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PERSPECTIVE

Life is better when you're laughing.

Manipur's Lifeline Highways Under Strain: 500 Trucks Stranded as Blockades and Road Damage Threaten Supplies

IMPHAL
Fresh disruptions along Manipur's two principal national highways have sparked concerns over a potential supply crunch across the state, with nearly 500 goods-laden vehicles stranded and freight movement severely affected by a combination of damaged road infrastructure, repair delays, and ongoing protest blockades. The most critical situation has emerged on National Highway-37, the vital Imphal-Silchar corridor, where transporters report that around 500 commercial vehicles remain stranded following the suspension of road restoration work on the Noney-Nungba stretch. The highway serves as one of Manipur's primary supply routes for essential commodities, fuel, and consumer goods. According to transport operators, the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) halted repair activities shortly after initiating restoration efforts in the affected section. The decision has drawn criticism from transport bodies, which argue that highway repairs must be treated as an urgent priority given the route's strategic importance to the state's supply chain. Transporters and Drivers' Council (TDC) president Hijam Ranjit alleged that the suspension of work runs contrary to earlier assurances reportedly given before Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand regarding the prompt restoration of the damaged highway.

The latest setback follows a landslide at Oinamlong that significantly affected traffic movement. Although authorities managed to clear a single lane for vehicle passage, transporters say large volumes of debris and inadequate drainage continue to hamper normal operations.

WHO SAID WHAT

Business without barrier, only in Assam

We will further simplify rules to ensure greater ease of doing business for small non-polluting enterprises. #AssamCabinet
- Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, CM, Assam

Guwahati to Host BRICS Anti-Narcotics Summit as India Pushes Stronger Global Action Against Synthetic Drug Networks

GUWAHATI
India is set to host the BRICS Heads of Anti-Drug Agencies Meeting in Guwahati on July 6 and 7, bringing together top anti-narcotics officials from BRICS nations for discussions on combating the growing threat of synthetic drugs, darknet-enabled trafficking, and other emerging transnational drug crimes.

Organised by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) under the Ministry of Home Affairs, the two-day summit is expected to strengthen cooperation among member countries through enhanced intelligence sharing, operational coordination, and capacity-building initiatives aimed at tackling evolving narcotics challenges.

The meeting comes amid increasing global concern over the rapid expansion of synthetic drug markets, the proliferation of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), and the use of digital platforms and cryptocurrency channels by international trafficking syndicates. Officials from BRICS countries will deliberate on strategies to address these threats and improve collective responses to organised drug networks.

Narcotics Control Bureau
Ministry of Home Affairs

India to Host BRICS Heads of Anti-Drug Agencies Meeting

Guwahati, Assam
6th-7th July 2026

MANAS National Narcotics Helpline 1933

According to officials, the discussions will centre on three major

priorities: curbing the production and trafficking of synthetic drugs and precursor chemicals, improving intelligence-sharing mechanisms and joint enforcement efforts, and strengthening institutional cooperation among member states.

As part of the agenda, delegates will participate in six thematic sessions covering critical issues such as the use of digital technology for real-time drug interdiction, tackling darknet-facilitated trafficking, addressing emerging psychoactive substances, preventing the diversion of precursor chemicals, reducing drug demand through public health interventions, and reinforcing institutional frameworks for narcotics control.

India is also expected to showcase its multi-pronged approach to combating drug abuse and trafficking, which combines stringent enforcement measures with awareness campaigns, community participation, and rehabilitation programmes. The country will present its recently launched Vision Document on Narcotics Control (2026-2029), outlining its roadmap for strengthening institutional capabilities and enhancing

national anti-drug efforts.

Holding the BRICS Chairmanship in 2026, India is expected to use the platform to promote deeper collaboration among member nations through joint training programmes, expert exchanges, coordinated enforcement actions, and enhanced information-sharing mechanisms. The meeting is scheduled to conclude with the adoption of a Joint Declaration outlining collective commitments and future cooperation in addressing drug-related challenges across BRICS countries. India's BRICS presidency this year is guided by the theme, "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability." The expanded BRICS grouping currently includes Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and the United Arab Emirates.

The Guwahati summit is being viewed as a significant step in strengthening international partnerships against increasingly sophisticated narcotics networks that operate across borders and exploit technological advancements to evade law enforcement agencies.

Two Assam Rifles Personnel Killed in Suspected Ambush on Convoy in Manipur's Ukhrul District

IMPHAL

Two personnel of the Assam Rifles were killed after unidentified armed assailants allegedly ambushed a convoy of the 40 Assam Rifles near Nungshang Kong in Manipur's Ukhrul district on Sunday, triggering a major security operation in the area.

According to sources, the attack occurred while the convoy was moving through the remote stretch near Nungshang Kong. The assailants reportedly opened fire on the convoy, critically injuring two Assam Rifles personnel.

Efforts were initially made to evacuate the injured soldiers to Imphal for advanced medical treatment. However, as their condition worsened, they were taken to the Assam Rifles camp at Sangshak in Ukhrul district, where both later succumbed to their injuries.



The incident marks another serious security challenge in Manipur, where security forces continue to maintain heightened vigilance amid ongoing efforts to restore peace and stability in conflict-affected areas.

Following the attack, security forces launched an extensive search and combing operation to track down those responsible. Additional forces

have reportedly been deployed in the area, while investigations are underway to determine the identity of the attackers and the motive behind the assault. Condemning the incident, Manipur Home Minister K. Govindas Singh expressed deep concern over the reported attack on the Assam Rifles convoy.

In a social media post issued before the deaths of the two personnel were confirmed, the minister said such acts of violence undermine efforts to restore normalcy and harmony in the state.

"Such incidents only disrupt the peace and harmony that we all aspire to uphold. My thoughts and prayers are with the injured personnel, and I wish them a speedy and complete recovery," he stated.

The minister also expressed confidence that security agencies would take all necessary steps to identify and apprehend those involved in the attack in accordance with the law. He urged the public to remain united in supporting peace, security and stability across Manipur.

Authorities have yet to issue an official statement identifying the victims. Security forces remain on high alert as search operations continue in and around the attack site.

Over 41,000 Aspirants Appear for APSC Preliminary Examination Across Assam

GUWAHATI

The Assam Public Service Commission successfully conducted the Combined Competitive (Preliminary) Examination, 2025 on Sunday across 35 districts of Assam, with more than 41,000 candidates appearing for recruitment to various state government services.

According to the Commission, the examination was held at 74 centres statewide for a total of 78 vacancies across 11 different services. A total of 41,695 candidates had applied for the examination, including 23,218 male candidates, 18,473 female candidates, four transgender candidates, and 278 Persons with Benchmark Disabilities (PwBD).

The recruitment drive covers several key administrative and departmental posts, including 45 positions in the Assam Civil Service (ACS) and six posts in the Assam Police Service (APS). Other vacancies include District Transport Officer, Superintendent of Excise, Assistant Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Assam Urban Administrative Service officer, Inspector of Labour, Assistant Employment Officer, Sub-Registrar, Research Assistant, and Inspector of Excise.

Officials said the examination was conducted smoothly with extensive support from district administrations, police authorities, educational institutions, and various government departments.

FIR Registration Dispute Sparks Heated Exchange on Opening Day of Assam Budget Session



GUWAHATI
The opening day of the Budget Session of the 16th Assam Legislative Assembly witnessed a sharp confrontation between opposition legislator Akhil Gogoi and Assam Cabinet Minister Pijush Hazarika over the registration of First Information Reports (FIRs) by the state police.

The issue surfaced during Question Hour when Gogoi raised concerns regarding the alleged non-registration of FIRs despite complaints being filed at police stations across Assam. The question had originally been addressed to Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who also holds the Home portfolio, but was answered by Hazarika in the Chief Minister's absence as Sarma is currently in New Delhi on official engagements.

Gogoi alleged that the government was underreporting crime by limiting the number of complaints converted into FIRs, thereby affecting official crime statistics. "The government is ensuring that fewer cases are reflected in official records and National Crime Records Bureau data," Gogoi argued while seeking detailed information on police complaints lodged across the state between July 2024 and June 2026. The Rajior Dal MLA had sought data on General Diary (GD) entries, preliminary inquiries conducted by police, the number of complaints converted into FIRs, cases involving medical examinations, and the annual gap between

GD entries and FIR registrations.

