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PERSPECTIVE

There is no way to completely fail unless you completely quit.

Assam to Withdraw Cases Against NEET Protesters, Review Arrests

GUWAHATI

The Assam government has decided to withdraw all police cases registered in connection with protests over alleged irregularities in the NEET (UG) examination and expedite the release of those arrested, effectively bringing legal proceedings arising from the demonstrations to an end.

According to an official decision, five police cases had been registered across the state as of 6 pm on July 26, resulting in the arrest of 13 individuals who had participated in the protests.

Following a review of the circumstances surrounding the agitation, the government said it had decided not to pursue further legal action against those involved. The move, it said, reflects its commitment to strengthening accountability and pursuing systemic reforms in the examination and higher education system.

Under the decision, police authorities across Assam have been directed not to initiate any adverse legal action against individuals who took part in the protests. The government has also instructed officials to begin the process of withdrawing all existing cases, irrespective of the stage of legal proceedings, in accordance with the law.

In addition, the arrests and detentions made in connection with the five registered cases will be reviewed, with authorities directed to expedite the release of those currently in custody.

The state government further clarified that it does not intend to initiate any fresh legal proceedings against participants in the NEET protest movement, signalling that the matter will be treated as closed once the withdrawal process is completed.

WHO SAID WHAT



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~ United Nations



KRC TIMES

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Assam Flood Situation Improves; No Fresh Deaths, Affected Population Drops to 4.45 Lakh

Assam MLAs Donate One Month’s Salary for Flood Relief as Parties Close Ranks

GUWAHATI

In a rare display of political unity, members of the Assam Legislative Assembly on Tuesday pledged to donate one month’s salary towards relief and rehabilitation efforts for people affected by the devastating floods that have ravaged large parts of the state.

The decision received support from legislators across party lines, underscoring a collective commitment to assist flood-hit communities, particularly in Upper Assam, where the recent deluge has caused widespread damage to homes, infrastructure and agricultural land.

Trinamool Congress (TMC) MLA Sherman Ali Ahmed announced that his party’s legislator would contribute one month’s salary to the relief fund. The All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) also joined the initiative, stating that all its MLAs would donate their salaries. The party further announced an additional contribution of Rs 2 lakh, complementing AIUDF president and former Lok Sabha MP Badruddin



Ajmal’s earlier personal donation of Rs 2 crore for flood relief and rehabilitation. The bipartisan initiative comes as the state government and various organisations intensify efforts to provide assistance to thousands of families affected by one of Assam’s worst flood spells in recent years.

According to the chief minister, the initiative is expected to cost around Rs 12 crore, and BJP workers across the state, along with party members from outside Assam, have begun contributing towards the campaign. He expressed

confidence that the required funds would be mobilised within the next few days.Assam reported no fresh flood-related deaths over the past 24 hours, marking the first such respite in a week, as the overall flood situation continued to improve with the number of affected people falling to 4.45 lakh, according to the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA).

The flood death toll remained unchanged at 68, while no new cases of missing persons were reported during the latest reporting period.

Although floodwaters have receded in several areas, six districts-Charaideo, Sivasagar, Golaghat, Jorhat, Nagaon and Kamrup (Metropolitan)remain affected.Charaideo continues to be the worst-hit district with 1.88 lakh people affected, followed by Sivasagar with 1.44 lakh and Jorhat with 74,458 affected residents.

A five-member Central team led by M. Ramachandrudu, Joint Secretary in the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, visited Sivasagar on Monday to assess the flood situation in Upper Assam. The delegation reviewed ongoing relief and rehabilitation measures with Assam ministers Keshab Mahanta and Bimal Borah, along with district officials.

The state government has also accelerated the restoration of essential services in flood-affected areas. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said electricity supply is being restored in phases as water levels continue to recede.

In a post on social media, the Chief Minister said the number of households

without electricity had declined by another 25 per cent since Monday morning and assured that power restoration would continue until every affected family is reconnected.

Relief operations remain in full swing across the affected districts. According to the Chief Minister, around 71,000 people are currently sheltered in relief camps, while 1,690 relief distribution centres are operating round the clock to provide food, drinking water and other essential supplies.

Multi-agency rescue and relief efforts are also continuing, with teams from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) and Civil Defence personnel deployed across inundated areas. A total of 67 boats remain engaged in rescue and relief operations.

Despite the overall improvement, authorities continue to monitor the Dhan-siri (South) River, which is still flowing above the danger mark at Numaligarh in Golaghat district, posing a flood risk to nearby areas.

