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# Assam-Bhutan Rail Link to Boost Trade, Tourism: Himanta

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## PERSPECTIVE

If you're struggling, that means you're progressing.

## Muslim Community Holds Peaceful Protest Against Proposed UCC Bill in Silchar

SILCHAR

Members of the Muslim community staged a peaceful protest in Silchar's Berenga area on Friday following congregational prayers, expressing opposition to the Assam government's proposed Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill.

The demonstration was organised by several religious and social organisations, with worshippers gathering outside a local mosque to voice their concerns over the proposed legislation. Participants were seen carrying petitions and placards calling for the withdrawal of the Bill.

Protesters argued that the proposed UCC is inconsistent with Muslim Personal Law and could affect constitutionally protected rights relating to religious freedom and personal practices. They urged the state government to reconsider the proposal and withdraw the legislation.

Addressing the gathering, speakers said the implementation of a Uniform Civil Code could have implications for the community's personal laws and religious customs. They maintained that opposition to the proposal would continue through peaceful and democratic means.

Organisers reiterated their appeal to the government to engage with stakeholders and review the proposed measure. The protest concluded without any untoward incident, and normalcy was maintained in the area, officials said.

### WHO SAID WHAT



**"We are the strongest and most powerful country on Earth. And by the grace of God, the United States of America is the most successful, most accomplished, most exceptional nation ever to exist in human history."**  
- President DONALD J. TRUMP

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday said the proposed Kokrajhar-Gelephu railway link will play a crucial role in strengthening trade, tourism and regional connectivity, further advancing India's Act East Policy and deepening ties with Bhutan.

Highlighting the significance of the project in a post on X, Sarma said enhanced connectivity is creating new economic opportunities for Assam and positioning the state as a key gateway for cross-border commerce in the region.

The Chief Minister described the 69.05-km Kokrajhar-Gelephu railway line as a landmark infrastructure project that will connect Kokrajhar in Assam with Bhutan's Gelephu Mindfulness City, a flagship urban development initiative of the Himalayan kingdom.

According to official estimates, the proposed railway corridor will be de-

## ASSAM-BHUTAN RAIL LINK PROJECT OVERVIEW



veloped at a cost of Rs 3,456.36 crore.

Sarma said the rail link is expected to boost trade and tourism between India and Bhutan while improving regional connectivity. He added that the project will strengthen Assam's strategic role in India's engagement with neighbouring countries and Southeast

Asia under the Act East Policy.

The Chief Minister also noted that the railway project represents another important milestone in the longstanding friendship between India and Bhutan. He said the improved connectivity will create fresh avenues for economic growth, facilitate the movement of

people and goods, and contribute to the overall development of the region.

Once completed, the Kokrajhar-Gelephu rail link is expected to enhance cross-border cooperation and support the broader vision of expanding connectivity-driven growth across North-east India.

## IAS Officer, Three Others Named in FIR Over Alleged Rs 14.55 Crore Tender Fraud in Tripura



AGARTALA

An FIR has been lodged at the New Capital Complex Police Station in Agartala alleging a financial fraud involving purported government tenders worth Rs 14.55 crore, with an IAS officer and three others named in the complaint.

The complaint was filed on July 1 by a representative of a Nagpur-based company, alleging that IAS officer Abhishek Chandra, along with Utpal Chandra, Sudip Pal and Krishna Chakraborty, induced the firm to invest substantial funds on the assurance of securing government supply contracts purportedly issued by Tripura's Directorate of Higher Education.

According to the FIR, the accused allegedly claimed to have connections with senior government officials and influence over the tendering process.

Acting on these assurances, the company entered into a joint venture agreement in September 2024 to participate in the alleged procurement contracts.

The complainant stated that between September 2024 and February 2025, the firm transferred approximately Rs 14.55 crore towards earnest money deposits and related payments, believing the tenders to be genuine. The complaint further alleges that work orders, supporting documents and WhatsApp communications were used to establish the authenticity of the contracts.

The FIR also claims that the company received certain payments described as refunds or profit-sharing, which allegedly strengthened its confidence in the legitimacy of the transactions.

However, after conducting an independent verification in April 2025, the firm reportedly discovered that the Directorate of Higher Education had not issued the tenders in question. The complainant alleged that the documents and assurances provided were fabricated and that the accused subsequently became unreachable.

Seeking a detailed investigation, the company has urged police to examine alleged offences including cheating, criminal breach of trust, forgery and criminal conspiracy under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, and other applicable provisions of law.

Police have registered the FIR, and further investigation is expected. The allegations contained in the complaint are yet to be verified and remain subject to the findings of the investigation.

## ED Conducts Searches at Silchar Businessman Abub Mazumdar's Properties in Financial Probe

SILCHAR



The Enforcement Directorate (ED) carried out simultaneous searches at two properties linked to Silchar-based businessman Abub Mazumdar on July 3 as part of an ongoing investigation into his financial transactions and alleged business dealings, sources said.

Teams from the central agency's Guwahati and Kolkata units, assisted by security personnel, conducted coordinated raids at Mazumdar's residence in the Itkhola Ghat area and another property in the Itkhola Ghaniwala locality early in the morning.

According to sources familiar with the investigation, the ED is examining Mazumdar's financial activities, the source of his assets, and his alleged links to a Myanmar-based betel nut syndicate. Investigators are reportedly looking into allegations that he accumulated significant wealth through his purported association with the network over a prolonged period.

Local sources claimed that Mazumdar left his residence after learning about the ED operation and could not be located during the searches. However, there has been no official confirmation regarding his whereabouts.

Sources further stated that Mazumdar had earlier come under the scanner of the Assam Police and the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in connection with separate cases.

The Enforcement Directorate has not issued an official statement on the searches so far. The investigation remains underway, and the allegations against Mazumdar have not been established and are subject to the outcome of the probe.

## Cachar Issues 48-Hour Advisory Against Using Jatinga River Water After Formalin Tanker Accident



SILCHAR

The Cachar District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) has advised residents living along the Jatinga River to avoid using its water for the next 48 hours following concerns of possible formalin contamination after a tanker accident near Jatinga Bridge.

According to district authorities, a tanker transporting formalin met with an accident on July 4 near the bridge. Officials suspect that some quantity of the chemical may have leaked into the river, prompting the administration to issue a precautionary public safety advisory.

In view of the potential health risks associated with formalin exposure, residents have been asked not to consume or use water from the Jatinga River for drinking or cooking purposes. The administration has also

urged people to avoid entering the river and to ensure that livestock do not drink the water during the advisory period.

As part of preventive measures, the Public Health Engineering (PHE) Department has been directed to temporarily halt water extraction from its drinking water supply project in the Barkhola Assembly constituency, which sources water from the Jatinga River.

District officials said the situation is under close observation and necessary assessments are being carried out. The administration has appealed to the public to strictly adhere to the advisory and cooperate with authorities until further updates are issued.