The debate escalated after Gogoi accused the government of avoiding direct answers to his queries, drawing strong objections from members of the treasury benches.

Responding sharply, Hazarika turned the focus on Gogoi himself, claiming that official records showed 32 criminal cases registered against the opposition legislator in various police stations across Assam. The minister further alleged discrepancies in Gogoi's election affidavit, claiming that only 21 cases had been disclosed despite government records indicating a higher number. "According to government data, there are 32 cases against Akhil Gogoi. However, only 21 cases were mentioned in his election affidavit. If incorrect information has been furnished, the matter will be examined legally," Hazarika told the House. As tensions rose, Assembly Speaker Ranjeet Kumar Dass intervened and directed that Gogoi's remarks suggesting the Chief Minister was deliberately avoiding questions be expunged from the official proceedings. The Speaker observed that the Chief Minister's absence should not be construed as an attempt to evade accountability, noting that ministers are often required to attend parliamentary and official engagements outside the state. Clarifying the government's position on FIR registration, Hazarika cited provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), which permit police officers to conduct preliminary scrutiny of complaints that may be non-cognisable or appear malicious in nature.

He explained that in such cases, approval from a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) is required before a preliminary inquiry can be initiated. The inquiry, he said, must be completed within 14 days, after which an FIR is registered if a cognisable offence is established.

Gauhati University's Fiscal Crisis Exposes Deeper Challenges in Higher Education Funding

GUWAHATI

One of Northeast India's oldest and most prestigious institutions, Gauhati University, is grappling with a severe financial crisis that has brought into focus the growing sustainability challenges facing public universities across the country.

The university is reportedly burdened with an annual deficit of nearly Rs 80 crore, a shortfall that has prompted the administration to consider a range of cost-cutting measures, including a proposal to reduce pension payments to retired employees by 50 per cent. The proposal, discussed during a recent meeting of the university's Executive Council, has triggered anxiety among pensioners and drawn criticism from employee groups.

While university authorities have not taken a final decision, the mere consideration of such a measure has sparked debate over how public institutions should address mounting financial pressures without affecting the welfare of former employees who depend on pension benefits for their livelihood.

Officials familiar with the matter said the institution's financial burden has steadily increased over the years due to rising expenditure on salaries, pensions, maintenance, and operational costs. At the same time, government grants and internally generated revenue have not grown at a comparable pace, creating a widening gap between income and expenditure.

The situation reflects a broader challenge confronting many publicly funded universities. As educational institutions expand academic programmes, invest in infrastructure, and respond to increasing student enrolment, recurring expenditure often rises faster than available resources. Pension liabilities, in particular, have become a major concern for several older universities with large numbers of retired employees.

Manipur CM Backs Electoral Roll Revision, Says Final Voter List Will Be Accurate and Inclusive

IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister Y. Khemchand Singh on Monday expressed confidence that the state's final electoral roll, being prepared under the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise, will be inclusive, accurate, and free from errors, following the publication of the draft voter list that excluded over 1.58 lakh names. The Election Commission released the draft electoral rolls on July 5 after completing the enumeration phase of the revision process. According to official figures, more than 19.34 lakh voters have been retained in the draft list based on the enumeration exercise conducted across the state.

The publication of the draft rolls marks the beginning of the claims-and-objections phase, during which voters whose names are missing can apply for inclusion or seek corrections. The window for filing claims and objections will remain open until August 4, while the final electoral rolls are scheduled to be published on September 6.

Speaking after attending a workshop on the second phase of the Special Intensive Revision at the BJP state headquarters in Imphal, Singh said the ongoing exercise is aimed at ensuring a credible and updated voter database.

In a statement shared on social media, the Chief Minister said the workshop reviewed the draft electoral rolls prepared by the Election Commission following the successful completion of the enumeration phase, during which more than 19.34 lakh enumeration forms were

collected from eligible voters.

Expressing confidence in the process, Singh said the final electoral roll would accurately reflect eligible voters in the state once all claims and objections are examined and verified. "The final electoral roll will be accurate and inclusive," the Chief Minister stated, reiterating the state government's commitment to supporting the conduct of free, fair, transparent, and credible elections. The workshop was attended by several senior BJP leaders, including state BJP president and Rajya Sabha MP A. Sharda Devi, Home Minister K. Govindas Singh, former Member of Parliament Vinod Sonkar, party legislators, and organisational leaders. The Special Intensive Revision exercise has assumed significance in Manipur as authorities seek to update electoral records ahead of future elections. With more than 1.58 lakh names absent from the draft list, the claims-and-objections period is expected to play a crucial role in ensuring that eligible voters who were left out during the enumeration phase have an opportunity to secure inclusion before the final publication of the rolls. Election officials have urged voters to verify their details in the draft list and make use of the correction window where necessary, emphasizing that the revision process is designed to improve the accuracy and integrity of the electoral database.

The final electoral roll, to be published on September 6, will form the basis for future electoral exercises in the state.

Heavy Rain, Thunderstorm Warning Across Assam as 30 Districts Placed Under Yellow Alert

GUWAHATI

The Regional Meteorological Centre (RMC) has issued a yellow alert for 30 districts across Assam, warning of heavy rainfall, thunderstorms, lightning activity and hot, humid weather conditions in different parts of the state over the coming days. According to the weather office, districts under the weather alert include Kokrajhar, Dhubri, South Salmara, Chirang, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Goalpara, Kamrup, Kamrup Metropolitan, Darrang, Hajo, Morigaon, Sonitpur, Nagaon, Hojai, West Karbi Anglong, Karbi Anglong, Dima Hasao, Cachar, Sribhumi, Hailakandi, Biswanath, Golaghat, Lakhimpur, Majuli, Jorhat, Dhemaji, Sivasagar, Dibrugarh, Charaideo and Tinsukia.

The forecast indicates a mixed weather pattern across the state, with several districts expected to experience heavy showers and thunderstorm activity, while others are likely to face uncomfortable hot and humid conditions.

The meteorological department has specifically warned of heat and humidity-related discomfort in 16 districts-Kokrajhar, Dhubri, South

Salmara, Chirang, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Goalpara, Kamrup, Kamrup Metropolitan, Darrang, Hajo, Lakhimpur, Majuli, Sivasagar, Charaideo and Dhemaji-where elevated temperatures combined with high moisture levels are expected to prevail.

At the same time, isolated locations in Morigaon, Sonitpur, Nagaon, West Karbi Anglong, Karbi Anglong, Biswanath, Golaghat, Jorhat, Dibrugarh and Tinsukia are likely to witness heavy rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms and lightning.

Weather officials have urged residents to remain alert, particularly in districts vulnerable to intense rainfall and thunderstorm activity. They cautioned that sudden changes in weather conditions could lead to lightning strikes, gusty winds and brief periods of heavy downpour, potentially affecting transportation, outdoor activities and daily routines. The RMC has advised people to follow weather updates regularly and take necessary precautions, especially during periods of lightning and severe thunderstorm activity, to minimise risks and ensure public safety.



VOLUME:1, ISSUE 815

Confronting the Evolving Global Drug Crisis

The global fight against illicit drugs has reached a defining moment. Despite decades of international conventions, aggressive law-enforcement campaigns, and billions of dollars spent on interdiction efforts, the world drug problem remains stubbornly persistent. More troublingly, it is no longer the same challenge governments confronted a generation ago. It has evolved into a complex public health, social, economic, and security crisis that transcends borders and demands a fundamentally different response.

The observance of the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking each year serves as a reminder that the battle against drugs is far from won. This year's theme - "World Drug Problem: Persisting Issues, New Challenges, Innovative Responses" - captures the reality confronting policymakers worldwide. While old threats remain, new dangers are emerging with unprecedented speed, requiring governments to rethink strategies that have often relied too heavily on punitive measures and too little on prevention, rehabilitation, and social resilience.

The illicit drug trade has consistently demonstrated an extraordinary ability to adapt. Globalization, technological innovation, and increasingly interconnected economies have transformed criminal enterprises into highly sophisticated networks capable of operating across continents with remarkable efficiency. Drug traffickers today are not merely exploiting remote border regions or weak enforcement mechanisms; they are leveraging digital technologies, encrypted communication platforms, anonymous payment systems, and transnational logistics chains to evade detection and expand their reach.