Postal Services Halted in Ukhrul After Mail Van Intercepted, 37 Mail Bags Burned



IMPHAL

Postal services across Manipur’s Ukhrul district have been suspended indefinitely after unidentified miscreants allegedly intercepted an India Post mail van and set 37 mail bags ablaze on National Highway-202, disrupting the delivery of passports, banking documents, educational certificates and other essential consignments.

The incident occurred on Monday when the mail vehicle, carrying consignments destined for the Ukhrul, Somdal and Kamjong post offices, was reportedly stopped near Shangkai Kuki village.

According to the Ukhrul Postmaster, the attackers seized 37 mail bags from the vehicle before setting them on fire. An FIR has been registered at Litan Police Station, and postal authorities

have initiated legal proceedings into the incident.

The destroyed mail reportedly contained a wide range of important items, including passports, ATM cards, educational certificates, registered documents, personal parcels, clothing, food items and other articles intended for delivery to residents across the district.

Ukhrul Post Office suffered the largest loss, with 32 mail bags reduced to ashes. The destroyed consignment included 23 parcel bags, two speed post bags, three ordinary mail bags and two registered letter bags.

Somdal Post Office lost four mail bags comprising one parcel bag, two speed post bags and one ordinary mail bag, while Kamjong Post Office lost one mail bag in the incident.

Following the attack, postal operations throughout Ukhrul district have been suspended until further orders, postal officials said, adding that services will resume only after directions are received from higher authorities.

Meanwhile, the Working Committee of the Kuki Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Ukhrul, which is enforcing an indefinite counter-economic blockade in the district, acknowledged that an India Post vehicle had been intercepted.

However, the committee claimed the vehicle was transporting vegetables and grocery items along with legitimate postal consignments. It did not address the allegation that the 37 mail bags were subsequently set on fire.

The incident comes amid continuing tensions in parts of the hill district, with the disruption of postal services expected to affect thousands of residents awaiting delivery of critical documents and essential parcels. Authorities are investigating the circumstances surrounding the interception and destruction of the mail consignment.

Assam Premier League Facebook Page Hacked Days Before Tournament Opener

GUWAHATI

The official Facebook page of the Assam Premier League (APL) was hacked just days before the tournament’s scheduled kickoff, raising concerns over the digital security of one of the state’s premier domestic cricket competitions.

The breach came to light on Monday after an unauthorised and defamatory post targeting Assam cricketer and Rajasthan Royals captain Riyan Parag appeared on the league’s official Facebook page. The post quickly drew attention on social media before it was removed.

In an official statement, APL organisers confirmed that the page had been compromised but said they had intervened and regained access to the account. The organisers also apologised to followers, fans and stakeholders for the incident and any inconvenience caused.

However, concerns over the security of the account persisted. At the time of reporting, the page’s name had reportedly been changed to “Assam Premier League Sarcasm,” while multiple troll posts had appeared, indicating that unauthorised users may still have had access to the account.

The incident has sparked questions about the page’s security as the tournament approaches, with officials working to restore normal operations and prevent further misuse of the platform.

Authorities have not yet identified those behind the cyber breach, nor have they confirmed whether a formal complaint has been lodged with cybercrime authorities.Sources familiar with the matter said efforts are underway to fully secure the Facebook account, remove unauthorised content and restore the page ahead of the tournament, which is expected to get underway in the coming days.

CWG 2026: Bindyarani Bags Bronze, Delivers Manipur’s Third Medal in Glasgow



IMPHAL

Manipur’s medal-winning run at the Commonwealth Games 2026 continued as weightlifter Sorokhaibam Bindyarani Devi clinched the bronze medal in the women’s 58kg category, taking the state’s tally to three medals and further bolstering India’s impressive performance in Glasgow.

Bindyarani secured the podium finish with a combined lift of 199kg, registering 87kg in the snatch and 112kg in the clean and jerk. The Birmingham 2022 silver medallist narrowly missed improving her total after failing in her final clean and jerk attempt at 116kg but did enough to finish third.

Her bronze added another medal to India’s growing weightlifting haul at the Games and marked Manipur’s third medal of the competition after Saikhom Mirabai Chanu’s gold in the women’s 48kg event and Rishikanta Singh Chanambam’s silver in the men’s 60kg category.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated the weightlifter, describing her achievement as the result of “hard work and determination.”

“Yet another medal for India

in Weightlifting! Proud of Bindyarani Devi Sorokhaibam for winning a Bronze in the Women’s 58kg event at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games. Her success is due to her hard work and determination. Wishing her the very best for the endeavours ahead,” the Prime Minister said in a post on X.

Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh hailed the bronze medal as “a matter of immense pride” for both the state and the country, saying Bindyarani’s perseverance and dedication would inspire aspiring athletes across the region.

Former Chief Minister N. Biren Singh also congratulated the lifter, saying her 199kg total once again brought glory to Manipur and India. He wished her continued success on the international stage.

State Home Minister Govindas Konthoujam praised Bindyarani’s determination and resilience, describing her podium finish in a highly competitive field as a proud moment for the state.

Lok Bhavan Manipur, in a congratulatory message, noted that with Mirabai Chanu’s gold, Rishikanta Singh’s silver and Bindyarani’s bronze, Manipur had once again underlined its status as India’s premier weightlifting powerhouse.

Bindyarani’s latest success adds to Manipur’s rich sporting legacy, with athletes from the state continuing to make a significant contribution to India’s medal tally at major international competitions.

Assam Factory Blast: Owner Among Five Arrested as Probe Intensifies into Cachar Explosion

SILCHAR

Police have arrested five people, including the owner of a rod manufacturing factory, in connection with the explosion that killed four workers at an industrial unit in Assam’s Cachar district, officials said on Monday.

The arrests come a day after the fatal blast at the factory’s Pangram unit under the Udhbarband Assembly constituency, where an explosion inside the plant claimed four lives and left several others injured.

Officials said the action followed directions from Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to expedite the investigation and identify those responsible for the tragedy.

Among those arrested is factory owner Rakesh Kumar Surana, while the remaining four are associated with the factory’s management and day-to-day operations. Police have registered a criminal case, and further investigation is underway.



A team from the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) has examined the blast site and collected evidence to determine the exact cause of the explosion and reconstruct the sequence of events leading to the accident.

According to preliminary findings, the explosion occurred at around 11 a.m. on Sunday when molten metal is believed to have exploded inside the factory’s processing unit.

The impact of the blast was so powerful that it was heard across the surrounding area, with local residents reporting extensive damage within the industrial premises.The four workers killed in the incident have been identified as Appu Boraik, Kiron Munda, Shyamal Gaur and Sagar Nath, a resident of Agartala in neighbouring Tripura.

The victims were taken to Silchar Medical College and Hospital, where they were declared dead before post-mortem examinations were conducted.

Police, Fire and Emergency

Services personnel and other rescue teams rushed to the site soon after the explosion. Several injured workers were rescued and shifted to nearby hospitals. While some required further medical treatment, others were discharged after receiving first aid for minor injuries.The Assam government has announced an ex gratia of Rs 5 lakh for the families of each of the deceased workers. The financial assistance was handed over by Udhbarband MLA Rajdeep Goala and Cachar Deputy Commissioner Rahul Kumar Gupta, who also assured the bereaved families of continued government support.

In addition to the police investigation, the state government has ordered multiple inquiries into the incident.

A magisterial inquiry and a separate investigation by the Labour Department have been initiated to ascertain the cause of the blast and examine whether the factory complied with mandatory industrial safety regulations.The district administration has also

sought detailed information from the factory management regarding the safety protocols and operational procedures followed at the unit.

Meanwhile, local residents have alleged that minor explosions had occurred at the factory on previous occasions but were never officially reported. Family members of one of the deceased workers further claimed that the factory management initially attempted to downplay the severity of Sunday’s explosion.

Police said all such allegations would be thoroughly investigated and warned that stringent legal action would be taken if evidence of negligence, safety violations or regulatory lapses is established.

The incident has renewed concerns over industrial safety standards in Assam, with labour rights advocates and local residents calling for stricter enforcement of workplace safety regulations, regular inspections and greater accountability to prevent similar tragedies in the future.



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INDIA'S NEXT
BATTLE IS
LOGISTICS

Operation Sindoor proved that India can strike. The more consequential question is whether it can endure. The precision strikes carried out deep inside Pakistan in May 2025 demonstrated a significant shift in India's conventional military posture. They sent a clear message of resolve, established deterrence, and culminated in a ceasefire within days. Militarily and politically, the operation achieved its immediate objectives. Yet short, limited conflicts often create a dangerous illusion of preparedness. They reveal the effectiveness of offensive capabilities but seldom test the resilience of the systems that sustain war over weeks rather than days.

For India, the most important lesson of Operation Sindoor lies not in the targets destroyed across the border but in the vulnerabilities exposed within its own territory. Pakistan's retaliatory drone and missile attacks stretched across India's western frontier from Srinagar to Bhuj-bringing strategic infrastructure into sharp focus. Oil installations in Gujarat, including the massive Jamnagar refinery complex, were placed on high alert. The response was swift and appropriate. But emergency alerts are no substitute for long-term preparedness. A nation's logistics architecture should not rely on reflexes when confronted with sustained conflict.