The DDMA stated that the precautionary measures have been taken to eliminate any possible risk to public health while the extent of the suspected contamination is being examined.

## Cachar pineapple reaches Dubai market, boosting export prospects for Barak Valley farmers

SILCHAR

Pineapples grown in Assam's Cachar district have entered the Dubai market, marking a significant milestone for local farmers and highlighting the export potential of one of Barak Valley's most renowned horticultural products.

Riding on this achievement, farmers, exporters, processors, agri-entrepreneurs and institutional buyers came together at a buyer-seller meet on Thursday to explore opportunities for expanding the fruit's presence in domestic and international markets. The Post-Harvest Management Programme and Buyer-Seller Meet on Cachar Pineapple was organised by the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in collaboration with the Cachar district administration.

The programme focused on strengthening post-harvest management practices, minimising losses, promoting value addition and creating direct market linkages for pineapple growers.

Inaugurating the event, Assam Cabinet Minister and Lakhimpur MLA Kaushik Rai described the initiative as an important step towards enhancing market access for farmers in the region. "The Kew



variety of pineapple cultivated in Lakhimpur is among the finest in India and reflects the immense agricultural potential of the region," Rai said.

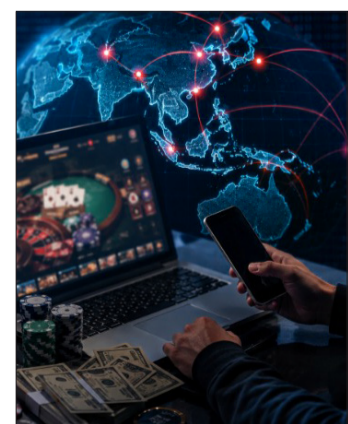
Emphasising agriculture's role in the Barak Valley economy, the minister noted that Cachar's naturally grown pineapples deserve wider recognition in both national and international markets.

He said the initiative would improve post-harvest management, strengthen market connections and create greater economic opportunities for pineapple growers. Rai also reiterated the government's commitment to supporting farmers and unlocking the full commercial potential of the district's pineapple industry. The minister highlighted that better

post-harvest handling, scientific grading, packaging and direct engagement with buyers could help farmers secure improved prices while reducing dependence on intermediaries. The event facilitated direct interaction between growers and potential buyers, with discussions covering procurement, quality standards, pricing, logistics and long-term sourcing arrangements. Farmers also displayed fresh pineapples and other agricultural products, including premium-quality spices, attracting interest from businesses exploring sourcing opportunities. Agricultural experts and officials attending the programme said Cachar's favourable agro-climatic conditions, fertile soil and strong horticultural base provide an ideal environment for expanding pineapple cultivation and exports. However, they stressed that investments in organised market support, modern post-harvest infrastructure and processing facilities would be crucial for fully realising the sector's export potential.

Participants noted that stronger engagement with buyers from outside Assam could open new market channels for farmer-producer organisations and progressive growers, helping integrate local produce into larger national and global supply chains.

## Hailakandi Police Bust Cyber Fraud and Online Gambling Racket, Four Arrested



HAILAKANDI

Assam Police have arrested four alleged cyber criminals in Hailakandi district for their suspected involvement in online fraud, cyber scams and an illegal online gambling network that allegedly cheated victims of lakhs of rupees.

According to police, the accused were engaged in a range of cyber fraud and online financial scam activities while also operating betting applications used for

unlawful gambling. Preliminary investigations suggest that the operation may have been linked to a larger organised cybercrime network.

Officials said investigators are examining possible connections between the accused and a suspected Chinese hacker syndicate, which allegedly assisted in facilitating and managing the online gambling activities.

Two of the arrested individuals have been identified as Gaurav Ray Choudhury and Jaharul Hasan Choudhury. The identities of the other two accused have not yet been officially disclosed.

Police have launched a comprehensive investigation to trace the money trail, uncover the extent of the alleged fraud, and identify other individuals associated with the network.

Authorities said efforts are underway to analyse financial transactions and digital evidence as part of the ongoing probe into the cyber fraud and online gambling racket.

Further investigations are in progress.



VOLUME:1, ISSUE 815

## ACCELERATING INDIA'S GROWTH



Prime Minister Narendra Modi's interaction with Government secretaries this week, centred on deregulation, ease of doing business and living, and the promotion of Aatmanirbharta, arrives at a moment when things are moving at a bureaucratic pace. West Asia is aflame, global supply chains are being redrawn in real time, and nations that can offer stability, scale, and speed are being courted by investors fleeing uncertainty elsewhere. This is not a moment for incremental reform delivered through the usual choreography of committees and circulars. It demands exponential urgency, and the Prime Minister's call for a whole-of-government approach that breaks down departmental silos is the correct diagnosis of what has held India back.

The two themes he chose to anchor this conversation are not new, but their pairing is instructive. Deregulation without self-reliance produces an economy dependent on the goodwill of others; self-reliance without deregulation produces an economy too shackled by its own rules to compete. Together, they describe the only credible route to the developed-nation ambition PM Modi has set for 2047. The urgency is compounded by geopolitics. Every disruption in West Asia, every recalibration of global trade routes, is a reminder that nations sitting on the fence of half-finished reform will simply be bypassed.

India's case for an industrial leap looks, on paper, unanswerable. A demographic dividend in which roughly 65 per cent of the population is of working age, abundant land, a diverse natural resource base, and a policy vocabulary already fluent in terms like "ease of doing business" and "Aatmanirbhara Bharat". Yet the industrial transformation commensurate with these advantages remains elusive in large parts of the country. The reasons lie in the everyday friction of governance; states and Union Territories operating as isolated ecosystems, and within each, departments functioning as silos, answerable to their own mandates rather than to a shared economic outcome.

This is where the Prime Minister's emphasis on interdepartmental coordination and his call for wider use of the PM Gatishakti platform deserve more than polite applause. Setting up an industry is never merely a matter of production. It is a catalytic act; it creates employment, draws ancillary investment, builds skills, and lifts an entire region's economic profile. This is especially true for states and Union Territories with a thin industrial base, where a single well-planned industrial cluster can alter the trajectory of an entire district.

But industrial land does not sit within the neat boundaries of an industry department's file. Clearing land for investment while safeguarding the environment requires the Revenue Department, the Forest Department, the Public Works Department, the power utility, and the Jal Shakti Ministry to move in step, each bearing equal responsibility rather than treating the task as someone else's problem. An industrial estate lacking approach roads, assured power, or water connectivity is a wasted project. Investors do not distinguish between departments when they walk away from a state; they simply walk away.

This is precisely why the role of Chief Secretaries becomes pivotal. They are the only functionaries positioned to sit above departmental turf and compel genuine coordination at the state level. The Centre can convene meetings, issue guidance, and build platforms like Gatishakti, but it cannot dig the trench for a power line or clear a forest clearance file sitting in a state secretariat. That work, and the political will to expedite it, belongs squarely to state administrations. PM Modi is correct in leading from the front, utilising these secretary-level interactions to maintain reform on the national agenda. However, leadership at the top cannot replace the execution on the ground.

