monumental Rs 60.60 crore net (Rs 72.44 crore gross), making it the biggest opening day for any Hollywood release in India and surpassing Avengers: Endgame.

The momentum held strong into Friday. Overcoming the working-day slump, the Marvel film added another Rs 49.35 crore net, propelling its two-day India net collection past the elite milestone to Rs 109.95 crore (Rs 131.46 crore gross). (Aagegics)



## 'PACHINKO' STAR KIM MINHA TO HOST BUSAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL'S OPENING CEREMONY

Busan International Film Festival has announced "Pachinko" star Kim Minha, a rising South Korean star, as the host of this year's opening ceremony.

Minha made her debut in 2016 and has built a distinctive body of work across films and television over the years. She gained international fame with her portrayal of young Sunja in the globally acclaimed Apple TV series "Pachinko", a popular novel by author Min Jin Lee.

After earning acclaim for her portrayal of young Sunja, Minha has also starred in popular K-dramas such as "Light Shop", "Way Back Love" and "Typhoon Family".

BIFF selected Kim Minha in recognition of the depth and emotional precision she brings to every role, as well as her growing presence as a new-generation star. Known for her poised yet spirited presence, she is expected to bring warmth and confidence to the opening ceremony and set the tone for this year's festival, the festival said in a release.

The 31st Busan International Film Festival is set to take place from October 6 to October 15 at Busan Cinema Center and throughout Busan. (PTI)

## 'Operation Safed Sagar' tells story of people behind the uniforms, say stars Siddharth and Jimmy Shergill

Patriotism in Netflix's new series "Operation Safed Sagar" comes not from larger-than-life heroics but from portraying the people behind the uniforms with honesty, say actors Siddharth and Jimmy Shergill, who believe authenticity was the guiding principle on the show inspired by the Indian Air Force's role in the 1999 Kargil War.

The series chronicles Operation Safed Sagar, the Indian Air Force's campaign during the Kargil conflict, and follows the Golden Arrows Squadron as it undertakes high-altitude combat missions while also exploring the personal lives of the officers and their families.

Siddharth, who essays Squadron Leader Ajay Ahuja, said he was initially reluctant to take on the project because it was based on real events and real people.

"I was hesitant for two reasons because it's a real person and it's not just me, who's going to do the tribute of this character. It's a whole team of people. So, I didn't know what their intentions were because it's very easy for someone to take a subject like this and do it in a very easy commercial way to get applause.

"Their intent was so pure and their

research was so tight that I was very clear from the get go that this is going to be as beautifully you put it as human drama, set against the air force, set against the time of the target war. That's the best way to describe this experience," the actor told PTI in an interview.

He said what impressed him most was the effort to understand the individuals behind the military ranks.

"Before they are pilots, they're human beings first and to understand those human beings, the effort that was made was amazing. I give credit to Kushal Srivastav, who's an ex-air force man, who is the starting points of this creation. I think that lent this very unique air to this project."

The "Rang De Basanti" star said receiving the support of the Indian Air Force and the families of those depicted in the series convinced him to come on board.

"The most important thing that tilted it, where it was a project that I can't afford to miss, was one, the blessing of the air force and the permission and the blessing of the families involved. So those two things really helped."

Shergill, who plays Wing Commander B S Dhanoa, said the makers

were encouraged to stay as close to reality as possible while telling the story.

"It all depends on the makers what kind of a concept they have and how they are wanting to make that. Here with this show, the Air Force have given a brief to these people, to try and keep it as real and close to real life as possible," said the actor, known for movies such as "Haasil", "Maqbool", "Yahaan", "A Wednesday!", and "Saheb, Biwi Aur Gangster".

At the same time, the actor believe there was room in cinema for different interpretations of patriotism.

"I don't see anything wrong if a director wants to make a film, which is high octane and everything like that, it is cinema. As long as it is made correctly, then people like it... Everybody has a right to make it their own way... As long as it's good, it's going to work. Don't force your views on somebody else. Just because you don't like that kind of stuff doesn't mean it's bad," he said.

Siddharth said everyone involved in the project was conscious of the responsibility that came with portraying one of the Indian Air Force's defining operations.

"We've come into this team with an intent that the air force, we have to do the air force proud. Now, that's the



kind of pressure that is very good because it prevents you from doing stupid things... But while we were doing it, we were completely aware of our responsibility, we understood the assignment."

