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Mizoram Uncovers Suspected Cross-Border Militant Supply Network Near Bangladesh Border

AIZAWL
Security forces in Mizoram have uncovered what officials suspect to be a clandestine cross-border militant supply network following the arrest of three alleged cadres of the Bangladesh-based insurgent outfit United People's Democratic Front-Prasit and the recovery of a large cache of arms and ammunition near the Indo-Bangladesh border.

The joint operation was carried out on Sunday by personnel of the Border Security Force and the Mizoram Police CID Special Branch.

According to officials, the three suspects were intercepted in Aizawl district while allegedly attempting to move through Mizoram towards Bangladesh using remote forest routes passing through the Dampa Tiger Reserve sector in western Mizoram.

Police identified the arrested individuals as Apon Chakma, Nihar Ranjan Chakma and Moni Karbari Chakma. All three are currently being held at Sairang Police Station for interrogation.

Security officials said the arrests led to a series of follow-up search operations in dense forest areas across the Dampa Tiger Reserve corridor in Mamit district. During the first recovery operation, security personnel unearthed a concealed cache containing 1,799 rounds of 7.62 mm live ammunition hidden inside a jungle area around eight kilometres from the initial arrest location. Based on information gathered during interrogation, investigators later launched another operation in a forest area located nearly six kilometres from Saithah village under West Phaileng Police Station limits.

Officials said the second recovery included two AK-47 assault rifles, two magazines and 12 additional rounds of ammunition.

WHO SAID WHAT



"The Enriched Uranium (Nuclear Dust!) will either be immediately turned over to the United States or be brought home and destroyed or, preferably, in conjunction and coordination with the Islamic Republic of Iran, destroyed in place or..."

- President Donald J. Trump

Manipuri Astrophysicist Ronaldo Laishram Names Ancient Galaxy Protocluster After Loktak Lake

IMPHAL

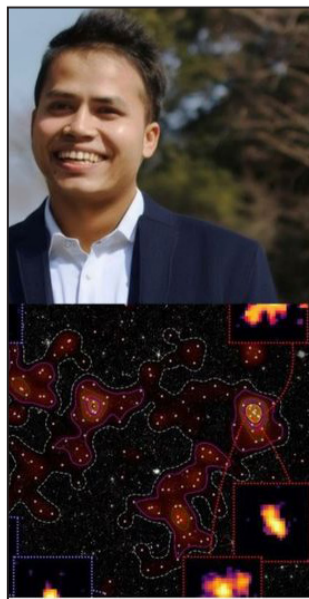
Ronaldo Laishram has led an international team of researchers in discovering a massive protocluster of young galaxies dating back nearly 12.6 billion years, shedding new light on how galaxies evolved in the early Universe.

The discovery, published in The Astrophysical Journal Letters, identifies a giant galaxy structure named the "Loktak Protocluster", inspired by Loktak Lake, the iconic freshwater lake in Manipur known for its interconnected floating phumdis.

Astronomers said the protocluster existed when the Universe was only around 1.2 billion years old. A protocluster is considered an early-stage galaxy cluster - a vast grouping of galaxies still forming under the influence of gravity.

The newly discovered system consists of four interconnected concentrations of galaxies evolving together within a dense cosmic environment, drawing parallels with the floating formations seen across Loktak Lake.

Dr Laishram, currently a researcher at the National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, said naming the structure after Loktak was a tribute to his



roots in Manipur.

"Loktak is deeply connected to Manipur's identity. Naming this discovery after Loktak Lake is my way of connecting our home with the wider Universe," he said, adding that "the name Loktak will continue to echo in

the story of the Universe".

The research team used observations gathered from the Subaru Telescope and the James Webb Space Telescope to examine the distant structure in unprecedented detail.

According to the study, galaxies

GUWAHATI

Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday appealed to people in Assam to refrain from cow sacrifice during Bakrid, stating that no religious scripture mandates the practice and describing the move as a step towards strengthening communal harmony in the state.

Speaking on the third day of the Assam Assembly session, the chief minister said several Bengali Muslim organisations in Assam had already decided against sacrificing cows during Eid al-Adha out of respect for the sentiments of the Hindu community.

"This indicates a new era and presents a clear direction for the future before us," Sarma said, while thanking sections of the Muslim community for what he termed a thoughtful initiative aimed at promoting peaceful coexistence.



He said the decision, if adopted more widely, would positively impact communal relations in the state. "We have always wanted people in Assam to live together peacefully, and this step will definitely strengthen that spirit," he added.

The chief minister also appealed to others yet to decide on the matter to "draw inspiration" from those organisations that had opted for alternative forms of sacrifice this year.

During his address, Sarma further highlighted the state govern-

ment's proposed Uniform Civil Code Bill, claiming it would provide greater social security for men and women belonging to minority communities.

Touching on Assam's economic performance, the chief minister said the state's GDP had grown to Rs 8.71 lakh crore over the past five years. He expressed confidence that Assam's poverty rate could decline to between 2 and 3 per cent over the next five years.

Sarma also said maternal mortality rates in the state had seen significant improvement over the last decade and announced that the government would continue its employment drive by providing government jobs to two lakh youths.

Emphasising entrepreneurship and self-employment, he said the government was working towards creating 10 lakh young entrepreneurs in Assam, each potentially

generating jobs for at least 10 more people.

Criticising the previous Congress government, the chief minister alleged that Assam had faced severe financial distress during its tenure, claiming that salaries of government employees had remained unpaid for six months at one stage.

He asserted that the NDA government had received a mandate for development and security and reiterated its commitment to safeguarding the interests of indigenous communities in Assam.

Sarma further stated that making Assam "foreigner-free" would remain one of the government's primary priorities over the next five years. Reaffirming the government's stand against illegal infiltration, he said strict measures would continue to identify and deport foreigners residing illegally in the state.

Himanta, Tobgay Discuss Expanding Assam-Bhutan Partnership



GUWAHATI

Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday thanked Bhutan Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay for visiting Assam and said the long-standing relationship between Assam and Bhutan would be strengthened further through deeper regional cooperation and bilateral engagement.

Responding to Tobgay's post on X, Sarma said Assam valued its "multi-faceted partnership with Bhutan" and expressed confidence that ties between the two sides would continue to grow under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Thank you for your wonderful visit and the meaningful discussions," Sarma said, adding that Assam would "further strengthen this bond in the coming days". Earlier, Tobgay shared details

of his meetings with Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya and Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma during his visit to Guwahati.

The Bhutanese leader said the discussions reaffirmed a shared commitment to enhancing the "close and enduring ties between Bhutan and Assam".

Tobgay arrived in Guwahati on Monday and was accorded a formal welcome by the Assam Governor and Chief Minister, reflecting the close diplomatic, cultural, and economic relationship shared between Assam and Bhutan.