This coordination cannot remain an occasional exhortation delivered at periodic meetings in Delhi. It needs to become the default operating grammar of every state Government, embedded into how land is allotted, how clearances are sequenced, and how infrastructure is timed to arrive alongside investment rather than years after it. The geopolitical window will not stay open indefinitely. Nations that move decisively now, cutting through their own red tape with the same urgency PM Modi has articulated, will be the ones that capture the capital and confidence looking for a new home. India has the ingredients. What it needs now is the discipline of delivery.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

A long habit of not thinking a thing wrong gives a superficial appearance of being right. - Thomas Paine

# UNDERSTANDING OMEGA BLOCKS AS CAUSE OF HEATWAVE IN FRANCE



POOJA MISHRA

Online searches on tourist websites tell that May and June are the best months to travel to Paris. The days are long and the city is full of life. However, that has not been the case this year. The entire continent of Europe is facing a second major heatwave in two months with record-breaking temperatures that has led to loss of lives.

What makes it worse is that the temperature is set to rise further. Public events stand cancelled and schools have closed. In the Bordeaux region of France, the temperature reached almost 42 degrees Celsius.

But what is causing these extreme temperature shifts? The answer lies in an interesting phenomenon called the omega block.

What is an Omega Block?

The Omega block (getting its name from the shape wind takes in this phenomenon) is an interesting atmospheric pattern that can trigger heatwaves in one region and torrential rains just a few hundred miles away. The wind usually moves in smooth jet streams. However, sometimes this flow is distorted resulting in a massive, exaggerated loop. If these loops stall and stop moving eastward, they create an atmospheric block.

When an Omega block forms, the region trapped directly under it develops high-pressure and experiences an intense, escalating heatwave. The same has happened in France, where extremely hot and dry air from North Africa has become trapped in the atmosphere over parts of Europe due to weather systems on either side blocking it from moving away.

As air sinks from high in the atmosphere toward the ground, it compresses. In thermodynamics, compressing a gas raises its temperature. This sinking, warming air acts like a giant lid called the heat dome. The sinking air in the high-pressure system prevents clouds from forming. Without cloud cover, the sun heats the region for 14 to 16 hours a day during the summer. The ground bakes, dries out, and reflects that heat right back into the lower atmosphere, causing temperatures to rise further day after day.

Does Climate Change Have a Role to Play?

The connection between Omega blocks and climate change is one of the most active, fiercely debated areas of modern meteorology. While they are a completely natural weather pattern, human activity is altering how they behave and amplifying the damage they cause.

The most direct link is thermodynamics. Because human green-

house gas emissions have warmed the global baseline temperature by about 1.3°C, any weather system today starts from a much warmer baseline. When an Omega block stalls over a region, the heat dome compresses air that is already abnormally warm. Because of this, heatwaves under modern Omega blocks run roughly 2°C to 4°C hotter than they would have a few decades ago. It takes a normal summer heatwave and pushes it into a dangerous, record-breaking territory.

Beyond just the temperature baseline, scientists are investigating a structural link that involves the jet stream itself. The rapid warming of the Arctic, a phenomenon known as Arctic amplification, is shrinking the temperature difference between the North Pole and the equator. Since this temperature contrast is the primary engine driving the jet stream, a smaller difference can cause the wind currents to lose their momentum. Instead of racing in a tight, fast belt around the globe, the jet stream begins to meander, waving wildly like a slow-moving river on a flat plain. These exaggerated waves are far more prone to bending into the rigid Omega shape and getting stuck for days or weeks at a time.

Omega Blocks are Not New

These blocking patterns are standard features of Earth's atmosphere, but they are responsible for Europe's most infamous and lethal weather events. Rather than happening every single year in the exact same spot, they tend to strike different regions of the continent over time, leaving a trail of contrasting disasters in their wake.

During the historic 2003 European heatwave, a massive block

stalled over Western Europe for weeks in August, resulting in more than 70,000 deaths across the continent, drying up major rivers like the Rhine, and smashing temperature records that had stood for a century. Seven years later, the 2010 Russian heatwave saw an incredibly powerful Omega block lock over western Russia for nearly two months, triggering widespread wildfires and causing around 55,000 deaths. Crucially, on the low-pressure flank of that exact same block, the diverted moisture caused Pakistan to experience unprecedented, catastrophic flooding at the very same time.

This dual nature of the Omega block became evident again in the summer of 2021, when the pattern anchored prolonged heatwaves in one area while simultaneously pinning down the stalled storm systems that caused historic, deadly flash floods in Germany and Belgium. More recently, in September 2023, a late-summer Omega block brought record-breaking autumn heat to the UK and France, while its eastern low-pressure foot held Storm Daniel over Greece and Libya, culminating in catastrophic dam failures and devastating floods.

Navigating a Stuck Future

As we look ahead, the challenge of the Omega block is no longer just a phenomenon for meteorologists to study, but a critical reality for societies to navigate. When weather patterns stop moving, our infrastructure is put to the ultimate test. Cities designed for cooler climates are forced to adapt to prolonged, stagnant heat domes, while neighboring regions must brace for rainfall volumes that rivers cannot handle.

Adapting to these blocked

systems requires a shift in how we interpret weather forecasts. A prediction of an Omega block is no longer just a warning of a hot or rainy week; it is a signal that the atmospheric conveyor belt has ground to a halt. Recognizing these patterns early allows emergency services, agricultural sectors, and city planners to prepare for a weather event that will not simply pass over in a day or two, but will settle in, testing the limits of human and environmental resilience.

### DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

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# Manipur launches bioreactor unit to boost bio-fertilizer production and sustainable farming



IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Thursday inaugurated a bioreactor unit for bio-fertilizer production at the CSIR-North East Institute of Science and Technology complex in Imphal, marking a significant step in the state's efforts to promote sustainable and eco-friendly agriculture.

The new facility is expected to support natural farming practices, enhance bio-fertilizer availability and reduce dependence on chemical inputs in agriculture.

Speaking at the inauguration, the chief minister said the initiative reflects the government's commitment to encouraging sustainable farming while facilitating technology transfer to strengthen local micro, small and medium enterprises

(MSMEs).

He noted that the project would contribute to the conservation of indigenous biological resources and create new opportunities for skill development and employment among young people in the state.

As part of its sustainable agriculture strategy, the Agriculture Department, in collaboration with Green Biotech Ecosolutions Private Limited, will supply bio-fertilizers to 225 sangams of paddy fields across Manipur.

Under the programme, 150 sangams will be covered in Imphal East district, 50 in Imphal West and 25 in Thoubal district. Farmers participating in the initiative will adopt a cultivation model using a combination of chemical and bio-fertilizers in a 75:25 ratio.