Created by Abhijeet Singh Parmar and Kushal Srivastava, and directed by Oni Sen, "Operation Safed Sagar" also stars Abhay Verma, Mihir Ahuja, Taaruk Raina, Arnab Bhasin, Dia Mirza, Prajakta Koli, Adil Hussain and Amrita Bagchi.

For both Ahuja and Bhasin, landing the opportunity to portray war heroes early in their career was a significant

milestone.

Ahuja said casting director Deepak Agarwal reached out to him for the role of flying officer C H Bal Reddy and he auditioned wearing the coveralls provided by the team.

"When the project came to me, I was like, 'oh my God, like, I'm getting to play an Air Force pilot'. So, while reading the script, I was sitting upright, I've to show respect to that script and character," the actor, who garnered acclaim for his work in "Made in Heaven", "The Archies", and "Vijay 69", said.

Ahuja said he was among the last

actors to be cast in the project. Finalised just days before filming began, he found himself reporting to the Bikaner Air Force Station for the shoot.

"I was just awestruck, like everyone seeing the MiG-21 aircraft around them, I get goosebumps if I'm talking about it. But it was a great ride to be a part of this project, it's been one of my best experiences so far."

Bhasin said he felt "honour and privileged" to be part of the series.

"I feel everybody would feel the same as this is in collaboration with the Indian Air Force, and that is a very big deal," the actor, best known for his work on OTT shows like "Cubicles" and "The Insiders", said.

He added that he was fully charged to commit to the show in any capacity.

"It looks really cool when I'm walking out in slow motion at 60 FPS (Frames Per Second), wearing aviators, with eight guys standing right behind me. To be a part of something like that, even if they (makers) would make me do anything, I would do it and it makes you believe you did it all on your own," Bhasin added.

Produced by Matchbox Shots LLP and Feel Good Films, the series premieres on Netflix on August 7. (PTI)

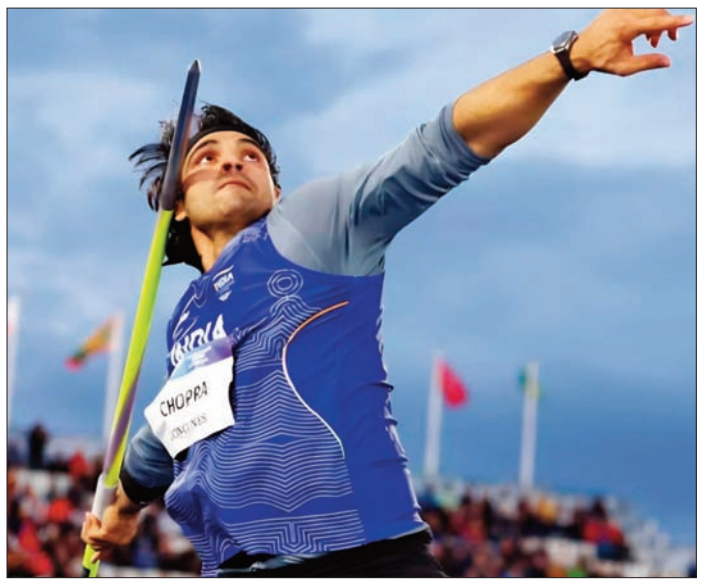
# Chopra wins javelin throw silver in CWG, bronze for Yashvir

GLASGOW, Aug 2: Indian javelin throw superstar Neeraj Chopra was not at his best under testing conditions but still delivered a silver medal while Yashvir Singh fetched a surprise bronze with his last throw in the Commonwealth Games here on Friday.

The 28-year-old Tokyo Olympics champion produced a season's best throw of 85.83m in his second attempt, which was good enough for a second place finish. His effort on Friday was just a shade better than the 85.69m he had come up while finishing fourth at the Doha Diamond League on June 19, his only other event this season.

The 24-year-old Yashvir on his debut at Games stunned one and all with a personal best 85.41m throw in his sixth and final attempt as Indians finish 2-3 on the podium. His earlier personal best was 83.72m. He was at seventh spot after the penultimate round with his third attempt measuring 81.33m before producing a memorable 85.41m throw to join Chopra on the podium.

Sri Lankan star Rumesh Tharanga Pathirage won the gold as expected with a best throw of 89.75m which he recorded in his



second attempt.

The near-90m throw was noteworthy as the athletes were competing under cold and windy conditions. He is the lone javelin thrower this season to have breached the 90m mark. He has a personal and season best throw of 92.62m which he had recorded while winning the Rome Diamond League title in June.