As a result, the drug economy has become more resilient than ever. Traditional trafficking routes continue to exist, but digital marketplaces have opened entirely new avenues for distribution. The internet has blurred geographical boundaries, allowing criminal networks to market and deliver illicit substances with a speed and discretion unimaginable just two decades ago. Law-enforcement agencies, despite technological advances of their own, often find themselves struggling to keep pace with this rapidly evolving ecosystem.

Compounding the challenge is the growing diversification of substances available in illicit markets. Synthetic drugs and laboratory-produced psychoactive compounds have altered the landscape of drug consumption. Unlike traditional narcotics that depend on cultivation and geographic conditions, synthetic substances can often be manufactured in concealed facilities with relative ease. Their potency, unpredictability, and accessibility create significant risks for users while complicating efforts at regulation and detection.

The consequences of these developments are particularly alarming for young people. Adolescents and young adults now inhabit a digital environment where exposure to harmful influences occurs with unprecedented frequency. Social media platforms, online communities, and encrypted messaging services can facilitate the dissemination of misinformation about drugs, normalize risky behavior, and provide easy access to illicit substances. Combined with peer pressure, emotional distress, academic stress, and social isolation, these influences create a dangerous pathway toward substance abuse.

Yet focusing solely on trafficking networks and criminal enterprises risks overlooking the most important aspect of the drug problem: its human cost.

Addiction is not merely a law-and-order issue. It is a profound social and public health challenge that devastates individuals, families, and communities. Substance dependence destroys lives, weakens family structures, undermines educational attainment, and erodes economic productivity. Behind every statistic lies a human story marked by suffering, loss, and unrealized potential.

The growing link between substance abuse and mental health disorders further complicates the challenge. Anxiety, depression, loneliness, trauma, and psychological stress often contribute to drug use, while addiction itself can intensify mental health conditions. This vicious cycle highlights the limitations of approaches that focus exclusively on enforcement while neglecting prevention, counseling, and treatment. Effective drug-control policies must recognize that addiction is frequently rooted in deeper social and psychological vulnerabilities.

Indeed, the social consequences of drug abuse extend far beyond the individual user. Educational disruption, family breakdown, reduced workplace productivity, increased healthcare costs, and heightened vulnerability to criminal activity impose substantial burdens on society. Communities grappling with widespread substance abuse often experience diminished social cohesion and weakened prospects for long-term development. For this reason, drug policy should be viewed not merely as a criminal justice concern but as an essential component of social and economic development.

India is not immune to these global trends. The country's rapid social transformation, expanding digital connectivity, demographic pressures, and employment challenges have created conditions that can increase vulnerability to substance abuse, particularly among young people. While law-enforcement agencies continue to seize significant quantities of narcotics and dismantle trafficking networks, the persistence of the problem underscores the need for a broader and more balanced strategy. The situation in Jammu and Kashmir offers a compelling example of why such an approach is necessary. In recent years, concerns about substance abuse have grown across the Union Territory, cutting across social, economic, and geographic divides. The increasing involvement of young people has raised legitimate concerns about the long-term consequences for society. Drug addiction threatens not only individual health but also the aspirations and productivity of an entire generation. Against this backdrop, the Jammu and Kashmir government's ongoing 100-Day Anti-Drug Campaign deserves attention. The initiative reflects an understanding that enforcement alone cannot solve the problem. By emphasizing awareness, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and community participation, the campaign seeks to address the issue in a more comprehensive manner. Its emphasis on collective responsibility is particularly noteworthy. Drug abuse cannot be tackled by governments alone. Educational institutions, healthcare providers, law-enforcement agencies, civil society organizations, community leaders, and families all have critical roles to play. The campaign's attempt to mobilize these stakeholders recognizes an important truth: sustainable solutions emerge when society itself becomes an active participant in prevention and recovery.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

The revolution is not an apple that falls when it is ripe. You have to make it fall. - Che Guevara

A LIFE DEVOTED TO INDIA'S UNITY AND PROGRESS



SHRI NARENDRA MODI

Today, 6th July, is a special day for countless people who cherish the ideals of nationalism and selfless service. We commemorate the 125th birth anniversary of Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee, whose life remains a timeless example of courage and unwavering commitment to Maa Bharti. Few leaders in modern India embodied the seamless confluence of intellect, public service and moral conviction as profoundly as Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee.

The young Syama Prasad was born into circumstances that could easily have assured him a protected and comfortable life. His father, Sir Ashutosh Mookerjee, was among the foremost educationists and intellectuals of his age. Yet, while destiny placed before him a path of privilege, his conscience led him towards one of sacrifice and national service. He was convinced that he could not remain a mute spectator to the turbulence of his times, be it fighting colonialism, communalism, humanitarian challenges and more. Along this journey, he endured profound personal tragedies, including the loss of an infant child and, later, his wife. Yet, these tragedies only deepened his resolve and strengthened his unwavering commitment to serve.

If there was one ideal that defined Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee's public life above all else, it was the indivisibility of India. He stood firm during the upheaval of Partition to ensure that West Bengal remained an integral part of India. A few years later, that very conviction drew him to Jammu and Kashmir. Imprisonment did not deter him and isolation did not diminish him. His life came to an abrupt end in detention, far from the countless people whose cause he had made his own. There are moments in history when an individual's final sacrifice transcends politics and enters the realm of national memory. Dr. Mookerjee's last journey remains one such moment. Acharya Vinoba Bhave said that Dr. Mookerjee sacrificed himself for a cause in which he had faith. Years later, the revocation of Articles 370 and 35(A) in 2019 was the most fitting tribute to his martyrdom.

Dr. Mookerjee put India First and Indian values first. And he did it by building institutions and nurturing systems that defied conventional mindsets of those times. He became the youngest Vice Chancellor of the University of Calcutta. In his unique style, he brought positive changes that were patriotic and futuristic.

actly what the Jana Sangh did both during the years it was active and beyond.

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee's tenure as India's first Minister for Industry and Supply reveals a statesman whose conception of development was remarkably comprehensive and humane. He viewed industry as a means of restoring dignity, opportunity and confidence to a newly independent nation. He respected wealth creation and value addition. While laying the foundations of modern industrial India through pioneering initiatives such as the Damodar Valley Corporation, the Sindri Fertiliser Plant and a robust industrial policy, he simultaneously ensured that India's traditional strengths were not neglected. Handlooms, cottage industries, artisans and textile workers found in him an equally committed champion.

Here, I would like to share a personal experience. The Sindri plant, which Dr. Mookerjee worked to establish with a clear vision of self-reliance, was ignored by those who ran the nation for several decades. I feel honoured that our Government had the opportunity to contribute to its revival. It was indeed among the most special moments to have been there for that programme.

India's civilisational tradition has long celebrated dialogue and discussions. Dr. Mookerjee embodied this democratic spirit. He joined Pandit Nehru's Cabinet, believing that the task of nation-building in the early years transcended political differences. He served with sincerity and a constructive spirit. But when he felt that questions of national importance demanded a different course, he relinquished office with dignity and devoted himself wholeheartedly to the political work he believed the nation required.

75 years ago, Pandit Nehru brought the First Amendment, which was a direct assault on free speech. Dr. Mookerjee was among its staunchest critics. He understood fully what the Congress was capable of doing. And he was proven right. Those who brought the First Amendment 75 years ago imposed the Emergency in 1975 and 50 years ago, brought in the 42nd Amendment Act, which again struck at the core of liberal democratic values.

Dr. Mookerjee also stood out for his humanitarian efforts. When the most tragic famine struck Bengal in 1943, Dr. Mookerjee immersed himself in serving those affected. He ensured that several canteens and relief centres were opened to feed people. On one hand, he was deeply shaken by the plight of his people while on the other, he was repulsed by the insensitivity of the colonial rulers. He even wrote a book, Panchasher Manwantar, in which he expressed his angst. When a super cyclone hit Medinipur in 1942, his efforts to restore normalcy were wide-

ly lauded.

Speaking at a college in Kolkata, Dr. Mookerjee urged the youth, "Whatever work you undertake, do it seriously, thoroughly and well; never leave it half-done or undone, never feel yourself satisfied unless and until you have given it your very best." As India advances towards the goal of a Viksit Bharat, the finest tribute we can pay him is to strive every day to build the strong, united, self-confident and compassionate India that he so deeply believed in. And knowing today's youth, I am

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

From farms & fisheries

to local businesses, rural

communities are driving

innovation, strengthening

food systems & creating

opportunities.

