

6
WORLD

8
NATION

- Ebola kills 1,700 in eastern Congo as fastest-growing outbreak surges
- French and British teams rescue 157 migrants after a boat engine fire in the Channel
- AAP's march against E20 halted; Kejriwal stages sit-in on PM residence route
- Bihar police 'violated' manual while handling NEET paper leak protests in state: Kanhaiya Kumar

Flood-hit people in Sivasagar, Charaideo dependent on mining in Nagaland: Himanta ● Flood toll rises to 87 'Assam cannot stop mining in neighbouring state'

GUWAHATI, Aug 4: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday claimed that most of the people affected in the Upper Assam flood depend on coal-sand mining activities in neighbouring Nagaland, and they must decide on closing the "illegal" ones.

Sarma's statement came following the opposition's demand to shut all illegal coal-sand mining to prevent a recurrence of floods in Upper Assam districts.

After visiting some flood-hit areas, he also said that Assam cannot stop any mining taking place in Nagaland, and the central government will have to be involved in the process.

In the latest wave of floods, widespread devastation occurred in Sivasagar and Charaideo districts, especially in the bordering areas of



Assam-Nagaland, while at least 87 people died and nearly 1.3 lakh others were impacted.

Opposition parties like Congress, Rajior Dal and Assam Jatiya Parishad, along with peasant body Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti,

have alleged that the devastating floods in Upper Assam districts were "man-made" as they result from a nexus between coal-stone mafias and influential political leaders from Assam and Nagaland. "All people in those affected

places depend on mining. So, I have requested the public to give a decision," Sarma told reporters here.

Stones come from Nagaland as mining takes place in that state, and Assam cannot go and stop mining in the neighbouring state, he added.

"We can stop the stone crushers at Bihubor (in Assam). Coal mining also does not take place in Assam, it happens in Nagaland. We cannot dictate what policy the Nagaland government will take," the Assam CM said.

The Assam government will try to talk to Nagaland through the central government, he added.

"No illegal mining takes place inside Assam. I will try to talk myself once this flood situation improves," Sarma said. When asked if illegal (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Northeast infra facing challenges due to corrosion: Report

GUWAHATI, Aug 4: The Northeast is facing a huge challenge in corrosion-related deterioration of bridges, highways, railways and other public assets due to the region's harsh climatic conditions, a new report said.

According to the recently published report of consulting firm Nomura, the Northeast has witnessed unprecedented infrastructure investment over the last decade in roads, bridges, railway connectivity, airports, power transmission and border connectivity projects.

"The Northeast experiences some of the most aggressive climatic conditions in the country. Heavy rainfall, prolonged humidity, difficult terrain and expanding strategic infrastructure lead to corrosion and reduce the service life of public assets," a statement issued by the firm said.

"Protecting these assets should now become as important as cre-

ating them," International Zinc Association (India) Director Rahul Sharma was quoted as saying.

The report stated that infrastructure in the region cannot be designed according to uniform specifications suited for drier parts of India.

"Climate-responsive corrosion protection needs to be a fundamental part of infrastructure planning," it added.

The report comes at a time when the government is dramatically expanding highways, railways, inland waterways, power transmission, border roads and urban development in the Northeast.

Experts pointed out that higher humidity, prolonged monsoons and difficult accessibility in the region also push up maintenance costs, making durability critical from both economic and operational perspectives, it said. They advocated (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

CRPF officer shoots 2 colleagues dead, injures another before killing himself

NAGAON, Aug 4: A CRPF officer shot his two colleagues dead and injured another before killing himself in Assam's Nagaon district on Tuesday, police said.

Nagaon Deputy Superintendent of Police (HQ) Paramita Sarkar told PTI that the incident took place at the 34 Battalion camp in Katimari around 7 am when ASI/GD Ballani Premabaram, who was on duty at the main gate, fired at his colleagues.

The ASI later shot himself and died at the spot, the DSP said.

"Two personnel, HV/GD Vishnu Prasad Baghel and SI/GD Ramnawal Singh Yadav, died on the spot," Sarkar said.

Another CRPF personnel ASI/Mane Govind Sriplav was injured in the incident and taken to a private hospital, she said.

Later, the injured was referred to Gauhati Medical College and Hospital, the DSP said. Senior CRPF and police (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

India distances itself from Sheikh Hasina's planned virtual press event in New Delhi



NEW DELHI, Aug 4: India on Tuesday distanced itself from former Bangladeshi prime minister Sheikh Hasina's planned virtual media interaction in New Delhi, emphasising that it does not endorse any views that may be expressed during the event.

Hasina is set to hold her first interaction with the media on Wednesday evening, two years after she fled Dhaka after the collapse of her government following a massive anti-government protest.

Dhaka on Monday sought a clarification from the Indian side on Hasina's plan with Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's foreign affairs adviser Humaiun Kobir saying the public interaction from Indian soil could undermine the positive momentum witnessed in the bilateral ties in the recent months.

"The interaction you refer to is being organised by a private media entity. The government has no involvement whatsoever in it, neither does it endorse any views that may be expressed at the forum," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson

Randhir Jaiswal said.

He was answering a question on Hasina's plan during his bi-weekly media briefing.

Bangladesh's State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam said on Monday that Hasina's public political activities from Indian territory could have a negative impact on relations between the two countries.

The former prime minister is set to address the virtual press conference at the Foreign Correspondents' Club. Though Hasina had given a series of e-mail interviews over the past few months, it will be her first media interaction.

The Awami League leader has already announced her plan to return to Dhaka by end of this year and she is likely to elaborate on that during the media interaction.

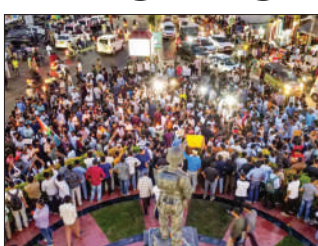
Hasina's son Sajeeb Wazed Joy, and a number of other Awami League leaders including Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury Nowfel and Shakib Al Hasan are likely to speak at the conference. Hasina, 78, has (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

CM extends 'moral support' to Jharkhand students protesting alleged paper leaks

GUWAHATI, Aug 4: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday extended his "moral support" to students protesting in Jharkhand over alleged paper leaks in recruitment examinations and urged the JMM-led government to immediately accept their demands.

The BJP leader claimed that the situation could have been avoided had the JMM-led government acted with "sensitivity and transparency" on the students' complaints in time.

"During the Jharkhand Assem-



bly elections, I had the opportunity to closely witness the pain, anger and concerns of JSSC-CGL aspirants regarding the recruitment process. I can well understand the

feelings of the students who are protesting today for their future and for justice," he said.

"Unfortunately, allegations of irregularities and paper leaks have continued to mount, and today the future of lakhs of youth is in crisis. I express my moral support for this just movement of Jharkhand's students and youth and urge the state government to immediately accept the legitimate demands of the students and deliver justice to them," he added. Sarma said injustice with the future (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Three, including minor, held for gang rape, murder of class 10 student

SILCHAR/HAILAKANDI, Aug 4: Three persons, including a minor, were held in Assam's Hailakandi district in connection with the alleged gang rape and murder of a 15-year-old girl, police said on Tuesday.

The victim's mother had gone to attend a function at a neighbour's house on Saturday night, and after returning home, she found her body lying in the bed without clothes, they said.

Villagers immediately informed the Katlicherra police station, and the body, which also had visible injuries, was sent to the SK Roy Civil Hospital for post-mortem examination, they added.

A Special Investigation Team (SIT) was constituted, and three persons were nabbed on Monday in connection with the case, police said.

The incident triggered protests in the area with locals blocking the NH-6, demanding exemplary punishment for those behind the incident.

Several organisations have condemned the incident and demanded a fast-track trial to ensure speedy justice for the victim.

Protest marches were held in the area and memoranda submitted to the district administration. (PTI)

'These lapses caused the project cost to escalate sevenfold to ₹ 6,663.20 crore'

Faulty surveys, rushed land purchase led to sevenfold cost hike in Nagaland rail project: PAC report

NEW DELHI, Aug 4: The cost of the Dimapur-Kohima rail link project in the Northeast Frontier Railway zone has escalated more than sevenfold, from ₹ 850 crore during sanction in 2006-07 to ₹ 6,663.20 crore by May 2022, while physical progress remained below 25 per cent as of March 2022, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) said in a report presented in Parliament on Tuesday.

The report, titled "Construction of Dimapur-Kohima New Line Project: Northeast Frontier Railway", observed that the stalling of the project exemplifies a series of shortcomings that are encountered during large railway infrastructure projects in geographically complex regions.

These include inadequate initial surveys, rushed land acquisition, designs not backed by cost-benefit analysis, poor contract oversight and insufficient accountability, the report said.

The committee observed that this level of cost escalation, coupled with such poor



physical progress, represents a failure of financial oversight and project governance.

It stated that Nagaland, a landlocked hill state with only 11.13 km of existing broad-gauge railway lines, remains heavily dependent on road transport for majority of its connectivity needs.

According to the committee, to address this infrastructure gap and promote all-weather rail connectivity, the Ministry of Railways had sanctioned the Dimapur-Kohima New Line Project in 2006-07 at an estimated cost of ₹ 850 crore.

"However, the project has been plagued by repeated alignment revisions, persistent land acquisition challenges, tunnelling design issues, premature procurement, and systemic failures in contract management," the report said.

"These lapses caused the project cost to escalate sevenfold to ₹ 6,663.20 crore by May 2022 while physical progress remained below 25 per cent, significantly delaying the socio-economic benefits that the project was designed to deliver to the people of Nagaland," it added.

The committee noted that

the pre-construction survey between Dimapur to Zubza was allocated to M/s RITES, which completed the work at a total cost of ₹ 7 crore, however, the survey did not address construction challenges in the Neo-Himalayan terrain.

Thereafter, the railway ministry employed services of M/s AYESA for a fresh alignment review using advanced digital terrain modelling (DTM) and digital elevation modelling (DEM) tools, the report said.

It recommended the Ministry of Railways institutionalise a robust pre-project survey framework that mandates multi-stage, technology-assisted geotechnical and geological investigations.

The committee also urged the ministry to review all ongoing and future hill-railway projects in the Northeast to identify similar survey-related risks and take preemptive corrective action. The panel also pointed out many "avoidable irregularities" in land acquisition at every stage, resulting in inordinate expenditure (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

OUR CENSUS
OUR DEVELOPMENT
(First Phase of Census 2027)
Common queries on Self-Enumeration (SE) and their Answers (Part-2)

WHAT IS SELF-ENUMERATION?
Self-Enumeration is an online process in which you fill and submit your household details on the SE portal (se.census.gov.in) yourself, without waiting for an enumerator

- ❖ What are the benefits of Self-Enumeration?
 - Fill details conveniently
 - Ensures privacy
 - Makes the Census process faster and efficient
- ❖ How to log in to the Self-Enumeration portal?
 - Select State/UT
 - Enter name of head of the family, mobile number and email (optional)
 - Verify through OTP
 - Start Self-Enumeration
- ❖ How to mark the correct location of your house?
 - Select district/PIN code
 - Enter area/landmark
 - Zoom on map and mark location near your house (Do not worry if exact address is not displayed)
 - Correct location marking is necessary
- ❖ Can I edit my information later?
 - Yes, you can edit before final submission during State/UT SE period
 - After final submission changes can be done during enumerator's visit
- ❖ Can SE portal be accessed outside India?
 - No, this facility is available only within India's geographical boundaries
- ❖ What if an error is found after submission?
 - Correction can be made when the enumerator visits your house
- ❖ Can I save and complete the form later?
 - Yes, you can save progress and complete the form within the stipulated time

TOLL FREE - 1855
Let us fulfill our responsibility, Let us participate in the Census CensusIndia2027

CBC 19108/13/0158/2627

WhatsApp tests age confirmation in India

NEW DELHI, Aug 4: WhatsApp is testing new ways for users in India to confirm their age as it prepares to comply with upcoming legal requirements, including those related to the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, the Meta-owned messaging platform said on Tuesday.

NAME CHANGE

I, Eaka Rishi, C/O Shankar Rishi resident Santipara Road, Diphu would like to mention that in my Assam Gramin Vikash Bank my name wrongly recorded as Aka Rishi Das instead of Correct name i.e Eaka Rishi. This is true.

AFFIDAVIT

I, Tulsi Chetry, D/O Indra Bahadur Chetry, Mother's Name: Bishnu Kumari Thapa W/O Shankar Chetry, residing at (Char Chari Nepali Basti) Diphu Karbi Anglong Assam), shall henceforth be known as (Tulsi Thapa), as declared before the Notary Public / First Class Judicial Magistrate Diphu Court, Karbi Anglong , Assam vide Affidavit No. 11976 Dated 04-08-2026 (Tulsi Chetry) and (Tulsi Thapa) both are the same and identical person.

PROVISION OF RAC

E-Tender Notice No. Sr. DEE/LMG/15 of 2026-27, dated: 31-07-2026. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **SN.1: Tender No: EL-LM-26-27-09/RT-01: Name of work:** At Lumding Division Provision of RAC (Split AC's) in SS/SM's chamber/rooms. Tender Value: ₹1,02,25,312.04. Earnest Money: ₹2,04,500.00. **E-tender will be closed at 11:00 hrs. on 24-08-2026 and Opened at 11:30 hrs. on 24-08-2026.** The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 11:00 hrs. on 24-08-2026 on website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>

Sr. DEE/G&C/Lumding

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers with a smile

AFFIDAVIT

I, MD. RAFIKUL HUSSAIN, S/O. MIR HUSSAIN, resident of Thana Road, Diphu, P.O./P.S. Diphu, Dist. Karbi Anglong, Assam, hereby solemnly affirm and declare before the Executive Magistrate, Diphu, Karbi Anglong, on 03/08/2026 that I am the parent/legal guardian of the "RUJANA HUSSAIN," holding Aadhaar Card number 3295 3815 8444.

The correct name of my child/ward is "RUJANA HUSSAIN", but in the earlier recorded name of birth in Aadhaar of my child/ward is ROJANA BEGUM."

That I wish to get my child/ward name updated in the Aadhaar as "RUJANA HUSSAIN."

NAME CHANGE

I, Khijumoni Deka, S/o Late Khagesh Chandra Deka and Mrs. Dipanjali Deka residing at Henrabari, Rupkonwar Path near Nabajyoti Club, Byelane-3, House No-34, Guwahati, Assam-781036, have changed my name to JYOTISHMAN DEKA vide affidavit dated 27/04/2016. Henceforth, I shall be known as JYOTISHMAN DEKA for all purposes.

The company, however, said the test is optional and users do not have to confirm their age to continue using WhatsApp. It also said users' age information will remain private and will not be shared with others on the platform.

"To comply with upcoming laws in India like the Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDP), we are testing privacy-protective ways for people to confirm their age. This doesn't change how WhatsApp works or your experience," WhatsApp spokesperson said in response to a PTI query.

Users have been taking to X to share screenshots of WhatsApp's nudge on adding date of birth with a message display that says "upcoming laws in India require us to ask for your age". The latest move has fuelled a social media chatter that the messaging platform could be gearing up for future age-verification requirements in the country.

Early Tuesday, IT Secretary S Krishnan had observed that the move "might be from the context of DPDP Act, where it is (provisions are) age-related."

"But we will have to check with

them... because we are approaching the deadline...." Krishnan had said.

It is pertinent to mention that the Digital Personal Data Protection Act regulates the processing of digital personal data by balancing the right of individuals to protect their personal data with the necessity of processing such data for lawful purposes. The Act and associated rules outline several stringent provisions for platforms when it comes to processing the personal data of children, defined as individuals under 18 years of age.

The norms - when fully implemented - will require platforms to obtain verifiable consent from the child's parent or lawful guardian, before any personal data of a child can be processed; platforms must adopt appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure this consent is authentic.

The rules strictly prohibit platforms from engaging in activities that could harm children or exploit their data; there is a ban on tracking or behavioural monitoring of children, and platforms are also prohibited from directing targeted advertising at children.

Failure to adhere to obligations regarding children's data will lead to significant financial consequences.

Experts believe that while the specific rules for verifiable consent (Rule 10) are set to come into force in May 2027 - still months away - platforms may start collecting this information early to ensure their systems are fully ready and verified by the time the enforcement begins.

Asked about the IT Ministry's next steps on the username notices, Meity Secretary Krishnan said the issue extends beyond WhatsApp, to all messaging apps. Two dimensions -- the possibility of impersonation risks arising from username features, and the privacy angle -- will have to be taken into account, he said. On whether the IT ministry is mulling a common set of standards governing all messaging platforms, Krishnan said, "We are looking at what they had to say, the feedback that they've given, and we will take a final call."

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

Govt to raise CSAM lapses, wrongful account action issue with Meta; global team in India today

NEW DELHI, Aug 4: Lapses in curbing 'CSAM' as well as wrongful action on prominent accounts are among a slew of concerns that the Government will raise when it meets Meta's global team, IT Secretary S Krishnan said on Tuesday, adding that a company at the forefront of technology should have been able to make its systems work as they are supposed to.

Meta's global team will be in India on August 5 and 6, Krishnan said.

The upcoming meeting is significant as the government has summoned Meta's top global executives after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent Facebook post addressing Indian youth and promising stringent action against paper leaks was briefly restricted on the platform. Sources said top Meta executive Joel Kaplan is expected to be present at the meeting.

While the US-headquartered social media giant had attributed the incident to a technical glitch and apologised, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) had found the explanation "inadequate". The company, which owns Facebook, had said that the content was removed "in error" and was restored on the platform.

Meta has also been under regulatory scrutiny over the issue of Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) in paid advertisements on Instagram, and the government, last month, slapped a notice on Meta over the issue.

"There are a range of issues...the CSAM issue was raised, so what measures have been taken regarding that, and synthetically generated information ... to what extent that is being looked at. Then, for prominent personalities when they have verified accounts, if content has to be taken down, there have to be safeguards...all of these will be the issues (taken up)," Krishnan told reporters on the sidelines of the launch of an independent multimodal AI evaluation platform by AI4Bharat at IIT Madras and Josh Talks AI.

Meta, as one of the leading technology companies in the world, should have the technology to address such issues effectively, he said.

"We would like to understand from them (Meta) as to why some of these things have not been working the way they are supposed to work, and what are the challenges," Krishnan added.

For platforms, there needs to be a clear understanding of India's law, what compliance must look like, "and a clearer understanding of how they intend to make sure compliance happens", Krishnan said.

Government sources had earlier said that the issue is not just about technical aspects, but about "national security and public order". Meta's global team will be "categorically" asked to clarify on issues around algorithmic bias, how their algorithm operates and the company's role in public order, they had said.

In the immediate aftermath of the issue, Meta had informed the IT Ministry that posts by the prime minister and select prominent accounts will be subject to additional oversight on the platform, with multiple levels of checks involving senior company officials. Meta wrote to the government outlining the specifics of enhanced and rigorous safeguards it implemented (on July 28) for content posted by PM Modi and other prominent accounts. Modi's July 23 Instagram post, later shared on Facebook, had marked his first direct selfie video aimed at engaging with the youth and underscoring the government's commitment to crack down on paper leaks amid students' protests organised by the Cockroach Janta Party at that time. The Facebook version of the post was briefly restricted by Meta before being restored. The IT Ministry maintained that Meta's explanation to the government, citing a technical glitch in the automated content filters, was "not reasonable". They had said that if indeed a glitch in the automated system caused the error, then Meta, being a technology company, must surely hasten to improve its own tools.

Meta officials had attributed the error to AI-powered automated content filters reviewing shared posts and subsequent videos that had circulated following the original post by the prime minister. Meta had told the Government that its automated filters inadvertently ended up briefly removing the original post itself.

By summoning global executives, the government wants to ensure that Meta's leadership -- all the way to the top -- is made fully aware of concerns being raised by Indian authorities. The summoning of global executives, rather than only local representatives, underscores the Centre's intent to directly engage Meta's international leadership on platform accountability. (PTI)

Morepen posts record quarterly revenue, profit in Q1 FY27

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 4: Morepen Laboratories Ltd. has reported its highest-ever quarterly revenue and earnings for the quarter ended June 30, 2026, driven by strong growth in its API business, exports and the commercial rollout of its Contract Development and Manufacturing Organisation (CDMO) operations. The company posted revenue of ₹575.31 crore, up 34 per cent year-on-year, while EBITDA surged 207 per cent to ₹87.72 crore. Profit after tax (PAT) rose 394 per cent to ₹56.35 crore, with the EBITDA margin improving to 15.25 per cent from 6.65 per cent in the corresponding quarter last year.

Exports recorded a 111 per cent year-on-year increase, while the API business grew 31 per cent, supported by a 42 per cent rise in API exports. The company's medical devices segment also registered 19 per cent growth during the quarter.

A major milestone during the quarter

was the commencement of full-scale commercial execution of Morepen's ₹825-crore CDMO mandate, with commercial supplies worth ₹58 crore already completed. The company said the development marked a significant step in its strategy of transitioning from a traditional API manufacturer to an innovation-driven contract manufacturing platform.

Commenting on the performance, Chairman and Managing Director Sushil Suri said the results reflected the success of the company's transformation strategy, supported by stronger operating leverage, growing exports and long-term global manufacturing partnerships.

Morepen also highlighted the successful completion of its fourth consecutive USFDA inspection without any Form 483 observations, reinforcing its regulatory compliance and strengthening its position in the global pharmaceutical manufacturing market.

PhonePe reports surge in Daily SIP adoption across smaller towns

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 4: PhonePe Mutual Funds has reported a sharp rise in the adoption of its Daily Systematic Investment Plan (SIP) feature, saying the platform has onboarded more than five lakh unique investors since its launch in December 2025, reflecting growing acceptance of micro-investing across the country.

According to the company, Daily SIP transactions increased nearly five-fold between January and June 2026, with an average investment of ₹50 per day.

The feature allows investments from as little as ₹10 a day, encouraging disciplined investing through small, regular contributions.

The company said 77 per cent of Daily SIP investors are from B30 cities, indicating growing participation from tier-II, tier-III and smaller towns.

Investors in the 18-29 age group account for 58 per cent of the investor base, while those aged 30-45 years constitute another 37 per cent.

PhonePe said the Daily SIP option is particularly suited to business owners, merchants and self-employed individuals with daily cash flows, allowing them to invest small amounts regularly instead of making monthly contributions.

The company also highlighted benefits such as averaging investment costs during market fluctuations, better liquidity management through smaller daily payments and the flexibility to discontinue the SIP without penalties.

Commenting on the trend, Nilesh D Naik, Head of Mutual Funds at PhonePe, said the growing adoption of Daily SIPs reflects a shift towards consistent investing and that the feature aims to make long-term wealth creation more accessible for first-time investors and individuals with varying cash flow patterns.

ABHICL bets on young adults to drive health insurance growth

KOLKATA, Aug 4: Eyeing a large untapped opportunity in the young adult segment, Aditya Birla Health Insurance Company Ltd (ABHICL) on Tuesday launched a health insurance plan targeted at people aged 25-35 years, where penetration is below 15 per cent even though the cohort makes up about 65 per cent of India's population. The standalone health insurer introduced Activ Yuva, a wellness-focused health insurance product designed to keep customers engaged beyond hospitalisation

through rewards linked to healthy lifestyle habits such as nutrition, fitness and sleep. "We see a significant opportunity in the 25-35 age segment. While they account for nearly 65 per cent of the country's population, their share in health insurance is less than 15 per cent," ABHICL Chief Executive Officer Mayank Bathwal said.