Chopra had returned from a

lower back injury that has troubled him since September last year. The injury delayed his return until the Diamond League in Doha. It was his second Commonwealth Games, having won a gold in the 2018 edition in Gold Coast.

He indicated that he was still not at his full fitness but slowly getting there.

"I can't say fitness is like before. But I'm getting there slowly. There

is still time for the Asian Games. I will compete in Diamond League before that. There will be more improvement. Will improve slowly," Chopra said after his event.

Chopra said his comeback from injury has been satisfactory.

"Although we always want the national anthem to play but I did my season best and comeback is going okay, there are other competitions as well. I am happy," he said.

"The weather was better than yesterday. It was good in the starting but later it became cold and there was wind.

"I also had a one go throw only, I thought it will go further but it didn't fly. I thought I could have pushed myself further. I'm trying to get into my rhythm. I am not able to do that well in these conditions, I like hot weather ... (I'm) Indian blood."

For Yashvir, sharing the podium with Chopra was a happy moment for him.

"I am happy that I could do my personal best and also get a medal in such conditions," he said.

The third Indian in the fray, Rohit Yadav finished seventh with a best throw of 81.56m.

Interestingly, athletes from the

## Tanvi enters Taipei Open final, Unnati loses



TAIPEI CITY, Aug 1: Young Indian shuttler Tanvi Sharma stayed on course for her maiden BWF World Tour title, producing another commanding display to outclass Chinese Taipei's Huang Yu-Hsun in straight games and enter the women's singles final of the Taipei Open Super 300 here on Saturday.

The 17-year-old from Punjab, who finished runner-up at last year's US Open Super 300, outclassed World No. 24 Yu-Hsun 21-17 21-11 in a one-sided semifinal that lasted just 33 minutes.

It could have been a dream final between two Indians but Unnati Hooda suffered a 15-21 18-21 loss to world No. 21 Thuy Linh Nguyen of Vietnam in the other women's singles semifinal.

Tanvi, the Junior World Championships silver medallist, will take on the Vietnamese sixth seed in Sunday's title clash.

Tanvi, who was part of India's gold medal-winning squad at the 2024 Badminton Asia Team Championships, has enjoyed a rapid rise over the last two years.

Besides finishing runner-up at the Odisha Masters Super 100 and Guwahati Masters Super 100 in 2025, she has won the Bonn

International in 2024 and the Denmark Challenge in 2025.

Tanvi displayed her repertoire of attacking strokes, repeatedly unsettling Huang with her steep cross-court smashes and disguised pushes to the back court.

In the opening game, from 3-3 it was 7-6 as Huang tried to stay within touching distance for most of the contest. Tanvi, however, maintained a slender lead throughout, moving from 14-10 to 17-11.

The local player narrowed it down to 15-17 before Tanvi raised her intensity at the closing stages to seal the opening game comfortably.

The Indian's ability to finish rallies quickly denied Huang any rhythm, with the home shuttler

struggling to cope with the pace and angles her rival generated.

In the second game, Huang drew level at 9-9 but Tanvi tightened her game and produced precise strikes from the back court while mixing deft drops at the net. She reeled off 12 of the last 14 points to wrap up the contest with a near-flawless finish.

In the other match, Nguyen took control midway through the opening game after the two were locked in an intense battle in the early exchanges.

With the scores at 6-8, a few judgment errors from Unnati allowed the Vietnamese to stretch her lead to 11-6 at the interval.

Constantly moving the Indian around the court with precise placements to the corners, Nguyen opened up a 16-10 advantage before Unnati briefly reduced the deficit to 12-16.

But the sixth seed responded with a stunning cross-court winner and maintained her composure in the closing stages, converting her second game point when Unnati's return sailed long.

The Indian looked a transformed player after the change of ends, racing to a 5-0 lead as Nguyen struggled with unforced errors.

Although the Vietnamese clawed her way back to 8-8, Unnati regained control to lead 11-9 at the mid-game interval and later extended the advantage to 16-12 with a series of well-angled winners.

However, the momentum swung dramatically thereafter as Nguyen forced the pace of the rallies and raised errors from the Indian, winning five of the next six points to level at 17-17.