On

WorldRuralDevelopmentDay,

we join @IFAD in

celebrating the people

shaping a more sustainable

future for all. ~ United

RuralDevelopmentDay, we

join @IFAD in celebrating

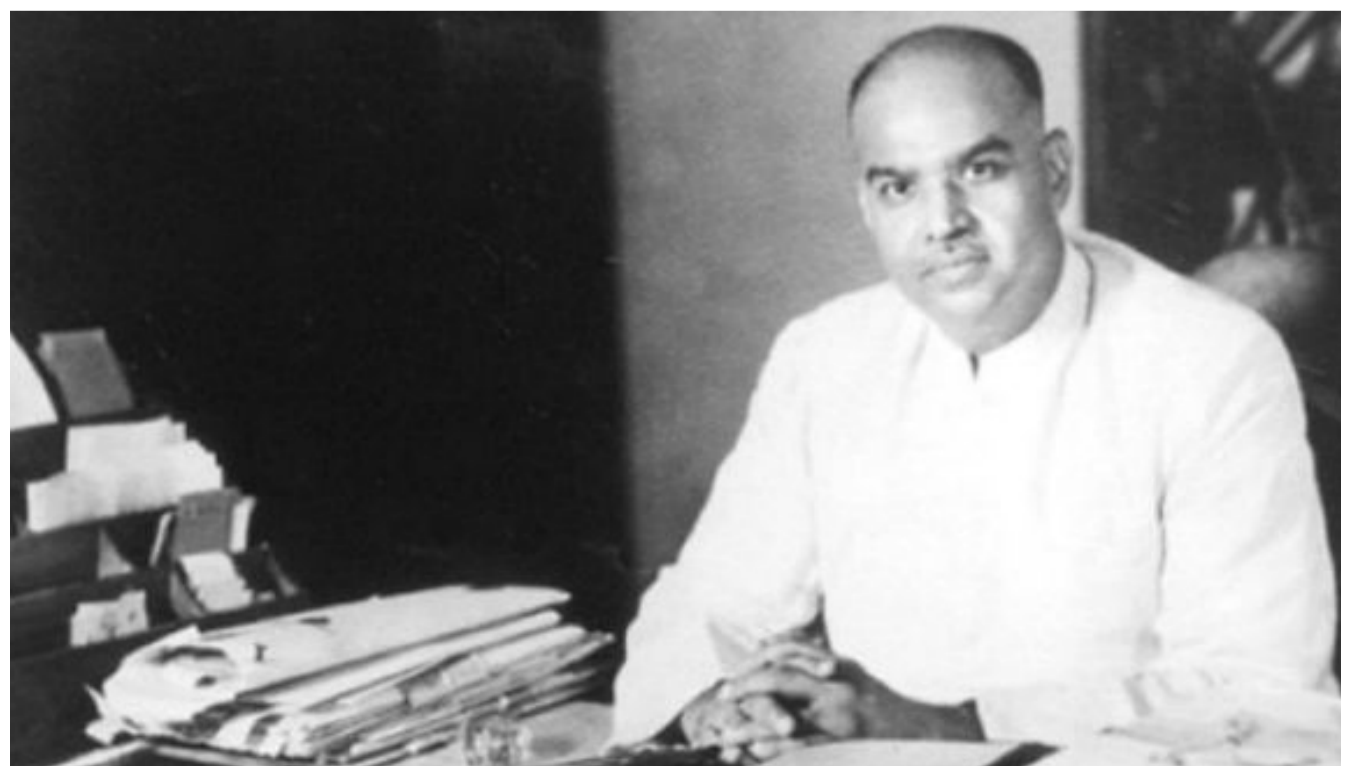
the people shaping a more

sustainable future for all. ~

United Nations



certain they will rise to the occasion and do exactly that.



Over 92% of Manipur Voters Included in Draft Electoral Roll; 1.58 Lakh Electors Yet to Complete Verification

IMPHAL

The Election Commission of India (ECI) published the Draft Photo Electoral Rolls for all 60 Assembly constituencies in Manipur under the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) 2026, with more than 92 per cent of the state's electors finding a place in the preliminary list.

Addressing a press conference at the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) in Lamphel, CEO Arun Kumar Sinha said that 19,34,399 electors representing 92.42 per cent of Manipur's pre-draft electorate of 20,93,076 submitted their enumeration forms during the revision exercise conducted between May 30 and June 28.

The remaining 1,58,677 electors, accounting for 7.58 per cent of the electorate, were not included in the draft



roll after failing to submit enumeration forms. Election officials attributed the omissions to factors such as death, per-

manent migration, enrolment in other states or Union Territories, duplicate registrations, inability to trace voters,

or non-submission of forms within the stipulated timeline.

Sinha sought to allay concerns over exclusions, emphasising that no elector's name would be removed from the electoral roll without following due legal procedures.

"No individual's name can be deleted from the electoral roll without providing an opportunity for a hearing. Any deletion can only take place after due verification and the issuance of a reasoned order," he said.

The CEO clarified that voters whose names do not appear in the draft roll still have an opportunity to secure inclusion by submitting Form-6 along with the required declaration during the Claims and Objections period, which will remain open from July 5 to August 4.

The Notice and Verification Phase of

the revision process will continue until September 2. During this period, Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) will examine claims and objections, conduct necessary verification exercises, and issue notices wherever required.

Electors seeking corrections in personal details such as names, addresses, or other particulars, as well as those wishing to shift their Assembly constituency, can submit Form-8 during the revision period, Sinha added.

He also noted that voters dissatisfied with decisions taken during the revision process would retain the statutory right to appeal under the provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, even after the publication of the final electoral roll.

According to the draft rolls, Manipur currently has 19,34,399 registered

electors, including 9,40,446 male voters, 9,93,660 female voters, and 283 third-gender voters. The draft also records 20,442 electors in the 18-19 age group, reflecting the entry of new young voters into the electoral process.

In a move aimed at improving voter accessibility, election authorities have increased the number of polling stations across the state from 2,956 to 3,041 following a rationalisation exercise. A total of 85 new polling stations have been added to reduce voter congestion and improve access to polling facilities.

To ensure transparency, both-wise lists of Absent, Shifted, Deceased and Duplicate (ASDD) electors have been displayed at the offices of Electoral Registration Officers and made available on the Chief Electoral Officer's website for public scrutiny.

Two Die in Separate Incidents in Manipur's Thoubal; JAC Seeks Probe into Youth's Mysterious Death

IMPHAL

Two separate incidents in Manipur's Thoubal district claimed two lives over the past 24 hours, with one involving the unexplained death of a young man and the other a fatal road accident on Asian Highway-1. The first incident has triggered public concern after the body of a 25-year-old man was found under mysterious circumstances near the Khekman Ningthibi Khong Canal on July 5. The deceased, identified as Sapam Swami of Leisangthem Keliakhong, had reportedly left his home for work on the morning of July 4 but failed to return. His body was later recovered by police from the canal area. A police team, assisted by forensic experts, inspected the site and sent the body for post-mortem examination to ascertain the cause of death. Authorities have launched an investigation into the case. The incident has led to the formation of a Joint Action Committee (JAC), with local residents and family members demanding a thorough inquiry. Alleging possible foul play, the committee has called for a government-led investigation and the identification of those responsible. Swami's wife, Roshibina, along with members of the JAC, has reportedly refused to claim the body until the circumstances surrounding his death are clarified. JAC convenor Sapam Mocha stated that the committee would continue its demand for justice and accountability before accepting the mortal remains. In a separate incident, a 17-year-old boy lost his life while another youth sustained injuries after a scooter crashed into the rear of a parked vehicle along Asian Highway-1 near the Wangsing Toll Tax point shortly after midnight. Police identified the deceased as Elangbam Mahesh, son of E. Biren from Heirok Part-II Keithel Maning. He was travelling as a pillion rider on a TVS NTORQ scooter when the accident occurred at around 12:10 am under the jurisdiction of Thoubal Police Station.

Grenade Recovered at Former Minister Bijoy Koijam's Residence; PREPAK Claims Responsibility

IMPHAL

Security concerns have intensified in Manipur after a hand grenade was recovered from the residence of former MLA and ex-minister Bijoy Koijam in Thongju Pheijaleitong, with the banned insurgent outfit People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak later claiming responsibility for the act.