Modern warfare is decided as much by supply chains as by firepower. Armies fight with ammunition, fuel, spare parts, food, transportation networks and uninterrupted communications. History repeatedly shows that military campaigns rarely collapse because soldiers lose the will to fight; they collapse because logistics fail.

India's strategic debate has traditionally focused on weapons procurement-fighter aircraft, missiles, artillery, drones and naval platforms. Comparatively little attention has been paid to the invisible infrastructure that keeps those assets operational. Yet logistics is the silent determinant of military power.

The distinction between commercial logistics and wartime logistics illustrates the challenge. Commercial supply chains are designed for efficiency. They minimize inventories, optimize routes and reduce costs through just-in-time delivery systems. Wartime logistics operate on precisely the opposite principles. They prioritize redundancy, dispersed storage, reserve capacity and alternative routes that may remain unused during peacetime but become indispensable under attack.

India's western logistics network largely reflects peacetime priorities. That may maximize economic efficiency, but it creates strategic risks during conflict.

Fuel security offers perhaps the clearest example. India imports nearly nine-tenths of its crude oil requirements, making energy resilience a central pillar of national security. The country's Strategic Petroleum Reserve has expanded in recent years, but its capacity remains modest relative to potential wartime needs. Current reserves provide only a limited cushion against prolonged disruptions in global supply or attacks on critical infrastructure.

Equally significant is geography. Much of India's refining capacity is concentrated along the western coastline, where proximity to Gulf shipping routes has long offered commercial advantages. The Jamnagar refinery grew into one of the world's largest precisely because of its strategic location near maritime energy lanes.

Those same geographical advantages, however, also create military vulnerabilities. Strategic assets clustered within striking distance of an adversary become attractive targets during conflict. Geography that enhances economic competitiveness can simultaneously reduce wartime resilience.

The obvious answer is not to dismantle existing infrastructure. Rather, India must invest in greater strategic depth.

Planned expansions of petroleum reserves represent progress, but future storage should increasingly emphasize inland, hardened facilities capable of surviving sustained attacks. Underground caverns in suitable geological formations across western India could significantly strengthen national resilience. Such investments should be viewed not merely as energy projects but as critical defence infrastructure.

Fortunately, India's logistics story is not one of deficiencies alone.

One of the country's most consequential strategic assets has emerged almost quietly: the completion of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor.

Stretching from Jawaharlal Nehru Port to Dadri, this electrified freight-only railway fundamentally changes India's logistics landscape. Built to carry heavy loads without interference from passenger traffic, it provides an uninterrupted transportation spine running through the heart of India's western theatre.

Its commercial benefits are already evident. Freight movement becomes faster, more predictable and significantly more efficient. Yet its military implications are potentially even greater.

Rapid mobilization has always been a decisive factor in warfare. Moving armoured formations, artillery, fuel and ammunition over long distances can determine the tempo of operations. Dedicated freight infrastructure offers precisely the kind of capacity modern militaries require during crises.

However, infrastructure alone does not create capability.

The corridor must be fully integrated into national defence planning through military-grade loading facilities, dedicated sidings, emergency traffic protocols and rapid roll-on/roll-off systems for heavy equipment. Civilian transport corridors cannot automatically become military lifelines without deliberate planning.

The experience of recent conflicts reinforces this lesson.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine demonstrated how vulnerable logistics become when supply lines outrun their supporting infrastructure. Massive armoured columns stalled not because Russia lacked weapons but because fuel, maintenance and supply systems failed to keep pace. Ukraine subsequently exploited these weaknesses by targeting ammunition depots, bridges and logistics hubs far behind the front lines.

Contemporary warfare increasingly focuses on attacking an adversary's ability to sustain operations rather than merely confronting frontline forces.

India must assume that any future conflict would follow similar patterns.

The final link in the logistics chain lies beyond railways.

Much of India's western frontier consists of deserts, mountains and difficult terrain where conventional transport faces severe limitations. Here, technological innovation offers new opportunities.