The chief minister also highlighted

the government's support measures for farmers during the ongoing monsoon cultivation season. He said 93,472 bags of neem-coated urea were distributed at a subsidised rate of Rs 270 per bag through a special campaign conducted at 54 locations across all 16 districts of the state.

To ensure uninterrupted agricultural activities in areas affected by law-and-order challenges, the government organised special distribution camps in several fringe areas to provide farmers with neem-coated urea and paddy seeds.

Officials said the bioreactor unit and associated initiatives form part of Manipur's broader strategy to promote environmentally sustainable farming, improve soil health, reduce reliance on chemical fertilizers and strengthen the rural economy through modern and eco-friendly agricultural practices.

## Eastern Army Commander reviews security situation, border infrastructure during Nagaland visit

KOHIMA

The General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C) of the Indian Army's Eastern Command, V. M. Bhuwana Krishnan, reviewed the security situation and border infrastructure in Nagaland during a visit to the state. As part of the visit, Lt Gen Krishnan held separate meetings with Nand Kishore Yadav and Neiphiu Rio to discuss matters relating to national security, border management and civil-military cooperation. During his meeting with the Governor, the Army Commander reviewed issues concerning national security, the development of border infrastructure and coordination between the armed forces and the civil administration to maintain peace and stability in the region. Governor Yadav commended the Indian Army's contribution to safeguarding the nation's borders and appreciated its humanitarian assistance and civic action programmes in remote parts of Nagaland. Later, Lt Gen Krishnan paid a courtesy visit to Chief Minister Rio at his official residence in Kohima. The discussions focused on the prevailing security environment, ongoing border infrastructure projects and joint initiatives being undertaken by the Army and the state government for the welfare and development of local communities. Rio congratulated Lt Gen Krishnan on assuming charge as the head of the Eastern Command and wished him a successful tenure. Nagaland Deputy Chief Ministers T. R. Zeliang and Y. Patton were also present during the meeting. Lt Gen Krishnan recently took over as the GOC-in-C of the Eastern Command and is currently touring Northeastern states to review operational formations and strategic areas under his command. The Eastern Command oversees the Indian Army's operations across the Northeast and plays a key role in border security, counter-insurgency operations and infrastructure development in the region.

## Nagaland's Hokato Hotozhe Sema rises to World No. 1 in Men's Shot Put F57

KOHIMA

Nagaland's celebrated para-athlete and Indian Army officer Hokato Hotozhe Sema has secured the World No. 1 ranking in the Men's Shot Put F57 category, according to the latest World Para Athletics rankings.

The achievement marks another major milestone in the career of the 42-year-old athlete, who has emerged as one of India's most accomplished para sportspersons after overcoming a life-altering injury sustained during military service.

Congratulating Sema on the accomplishment, Neiphiu Rio described it as a proud moment for both Nagaland and the country.

"Heartiest congratulations to Subedar H. Hokato Sema, AVSM, on becoming World No. 1 in Men's Shot Put F57 in the latest World Para Athletics Rankings. This outstanding achievement makes Nagaland and the nation proud. I wish him continued success in the years ahead," Rio said in a post on social media.

The latest rankings also under-

line India's growing strength in para athletics, with Rana Soman and Juyal Shubham occupying the second and third positions respectively in the Men's Shot Put F57 rankings.

A native of P. Vihoto village in Niuland district, Sema was born on December 24, 1983, and joined the Indian Army's 9 Assam Regiment in 2000.

His military career took a dramatic turn in October 2002 when he stepped on a landmine during a counter-infiltration operation along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir. The explosion resulted in the amputation of his left leg below the knee, ending his aspirations of joining the Special Forces.

Following rehabilitation at the Army Paralympic Node in Pune, Sema discovered para athletics and began competing in the F57 category for seated athletes with lower-limb impairments. With support from the Indian Army, he steadily progressed through the national and international ranks.

## BDF Demands Revival of Silchar Doordarshan Kendra, Welcomes MP's Initiative

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**SILCHAR:** The Barak Democratic Front (BDF) has called for the revival of the Doordarshan Kendra in Silchar, urging the government to establish a dedicated satellite television channel and modern broadcasting infrastructure to preserve and promote the region's cultural identity and local news coverage.

In a press statement, BDF Media Cell Convenor Joydeep Bhattacharya said the Silchar Doordarshan Kendra, which once played a vital role in broadcasting local news and showcasing the diverse culture and traditions of the Barak Valley, is now on the verge of closure due to prolonged government neglect and the lack of technological upgradation.

Drawing parallels with other defunct government projects in the valley, including the Cachar Sugar Mill, Badarpur Textile Mill and Panchgram Paper Mill, Bhattacharya alleged that the Doordarshan centre was facing a similar



fate because of official apathy. He also expressed concern over what he described as the silence of most public representatives and civil society on the issue.

Recalling the efforts of former MP Kabindra Purkayastha, Bhattacharya said it was under his initiative that local news bulletins from the Silchar Doordarshan Kendra had begun. However, he claimed that no meaningful steps had been taken subsequently to modernise or sustain the facility.

He said that with terrestrial transmitters having become

largely obsolete, the revival of the centre would require the establishment of a dedicated satellite television channel supported by an earth station. According to him, the proposed channel could initially broadcast for at least 12 hours daily before eventually being integrated into the national broadcasting network.

Bhattacharya also stressed the need to recruit qualified and dedicated professionals to ensure the smooth functioning of the proposed satellite channel. He maintained that the Barak Valley

has no shortage of capable media professionals and said that, with adequate investment and skilled manpower, the initiative could significantly strengthen the region's media landscape.

Welcoming reports that Barak Valley MP Kanad Purkayastha has already taken up the matter with the Central Government, Bhattacharya said the BDF supports the initiative and is prepared to extend all possible cooperation.

He further argued that the people of the Barak Valley, numbering over four million, deserve a national platform to showcase their culture, voice their concerns and highlight regional issues, as they contribute to the nation's revenue like citizens elsewhere. He urged the government to recognise this legitimate demand and appealed to the people of the valley to become more aware of and vocal in support of the revival of the Silchar Doordarshan Kendra.

The information was shared in a press release issued by BDF Convenor Hrishikesh Dey.

## Raijor Dal to decide Nagaon bypoll strategy on July 4, Akhil Gogoi criticises Congress

GUWAHATI

With the Nagaon Lok Sabha by-election approaching, Raijor Dal president Akhil Gogoi on Friday said the party is yet to take a final call on whether it will contest the seat or extend support to another political party.

Addressing a press conference at Shilpagram in Guwahati, Gogoi said the matter would be discussed at the party's State Executive Committee meeting scheduled for July 4.

"A section of the party favours fielding a Raijor Dal candidate from the constituency, while another section believes we should not contest. We will deliberate on the issue tomorrow and arrive at a final decision," he said.

Gogoi also questioned the effectiveness of Raijor Dal's alliance with the Indian National Congress,



alleging that several elected representatives of the party eventually shift allegiance or compromise with the BJP.