According to police, the explosive was found at Koijam's residence at around 11 pm on July 4. Security personnel rushed to the site after receiving information and safely recovered the grenade without any casualties or damage. A case has been registered and an investigation is underway to identify those involved and determine the circumstances surrounding the incident. The recovery triggered strong reactions from local residents, who expressed concern over the placement of a live explosive in a densely populated neighbourhood. On July 5, residents under the banners of the Pheijaleitong Meira Paibi and the Students' Welfare Committee staged a sit-in protest, condemning the act and warning that it could have resulted in a major tragedy.

Protesters urged those responsible to disclose the motive behind the attack and called for disputes—whether political or personal—to be addressed through peaceful dialogue rather than violence. They also appealed to authorities to ensure the safety of civilians and prevent similar incidents in residential areas. The incident comes amid a series of attacks recently claimed by PREPAK. In a statement issued by its publicity secretary, identified as Mangal Khuman, the outfit claimed responsibility for grenade attacks allegedly targeting Koijam's residence on June 28 and July 4. It also claimed involvement in an explosion at the residence of Phuralaitam Bhavananda Sharma in Brahmapur Aribam Leikai on June 26. In its statement, the outfit accused Koijam of collaborating with Indian intelligence agencies and security forces. PREPAK alleged that the former minister had been approaching families of its cadres and encouraging them to persuade their children to leave the organisation, which it described as an attempt to weaken the group.

Assam Assembly to Add Hindi as Fourth Official Language; Bodo Status Remains Unchanged

GUWAHATI

The Assam Legislative Assembly will introduce Hindi as an official language of House proceedings from the Budget Session commencing on July 6, expanding the list of Assembly languages to four alongside Assamese, English and Bodo.

Assembly Speaker Ranjeet Kumar Dass announced the decision on Sunday, stating that it was approved during a meeting of the General Purpose Committee held a day earlier.

Addressing a press conference in Guwahati, Dass said members would now be able to use Hindi in Assembly proceedings in addition to the existing official languages. "The General Purpose Committee met on Saturday and decided that Hindi will be introduced as an official language of the Assembly along with Assamese, English and Bodo," the Speaker said.

Explaining the rationale behind the move, Dass noted that



Hindi enjoys a prominent place as a widely spoken language across the country and that its inclusion was intended as a mark of respect.

In another administrative change, the Speaker announced that ALA TV, the channel that broadcasts Assembly proceedings, will be renamed Assam Bidhan Sabha TV.

The announcement had sparked speculation in some

quarters about the future status of Bodo in the Assembly. However, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma moved quickly to clarify that there was no proposal to discontinue the use of Bodo as an official Assembly language.

In a statement shared on social media, Sarma said he had been informed by the Speaker that Bodo would continue to enjoy its existing status in the House.

Describing Bodo as an integral part of Assam's cultural fabric, the Chief Minister said the language represents the history, traditions and aspirations of the Bodo community and contributes significantly to the state's linguistic diversity.

"Bodo is an inseparable part of Assam's rich cultural heritage and identity. It carries the history, traditions and aspirations of the Bodo community and enriches the vibrant diversity that defines our state," Sarma stated.

He further reiterated the government's commitment to

safeguarding and promoting the language, assuring continued institutional support for its growth and development.

"The Government of Assam remains fully committed to preserving and promoting the Bodo language and will continue to take all necessary steps to ensure that it flourishes for future generations," he added.

Bodo was accorded the status of Associate Official Language of the Assam Legislative Assembly through the Assam Official Language (Amendment) Act, 2020. The language is also included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution, which recognises India's officially listed languages.

The inclusion of Hindi marks a significant linguistic expansion in the functioning of the Assam Assembly, while the government's clarification seeks to reassure stakeholders that the move will not affect the constitutional and legislative recognition already granted to Bodo.

Tripura Gets Northeast's First MEMU Service as CM Signals Early Arrival of Vande Bharat Train

AGARTALA

Tripura took a significant step in rail modernisation on Saturday with Chief Minister Manik Saha flagging off the Northeast region's first Mainline Electric Multiple Unit (MEMU) train service from Agartala, while also indicating that a Vande Bharat train could begin operations in the state in the near future. Describing the launch as a milestone in the state's transportation journey, Saha said the introduction of the MEMU service reflects the rapid expansion of railway infrastructure in Tripura and will strengthen connectivity, trade and passenger movement across the region. Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, the Chief Minister revealed that he had recently met Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav to seek improved rail services for the state. According to Saha, he had initially requested the intro-

duction of a Diesel Electric Multiple Unit (DEMU) service. However, the Railway Minister informed him that Tripura would instead receive a more advanced electric train service.

"This is the first MEMU train originating from Agartala in the Northeast Railway zone. If everything progresses according to plan, a Vande Bharat service will also be launched from here very soon," he said. The Chief Minister termed the introduction of electric train operations a historic achievement for Tripura and credited the Centre and the state government for accelerating infrastructure development and improving last-mile connectivity.

Highlighting future connectivity projects, Saha said work is progressing on the Maitri Setu over the Feni River and the Agartala-Akhaura Rail Link, both of which are expected to significantly enhance regional

and international transport links. He noted that these projects would provide faster and more affordable transportation options while opening new avenues for trade and economic cooperation with neighbouring Bangladesh.

The Chief Minister also reiterated the government's vision of developing Tripura as a strategic gateway for trade, logistics and travel in the Northeast. He pointed out that 271 kilometres of railway electrification had been completed in the state during 2026, paving the way for modern electric train operations. Saha highlighted the growing network of rail services connecting Tripura with major destinations across the country, including the Tejas Express, Lokmanya Tilak Express, and Tripura Sundari Express, along with several inter-city services.

Reflecting on the state's railway history, the Chief Minister

noted that rail connectivity first reached Dharmanagar in 1964 and Kumarghat in 1990. He said major expansion efforts gained momentum after railway development in the Northeast was accorded national project status during the tenure of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, culminating in the extension of metre-gauge rail services to Agartala in 2008.

He added that the subsequent conversion of metre-gauge tracks to broad gauge under the government led by Narendra Modi significantly improved rail connectivity and operational efficiency in the state.

Saha also informed that he had raised the demand for a double railway line connecting Tripura with the national rail network. According to him, the survey for the project has already been completed and preparation of the Detailed Project Report (DPR) is underway.

Tripura Eyes Fresh Investment Push as CM Manik Saha Highlights State's Business-Friendly Ecosystem

AGARTALA

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha asserted that the northeastern state has emerged as a promising destination for investment, attributing growing investor interest to improved law and order, policy reforms, and the availability of raw materials.

Speaking to reporters ahead of the upcoming Destination Tripura: Business Conclave 2026, scheduled for July 9 and 10 at the Badharghat International Fair Ground in West Tripura, Saha said the state is witnessing increasing attention from entrepreneurs and industry leaders looking to explore new business opportunities.

According to the Chief Minister, nearly 500 business representatives, including foreign investors, are expected to attend the two-day conclave, which is being positioned as a major platform to showcase Tripura's economic potential and attract fresh investments across key sectors.

Saha said Union Minister for Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) Jyotiraditya Scindia is slated to participate in the event along with senior officials from the Central government, underlining the significance of the conclave.

Highlighting the outcomes of previous investment outreach

efforts, the Chief Minister noted that the state had received business proposals worth around ₹30,000 crore during an earlier summit, translating into investments of nearly ₹8,000 crore. He expressed optimism that the upcoming conclave would generate a fresh wave of investment commitments and strengthen Tripura's economic growth trajectory.

"Investors are showing interest in Tripura because of the conducive environment created by the government. Continued investments will help create jobs, increase the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), and accelerate overall development," Saha said.

Ahead of the conclave, the Chief Minister chaired a high-level review meeting with senior officials to assess preparations and ensure smooth execution of the event.

The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary J.K. Sinha, Director General of Police Anurag Dhankar, and representatives from various departments.

Officials made detailed presentations outlining investment opportunities in sectors ranging from infrastructure and manufacturing to agriculture, tourism, and services. The government is expected to use the conclave to connect potential investors with sector-specific projects and policy incentives.