ABHICL is a JV between Aditya Birla Capital Ltd and Momentum Group of South Africa. Bathwal said the company expects to grow faster than the health insurance industry, al-

though he declined to provide a growth target for the remaining quarters of the current financial year. The insurer recorded around 50 per cent growth in the first quarter of FY27, he said. He said that there are health insurance products linked to wellness, but this policy offers targeted needs, including unlimited sum insured through automatic reinstatement of coverage during the policy year and allows the sum insured to increase up to 11 times over 11 years through the "Yuva Credit" feature. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

‘Assam cannot stop

mining is responsible for such huge devastation, the CM said the government will have to take the experts' opinion to find the exact reason.

"Rain takes place every year, but such a flood has never happened. Satellite data will have to be studied, and institutions like IIT will have to be roped in. We politicians cannot comment so easily," he added.

The opposition and social groups have claimed that illegal open-cast mining in the bordering hilly regions of Nagaland created massive pits and artificial reservoirs.

During heavy rains, water accumulates in these pits and bursts downstream, triggering flash floods in Assam.

The flood situation in Assam remained serious on Tuesday even though water is receding from most of the state, while the death toll in the deluge hit localities increased to 87, and nearly 1.3 lakh people were still affected.

Meanwhile, the CM visited the flood relief camp set up at the campus of Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology (RGIPT) in Sivasagar and interacted with the flood-affected families taking shelter there.

"Assam will tide over every obstacle to rebuild people's lives and support them in starting over, leaving behind the scars of the floods. We are taking feedback from every affected family to see if they have received relief and help," he said.

Starting from August 9, government teams will reach every home of the affected families to conduct a ground assessment of the damage, Sarma said.

"I want to assure every flood-affected family in Assam that in this difficult time, the government stands with them at every step. From rehabilitation to restoring life to normalcy, every possible assistance will be provided. Today, in a relief camp in Sivasagar, I reiterated this very resolve," he added. (PTI)

Northeast infra facing

a shift towards exposure-based engineering standards, where corrosion protection systems are selected based on the specific environment in which an asset will operate, instead of a "one-size-fits-all" approach. The experts also called for moving away from public procurement based solely on the L1 or lowest-cost model.

"Selection of infrastructure solutions only based on the lowest initial cost often leads to much higher maintenance expenditure over the life of an asset. Lifecycle cost-based decision making allows governments to optimise public expenditure while improving infrastructure reliability and longevity," the report highlighted. Integrating internationally accepted corrosion management practices during the design and construction phases can help reduce lifecycle expenses and improve asset availability and returns on public investment, it added.

"Every additional year that a bridge, railway structure or transmission tower remains in service and does not need major repairs brings economic savings to the region -- and thus better connectivity and resilience. Infrastructure durability should therefore be seen as a strategic investment rather than just a maintenance problem," the report explained.

It further stressed that for India's goal of becoming a developed nation, a resilient infrastructure suited to local environmental conditions will be as important as expanding the country's infrastructure footprint.

The report further said that India is losing an estimated Rs 14 lakh crore annually, or 4.3 per cent of GDP, due to corrosion-related deterioration of bridges, highways, railways and other public assets, while adopting global best practices for corrosion management could potentially increase the GDP by up to 1.5 per cent.

"India's cost of corrosion (CoC) is estimated at about 4.3 per cent (Rs 14,14,840 crore) of GDP, exceeding the global average of 3.4 per cent," the report said.

The country's above-average CoC and high corrosion susceptibility highlight a growing macro-economic risk, with significant negative impact expected on GDP in future, it said.

"Effective corrosion protection measures could improve GDP by approximately 1.5 per cent," it added. (PTI)

CRPF officer shoots

officers rushed to the camp, and an inquiry into the incident was ordered, she added.

Explaining the sequence of events, Nagaon Senior Superintendent of Police Partha Protim Das said that ASI Premabaram, who hailed from Andhra Pradesh, was found without his assigned weapon while he was discharging duty at the main gate of the CRPF Camp this morning.

"He subsequently took an INSAS rifle from the Guard Room and proceeded towards the rear side of the Quarter Guard, where he opened fire on Baghel, who succumbed to his injuries," Das told PTI.

Premabaram then fired at Yadav, who had come for document verification from Lucknow and the officer also died on the spot, the Assam Police SSP said.

"The ASI also fired at Sripul, causing serious injuries to him. After firing, Premabaram entered the B/171 Barrack and shot himself, resulting in his death," Das said.

The police are investigating the case along with the CRPF, he added. (PTI)

APHLC, Congress

leadership of Tuliram Ronghang, chief executive member (CEM) of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council.

"Dr. Ronghang's track record in maintaining regional peace and driving sustainable development, while reaffirming their belief that under his guidance, the movement for the creation of an Autonomous State under Article 244(A) of the Indian Constitution will continue to move forward through constitutional and democratic channels," they said.

The successful event underlines the BJP's expanding influence and consolidating political footprint across the hill district of Karbi Anglong as development and political autonomy remain central issues for the local populace.

CM extends ‘moral

of the youth could not be accepted under any circumstances.

Students have been staging an indefinite protest at Ranchi's Jaipal Singh Munda Stadium since July 29 over alleged paper leaks in the Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC) examination and other recruitment tests.

The protesters on Tuesday demanded an inquiry by an independent panel of retired high court judges from outside Jharkhand, alleging that the state government was attempting to "whitewash" the issue by entrusting the probe to the CID.

They had earlier sought a CBI investigation, along with an Enforcement Directorate (ED) probe, claiming large-scale financial transactions were linked to the alleged recruitment scam. (PTI)

India distances itself

been living in India since fleeing Dhaka on August 5, 2024.

Last November, Hasina was sentenced to death in absentia by a special tribunal in Dhaka for alleged "crimes against humanity" over her government's brutal crackdown on student-led protests in 2024.

Since the verdict, Dhaka has been urging New Delhi to extradite her to face the law.

The relations between India and Bangladesh witnessed major downturn after the interim government headed by Muhammad Yunus came to power following the collapse of the Hasina government.

The two sides initiated efforts to stabilise the relations after Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, accompanied by Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, represented India at the inauguration of Rahman as the prime minister in Dhaka on February 17.

Rahman became the prime minister following his party's landslide victory in the parliamentary polls. The Awami League was barred from contesting the polls.

In April, Bangladesh Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman visited India as part of efforts to repair the strained bilateral ties following more than 18 months of heightened diplomatic tension.

It was the first high-level visit to India by a senior member of the new Bangladesh Nationalist Party government. (PTI)

Faulty surveys, rushed

of ₹141.70 crore. While examining contract management and extension of time in the project, the committee found that till December 2025, a total of 42 Extensions of Time (EOTs) were given to contractors since 2015, resulting in additional price variation costs of ₹42.38 crore.

The panel also noted that signalling materials worth ₹11.44 crore were procured prematurely when civil works were only 25 per cent complete, resulting in idle blockage of funds. Additionally, tunnel radio communication equipment was imported from the United States due to absence of Indian manufacturers, raising concerns about procurement planning, the report said.

It recommended that the railway ministry should review its framework for granting EOTs in hill-railway and complex-terrain projects to ensure that each extension is individually justified by documentary evidence and subjected to financial scrutiny at a senior level before approval.

The panel further urged the ministry to develop an indigenous supply chain or "Make-in-India alternative" for specialised tunnelling and communication equipment to reduce import dependence and procurement risks.

"Given the State's landlocked and seismically sensitive geography, the Committee desire that robust contingency plans be formulated and adequate funding reserved for emergency geological interventions throughout the construction period," the report read.

The committee has also recommended fixing accountability for specific lapses during the project, including surplus land acquisition, premature procurement, and non-adoption of cost-effective design solutions. (PTI)

E-AUCTION CATALOGUES FOR MULTI PURPOSE STALL OVER LUMDING DIVISION

E-Auction is invited for Multi Purpose Stall over Lumding Division for a period of 05 years. **Catalogue No.: MPS-LMG-05-26. Rate Unit:** Annual Licensing Fee. **Days:** 1826. **Auction Start Date & Time (All Lots) :** At 12:30 hrs. on 14-08-2026.

Seq No.	Lot No./Category	Description
AA/1	MPS-LMG-BXJ-MPS-127-26-1 (MPS - Multi Purpose Stalls)	Provision of Multipurpose Stall No. BXJMPS-1 at Platform 1 of Bokajan Railway station.
AA/2	MPS-LMG-SZR-MPS-131-26-1 (MPS - Multi Purpose Stalls)	Provision of Multipurpose Stall No. SZRMPS-1 at Platform 1 of Sarupathar Railway station.
AA/3	MPS-LMG-SZR-MPS-132-26-1 (MPS - Multi Purpose Stalls)	Provision of Multipurpose Stall No. SZRMPS-3 at Platform 2 of Sarupathar Railway station.
AA/4	MPS-LMG-DPU-MPS-134-26-1 (MPS - Multi Purpose Stalls)	Provision of Multipurpose Stall No. DPUMPS-3 at Platform 1 of Diphu Railway station.
AA/5	MPS-LMG-NHLG-MPS-119-25-1 (MPS - Multi Purpose Stalls)	Provision of Multipurpose Stall No. NHLGMPS-8 at PF-1 of New Hafilong Railway station ('D' category).
AA/6	MPS-LMG-DPU-MPS-133-26-1 (MPS - Multi Purpose Stalls)	Provision of Multipurpose Stall No. DPUMPS-1 at Platform 1 of Diphu Railway station. Unreserved category. (Sketch plan uploaded.)
AA/7	MPS-LMG-DPU-MPS-136-26-1 (MPS - Multi Purpose Stalls)	Provision of Multipurpose stall (DPUMPS-5) at Diphu Railway Station, platform-2 at Lumding. unreserved category. (Sketch plan uploaded)
AA/8	MPS-LMG-BXJ-MPS-128-26-1 (MPS - Multi Purpose Stalls)	Provision of Multipurpose Stall No. BXJMPS-3 at Platform 2 of Bokajan station. Reserved for OBC category. (Sketch plan uploaded.)
AA/9	MPS-LMG-JMK-MPS-126-26-1 (MPS - Multi Purpose Stalls)	Provision of Multipurpose stall (JMKMPS-5) at PF-2 of Jamunamukh Station. (Sketch plan uploaded)
AA/10	MPS-LMG-SCL-MPS-109-25-1 (MPS - Multi Purpose Stalls)	Provision of multipurpose stall (SCLMPS-3) at platform 1 of Silchar station, reserved for Women, sketch plan uploaded.
AA/11	MPS-LMG-GHY-MPS-124-26-1 (MPS - Multi Purpose Stalls)	Provision of Multipurpose Stall No. GHYMPS-14 outside the parking lot near SSE/P/GHY office of Guwahati Railway station ('A1' category).

E-Auction Close Date & Time: At 14:40 hrs. on 14-08-2026. Initial Cooling off period is 30 minutes. Successful bidders closing interval 10 Minutes. **Note :** Prospective bidder are requested to visit e-Auction leasing module on IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in for more details.

Sr. DCM, Lumding

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

₹112 crore transferred to 75,000 families; more assistance announced for housing, education and livelihoods

Assam announces massive relief package for flood-hit families

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 4: The Assam Government has announced a comprehensive financial relief package for families affected by the recent floods, with ₹112 crore already transferred through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mechanism to 75,000 severely affected families in the first phase, BJP Assam spokesperson Mita Nath Bora said on Tuesday.

Each eligible family has received ₹15,000 as interim assistance to help purchase essential household items and begin rebuilding their lives.

The first phase covers the worst-affected districts of Sivasagar, Charaideo, Jorhat and Golaghat, while another 10,000 eligible families will be included after verification.

The government has also announced ₹5 lakh as special financial assistance to the next of kin of a person who died following the breach of the HDP embankment in the Demow Assembly constituency.

According to Bora, the government has approved ₹25,000 for eligible Orunodoi beneficiaries in



the four worst-affected districts to support repairs to damaged houses and replacement of essential household belongings.

To ensure continuity of education, the State has sanctioned ₹7.61 crore from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund to Samagra Shiksha Assam for providing school uniforms to students affected by the floods.

Additional State assistance has also been announced under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana to

help eligible households restore electricity through rooftop solar systems.

The government has further announced a loan repayment relief package, including a moratorium for eligible borrowers, and has initiated door-to-door assessments of damaged houses, agricultural land, livestock and public infrastructure.

Special rehabilitation and livelihood restoration measures will also be undertaken for villages severely affected by floods and ero-

sion.

Bora said the government had expressed gratitude to individuals, organisations, corporate houses and volunteers who contributed to the relief efforts.

Major contributions to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund include ₹21 crore from the Reliance Foundation, ₹16 crore from BJP workers across Assam, ₹11 crore from the Adani Group, ₹5 crore from the Jindal Group, ₹3 crore from Assam Gas Company Ltd, and donations from several institutions, business groups and individuals.

She also said BJP national president and Union Minister JP Nadra is scheduled to arrive in Dibrugarh on Tuesday and will tour flood-affected districts from Wednesday to review relief and rehabilitation measures and interact with affected families.

The spokesperson said Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has assured that no flood-affected family will be left behind and that the government's response will focus on long-term rehabilitation, livelihood restoration, flood management and disaster preparedness.

BTC Chief chairs first joint meeting of vigilance, monitoring committees

Mohilary stresses transparency, accountability and stronger oversight of development projects

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Aug 4: BTC Chief Hagrama Mohilary on Tuesday chaired the first joint meeting of the newly constituted Bodoland Vigilance Committee (BVC) and Bodoland Monitoring Committee (BMC) at the BTC Secretariat in Kokrajhar, describing the two bodies as key instruments for strengthening transparency, accountability and participatory governance in the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC).

The meeting was attended by former MLAs and former MCLAs serving as committee members, sitting MCLAs, Executive Member Mrityunjay Narzary, Additional Principal Secretary Pranjit Wary, senior BTC officials and members of the two committees.

Addressing the meeting, Mohilary said the committees had been constituted to ensure transparency, quality assurance and institutional oversight in the implementation of development projects and welfare schemes under various Central and State government programmes.

He said the objective was to ensure the judicious utilisation of public funds and timely delivery of benefits to genuine beneficiaries.



The BTC Chief said the committees would serve as a bridge between the administration and the public by independently monitoring developmental works and providing regular feedback from the grassroots.

He emphasised that all districts and subdivisions under the BTC would be monitored impartially to ensure balanced and equitable development across the region.

Members discussed the mandate, powers and responsibilities of the committees, with emphasis on regular field inspections, systematic re-

porting and close coordination with the administration to improve the quality and implementation of development works.

Members of both committees welcomed the initiative, describing it as a significant step towards reinforcing transparency, accountability and good governance in the BTC administration.

They expressed confidence that the committees would help safeguard public interest while ensuring effective implementation of government schemes and development programmes.

KAAC adopts ₹1,136.35-crore budget for 2026-27

Two-day budget session concludes with discussion on inherent subjects

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 4: The Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) on Tuesday adopted a ₹1,136.35-crore budget for the 2026-27 financial year, bringing its two-day budget session to a close.

The budget for the Council's inherent subjects, tabled on Monday by Chief Executive Member (CEM) Dr Tuliram Ronghang, was discussed in detail during the concluding day of the session.

Participating in the discussion, Executive Members D. Uphing Maslai, Madhurya Dhekial Phukon, Tilotoma Hasnu and Prabhat Chandra Taro, along with MAC Johnny Timung, said the budget reflected the aspirations of

the people of Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong. They appreciated the leadership of Dr Ronghang in preparing the budget.

Replying to the discussion, Dr Ronghang thanked the members for their suggestions and cooperation. He said the Council had prepared special development schemes after holding interactive meetings in all 26 constituencies to identify local issues and ensure balanced development across both hill districts.

During the morning session, the CEM presented the demands for grants relating to the Council's inherent subjects, following which the House considered and passed the ₹1,136.35-crore budget for the 2026-27 financial year.

Awareness rally marks World Breastfeeding Week in Laharighat

HT Correspondent

MORIGAON, Aug 4: As part of the observance of World Breastfeeding Week, the Laharighat ICDS Project organised an awareness rally at Barchala on Tuesday to promote the importance of breastfeeding and maternal and child health.

The rally was attended by CDPO Jitu Deka, ICDS supervisors, members of the Poshan team, the Panchayat president, teachers, ward members, health workers, SLRM members, guardians, and Anganwadi workers and helpers.

A convergence meeting involving officials of various line departments was also held on the occasion. Participants discussed the significance of World Breastfeeding Week and the need to strengthen awareness on breastfeeding practices for improving maternal and child health.

Lakshman Prasad Acharya urges public to participate in digital census exercise

Governor completes self-enumeration for Census 2027



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 4: Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya on Tuesday completed his Self Enumeration for Census 2027 through the online Self Enumeration Portal at Lok Bhavan and appealed to the people of the State to actively participate in the country's first fully digital Census.

Describing the self-enumeration process as simple, secure, transparent and user-friendly, the Governor

said the online facility enables citizens to fulfil their national responsibility conveniently while contributing to the creation of an accurate and reliable national database.

Highlighting the importance of the Census, Acharya said it serves as the foundation for effective planning, good governance and equitable delivery of public services.

He noted that accurate Census data is crucial for the formulation of welfare schemes, balanced allocation of resources and evidence-based development policies.

The Governor urged all eligible residents of Assam to complete self-enumeration for themselves and their family members by August 16 and extend full cooperation to enumerators during the house-to-house enumeration scheduled from August 17 to September 15 by providing accurate information.

He also appealed to citizens to encourage their family members, friends, neighbours and colleagues to participate in the exercise, stating that widespread public participation would help ensure a comprehensive, accurate and error-free Census.

Director-cum-Chief Principal Census Officer Biswajit Pegu and other officials were present on the occasion.

Media bodies contribute ₹10,000 to CMRF for flood relief

HT Correspondent

BOKAJAN, Aug 4: The Greater Khakhati Press Club, in association with Public TV Assam, on Tuesday contributed ₹10,000 to the Assam Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) to support relief and rehabilitation efforts for flood-affected people in Sivasagar district.

The amount was formally transferred to the relief fund to assist the State government's ongoing emergency response in the flood-ravaged region.

Expressing concern over the plight of the affected families, representatives of the two media organisations said the contribution was a gesture of solidarity with people facing hardship due to the recent floods.

"This is a modest contribution on our part to stand with our brothers and sisters in Sivasagar during this challenging period. We hope it supports the ongoing relief efforts and encourages others to come forward to help the affected communities," a spokesperson for the Press Club said.

Large parts of Upper Assam, including Sivasagar district, have been severely affected by recent monsoon floods, prompting relief and rehabilitation efforts by government agencies, voluntary organisations and civil society groups.

Scientific sericulture practices promoted at Kokrajhar awareness programme

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Aug 4: The Central Silk Board (CSB) organised an awareness programme on "Technological Interventions in Muga & Eri Rearing" under Mera Resham Mera Abhimaan (MRMA) 2.0 at the 7th APBN Headquarters, Charaikhola, to promote scientific sericulture practices and sustainable livelihoods.

The programme was attended by BTC Executive Member (Sericulture) Kameswar Roy as chief guest, Kokrajhar Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Chakravarty as guest of honour, 7th APBN Commandant Supriya Das, MESSO Director Dr Maheswari M, and Director of Sericulture Bhanulata Musahari, among others.

Addressing the gathering, Roy stressed the need for coordinated efforts among the Central Silk Board, the Department of Sericulture, farmers and other stakeholders to

establish BTC as a major sericulture hub.

Chakravarty said the district administration aims to develop BTC into a model sericulture and handloom hub to strengthen the rural economy through sustainable livelihood opportunities.

The speakers emphasised the adoption of scientific technologies, improved rearing practices and stronger institutional partnerships to enhance productivity in Muga and Eri sericulture.

Officials also highlighted the scope for expanding sericulture activities to increase production and improve farmers' incomes.

During the technical session, Dr Suraksha Chanotra, Scientist-B, CSB, demonstrated improved Eri silkworm breeds, scientific host-plant management, hygiene protocols and other modern practices for increasing cocoon yield. Extension Officer Kalpojita Basumatary

briefed farmers on recommended practices and the technical support available under various government programmes.

The programme, attended by 78 Muga and Eri farmers along with officials of the CSB and the Department of Sericulture, also witnessed the release of a trilingual technical booklet on technological interventions in Muga and Eri sericulture.

A key outcome of the programme was the proposal to establish a farmer-centric Muga revival model through the revival of host-plant plantations within the 7th APBN campus, with technical support from the CSB and the Department of Sericulture, institutional support from the district administration and logistical support from the APBN.

The initiative aims to promote scientific sericulture practices and strengthen livelihood opportunities in the region.

Kalong-Kapili distributes relief to 500 flood-hit families in Sivasagar

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Aug 4: The Kalong-Kapili organisation, along with its volunteers and well-wishers, distributed relief materials to 500 flood-affected families in the remote villages of Loraputa and Senimora in Sivasagar district, extending humanitarian assistance to people affected by the recent floods.

The recent flooding severely disrupted livelihoods and left many families without access to basic necessities.

In response, the organisation distributed relief kits containing essential food and hygiene items to support the affected families.

Each kit included biscuits, flattened

rice (chira), instant noodles, oral rehydration salts (ORS), soup packets, detergent and other essential items to meet immediate nutritional and hygiene needs.

Apart from distributing relief materials, volunteers also interacted with the affected families, expressing solidarity and support as they begin rebuilding their lives after the disaster.

In a press statement, Kalong-Kapili thanked its volunteers, donors and partner organisations for supporting the relief initiative and reaffirmed its commitment to assisting vulnerable communities and contributing to their long-term recovery.

NFR launches GoLukBuk digital travel kiosks at Guwahati station

New platform offers integrated travel services while boosting non-fare revenue

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 4: Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) on Tuesday launched the GoLukBuk Digital Travel Assistance Kiosk Network at Guwahati Railway Station, marking the first such initiative in the zone to enhance passenger convenience through digital technology.

The kiosks were inaugurated by NFR General Manager Chetan Kumar Shrivastava in the presence of Principal Chief Commercial Manager Niraj Sahay and other senior railway officials.

The project has been introduced under the New Innovative Non-Fare Revenue Ideas Scheme (NINFRIS).

NFR said the digital kiosks provide passengers with a single platform to compare and book a range of travel-related services, including hotel accommodation, cab rentals, food delivery, sleeping pods, meeting pods and other travel assistance services.

Similar kiosks will also be installed at Kamakhya Railway Station.

The kiosks are equipped with high-resolution digital display screens and LED



hologram fan technology, creating a Digital Out-of-Home (DOOH) advertising platform for businesses.

The railway also plans to integrate quick commerce and additional passenger services in the near future.