Following his arrival, the Bhutan Prime Minister visited the State Guest House at Koinadhora, where he was received by Assam Cabinet Minister Atul Bora.

Bora described the Assam-Bhutan relationship as one built on "mutual trust, harmony and deep socio-cultural ties". He said the friendship between the two sides had strengthened over generations through people-to-people connections, shared traditions, and co-operation across multiple sectors.

The minister also expressed hope that Tobgay's visit would pave the way for greater cultural exchange, stronger regional collaboration, and enhanced economic opportunities between Assam and Bhutan.

Senior officials, including Assam Director General of Police Harmeet Singh and General Administration Department Secretary Narsing Pawar, were present during the reception in Guwahati.

Four men arrested for alleged involvement in abduction of Naga civilians in Manipur

IMPHAL

The four are suspected to be involved in anti-social activities such as extortion, criminal intimidation, and a joint team of the Manipur Police, CRPF and Assam Rifles have arrested four people for their alleged involvement in the abduction of six Naga civilians, who are believed to be still held hostage amid simmering tensions in the ethnic-conflict hit state.

According to police, the four men were arrested from the stretch between P Molding and Leilon Vaiphei inter-village road in the Kangpokpi district on Monday. The arrested persons were identified as Thangkhomang Khongsai (51), Seikholot Khongsai (40), Lumminthang Dimngel (27) and Kamgoulal Khongsai (30). Police said the four are suspected to be active members of armed village volunteer groups operating in the district and may have been involved in anti-social activities such as extortion, criminal intimidation, and illegal possession of arms and ammunition.

"The role of the apprehended individuals in the abduction of six persons is suspected and will be ascertained during the course of investigation," a police statement said, adding that further investigation is underway.

Several people were allegedly abducted and taken hostage by armed groups in Kangpokpi and Senapati districts on May 13, hours after three church leaders were killed in an ambush. Police said 31 people, 14 Nagas, 16 Kukis and one Meitei, have since been released. However, six Nagas are still missing. The Kuki Inpi Manipur, the apex body of the Kuki tribes in the state, claimed that 14 members of the community are also being held hostage by Naga groups.

IIT Guwahati Develops Smart Nanomaterial to Detect Fake Currency

GUWAHATI

Researchers at Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati have developed an advanced light-emitting nanomaterial that could strengthen protection against fake currency, forged documents and counterfeit products through highly secure invisible markings that are difficult to duplicate.

The research team developed specialised perovskite nanocrystals capable of generating precise light patterns invisible to the naked eye and nearly impossible to reproduce using conventional printing or imaging technologies.

The study was conducted by Saikat Bhaumik and P. K. Giri from the Department of Physics at IIT Guwahati, along with research scholars Latika Juneja and Garima Choudhary. The findings were published in the international journal Advanced Optical Materials.

Researchers said the innovation addresses the growing global challenge of counterfeiting, which affects industries including banking, pharmaceuticals, electronics, luxury goods and identity documentation.

Traditional anti-counterfeiting tools such as QR codes, holograms and watermarks are increasingly vulnerable to duplication using advanced imaging and printing technologies. To counter this, the IIT Guwahati team engineered nanocrystals that emit exceptionally pure and bright colours with unique optical signatures.

These nanocrystals, thousands of times smaller than a strand of human hair, can be used to create concealed security patterns for authentication purposes.

One of the major limitations of such materials has been their instability when exposed to heat, moisture and chemicals. The researchers addressed this issue by designing a special double-layer protective coating that preserves both the stability and luminescent properties of the nanocrystals.

Using a direct laser-writing technique, the team created microscopic security patterns without relying on conventional printing masks, enabling the production of highly detailed structures capable of storing hidden information.

Explaining the technology, Bhaumik said the material behaves differently from conventional security labels.

"Unlike normal labels that always show the same mark, these materials react differently to heat and chemicals. An invisible fluorescent pattern can disappear when heated and reappear after chemical treatment," he said.

Researchers said the feature adds an additional layer of security, as counterfeiters would need to replicate not only the visible pattern but also the material's specific response to environmental conditions.

The team has termed the concept "4D anti-counterfeiting". Apart from security applications, the technology could also contribute to the development of next-generation micro-LED displays for smartphones, wearable devices and augmented reality systems. The researchers said the material may eventually find applications in currency notes, passports, identity cards, branded products and luxury goods for advanced authentication and secure information storage.

India, Canada Aim for \$50 Billion Trade by 2030

NEW DELHI/OTTAWA

India and Canada are working towards finalising a landmark free trade agreement by the end of 2025, marking a major reset in bilateral ties after tensions triggered by the 2023 Nijjar controversy. The announcement was made jointly in Ottawa by Piyush Goyal and Maninder Sidhu during Goyal's three-day official visit to Canada that began on May 25. Both countries have also set a target of increasing bilateral trade from the current USD 17 billion to USD 50 billion by 2030. "Our prime ministers have tasked us not only with completing the free trade agreement with a comprehensive outlook before the end of this year, or earlier, but also tripling our trade by 2030," Goyal said during a joint media interaction. The renewed push comes after bilateral relations deteriorated sharply in 2023 following allegations by Canadian authorities linking Indian agents to the killing of Sikh activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar near Vancouver.

India had strongly rejected the allegations, leading to a diplomatic standoff and suspension

of trade negotiations during the tenure of former Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Officials said ties began improving after the arrival of Mark Carney, whose visit to India earlier this year marked the first by a Canadian prime minister in eight years. Goyal described Carney's visit as a turning point that "completely changed the way Canada and India looked at each other," adding that it paved the way for "a complete overhaul" of bilateral relations. During Carney's India visit, the two countries signed several agreements, including a CAD 2.6 billion deal for Canada to supply nearly 22 million pounds of uranium to India for nuclear energy generation. Carney later described the proposed free trade agreement as "a game changer for Canadian workers and businesses," highlighting sectors such as energy, agri-food, technology and education as key areas of cooperation.

India and Canada are currently negotiating a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, with two rounds of negotiations already completed.



VOLUME:1, ISSUE 783

THE POLITICS OF AN ECONOMIC IMPASSE



Upon his stunning victory 12 years ago, Narendra Modi addressed a gathering of party faithful and appealed to them that they give him “10 years to transform” the country. As we mark the twelfth anniversary of the Modi government, it is now clear that he has succeeded in “transforming” India politically but has failed to do so economically. It is worth considering whether the political transformation that has been achieved is among the reasons for the failure on the economic front.

The emerging consensus among political and policy analysts across the country is that Modi has not been able to translate his political success into economic performance. Some, like economist Surjit Bhalla, blame the ‘deep state’ or the embedded bureaucracy for this. Indeed, even many close to and loyal to the Prime Minister often articulate this view, that the real impediment to better performance is the ‘rust in the steel frame’.