She then moved ahead with a cross-court smash and then a precise winner clipped the back line earned her two match points. Nguyen sealed the contest with a sharp interception at the net to book her place in the final. (PTI)

## Haryana CM congratulated two women boxer for winning gold

CHANDIGARH, Aug 1: Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, on Saturday, congratulated boxers Preeti Pawar and Jaismine Lamboria after they won gold medals in their respective categories at the ongoing 2026 Commonwealth Games.

Preeti from Bhiwani won the gold medal in the women's 54 kg boxing event while compatriot Lamboria claimed the gold in the women's 57 kg category, giving India two boxing gold medals.

In a congratulatory message, Saini said the two athletes had made the country proud through their determination, hard work and discipline.

He said Haryana's women athletes have consistently performed well in national and international sporting events and have brought laurels to both the state and the country.

Saini described the victories as a proud moment for Haryana and India, saying the achievements of the two boxers would inspire young sportspersons across the state to pursue excellence.

Saini reiterated the Haryana government's commitment to promoting sports by providing athletes with world-class infrastructure, modern training facilities and a transparent sports policy.

He said the state's sportspersons have been delivering outstanding performances at international events due to sustained government support and their dedication.

The CM also extended his best wishes to both gold medallists, their families, coaches and the Indian boxing contingent for their future endeavours. (PTI)

## Haeran Ryu takes a 1-shot lead after 2 rounds of the British Women's Open

LYTHAM ST. ANNES (ENGLAND), Aug 1: Haeran Ryu birdied No. 18 to complete a 2-under 69 for a one-shot lead after two rounds of the British Women's Open on Friday as the South Korean star pursues a third consecutive major victory.

Ryu overcame a tough start — including a double bogey on the par-3 5th — to tally five birdies and reach 7 under overall at Royal Lytham & St. Annes.

Shiho Kuwaki of Japan was one shot back after her 70, and overnight leader Jeeno Thitikul and Yealimi Noh were tied for third, both two strokes behind Ryu.

"I'm just trying to have fun on the course because this course is (very) stressful," Ryu said, citing "a lot of bunkers" plus windy conditions.

Not since Inbee Park in 2013 has anyone claimed three straight majors. Ryu won the Women's PGA at Hazeltine and closed with 60 to win the Evian Championship.

"(There are) a lot of great players in here, so that's why I just want to think about my golf," she added. "Because this is a major, nobody knows what comes up."



Thitikul, still in pursuit of her first victory at a major, brought a two-stroke lead over Kuwaki and Ryu into day two but made three bogeys in her 73.

"I'm not hitting like as close to the pin as yesterday," Thitikul said. "Maybe the pin position was kind of hard, too."

## India drawn with Maldives, Pakistan in SAFF Championship 2026

NEW DELHI, Aug 1: Defending champions India have been drawn with Maldives and Pakistan in Group B of the SAFF Championship 2026, following the draw conducted in Thimphu, Bhutan, on Saturday.

The 15th edition of the sub-continental football tournament will be hosted in Dhaka from November 4-17.

Chasing a record-extending 10th SAFF championship title, India will begin their campaign against Maldives on November 5 before taking on Pakistan on November 11.

Hosts Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Bhutan are placed in Group A.

In the event that FIFA's suspension of the All Nepal Football Association is lifted by September 1, Nepal will be included in Group A.

If the suspension stays, the SAFF Championship 2026 will go ahead with six teams.

The top two teams from each group will qualify for

the semi-finals, with Group A winners meeting Group B runners-up and vice-versa.

The semi-finals will take place on November 14, and the final will be on November 17.

India have a splendid head-to-head record against both their group stage opponents.

The Blue Tigers have won 16 of the 25 meetings against Pakistan, drawing seven and losing only two. Their last face-off was in the SAFF Championship 2023, with India securing a dominant 4-0 win.

Against Maldives, India have a record of 13 wins, two draws and three losses in 18 encounters. The last meeting was in a friendly in March 2025 when the hosts clinched a 3-0 win in Shillong.

India have won the SAFF Championship on nine previous occasions — 1993, 1997, 1999, 2005, 2009, 2011, 2015, 2021, and the last in 2023, when the Blue Tigers defeated guest side Kuwait in a memorable final in Bengaluru. (PTI)

## Infantino abandons plans to sell World Cup profits to private equity following massive pushback

GENEVA, Aug 1: FIFA President Gianni Infantino is abandoning his divisive plan to sell World Cup profits to private equity after receiving pushback from all corners of the soccer world.

Infantino's decision came after his senior adviser who sat on a White House panel resigned and Asia's soccer body joined Europe and North America in opposing it.