Implemented initially for a one-year licence period, extendable based on performance, the project aims to improve

passenger experience while generating sustainable non-fare revenue through technology-driven services.

NFR said the launch of GoLukBuk reflects its commitment to digital innovation and passenger-centric services, with the initiative expected to serve as a model for similar projects at railway stations across the country.

NFR diverts, cancels trains due to flooding at Simaluguri

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 4: Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has announced further cancellations, diversions and partial cancellations of train services due to disruption caused by heavy rainfall and flooding at Simaluguri and adjoining areas in Sivasagar district under the Tinsukia Division.

According to an official release, several long-distance trains, including the Dibrugarh-New Delhi Rajdhani Express (12423/12424) and Dibrugarh-New Delhi Rajdhani Express (20503/20504), will be diverted via Dibrugarh-North Lakhimpur-Rangapara North-Rangiya-Guwahati-New Bongaigaon for their respective journeys on August 4 and 5.

The Avadh Assam Express (15909/15910), Kamrup Express (15946/15960 and 15959) and Vivek Express (22504) will also operate on diverted routes via North Lakhimpur and Rangapara North.

The Nagaland Express (15669/15670) has been partially cancelled.

Marwari community spearheads flood relief across Upper Assam

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 4: The Purvottar Pradesh Marwari Sammelan (PPMS) and its network of branches have intensified relief and rehabilitation efforts in the flood-ravaged districts of Jorhat, Sivasagar and Charaideo, providing humanitarian assistance to thousands of affected families.

According to a statement, volunteers and office-bearers of the Amguri, Teok, Sivasagar, Nazira-Geleky, Simaluguri and Sonari branches have been working in co-ordination with the district administration, Civil Defence and local organisations since the onset of the floods.

Their activities include rescue operations, running relief camps and distributing food, drinking water, clothing, bedding, medicines and other essential supplies. The Sivasagar branch has set up relief camps providing shelter and meals to displaced families, while the Nazira-Geleky branch has accommodated flood victims in members' homes and extended care to cattle stranded in a flood-affected gaushala.

Branches at Simaluguri, Teok and Sonari have been delivering relief materials to re-

mote inundated villages in coordination with the local administration. The relief campaign has also received support from Marwari organisations across Assam, with branches from Moranhat, Demow, Borpathar, Guwahati and other places contributing food grains, drinking water, blankets, bedding, hygiene kits and essential supplies for women and children.

Many of the relief materials are being transported by boats to inaccessible villages. Led by PPMS State President Kailash Kabra, the organisation's leadership has remained in constant touch with flood-hit areas.

State General Secretary Ramesh Kumar Chandak and other office-bearers have visited affected districts to assess the situation, interact with victims and coordinate relief measures.

The Sammelan has also mobilised financial assistance through State and national relief funds to strengthen ongoing operations and has announced an interest-free financial assistance programme for community members whose businesses and livelihoods have been affected by the floods.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Never interrupt someone doing what you said couldn't be done.- Amelia Earhart

Changing political scene in India

The political scene in India is changing quickly, and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is facing a key moment in its history. It needs to think about how to engage Gen Z. The ruling Modi government struggled with Gen Z, which launched an unexpected agitation that took the government by surprise. This group has evolved due to economic and political events. The new Anti-Leak Bill aims to improve transparency in government dealings. Generation Z is described as the "forgotten generation" or the "middle child" between the larger Baby Boomer and Millennial cohorts. A distinct sense of independence, pragmatism, and scepticism toward established institutions characterises this generation. Generation Z has experienced significant national and global events, including economic recessions, the emergence of the internet, and critical political transformations. Many individuals within this cohort encountered challenges in the job market during the recent years and were affected by the implications of liberalisation policies, which presented both opportunities and uncertainties. This generation values authenticity and practicality, focusing on real benefits rather than empty promises. For Generation Z, this means they will carefully examine how the Anti-Leak Bill affects real life. To win their support, it is important to clearly explain what the bill aims to do and how it protects people.

Parliament recently passed the Anti-Leak Bill to stop information leaks that could threaten national security and the public's safety. This bill has received mixed reviews. It raises important questions about how to balance national security with individual freedoms. Critics believe that while protecting sensitive information is important, the bill could be misused. They worry it might undermine freedoms like free speech and limit the space for different viewpoints. It's also worth noting that the Anti-Leak Bill was created to prevent information leak in examinations. These concerns are very important to Generation Z, who value accountability and transparency in government. Many Gen Z students see this legislation as a repeat of past government actions, where laws meant for security were used to silence dissent. They are understandably cautious and sceptical.

To win back Generation Z, the BJP needs a clear strategy. This strategy should do more than promote policies or highlight guaranteed outcomes. Several additional approaches could help achieve this goal. Reassuring Generation Z about the importance of individual rights is paramount. The BJP should explain how the Anti-Leak Bill supports democratic values. They need to show the safeguards in place, mention that there will be independent oversight, and highlight that there are ways for people to express their concerns. This can help bridge the trust gap with this sceptical demographic. The BJP can use digital platforms for outreach, policy discussions, and educational campaigns. By analysing data and using social media insights, the party can focus its messages on the issues that matter most to Gen Z.

B'desh is a clear winner in US- China diplomatic battle over its loyalty

By: Nitya Chakraborty

Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman emerged as a clear winner at the end of his crucial talks with the US envoy for South Asia Sergio Gor last week as he was able to extract maximum concessions from the US team on big investments in his country to help the struggling economy as also widening the areas of bilateral trade suiting the immediate interests of Bangladesh.

Gor was the first senior-most official of the US to visit Dhaka during the tenure of Tarique Rahman. He visited Dhaka in the context of the expanding Chinese footprint in all sectors of the Bangladesh economy, apart from defence and maritime facilities. It was expected that the Chinese influence in Bangladesh naval facilities in the Bay of Bengal would come up in a big way. But if the Bangladesh experts are to be believed, the issue did not get prominence finally. Gor only explained the US position on the security aspects in Bay of Bengal and nothing more.

That way Tarique Rahman sowed his maturity as the PM and focused primarily on economic cooperation between Dhaka and Washington. The US envoy reciprocated by conveying US commitment to deepen strategic and economic ties and continued support to resolve the Rohingya crisis. The US embassy in Dhaka said in statement after the conclusion of Gor's visit from July 30 to August 1 that the visit highlighted the breadth and depth of the US-Bangladesh relationship. Gor responded to Bangladesh PM's emphasis on larger investments in Bangladesh, particularly in soyabean, cotton, information technology and wheat mentioning that such US investments will help building a stronger and more competitive supply chain. The US side said that the US investors are deeply interested in Bangladesh and the coming meeting of the US, India Business Council in Dhaka will be formulating some measures for new investments. Further, steps will be taken to hold a separate US investors summit in Bangladesh. Both sides also discussed expanding cooperation through the US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), with Gor assuring Bangladesh that Washington would work positively for US engagements through the DFC, formed during the Trump presidency in 2019.

An analysis of what US Embassy said in its statement after the visit as also what was said by the Bangladesh government in official briefings, it seems that the issue of China-Bangladesh-Myanmar corridor or Chinese involvement in the Bay of Bengal facilities did not receive priority. This was the first visit of the US envoy after the new regime took over in February this year. China has been active from the very beginning. PM Tarique Rahman's three day visit to China in June this year and his meeting with the Chinese President Xi Jinping set the base of a strategic relationship which is beneficial to the economy of Bangladesh. So the US side is moving cautiously. The US has started the process of bridging the diplomatic gap in Dhaka vis a vis China by focusing on larger US investments which Bangladesh is looking for desperately. It is significant that Sergio Gor had a meeting with the Indian High Commissioner Dinesh Trivedi before his meeting with the Bangladesh PM. They must have discussed some of the common concerns about China's increasing footprint in the security arena of Bangladesh. Indian envoy can not officially express these concerns. Trivedi must have communicated those to Sergio Gor who is also US ambassador based in New Delhi. Tarique's regime has attained stability. So both US and India have to talk to Bangladesh on equal footing. Indian foreign ministry officials are conversant with the carrot and stick policy of China in diplomacy.

In Bangladesh, following the PM's visit to Beijing in June this year, agreements have been signed for the speeding up of Mongla port as well as expansion of Chinese economic and industrial zone in Chittagong. Bangladesh has every right to seek Chinese investment in this sea side, but Indian security experts are worried that the Chinese are having control over maritime facilities. If there is change in geopolitics, China can use that against India. The USA is equally concerned at the expansion of Chinese footprint in the Bay of Bengal, but at the moment, the US is lying low. (IPA Service)

Government schemes and the public

At present, there is certainly a need for a profound and objective analysis of the sweeping impact that government schemes have had on the social fabric of Assam. The relationship between the government and the common people is no longer confined to mere principles and ideals; rather, it has transformed into a transactional relationship. When the government prioritizes directly fulfilling the personal needs of the citizenry, a novel mindset is engendered within society. This mentality renders the populace overly dependent on the government and gradually blunts their innate propensity to accomplish things independently. Instead of the permanent infrastructure required for the development of the state, schemes that create individual beneficiaries have now gained precedence. Consequently, economic division has become starkly apparent within society: on one side exists a vast multitude of people who eke out a living relying on government assistance, while on the other side are those individuals who continuously pay taxes to fill the government treasury yet receive no commensurate benefits in return. This imbalance may sow the seeds of future social instability. Although poverty can be temporarily alleviated through government schemes, permanent economic self-reliance is not attainable via this route. This system has induced a form of mental lethargy among the public, where people wait for what the government will dispense next instead of engaging in labor. In an agrarian state like Assam, the repercussions of this have been devastating, as the value and necessity of labor are steadily declining. Productive thinking among the populace has been superseded by consumerist thinking.

It has been observed that the excessive proliferation of government schemes has resulted in an acute shortage of labor in agriculture and allied sectors. When an able-bodied person in a rural area receives monthly cash and food items at nominal prices or entirely free of charge from the government without performing any labor, the inclination to engage in rigorous physical work completely vanishes within them. This has precipitated a situation where finding laborers to cultivate fields or assist in local construction work has become nearly impossible. Such a scenario exerts an adverse effect on the state's agricultural production, forcing us to rely increasingly on other states even for basic food commodities. The objective of government schemes ought to have been to render people work-oriented, but the current framework has only made them lazier and more dependent. A person who could have earned a hundred rupees through a day of toil now considers it more profitable to sit at home supported by government grants. Consequently, the work culture of society is slowly eroding. Instead of developing their skills, the youth are en-

grossed in the race to have their names registered in official rolls and beneficiary lists. In such an environment, how the future generation of the state will forge a robust economy remains a major question. The escalating tendency to depend on others for any task in society is steadily hollowing out our economic foundation. Continuously distributing resources without generation inevitably leads to an empty government treasury. Another crucial aspect of government schemes is their political motive. Presently, any welfare scheme is utilized as a convenient stepping stone to cross electoral hurdles. Political parties attach greater importance to measures that temporarily appease the public rather than formulating long-term policies or laying the foundations for the state's economic development. This breeds a form of mental servitude among the citizens. People begin to regard minor grants provided by the government as immense windfalls and, in exchange, pledge their voting rights securely to that party. This degrades the true character of democracy. When the citizenry expresses gratitude for government aid instead of holding the government accountable for its actions, the administration finds an opportunity to exhibit laxity in fulfilling its duties. Major problems such as dilapidated roads, declining educational standards, or the failure of healthcare services are eclipsed by the glitz of government handouts. The public fails to realize that the funds or commodities bestowed upon them are actually a portion of the money collected from them as taxes—not the personal property of any government or political party. Such an environment gives birth merely to dependent voters rather than conscious citizens. This political strategy has impeded the trajectory of the state's intellectual and social progress. A society where people seek government handouts instead of their rights can never truly develop.

A review of government schemes within the education and health sectors in contemporary Assam reveals numerous flaws. The material goods distributed by the government in the name of encouraging students are questionable regarding how much positive change they bring to the academic sphere. Educational standards cannot be elevated merely by distributing bicycles or scooters without resolving fundamental problems such as the lack of proper infrastructure in schools, the absence of adequate teachers, and the dearth of modern pedagogical methods. While these schemes augment the government's popularity for a brief period, they fail in their long-term objectives. Providing a meritorious student with a favorable environment for higher education and assuring future employment is far more essential than merely presenting them with a scooter. Yet, the current system prioritizes only commodity-centric benefits. The healthcare sector paints an identical picture. Government insurance schemes



have predominantly benefited private hospitals because the condition of state-run hospitals remains unimproved. The general public is compelled to rush to private hospitals in search of superior medical treatment, and the funds provided by government insurance cover only a fraction of those expenses. Had government hospitals been rendered fully modern and well-equipped, the populace would not have been forced to rely upon such insurance schemes. Rather than enclosing foundational sectors like education and health within the purview of temporary schemes, a robust structural policy transformation is required. Providing quality services rather than distributing goods should be the primary duty of the government. From an economic perspective, a substantial portion of the funds expended on government schemes originates from borrowed capital. The massive loans contracted by the Government of Assam to sustain these beneficiary schemes will evolve into an unbearable burden on the state's exchequer in the days to come. Borrowing for developmental work is natural, but if borrowed funds are expended solely on distributive measures yielding no productive revenue, the state will march toward economic bankruptcy. Future generations will forfeit a significant portion of their earnings merely servicing the interest on this debt.

The benefits enjoyed by the contemporary public will eventually exact a heavy toll on society. Such squandering of public funds has obstructed the state's industrialization and enterprise development. Funds that could have been utilized to establish new industries or generate employment have instead been disbursed as cash, creating no permanent assets. Furthermore, the middle class has suffered the most under this system. Despite paying taxes, they receive neither government assistance nor improved public services. Spiraling market prices have rendered their daily lives arduous, yet governmental attention remains fixated exclusively on beneficiaries below the poverty line. This has bred deep resentment within society, serving as an impediment to healthy

social development.

Technical and administrative flaws in the execution of government schemes also inconvenience the common citizen. Although funds are now transferred via digital channels, the process of selecting appropriate beneficiaries for schemes remains far from transparent. In rural areas, individuals patronized by influential figures or party leaders reap the majority of the benefits. Truly needy individuals are forced to wander from office to office, while their applications languish in some neglected corner. This brokerage culture has not been eradicated; rather, its form has merely changed. The statistics touted by the government regarding its successes diverge sharply from reality. In many instances, the same individual avails benefits from multiple schemes, while another receives nothing from even a single one. This disparity generates friction and animosity within society. A competition has erupted among the public to see who can secure government handouts first, thereby destroying social solidarity. Instead of raising their collective voices to seek solutions to their problems, people are increasingly focusing on personal gains. The administration itself conducts no proper scientific surveys regarding the outcomes of these schemes or their genuine impact on society. Merely citing how many thousands of crores of rupees have been distributed is utilized as the benchmark of development.

In a resource-rich state like Assam, the objective of government schemes ought to have been the optimal utilization of resources and the development of human capital. Unfortunately, we have busied ourselves with creating mere consumers and beneficiaries. The creative energy and industrious mindset inherent in the public have been caged within the labyrinth of government schemes. When an individual realizes that they can get by comfortably without working or by keeping the government appeased, they lose interest in any new endeavors. This represents a colossal waste of our society's intellectual and labor force. In the contemporary context, this relationship between government

schemes and the common public is driving society toward a catastrophic defeat. It is imperative that the citizens become conscious of their rights and responsibilities. The facilities provided by the government are not gifts; rather, they are the rightful assets of the citizenry. Only by comprehending this truth can the public compel the government to execute its duties correctly. Otherwise, we shall remain merely a dependent class incapable of ever standing on our own feet. For a healthy and robust society, government schemes should not serve as mediums of dependency, but rather as stepping stones toward self-reliance. To achieve this, a transformation in the mindset of both the government and the general public is indispensable.

Achieving societal welfare through government schemes should be the primary goal of any administration, but evaluating whether that welfare is permanent or temporary is the task of a conscious society. The prevailing scheme culture in Assam could prove catastrophic for the state's future. The public must understand that government schemes cannot be the sole anchor for survival. They should merely serve as temporary assistance during times of distress. Yet, in contemporary society, they have transformed into a primary livelihood. This notion has lowered the standards of our society. For the state's economic development, we do not require passive beneficiaries; we require skilled and hardworking human capital. Had government funds been judiciously deployed to create employment opportunities, thousands of youths would not have been compelled to migrate outside the state for jobs. It is a misfortune that despite having the capacity to produce on our own soil, society has lapsed into stagnation under the spell of government schemes. Consequently, reviewing government policies has become urgent so that a robust work culture can be resurrected. The public must demand opportunities and rights rather than handouts. Only then can Assam's society and economy progress in the right direction. Otherwise, we shall remain branded merely as a crippled society reliant entirely on government aid.

Decline in undergraduate Enrollment in India: Causes and Impact

By: Lalit Nath

In Indian society, pursuing a traditional undergraduate degree immediately after higher secondary school has long been a deeply ingrained norm. Every academic year, lakhs of young students enter colleges and universities with high hopes for a promising future. However, breaking from this long-standing trend, the recently released All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2023-24 report by the Union Ministry of Education highlights a critical reality that demands national attention. For the first time since the inception of the AISHE survey in 2011, India has recorded a consecutive decline in undergraduate enrolment.

At first glance, the overall picture of higher education appears encouraging. Total enrolment in higher education increased from 4.46 crore in 2022-23 to 4.50 crore in 2023-24, reflecting an impressive growth of approximately 31.5% compared to 2014-15 (3.42 crore). Similarly, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) rose from 29.5% to 30%, while female enrolment grew by 42.2% over previous figures. However, beneath this overall aggregate growth lies a worrisome trend: a sharp decline in core undergraduate admissions. Given that undergraduate students constitute nearly 77% of the total higher education population in the country, a drop of nearly 93,000 students in this primary segment is no minor anomaly. Rather, it serves as a clear indication of the younger generation's growing disillusionment with traditional university education and degree-centric systems. Several socio-economic factors underpin this shift.

First, regarding gender dynamics, the report indicates a 2.2% drop in male undergraduate enrolment, whereas female enrolment grew by 1.8%. Female enrolment crossing the one-crore mark in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) courses is undoubtedly a commendable milestone. Con-

versely, the official report provides no explicit reasons for why male students are increasingly turning away from traditional undergraduate studies. This contrast suggests that male students face heightened pressure to generate early income, nudging them into immediate labor markets or informal gigs rather than multi-year academic commitments.

Second, a conventional BA, BSc, or BCom degree no longer guarantees stable employment. Instead of spending three to four years of time and financial resources on a general degree, youth are increasingly gravitating toward technical skills, vocational courses, or diplomas aligned directly with market demand. Furthermore, the rapid expansion of technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) has led employers to prioritise digital proficiency, communication skills and practical expertise over paper certificates. Consequently, many young individuals prefer professional certifications, coding bootcamps, short-term data analytics modules, or online skill development platforms over conventional university degrees. In a modern economy driven by functional capability, modern recruiters are continuously evaluating what a candidate can execute practically rather than assessing the institutional prestige stamped on a paper parchment.

Third, a stabilising birth rate compared to the past has led to a plateau in the college-going demographic. On the other hand, rising educational expenses coupled with uncertain job prospects have deeply concerned middle- and low-income families. Tuition fees, housing overheads and study materials continue to climb, forcing households to weigh the return on investment (ROI) of higher education far more rigorously than past generations did. To support their families financially, young people find entering the workforce early a far more practical choice. Additionally, while the National Education Policy (NEP 2020) advocates for multiple entry/exit options and vocational training, its practical execution in many

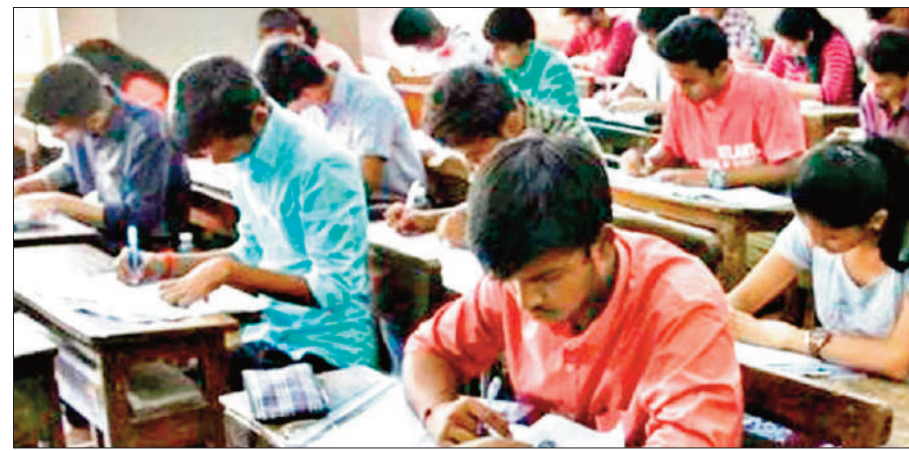
colleges and universities remains sluggish. Structural delays in updating syllabi, inadequate infrastructure and faculty shortages further dilute the perceived benefits of staying enrolled for three or four years.

The impact of this national trend is clearly evident in Assam as well. Although the number of colleges and universities in Assam has grown significantly in recent years, their true success hinges on preparing students with job-ready skills. Facing unemployment after completing general undergraduate degrees, thousands of students in Assam now prefer joining ITIs, polytechnics, or other technical institutes right after matriculation or higher secondary education. Financial pressures in rural areas force many male students to engage early in micro-businesses or income-generating pursuits. In many sub-divisions across Assam, young scholars realise that a specialised technical diploma offers far faster pathways to financial independence than a standard liberal arts degree. Therefore, rather than merely increasing the number of institutions, Assam's education system must urgently integrate career guidance, industry linkages, apprenticeship models and skill-based education into its framework.

This persistent decline in undergraduate enrolment carries serious implications, notably the risk of vacant seats in rural colleges. Many institutions are confronting existential challenges, which could ripple through the economics of the education sector and affect the livelihood of faculty and staff. When seat occupancy tumbles, state funding and administrative grants often face cutbacks, threatening the overall quality of campus infrastructure and faculty retention. To retain students, policymakers must overhaul existing curricula to align them with industry demands and employment needs. India aims to become a developed nation by 2047. Achieving this goal requires a workforce empowered with 21st-century knowledge and skills, not just an increase in degree holders. Therefore, viewing this first-ever drop in undergraduate enrolment as merely a discouraging metric would be a mistake—it is a timely wake-up call. If universities and education departments heed this signal to shift focus from degree-centric models to student- and employment-oriented learning, they can lay the groundwork for a world-class education system.

tion into its framework.

This persistent decline in undergraduate enrolment carries serious implications, notably the risk of vacant seats in rural colleges. Many institutions are confronting existential challenges, which could ripple through the economics of the education sector and affect the livelihood of faculty and staff. When seat occupancy tumbles, state funding and administrative grants often face cutbacks, threatening the overall quality of campus infrastructure and faculty retention. To retain students, policymakers must overhaul existing curricula to align them with industry demands and employment needs. India aims to become a developed nation by 2047. Achieving this goal requires a workforce empowered with 21st-century knowledge and skills, not just an increase in degree holders. Therefore, viewing this first-ever drop in undergraduate enrolment as merely a discouraging metric would be a mistake—it is a timely wake-up call. If universities and education departments heed this signal to shift focus from degree-centric models to student- and employment-oriented learning, they can lay the groundwork for a world-class education system.



OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REVENUE OFFICER
DIPHU REVENUE CIRCLE

KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL, DIPHU

NO. KAAC/ARO/RLA/Notification/2025/103

Dated: 04/08/2026

NOTIFICATION

Whereas, by the Notification No. KAAC/ARO/Railway Land Acquisition/1208 dated 22/05/2026 and Corrigendum Notification No. KAAC/ARO/Railway Land Acquisition/1227 dated 05/06/2026, published under Section 3A of the National Highways Act, 1956, the land specified in the Schedule appended thereto was notified for acquisition of land for the public purpose, namely, construction of the Railway Doubling Project from Nirmal Tea Estate to Matipul Block No. 2 in the district of Karbi Anglong, Assam.

And whereas, the substance of the said notification has been published in 2(Two) newspapers namely, "The Hills Times and Samphri Kimi" both on dated 23/05/2026 and 06/06/2026.

And whereas, the period prescribed for filing objections under Section 3C of the said Act has expired, and all objections received, if any, have been duly considered and disposed of by the Land Acquisition Officer.

Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of Section 3D of the National Highways Act, 1956, the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, being the Competent Authority, hereby declares that the lands described in the Schedule below are acquired for the aforesaid public purpose.

On publication of this Declaration in the Official Gazette, the land specified in the Schedule shall vest absolutely in the Central Government free from all encumbrances in accordance with sub-section (2) of Section 3D of the National Highways Act, 1956.

SCHEDULE

Brief description of land to be acquired with or without structures falling under Railway Doubling Project covering a stretch of 4.47 KM from Nirmal T.E to Matipul Block No.2 (Karbi Anglong Autounous Council, Department of Revenue, Diphu) in the district of Karbi Anglong, Assam.

Village: Nirmal T.E Mouza: Borjan Circle: Diphu Dist: Karbi Anglong					
Sl. No	Dag No/Patta No	Type of Land	Class of Land	Area acquired (in Hectre)	Name of Land Owner
1	42-PP-1	Private	Commercial	0.0053	Smt. Animitra Ghatak Smt. Devashree Mukherjee Ghatak Smt. Chandrayani Bholani Ghatak D/o Lt. Amal Kr. Ghatak
2	43-PP-1	Private	Commercial	0.0066	Smt. Animitra Ghatak Smt. Devashree Mukherjee Ghatak Smt. Chandrayani Bholani Ghatak D/o Lt. Amal Kr. Ghatak
3	44-PP-1	Private	Commercial	0.0022	Smt. Animitra Ghatak Smt. Devashree Mukherjee Ghatak Smt. Chandrayani Bholani Ghatak D/o Lt. Amal Kr. Ghatak
4	4-Nil	Govt Land	NH-29	0.0669	Road
Village: Lahorijan T.E Mouza: Borjan Circle: Diphu Dist: Karbi Anglong					
Sl. No	Dag No/Patta No	Type of Land	Class of Land	Area acquired (in Hectre)	Name of Land Owner
5	25-PP-3	Private	Tea	0.3239	Smt. Animitra Ghatak Smt. Devashree Mukherjee Ghatak Smt. Chandrayani Bholani Ghatak D/o Lt. Amal Kr. Ghatak
6	24-Nil	Private	Bari	0.4538	Lahorijan T.E
7	21-Nil	Govt Land	Road	0.0455	Tea Estate Road
8	17-Nil	Private	Fishery	0.8969	Lahorijan T.E
9	18-AP-1	Private	Bari	0.0267	Smt. Animitra Ghatak Smt. Devashree Mukherjee Ghatak Smt. Chandrayani Bholani Ghatak D/o Lt. Amal Kr. Ghatak
10	19-AP-1	Private	Bari	0.1165	Smt. Animitra Ghatak Smt. Devashree Mukherjee Ghatak
11	16-AP-1	Private	Commercial	0.5622	Smt. Chandrayani Bholani Ghatak D/o Lt. Amal Kr. Ghatak Smt. Animitra Ghatak Smt. Devashree Mukherjee Ghatak Smt. Chandrayani Bholani Ghatak D/o Lt. Amal Kr. Ghatak
12	61-PP-3	Private	Bari	0.0468	Smt. Animitra Ghatak Smt. Devashree Mukherjee Ghatak Smt. Chandrayani Bholani Ghatak D/o Lt. Amal Kr. Ghatak
13	14-AP-1	Private	Bari	0.4404	Smt. Animitra Ghatak Smt. Devashree Mukherjee Ghatak Smt. Chandrayani Bholani Ghatak D/o Lt. Amal Kr. Ghatak
14	13-PP-3	Private	Fishery	0.5274	Smt. Animitra Ghatak Smt. Devashree Mukherjee Ghatak Smt. Chandrayani Bholani Ghatak D/o Lt. Amal Kr. Ghatak
15	15-PP-3	Private	Fishery	1.2008	Smt. Animitra Ghatak Smt. Devashree Mukherjee Ghatak Smt. Chandrayani Bholani Ghatak D/o Lt. Amal Kr. Ghatak
16	62-PP-3	Private	Tea	0.2717	Smt. Animitra Ghatak Smt. Devashree Mukherjee Ghatak Smt. Chandrayani Bholani Ghatak D/o Lt. Amal Kr. Ghatak
17	10-PP-3	Private	Fishery	0.0147	Smt. Animitra Ghatak Smt. Devashree Mukherjee Ghatak Smt. Chandrayani Bholani Ghatak D/o Lt. Amal Kr. Ghatak
18	11-PP-3	Private	Sali	0.0267	Smt. Animitra Ghatak Smt. Devashree Mukherjee Ghatak Smt. Chandrayani Bholani Ghatak D/o Lt. Amal Kr. Ghatak
19	63-PP-3	Private	Tea	0.2543	Smt. Animitra Ghatak Smt. Devashree Mukherjee Ghatak Smt. Chandrayani Bholani Ghatak D/o Lt. Amal Kr. Ghatak
20	6-PP-3	Private	Sall	0.3668	Smt. Animitra Ghatak Smt. Devashree Mukherjee Ghatak Smt. Chandrayani Bholani Ghatak D/o Lt. Amal Kr. Ghatak
Village: Khatkhathi Block No.4 Mouza: Borjan Circle: Diphu Dist: Karbi Anglong					
Sl. No	Dag No/Patta No	Type of Land	Class of Land	Area acquired (in Hectre)	Name of Land Owner
21	113-PP-14	Private	Phong	0.091	Sri. Shankar Paul Sri Sambhu Paul S/o Lt. Ranjit Paul
22	125-PP-20	Private	Sali	0.257	Sri Sambhu Paul S/o Lt. Ranjit Paul
23	172-PP-08	Private	Commercial	0.106	Sri. Amos Langneeh S/o Lt. Wesley Langneeh
24	80-PP-14	Private	Sali	0.3473	Sri. Shankar Paul Sri Sambhu Paul S/o Lt. Ranjit Paul
25	31-PP-68	Private	Commercial	0.2543	Sri. Sanjay Kr. Shetty S/o Keshanlal Shetty
26	32-PP-14	Private	Jalatok	0.0669	Sri. Shankar Paul Sri Sambhu Paul S/o Lt. Ranjit Paul
27	112-PP-14	Private	Commercial	0.0937	Sri. Shankar Paul Sri Sambhu Paul S/o Lt. Ranjit Paul
28	34-PP-14	Private	Commercial	0.1311	Sri. Shankar Paul Sri Sambhu Paul S/o Lt. Ranjit Paul

29	30-PP-34	Private	Commercial	0.0642	Sri. Baban Singh S/o Laxman Singh
30	29-PP-12	Private	Commercial	0.0803	Indian Oil
31	28-PP-34	Private	Commercial	0.0414	Sri. Baban Singh S/o Laxman Singh
32	27-PP-37	Private	Commercial	0.0334	Sri. Shivji Singh S/o Tilak Raj Singh
33	26-AP-30	Private	Commercial	0.0267	Sri. Haripath Debnath S/o Khogendra Debnath
34	25-Nil	Private	Commercial	0.008	Sri. Sukmaya Thakuria S/o Chandra Bahadur Thakuria
35	24-Nil	Private	Commercial	0.009	Sri. Sinardhan Paul S/o Horendra Kr. Paul
36	23-PP-67	Private	Commercial	0.024	Sri. Bholanath Prakash S/o Gaurinath Prakash
37	22-PP-69	Private	Commercial	0.0307	Sri. Kamal Lama S/o Sambarsing Lama
38	21-PP-71	Private	Commercial	0.0495	Sri. Norsing Moli Sri. Prahlad Moli S/o Raj Dev Moli
39	20-PP-36	Private	Commercial	0.0267	Sri. Murli Singh S/o Tilak Raj Singh
40	19-PP-13	Private	Commercial	0.0455	Sri Biswanath Singh
41	18-PP-19	Private	Commercial	0.0006	Sri Daurilal Bakaliwal
42	17-PP-11	Private	Commercial	0.0013	Sri Bhagwanilal Jain S/o. Hanuman Lal Jain
43	154-AP-29	Private	Commercial	0.0004	Sri. Sadhuachandra Das. S/o Tongkeswar Das
44	109-AP-28	Private	Commercial	0.016	Sri. Hanuman Lal Yadav S/o Ganesh Yadav
45	114-PP-35	Private	Commercial	0.001	Sri. Shivji Singh S/o Tilak Raj Singh
46	4-PP-12	Private	Commercial	0.2115	Indian Oil
47	3-PP-12	Private	Commercial	0.1606	Indian Oil
48	5-Nil	Govt Land	Road	0.0929	Village Road
Village: Khatkhathi Block No.3 Mouza: Borjan Circle: Diphu Dist: Karbi Anglong					
Sl. No	Dag No/Patta No	Type of Land	Class of Land	Area acquired (in Hectre)	Name of Land Owner
49	60-PP-12	Private	Bari	0.0589	Sri. Man Paharia Sri Rajen Paharia S/o. D/o. Sanuk Paharia
50	59-PP-13	Private	Bari	0.0722	Khatkhathi Shiv Mandir
51	51-Nil	Govt Land	Road	0.0194	Village Road
52	50-PP-14	Private	Bari	0.1151	Khatkhathi Shiv Mandir
53	49-PP-15	Private	Bari	0.2247	Sri. Baliram Chaudhury S/o Nandi Chaudhury
54	20-PP-23	Private	Phong	0.0856	Sri. Keshav Singh S/o Badri Singh
55	18-PP-23	Private	Bari	0.0468	Sri. Keshav Singh S/o Badri Singh
56	17-PP-16	Private	Bari	0.0776	Smt. Prema Mijor W/o Bhupe Mijor
57	16-PP-17	Private	Bari	0.0763	Smt. Prema Mijor W/o Bhupe Mijor
58	14-PP-18	Private	Bari	0.0883	Sri. Bhuban Thapa S/o Lt. Madan Thapa
59	13-PP-19	Private	Bari	0.02	Sri Bhim Bh. Mijor S/o Lt. Ghan Bh. Mijor
60	12-PP-20	Private	Bari	0.0133	Sri Bhim Bh. Mijor S/o Lt. Ghan Bh. Mijor
61	11-PP-20	Private	Bari	0.0977	Sri Bhim Bh. Mijor S/o Lt. Ghan Bh. Mijor
62	122-PP-22	Private	Bari	0.1079	Smt. Sika Engtipi W/o Ranjit Terang
63	2-PP-21	Private	Bari	0.0852	Sri. Ram Prabesh Rajbhar S/o Sidhar Rajbhar Sri. Ajay Rajbhar S/o Sidhar Rajbhar
Village: Ghoriyal Dubi Block no.1 Mouza: Borjan Circle: Diphu Dist: Karbi Anglong					
Sl. No	Dag No/Patta No	Type of Land	Class of Land	Area acquired (in Hectre)	Name of Land Owner
64	70-PP-1	Private	Sali	0.091	Sri. Sondon Phukan S/o Sidanto Phukan Smt. Sinu Phukan W/o. Sidanto Phukan
65	73-PP-1	Private	Bari	0.21	Sri. Sondon Phukan S/o Sidanto Phukan Smt. Sinu Phukan W/o. Sidanto Phukan
66	74-Nil	Govt Land	Road	0.009	Village Road
67	71-PP-92	Private	Bari	0.016	Sri. Sarkdim Teron S/o Roben Teron Sri. Sondon Phukan S/o Sidanto Phukan
68	75-PP-1	Private	Bari	0.1432	Smt. Sinu Phukan W/o. Sidanto Phukan
69	77-Nil	Govt Land	Stream	0.0127	River
70	78-PP-93	Private	Bari	0.1499	Sri. Bipul Gohain S/o Hemchandra Gohain
71	353-PP-94	Private	Bari	0.1499	Sri. Bipul Gohain S/o Hemchandra Gohain
72	354-PP-98	Private	Bari	0.1197	Sri. Jacksai Engti Kathar S/o Lt. Arkoi Engti Kathar
73	355-PP-99	Private	Bari	0.1196	Sri. Longkumar Teron S/o Lt. Robin Teron
74	81-Nil	Govt Land	Road	0.0267	Village Road
75	82-Nil	Private	Bari	0.0267	Sri. Dullu Gogoi Sri. Dilip Gogoi Sri. Kushal Gogoi S/o Lt. Jugesh Gogoi
76	84-PP-95	Private	Sall	0.1874	Sri. Dullu Gogoi Sri. Dilip Gogoi Sri. Kushal Gogoi S/o Lt. Jugesh Gogoi
77	85-PP-96	Private	Bari	0.1472	Sri. Ganesh Gupta S/o Lt. Sandesh Gupta
78	205-PP-97	Private	Bari	0.1673	Sri. Dullu Gogoi Sri. Dilip Gogoi Sri. Kushal Gogoi S/o Lt. Jugesh Gogoi
Village: Matipul Block no.2 Mouza: Borjan Circle: Diphu Dist: Karbi Anglong					
Sl. No	Dag No/Patta No	Type of Land	Class of Land	Area acquired (in Hectre)	Name of Land Owner
79	2-AP-10	Private	Phong	0.0561	Sri. Jerom Bekk S/o Martin Bekk
80	3-PP-17	Private	Phong	0.1172	Sri. Jerom Bekk S/o Martin Bekk
81	181-Nil	Govt Land	Road	0.008	Village Road
82	217-PP-62	Private	Phong	0.0434	Sri. Daniel Mura S/o Nahak Mura
83	278-PP-66	Private	Bari	0.1473	Sri. Ranjit Terang S/o Lt. Moniram Terang
Total				11.0644	

Sd/-
Assistant Revenue officer
&
Land Acquisition officer
Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu

'If nothing is done within 24 hours, we will escalate our action' Ebola kills 1,700 in eastern Congo as fastest-growing outbreak surges

BUNIA(CONGO), Aug 4: Ebola has killed more than 1,700 people in eastern Congo in the fastest-growing outbreak of the disease, data showed. As of Tuesday, 3,802 cases had been recorded, with 1,707 deaths, according to the latest government update.

It is not clear when the outbreak will reach its peak, Africa CDC Director-General Dr Jean Kaseya said during his second visit to the town of Bunia near the outbreak's epicentre on Tuesday. Kaseya cautioned that nearly 80 per cent of new cases are not coming from contact tracing but instead from community spread.

The outbreak, declared on May 15, has been linked to the Bundibugyo virus for which there are no approved vaccines or treatments. Delays in contact tracing, difficulties accessing affected areas, mistrust from communities, and violence by armed groups and



some residents have hampered the response, the Africa CDC has said.

The outbreak is mostly concentrated in eastern Congo's remote Ituri province, which accounts for nearly 90 per cent of cases, but cases have also been confirmed in five other provinces, including in one of the country's largest cities, Kisangani.

Neighbouring Uganda declared

itself free of Ebola following the discharge of the country's last patient in mid-June. On Monday, healthcare workers in the hard hit town of Mongbwalu issued an ultimatum over unpaid wages saying that "if nothing is done within 24 hours, we will escalate our action."

A key challenge is that patient zero has yet to be identified in the outbreak while displacement from

armed conflict and illegal mining in the region have made it difficult to trace thousands who have come in contact with infected individuals. Previously, healthcare workers in Bunia went on strike over a lack of pay and dangerous working conditions. The World Health Organization says more than 100 healthcare workers have been infected since the beginning of the outbreak.

The latest outbreak has killed more people at a quicker rate than any previous outbreak, including in 2014-2016 when 28,000 cases were reported, of which over 11,000 people died. That outbreak took about eight months to reach 1,000 deaths. The response is also hampered by a funding gap, attacks on health centres, an ongoing conflict in eastern Congo and mistrust among local communities.

Enrollment in a highly anticipated study of two possible Ebola treatments recently started in Ituri. (AP)

French and British teams rescue 157 migrants after a boat engine fire in the Channel

PARIS, Aug 4: French and British teams rescued 157 migrants who were trying to cross the English Channel after the engine of their boat caught fire, French maritime authorities said.

On Tuesday morning, while the boat was still in France's search-and-rescue zone near British waters, its engine caught fire and it rapidly began to break apart, the maritime prefecture for the English Channel and the North Sea said in a statement. French authorities deployed two rescue ships, a Navy helicopter and medical personnel. Britain's Royal National Lifeboat Institution and Border Force also responded.

The rescue operation brought 157 people to safety — 103 rescued by French vessels and 54 by British vessels. All were due to be disembarked at the port of Boulogne-sur-Mer, in northern France, for medical assessment and assistance. The boat had initially departed Monday from Normandy shores and was being monitored by French rescue vessels. During the night, five people



onboard required assistance and were brought ashore at Boulogne-sur-Mer, while the remaining passengers refused help from French rescuers, the statement said.

French maritime authorities said migrants attempting the crossing in makeshift, overloaded boats often refuse rescue unless faced with an immediate danger. Rescuers do not force people off the boats because of the risk of capsizing that would put people's lives at risk, the statement said.

Last week, four people died in two separate attempts to cross the Channel on small boats.

Earlier this year, the UK and French governments signed a new multimillion-euro deal aimed at reducing the number of migrants crossing the Channel in small boats, with increased police patrols and enhanced surveillance in northern France.

The plan includes the deployment of new technologies aimed at reducing departures of "taxi boats," the term authorities use for small motorised vessels that are typically inflatable and are used by smugglers to pick up migrants along long stretches of the northern French coast. (AP)

Russian and Ukrainian drone strikes kill at least 5 in each country

MOSCOW, Aug 4: Ukrainian drone attacks in the region around Moscow killed five people, local officials said Tuesday, while authorities in Ukraine said Russian aerial strikes there also caused at least five civilian deaths. Since Russia's invasion more than four years ago, Ukraine has developed long-range drones that can hit targets deep inside Russia. In the past year, they have battered oil facilities, major storage depots and other key infrastructure.

More than 16,000 civilians have been killed in Ukraine since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion, according to the United Nations, with the vast majority of them occurring in areas under the Ukrainian government's control. Casualties have risen steadily each year.

Meanwhile, escalating attacks by both sides on shipping in the Black Sea has reawakened fears that global food security could be put at risk. The death toll from a drone strike Monday in the Russian Black Sea resort of Arkhipo-Osipovka rose to seven, including four children, regional authorities said.

On Tuesday morning, Krasnodar regional authorities updated the number of wounded to 58, with 21 of them hospitalised.

Footage circulating online showed a drone slamming into a crowded beach, with what sounded like rapid gunfire ringing in the background. Ukraine has not commented on the strike.

A Ukrainian drone attack in the Moscow region, which surrounds but doesn't include the Russian capital, killed five people and wounded 10 others wounded on Tuesday morning, the region's governor Andrei Vorobyov said.

Most damage from the attack occurred in the Chekhov municipal district, where several fires erupted at the Novoselki industrial zone, Vorobyov said.

In the latest in a string of attacks attack on Russia's biggest online retailer, Wildberries said Tuesday that its warehouse in the Leningrad region, which lies adjacent to St Petersburg, was on fire.

In the Tver region, located between Moscow and St Petersburg, drone debris inflicted "partial" damage on a wall of a Wildberries warehouse in the village of Emmaus, the region's governor Vitaly Korolyov said.

Ukrainian drones have over the past 18 days targeted 15 Wildberries warehouses, 13 of which have caught fire, Ukraine's Unmanned Systems Forces commander Robert Brovdi said. Ukrainian officials say the company provides goods that can be used by the Russian military. Kyiv is also keen to unsettle the Russian public with high-profile attacks.

Overall, the Russian Defense Ministry reported Tuesday morning that its air defences shot down 320 Ukrainian drones overnight.

The Russian Defence Ministry said in a statement Tuesday that its forces the previous night "continued to strike Ukrainian ports, vessels, and port infrastructure" used by Kyiv's army.

In the port of Chornomorsk, in Ukraine's southern Odesa region, the Russian military said it struck an automobile components plant and a port terminal, where the Ukrainian forces "were repairing military vehicles and storing ammunition and fuel."

In the southern port of Mykolaiv, a bulk carrier with military cargo was damaged, while in Pivdennyi, another Ukrainian Black Sea port, a vessel unloading military cargo was hit, according to the statement.

The ministry also said two bulk carriers taking weapons and military equipment to Ukrainian ports were damaged at sea, south of Odesa.

Turkey on Tuesday repeated its appeal for both Russia and Ukraine to ensure the safety of navigation in the Black Sea after two Turkish-owned ships were attacked by drones after leaving the Russian port of Novorossiysk.

A Turkish Foreign Ministry statement expressed concerns that the war is increasingly spreading across the Black Sea, threatening civilian shipping, and warned such incidents could have broader consequences, including for the global food supply, as important amounts of grain, fertilisers and other key produce moves through those waters.

Russian attacks on Mykolaiv, including its port, killed an 89-year-old woman and wounded seven other people aged between two and 83, Ukrainian regional officials said.

The Russian strike on civilian infrastructure in southern Odesa region destroyed a private home and wounded two people, according to Oleh Kiper, head of the regional military administration. (AP)

Pakistani rescue teams search on foot for missing climbers amid adverse weather conditions

ISLAMABAD, Aug 4: The rescue teams on Tuesday searched on foot to locate the remains of the last two members of a 10-member expedition group buried in a deadly avalanche last week, as adverse weather conditions prevented helicopters from joining the operation, officials said.

The climbing team — comprising six Nepalese, one Pakistani, one Omani, one American and one Chinese — went missing on Thursday after the avalanche struck the group at an altitude of around 7,000 metres when it was attempting to scale Broad Peak in the Karakoram range.

According to the Alpine Club of Pakistan (ACP), rescuers have so far recovered the bodies of eight climbers. Search efforts continue for Pakistani mountaineer Sohail Sakhi and Nawang Thindhu Sherpa, it added.

Rescue teams continued searching on foot on Tuesday as adverse weather conditions prevented helicopters from joining the operation, it said.

"Helicopters remain on standby



but were unable to fly due to poor weather," the ACP said, describing the search as extremely challenging because of the difficult high-altitude terrain.