Some hold the BJP’s essentially inward-oriented, ‘swadeshi’ thinking on trade policy and the confusion created by multiple interpretations of Atmanirbhara and Make in India responsible. Some castigate Modi’s own ‘instruments’, his loyal ministers, for the inadequacies of the leader.

During the Congress era, inter-ministerial policy and personality differences would be spoken of openly and reported in the media. Differences between senior ministers like Pranab Mukherjee and P Chidambaram were open secrets. Such differences and rivalries exist in Modi’s council of ministers too, and some in the media are privy to them. But these are almost never reported.

My friend Parakala Prabhakar, a distinguished political economist, has for long held a very different view on the governance challenges faced by the Modi government. Be it the manner of announcement and execution of demonetisation, or the imposition of overnight lockdown due to Covid, or actions on issues like farm and land laws, foreign investment policy and so on. Parakala blames it all on managerial ‘incompetence’ at the political, not merely bureaucratic, level.

Perhaps Peter’s Principle—the celebrated management theory that “employees are continually promoted based on their success in previous roles until they reach a position where they are no longer competent”—also applies to politicians and senior ministers.

Moreover, it is one thing to win elections, quite another to steer the national economy, national security and foreign policy—the primary responsibilities of the Prime Minister—over a long period of time. Even Jawaharlal Nehru, who had a distinguished decade in office as Prime Minister from 1947 to 1957, began erring after that. The question may well be asked if Modi has outlived his welcome and diminishing returns have set in on the administrative and economic fronts, even as he continues to deliver on the political front.

Reflecting on that 2014 request of the PM, that he be given a decade for ‘transforming’ India, it seems clear now that his focus was mainly on the Indian republic’s transformation into a Hindu majority polity. On that objective he has largely succeeded, with southern India still outside the grip of Hindutva. The mixing of religious faith and prejudice into public life and politics has generated social and political tensions that are depleting the so-called ‘animal spirits of enterprise’.

A growing concern among business leaders, at home and overseas, about the direction of Indian politics is making them risk-averse as investors. An important reason for private investment not picking up, for the flight of capital and the tapering down of foreign direct investment may well be the wider political environment.

Economists often ignore the role of political management in influencing business decisions. Confidence in a government’s ability to deal with emergent political and security challenges, at home and overseas, reassures investors. It contributes to positive expectations and encourages risk-taking by investors. Any concern about a political leadership’s competence or determination to deal with such challenges contributes to negative expectations and risk aversion.

Consider two examples. It is not often recognised by economists and public policy analysts that a key trigger for the 1990-91 balance of payments crisis episode was the judgement of a variety of economic actors that the government of the day would not be able to handle the challenges at hand. It was the inability of the Vishwanath Pratap Singh and Chandrashekar governments to act decisively on the fiscal and external front in 1990 that led to a loss of confidence in the economy and the rapid descent into the crisis of 1991. It was then the decisive actions of Prime Minister Narasimha Rao that restored investor confidence and stabilised the economy.

By contrast, in 2004 the defeat of the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government and the coming into office of a Congress-led coalition supported by communist parties triggered instability in the markets and unease among investors. The reassurance provided very quickly by the newly elected Prime Minister Manmohan Singh set at rest all such worries. In both instances, the quality of political leadership made all the difference to investor sentiment.

We are in a similar situation today. In 1991 and 2004, both business leaders and the media articulated their views openly and played their part in ensuring political action that helped restore investor confidence. Today, a largely timid media and a highly risk-averse and fearful business class are no longer exerting pressure on the political leadership to act in a reassuring manner.

All good news is celebrated in an exaggerated manner and all bad news is buried. Thus, when India was seen as being on the threshold of becoming the world’s third largest economy, there was much song and dance about it. Today, when it has slipped to the sixth position, few ask why. In 2017, Prime Minister Modi declared that the country’s national income would be \$5 trillion by 2020. Very quickly, the goal was shifted to 2022, and then to 2025, and then forgotten. In 2026, the economy is just over \$4 trillion.

India’s economy’s long-term average annual rate of growth from 1990 to 2025 is estimated to be around 6 percent. During 2000-12, the average growth rate was over 7 percent. For India to be regarded as a developed economy by 2047, the goal of Viksit Bharat, the average annual growth over the next two decades will have to be around 8 percent. The question to ask today is what was done over the past decade that the acceleration in growth experienced during 1990-2010 has not been sustained over the past decade.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

No one ever drowned in his own sweat. - Ann Landers

FROM THE FIRST WAVE TO THE DIGITAL NATIVES



DR. ARSHED IQBAL DAR

Human civilization has never remained static. Across centuries, societies have repeatedly transformed themselves in response to changing knowledge, technologies, and human needs. The journey from agricultural settlements to industrial cities and now to digitally connected societies reflects not merely technological progress, but a complete reorganization of human life and thought.

Futurist Alvin Toffler famously described this transformation as a movement through three major “waves” of civilization—the Agricultural Age, the Industrial Age, and the Information Age. Each wave reshaped the foundations of power, production, education, and social relationships. More importantly, each altered the way human beings understood themselves and the world around them.

The first major turning point came with the Agricultural Revolution. Early humans gradually abandoned nomadic lifestyles and began cultivating land, domesticating animals, and establishing permanent settlements. Civilizations flourished along river valleys such as the Nile, the Indus, and the Tigris-Euphrates because agriculture made stable communities possible. In those societies, land symbolized prosperity, while human labour and seasonal rhythms determined everyday existence.

Life during this period was deeply connected to nature. Communities depended upon rain, soil fertility, rivers, forests, and animal power. Even today, traditional farming communities in regions like Kashmir continue to follow seasonal agricultural rhythms that reflect humanity’s long relationship with nature. Although agrarian societies lacked modern technological sophistication, they possessed an ecological balance that modern civilization increasingly struggles to recover.

Centuries later, the Industrial Revolution disrupted this equilibrium dramatically. Machines entered the workplace, factories replaced household production, and urban centres expanded rapidly. The invention of the steam engine transformed transportation and manufacturing, while railways connected distant regions and accelerated trade. Productivity

increased enormously, and industrial societies began measuring progress through output, efficiency, and economic expansion.

Education systems also changed during this phase. Schools increasingly adopted standardized structures designed to produce disciplined workers capable of functioning within industrial economies. While industrialization improved material living conditions for many, it also introduced serious social and environmental consequences that continue to affect humanity today.

Dependence on fossil fuels intensified environmental degradation, pollution, and climate instability. Industrial cities across the world witnessed overcrowding and unhealthy living conditions during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Today, the effects of excessive industrialization are visible in rising global temperatures, melting glaciers, polluted rivers, and extreme weather events that increasingly affect vulnerable populations.

The contemporary world now stands within what Toffler called the Third Wave—the Information Age. In this era, information itself has become a form of power. Digital technology, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and global communication systems have altered almost every aspect of human activity, from education and governance to commerce and personal interaction.