"There is no point in helping the Congress. If they win, they either join the BJP or end up compromising with the BJP," he claimed.

Calling for greater unity among regional political forces in Assam, the Raijor Dal leader said regional parties should come together under a common platform to mount a stronger challenge against the BJP.

"Regional parties in Assam must

unite. There is no benefit in remaining divided. Once we come together, we must formulate a strategy to defeat the BJP," he said.

When asked whether Raijor Dal was reconsidering its alliance with the Congress, Gogoi said the party had not yet held any formal discussion on the matter.

"Whether we remain in the alliance or leave it, nothing much changes. If an alliance is formed only days before an election, what is its significance? We entered into an alliance and suffered a heavy defeat, and the Congress is responsible for that," he alleged.

Gogoi further claimed that while the BJP was actively campaigning ahead of elections, Congress leaders were focused on internal ticket distribution, which he said weakened the opposition's electoral preparedness.

He also criticised the Congress for what he described as a lack of modern electioneering strategies.

"The Congress does not possess the tactics required to fight elections in the current political environment. That is its biggest weakness," he said.

The remarks come weeks after the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee held a key strategy meeting in Guwahati on June 7 under the leadership of APCC president Gaurav Gogoi. The meeting focused on preparations for the upcoming Nagaon Lok Sabha bypoll, organisational restructuring and the party's broader political roadmap in the state.

The by-election is expected to be a key political contest in Assam, with opposition parties weighing their strategies ahead of the next round of electoral battles in the state.

## Assam's Chota Tingrai Tea Estate pioneers India's first commercial Matcha tea production

TINSUKIA

Assam's Chota Tingrai Tea Estate has achieved a major milestone in the country's tea industry by becoming the first tea estate in India to commercially manufacture Matcha tea, a premium green tea product traditionally associated with Japan.

The breakthrough comes after nearly a decade of collaboration with Japanese tea manufacturers, agronomists, equipment suppliers and tea experts aimed at developing authentic Matcha production in Assam.

To realise the project, the estate established a fully automated Japanese tea manufacturing facility, combining Assam's long-standing tea-growing tradition with advanced Japanese processing techniques.

The first commercially produced batch of Indian Matcha was sold during Sale No. 27 at the Guwahati Tea Auction Centre. Lot No. 7001 fetched a price of Rs 3,000 and was purchased by Sheosons Chai Co. through auctioneers J. Thomas & Co. Pvt. Ltd..

Matcha is a high-value powdered green tea that is widely consumed



across global markets and is primarily produced in Japan, China and Vietnam. Industry experts note that rising international demand has led to supply shortages, making the emergence of an Indian produc-

er particularly significant.

The launch of Assam-produced Matcha is expected to diversify the state's tea portfolio beyond its globally recognised black teas and open new opportunities in the specialty

tea and export sectors.

Speaking on the achievement, Mrityunjay Jalan said the project was the culmination of ten years of close cooperation with Japanese tea specialists.

"We have been working with tea experts from Japan for the past decade to introduce the highest quality green tea to the Indian market. While we have successfully marketed whole-leaf green tea grades over the years, the launch of authentic Indian Matcha marks a significant milestone. We are confident that Matcha from Chota Tingrai will find acceptance in both domestic and international markets," he said.

The development has also drawn praise from industry stakeholders. Bidyananda Barkakoty, Adviser to the North Eastern Tea Association, described the achievement as a proud moment for Assam's tea sector.

"Matcha tea is gaining immense popularity worldwide. It is a matter of pride that a tea estate in Assam is now producing high-quality Matcha. Japan has traditionally dominated global Matcha production and exports, making this a significant accomplishment for the state," he said.

Industry observers believe the successful commercial production of Matcha could help Assam tap into the rapidly expanding global market for specialty teas while enhancing value addition and creating new export opportunities for the state's tea industry.

## Nagaland launches four new model degree colleges under PM-USHA scheme

KOHIMA

Nagaland marked a major step towards strengthening higher education infrastructure with the virtual foundation stone laying ceremony for four New Model Degree Colleges under the Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA).

The foundation stones were virtually laid by Temjen Imna Along, Minister for Higher Education and Tourism, in the presence of officials from the Ministry of Education and the PM-USHA/RUSA team.

The new colleges will be established in the districts of Niuland, Noklak, Shamator and Tsemnyu, with the aim of expanding access to quality higher education in some of the state's newer districts.

Among those present during the programme were Amit Singh, Section Officer in the Department of Higher Education under the Ministry of Education, along with senior officials of the Higher and Technical Education Department and PM-USHA implementation team.

Addressing the event, Along underscored the importance of expanding educational infrastructure across Nagaland to ensure students from all regions have access to quality higher education closer to their homes.

The minister said the initiative would help bridge regional disparities in educational oppor-

tunities and support the state's efforts to create a more inclusive and accessible higher education system.

The establishment of the four colleges is part of the PM-USHA scheme, a centrally sponsored programme aimed at improving access, equity and quality in higher education institutions across the country.

According to the Department of Higher Education, the project reflects the Nagaland government's commitment to promoting inclusive educational development through the creation of modern academic infrastructure and expanded opportunities for students in underserved areas.

Officials said the new institutions are expected to reduce the need for students to travel long distances for higher studies, while also contributing to regional development and improving Nagaland's Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education.

The government expressed confidence that the colleges would play a key role in empowering youth, promoting academic excellence and supporting the state's long-term socio-economic development through greater access to quality higher education.

Senior officials attending the programme included Sarita Yadav, V. Lovitoly Sema, Sentiyanger Pongen, Ruokuosatuo Yhome, Tol Pucho and Chubalepshi Jamir

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## First DAC under new military leadership clears Rs 52,000 crore buys



NEW DELHI

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) cleared capital acquisition proposals worth around Rs 52,000 crore, with counter-drone systems, layered air defence, anti-tank weapons and persistent surveillance platforms emerging as the biggest priorities in the armed forces' latest modernisation push.

Chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, the DAC granted the "acceptance of necessity" for the projects, which is only the first step in the long-winded procurement process. The proposals will now wind their way through tendering, technical evaluation and cost negotiations, with the high-value ones also needing the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) nod, before contracts are eventually inked.

The Friday meeting was also the first of the DAC since a sweeping churn at the top of the military hierarchy, with Gen Raja Subramani having taken over as Chief of Defence Staff, Gen Dhiraj Seth as Army chief and Adm Krishna Swaminathan as Navy chief.

The latest approvals also point to the way Operation Sindoor has influenced the military's acquisition priorities. The hostilities with Pakistan, in which swarms of drones and loitering munitions slugged it out with air defence networks on both sides, has forced the shift away from big-ticket con-

ventional platforms towards counter-UAV systems, layered air defence, better tank survivability and round-the-clock intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR).