Standing at 8,051 metres, Broad Peak is the world's 12th-highest mountain and one of the most technically demanding peaks in Pakistan's Karakoram range, located near K2.

Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar expressed deep sorrow over the tragedy, extending condolences to the families of the victims and to

the governments and people of China, Nepal, Oman, the United Kingdom and the US.

"We also mourn one of our own, Pakistani mountaineer Sohail Sakhi of Hunza, whose courage and enduring passion for the high mountains will be remembered with pride," Dar said in a post on X on Tuesday.

He said the determination and pursuit of excellence demonstrated by the climbers embodied the true spirit of mountaineering and would continue to inspire future generations. (AP)

Spanish Prime Minister Sanchez fends off blistering criticism within the EU over Ceuta crisis

BRUSSELS, Aug 4: Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez's migration policies have come under withering criticism as leaders from across the European Union meet Tuesday following last week's rush of migrants to the Spanish territory of Ceuta in North Africa.

The sudden arrival of 50,000 to 60,000 migrants on Thursday and Friday sparked a humanitarian crisis in Ceuta and reignited the immigration debate in the 27-nation bloc, though most of the migrants soon went back. More than 80 migrants died, including some who drowned or were trampled in a stampede to cross a breakwater barrier, according to Spanish and Moroccan authorities.

Open letters from 22 EU leaders, and a quick retort from Sanchez, have exposed a roiling debate inside the EU pitting migration hawks against the progressive Spanish leader who has challenged consensus within the bloc on migration as well as NATO spending, Gaza and Israel.

Sanchez's government has dismissed the attacks as politically

motivated, saying most of the migrants were pushed back from Ceuta within hours in "close coordination with the Moroccan authorities and with very little support from other European states."

Regardless of Tuesday meeting's outcome, Europe is displaying a deeply damaging disunity as it faces security threats from Moscow, instability with Washington and economic tension with Beijing, said Alicia Garcia-Herero, chief economist for Asia Pacific and Middle East for the financial firm Natixis.

"Europe has shown weakness again," she said. "Massive weakness."

EU leaders quickly pounced on Sanchez once videos from Ceuta went viral. Many blamed the incident on his government's progressive policies and publicly rallied for new border checks at sea, air and land ports of entry.

They blamed a recent Spanish court ruling for triggering "this attack on our migration and asylum system," according to an open letter signed from the leaders of 22

EU countries, from Finland to Malta.

Spain's Supreme Court had ruled that migrants arriving by sea could not be summarily deported without due process, unlike those who cross by land or climb Ceuta's border fence, because they had not crossed a physical barrier.

Sanchez said that the ruling had been intentionally misconstrued by migrant smugglers to convince thousands of people to cross by swimming around the border fence.

The Socialist leader replied in his own letter by recalling that Spain had taken in migrants who arrived to eastern European nations from Belarus in 2021 and to the southern Italian island of Lampedusa in 2023.

Morocco's government views the situation as a predictable result of the court ruling, said a high-ranking diplomat who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss a highly sensitive issue.

He said it "sent a clear message to migrants: Come. If you arrive, you'll be protected." That outcome should have been anticipated by

Ceuta's authorities."

Blame has been pointed the other way, however, with Spain's Defense Minister Margarita Robles on Monday putting pressure on Rabat to investigate how local authorities did not stop the tens of thousands of migrants from leaving the kingdom.

The Moroccan diplomat said the idea of forcefully blocking departures "reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of the migration phenomenon."

"We are not Europe's police."

Gil Arias, who served as deputy executive director of the EU's border agency Frontex from 2006-2016 and also worked for Spain's interior and migration ministries, said he is convinced Morocco must not only have known of, but have been directly or indirectly complicit in the movement of so many people across its border.

"I have absolutely no doubt," Arias, who retired in 2020, told the AP. "This doesn't happen simply due to a passive attitude or omission from Morocco ... there was an invitation or it was encouraged." (AP)

Cargo ship reports being struck in Strait of Hormuz as US, Iran claims about talks diverge

CAIRO, Aug 4: A British maritime monitoring agency said a cargo ship reported being hit by a projectile overnight off the coast of Oman in the Strait of Hormuz, while the United States and Iran made opposing claims about whether they were holding talks.

US President Donald Trump on Monday said the two sides are resuming talks to wind down the war. But Iran insisted it only was talking with Oman and the discussion focused on the Strait of Hormuz.

The cargo ship reported being "hit by an unknown projectile" at 2 am local time while it was 37 kilometres (23 miles) northeast of Al Khasab in Oman, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations Centre said.

The UKMO did not provide further information on the ship, including what flag the vessel was sailing under or whether it was carrying cargo.

The ship suffered damage, ac-

cording to British maritime security firm Ambrey, which did not elaborate.

The town of Al Khasab sits on the tip of the Arabian Peninsula that juts into the Strait of Hormuz, the crucial waterway at the mouth of the Persian Gulf through which a fifth of the world's oil and natural gas passed before the war.

The strait has been effectively shut by Iran's attacks on shipping since the start of the war in February, while the US also has imposed a blockade on Iranian ports in the waterway.

A military spokesman for the Iranian-backed rebels, Brig Gen Yahya Saree, claimed the drone hit a "sensitive target" at the airport in the southwestern city of Najran. He did not provide evidence.

He said the drone attack was in response to what he called Saudi breaching of Yemen's airspace over the provinces of Saada and Hajjah. There was no immediate comment from Saudi Arabia.

The Houthis recently announced they were imposing a blockade on Saudi-linked shipping passing through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait that leads to the Red Sea. The rebels have long been at odds with Saudi Arabia, having fought a war against the kingdom and its allies. Major fighting ended with a truce in 2022.

The Houthi rebels seized the capital, Sanaa, and much of northern Yemen in a civil war that began in 2014. Saudi Arabia led an international coalition fighting the rebels, and also imposed an air and sea blockade on Houthi-led parts of Yemen that has eased in recent years.

Trump said Monday that talks with Iran had resumed, a day after saying he called of massive strikes he had threatened to unleash on the country. Trump said he pulled back at the urging of Gulf allies Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. (AP)

A number of companies are developing similar drones Japan says combat drones key to adapting to new warfare as tension rises in the region

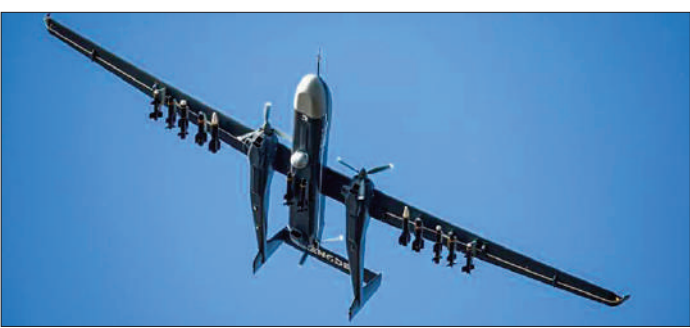
TOKYO, Aug 4: Japan needs to adapt to the new methods of warfare like drones and artificial intelligence used in Ukraine and the Middle East and strengthen its defence industry, the government said Tuesday.

Japan has bolstered its military capability and spending in recent years and has started deploying long-range cruise missiles as a deterrence to China's military activity.

The 598-page defence paper adopted by the Cabinet on Tuesday reiterated that China is Japan's biggest strategic challenge. Japan is alarmed by the growing presence and frequency of Chinese warships in the Pacific Ocean.

Inspired by the use of drones by Ukraine, Japan considers it is essential to adapt to "new ways of warfare," the paper said.

With many countries racing to



develop combat drones, Japan's government prioritizes development of its own for a coastal defence, in combination with long-range missiles.

"Speed is key," Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi said in early July.

The Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency recently selected four drone makers out of 38 applicants for a rapid development

program and that they will advance to testing by Japan's navy in early August before a final selection.

A number of companies are developing similar drones. Toshiba announced Friday plans to jointly develop combat drones with startup Pro Drone.

Uncrewed weapons could help Japan make up for its decreasing number of service members in a country with a shrinking popula-

Omkara@20: Robin Bhatt recalls how Vishal Bhardwaj's Shakespearean adaptation took shape on paper

One of the key challenges of adapting William Shakespeare's Othello for Vishal Bhardwaj's 2006 film "Omkara" was to translate the inherent racial conflict into Indian context, says screenwriter Robin Bhatt, who worked with Bhardwaj and Abhishek Chaubey to give shape to the story.

The film, which celebrated its 20th release anniversary on July 28, was the second story in Bhardwaj's adaptation of Shakespeare's three tragedies. He has also adapted "Maqbool" (Macbeth) and "Haider" (Hamlet).

Bhatt credited the film's enduring relevance to its source material, originally written over 400 years ago.

"We just followed Othello. We used the same characters, imbibed them in an Indian environment and made a script out of it. So, I give full credit to Mr. Shakespeare, he is an unbelievable writer and he is so relevant," Bhatt told PTI in an interview.

Known for 90s commercial hits such as "Aashiqui", "Dil Hai Ke Manta Nahi", "Sadak" and "Baazigar", Bhatt said he was brought to work on "Omkara" to balance Bhardwaj's literary sensibility with mainstream commercial aspects.

"He (Bhardwaj) wanted me to contribute in the way I best understand quintessential Hindi commercial cinema," he said.

Shakespeare's "Othello" revolves around a Moorish general, his romance with Desdemona, and his trusted officer Iago, whose deceit sets off a chain of tragic events.

Bhardwaj's "Omkara" was set in Western UP and featured Ajay Devgn as Omi Shukla, Kareena Kapoor Khan as Dolly Mishra and Saif Ali Khan as Langda Tyagi aka Ishwar Tyagi.

Recalling the process of writing the film, Bhatt said their central task was to mirror the social divide central to the original story for the Indian audiences.

"In Othello, the protagonist is the Moor. Moor is a black guy, the hero of the story. Othello falls in love with a very beautiful girl. In India, we don't have that, we've caste, upper and lower caste. So, if you watch 'Omkara', Ajay Devgn's character is a half-brahmin."

The 80-year-old screenwriter said they had initially thought about setting the story in a college campus or in a cricket team but finally they settled on the backdrop of Western UP.

The decision, Bhatt said, was driven by Bhardwaj's familiarity with the region as a native of Meerut.

Describing himself as a "Bombay boy", the writer said, "I knew the mathematics of screenplay writing, I was well versed in how a successful screenplay should work. So, that was the contribution from my side."

"Story was contributed by Mr. Shakespeare, we had to follow the spine. All the stories have one singular spine, if you follow that while adapting, you are not likely to go wrong and that is what we did."

The dialect came directly from Bhardwaj, according to Bhatt.

"The moment he wrote the first scene; we fell in love with the dialect, the way they speak and all the profanity, there are lines and there are typical bad words of UP but that looked natural and real."

"Omkara" boasted an ensemble cast including Konkona Sen Sharma, Vivek Oberoi, Bipasha Basu, Naseeruddin Shah, and Deepak Dobriyal, among others.

Bhatt said Devgn agreed to do the film in five minutes after hearing the basic plot of "Othello" on the condition that he would be available to shoot within two months.

"We had fantastic actors, their dates were available. Money-wise, they were okay with the producer," he said, adding that all the actors worked very hard on getting the dialect correct.

When asked for his best memory of working on the film, Bhatt named the 17 days spent writing "Omkara" in Mussoorie among the finest experiences of his career.

Bhatt's friendship with Bhardwaj began unexpectedly, on a cricket field in Dehradun. The filmmaker joined a film industry cricket team on lyricist-filmmaker Gulzar's recommendation and that's where Bhatt met him and the two clicked.

"My first meeting with Vishal was as a cricketer. He was a good right arm leg spinner and a good batsman," the writer said.

"Later, while writing the screenplay, we discussed where we could have a song and created the character of Bipasha Basu, who is a dancer."



I used to meet Vishal regularly because we had cricket practice every day at 7 in the morning.

"Those were the days when Vishal would create a tune or a piece and discuss it while sipping tea after a cricket practice. He would ask, 'I've made this, how does this sound?'"

The music of the movie, composed by Bhardwaj with lyrics by Gulzar, became a rage. Songs like "Beedi", "Namak" and "O Saathi Re" are popular even today.

"Vishal is all-in-one," Bhatt said, praising the filmmaker's work in movies such as "Makdee",

"Maqbool", and "The Blue Umbrella".

Upon its release, "Omkara" earned critical acclaim, did good business at the box office and won awards.

The film even won the Best Adapted Screenplay honour at the Karachi Film Festival, where Bhatt and Bhardwaj travelled to receive the award in person.

"In those days, we were given a visa to enter Pakistan, we had gone to Karachi. The film was screened there and we received the special award too," Bhatt said. (PTI)

PVR INOX launches SMART Cinemas for Tier III cities, begins rollout from Muzaffarpur

Multiplex chain PVR INOX on Tuesday unveiled 'PVR INOX SMART Cinemas', a new exhibition format aimed at expanding its footprint in Tier III cities through a franchise-led model with Muzaffarpur in Bihar set to become its first destination.

The company said the new concept has been designed to bring the signature PVR INOX cinema experience to India's fast-growing smaller cities while adopting a capital-efficient Franchise-Owned, Company-Operated (FOCO) model.

The rollout comes as organised retail and consumer spending continue to grow beyond metropolitan centres, creating demand for premium entertainment in emerging urban markets, PVR INOX said in a statement.

According to the company, Muzaffarpur has been chosen as the launch city owing to its growing commercial importance, expanding retail landscape and rising demand for organised entertainment.

PVR INOX said it has already signed six more SMART Cinemas properties, which are expected to open over the next nine months, while discussions with developers in several other cities are underway.

Every PVR INOX SMART Cinemas property will feature 2K laser projection, 7.1 surround sound, curated food and beverage offerings, modern auditoriums and the company's standard operating practices, adapted for value-conscious, high-growth markets.

Managing Director Ajay Bijli said the new format marks the company's next phase of expansion.

"For nearly three decades, PVR INOX has transformed the way India experiences cinema. With PVR INOX SMART Cinemas, we are building on that legacy



by creating a cinema concept designed for India's fastest-growing Tier III cities.

"Across the country, aspirations are rising, and audiences are seeking the same world-class experiences that have defined PVR INOX. Our vision is to make those experiences more accessible than ever before, beginning with Muzaffarpur and expanding to new markets in the years ahead."

Executive Director Sanjeev Kumar Bijli said the FOCO model would enable the company to scale its presence while partnering with local developers and entrepreneurs.

"India's passion for cinema continues

to grow, creating significant opportunities across the country's high-growth cities. PVR INOX SMART Cinemas combines a highly scalable, capital-efficient expansion model with the signature PVR INOX experience. It enables us to grow alongside our partners while bringing world-class cinema to more communities across India."

The company said the expansion is also expected to create direct employment opportunities, generate state and local tax revenues and strengthen organised entertainment infrastructure in the markets where the new cinemas are launched. (PTI)

Rashmika Mandanna confirms hip injury, says tendon detached during 'Mysaa' shoot

Actor Rashmika Mandanna has confirmed that she suffered a tendon detachment in her right hip while shooting for her upcoming film "Mysaa", saying it is her third injury in a row.

Mandanna on Monday evening shared a detailed health update on Instagram, explaining the nature of the injury. The post came days after there were reports stating that the actor has been advised six weeks of complete rest and a structured rehabilitation programme.

"Injuries suck.. and I was really hoping that no one will get to know.. but well... Sorry I've been MIA but hieeee! I'm hereeee!"

"It happened awhile ago ya and this is my 3rd injury back to back.. I should definitely learn to treat my body like a human body and not some machine..," she wrote.

The actor said one of the tendons connecting her right hip to her leg had detached during the filming of a dance sequence for "Mysaa".

"But well umm the injury is basically.. ummm how do I explain it.. (make way for the biology teacher) so there are 4 tendons on each side of your hip that connects your hip to your leg and one of those tendons on my right hip apparently had detached and that has

to attach again, for me to be able to lift my leg up and stuff.. and this happened during my dance shoot for 'Mysaa'.. my god that's the most aggressive film I've ever done for sure!" she added.

The actor, however, reassured fans that she was recovering well.

"It hurts but it's not unbearable or something.. so ya that's that.. and I feel like this is god saying you'll never take a break if it's left to you so here.. let me do it for you!" she said.

Mandanna described the injury as a "freak accident" and said she was making the most of her forced break by solving puzzles.

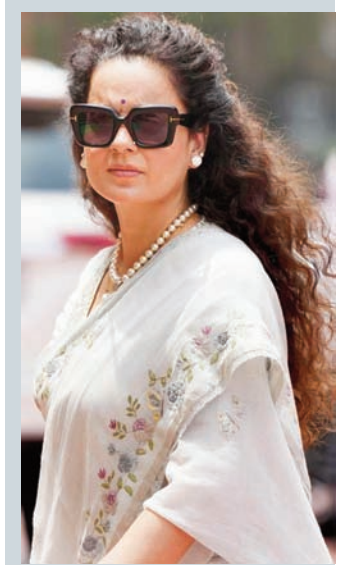
The actor also joked about missing her workout routine.

"Really really trying not to put on weight cz well I workout and run like a beast which keeps me in a decent shape and now I won't be able to workout or run for awhile and if I can't workout then what do I doooo.. ummm I eat.. and I become a dessert monster.. so uh hooooo!"

"We'll that's about it.. what else did I miss.. nothing na.. if anything I'll update soon. Love ya! Don't worry ok.." she added. (PTI)



I want to become an awakened Hindu: Kangana Ranaut



Actor and BJP MP Kangana Ranaut, who was recently in the news for calling Gen Z protesters "generation gutter", on Monday said she used to be a moderate Hindu and now wants to "convert" and become an awakened Hindu.

In a video on Instagram, the latest in a series, Ranaut criticised those questioning her present stance on issues given her past as an actor.

"I am taunted, 'When did you become a Sanghi?' I want to become a Sanghi. I want to convert to the BJP and RSS ideology, which is an awakened Hindu. Why can't I?"

"When it comes to Hindu daughters, then so called custodians of society... start looking into our life from a decade ago and say, 'You used to party, you used to do this.' Yes, I used to but now I want to convert. Why is that door closed for me?"

The MP from Mandi in Himachal Pradesh said she did not want to defend her past but pointed out that she had fought for issues like pay parity, against nepotism and item numbers.

Ranaut, who has been the focus of debate for her provocative comments, described videos of protesters at Jantar Mantar as a display of "filth, garbage and ugliness".

"So much ugliness in one place, these reels from GenZ protests are puke-inducing, the way they speak and the kind of language they are using, never in my life I have seen everything in each and every frame so jarring and so crass all at once, ewwww who is birthing and raising them?" the 39-year-old said last week.

She also said, "Here is a new generation of so called westernised Indian women. I call them generation gutter."

Ranaut's statements went viral on social media with many criticising the actor for her "crass comments". (PTI)



I'm here to find my own audience and create my own path: 'Musafir Cafe' actor Mahima Makwana

est Netflix series "Musafir Cafe" is another step in a career that she is determined to shape on her own terms.

The unpredictability of showbiz world has taught her patience and perseverance, said the actor, who started out as a child actor on daily soaps "Miley Jab Hum Tum" and "Balika Vadhu" before making the transition to films with Salman Khan's "Antim: The Final Truth" and later to OTT projects such as "Tumse Na Hoo Payega" and "Showtime".

"I feel that if I can do it, everybody can do it. It's important to dream, it's all about believing in yourself. I'll always be grateful to the people who saw that potential in me. At the same time, our industry demands patience and perseverance. It's not an easy industry and there is hardly anything in your control. All you can control are the choices you make from the offers you're given."

"You learn, you unlearn, you realise and you create your own niche. I'm here to find my own audience, to create my own path, and that's how I've been navigating my journey," she added, Makwana told PTI in an interview.

Makwana credits "Antim", which featured her alongside Salman and Ayush Sharma, as a turning point in her career. The 2021 movie, directed by Mahesh Manjrekar, marked her Hindi film debut.

"I'll always be grateful for the opportunity that Salman sir and Mahesh Manjrekar sir gave me because I always wanted to see myself on the big screen. And that project changed everything for me, it made me believe in myself."

"When people like them see potential in you, it kind of makes you believe in yourself. 'Antim' opened so many doors for me... 'Showtime' and 'Tumse Na Hoo Payega', happened and every part, every opportunity has given me something or the other in terms of critical acclaim, or people that I've worked with," she said.

In "Musafir Cafe", which is currently streaming on Netflix, Makwana plays Preeti, whose life becomes intertwined with Chander (Vikrant Massey), a man caught between his past and present relationships.

Based on Divya Prakash Dubey's best-selling novel, the series also stars Vedika Pinto. It is created and written by Sha-

ranya Rajgopal and directed by Ruchir Arun.

Makwana said she was instantly drawn to the project because it offered a layered love story at a time when romances are becoming increasingly rare.

"I think both as an audience and as an actor, there is a dearth for love stories. There are not many love stories being made and maybe with 'Musafir Cafe', there should be more romance and love stories that we should see."

"A love story in itself is such a vast genre, there is so much that you can experience in it and resonate with, whether it is sacrifice, acceptance, or partners mirroring you. There is so much that you learn about yourself. There is so much that was for me to take away from the show, from the characters," she said.

The 26-year-old actor described playing Preeti and working on the project as one of the "most healing, mirroring and cathartic" experiences of her career.

"Musafir Cafe" is special because of the way the characters have been written and carved. Sharanya Rajgopal, our writer, has written the show with a lot of tenderness, with a lot of depth.

"It is not going to be all beautiful and simple because as humans, we are complicated, we are complex and such are our love stories and that is what we have tried to create," she said.

Asked about working with Massey, Makwana said she had briefly met the actor during her early television days when they were both part of the popular daily soap "Balika Vadhu".

"Even though we didn't know each other, his growth feels very personal. He comes from television and everything that he's done so far, whether it's films and OTT, I felt that there is somebody who's been putting their heart and soul in what they do. Today, you see him getting the recognition and success he deserves."

Looking ahead, the actor said she will next be seen alongside Tiger Shroff in an upcoming film and also has a project with Dharma Productions in the pipeline.

"I hope to be a part of great scripts and be a part of meaningful projects," Makwana said, adding that she hopes to work with filmmakers such as Imtiaz Ali, Ambrish Verma, and the duo Raj Nidimoru and Krishna DK. (PTI)

Kashmir's rising MMA exponent Yaqoob gets grand reception after beating Bulgaria's Georgiev



SRINAGAR, Aug 4: Rising mixed martial arts exponent Owais Yaqoob, who defeated Bulgarian Delyan Georgiev last week, returned to his native village in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir to a rousing welcome on Tuesday.

Yaqoob said he will celebrate his victory without losing focus as he is up for another test in Istanbul later this month.

"I have returned home to my people, and I am feeling a very

good energy. My focus never wavered. I always celebrate my victories, but we always celebrate in a way that ensures our focus never shifts. Our focus remains on the fact that we are still hungry and we need to do more," Yaqoob said at his residence in Murrnan village.

He thanked the countrymen for supporting him all through.