"Having listened carefully to all the views, it has become clear that the project has created divisions of a nature that, regardless of the level of support, are no longer in the interest of the objective set out

in the first place," Infantino said in a statement early Saturday. "Our purpose has always been — and will always be — to unite and improve. As a result, this proposal will not proceed."

Infantino had proposed creating a \$20 billion company to run the World Cup with private investors including the Kushner family, but drew backlash that grew every day since Tuesday's announcement.

UEFA's 55-member nations agreed to boycott the World Cup and all other FIFA competitions over Infantino's plan on Thursday. North America's CONCACAF and

the Asian Football Confederation also said they opposed the plan.

"Some things are simply too important to sell," UEFA said in a statement. "The FIFA World Cup belongs to football. It always will. And so long as Europe has a voice, it will never be for sale."

Infantino's senior adviser, Carlos Cordeiro, a former Goldman Sachs banker who represented the soccer body on the White House Task Force for the World Cup, resigned on Friday and urged other senior FIFA staff to speak out.

"I cannot stand by while FIFA considers selling a stake in the

## Ajaraie hat-trick powers NorthEast United to big win vs Bodoland FC

GUWAHATI, Aug 1: Defending champions NorthEast United FC began their 135th Durand Cup title defence in emphatic fashion, thrashing Bodoland FC 6-0 in the opening Group F fixture, here on Saturday.

Returning talisman Alaaeddine Ajaraie stole the show with a brilliant hat-trick (45+3rd, 67th and 86th), while Lalrinzuala Lalbiaknia (58th), Redeem Tlang (70th) and substitute Antonio Moyano (90+1st) also found the net as the Highlanders produced a commanding all-round performance.

Juan Pedro Benali's side controlled proceedings from the opening whistle, enjoying the bulk of possession and creating a string of chances through Ajaraie, Jithin M.S. and Lalrinzuala.

Despite sustained pressure, NorthEast had to wait until first-half stoppage time to make the breakthrough.

After Bodoland surrendered possession inside their own half, Ajaraie displayed superb composure inside the penalty area, cushioning the ball before calmly rolling a left-footed finish beyond goalkeeper Birkhang Daimary to hand the defending champions a



deserved lead.

NorthEast doubled their advantage when Mohammed Arshaf split the defence with a perfectly weighted through ball for Jithin on the right, whose low cross into the six-yard box was turned home from close range by Lalrinzuala.

Ajaraie struck again to put the contest beyond Bodoland.

Macarion Louis Nickson's delivery created confusion inside the penalty area, and the Moroccan forward reacted quickest to the loose ball before delicately lifting his finish over the advancing Daimary to make it 3-0.

The Highlanders added a fourth when Macarion once again turned provider, threading an incisive pass between the two central defenders for Tlang to slot home. (PTI)

## Indian cyclists finish at the back in men's 4000m individual pursuit

GLASGOW, Aug 1: India's challenge in the men's 4000m individual pursuit ended in the qualification stage as both Dinesh Kumar and Harshveer Singh Sekhon finished towards the bottom of the standings, while Australia underlined its dominance in the event at the Chris Hoy Velodrome during the Commonwealth Games here on Friday.

Dinesh was the better-placed of the two Indians, finishing 17th among 23 riders with a time of 4:29.267 (average speed 53.479 kmph), more than 25 seconds behind Australia's Oliver Bledny, who topped the qualification in a Commonwealth Games record time of 4:04.132 (58.984 kmph). Harshveer ended 19th after clocking 4:35.524 (52.264 kmph).

Dinesh began cautiously, covering the opening 1000m in 1:11.875, before significantly improving his pace over the next two kilometres with splits of 1:05.175 and 1:04.379. However, he was unable to sustain the momentum and slowed in the final kilometre, clocking 1:07.838.

The qualifying session was dominated by Australia, which placed three riders in the top four.

Bledny, the reigning Olympic team pursuit champion from the Paris Games and a silver medallist in the team pursuit at the 2025 UCI Track Cycling World Champi-



onships in Santiago, carried his impressive form into Glasgow by setting the Games record.

He edged compatriot Conor Leahy, who qualified second in 4:04.147, by just 0.015 seconds to set up an all-Australian gold medal race.

The bronze medal contest will feature Matthew Bostock of the Isle of Man, who qualified third in 4:04.700, against Australia's James Moriarty, fourth in 4:05.677.