The Army cornered the biggest chunk of approvals. Topping its list is the indigenous 'Akash-Tarang', an anti-UAV electronic warfare (EW) system built to detect, track and jam hostile drones before they get anywhere near forward troops. With cheap drones and loitering munitions emerging as a defining threat in recent conflicts, counter-UAV soft kill capability has become one of the military's fastest-growing operational needs.

The DAC also cleared 2,300 indigenous man-portable anti-tank guided missiles (MPATGMs), along with 100 launchers and five simulators, for around Rs 2,600 crore, sources said. Developed by DRDO for production by state-run Bharat Dynamics, the third-generation, fire-and-forget missile packs an imaging infrared seeker, tandem warhead and top-attack capability to take out modern tanks and will progressively replace the vintage Milan and Konkurs ATGMs in infantry units.

Also cleared were additional Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missile (MRSAM) systems and the shoulder-fired Verba VSHORADS, the fourth-generation Russian MANPADS which will be manufactured in India by Adani Defence under

transfer of technology from Rosoboronexport. The Verba, which succeeds the Iglu-S with a multi-spectral seeker far harder to fool with flares or laser dazzlers, will thicken the Army's layered air defence against jets, choppers, cruise missiles and drones.

The package also includes Active Protection Systems (APS) to keep tanks alive on a contested battlefield and a jet-based kamikaze drone system for longer-range precision strikes.

For the Navy, the DAC cleared the Multi-Influence Ground Mine (MIGM), a Naval Shipborne Unmanned Aerial System (NSUAS) and a land-based testing facility for electric propulsion. The smart mines, which read a passing ship's magnetic, acoustic and pressure signatures, will strengthen the Navy's sea-denial punch, while the shipborne drones extend a warship's eyes over the horizon.

The shore-based facility, in turn, will let the Navy prove motors and propulsion for its next-generation warships before they put to sea, electric drives being far quieter and harder to detect underwater.

For the IAF, the headline approval is the Fixed-Wing Based High Altitude Pseudo Satellite (FW-HAPS), a solar-powered platform built to loiter in the stratosphere for weeks on end. Sitting between conventional drones and satellites, it will deliver persistent ISR, along with communication and remote sensing, at a fraction of a satellite's cost, and can be shifted or have its payload swapped at will.

The DAC cleared other IAF proposals too, without specifying.

The government in its statement said that the acquisitions are meant to "enhance the combat readiness of the defence forces."

## 'Position remains consistent': India says Indus Waters Treaty to stay in abeyance until Pakistan ends terror support



NEW DELHI

India reiterated that the Indus Waters Treaty will remain in abeyance until Pakistan takes credible and irreversible steps to end its support for cross-border terrorism.

Addressing a press conference in New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said India's stance on the treaty remains unchanged.

"India's position on the Indus Waters Treaty is consistent. IWT stands in abeyance in response to Pakistan's continued spon-

ship of cross-border terrorism. Pakistan must credibly and irrevocably abjure its support for cross-border terrorism," Jaiswal said.

Meanwhile, on Thursday, India and Japan on Thursday issued a sharp, unequivocal condemnation of cross-border terrorism originating from Pakistan, demanding immediate global action to dismantle state-supported safe havens and financing channels.

According to the joint statement released following the bilateral talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi,

the two nations took a firm, unified stand against the rising threat of terrorism in South Asia.

Moving past rhetoric, the prime ministers called for urgent, concerted global actions against all UN-listed terrorist entities and their proxies, specifically naming Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), Al Qaeda, and ISIS. They emphasised that the international community must take resolute measures to completely root out terrorist safe havens, disrupt the nexus between terror financing and transnational crime, and halt the cross-border movement of terrorists.

Meanwhile, during the press briefing today, when asked about Pakistani military strikes in Afghanistan and whether India is extending support to the government of Afghanistan, the MEA Spokesperson underlined that India supports the territorial integrity of Afghanistan and has an ongoing humanitarian assistance cooperation with the country.

"We had strongly condemned the airstrikes that happened from Pakistan into Afghanistan, in which several civilian lives, including women and children, were lost. We had offered our condolences on the passing away of precious lives, and we had also, at the same time, reiterated our strong support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Afghanistan," Jaiswal said.

He added, "We have an ongoing humanitarian assistance cooperation. We have been sending them medicines and also been offering development projects which can bring benefit to the lives of people there."

Pakistan had conducted cross-border military strikes in the eastern provinces of Afghanistan in Paktia, Paktika and Kunar, resulting in significant civilian casualties and widespread devastation.

The deputy spokesperson of the Taliban-led Afghan government, Hamdullah Fitrati, detailed the civilian toll in a post on social media, stating, "According to the reports available thus far, the attacks carried out last night resulted in the martyrdom of 36 civilians, including women and children, while 163 others sustained injuries. Three residential houses were completely destroyed."

## INTERNATIONAL

### Iran prepares for dayslong funeral for late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, killed in war

TEHRAN

Iran prepared for the dayslong funeral of the late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, with banners across Tehran urging the public to rise up in support of the Islamic Republic after the devastating war that killed the 86-year-old cleric.

The country's theocracy plans to see millions flood the streets of the capital beginning Saturday in scenes reminiscent to the burial of the late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in 1989.

That could provide a boost for Iran's government, particularly as it tries to leverage its hold on the Strait of Hormuz in negotiations with the United States over a permanent end to the war, and as concern still lingers that Israel could attack yet again.

Despite that, a powerful general who leads Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard emerged publicly for the first time in months for the funeral. Other top government officials likely will be on hand alongside foreign dignitaries as well in show of strength of Iran.

"As long as these people, who are chosen (by God), are on the field, we will definitely continue the same 'no to humiliation' policy that was founded by the Islamic Republic," said Mohammad Hossein Rezaei, a volunteer preparing for the funeral Friday.

"We will continue our policy of pursuing independence, and decisions will be made inside the country, and the people will decide their own fate," he said.

Khamenei's flag-draped coffin sat at Tehran's Grand Mosalla alongside family members killed in the Israeli airstrike that came in the first moments of the war on Feb. 28.

The dead being honored include a son-in-law, his eldest daughter, a 14-month-old granddaughter and the wife of Iran's new Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, the son



of the previous leader who remains in hiding after reportedly being wounded in the attack.

Religious leaders and foreign dignitaries walked up to Khamenei's casket as a military band played or a man sang prayers. Iran's Parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and President Masoud Pezeshkian, key leaders in the country's civilian government, all paid their respects.

Video published by Iranian state media showed an earlier mourning ceremony Thursday night for Khamenei. The black-clad mourners, whom state media identified as coming from families of those who lost loved ones in the 12-day war in 2025 and the recent Iran war, threw scarves and other items for attendants to brush against the coffin, a common practice in Iran seen as a blessing.