A student sitting in a remote village today can access online lectures from leading universities through a smartphone. Small businesses in towns and villages now market products through social media platforms and digital payment systems. During the COVID-19 pandemic, online classrooms, telemedicine, and virtual meetings demonstrated how deeply digital networks had become integrated into modern life.

In this context, the concept of “nexus,” discussed by Yuval Noah Harari, becomes increasingly relevant. Human societies have always been sustained by networks of cooperation and shared information. In earlier ages, religion, empires, trade routes, and printed texts connected civilizations. Today, digital platforms and algorithms perform a similar role on an unprecedented scale.

Artificial intelligence rep-

resents perhaps the most influential development within this information ecosystem. Recommendation algorithms shape what people watch, read, and discuss online. AI systems are now used in healthcare diagnostics, banking, education, surveillance, and even judicial administration in some countries. The challenge, however, lies in ensuring that these technologies remain aligned with human ethics and democratic values.

Another defining feature of the Information Age is the emergence of the “prosumer,” a term anticipated by Toffler to describe individuals who simultaneously consume and produce information. A college student today can create educational videos, run an online business, publish research, or influence public opinion through digital platforms. Ordinary individuals now possess opportunities to shape society in ways unimaginable a few decades ago.

At the same time, this digital expansion has created new vulnerabilities. Misinformation and deliberate disinformation spread rapidly through online networks, often faster than verified facts. False rumours circulated through social media during elections, communal tensions, and public health emergencies have shown how digital misinformation can create real-world instability and fear. The younger generation—often described as digital natives—occupies the centre of this transformation. Born into a world of smartphones, social media, and artificial intelligence, they possess unprecedented technological familiarity. Yet they also face serious challenges, including information overload, shrinking attention spans, cyber dependency, online harassment, and growing psychological pressures associated with virtual life.

Education, therefore, cannot remain limited to technical instruction alone. Modern societies must cultivate ethical awareness, emotional intelligence, critical reasoning, and responsible citizenship alongside digital literacy. Technology can expand human capacity, but wisdom remains essential for guiding its use.

Ironically, the Information Age, despite appearing largely virtual, depends heavily upon physical infrastructure and

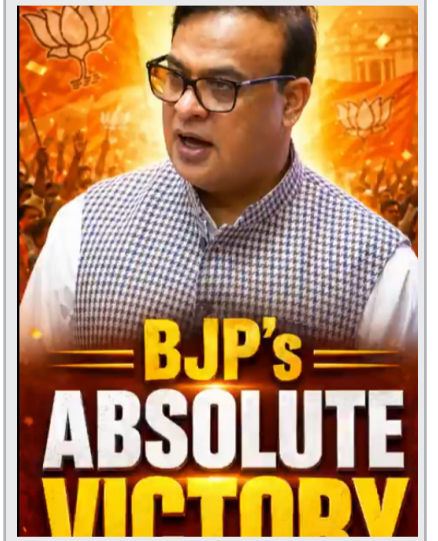
enormous energy consumption. Massive data centres powering artificial intelligence and digital communication require enormous quantities of electricity and cooling systems. The growing global demand for energy has intensified debates around renewable energy, sustainability, and environmental responsibility.

Perhaps the future lies not in

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

“Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas” is reflected in Assam’s ABSOLUTE mandate to the BJP and NDA Pariwar.

People from all sections of society, including SCs, STs and Cha Shramiks, have voted decisively in favour of our developmental agenda. ~ Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, CM, Assam



rejecting previous civilizations, but in learning from all three historical waves simultaneously.

From the Agricultural Age, humanity can recover ecological sensitivity and respect for natural balance. From the Industrial Age, it can retain scientific innovation and productive capacity while shifting toward sustainable technologies such as solar and wind energy.

From the Information Age, it can harness artificial intelligence, smart systems, and global cooperation for human welfare and environmental sustainability. The real challenge before modern civilization is not simply technological advancement. It is whether humanity can use its growing power responsibly. Progress loses meaning when it undermines social harmony, ethical values, or ecological stability. In an increasingly interconnected world, the future will ultimately belong not only to societies that generate knowledge, but to those capable of using that knowledge with wisdom, responsibility, and compassion.

Assam Announces Phase-I Census 2027 Schedule, Over 83,000 Personnel to Be Deployed

GUWAHATI

The Assam government on Monday announced the schedule for Phase-I of Census 2027, which will be conducted across the state from August 17 to September 15, 2026, with self-enumeration facilities to remain open from August 2 to August 16 through the official portal.

The schedule was finalised during a high-level review meeting on Census preparedness, where officials assessed arrangements related to field operations, training, digital infrastructure, supervision and public awareness ahead of the nationwide exercise.

According to an official statement, Ravi Kota stressed the importance of co-ordinated administrative efforts and public participation for the successful implementation of the Census process.



"The successful conduct of Census 2027 will require co-ordinated administrative efforts, public participation and timely preparedness at every level," the statement quoted him as saying.

Officials said Population Enumeration under Phase-II in Assam would be carried out in February 2027 along with the rest of the country, with March 1, 2027 fixed as the reference date.

As part of preparations, two national trainers from the Directorate of Census Operations, Assam, have been selected to conduct cascade training programmes across the state.

A total of 59 master trainers have also been appointed, with their training scheduled between June 9 and June 12, 2026. Additionally, 1,109 field trainers have been finalised, and their training is expected to begin from the third week of June.

The government said approximately 83,535 enumerators and supervisors, including reserve personnel, would be deployed for the Phase-I Census operations across Assam.

Mrityunjay Kumar Narayan highlighted the growing role of technology in the Census exercise, noting that digital tools, self-enumeration systems and re-

al-time monitoring mechanisms would ensure more transparent and accurate data collection.

Chief Principal Census Officer of Assam Biswajit Pegu appealed to citizens to actively cooperate with the process.

"Cooperation and participation of the public, along with compliance with responsibilities and duties prescribed under the Census Act, 1948, and notifications issued by the Government of Assam, are essential for the successful conduct of this gigantic exercise of national importance," the official release stated.

Officials said the information collected during Phase-I would help both the state and central governments plan housing, infrastructure development and delivery of essential services more effectively in rural and urban areas.

The review meeting was attended by

senior officials from the Assam government, district commissioners, municipal commissioners, principal census officers and representatives from the Directorate of Census Operations, Assam.

Census 2027 will be India's first fully digital Census and will be conducted in two phases - House-listing and Housing Census (HLO) and Population Enumeration (PE).

Phase-I will focus on collecting information related to houses and households, including housing conditions, amenities and household assets, which will serve as the foundation for the Population Enumeration phase later in 2027.

Residents in Assam will also be able to complete self-enumeration through the official portal before verification by trained field enumerators using digital devices.