In the 4000m individual pursuit, the two fastest riders from the qualification round advance to the gold medal race, while the third and fourth fastest qualifiers compete for the bronze medal.

Australia will now be assured of at least two medals in the discipline after its commanding display in qualification.

Indians fail to impress in men's keirin. The Indian cyclists endured a disappointing outing in the men's keirin competition,

finishing well down the order in the tactical, high-speed qualifying heats, with the country's leading sprinter David Beckham emerging as the best performer among the three from the country.

Competing in Heat 3, the 22-year-old Beckham finished fifth, clocking +0.780 seconds behind heat winner Daniel James Barber of Australia. Barber and Malaysia's Mohd Azizulhasni Awang secured the two automatic quarterfinal berths from the heat, while Beckham missed out.

The top two riders from each of the four heats advanced to the quarterfinals.

In Heat 1, Ronaldo Singh finished seventh and last, 0.691 seconds behind the winner, failing to challenge for a qualifying place.

Meanwhile, Jemsh Singh also placed fifth in Heat 4, ending 1.534 seconds behind Australia's Tayte Ryan in the six-rider contest.

Sekhon finishes 21st in men's elimination race final

India's Harshveer Singh Sekhon finished 21st among 23 riders in the men's elimination race final, won by Australia's Blake Agnolotto.

In the race, all riders start together after a neutral lap. Every two laps on the 250m track, the last rider to cross the finish line is eliminated. The process continues until only two riders remain, who then contest the final sprint for the gold medal. (PTI)

# Preeti, Jaismine win gold in women's boxing; silver for Jadumani

GLASGOW, Aug 1: Indian boxers Jaismine Lamboria and Preeti Pawar won gold medals in their respective categories while Jadumani Singh settled for a silver at the Commonwealth Games here on Saturday.

Preeti claimed the gold with a dominant 5-0 victory over Canada's Scarlett Delgado in the women's 54kg before reigning world champion Jaismine clinched the yellow metal with the same scoreline against Northern Ireland's Michaela Walsh, who was the defending champion in the women's 57kg.

In the day's third bout featuring an Indian pugilist, Jadumani Singh lost a hard-fought contest 0-5 against Australia's Jye Dixon.

After a bit of struggle against his taller opponent from Down Under, Jadumani rallied to win the first round 3-2.

However, Dixon then showed



his wares and fought back brilliantly to take the second round by an 5-0 unanimous verdict. The Aussie used the momentum to edge out his opponent and end India's golden run in the boxing

ring. Jadumani had stormed into the men's 55kg final after pulling off a 5-0 unanimous decision victory against Philip Haoseb of Namibia on Friday.

In the women's section, Jaismine took the first round by a split verdict after a close contest with both boxers challenging each other.

However, Jaismine won the second round by a unanimous verdict, having landed some hard blows on her opponents.

Earlier, Preeti made a commanding start to her gold-medal bout, winning the opening round unanimously with all five judges adjudicating 10-8 in the Indian's favour.

The World No. 3 in the bantamweight division started the second round on a positive note and continued in the same vein to emerge winner for India's first gold medal of the day.

The 22-year-old Preeti had secured a flawless 5-0 unanimous decision victory against Zambia's Catherine Mwape in the semifinals. (PTI)

# Yeh dil maange more: A week of tears, triumph and history for Tejaswin Shankar



that followed were not of pain. They were of surrender.

"If I was alone, I would have probably given up," Tejaswin told PTI.

"When I was standing there crying, those were tears of giving up. I was thinking one year is gone, the Commonwealth Games are gone, maybe the Asian Games are gone too. I went down a very negative spiral."

Only four days later, the same athlete stood smiling with history around his neck.

"I have seen in two days how emotions can change. Today I am standing with a medal around my neck. I have no words. It's just unreal."

Tejaswin had won bronze in the high jump at Birmingham in 2022, becoming the first Indian medallist in the event at the Commonwealth Games. This time, he climbed the podium in an entirely different discipline.

"That makes it even more special," he said.

"I had a bronze in high jump in the previous edition and now one in the decathlon. I don't know how many people have been able to do that."

And why did he choose to compete in the decathlon alongside high jump?

"Yeh dil mange more...I just want more," he said with a smile. High jump is good, but when you can do more, why shouldn't you? I believe when you can push yourself, why mustn't you?"

But before the medal came the moment that almost broke him.