Manipur Village Launches Community-Led Drive to Protect Endangered Hog Deer, Sets Rs 5 Lakh Fine for Poachers

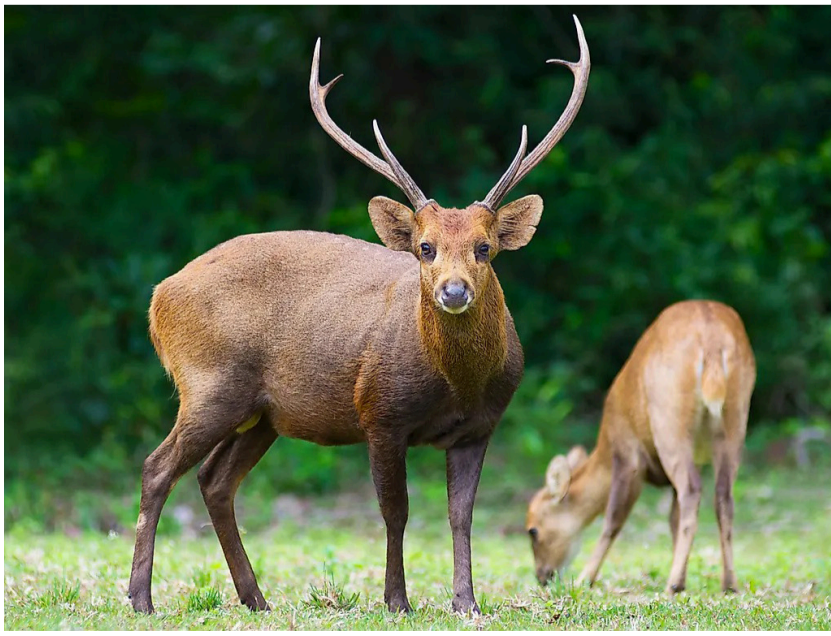
IMPHAL

In a significant grassroots conservation initiative, residents of Ishok village near Loktak Lake in Manipur's Bishnupur district have imposed a complete ban on the hunting of the endangered hog deer, introducing stringent penalties of up to Rs 5 lakh and legal action against violators.

The decision was adopted during a stakeholders' meeting attended by local residents, civil society organisations and officials of the Bishnupur Forest Division at Chingphu Ningthou Shembi Leima Haraobung. The gathering also endorsed a broader wildlife protection framework aimed at safeguarding vulnerable species and preserving critical habitats around the Loktak Lake ecosystem.

Under the resolutions passed at the meeting, any individual found hunting, killing or engaging in the poaching of hog deer or other protected wildlife species will face a monetary penalty of up to Rs 5 lakh. Offenders will also be handed over to forest authorities for prosecution under applicable wildlife protection laws.

The village community further re-



solved to strengthen habitat protection measures by holding pet owners accountable for wildlife attacks. Residents have been instructed to ensure that their dogs do not stray into ecologically sensitive areas such as Mutum Yangbi and Ngakra-tubi, which serve as important habitats for wild animals.

According to the resolutions, dog owners whose pets injure or kill a hog deer will also be liable to pay fines of up to Rs 5 lakh.

In an effort to enhance local surveillance and conservation efforts, the village has constituted the Ishok Apunba Wildlife Protection Committee, which

will undertake regular patrols, monitor wildlife habitats and coordinate protection measures with local authorities.

The community also decided to restrict entry into the village for outsiders found to be involved in illegal wildlife activities, signalling a stronger local commitment to preventing poaching and protecting biodiversity in the region.

The endangered hog deer, scientifically known as Hog Deer, is locally referred to as Kharsa and enjoys the highest level of legal protection under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act. The species is closely associated with the unique floating wetland ecosystem of Keibul Lamjao National Park, the world's only floating national park located on Loktak Lake.

Conservationists have long expressed concern over the declining population of the species, which faces threats from habitat degradation, fragmentation, human encroachment and poaching. The wetlands surrounding Loktak Lake remain one of the last important habitats supporting the animal in the region.

The meeting was attended by Waikhom Romabai, village chief Warepam Deben, and representatives of the Indian Red Cross Society.

The resolutions adopted by Ishok village are being viewed as a notable example of community-led conservation, demonstrating how local participation can complement government efforts to protect endangered wildlife and preserve fragile ecosystems in Manipur.

Quest!

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India plans seabed cable network to hunt Chinese, Pakistani submarines



submarine is unlikely to be delivered for around seven years.

Submarines are inherently the most potent anti-submarine warfare (ASW) platforms, silent hunter-killers best equipped to stalk enemy boats. But with a depleted and ageing conventional fleet of both subs and ASW choppers, the Navy has to lean on a layered grid of P-8I maritime patrol aircraft, MH-60R multi-role helicopters, warships and surveillance systems. Fixed seabed sensors like UFOSS will plug a critical gap in that grid.

Unlike ships and aircraft that patrol an area only periodically, seabed sensor networks keep watch round-the-clock, silently monitoring underwater activity and cueing ASW assets towards potential contacts.

The concept has well-established precedents. During the Cold War, the United States deployed the Sound Surveillance System (SOSUS), a network of seabed-mounted hydrophone arrays connected by undersea cables to detect and track Soviet submarines. The US and Japan later expanded similar underwater surveillance architecture across the western Pacific to monitor Chinese submarine movements, while China has built its own "underwater Great Wall" of seabed acoustic sensors in the South China Sea.

According to the EOI, the UFOSS will comprise underwater "wet-plant" systems including sensor array nodes, subsea fibre-optic cables, junction boxes and branching units linked through a beach manhole to a shore station. The selected integrator will be responsible for the entire project, from integration and deployment to commissioning, one year of operations and lifecycle support for the system's planned 20-year service life. Execution has been tentatively pegged at 48 months.

bidder to bag the contract.

India is moving to plant eyes and ears on the Indian Ocean seabed. The Defence Research and Development Organisation has kicked off the hunt for an industry partner to develop and deploy an Underwater Fiber Optic Sensing System (UFOSS), a fixed network of undersea sensors that will keep round-the-clock watch on submarines prowling India's waters.

The Kochi-based Naval Physical and Oceanographic Laboratory (NPOL), DRDO's premier underwater warfare lab, has floated an expression of interest (EOI) to identify a "lead system integrator" for the turnkey development, supply, transportation, deployment and commissioning of the system. The network will comprise seabed sensor nodes linked by subsea fibre-optic cables to a shore station where the data will be received, monitored and analysed.

An EOI is only the first stage of the procurement process, issued on a "no cost, no commitment" basis to gauge industrial capability. But it marks the government's first public move towards what could eventually become a strategic underwater sensing grid. Based on the responses, NPOL will float a request for proposal (RFP), with the lowest qualified

Teacher, temple aide, former mechanic: Who are the 8 arrested in Ayodhya Ram Temple donation theft probe?

NEW DELHI

A primary school teacher, a former car mechanic, a retired bank employee and a trusted aide of a senior Shri Ram Jannabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust functionary are among the eight people arrested in connection with the alleged embezzlement of donations at the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

Police sources allege that the accused, most of whom were employed as contract workers through an outsourcing agency, exploited their roles in the temple's donation management system to siphon off cash offerings over a period of time.

Investigators are examining their financial transactions, assets and individual roles in the alleged conspiracy.

Avinash Shukla Among those arrested is Avinash Shukla, a primary school teacher who was assigned to cash reconciliation during donation-counting sessions.

Police sources claimed that more than Rs 20 lakh in cash, foreign currency and jewellery were recovered from premises linked to him, the largest seizure among the accused.

A donation chest bearing the words "Ramrajya Kosh" and fitted with a QR code for digital payments was also recovered from Avinash's house.

During questioning, he described how currency notes were allegedly removed from the counting centre by taking advantage of CCTV blind spots and temporarily hiding the cash inside washrooms.

Police also claimed he had been living at a yoga centre in Ayodhya for several years.

In this photo from July 1, 2026, a few items belonging to Avinash Shukla, who is an arrested accused in the Ram Temple donations alleged theft case, are left behind at a yoga centre in Kaushalpur Phase 2, where he used to stay, in Ayodhya.

Ram temple theft vs robust TTD



security

Anukalp Mishra Anukalp Mishra worked as a contract employee in the temple's donation-counting unit through the outsourcing agency.

A resident of Basawan village in Ayodhya's Milkpur area, he reportedly earned about Rs 15,000 a month.