CAG Flags Assam Government for Rs 509 Crore Spending Without Legislative Approval

GUWAHATI

Comptroller and Auditor General of India has flagged major lapses in financial discipline by the Assam government in its Audit Report for 2024-25, revealing that Rs 509.59 crore was spent in 13 cases without budgetary approval or re-appropriation orders, in violation of constitutional provisions.

According to the report, the expenditure was incurred under the head of Public Debt and Servicing of Debt without any allocation in the original budget, supplementary approval from the legislature, or re-appropriation authorisation.

The CAG observed that such expenditure violated Article 204 of the Constitution, which mandates legislative approval before public funds can be spent.

"Expenditure without budget is violative of financial regulations as well as the will of the Legislature. This is also indicative of the need for greater financial discipline in Government Departments," the report stated.

The audit report also highlighted serious accountability gaps regarding utilisation of public funds. As of March 31, 2025, a total of 6,929 Utilisation Certificates amounting to Rs 23,240.56 crore remained pending submission before the Accountant General.

The CAG noted that without these certificates, authorities could not verify whether the grants had been utilised for the purposes for which they were sanctioned.

Among the departments flagged, the Finance Department recorded the highest pending utilisation certificates, amounting to Rs 4,067.06 crore.

The report further stated that 1,222 Abstract Contingent bills worth Rs 753.61 crore were pending conversion into Detailed Countersigned Contingent bills as of March 31, 2025.

Gurucharan University Donates 92 Books for New 'Flybrary' at Silchar Airport



OUR CORRESPONDENT

SILCHAR: In a unique initiative aimed at promoting reading among air travellers, a new "Flybrary" has been introduced at Silchar Airport under an initiative of the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

The term "Flybrary" is a portmanteau of the words "fly" and "library". The concept seeks to create a reading space for passengers at airports and encourage a culture of book-sharing and reading during travel.

As part of the initiative, teachers of Gurucharan University donated a total of 92 books to the Silchar Airport Authority on Monday. Sources said the donated books cover different subjects and genres and will be made available for passengers at the airport Flybrary section. Airport officials and university representatives expressed hope that the initiative would help create a more engaging and meaningful experience for travellers passing through Silchar Airport.

The research was conducted by scientists from the Department of Geology at Nagaland University

Nagaland University Study Reveals New Geological Clues to Northeast India's Ancient Past

GUWAHATI

Researchers from Nagaland University have uncovered new evidence about the ancient geological formation of Northeast India, offering fresh insights into the tectonic evolution of the Indo-Myanmar region.

The study focused on the Upper Disang Formation, a major rock formation spread across parts of Nagaland and adjoining areas of Northeast India, and examined how ancient sediments were formed, transported and deposited along the eastern margin of the Indian tectonic plate millions of years ago.

According to researchers, the findings could improve scientific understanding of earthquakes, basin development and crustal movement in the tectonically sensitive Indo-Myanmar belt, one of South Asia's most active geological regions.

The research was conducted by scientists from the Department of Geology at Nagaland University



and published in the international journal *Evolving Earth*.

Unlike earlier studies concentrated mainly on upper Assam and neighbouring regions, the new research explored relatively under-studied areas of Nagaland using advanced geological methods including rock composition analysis, heavy mineral studies and sediment examination.

The researchers found that the sandstones of the Upper Disang Formation originated from multiple geological sources, including

igneous, metamorphic and sedimentary rocks. This indicates that ancient river systems transported sediments from both nearby and distant regions into the basin over millions of years.

"Our study revealed evidence of tectonically active environments and major drainage changes during sediment deposition," said S.K. Srivastava.

The study further revealed that the sediments were deposited during an active convergence phase between the Indian and

Burma tectonic plates during the Middle to Late Eocene period, approximately 34 to 48 million years ago.

Researchers said the findings could contribute to future studies on tectonic reconstruction, basin evolution and geological mapping across Northeast India and adjoining regions.

Another major discovery involved identifying post-depositional changes within the rocks, offering insights into the thermal history of the region, burial processes and underground fluid movements over geological timescales.

Jagdish Kumar Patnaik said the research demonstrated the university's growing contribution to advanced earth science studies and strengthened scientific understanding of the Indo-Myanmar geological system.

The research team included S.K. Srivastava, Amitava Patra, K. Swuro, V. Kirha and Shyam Kanhaiya from VBS Purvanchal University.

Gauhati High Court Reserves Order on Shyamkanu Mahanta's Bail Plea Till May 29

GUWAHATI

The Gauhati High Court on Monday reserved its order on the bail plea of Shyamkanu Mahanta, one of the prime accused in the case linked to Assam's cultural icon Zubeen Garg. The court is expected to pronounce its verdict on May 29.

Additional Public Prosecutor Bojendro Mohan Choudhury said arguments from both the prosecution and defence were heard during the proceedings.

"From our side we argued that he should not be granted bail. After hearing both sides, the court may pronounce its verdict on May 29, or it could take another two to three days," Choudhury told reporters.

According to the prosecution, the case involved a "pre-planned murder," and the evidence presently available supported the prosecution's claims against Mahanta.



Choudhury said the High Court observed during the hearing that the material on record currently favoured the prosecution's case and that granting bail at this stage may not be appropriate.

"The court also noted the possibility of flight risk, as he allegedly left for Malaysia immediately after the incident," the prosecutor said. The prosecution further claimed that Zubeen Garg's nephew had alleged Mahanta used

emotional pressure and coercive tactics involving overseas travel arrangements.

"Zubeen's nephew explained how Zubeen was allegedly treated like a product. He claimed Shyamkanu used emotional pressure, saying that if Zubeen did not attend shows, he would commit suicide. Everyone knows Zubeen's efforts to maintain peace and harmony among people," Choudhury said. Earlier, on May 13, the hearing on Mahanta's bail petition could not proceed after Parthivjyoti Saikia recused himself from hearing the matter.

The bail petition, which had been listed before Justice Saikia's bench, was expected to come up for final hearing that day.

Special Public Prosecutor Ziaul Kamar had then confirmed that the judge chose not to hear the case.

Meghalaya CM Conrad Sangma Meets Dharmendra Pradhan to Push Education Reforms and NEHU Issues

SHILLONG

Conrad K. Sangma on Monday met Dharmendra Pradhan to discuss measures aimed at strengthening the education sector in Meghalaya and the wider Northeast region.

The meeting focused on improving educational outcomes, upgrading higher education infrastructure and addressing pending issues concerning schools and universities in the state.

Sharing details of the discussions, Sangma said he apprised the Union Minister about the Meghalaya government's ongoing efforts to improve the state's Performance Grading Index (PGI) score and enhance the overall quality of education.

The Chief Minister highlighted several reforms being implemented by the state government, including the Structured Pay Framework for Ad Hoc, SSA and Fourth Teachers. He also discussed school rationalisation initiatives and infrastructure improvements in government schools aimed at creating better learning environments.