As Tejaswin went down a negative spiral after the high jump event, one athlete sought him out.

Long jumper Murali Sreeshankar, himself no stranger to career-threatening injuries after battling back from a ruptured patellar tendon, knew exactly what his teammate was going through.

"When I went back completely broken after high jump, the one person who came up to me... and this is the only person's advice I would have taken at that time...was Sreeshankar," Tejaswin said.

"He had the same injury...a lot worse than me, ruptured his tendon, and he's jumping on a new leg right now."

Rather than thinking about surviving 10 gruelling events over two days, Sreeshankar urged him to take it one event at a time.

"He told me, 'Just take one event at a time. Show up, warm up for the 100 metres. If it doesn't feel right, stop.'"

"I didn't let my mind get into what would happen in the 1,500 metres or the shot put or any other event."

As the competition wore on, the impossible gradually became possible.

"Sree was one of the main reasons. His words just kept coming back to me," he said.

"Everybody says it, but he's the epitome of resilience." (PTI)

## UEFA says it has lost confidence in FIFA's Infantino after failed private equity plan for World Cup

NYON (SWITZERLAND), Aug 1: UEFA says it has lost confidence in FIFA President Gianni Infantino and that "no option should be off the table" as it will pursue a full review of his now abandoned plan to sell stakes of the World Cup to private equity investors.

Infantino was forced to scrap the plan early Saturday after his senior adviser who sat on a White House panel resigned and Asia's soccer body joined Europe and North America in opposing it.

Infantino had proposed creating a \$20 billion company to run the World Cup with private investors, but drew backlash that grew every day since Tuesday's announcement.

"We must identify those responsible and hold them to account," UEFA said on Saturday. "No option should be off the table. The current FIEA leadership has not only lost UEFA's confidence but also that of many other members of the football family."

The governing body of European soccer, headed by Aleksander Ceferin, issued its blistering statement hours after FIFA announced it was withdrawing its private equity plan.

"We cannot keep going on like this with secret schemes on fast-track timescales, cooked up by faceless individuals and of dubious benefit to the game," UEFA said.

"It is right that, in the coming days and weeks, UEFA will work with its associations and in close cooperation with other confederations to reflect on how this happened and devise a plan to make sure that it cannot occur again." (AP)

## Mary Kom's story inspired Pakistan's first female CWG boxing medallist Fatima

GLASGOW, Aug 1: India's MC Mary Kom has inspired generations of homegrown boxers, but the six-time world champion's influence has travelled well beyond the country's borders, reaching Pakistan's first female Commonwealth Games medallist, Fatima Zahra.

The 22-year-old signed off with a historic bronze medal in the women's 60kg event here, becoming the first Pakistani woman boxer to stand on a Commonwealth Games podium. Growing up in Sargodha in Pakistan's Punjab province, Fatima had few female boxing role models to look up to in her own country. She instead found one across the border in Mary Kom.

"I am inspired by India's Mary Kom," Fatima told PTI after securing her bronze medal. For Fatima, it was not just Mary Kom's achievements but the story behind them that resonated.

Born into a poor farming family in rural Manjpur, Mary Kom overcame financial hardship, social resistance and limited resources to become one of the greatest boxers of all time.

She secretly pursued boxing in her early years, balancing training with work in the fields before going on

to win six world championship titles, an Olympic bronze medal, Asian Games and Commonwealth Games golds, and five Asian Championships.

The 2014 Bollywood biopic based on Mary Kom's life left a lasting impression on a then 10-year-old Fatima.

"I used to watch the film made on her life.

When I started boxing I used to watch that movie and train. I have a lot of respect for her and inshallah one day I will become like her. I hope I can meet her," Fatima said. Like Mary Kom, Fatima also had to battle opposition at home before she could chase her dreams.

"My background is not that strong. My basic coach taught me everything," she said.

"My family was against boxing. They would not let me go for training but I fought with them and continued training." Years later, the resistance has turned into unwavering support.

"And now they are more tense than me for my fight and competition," she said with a smile.

Fatima hopes her breakthrough medal can encourage more Pakistani girls to challenge stereotypes and take up sport instead of being confined to household responsibilities. (PTI)



## Judoka Unnati enters semifinals in CWG

GLASGOW, Aug 1: Indian judoka Unnati Sharma advanced to the women's -63kg semifinals but compatriots Harsh Tokas and Karanjit Singh Maan lost their quarterfinals at the Commonwealth Games here Saturday.