Police are scrutinising assets allegedly acquired by him, including a house valued at around Rs 65 lakh, a farmhouse in his native village, a premium motorcycle and a booked sport utility vehicle, which investigators suspect are disproportionate to his known income.

Searches linked to him allegedly yielded around Rs 16.8 lakh in cash.

Police are also examining his reported family relationship with temple trust member Anil Mishra and his close association with co-accused and brother-in-law Lavkush Mishra.

Lavkush Mishra Lavkush, who was also recruited through the outsourcing agency for donation counting, had previously worked as an automobile mechanic earning around Rs 10,000-12,000 a month.

A resident of Minapur Fagauli village, he is reported to have studied up to Class 12.

Police sources alleged that he took part in diverting donations and said around Rs 14.25 lakh in cash was recovered during the investigation.

Ramshankar Mishra Ramshankar Mishra was another contract employee involved in donation counting.

According to police sources, he handled cash inside the secure counting room and was part of the alleged conspiracy to siphon donations.

Searches linked to him allegedly led to the recovery of about Rs 7.3 lakh in cash.

Authorities have disclosed little about his personal background beyond his role in the counting operations.

Ramshankar 'Tinnu' Yadav Police sources have described Ramshankar Yadav, popularly known as Tinnu Yadav, as one of the principal figures in the alleged conspiracy.

Initially appointed as the personal driver of Shri Ram Jannabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust general secretary Champat Rai, he later became a trusted aide associated with temple administration and VIP management.

Police alleged that he had unauthorised access to the keys of the

donation-counting room and donation boxes, enabling manipulation of the counting process.

Investigators are also analysing WhatsApp conversations recovered during the probe.

In this photo from July 1, 2026, a few items belonging to Avinash Shukla, who is an arrested accused in the Ram Temple donations alleged theft case, are left behind at a yoga centre in Kaushalpur Phase 2, where he used to stay, in Ayodhya.

Donation theft: Accused's family alleges 'influential people' framing low-level staff, demands fair probe Manish Kumar Yadav

Manish Kumar Yadav, who worked in the temple's donation-counting team, is reported to be Tinnu Yadav's nephew.

Police sources alleged that he secured the assignment through family connections and was involved in handling cash inside the counting room.

Investigators said cash was recovered during searches linked to him and that his financial transactions are being examined.

Subhash Chandra Srivastava Subhash Chandra Srivastava, a retired bank employee, had been engaged by the temple trust to supervise donation counting at the Pilgrim Facility Centre.

He brought banking experience to the operation and oversaw counting shifts. He has also been identified in reports as a local RSS functionary.

Police sources alleged that he failed to prevent irregularities and played a role in facilitating the alleged embezzlement.

Karunesh Pandey Karunesh Pandey, another contract employee hired through the outsourcing agency, was responsible for opening donation boxes, sorting cash and counting donations.

Police sources alleged that he participated in the conspiracy to siphon funds and said searches linked to him led to the recovery of more than Rs 18 lakh in cash.

INTERNATIONAL

Iranian officials attend prayers for late Supreme Leader Khamenei; son and successor Mojtaba absent



TEHRAN

Iranian leaders joined prayers Sunday over the casket of late supreme leader Ali Khamenei during a second day of funeral ceremonies, but his son and successor Mojtaba Khamenei was conspicuously absent.

The elder Khamenei ruled the Islamic republic from 1989 until he was killed aged 86 in an airstrike on the first day of the US-Israeli war with Iran on February 28.

Officials including President Masoud Pezeshkian and Revolutionary Guards chief Ahmad Vahidi joined Sunday's ceremonies, along with huge crowds paying their final respects in Tehran.

But Mojtaba has not appeared in public since his appointment in early March. He is said to have been wounded

in the attack that killed his father.

The late supreme leader's other three sons, Masoud, Mostafa and Meysam, all attended the service.

It was held at Tehran's Grand Mosalla religious complex and led by prominent Shia cleric Ja'far Sobhani, a 97-year-old scholar who teaches at seminaries in the holy city of Qom.

Sunday was declared a public holiday across Iran.

Later in the day, Khamenei's body will be moved out of the Grand Mosalla, where it is lying in state, as part of preparations for processions through the capital on Monday.

The vast complex and surrounding streets were packed with mourners on Sunday morning. With temperatures forecast to exceed 35C, many were handed refreshments as they made their way

to the Grand Mosalla, some carrying Iranian flags or portraits of the late Khamenei.

Authorities have said they expect more than 10 million people to take part in the ceremonies in the capital. Strict security measures have been imposed and official media have warned of a risk of crowd crushes.

"More than 4,000 people visited medical centres located in and near Tehran's Mosalla," Iran's official IRNA news agency reported on Sunday, but no deaths had been recorded.

Footage from state television showed Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Iran's parliament speaker and its chief negotiator in talks with the United States, attending the prayers.

Also seen was Esmail Qaani, head of the Quds Force, the foreign arm of the

Revolutionary Guards.

Khamenei's coffin, draped in the Iranian flag and topped with his black turban, was placed alongside those of four relatives also killed in the February strikes, including an infant granddaughter.

After five weeks of intense fighting, the Middle East war is on hold following a ceasefire and an initial accord struck with the US. But both Washington and Tehran have warned they are ready to resume military action.

"The killers (of Khamenei) must face punishment," a 38-year-old man surnamed Miremadi told AFP as he attended the prayers. "If our leaders are about to proceed with negotiations in this manner, our people will not agree with it," he said. People were seeking revenge, not peace and negotiations, he added. Khamenei's funeral is being viewed outside Iran as a test of support for the government following mass protests in January that rights groups say were quelled by a crackdown that left thousands dead. "We're here to show the world that we back our revolution and our leader, and we demand revenge for the blood of our loved ones," said one woman surnamed Bakand, a 39-year-old homemaker attending Sunday's prayers.

Khamenei long pursued a course of confrontation with the West, and Tehran for years has provided support to anti-US and anti-Israel armed groups around the Middle East, including Palestinian Hamas and Lebanon's Hezbollah.

Delegations from both those groups met with Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Saturday, Iranian state media reported, while representatives of Yemen's Houthi rebels and Hamas ally Palestinian Islamic Jihad also attended the funeral ceremonies.

After the processions through Tehran on Monday, Khamenei's coffin will be moved on Tuesday to Qom, then on Wednesday to neighbouring Iraq, before the burial on Thursday in his northeastern hometown of Mashhad.

Pakistan's Islamabad is likely to host the next round of US-Iran talks: Report



ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's capital, Islamabad, is emerging as the frontrunner to host the next round of technical negotiations between the US and Iran, according to a media report on Sunday.

The US and Iran signed the memorandum of understanding (MoU) on June 18, aimed at restoring peace in West Asia.

It was followed by technical-level talks in Switzerland on June 21, with Pakistan and Qatar as mediators.

The resumption of the talks is part of ongoing efforts to keep the diplomatic process on track and resolve long-standing disputes between Washington and Tehran, Dawn reported quoting diplomatic sources.

"There are two possible venues for the technical talks - Islamabad and the Burgenstock resort in Switzerland," one diplomatic source said.

"Islamabad, however, is the more likely option."

The technical talks are expected to take place on July 11, although a final decision on the venue has yet to be announced.

The talks were temporarily delayed because of the multi-day state funeral ceremonies for Iran's late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Iranian officials have indicated that the composition of Tehran's delegation will be announced after the

funeral ceremonies conclude.

Khamenei, who ruled Iran for the last three decades, was killed on February 28, the first day of the massive US and Israeli joint air strikes on Tehran.

Starting Sunday, the burial ceremonies are slated to be held in Tehran and Qom and will continue till Tuesday, July 7.

The final burial ceremony will take place in the city of Mashhad on Thursday, July 9.

Dawn further quoted diplomatic sources to say that the negotiations will focus on Iran's nuclear programme, sanctions relief and Iranian assets frozen abroad.

A billboard of the US-Iran talks is seen near the Serena Hotel, the venue for the official meeting between both nations, in Islamabad, Pakistan, Sunday, April 12, 2026.

'They are all there': Trump says Iran's top leaders could be taken out with 'one shot' at Khamenei's funeral

The discussions are also expected to address regional security issues, including efforts to preserve stability in the Strait of Hormuz and maintain the recently agreed ceasefire in Lebanon.