Sangma further informed the Union Minister about recent improvements in SSLC and HSSLC examination results, along with support programmes introduced for school dropouts.

He also highlighted the implementation of the Meghalaya Teacher Eligibility Test to strengthen teacher quality and

improve classroom education across the state.

One of the key issues raised during the meeting was the appointment of a regular Vice-Chancellor for North-Eastern Hill University, which has remained without a permanent head for a prolonged period.

The Chief Minister also sought expedited implementation of pending projects under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram at the NEHU Tura Campus.

In addition, Sangma requested support from the Union Government for the development of Captain Williamson Sangma State University through the PM-USHA MERU initiative aimed at strengthening higher education institutions nationwide.

The Meghalaya Chief Minister expressed gratitude to the Union Education Minister for extending support and guidance towards improving educational institutions and expanding opportunities for students and youth in Meghalaya and the Northeast.

The meeting comes at a time when Meghalaya has intensified efforts to reform its education system following concerns over the state's performance in national education indicators and rankings.

Officials said the discussions also focused on long-term institutional development, improving educational access in rural areas and ensuring quality education delivery across the state.

Assam Assembly Backs Early Implementation of 33% Women's Reservation in State Legislatures

GUWAHATI

The Assam government tabled a resolution in the state Legislative Assembly supporting the early implementation of 33 per cent reservation for women in state assemblies across the country following delimitation.

The resolution was moved by Ajanta Neog during the third day of the ongoing Assembly session.

Presenting the proposal, Neog said the resolution aimed to strengthen women's empowerment and ensure greater political participation of women in governance structures.

"With the aim of promoting women's empowerment and ensuring their overall development, I propose the urgent implementation of one-third reservation for women in all state assemblies across India following delimitation," she told the House.

Explaining the rationale behind the move, the minister noted that women constitute nearly half of the population in both India and Assam but continue to remain underrepresented in politics.

"Women constitute around 50 per cent of India's population, and Assam reflects a similar demographic reality. It is the responsibility of the nation to



take them forward, not only politically, but socially as well," she said.

Neog stated that despite women holding an important place in Indian society and history, structural barriers had continued to restrict equal political representation for decades.

"There could be social barriers, educational limitations and intellectual restrictions. But we have to make an effort to take women ahead, and in doing so there is a need for political reori-

entation," she added. Referring to the Nari Shakti Vandana Adhiniyam introduced in Parliament in 2023 under the leadership of Narendra Modi, Neog said the legislation had generated significant hope among women seeking greater political inclusion.

She also mentioned the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026, introduced in Parliament on April 16 this year to expedite implementation of women's reservation alongside delimitation-related measures.

According to Neog, the Bill could not be passed following a two-day debate in Parliament on April 18.

"All the years of hope held by women were watered down. However, the Prime Minister has assured that efforts to pass the Bill will continue in the future," she said.

Appealing for support cutting across party lines, Neog said Assam was joining other NDA-ruled states in formally urging the Centre to move ahead with the implementation of women's reservation.

"I request everyone in this House to approve this historic resolution irrespective of political parties and alliances. I stand here today as a representative of women's participation in politics. This resolution is not just for Assam, but for women across the country," she said.

Further proceedings of the Assam Legislative Assembly were adjourned till Tuesday.

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'No such grave urgency': CJI Surya Kant refuses to grant urgent hearing on plea seeking probe into CJP



NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court refused to grant urgent hearing on a plea seeking an investigation into the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), a satirical digital outfit, that recently garnered massive support on social media, mainly from the youth.

The CJP was launched as an apparent response to Chief Justice of India Surya Kant's remarks, allegedly referring to a section of the youth as "cockroaches" and "parasites" during a court hearing on May 15. Observing that there is "no grave urgency" in the matters mentioned in the plea, the SC bench headed by CJI Surya Kant and comprising Justice Jyotsna Singh and Justice Jyotsna Singh asked advocate N K Goswami, appearing

for the petitioner, not to take the issue "so sentimentally."

Goswami submitted that despite the CJI's clarification regarding his remarks, a distorted and malicious narrative was continuing.

"Don't take it so sentimentally," the CJI said.

Another advocate submitted that they were seeking a CBI probe into the issue of fake law degrees and said courtroom exchanges cannot be used for commercial purposes.

The CJI replied, "There is no such grave urgency. We will see."

The petition has also sought action against those involved in the alleged commercial exploitation of oral observations made during court proceedings.

It sought an investigation into alleged fake advocates practising law using fraudulent degrees.

Expressing concern over the misuse of judicial proceedings, the plea claimed that remarks and observations made during the court proceedings were being used for publicity campaigns.

On May 16, the CJI issued a strongly worded clarification of his remarks, saying he was "pained" by media reports suggesting he had criticised the youth.

He had emphasised that his remarks were specifically directed at individuals entering the legal profession through "fake and bogus degrees" and were "misquoted by a section of the media."

Girls should not give up on education due to lack of gender-segregated toilets, sanitary napkins: SC

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday said that school-going girls should not give up on education due to lack of functional, gender-segregated toilets and sanitary napkins in schools.

SC asked the Centre to ensure that its directions in this regard are effectively complied with in letter and spirit.

The apex court's observation came after the Centre said its January 30 judgement directing authorities to provide free sanitary napkins to girl students and functional, gender-segregated toilets at schools has led to galvanisation of efforts in all states and Union Territories.

"Make good use of it. It is for the good of women and girls of this country. Girls should not give up education and sit at home and do some domestic work only for this reason," a bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and R Mahadevan observed.

"Now, it is for you to make the most of it and see that as far as possible, the benefits are extended in terms of our judgment," the bench told Additional Solicitor General Archana Pathak Dave, who was appearing for the Centre.

In the landmark judgment delivered on January 30 to ensure gender justice and educational equity, the apex court directed all states and UTs to provide free oxo-biodegradable sanitary napkins to girl students and functional, gender-segregated toilets for all students at schools.

It had issued a slew of directions to all states and UTs to ensure that these facilities were provided in schools irrespective of whether they were government-run, aided or private.

On Monday, the law officer referred to the summary of compliance with the directions issued by the top court in its verdict.

"Are you collecting data from all the states?" the bench asked.

Dave said the Centre has collected data of roughly two to two-and-a-half months from the states.

The bench said the Centre should proceed further to see that directions issued by the apex court were effectively complied with in letter and spirit.

"The Union should keep guiding



all the states in this regard. The Union should periodically keep collecting the necessary data and information from all the states as regards due compliance of our directions," the bench said.

The top court said it would keep monitoring the compliance of directions every three months.

It said the Centre would furnish a fresh report of further progress in the matter every three months.

One of the advocates referred to an interim application filed in the matter and said that in its verdict, the apex court has used the word "oxo-biodegradable" sanitary napkins, which he claimed was counterproductive to the environment.

The bench told the advocate to bring it to the notice of the law officer.