"First of all, thank you to all of India. The whole of India celebrated with us today, and everyone

supported us and showed up. More than 1.6 million people watched the fight live from India for the first time, and the fight was going on at night, yet everyone was watching. This is a huge achievement for me," he said.

The 28-year-old, who has trained with Russian MMA fighters, said while winning the fight is great the bigger achievement is that the people are supporting and loving him.

"Their emotions are connected

to me, and that is a huge achievement. People give me the motivation to train. I called my family and told them I would celebrate today, sit with them, and start training again tomorrow because our next fight is coming up in Istanbul at the end of August. It will be a grappling match featuring major UFC fighters, and I will be there too," he said.

Yaqoob revealed that he became unwell a few days before the fight in Bulgaria but did not reveal it to anyone as he would have been accused of making excuses ahead of the big match.

"When I left from here, first, I had an injury in the foot, and then my shoulder got injured. After that, we went and travelled for 40 hours, and as soon as I reached the fight week, I got a fever and a cold. I wasn't sharing this with anyone because if I did, people would say I was making excuses," he said.

Asked about wearing a traditional Karakul cap while celebrating his win, Yaqoob said it represented the rich culture of Kashmir.

"The people we had from the old times, whose culture was good... better than ours, who were more modest, who had good discipline, who had good food... I wanted to represent all those things," he said. (PTI)

Venus Williams-Bublik, married couples among new teams entered for US Open mixed doubles



NEW YORK, Aug 4: An additional 13 teams, one featuring Venus Williams and some comprised of married couples, have entered the US Open mixed doubles championship.

The new duos announced Monday by the U.S. Tennis Association raised the total to 29 teams for the 16 spots in the main draw, which will be held on Aug 25 and Aug 26.

Williams is partnering with Alexander Bublik for the tournament that was overhauled last year, with a \$1 million prize to the winning team, in an effort to get top singles players to compete. Top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka and 24-time Grand Slam singles champion Novak Djokovic headlined the initial list of 16 teams who entered.

Elina Svitolina and her husband Gael Monfils, who is expected to play his final Grand Slam event at the US Open, and newlyweds Katie Boulter and Alex De Minaur also were among the new entries.

The other new teams: Karolina Muchova and Jakub Mensik, Anna Kalinskaya and Lorenzo Musetti, Emma Navarro and Tommy Paul, Maria Sakkari and Karen Khachanov, Tatjana Maria and Valentin Vacherot, Reese Brantmeier and Michael Zheng, Jelena Ostapenko and Marcelo Arevalo, Gabriela Dabrowski and Harri Heliovaara, Demi Schuurs and Julian Cash, and Caty McNally and Robert Cash.

Teams can enter until Aug. 17, when the six duos with the best combined singles rankings at the time will be automatically entered

into the main draw. That means Sabalenka, the two-time defending US Open women's champion, and Djokovic, still ranked No. 5 on the men's tour at age 39, will be safely into the field.

Eight teams will be given wild cards by the USTA, and two other teams will play their way into the field through a new qualifying tournament to be held Aug 24.

Besides Sabalenka and Djokovic, teams previously announced were: Iga Swiatek and Casper Ruud, the runners-up in 2025; Elena Rybakina and Taylor Fritz, the Japanese duo of Naomi Osaka and Kei Nishikori, Jessica Pegula and Jack Draper, Mirra Andreeva and Andrey Rublev, Belinda Bencic and Flavio Cobolli, Diana Shnaider and Daniil Medvedev, Amanda Anisimova and Leamer Tien, Alex Eala and Felix Auger-Aliassime, Leylah Fernandez and Frances Tiafoe, Taylor Townsend and Alexander Zverev, Elena-Gabriela Ruse and Nuno Borges, Sara Errani and Andreea Vavassori, Katerina Siniakova and Henry Patten, and siblings Peyton Stearns and Preston Stearns.

Errani and Vavassori are the two-time defending US Open champions. The Italians needed a wild card to get into last year's event because their singles ranking was too low, and that will be the case again this year. (AP)

Arsene Wenger backs decision to drop Gianni Infantino's WC sell-off plan



GENEVA, Aug 4: FIFA executive Arsene Wenger on Tuesday distanced himself from Gianni Infantino's failed plan to sell stakes in future World Cup profits to private investors and said it was "absolutely necessary" to drop the proposal.

Wenger's statement on the controversy came after a letter from UEFA's lawyers to Infantino threatening legal action named the French coaching great among 18 executives whose data and communications should be retained as potential evidence.

"I was not involved in this strategic plan and first became aware of the project through media reports," said Wenger, who was hired by Infantino in 2019 and is FIFA's Chief of Global Football Development.

The statement by the former Arsenal coach did not name Infantino.

"The decision to withdraw the project was absolutely necessary and beyond question, because I firmly believe in an independent FIFA that serves our game with commitment, transparency, and integrity," Wenger wrote.

Infantino withdrew his \$20 billion proposal early Saturday after a furious backlash by global soccer officials, including European body UEFA warning of a boycott of all FIFA games and events. (AP)

Nabi's ability to get batters out while defending is his biggest asset: Pathan

NEW DELHI, Aug 4: Auqib Nabi's knack for forcing top batters into errors while they are defending, rather than relying on raw pace, could be his biggest strength as the Jammu and Kashmir pacer prepares for international cricket, feels former India all-rounder Irfan Pathan.

Nabi's long-awaited India call-up came on Monday when the selectors named him as injured Jasprit Bumrah's replacement in the upcoming two-Test series in Sri Lanka beginning August 15.

Pathan, who first spotted Nabi during trials in Srinagar in 2018 and later mentored Jammu and Kashmir's young cricketers, believes the pacer's natural action, wrist position and ability to move the ball make him effective without express pace.

"The optimum pace to get the ball moving is around 135 kph. If you can get it to swing, that too late, then you are good," Pathan told PTI in an interview.

"And with the rhythm and with the kind of action he has, we can touch 133-135 kph on a regular basis. That's what I believe," he added.

For Pathan, however, pace is only one part of the equation. The bigger quality is whether a bowler can make top-class batters defend and still find a way to get them out.

"Does the bowler have the ability to get the batters, the top-quality batters, out while defending? This is the other quality you seek," he said.

Pathan has seen Nabi produce that kind of bowling against high-quality batters in domestic cricket, including in the Ranji Trophy final when they pipped Karnataka on first innings lead to clinch a historic maiden title earlier this year.

"We have seen that in the Ranji Trophy final, he troubled KL Rahul, he didn't even get a wicket. In that too, he defended normally



and dismissed the batsman," he said.

The former India pacer also saw Nabi create similar problems for batters in Mumbai.

"In Mumbai, I saw the match, Shreyas and our current players, he was dismissing them the same way. So, on different pitches, the top-quality batsmen defend and get dismissed. That means he has the ability," Pathan said.

Bigger test
Test cricket, however, will provide a bigger examination, particularly on flat pitches where bowlers need something extra to create chances.

"Obviously, when you play Test cricket, the challenge becomes even more. Because sometimes, you get the flattest pitch in the world," he said.

"And then obviously, you need to have some extra. In that extra ability, can he use the angle? Can he call the wicket-keeper up? Eventually, it's all about the performances. Can you perform?" Pathan added.

Pathan, who claimed 301 international wickets, said a bowler does not necessarily need express pace if he possesses the skill to deceive batters.

"I've been able to take 301 inter-

national wickets. I was not bowling 150kph," he said.

"My ability was to get the batsman out LBW before they think that ball will not come in," Pathan added.

He believes Nabi's inclusion can provide a major boost to his confidence, even if he has to wait for his opportunity.

"For Auqib to be in the squad right now, even though he was not the first choice, he came as a replacement of Jasprit Bumrah, it will still give him a lot of confidence. Because being in the squad is a big thing," Pathan added.

He feels the opportunity to train alongside India's best batters will also be an important learning experience.

"It's a pleasure to play for India. It's the biggest achievement you can have, playing for India and especially in Test cricket," he said.

"When you go in the nets and when you play with the team, when you actually bowl against the solid, top-quality batters, you learn a lot as well. The management also will get a sighter of what Auqib can do in the nets," Pathan added.

Pathan feels Nabi's domestic performances deserved to be rewarded sooner and believes his opportunity has arrived at the right

time.

"The good thing is, his performance in domestic cricket got rewarded. I thought he should have been rewarded a bit earlier," he said.

"I think Afghanistan has already been the perfect start for him. But better late than never," he added.

Pathan's association with Nabi dates back to the 2018 trials in Srinagar, where eight fast bowlers had been called up.

Nabi immediately stood out for his skill and his ability to bowl long spells in junior cricket.

"Specially, I liked the skill of Nabi. He used to bowl long spells in junior cricket," he recalled.

Pathan said his approach to selection was never influenced by a player's name or place of origin.

The focus was on identifying the best talent and players with the potential to develop.

"I didn't care about the names. I didn't care if they came from Baramulla, Anantnag or Kupwara. I even used to go to Kupwara to pick up people," he said.

"So, my aim was to get the best players. But at the same time, I wanted to get the best players who had the potential," Pathan added.

Action over pace
Pathan's most important advice to Nabi, meanwhile, was to preserve the action that had already given him control and movement rather than chasing extra pace.

"When I met him for the first time, the first thing when he asked me, I had told him, 'Never change your action. No matter who tells you that,'" Pathan said.

"A lot of people will say to speed you up. A lot of people will say a lot of things about non-bowling arm. But don't change your action," he added.

Pathan explained that Nabi's action keeps his bowling close to his body and helps him maintain his alignment. (PTI)

Jadeja's attacking mindset has made him a more complete red-ball bowler: Pujara



NEW DELHI, Aug 4: Former India batter Cheteshwar Pujara believes Ravindra Jadeja has grown as a Test cricketer after making the transition from a defensive bowler to someone who is constantly hunting for wickets in recent years.

Jadeja has evolved into one of India's premier match-winners in the longest format, complementing his impeccable accuracy with a far more attacking approach.

Apart from taking wickets, he has also made some vital contributions with the bat, establishing himself as one of the world's finest all-rounders in red-ball cricket.

"Earlier, when Ravindra Jadeja used to bowl, his mindset was not to give away too many runs, especially in red-ball cricket. If there was a little help in the wicket, then he would try to take wickets. But if the wicket was not conducive to bowlers, his focus was on re-

stricting the runs," Pujara said on JioStar ahead of India's Test series against Sri Lanka beginning August 15.

Jadeja has 348 wickets in 89 Tests at an impressive average of 25.12.

"...he has understood his own strengths and is bowling accordingly. In every game, he is trying to land the ball in the line of the stumps and get the batter out," Pujara explained.

Pujara said Jadeja's biggest improvement has been the change in his mindset, with the veteran now looking to dismiss batters with every delivery rather than merely containing the scoring rate.

Pujara said the shift in Jadeja's approach has enabled him to think proactively as a bowler and use variations more effectively.

"Earlier, his mindset was a little more defensive, but now he is delivering every ball with the purpose of taking a wicket.

"So, you think a little more about your game. You use the crease a little better, try to go wider, and adjust your length according to the batter. That mental shift is very important for the game" he added.

Jadeja has been India's go-to spinner across conditions in recent years, with his relentless accuracy, subtle variations and ability to exploit even marginal assistance making him a wicket-taking option both at home and overseas.

His improved attacking intent has also helped him shoulder greater responsibility in Test cricket following the retirement of senior off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin. (PTI)

Prioritise women boxers, better bet for 2028 Olympic medal: Akhil Kumar



NEW DELHI, Aug 4: India's women pugilists are a stronger bet for an Olympic medal than their male counterparts and should be prioritised in the overall planning for the 2028 Los Angeles Games, says boxer-turned-police officer Akhil Kumar, lauding their record-shattering Commonwealth Games performance.

In a telephonic interview to PTI, Akhil, who was the only Indian boxer to strike gold at the 2006 Commonwealth Games, said he was quite impressed with the country's performance in Glasgow where it finished with its best ever tally of seven gold medals in boxing, six of them coming from women.

Women's boxing came into the CWG only in 2014 and featured just three categories -- 51kg, 60kg and 75kg -- to start with. This was two years after it entered the Olympics programme in the same three divisions. M C Mary Kom (2012, London) and Lovlina Borgohain (2021, Tokyo) have won Olympic medals for India in women's boxing.

"They (the women boxers) are clearly delivering better results. The weight categories are also increasing, they deserve to be prioritised? Among the current crop of male boxers, I don't really think there is anyone who can be an Olympic medalist at this stage. If there is a drastic improvement going forward, which I hope there is, I will change my view," the Haryana Police ACP said.

"At this point, it's the women boxers who have the advantage. We have adapted to the expansion of the sport quite well and given how it has grown, I guess India is better positioned to deliver more than one Olympic medal in women's boxing in

2028," he added.

The CWG programme in Glasgow featured seven weight categories for women, one more than last time. The men's event also comprised seven categories, achieving gender parity for the first time.

The weight divisions were also the ones that would be at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. The Indian women won medals in all seven categories, six gold and a silver. The men, on the other hand, managed two gold, and a silver.

The competition in the women's event featured 70 boxers from 43 countries, 11 more than previous edition's 59 participants from 55 countries. The male competition, however, shrank to 131 from 43 countries instead of 172 from 55 nations in 2022.

Asked to name the boxers who stood out during the competition, the former Asian champion and Olympic quarterfinalist said the gold-winning duo of Jaismine Lamboria (57kg) and Sakshi Chaudhary (51kg) displayed an all-round game which was also fairly gutsy. Among the men, he saw potential in Jadumani Singh (55kg), who was a silver-medallist.

"I have been talking about how good Jaismine is for a very long time, so I am not surprised that she has won gold, also Sakshi was a revelation. In Jadu-

mani, I see raw speed, right amount of power and he knows how to keep his distance. Very confident southpaw and has potential," he said.

"But we should remember that at the Asian Games, all these 'Stans' (Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan most notably) will come into the equation along with Japan and Korea. Let's see how we respond to that challenge," he noted.

Need heroes
Medals are regularly coming in for Indian boxing but Akhil believes the sport is in desperate need of heroes who can connect and inspire the next generation.

The sport was galvanised significantly by India's historic 2008 Beijing Olympics performance where Vijender Singh won a path-breaking bronze, while Akhil defeated the then world number one enroute to the quarterfinals in a gutsy display. It eventually tapered off due to several factors in the next decade.

"All sports need performance but in addition they also need heroes, who can inspire the masses. When youngsters see an athlete's struggle, discipline and hard work, they get inspired. I believe boxing doesn't have that kind of stories right now which feel organic like it was with Vijender or me," he noted.

"Take for instance Neeraj Chopra, now he is a

hero because his conduct and performance are both top notch. He embodies the very best of an athlete. Manu Bhaker, look at the way she has addressed the youth of this country in past few days, it's inspiring. Can we say Indian boxing has any such hero who can connect? Not right now, I think," he added.

Trials only fair way
Touching upon the controversy around the seeding-based system of selection in Indian boxing, Akhil said the concept is "rubbish and is perhaps designed by someone who has never achieved anything in the ring."

Trials were conducted to select the teams for CWG after Sports Authority of India's intervention after the seeding-based-system, that relies on subjective metrics such as training performance, including punctuality, was denounced as ambiguous by both SAI and Sports Ministry.

"Boxing is about fighting three rounds of three minutes. Beyond that, who can run faster or what time they show up at training means absolutely nothing. Those metrics should come into play only if a trial throws up a tied result.

"If you have two boxers of same calibre then evaluate who is more disciplined or more worthy but if there is a hands down better fighter then nothing else should matter," he said. (PTI)



“Mental health is a fundamental part of our overall well-being. Let us also work collectively to create environments where conversations around mental health become more mainstream.”

Shri. Narendra Modi
Hon'ble Prime Minister



Tele MANAS

National Tele Mental Health Programme of India

An initiative by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India

Are you dealing with any mental health issue?

Access support anytime, anywhere through Tele MANAS.
Available 24/7 in 20+ languages, all over India

Call us for any of these concerns



Feeling low or anxious most of the time



Problems with family or relationships



Stress about studies, work or finances



Issues with alcohol or other substances



Trouble sleeping



Excessive mobile usage

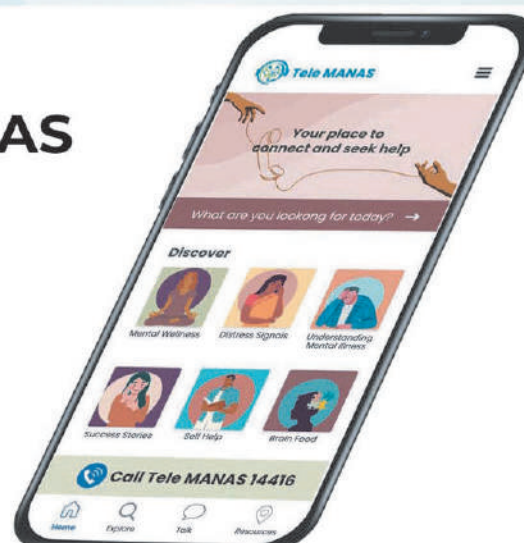


Thoughts of harming yourself



Any other mental health concerns

Download Tele MANAS App & delve into self-help materials and wellness practice modules



- Available in 10 regional languages + English & Hindi
- Accessibility features for differently-abled users
- Meet Asmi – your chatbot for queries, resources & connection

CBC 17193/13/0002/2627



Call Tele MANAS

14416

Toll-free number

Scan here



To know more about Tele MANAS & download the App!



Nagaland govt's PAC reiterates demand for ministerial-level interlocutor

Roadmap on Naga issue soon

KOIHIMA, Aug 4: The Nagaland Government's Political Affairs Committee (PAC) on Tuesday reiterated its demand for a ministerial-level interlocutor to advance the Naga political talks and said it would soon engage stakeholders to prepare a roadmap for the peace process.

Interacting with reporters after a closed-door meeting of the PAC held at Chief Minister's Residential Office here, state government Spokesperson and Minister for Power and Parliamentary Affairs, K G Kenye, said the committee reviewed developments since its previous meetings and resolved to continue pursuing the stand it had adopted earlier.

"The PAC members met today at 10 am. It was attended by all 28 members. We took stock of the resolutions adopted in our previous meetings and the developments over the last 24 months. After reviewing the situation, we resolved to remain with the same stand we had adopted earlier," Kenye said.

He said the committee would now work out modalities to engage stakeholders before unveiling



"something concrete" in the form of a roadmap to advance efforts towards resolving the protracted Naga political issue.

Responding to a query, Kenye confirmed that the PAC had reiterated its demand for the Centre to appoint a ministerial-level interlocutor, saying the issue must be taken "to its logical conclusion."

"When we sought a ministerial-level interlocutor, it was not a simple decision. Unless the interlocutor is at that level, the parties involved in the talks are not very confident, and even the government is not certain that our con-

cerns will be effectively conveyed. The Centre has assured us that it is looking into our demand," he said.

On engaging other political parties and stakeholders, Kenye said the government would require some time to prepare the ground before initiating wider consultations.

"The entire Naga public are stakeholders in this issue because it concerns the future of the Nagas. We have a lot of homework to do, and given the sensitivity of the issue, we do not want to antagonise anyone or hurt anybody's sentiments," he said.

Appealing for restraint, the minister urged all stakeholders to avoid blame games and instead focus on achieving a solution.

"There are accusations from every corner, but we must tone down the charges and countercharges. Let us focus on what is best for our people and for the future," he added. On reports of the formation of an "Eastern Flank" within the NSCN-IM, Kenye said the government was closely monitoring the developments but would refrain from comment until the facts were verified.

"The government is keenly observing the developments, but we have not yet ascertained the facts or the ground realities. Once we have confirmed the facts, the government may have something to say," he said.

Commenting on the 10th anniversary of the Framework Agreement signed between the Centre and the NSCN (IM), and the group's reiteration that it would adhere to the agreement for the final solution of the Naga issue, Kenye said such a stand was expected. (PTI)

Fresh landslides, flash floods hit three Arunachal districts

ITANAGAR, Aug 4: Fresh landslides and flash floods triggered by incessant rain affected three districts of Arunachal Pradesh, an official report said on Tuesday.

The ongoing spell of floods and landslides has so far claimed seven lives in the northeastern state, while the cumulative impact of the monsoon has spread across 28 districts, affecting an estimated 1,55,858 people, according to a report from the State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC) here.

The latest daily situation report said Upper Siang, Kra Daadi and Kamle witnessed damage during the past 24 hours.

In Upper Siang, a landslide affected Yingkong circle and Yingkong village. In Kra Daadi, flash floods struck Tarak Langdi circle, affecting the area between Taji and Kambang villages. In Kamle, heavy rain hit Raga circle, affecting Godak and Kigam villages.

The report said monsoon-related disasters have so far affected 384 circles and 678 villages across the state.

The report also highlighted extensive damage to public infra-



structure.

So far, 235 roads, 40 bridges, 75 culverts, 373 water supply systems, 161 power lines, 823 electric poles, 66 irrigation projects, 122 government buildings, 41 schools, 12 hydropower projects, 26 retaining walls and 16 flood protection walls, among other public assets, have been damaged by floods and landslides.

The agriculture and horticulture sectors have also suffered significant losses, with crops over 1,528.626 hectares affected, including 780.716 hectares under horticulture and 747.91 hectares

under agriculture, the report added.

Meanwhile, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast thunderstorms with lightning and very heavy rainfall at isolated places over Longding, Lower Subansiri and Papum Pare districts on Wednesday.

The IMD has also predicted heavy rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms and lightning over East Kameng, Lohit, Namsai and Kamle on Wednesday, and advised residents in vulnerable areas to remain alert as intense rainfall could trigger fresh landslides, flash floods and waterlogging. (PTI)

NIT Manipur to contribute immensely towards realising PM's 'Viksit Bharat': CM

IMPHAL, Aug 4: Manipur Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh on Tuesday said the National Institute of Technology (NIT) in the state would contribute immensely towards realising Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Viksit Bharat'.

Singh made the remarks at the 13th convocation of NIT Manipur held in Imphal.

Addressing the gathering, Singh congratulated the graduates on successfully completing their academic journey and wished them success in their future endeavours.

He said NIT Manipur has a vital role to play in the development of both the state and the nation and reaffirmed his government's commitment to establishing a permanent campus for NIT Manipur, stating that the administration was actively working towards this objective.

Highlighting the importance of technical education in achieving the vision of 'Viksit Bharat 2047', Singh said graduates from various disciplines will play a significant role in nation-building.

Describing NIT Manipur as one of the emerging premier technical institutions in the Northeast, Singh urged the graduating students to strive for excellence, become future administrators, innovators and leaders, and dedicate their knowledge and skills towards the progress of the state and the country. (PTI)

PM Surya Sarovar Yojana to boost India's clean energy push: Arunachal DyCM

ITANAGAR, Aug 4: Arunachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein on Tuesday hailed the Centre's approval of the Pradhan Mantri Surya Sarovar Yojana (PM-SSY), saying the ambitious scheme to develop 5,000 MW of floating solar capacity with energy storage marks another major milestone in India's clean energy transition.

In a social media post, Mein said the new initiative would further accelerate the country's renewable energy journey while strengthening energy security and supporting sustainable economic growth.