Later, state media showed images of Khamenei's casket draped by a red flag with white calligraphy reading "Ya Hussein," a Shiite expression in remembrance of the 7th-century mar-

tyrdom of the Prophet Muhammad's grandson. It had been flying over the Imam Hussein golden-domed shrine in Karbala, Iraq. The flag also traditionally symbolizes both the spilled blood of someone unjustly killed and a call for vengeance.

Photos published online by Iranian state media showed Gen. Ahmad Vahidi attending a meeting Thursday about the funeral of Khamenei, then sitting alongside his casket as Iran's theocracy held a smaller service for him Thursday night near the supreme leader's former home in downtown Tehran.

Vahidi has become a major player in formulating Iran's tough stance in negotiating a possible permanent end to the war with the United States, experts say. He hadn't been seen publicly since Feb. 8, weeks before the Iran war began.

Israel killed top leaders in Iran's military and government during the war, and has threatened the life of Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei as well. Vahidi is believed to be part of

a small clique in direct contact with the younger Khamenei.

It remains unclear whether Khamenei will appear at his father's funeral. His father appeared in 1989 at Khomeini's funeral, weeping visibly, as he began his journey to lead Iran for decades with an iron fist while confronting the West.

Israel repeatedly has threatened to kill Khamenei, something that drew a warning from Iran's joint military command Thursday.

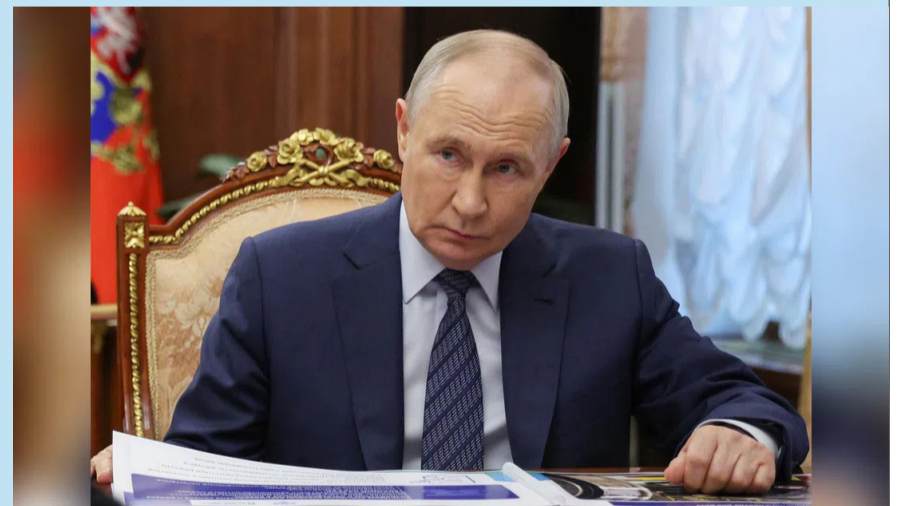
"We warn the enemies of a strong Iran, especially the United States, the Israeli regime and their regional and extraregional accomplices, to avoid any miscalculation and to consider the harsh and regret-inducing responses that the sons of the Iranian nation in the armed forces will give to any threat or aggression against our beloved country," the military command said.

Beginning Saturday, Iran will hold the dayslong funeral for Khamenei and his body will be transported to cities in both Iran and neighboring Iraq. Authorities plan to shut down streets, airspace and daily life in Tehran as mourners commemorate the life of Khamenei.

In Tehran, images of the late Khamenei's fist could be seen in banners and in a giant statue in Tehran's Enghelab Square, framed by what appeared to be ballistic missiles flying through the air. In his first message to the nation, read by a state television anchor, Mojtaba Khamenei said he saw his father's body after his death with raised, clenched fist.

The banners read in Arabic, English and Farsi: "We must rise." "This fist is the clenched fist of all us Muslims," taxi driver Jafar Javadi said. "The leader's fist is a sign all our fists are clenched and they (the enemies) will be destroyed with these fists, God willing. We will continue chanting death to America and death to Israel with the same clenched fist."

### Putin shrugs off fuel shortages in Russia as he ramps up attacks on Ukraine



MOSCOW

Despite severe fuel shortages across Russia, President Vladimir Putin appears unbothered by Ukraine's increasing attacks on his country's oil refineries.

He has shrugged off the setback for one of the world's leading oil producing nations as "not critical," dismissed ceasefire proposals and insisted the war will continue until his goals are met.

Putin has described the attacks on Russian energy as an effort by Ukraine to distract attention from its losses on the battlefield, although analysts say the advance of Russian forces has been stymied in recent months. The Russian leader appears to believe his government can keep the fuel crisis from eroding his authority and support for the war he launched more than four years ago.

The Russian military unleashed a massive 11-hour barrage on the Ukrainian capital overnight into Thursday morning that killed at least 21 people. It was one of the deadliest attacks on Kyiv since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion.

Here's a deeper look at the latest exchange of strikes and Putin's refusal to halt the fighting:

There have been more than 50 reported Ukrainian attacks on oil refineries and other ener-

gy facilities in Russia and the occupied Crimea since March — a barrage Ukrainian leaders have said is intended to pressure Moscow to end the war.

At the very least, the attacks have brought the war home even more poignantly for millions of Russians, shattering Putin's narrative of the conflict as something that doesn't affect the lives of ordinary people in his country.

An estimated one-third of Russia's refining capacity has been cut off, according to Chris Weafer, CEO of the consultancy Macro-Advisory. The attacks have inflicted lasting damage that will be costly to fix.

Despite significant air defenses protecting Russia's capital, a top refinery in Moscow has been hit twice. The second strike on June 18 set it ablaze, damaging key equipment that will reportedly take until the end of the year to repair.

With gasoline production in Russia reduced by roughly 17% to 850,000 barrels a day, according to government statistics, rationing has been introduced in many regions, and motorists have had to wait in line for hours to refuel.

Crimea, which Russia illegally annexed from Ukraine in 2014, has faced the worst fuel shortages. Gasoline sales to individuals have been halted there altogether.

Putin chaired a meeting

of government officials last weekend to discuss the fuel shortages.

In televised statements, he acknowledged the country was going through a "difficult period." He pledged to accelerate repairs of energy facilities and said Russia would consider importing gasoline to help make up for what he described as "temporary" shortages. He also said Russia's arms industry will boost production of air defense systems to fend off future Ukrainian attacks.

Putin portrayed the Ukrainian strikes as an attempt to divide Russian society, halt Moscow's offensive and try to force the Kremlin into negotiations on "terms advantageous to our adversary."

"We will not give them that chance," he said. While Putin said Ukraine's long-range strikes on Russian oil facilities "have absolutely no effect on the situation at the front," Western military analysts say mid-range strikes on the Russian army in recent months have hampered military logistics and slowed the tempo of its advance, leaving the battlefield in a stalemate.

Putin claims Russian forces are still advancing across the roughly 1,000 kilometer-long (620 mile-long) front line. In an interview last weekend with state TV, Putin mentioned the names of small villages and even streets in Ukraine.