"Look into the interim application and take necessary steps," the bench told Dave.

The top court posted the matter for reporting further compliance on September 1.

It directed all the states to furnish their status reports to the Centre by August 15.

"There shall not be any lapse on the part of any of the states in furnishing the status reports to the Union," the bench said.

It said the Ministry of Education would be the nodal ministry for the purpose of filing all further compliance reports in the matter.

In its January 30 verdict, the top court had said, "The right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution includes the right to menstrual health. Access to safe, effective and affordable menstrual hygiene management measures helps a girl child attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health."

It had said the right to healthy reproductive life embraces the right to access education and information about sexual health.

The top court had said inaccessibility of menstrual hygiene management measures strips away the right

to participate on equal terms in school, and the domino effect of the absence of education was the inability to participate in all walks of life later.

It had directed that "all states and UTs shall ensure that every school, whether government-run or privately managed, in both urban and rural areas, provides oxo-biodegradable sanitary napkins manufactured in compliance with the ASTM D-6954 standards free of cost."

Such sanitary napkins shall be made readily accessible to girl students, preferably within the toilet premises through sanitary napkin vending machines, or, where such installation was not immediately feasible, at a designated place or with a designated authority within the school, it had added.

As regards the "toilet and washing facilities", it had asked them to ensure that every school was provided with the "functional, gender-segregated toilets with usable water connectivity".

INTERNATIONAL

Iran peace deal in sight but not rushing it, says Trump



WASHINGTON

The US and Iran appeared to edge closer to a breakthrough agreement that could end months of conflict in West Asia, reopening the Strait of Hormuz and imposing fresh curbs on Tehran's nuclear programme, even as differences persisted over uranium enrichment and regional control.

US President Donald Trump

said negotiations were progressing in a "constructive manner" and insisted Tehran "must understand" that it cannot develop a nuclear weapon. Trump also confirmed the US blockade linked to the ongoing conflict would remain in place until a deal was reached.

The remarks came amid hectic parleys involving the US, Israel and Iran after three months of con-

frontation that disrupted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz and rattled global markets.

Earlier in the day, during a joint press conference with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in New Delhi, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio claimed a breakthrough is imminent. "There is the possibility that in the next few hours the world

will get some good news," he said. Rubio said progress had been made over the past 48 hours on a framework that could stabilise the Strait of Hormuz.

The US administration has repeatedly maintained that preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon remains its central objective. "Iran can never possess a nuclear weapon," Rubio said. "The ultimate goal is to make sure Iran could never have a nuclear weapon."

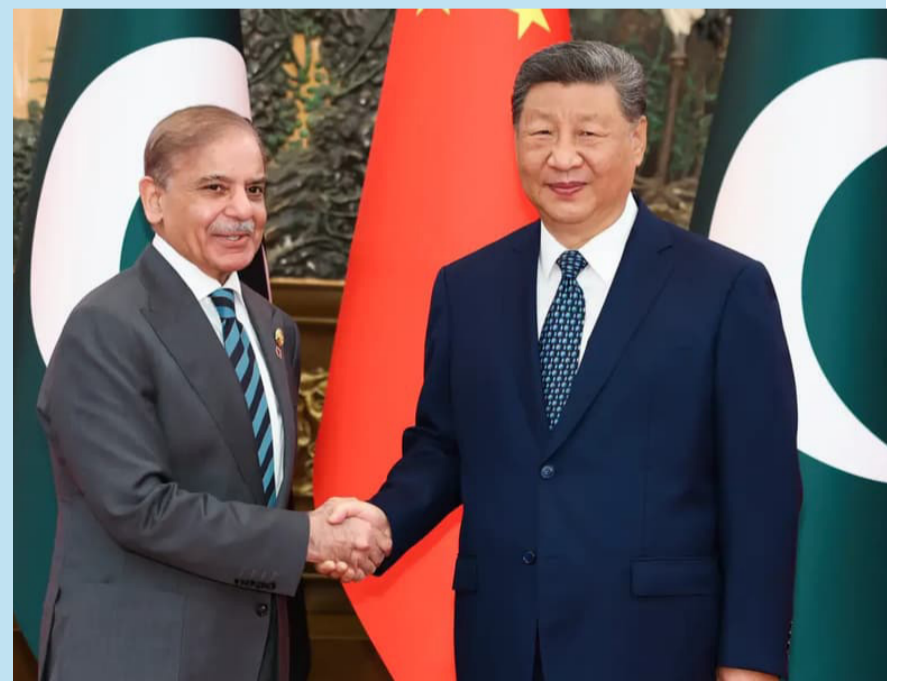
According to Axios, CNN and The New York Times reports, negotiators are finalising a 60-day ceasefire arrangement that would immediately reopen the Strait of Hormuz and create a window for broader negotiations over dismantling parts of Iran's nuclear programme.

However, conflicting messages from Iran suggested major disagreements remain unresolved. The Iranian Embassy in Delhi said Tehran has the right to "peaceful use of nuclear science and technology" and that "Iran will never relinquish this lawful and internationally recognised right". Iranian state media also disputed Trump's claim that the Strait would be fully reopened under the proposed arrangement.

Trump on Sunday made a surprise live video appearance at an event in Delhi attended by Rubio, praising Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a close friend and asserting that India-US ties had "never been closer".

Speaking on a giant screen installed at the event marking the 250th anniversary of the US Declaration of Independence, Trump described himself as a "big fan" of the Indian Prime Minister. "I love the Prime Minister. Modi is great. He's my friend," Trump said during the virtual address.

China's Xi meets Pakistan PM Sharif as Iran war mediation drags on



BEIJING

China's leader Xi Jinping met with Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Beijing on Monday, state media reported, as diplomatic efforts by several countries to formally end the Iran war drag on.

The high-level meeting, reported by state news agency Xinhua, followed Sharif's talks earlier in the day with Premier Li Qiang, China's number two leader. Pakistan has emerged as a central mediator between the United States and Iran, hosting face-to-face talks last month that failed to yield a lasting agreement.

Sharif was accompanied on his trip by army chief Asim Munir, Islamabad's key negotiator between the United States and Iran, Pakistan television showed on Monday.

Xi praised Pakistan for "taking the initiative to play a mediating role in restoring

peace in the Middle East", according to a Chinese read-out of the talks between the two leaders. "Both sides should continue to maintain close communication and coordination (and) jointly oppose unilateralism and Cold War mentality," Xi said. China has played a quieter mediation role, shepherding phone calls and meetings with officials of affected Gulf countries.

Sharif, speaking to Chinese leaders alongside Munir, said "the world is passing through a critical moment", Pakistan's state-run PTV channel showed.

"Pakistan has played a sincere role to mediate between US and Iran. Field marshal (Munir) was in Tehran and did not want to miss this great visit," Sharif said.