"India has approved the Pradhan Mantri Surya Sarovar Yojana (PM-SSY) to develop 5,000 MW of floating solar capacity with energy storage. With rapid growth in capacity, manufacturing and adoption, solar power is accelerating India's clean energy transition," he said in a post on X.

Highlighting the wider impact of the renewable energy sector, Mein,



who also holds the Power and Hydropower portfolios, said that the sector is strengthening energy security, supporting economic growth, advancing climate goals and reinforcing India's leadership in renewable energy.

The deputy chief minister also pointed to the rapid expansion of rooftop solar adoption across the country under the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, describing it as a key driver of India's transition to clean energy.

"India's solar journey has witnessed a remarkable transforma-

tion under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji. With 50 lakh households adopting rooftop solar through PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, the country is accelerating its transition towards a cleaner, greener and more sustainable future," he said in another post.

The Union Cabinet recently approved the PM Surya Sarovar Yojana with a financial outlay of ₹ 5,070 crore to promote floating solar photovoltaic projects across reservoirs and other suitable water bodies. (PTI)

ICR to conduct civil defence mock drill on August 8

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Aug 4: The Itanagar Capital Region (ICR) District Administration has announced that a Civil Defence Mock Drill will be conducted across the capital region on August 8 to assess emergency preparedness and coordination among government agencies, security forces, emergency services and the public.

According to an official public circular, the mock drill will be held from 8 pm to 9 pm, with the main exercise centred at Dera Natung Government College (DNGC), Itanagar.

As part of the exercise, an air raid siren will be sounded across the ICR at 8 pm for about two minutes, followed by a city-wide blackout from 8 pm to 8.15 pm.

Residents have been requested to switch off all lights, including inverter and rechargeable lights, close curtains and windows to prevent light from being visible outside, remain indoors and avoid panic during the blackout.

Police and Fire Service vehicles fitted with sirens, along with the Itanagar Smart City public address system, will simultaneously sound sirens during the exercise.

Traffic diversions and movement restric-



tions may also be imposed to facilitate emergency response operations, with emergency vehicles being given priority.

The administration clarified that hospitals, police establishments, emergency services and control rooms will remain exempt from the blackout.

The District Administration has urged residents, commercial establishments, educational institutions, market associations, civil society organisations and the media to cooperate in ensuring the successful conduct of the exercise.

It also appealed to the public not to spread rumours or misinformation and to rely only on official updates.

CoSAAP donates 8 lakh for Keyi Panyor flood relief



HT Correspondent

YACHULI, Aug 4: The Confederation of Service Associations of Arunachal Pradesh (CoSAAP), Keyi Panyor District Unit on Tuesday donated ₹ 8 lakh to the district administration to support relief and rehabilitation of families affected by the recent flash floods in the district.

A six-member delegation led by CoSAAP Keyi Panyor president Er Toko Lento and general secretary Chukhu Epa handed over the cheque to Deputy Commissioner Ankita Mishra at the District Secretariat in Yachuli.

The amount, raised through contributions from government employees and well-wishers, will be utilised for the rehabilitation of families affected by the flash floods in Possa, NEEPCO Colony and adjoining areas of Keyi Panyor district.

The association expressed gratitude to the CoSAAP Central Executive Committee, led by Likha Tech and the district units of Namsai, Papum Pare, Lohit, Leparada and East Siang for their support in mobilising the relief fund.

It also thanked government employees across Keyi Panyor district for their voluntary contributions.

Receiving the cheque, Deputy Commissioner Ankita Mishra appreciated the initiative and assured that the funds would be utilised transparently for the welfare, relief and rehabilitation of genuine flood-affected families.

CoSAAP reaffirmed its commitment to public service and thanked all donors and supporting organisations, stating that the collective effort reflected the spirit of compassion, unity and humanitarian service during a time of crisis.

West Kameng reviews preparations for civil defence mock drill



HT Correspondent

BOMDILA, Aug 4: The West Kameng district administration on Tuesday reviewed preparations for the upcoming Civil Defence Blackout Mock Drill during a coordination meeting chaired by Deputy Commissioner Dr Dilip Kumar at the DC's Conference Hall in Bomdila.

The meeting focused on the roles and responsibilities of the departments and agencies involved in the exercise, with officials providing detailed briefings to ensure smooth coordination during the mock drill.

Participants also shared suggestions and inputs aimed at ensuring the effective and successful conduct of the exercise.

The meeting was attended by Superintendent of Police Dorjee Wangdi Thongon, heads of departments, representatives of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), National Service Scheme (NSS), National Cadet Corps (NCC) and other officials.

West Kameng district is scheduled to conduct the Civil Defence Blackout Mock Drill on August 8 from 8 pm onwards.

Meghalaya secures ₹ 336 cr under Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0: Minister

SHILLONG, Aug 4: The Centre has approved ₹ 336.62 crore for Meghalaya under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) 2.0 for the financial year 2026-27, Public Health Engineering (PHE) Minister Marcuse Marak said on Tuesday.

Marak said the sanction, approved by the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti, would strengthen the implementation of JJM 2.0 in the state and enable the clearance of at least one-third of the pending bills of contractors executing drinking water projects under the mission.

"The subsequent instalments will also be released in due course



to ensure the timely and effective implementation of JJM 2.0 across Meghalaya," he said during a meeting with Union Jal Shakti Minister CR Patil in New Delhi.

The minister said Meghalaya's reform-linked sustainability initia-

tives under JJM and its continued efforts to provide safe and clean drinking water to households were appreciated by the Union minister during the meeting.

Marak also said Chief Minister Conrad Sangma sought Patil's support for the proposed Resubelpara Water Supply Scheme, which is expected to ensure a reliable, safe and sustainable drinking water supply for residents of Resubelpara in North Garo Hills district.

The Jal Jeevan Mission aims to provide functional household tap water connections to every rural household in the country. (PTI)

Elephant tusks, pangolin scales seized; 4 arrested in Meghalaya

SHILLONG, Aug 4: Four persons were arrested in two separate operations in Meghalaya's Ri Bhoi district after four elephant tusks and suspected pangolin scales were seized, officials said on Tuesday.

In the first operation, forest officials intercepted two suspects on the Nongpoh-Umden Road at Umwang on the basis of a tip-off, they said.

Four elephant tusks were recovered from their possession, they added. The two accused, identified as Tras Khyndei and Wilshon Khyndei of Ri Bhoi, were arrested under the provisions of the Wildlife (Pro-

tection) Act, 1972. In another operation at Shakhokuna village on August 2, a wildlife enforcement team intercepted three suspected traffickers and recovered two polythene bags containing articles suspected to be pangolin scales.

Two persons, Benedick Khyndei of Ri Bhoi district and Rupai Ingti of Assam's Kamrup district, were arrested, while another suspect managed to flee, officials said.

Investigations are underway to trace the source and intended destination of the seized wildlife contraband, they said. (PTI)

Militant arrested, arms, ammunition recovered in separate operations in Manipur

IMPHAL, Aug 4: Security forces arrested a 42-year-old militant belonging to a proscribed outfit in Manipur's Kakching district and seized a cache of arms and ammunition in a separate operation in Kangpokpi, police said on Tuesday.

The self-styled major of the banned Kangleipak Communist Party (Apunba) was apprehended from his residence in Wangoo Mameiching area on Monday, a police statement said. In a separate operation, security forces seized a cache of arms and ammunition in the hill range of Makokching jungle under the Saikul Police Station limits in Kangpokpi on the same day, it said.

"The recovered weapons include an M16 rifle, seven pistols, one Mark III rifle, one sniper rifle, one .22 bolt-action gun, 25 single-barrel guns, 76 live rounds of ammunition of different calibres, four pumps, three hand grenades and twenty detonators," the police statement said. (PTI)

Tripura CM to attend party's Delhi meet on polls to village committees in state

AGARTALA, Aug 4: Chief Minister Manik Saha will leave for New Delhi on Wednesday to attend a meeting with the BJP's central leadership to chalk out the party's strategy for the upcoming elections to the Village Committees under the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC).

The meeting will be chaired by BJP national president Nitin Nabin and attended by senior party leaders. The elections to 587 Village Committees under the TTAADC are scheduled to be held in the first half of September, marking the first such polls in a decade.

"I am going to Delhi on Wednesday to attend an organisational meeting convened to prepare the party's strategy for the upcoming Village Committee elections, though I have not yet received the agenda. Such meetings are usually held for organisational decisions, and accordingly I will participate," Saha told reporters. State BJP president Abhishek Debroy and the party's general secretary Bipin Debbarma will also attend the meeting.

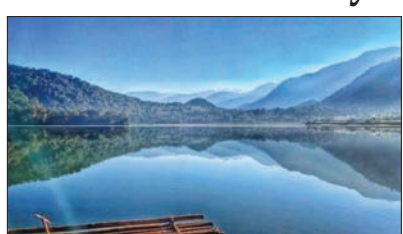
Debroy said the meeting would focus exclusively on organisational matters and would be presided over by the BJP national president. The State Election Commission had informed the Supreme Court in June that the Village Committee elections would be conducted in the first half of September after Tipra Motha Party founder Pradyot Kishore Debbarma filed a petition seeking early polls. (PTI)

Glaw Lake now Arunachal's 1st Ramsar site, recognition to boost biodiversity conservation: CM

ITANAGAR, Aug 4: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu said the recognition of Glaw Lake in Lohit district as the state's first Ramsar site of international importance will boost biodiversity conservation and promote sustainable livelihoods.

He said the announcement marked a major milestone in the ecological conservation history of the state and expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav. Yadav on Monday announced that the pristine freshwater body has become India's 101st Ramsar site.

"The designation of Glaw Lake as Arunachal Pradesh's first Ramsar site is



a proud milestone for our state. This recognition will strengthen biodiversity conservation, promote sustainable livelihoods, and inspire future generations to protect our priceless ecosystems," Khandu said in a social media post.

Nestled inside the Kamlang Tiger Reserve and Wildlife Sanctuary in the East-

ern Himalayas, Glaw Lake sits amidst dense primary forests.

Fed by perennial mountain streams, the high-altitude lake and its surrounding catchment area host over 150 tree species and 49 orchid species, making it a critical biodiversity hotspot for flora and fauna.

The Ramsar Convention is an intergovernmental environmental treaty established on February 2, 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar to protect wetlands like marshes, swamps, and lakes.

Administered under UNESCO, the treaty provides a global framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands and their resources. (PTI)

NO. KDB/BTC/15th FC(T)/NIT/2025-26/917

Date:04/08/2026

SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed tenders affixing a non-refundable Court Fee Stamp of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees Eight & Twenty-Five Paisa) only with a validity period of 180 (One Hundred Eighty) days, which will subsequently to be converted and drawn up in the APWD's printed F-2 forms are invited from the registered contractors of class-II and class-I (A, B & C) category of Assam PWD (Roads & Building) and BTC, according to their eligibility for submitting tenders for the following works under 6th Finance Commission Fund for the year 2025-26. The Tenders will be received by the undersigned up to 2.00 P.M. on 26.08.2026 and will be opened on the same date & place at 2.30 P.M. against the scheme shown below-

Sl. No.	Name of Scheme	A.A. Amount	Earnest Money	Cost of Tender paper	Time of Completion
1	Const. of Community Toilet at Belguri Village (AC-128505976).	17,85,833.00	17860/- (1% for ST, SC & OBC) & Rs. 35720/- (Gen)	Rs. 540.00	3 Months
2	Const. of Community Toilet at Bhatipara Muslim Basti (AC-128505963).	17,85,833.00	17860/- (1% for ST, SC & OBC) & Rs. 35720/- (Gen)	Rs. 540.00	3 Months
3	Const. of Community Toilet at Kultungpara (AC-128505990).	17,85,833.00	17860/- (1% for ST, SC & OBC) & Rs. 35720/- (Gen)	Rs. 540.00	3 Months

Details NIT may be seen in all working days during office hours in the office of the undersigned. Tender papers will be issued to the contractors or their authorized agent from 05.08.2026 to 26.08.2026 in the office of the undersigned on payment of cost of Tender paper in the form of demand draft/Banker Cheque from any Nationalized Bank, duly pledged in favour of Principal Secretary, BTC, Kokrajhar, payable at Kokrajhar.

IPR(BTC)/C/2026-27/1032

Sd/-Block Development Officer
Kokrajhar Development Block, Titaguri

Kashmir's rising MMA exponent Yaqoob gets grand reception after beating Bulgaria's Georgiev



SRINAGAR, Aug 4: Rising mixed martial arts exponent Owais Yaqoob, who defeated Bulgarian Delyan Georgiev last week, returned to his native village in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir to a rousing welcome on Tuesday.

Yaqoob said he will celebrate his victory without losing focus as he is up for another test in Istanbul later this month.

"I have returned home to my people, and I am feeling a very

good energy. My focus never wavered. I always celebrate my victories, but we always celebrate in a way that ensures our focus never shifts. Our focus remains on the fact that we are still hungry and we need to do more," Yaqoob said at his residence in Murrnan village.

He thanked the countrymen for supporting him all through.

"First of all, thank you to all of India. The whole of India celebrated with us today, and everyone

supported us and showed up. More than 1.6 million people watched the fight live from India for the first time, and the fight was going on at night, yet everyone was watching. This is a huge achievement for me," he said.

The 28-year-old, who has trained with Russian MMA fighters, said while winning the fight is great the bigger achievement is that the people are supporting and loving him.

"Their emotions are connected

to me, and that is a huge achievement. People give me the motivation to train. I called my family and told them I would celebrate today, sit with them, and start training again tomorrow because our next fight is coming up in Istanbul at the end of August. It will be a grappling match featuring major UFC fighters, and I will be there too," he said.

Yaqoob revealed that he became unwell a few days before the fight in Bulgaria but did not reveal it to anyone as he would have been accused of making excuses ahead of the big match.

"When I left from here, first, I had an injury in the foot, and then my shoulder got injured. After that, we went and travelled for 40 hours, and as soon as I reached the fight week, I got a fever and a cold. I wasn't sharing this with anyone because if I did, people would say I was making excuses," he said.

Asked about wearing a traditional Karakul cap while celebrating his win, Yaqoob said it represented the rich culture of Kashmir.

"The people we had from the old times, whose culture was good... better than ours, who were more modest, who had good discipline, who had good food... I wanted to represent all those things," he said. (PTI)

Venus Williams-Bublik, married couples among new teams entered for US Open mixed doubles



NEW YORK, Aug 4: An additional 13 teams, one featuring Venus Williams and some comprised of married couples, have entered the US Open mixed doubles championship.

The new duos announced Monday by the U.S. Tennis Association raised the total to 29 teams for the 16 spots in the main draw, which will be held on Aug 25 and Aug 26.

Williams is partnering with Alexander Bublik for the tournament that was overhauled last year, with a \$1 million prize to the winning team, in an effort to get top singles players to compete. Top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka and 24-time Grand Slam singles champion Novak Djokovic headlined the initial list of 16 teams who entered.

Elina Svitolina and her husband Gael Monfils, who is expected to play his final Grand Slam event at the US Open, and newlyweds Katie Boulter and Alex De Minaur also were among the new entries.

The other new teams: Karolina Muchova and Jakub Mensik, Anna Kalinskaya and Lorenzo Musetti, Emma Navarro and Tommy Paul, Maria Sakkari and Karen Khachanov, Tatjana Maria and Valentin Vacherot, Reese Brantmeier and Michael Zheng, Jelena Ostapenko and Marcelo Arevalo, Gabriela Dabrowski and Harri Heliovaara, Demi Schuurs and Julian Cash, and Caty McNally and Robert Cash.

Teams can enter until Aug. 17, when the six duos with the best combined singles rankings at the time will be automatically entered

into the main draw. That means Sabalenka, the two-time defending US Open women's champion, and Djokovic, still ranked No. 5 on the men's tour at age 39, will be safely into the field.

Eight teams will be given wild cards by the USTA, and two other teams will play their way into the field through a new qualifying tournament to be held Aug 24.

Besides Sabalenka and Djokovic, teams previously announced were: Iga Swiatek and Casper Ruud, the runners-up in 2025; Elena Rybakina and Taylor Fritz, the Japanese duo of Naomi Osaka and Kei Nishikori, Jessica Pegula and Jack Draper, Mirra Andreva and Andrey Rublev, Belinda Bencic and Flavio Cobolli, Diana Shnaider and Daniil Medvedev, Amanda Anisimova and Learner Tien, Alex Eala and Felix Auger-Aliassime, Leylah Fernandez and Frances Tiafoe, Taylor Townsend and Alexander Zverev, Elena-Gabriela Ruse and Nuno Borges, Sara Errani and Andrea Vavassori, Katerina Siniakova and Henry Patten, and siblings Peyton Stearns and Preston Stearns.

Errani and Vavassori are the two-time defending US Open champions. The Italians needed a wild card to get into last year's event because their singles ranking was too low, and that will be the case again this year. (AP)

Arsene Wenger backs decision to drop Gianni Infantino's WC sell-off plan



GENEVA, Aug 4: FIFA executive Arsene Wenger on Tuesday distanced himself from Gianni Infantino's failed plan to sell stakes in future World Cup profits to private investors and said it was "absolutely necessary" to drop the proposal.

Wenger's statement on the controversy came after a letter from UEFA's lawyers to Infantino threatening legal action named the French coaching great among 18 executives whose data and communications should be retained as potential evidence.

"I was not involved in this strategic plan and first became aware of the project through media reports," said Wenger, who was hired by Infantino in 2019 and is FIFA's Chief of Global Football Development.

The statement by the former Arsenal coach did not name Infantino.

"The decision to withdraw the project was absolutely necessary and beyond question, because I firmly believe in an independent FIFA that serves our game with commitment, transparency, and integrity," Wenger wrote.

Infantino withdrew his \$20 billion proposal early Saturday after a furious backlash by global soccer officials, including European body UEFA warning of a boycott of all FIFA games and events. (AP)

Nabi's ability to get batters out while defending is his biggest asset: Pathan

NEW DELHI, Aug 4: Auqib Nabi's knack for forcing top batters into errors while they are defending, rather than relying on raw pace, could be his biggest strength as the Jammu and Kashmir pacer prepares for international cricket, feels former India all-rounder Irfan Pathan.

Nabi's long-awaited India call-up came on Monday when the selectors named him as injured Jasprit Bumrah's replacement in the upcoming two-Test series in Sri Lanka beginning August 15.

Pathan, who first spotted Nabi during trials in Srinagar in 2018 and later mentored Jammu and Kashmir's young cricketers, believes the pacer's natural action, wrist position and ability to move the ball make him effective without express pace.

"The optimum pace to get the ball moving is around 135 kph. If you can get it to swing, that too late, then you are good," Pathan told PTI in an interview.

"And with the rhythm and with the kind of action he has, we can touch 133-135 kph on a regular basis. That's what I believe," he added.

For Pathan, however, pace is only one part of the equation. The bigger quality is whether a bowler can make top-class batters defend and still find a way to get them out.

"Does the bowler have the ability to get the batters, the top-quality batters, out while defending? This is the other quality you seek," he said.

Pathan has seen Nabi produce that kind of bowling against high-quality batters in domestic cricket, including in the Ranji Trophy final when they pipped Karnataka on first innings lead to clinch a historic maiden title earlier this year.

"We have seen that in the Ranji Trophy final, he troubled KL Rahul, he didn't even get a wicket. In that too, he defended normally



and dismissed the batsman," he said.

The former India pacer also saw Nabi create similar problems for batters in Mumbai.

"In Mumbai, I saw the match, Shreyas and our current players, he was dismissing them the same way. So, on different pitches, the top-quality batsmen defend and get dismissed. That means he has the ability," Pathan said.

Bigger test
Test cricket, however, will provide a bigger examination, particularly on flat pitches where bowlers need something extra to create chances.

"Obviously, when you play Test cricket, the challenge becomes even more. Because sometimes, you get the flattest pitch in the world," he said.

"And then obviously, you need to have some extra. In that extra ability, can he use the angle? Can he call the wicket-keeper up? Eventually, it's all about the performances. Can you perform?" Pathan added.

Pathan, who claimed 301 international wickets, said a bowler does not necessarily need express pace if he possesses the skill to deceive batters.

"I've been able to take 301 inter-

national wickets. I was not bowling 150kph," he said.

"My ability was to get the batsman out LBW before they think that ball will not come in," Pathan added.

He believes Nabi's inclusion can provide a major boost to his confidence, even if he has to wait for his opportunity.

"For Auqib to be in the squad right now, even though he was not the first choice, he came as a replacement of Jasprit Bumrah, it will still give him a lot of confidence. Because being in the squad is a big thing," Pathan added.

He feels the opportunity to train alongside India's best batters will also be an important learning experience.

"It's a pleasure to play for India. It's the biggest achievement you can have, playing for India and especially in Test cricket," he said.

"When you go in the nets and when you play with the team, when you actually bowl against the solid, top-quality batters, you learn a lot as well. The management also will get a sighter of what Auqib can do in the nets," Pathan added.

Pathan feels Nabi's domestic performances deserved to be rewarded sooner and believes his opportunity has arrived at the right

time.

"The good thing is, his performance in domestic cricket got rewarded. I thought he should have been rewarded a bit earlier," he said.

"I think Afghanistan has already been the perfect start for him. But better late than never," he added.

Pathan's association with Nabi dates back to the 2018 trials in Srinagar, where eight fast bowlers had been called up.

Nabi immediately stood out for his skill and his ability to bowl long spells in junior cricket.

"Specially, I liked the skill of Nabi. He used to bowl long spells in junior cricket," he recalled.

Pathan said his approach to selection was never influenced by a player's name or place of origin.

The focus was on identifying the best talent and players with the potential to develop.

"I didn't care about the names. I didn't care if they came from Baranulla, Anantnag or Kupwara. I even used to go to Kupwara to pick up people," he said.

"So, my aim was to get the best players. But at the same time, I wanted to get the best players who had the potential," Pathan added.

Action over pace
Pathan's most important advice to Nabi, meanwhile, was to preserve the action that had already given him control and movement rather than chasing extra pace.

"When I met him for the first time, the first thing when he asked me, I had told him, 'Never change your action. No matter who tells you that,'" Pathan said.

"A lot of people will say to speed you up. A lot of people will say a lot of things about non-bowling arm. But don't change your action," he added.

Pathan explained that Nabi's action keeps his bowling close to his body and helps him maintain his alignment. (PTI)

Jadeja's attacking mindset has made him a more complete red-ball bowler: Pujara



NEW DELHI, Aug 4: Former India batter Cheteshwar Pujara believes Ravindra Jadeja has grown as a Test cricketer after making the transition from a defensive bowler to someone who is constantly hunting for wickets in recent years.

Jadeja has evolved into one of India's premier match-winners in the longest format, complementing his impeccable accuracy with a far more attacking approach.

Apart from taking wickets, he has also made some vital contributions with the bat, establishing himself as one of the world's finest all-rounders in red-ball cricket.

"Earlier, when Ravindra Jadeja used to bowl, his mindset was not to give away too many runs, especially in red-ball cricket. If there was a little help in the wicket, then he would try to take wickets. But if the wicket was not conducive to bowlers, his focus was on re-

stricting the runs," Pujara said on JioStar ahead of India's Test series against Sri Lanka beginning August 15.