## Six Deaths, One Question: Is Manipur's Governance Failing Its Citizens?

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The abduction and killing of six Liangmai Naga civilians in Manipur is more than a criminal case. It is a stark reminder of the fragile state of governance in a region where unresolved land disputes, ethnic mistrust, armed group influence, and institutional paralysis continue to threaten civilian security.

For many observers, the tragedy may appear as another violent episode in Manipur's prolonged crisis. Yet a closer examination suggests that the deaths expose deeper structural problems that extend far beyond the fate of six individuals. The incident raises difficult questions about the state's capacity to protect citizens, resolve disputes peacefully, and maintain public confidence in the rule of law.

**A Tragedy That Shook the Liangmai Community**

Between May and June 2026, six Liangmai Naga men were allegedly held captive for nearly four weeks before their bodies were recovered. Among the victims were religious leaders, including pastors and a church deacon, individuals regarded within their communities as symbols of faith and social service rather than participants in armed conflict.

Their deaths sent shockwaves across Liangmai Naga settlements and revived concerns over civilian vulnerability in Manipur's conflict-affected areas.

What makes the case particularly troubling is the prolonged period of captivity. The victims reportedly disappeared in a region that remains heavily monitored because of its strategic and security significance. Questions naturally arise about how six civilians could remain missing for nearly a month without an effective rescue operation or a coordinated response from authorities.

For affected families, the issue is personal and heartbreaking. For the wider public, however, it has become a test of governance.

**The Larger Question: Why Are Civilians Still Unsafe?**

The incident underscores a reality that many communities in Manipur have experienced since ethnic violence erupted in May 2023.

Whether Naga, Meitei, Kuki, Zomi, Hmar, or members of other communities, civilians increasingly find themselves caught in disputes involving armed groups, territorial claims, and political narratives beyond their control.

The six Liangmai victims were not alleged combatants. Their status as civilians is central to understanding the gravity of the case.

In any democratic society, protecting non-combatants should be the minimum responsibility of the state. When civilians can be abducted, detained, and ultimately killed, public confidence in security institutions inevitably weakens.

The tragedy therefore highlights not merely the actions of alleged perpetrators but also broader questions about prevention, response, and accountability.

**Land Disputes at the Heart of Growing Tensions**

The killings cannot be viewed in isolation from the long-standing land disputes that continue to shape inter-community relations in Manipur's hill districts.

At the centre of the current controversy lies the area around Konsakhul and Leilon Vaiphei, where competing historical claims have generated friction for years.

Liangmai Naga organisations argue that Konsakhul possesses documented historical and customary ownership over surrounding lands. Community representatives frequently cite a 1920 lease agreement that allegedly permitted settlement by Vaiphei inhabitants under specific conditions.

According to their interpretation, the agreement carried a defined duration and did not confer permanent ownership rights. They maintain that the lease effectively expired and that any expansion beyond the original arrangement requires fresh consent and legal recognition.

Other communities, however, may hold different interpretations of the same history, reflecting the complexity of land ownership in Manipur's hills, where customary practices, colonial-era records, and modern administrative systems often overlap.

Regardless of which interpretation ultimately prevails, the underlying issue remains unresolved.

Successive governments have struggled to establish transparent mechanisms for adjudicating competing land claims. As a result, disputes that might otherwise have been settled through legal processes often become sources of ethnic tension.

**The Problem of Administrative Delay**

One of the recurring criticisms in Manipur's conflict zones is the tendency of authorities to address disputes only after violence has erupted.

Land ownership questions, settlement recognition issues, forest boundaries, and customary rights frequently remain unresolved for years. During this period, communities continue to expand, populations increase, and competing narratives harden.

By the time officials intervene, mistrust has often become deeply entrenched.

The area surrounding Konsakhul reflects this broader challenge.

Community leaders have repeatedly voiced concerns over changing settlement patterns, demographic shifts, and the gradual expansion of villages into disputed territories. Such developments, if left unaddressed, create fertile ground for future confrontations.

The lesson from the current tragedy is clear: delaying solutions does not eliminate disputes. It merely allows grievances to accumulate until they become more difficult to manage.

**Renewed Scrutiny of the Suspension of Operations Framework**

The killings have also reignited debate surrounding the Suspension of Operations (SoO) arrangement involving various armed groups.

The SoO framework was originally designed to reduce violence and facilitate political dialogue by bringing insurgent organisations into a monitored ceasefire system.

In principle, it represents an important mechanism for maintaining stability.

However, public confidence in the arrangement has weakened over time.

Many civil society groups and community organisations have raised concerns regarding monitoring mechanisms, accountability standards, and allegations that some armed actors continue to wield influence beyond what is permitted under the agreement.

The current case has intensified calls for a comprehensive review of how the framework operates on the ground.

Critics argue that any peace arrangement must be judged not merely by the absence of large-scale armed clashes but by its ability to guarantee civilian safety.

If communities perceive that armed actors operate with insufficient oversight, trust in the process inevitably declines.

**A Crisis of Public Trust**

Perhaps the most significant consequence of the killings is the erosion of public trust.

For communities already traumatized by three years of ethnic conflict, every unresolved incident deepens suspicion toward institutions.

Trust is difficult to build and easy to lose.

When investigations move slowly, rumours often fill the information vacuum. Competing narratives emerge, communities become polarized, and facts become increasingly difficult to establish.

This dynamic has repeatedly complicated conflict resolution efforts across Manipur.

The six Liangmai victims have now become part of a broader conversation about whether institutions remain capable of delivering impartial justice.

The answer will depend largely on the credibility of the official response.

**Why Accountability Matters**

Calls for accountability should not be interpreted as demands for vengeance.

A credible investigation serves several purposes simultaneously.

First, it establishes facts.

Second, it identifies responsibility based on evidence rather than speculation.

Third, it reassures communities that legal institutions remain functional.

Finally, it reduces the likelihood of retaliatory actions driven by anger or misinformation.

The current case requires precisely such an approach.

Investigators must determine how the abduction occurred, where the victims were held, what circumstances led to their deaths, whether security lapses occurred, and whether any organisations or individuals can be held criminally responsible.

Equally important is ensuring that findings are transparent and capable of withstanding public scrutiny.



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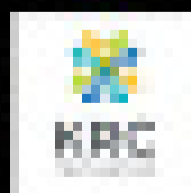


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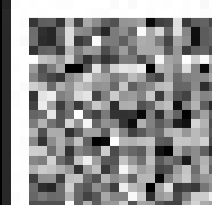


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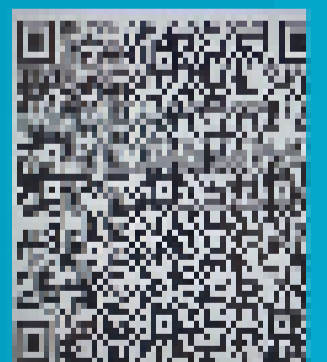
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