"Things are moving in the right direction. I would like to thank China's support to promote peace," he said. Sharif kicked off his four-

day official visit in Hangzhou in eastern Zhejiang province on Saturday.

It follows a visit by Munir to Tehran on Friday and Saturday alongside Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi as part of mediation efforts to end the war.

China has said it would work with Pakistan to "make positive contributions to the early restoration of peace and stability in the Middle East".

In April, Pakistan hosted the only direct negotiations between US and Iranian officials to take place since the war began.

Munir was at the centre of the action during that round of talks, greeting both delegations on their arrival and displaying bonhomie with US Vice President JD Vance.

But the talks ultimately failed, with Iran accusing the United States of making "excessive demands".

Rupee Nearing ₹100, Inflation Soaring: Economy Under Pressure



The rupee has crossed the ₹96-per-dollar mark and, despite repeated attempts to stop its fall, is rapidly moving toward the psychological barrier of ₹100 per dollar. As the dollar strengthens globally, markets are becoming anxious, policy-makers are struggling to find answers, and ordinary Indians are preparing to face rising prices.

The weakening rupee is no longer just a currency story - it has become a warning sign exposing deeper economic vulnerabilities and raising serious concerns for both the government and households.

Driven by a combination of foreign capital outflows, rising crude oil prices, and a stronger US dollar in global markets, the Indian rupee continues to depreciate sharply.

A falling rupee increases India's import bills, debt repayment burden, and subsidy costs, thereby pushing up governance and administrative expenses. Expensive imports of crude oil and edible oils fuel inflation further, forcing reductions in taxes and widening fiscal deficits, while the Reserve Bank of India's interventions reduce foreign exchange reserves. Export gains may provide limited relief, but immediate fiscal and administrative pressures continue to intensify.

Even before the outbreak of the US-Iran conflict, the rupee was already under stress due to growing external imbalances and foreign capital outflows. In May 2026, as global crude oil prices surged amid the conflict between Iran and the United States, the rupee fell by nearly 7.04 percent, trading around ₹96.3 per dollar.

The rupee had already been weakening steadily because of continuous selling by foreign investors. Between January and February alone, it had declined by more than ₹1. However, the war-triggered spike in crude oil prices accelerated the fall sharply. Between March and May 21, the rupee registered a further decline of 5.01 percent.

In May 2014, the average international price of the Indian crude basket was around \$108 per barrel. At that time, petrol in Delhi cost roughly ₹72.43 per litre and diesel about ₹55 per litre.

In May 2026, the Indian crude basket again hovered around \$109 per barrel, but petrol prices

in Bengaluru reached ₹107.14 per litre and diesel ₹95.04 per litre, while in Delhi petrol stood at ₹98.64 per litre and diesel at ₹91.58 per litre.

Concerns Over Foreign Investment and Economic Policy

Former Chief Economic Adviser Surjit Bhalla has warned that political compulsions have pushed India into an "economic comfort zone," slowing policy reforms. He pointed out that despite higher public expenditure, private investment remains stagnant, while foreign direct investment has dropped sharply - from 2.5 percent of GDP to just 0.8 percent.

Bhalla also challenged claims that India remains the world's fastest-growing major economy, noting that countries such as Bangladesh and Ethiopia have outperformed India in per capita GDP growth. His key warning is that political priorities may be overshadowing the need for difficult but essential economic reforms. India's retail inflation may have moderated between 2023 and 2026, but recent global energy disruptions have again increased pressure. Critics argue that the new CPI series, introduced with a 2024 base year, may not fully reflect the real inflation experienced by households while continuing to keep inflation figures within the Reserve Bank of India's target range.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also warned that ongoing global conflicts, pandemics, and energy crises have created what he described as a "decade of disasters." Addressing the Indian diaspora in The Hague, Netherlands, he cautioned that if these challenges are not controlled, they could reverse decades of progress and push large populations back into poverty.

Impact on Ordinary Citizens
A weakening rupee reduces the purchasing power of Indians because imports such as crude oil, electronics, pharmaceutical raw materials, fertilisers, construction materials, transport services, and food items become more expensive.

As a result, domestic inflation rises, foreign education and travel costs increase, and household budgets come under severe pressure, although export-oriented sectors like information technology and pharmaceuticals may gain marginally.

India remains vulnerable because of its heavy dependence on imports, foreign investments, and the dollar-dominated global financial system. Whenever the rupee weakens sharply, this structural dependence becomes more visible.

Declining purchasing power also slows demand in key sectors and weakens manufacturing activity.

Four Major Reasons Behind the Rupee's Fall

There are four major factors responsible for the rupee's depreciation.

First, foreign investors are withdrawing capital. As global funds pull money out of Indian stock and bond markets, they sell rupees to buy dollars, increasing demand for the US currency and pushing the rupee lower. This has contributed to prolonged weakness in the stock market.

Second, India's rising oil import bill has added further pressure. Since India imports over 80 percent of its crude oil requirements and payments are made in dollars, higher global oil prices mean India requires far more dollars to meet its energy needs, widening the trade deficit.

Debate Around Alternative Energy
The article also criticises excessive de-

pendence on imported battery technologies linked to alternative energy systems. It argues that battery storage technologies are heavily import-dependent, relatively inefficient, and increase dollar demand further.

It claims battery disposal creates additional environmental concerns while replacement costs remain extremely high. According to the article, several government departments purchasing battery-operated vehicles are now realising the long-term maintenance burden, as battery performance deteriorates significantly within four years, whereas internal combustion engine vehicles can function for decades.

Stronger US Dollar and RBI's Role
A stronger US dollar has also contributed to the rupee's decline. Higher US interest rates, rising Treasury yields, and global uncertainty have strengthened the dollar's position as a preferred safe-haven currency. The Reserve Bank of India, meanwhile, has often allowed gradual depreciation rather than aggressively defending the rupee, partly to maintain export competitiveness and support economic growth during periods of financial pressure.

RBI's Foreign Exchange Position
The RBI has stated that it did not incur losses from currency-related operations during 2024-25. It reported earnings of ₹1.11 lakh crore from foreign exchange transactions and ₹97,007 crore in interest income from foreign securities.

These gains helped the RBI transfer a record surplus of ₹2.69 lakh crore to the government. Even after reportedly selling nearly \$43 billion to stabilise the rupee, the central bank maintains that its interventions benefited both its balance sheet and government finances, though economists continue debating the extent of the actual gains. A Structural Economic Challenge

The article concludes that the rupee's fall is not merely a temporary market fluctuation but reflects India's structural dependence on dollar-based imports. A weaker rupee raises import costs, fuels inflation, pressures businesses, and makes overseas education and travel costlier.

The larger challenge, it argues, is not simply to defend the rupee during crises, but to strengthen India's internal economic foundations by reducing import dependence, boosting exports, expanding domestic manufacturing, and building greater confidence in the Indian economy.

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