Jadeja has 348 wickets in 89 Tests at an impressive average of 25.12.

"...he has understood his own strengths and is bowling accordingly. In every game, he is trying to land the ball in the line of the stumps and get the batter out," Pujara explained.

Pujara said Jadeja's biggest improvement has been the change in his mindset, with the veteran now looking to dismiss batters with every delivery rather than merely containing the scoring rate.

Pujara said the shift in Jadeja's approach has enabled him to think proactively as a bowler and use variations more effectively.

"Earlier, his mindset was a little more defensive, but now he is delivering every ball with the purpose of taking a wicket.

"So, your think a little more about your game. You use the crease a little better, try to go wider, and adjust your length according to the batter. That mental shift is very important for the game," he added.

Jadeja has been India's go-to spinner across conditions in recent years, with his relentless accuracy, subtle variations and ability to exploit even marginal assistance making him a wicket-taking option both at home and overseas.

His improved attacking intent has also helped him shoulder greater responsibility in Test cricket following the retirement of senior off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin. (PTI)

Prioritise women boxers, better bet for 2028 Olympic medal: Akhil Kumar



NEW DELHI, Aug 4: India's women pugilists are a stronger bet for an Olympic medal than their male counterparts and should be prioritised in the overall planning for the 2028 Los Angeles Games, says boxer-turned-police officer Akhil Kumar, lauding their record-shattering Commonwealth Games performance.

In a telephonic interview to PTI, Akhil, who was the only Indian boxer to strike gold at the 2006 Commonwealth Games, said he was quite impressed with the country's performance in Glasgow where it finished with its best ever tally of seven gold medals in boxing, six of them coming from women.

Women's boxing came into the CWG only in 2014 and featured just three categories -- 51kg, 60kg and 75kg -- to start with. This was two years after it entered the Olympics programme in the same three divisions. M C Mary Kom (2012, London) and Lovlina Borgohain (2021, Tokyo) have won Olympic medals for India in women's boxing.

"They (the women boxers) are clearly delivering better results. The weight categories are also increasing, they deserve to be prioritised? Among the current crop of male boxers, I don't really think there is anyone who can be an Olympic medalist at this stage. If there is a drastic improvement going forward, which I hope there is, I will change my view," the Haryana Police ACP said.

"At this point, it's the women boxers who have the advantage. We have adapted to the expansion of the sport quite well and given how it has grown, I guess India is better positioned to deliver more than one Olympic medal in women's boxing in

2028," he added.

The CWG programme in Glasgow featured seven weight categories for women, one more than last time. The men's event also comprised seven categories, achieving gender parity for the first time.

The weight divisions were also the ones that would be at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. The Indian women won medals in all seven categories, six gold and a silver. The men, on the other hand, managed two gold, and a silver.

The competition in the women's event featured 70 boxers from 43 countries, 11 more than previous edition's 59 participants from 55 countries. The male competition, however, shrank to 131 from 43 countries instead of 172 from 55 nations in 2022.

Asked to name the boxers who stood out during the competition, the former Asian champion and Olympic quarterfinalist said the gold-winning duo of Jaismine Lamboria (57kg) and Sakshi Chaudhary (51kg) displayed an all-round game which was also fairly gutsy. Among the men, he saw potential in Jadumani Singh (55kg), who was a silver-medallist.

"I have been talking about how good Jaismine is for a very long time, so I am not surprised that she has won gold, also Sakshi was a revelation. In Jadu-

mani, I see raw speed, right amount of power and he knows how to keep his distance. Very confident southpaw and has potential," he said.

"But we should remember that at the Asian Games, all these 'Stans' (Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan most notably) will come into the equation along with Japan and Korea. Let's see how we respond to that challenge," he noted.

Need heroes
Medals are regularly coming in for Indian boxing but Akhil believes the sport is in desperate need of heroes who can connect and inspire the next generation.

The sport was galvanised significantly by India's historic 2008 Beijing Olympics performance where Vijender Singh won a path-breaking bronze, while Akhil defeated the then world number one enroute to the quarterfinals in a gutsy display. It eventually tapered off due to several factors in the next decade.

"All sports need performance but in addition they also need heroes, who can inspire the masses. When youngsters see an athlete's struggle, discipline and hard work, they get inspired. I believe boxing doesn't have that kind of stories right now which feel organic like it was with Vijender or me," he noted.

"Take for instance Neeraj Chopra, now he is a

hero because his conduct and performance are both top notch. He embodies the very best of an athlete. Manu Bhaker, look at the way she has addressed the youth of this country in past few days, it's inspiring. Can we say Indian boxing has any such hero who can connect? Not right now, I think," he added.

Trials only fair way
Touching upon the controversy around the seeding-based system of selection in Indian boxing, Akhil said the concept is "rubbish and is perhaps designed by someone who has never achieved anything in the ring."

Trials were conducted to select the teams for CWG after Sports Authority of India's intervention after the seeding-based-system, that relies on subjective metrics such as training performance, including punctuality, was denounced as ambiguous by both SAI and Sports Ministry.

"Boxing is about fighting three rounds of three minutes. Beyond that, who can run faster or what time they show up at training means absolutely nothing. Those metrics should come into play only if a trial throws up a tied result.

"If you have two boxers of same calibre then evaluate who is more disciplined or more worthy but if there is a hands down better fighter then nothing else should matter," he said. (PTI)

India put up stellar performance in Glasgow Commonwealth Games: Haryana CM



CHANDIGARH, Aug 4: Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Tuesday said India put up a stellar performance at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games and it is also a matter of pride that of the 39 medals 10 have been won by sportspersons from Haryana.

Addressing a news conference here, Saini said the state government would soon organise a felicitation ceremony to honour Haryana's medal winners at the Commonwealth Games.

He said contribution by Haryana sportspersons to the impressive medal tally was the outcome of the

state's progressive sports policy. More than 2,000 sports nurseries were currently nurturing talent across Haryana, ensuring that young athletes received training and support from the grassroots level.

"It is a matter of pride that in Glasgow Commonwealth Games India has produced a stellar performance. Our players have won 39 medals," he said.

"Of the 39 medals, 10 have been won by players from Haryana and it is a matter of pride for me and all Haryanis. Twenty-five per cent of the total medals have been won by

our players from Haryana in CWG.

"Of the 13 gold medals India won, seven have been won by players from Haryana. Five of these have been won by women players. I congratulate all our 'dhakad' players," he said.

Saini said Haryana's Sports Minister Gaurav Gautam received the players when they landed at the international airport in Delhi in early hours of Tuesday.

Our players are bringing glory for the nation. Geographically, Haryana is a small state, but when medals are won, entire country looks to Haryana, he said.

Congratulating the medal winners, their parents and coaches, he said their achievements had once again brought laurels to Haryana and further strengthened the State's reputation as India's sporting powerhouse.

Replying to another question, Saini said that during the previous Congress government, the prevailing approach towards sportspersons was summed up by the phrase "Padak Lao, Pad Pao". (PTI)

The exercise aligns with the National Compliance Reduction and Deregulation Initiative

Kerala unveils AI-led governance overhaul to streamline administration, speed up public services



THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Aug 4: The Kerala government has launched a sweeping overhaul of its administrative machinery, introducing AI-assisted governance, digital public service delivery, faster land acquisition, deregulation and integrated planning systems as part of a broader effort to modernise the state's bureaucracy and improve ease of doing business and ease of living.

The reforms, rolled out over the past month, include the creation of a central programme management unit to monitor priority projects, an AI-enabled business process re-engineering cell, a review of obsolete laws and regulations, adoption of a "once-only" document submission framework through DigiLocker, and new digital platforms for public asset management, infrastructure planning and land acquisition, according to official notifications and official sources.

The reforms, announced under

the leadership of Chief Minister VD Sathesaran, include the creation of new coordination and policy units, a review of outdated laws and regulations, digital integration of government services and technology-enabled reforms in land management, litigation and public asset tracking.

At the centre of the overhaul is the newly constituted Co-ordination and Programme Management Division (CPMD) in the Office of the Chief Secretary. The division

has been established to support the Chief Minister's Office and the Chief Secretary's Office in monitoring and ensuring the time-bound implementation of priority projects and budget announcements.

A Business Policy and Process Re-engineering (BPPR) Cell has also been established to comprehensively revise the Secretariat Office Manual and the Rules of Business using AI-assisted tools and global best practices to simplify government procedures.

As part of its deregulation agenda, the state has initiated a review of outdated Acts and rules to identify legal provisions that have become redundant or create administrative overlaps. The exercise aligns with the National Compliance Reduction and Deregulation Initiative.

To simplify citizen services, Kerala will implement a "once-only" data-sharing principle by integrating DigiLocker-based document management, enabling residents to submit documents only once while accessing multiple government services, sources said.

The reforms also introduce a suite of technology-driven platforms for planning and governance.

The SAMPATH portal will serve as a GIS-based digital register of state-owned land, buildings and other public assets, using AI-based analytics to support maintenance planning. (PTI)

Viral social media claim of army bus causing major crash in Delhi misleading, says police



NEW DELHI, Aug 4: A viral social media claim alleging that an Army bus was being driven on the wrong side at high speed before crashing into multiple vehicles near Rajendra Nagar Chowk in central Delhi is misleading, police said on Tuesday.

According to the Delhi Police, the incident involved a minor collision between a van and a Border Security Force (BSF) bus near the Chanakya-puri turn close to the Mandir Marg roundabout, and not a major accident as claimed in social media posts.

Police said a PCR call regarding a road accident was received at Rajender Nagar police station at 3.30 pm. A police team rushed to the spot and found that the collision

had taken place while the two vehicles were negotiating a turn.

"The van and the BSF bus sustained a minor collision near the Chanakya-puri turn. The driver of the van suffered minor injuries and was shifted to Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital by a PCR van for medical examination," a police officer said.

No other person was injured in the incident, police said.

The clarification came after messages circulated widely on social media claimed that an Army bus had crossed the road divider, was travelling on the wrong side at high speed and rammed several vehicles near Rajendra Nagar Chowk, leaving multiple people injured. (PTI)

Ex-DGP of Haryana offers 5-point plan to police generation that records everything

CHANDIGARH, Aug 4: A former Haryana police chief has proposed a five-point plan to equip police personnel to work in front of a generation that films and broadcasts everything, emphasising reforms in the selection and training process of the constabulary.

Former Haryana Director General of Police O P Singh, in an essay published on his newsletter, said the arrival on Indian streets of a young, connected and constantly recording public had changed the work faster than the systems that recruit and train for it. India's median citizen is 29.2 years old, and with more than a billion internet users, a gathering today turns into a "broadcast" instead.

He said the policeman standing in front of it has acquired three duties nobody trained him for -- to explain himself in advance to strangers, to work while being recorded, and to separate a handful of troublemakers from a peaceful majority "quickly and visibly".

Explanation, which used to be a courtesy, has now become the most valuable minute of the day,

he wrote.

Citing the recommendations made by the committee on police training constituted under Professor M S Gore on November 10, 1971, he said the training should be continuous through a career, with refresher, specialist, promotion and orientation courses at every rank. According to Singh, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs also asked for soft skills and behavioural change in February 2022.

"What has changed is the cost of waiting. The street now records the consequence," he said.

On the reforms in the process of selection of constabulary and sub-inspectors, who remain at the plan's centre of gravity, he called for incorporating situational exercises in addition to the reasoning, general knowledge, quantitative aptitude and English comprehension in their recruitment process.

The force numbers about 20.3 lakh and some 86 per cent of it is constabulary. He said, "It is a constable at a barricade and a sub-inspector across a desk whom the

citizen actually meets."

Selection at that level does not test for judgement or the ability to explain, he said, proposing the addition of a short structured interview or a written situational exercise asking a candidate "How he would explain a police action to an unhappy citizen, and one line to the appraisal record for community engagement and public communication".

"It need not lengthen the process by a day," he wrote. "This is the one measure that reaches 86 per cent of the force."

Both changes required a state government decision rather than expenditure, he said.

According to him, the three measures a Director General could order on his own authority were practising facing hostile questions on camera in the state police academy, a weekly ninety-minute debrief in every unit held in the open and without punishment attached, and a standing instruction that senior officers carry junior ones through the ordinary working week. (PTI)

SC asks Bombay HC to decide ex-minister Manikrao Kokate's plea in cheating case in 6 months

NEW DELHI, Aug 4: The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Bombay High Court to decide within six months the revision application filed by former Maharashtra minister Manikrao Kokate in a cheating and forgery case connected to a government housing scheme.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and justices Joy-malya Bagchi and V Mohana also extended the stay on the conviction of Kokate in the case.

The top court had on December 22 last year stayed the conviction and clarified that he shall not face any disqualification as an MLA.

The case, concerning a housing scheme for EWS with an annual income limit of ₹ 30,000, dates back to 1989-1992.

Kokate is an MLA from the Sinnar constituency in Nashik district. His conviction and a two-year sentence by a magistrate in February 2025 were upheld by the Nashik sessions court on December 16, holding that he and his brother dishonestly in-

duced the state government to allot them flats.

The Bombay High Court on December 19, 2025 suspended Kokate's two-year jail term in the cheating and forgery case. It granted him bail but refused to stay his conviction.

The high court said in the order that it cannot stay the conviction as there was prima facie evidence pointing to the NCP leader's involvement in the case in which he was accused of securing a flat in a government scheme meant for the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) by submitting false affidavits.

The high court noted that the jail term handed to him by the magistrate's court was only two years and he had been on bail throughout the trial and hearing of his appeal before the session's court, hence it was inclined to grant him bail.

In his appeal before the high court, Kokate termed his conviction arbitrary and illegal.

As the opposition clamoured for his ouster, Kokate was divested of his portfolios on December 17. (PTI)

Mumbai consumer panel orders insurance firm to cough up ₹ 1.2 cr for liquor stock ruined in floods

MUMBAI, Aug 4: A consumer disputes commission here lifted a city-based liquor wholesaler's spirits by directing National Insurance Company Ltd to pay him more than ₹ 1.2 crore for stock ruined during the 2017 flooding in the city.

The South Mumbai District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, in an order passed last month, held the claim rejection "arbitrary and unreasonable", noting that floodwaters had rendered the liquor unfit for sale, making the insurer liable to pay the assessed loss with nine per cent interest.

A Kurla-based firm engaged in the wholesale liquor business claimed that torrential rainfall in Mumbai on August 29, 2017 had inundated its warehouse.

"Muddy floodwater damaged large quantities of liquor bottles and cans by rusting the caps, damaging labels and contaminating the stock, rendering the goods unfit for sale as per industry standards and under the supervision of the State Excise Department," the complainant said.

The firm claimed that despite



the insurer's own surveyor assessing the loss and recommending a settlement of ₹ 1.2 crore, the insurance company formally repudiated the claim on January 14, 2020.

The insurer argued that the trading firm failed to produce forensic laboratory reports proving the liquor was unfit for human consumption, and additionally failed to provide videographic evidence of the damaged stock's destruction.

After hearing both sides, the commission noted that the state excise department had officially confirmed the liquor was submerged

in polluted Mithi River floodwater and was unfit for consumption.

It further pointed out that the state excise authorities had clarified that no laboratory would certify such contaminated stock, and the goods were destroyed under strict official supervision.

The commission held that the insurer had unlawfully ignored its own independent surveyor's report.

"The requirement of a forensic report is neither found in the policy conditions nor supported by the state excise authorities, who are

the competent statutory authority governing liquor stocks," the commission remarked. The panel asserted that the insurance company rejected its surveyor's findings, but never obtained any contrary expert opinion.

"It is well settled that though the insurer is not invariably bound by the surveyor's report, it cannot discard such a report arbitrarily or on mere suspicion," it added.

The commission, therefore, held that the "repudiation of the claim was not based upon any valid or sustainable ground", but was "arbitrary, unreasonable and amounts to clear deficiency in service".

The panel directed the insurance company to pay the assessed loss amount of ₹ 1,20,12,403 to the complainant, with 9 per cent per annum interest, calculated from January 14, 2020, the date the claim was initially repudiated, until realisation.

It also awarded the complainant an additional ₹ 1 lakh as compensation for mental stress, inconvenience, and hardship and ₹ 25,000 for litigation costs. (PTI)

Married woman, lover held for killing her former partner in UP's Mau

MAU (UP), Aug 4: A married woman and her alleged lover have been arrested for the murder of her former partner in Uttar Pradesh's Mau district, while another accused is absconding, police said on Tuesday.

The victim, Asgar Ali, a resident of Jangipur in neighbouring Ghazipur district, was found stabbed to death in a rented room in the Kanshiram Colony area under the Sarailkhansi police station limits early Monday.

Additional Superintendent of Police Anoop Kumar said the investigation revealed that the murder was the result of a love affair and personal rivalry.

"The accused woman, Shahzadi, had been living separately from her husband for around two-and-a-half years. During this period, she developed a relationship with Asgar Ali, but the two later fell out. She subsequently became close to Akash Rao, while Suraj Rajbhar was also in contact with her," Kumar said.

The officer said Asgar allegedly objected to her relationship with Akash and had assaulted her, follow-



ing which Shahzadi and Akash allegedly conspired to eliminate him.

"To execute the plan, a rented room was arranged in Kanshiram Colony. At around 4.40 am on Monday, Akash Rao and Suraj Rajbhar reached the room. Asgar was overpowered by Suraj, while Akash stabbed him in the chest with a sharp-edged weapon, killing him on the spot," Kumar said.

According to the officer, the two accused fled on a scooter after the incident, while Shahzadi left the room shortly afterwards.

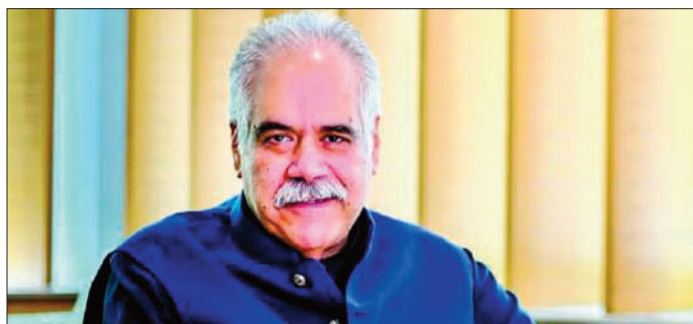
Police have arrested Shahzadi and Suraj Rajbhar and seized the scooter allegedly used in the crime, Kumar said.

Efforts are on to recover the murder weapon and arrest Akash Rao, who is absconding and has a criminal history, the officer said.

"Preliminary investigation and interrogation of the accused indicate that the murder was the outcome of a conspiracy driven by a love affair and jealousy. Further legal proceedings are underway," Kumar added. (PTI)

IndiGo started operations on August 4, 2006 and now operates nearly 2,200 daily flights

On 20th anniversary, IndiGo MD Bhatia says 'best is yet to come'



NEW DELHI, Aug 4: IndiGo Co-Founder and Managing Director Rahul Bhatia on Tuesday said the "best is yet to come" as the airline completed 20 years of flying and will be piloted by new CEO Willie Walsh.

"India's aviation story is only just beginning and the country is destined to become one of the world's great aviation hubs... our airline has played an important

role in that journey," Bhatia said in a message to staffers.

IndiGo started operations on August 4, 2006 and now operates nearly 2,200 daily flights with a fleet of over 430 planes.

What started as an ambitious vision has become one of the world's most admired aviation success stories, Bhatia said, adding that the next chapter promises even greater growth, greater innovation and

greater global relevance.

Bhatia said he was handing over the baton to Walsh and described him as the leader who will guide the airline into its next exciting phase of growth. "The best is yet to come".

IndiGo plans to operate nearly 3,000 daily departures, serve nearly 200 million passengers annually and expand its fleet to more than 550 aircraft by 2030.

After the sudden exit of Pieter Elbers in March against the backdrop of massive flight disruptions in December last year, Bhatia started managing the affairs of the airline as an interim CEO.

On March 31, the day the appointment of Walsh as the CEO was announced, Bhatia, in a message to employees, had described himself as "Kuchh Hee Dinon Kaa Mehmaan", which means a guest for a short time. (PTI)

HP: Police, home guard rescue 25 nomads trapped in the spating Jalmusha river

NAHAN (HP), Aug 4: A major tragedy was averted as Sirmour Police and Home Guard Jawans rescued 25 people belonging to the nomad community trapped in the surging Jalmusha River amid heavy rainfall in Himachal's Sirmour district on Tuesday.

About 25 members of four nomadic (Gujjar) families were trapped in the river due to a sudden flood caused by heavy rains near the Katsan Temple, about 25 kilometres from Nahan, along the Nahan-Paonta-Chandigarh National Highway, police said.

According to the police, on Tuesday, an individual named Bhupendra Kumar informed the Sadar Police Station, Nahan, about people trapped in the Jalmusha river, following which police, Home Guard, and fire brigade teams rushed to the spot, while an NDRF team was kept on standby.

The thehsildar of Paonta and other administrative officials also arrived at the scene to oversee the rescue operation. All the people were safely evacuated after a three-hour risky rescue operation amid heavy rain.

An eyewitness from Kolar village told PTI that the jawans formed a human chain using ropes in the raging river and pulled out each person one by one. (PTI)

Placement fraud racket busted in Delhi; seven held for duping job seekers

NEW DELHI, Aug 4: Seven persons have been apprehended for allegedly operating a fake placement agency here and cheating job seekers on the pretext of providing employment, police said on Tuesday.

According to the police, the accused were running an unregistered placement agency in west Delhi's Uttam Nagar area, and luring job aspirants through online employment portals by posing as HR executives.

The matter came to light following a complaint from a Karol Bagh resident, who alleged he had received a message from a person claiming to be an HR executive in response to an online job application.

He was called for an interview at the agency's office in Uttam Nagar on July 25, where he was allegedly asked to pay ₹ 4,800 as registration and account opening charges. He was assured that the amount would be refunded after he joined the job.

"However, neither was any job provided nor was the money refunded, and the mobile numbers used to contact him later became unreachable," a senior officer said.

Based on the complaint, a case was registered on August 1. During the probe, police analysed mobile phone records, digital payment trails

and beneficiary bank accounts before raiding the placement agency's 'office' at Jeevan Park in Uttam Nagar.

"The team apprehended seven accused from the premises. They have been identified as Preeti Malhotra (34), the alleged mastermind of the racket, Divya (33), Lalita alias Pinky (32), Naina (33), Priyanka (28), Kapil Kumar Sharma (30) and Lalit Kumar (28)," the officer said.

According to police, the accused advertised attractive job openings on online portals and contacted unemployed people through messages and phone calls while posing as HR executives. After conducting sham interviews, they allegedly collected ₹ 3,000 to ₹ 4,000 from each candidate as registration, processing and account opening charges, promising the amount would be refunded.

"The victims were neither provided jobs nor refunded the money," the officer said.

During the investigation, police found five complaints on the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal linked to the mobile numbers and bank accounts allegedly used by the accused, indicating that more victims may have been cheated, the officer said, adding that further investigation is underway. (PTI)