The July 11 meeting is intended to advance the framework established under the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, signed two weeks ago, which gave both sides 60 days to negotiate a comprehensive agreement on Iran's nuclear programme

and related issues.

The latest diplomatic efforts follow indirect technical discussions held in Doha earlier this week.

US President Donald Trump described those talks as "very good", while Iranian officials said the two sides had reached an understanding on the partial release of billions of dollars in frozen Iranian assets.

US officials, however, reportedly disputed that any such agreement had been reached.

Diplomatic sources said mediators from Qatar and Pakistan continued to facilitate indirect contacts during the pause in negotiations, with discussions focusing on ensuring freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz and preserving the 60-day ceasefire agreed after June negotiations in Switzerland.

The most recent high-level negotiations were held at Switzerland's Burgenstock resort and were mediated by Qatar and Pakistan.

Those talks produced what negotiators described as a roadmap for reaching a broader agreement covering Iran's nuclear programme, sanctions relief, maritime security and regional de-escalation.

Diplomatic sources said marathon negotiating sessions addressed nuclear restrictions, sanctions relief, security in the Strait of Hormuz and the Lebanon ceasefire.

Although negotiators reported progress, they cautioned that the process remained fragile amid continuing tensions between Washington and Tehran.

Officials familiar with the negotiations said the next round of high-level direct talks is expected to take place in Doha during the third week of July, after technical teams complete work on the details of a possible agreement.

“Lachit Borphukan: The Lion of the Brahmaputra India Must Never Forget”



COL (DR.) ASHWANI KUMAR,

MID, VSM (RETD.) @ ASHK MACHHANVI



The Forgotten Hero. Every nation draws strength from the memory of its heroes. Some become household names, while others, despite changing the course of history, remain confined to the pages of regional chronicles. Among such towering personalities is Lachit Borphukan, the legendary commander of the Ahom Kingdom, whose brilliant leadership defeated the mighty Mughal Empire in the Battle of Saraighat in 1671.

For many Indians, particularly outside the North-East, his name is still unfamiliar. That is unfortunate, for his courage, patriotism and military genius deserve a place alongside the greatest warriors of our civilization.

Assam: The Eastern Shield of Bharat. Assam has never been merely a distant frontier. It has been India's eastern gateway, connecting the subcontinent with South-East Asia through ancient trade, culture and civilization. The mighty Brahmaputra, dense forests and surrounding hills shaped not only the geography of the region but also its military history.

The Ahom rulers understood that the terrain itself could become a powerful ally. Their knowledge of the river, its channels and seasonal changes gave them an advantage that no invading army could easily overcome.

When the Mughal Empire Looked East. The seventeenth century witnessed the expansion of the Mughal Empire under Emperor Aurangzeb. Having subdued many kingdoms, the Mughals believed Assam would also fall under their authority.

However, the Brahmaputra Valley presented

men when morale began to weaken. His courage revived the fighting spirit of the Ahom forces, who launched a determined counterattack that forced the Mughal fleet to retreat.

The victory preserved the independence of Assam and ensured that the Mughal advance into the eastern frontier came to a decisive halt.

Leadership Beyond the Battlefield.

Lachit Borphukan is remembered not only for military success but also for his uncompromising sense of duty. The famous episode in which he punished his own maternal uncle for negligence in constructing defensive works continues to symbolize the principle that national interest must always come before personal relationships.

itage of the entire North-East and strengthening the emotional bond between every region of our country.

A nation becomes stronger when every citizen sees their history reflected in the national story.

Conclusion

The waters of the Brahmaputra continue to flow as they did centuries ago, carrying with them memories of courage, sacrifice and resilience. Those memories deserve to be preserved, celebrated and passed on to future generations. Lachit Borphukan was not only the defender of Assam; he was one of the great defenders of Bharat. His life reminds us that while empires may fade into history, the ideals of courage, duty and love for the motherland remain eternal.

Author's Note.

Throughout my years in uniform, I had the privilege of serving in some of India's most challenging operational environments from the counter-insurgency operations in Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir to the intense combat experience during the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) operations in Sri Lanka. My military assignments also took

me across the beautiful yet strategically vital North-Eastern states, where I witnessed first hand the unique geography, vibrant cultures and unwavering patriotism of its people.

Each theatre of conflict was different. Punjab taught me the importance of winning the confidence of the people while confronting terrorism. Jammu & Kashmir demonstrated how history, geography and national security are deeply intertwined. Sri Lanka revealed the complexities of fighting an unconventional enemy in unfamiliar terrain. The North-East, with its mighty rivers, dense forests and resilient communities, showed me that India's strength lies as much in its diversity as in its unity.

Despite these varied experiences, one lesson remained constant, every region of India has produced men and women who placed duty above self and the nation above personal interests. Many are celebrated nationally, while countless others remain known only within their own homeland.

Among these forgotten giants stands Lachit Borphukan. His leadership, strategic vision and unwavering commitment to Assam continue to inspire soldiers and students of military history alike. His victory at Saraighat was not merely a regional triumph, it was a defining moment in the defence of India's eastern frontier.

As both a soldier and a student of history, I believe it is our collective responsibility to preserve and share such stories. They strengthen our understanding of the nation, deepen our appreciation of its diverse heritage and remind future generations that courage knows neither region nor language.

This article is my humble tribute to one of India's greatest yet most under recognised military leaders of Assam. My salute.

About the Author.

Col (Dr.) Ashwani Kumar, MID, VSM (Retd.), writing under the pen name Ashk Machhanvi, is a decorated Indian Army veteran, military intelligence professional, Curative historian, Defence expert and author. During a distinguished career spanning nearly four decades, he served in operational, intelligence and instructional appointments across Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir, the North-East and during the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) operations in Sri Lanka and abroad.

A recipient of the Mention-in-Despatches (MID) and the Vishisht Seva Medal (VSM), he has also served in the Cabinet Secretariat, DIPAC (PMO) and the Ministry of Home Affairs. He is widely known for his writings on military history, national security, strategic affairs and India's forgotten heroes.

His work seeks to bridge the gap between history and contemporary national consciousness by bringing to light the lives of unsung warriors whose courage helped shape the destiny of Bharat.

Disclaimer:

This article is based on established historical sources and is intended solely to promote awareness of the life, legacy and enduring contributions of Lachit Borphukan. Any interpretations, opinions or narrative observations expressed herein are those of the author.

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challenges unlike the plains of northern India. Cavalry was ineffective, supply lines were difficult to maintain, and unfamiliar waterways favoured the defenders.

It was in these circumstances that Lachit Borphukan displayed extraordinary leadership. He transformed geographical limitations into strategic advantages and prepared his forces for a decisive confrontation.

The Battle That Changed History. The Battle of Saraighat was not won through superior numbers or resources. It was won through determination, intelligent planning and inspiring leadership.

Despite illness, Lachit personally led his

True leadership demands integrity, discipline and accountability. These qualities remain as relevant today as they were more than three centuries ago.

Lessons for Modern India. As a soldier, I have learnt that weapons alone do not win wars. Victory belongs to those who possess clarity of purpose, professional competence and unwavering commitment to the nation.

These timeless values are reflected throughout the life of Lachit Borphukan. His understanding of terrain, logistics, morale and leadership would still find relevance in modern military studies. More importantly, his life reminds us that patriotism is measured not by words but by duty.

Why We Must Remember Him. The North-East has contributed immensely to India's history, culture and national security. Yet many of its heroes remain under recognized in mainstream narratives. Recognizing Lachit Borphukan is not merely about honouring one individual. It is about acknowledging the rich her-

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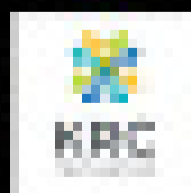


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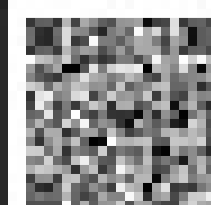


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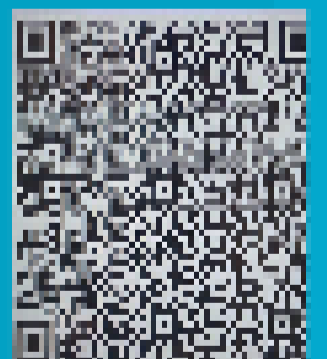
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