Unnati opened her campaign with a dominant Round of 16 victory over Eswatini's Lamulela Magagula, sealing the contest by ippon in just one minute and 39 seconds after scoring two successive waza-ari.

She then edged past New Zealand's Qona Christie in the quarterfinal, prevailing by waza-ari after also registering a yuko to book her place in the last four.

Karanjit lost the men's -90kg last-eight clash to Canada's Guillaume Gaulin, conceding the defeat by ippon after defeating New

Zealand's Elliott Connolly by ippon in three minutes and 29 seconds. He will now face home favourite Scott Cusack in the repechage round.

Tokas' campaign ended in the men's 81kg quarterfinals, where he suffered a narrow 0-1 defeat to Cyprus' Odysseas Georgakis, who clinched the bout with a yuko. Tokas will face Penamina Percival from Samoa in repechage.

In the women's -70kg quarterfinals, Inun-ganbi Takhellambam lost to Canada's Charlie Thibault by ippon in three minutes and 23 seconds after conceding a yuko earlier in the contest.

She will face England's Jemima Yeats-Brown in the repechage contest. (PTI)

## CEM Tuliram Ronghang unveils official jersey of Karbi Anglong Morning Star FC



HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 1: Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) and president of the Karbi Anglong Sports Association (KASA), Tuliram Ronghang, on Friday unveiled the official jersey of Karbi Anglong Morning Star FC (KAMSFC) ahead of the club's campaign in the 135th Indian Oil Durand Cup at the KASA Stadium here.

The jersey was launched in the presence of club officials, players and sports enthusiasts ahead of KAMSFC's opening Group F fixture against FC1 Ladakh on August 3 at the Indira Gandhi Athletic Stadium in Guwahati.

This marks KAMSFC's second appearance in Asia's oldest football tournament. The club exited in the group stage in its debut campaign last year and is aiming to qualify for the knockout stage this season.

Group F comprises Indian Super League outfit NorthEast United FC,

Bodoland FC, FC1 Ladakh and KAMSFC. The 135th edition of the Durand Cup, being held from July 25 to August 23, features 24 teams competing across Kolkata, Guwahati, Shillong, Imphal and Ranchi.

The tournament is organised by the Durand Football Tournament Society in association with the All India Football Federation (AIFF), the Eastern Command of the Indian Army and the Government of West Bengal, with support from the governments of Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur and Jharkhand.

Addressing the gathering, Ronghang congratulated the team on earning a place in the prestigious tournament and wished the players, coaching staff and management success in the competition.

"I extend my best wishes and prayers to the entire team. I hope KAMSFC performs well and brings glory to Karbi Anglong," he said.

Club manager Waisong Bey said the

players are highly motivated and well prepared for the tournament.

"Every match is crucial as we need to finish strongly in the group stage to qualify for the playoffs. Representing our district in a tournament of this stature is a matter of pride for all of us. We appeal to the people of Karbi Anglong to support and encourage the team," Bey said.

The squad features several promising local players, including Harbamon Timung, who trained at a football academy in Spain, Tata Football Academy product Jirjar Terang, former Indian Football League (IFL) captain and KAMSFC academy graduate Komolson Rongphar, and Malongkiri Tisso.

Bey said the squad has also been bolstered by experienced Indian players, including Bengaluru FC goalkeeper Jaspreet Singh, Joseph of Hyderabad FC, Vikash of Jamshedpur FC, Yohenba Meitei of Kerala Blasters and Fabian, the Golden Boot winner of the Arunachal Pradesh Football League.

The club has further strengthened its ranks with overseas recruits Luis of Mozambique and Cameroonian players Stephane, Samir DB Binong, Junior and Victor Kamaho. Cornelius Aldrin Laldinsang Pudaite is the head coach of the team.

KASA general secretary Pankaj Teron also extended his best wishes to KAMSFC, saying the district takes immense pride in having a professional football club representing Karbi Anglong in the prestigious Durand Cup.

He further urged football lovers to rally behind the team and noted that KAMSFC's opening match against FC1 Ladakh on August 3, scheduled to kick off at 4 pm, will be streamed live on Sony LIV.

Government of Assam

National Health Mission, Assam

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Within 12 weeks  
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**2<sup>nd</sup> Visit:**  
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**3<sup>rd</sup> Visit:**  
Between 28-34 weeks

**4<sup>th</sup> Visit:**  
Between 36 weeks and term

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