High-altitude logistics drones capable of transporting meaningful payloads across inaccessible terrain are no longer experimental concepts. Indigenous systems have already demonstrated impressive performance in extreme Himalayan conditions where helicopters often operate under severe constraints.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Action is the foundational key to all success.
- Pablo Picasso

The Effectiveness of Mass Movements From Jayaprakash to Anna-and Beyond



DHURJATI MUKHERJEE

The ongoing agitation led by the Cockerham Janata Party (CJP), demanding accountability and sweeping reforms following the NEET examination paper leak, reached its peak with Monday's "Chalo Parliament" march. In many ways, the movement evokes memories of the 2011 Anna Hazare movement. At that time, the Jan Lokpal campaign against corruption, led by Anna Hazare, became a symbol of public outrage across Delhi and the rest of India. Rooted in the Gandhian tradition of non-violent satyagraha, it sought the establishment of an independent Lokpal institution to investigate corruption in public life impartially. The current movement, meanwhile, has succeeded in mobilising young people across the country around the issue of the NEET examination scandal. Historically, however, the state's response to mass movements has often been marked by indifference and neglect. The same pattern was evident during protests against demonetisation, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), the farmers' movement, and the wrestlers' protests. Rather than addressing the concerns of protesters through dialogue, successive governments have generally preferred to keep their distance. Anna Hazare drew upon the Gandhian tradition of satyagraha, portraying his campaign against a corrupt political system as India's "second freedom struggle." Mass movements gain broad public support only when different sections of society provide them with moral and social legitimacy. The Anna movement received backing from retired judges, academics, former military officers, and other respected members of civil society, which lent the campaign considerable credibility. At the same time, in the early years of social media, educated middle-class youth joined the movement in large numbers, transforming it into a nationwide public mobilisation.

A closer examination reveals that large-scale political mobilisation is an essential feature of democratic protest. Mahatma Gandhi transformed protest through satyagraha into not merely a means of expressing dissent but an effective instrument of social change. According to Gandhi, every movement of resistance must be built upon three essential elements: purpose, commitment, and impact. In other words, satyagraha should be thoughtful, organised, and based on clear demands. This explains why Gandhian influence continued to shape collective movements even after India gained independence.

Although electoral politics became the principal foundation of democratic politics in independent India, political parties did not abandon social movements. Elections were viewed merely as one avenue for broader social transformation. During the 1970s, the politics of protest entered a new phase. Movements against displacement, struggles by Dalits and Adivasis for equality and dignity, and women's campaigns against patriarchal oppression fundamentally altered both the direction and character of public

movements in India.

The anti-Emergency movement of the same period paved the way for the formation of numerous organisations dedicated to protecting civil liberties. Jayaprakash Narayan's movement against Indira Gandhi's authoritarian policies emerged as one of the most significant popular mobilisations against state power. Its defining feature was that it was not the movement of any political party. During this period, protest acquired a broader meaning. Movements were no longer confined to expressing dissent; they became powerful instruments for public awareness and mass mobilisation.

The 1990s marked another turning point in the politics of public movements. It witnessed the rapid expansion of grassroots non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which opened new avenues for non-partisan social intervention. Rather than replacing mass movements, these organisations created platforms for dialogue on a wide range of social issues, enabling the participation of diverse stakeholders. Gradually, however, traditional mass movements began to lose some of their capacity for broad public mobilisation. This transformation also benefited organisations such as the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), which established a stronger presence within the social sphere. Political analysts argue that the most significant difference between India of the 1970s and 1980s and India in 2026 lies in the changing basis of political legitimacy.

During the Narendra Modi government, liberal developmentalism has increasingly given way to Hindu nationalism as the principal source of political legitimacy. This shift found symbolic expression during the inauguration of the Ram Temple on January 24, 2024, when Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat described the occasion as India's "real Independence Day."

One consequence of this transformation has been the gradual marginalisation of the social and economic dimensions of public movements. In an environment shaped by a new definition of nationalism, public discourse on unemployment, underemployment, labour rights, the agrarian crisis, child malnutrition, and other fundamental issues has become comparatively weaker. Since resistance to the political establishment is often viewed with suspicion, the everyday concerns of ordinary citizens have increasingly receded into the background. Voices raised against livelihood-related problems and what critics describe as the government's pro-corporate policies have also faced sustained pressure. As a result, policies perceived to favour the country's more privileged sections have not always been subjected to the level of public debate they might otherwise have attracted. Clearly, citizens' rights are more important than any religious identity or religious belief. Yet growing authoritarian tendencies have steadily narrowed the space for



In earlier decades, political scandals seriously undermined the legitimacy of governments because they were widely viewed as violations of established democratic norms. Today, however, the foundations of political legitimacy have undergone a substantial transformation.

public discussion on issues relating to livelihoods and social justice. At the same time, the opposition has found limited opportunities to effectively raise concerns regarding institutional autonomy, the centralisation of power, and the shrinking democratic space for dissent.

Mahatma Gandhi firmly believed that the last person in society should be an active participant in the development process so that the state would remain sensitive to that individual's needs and concerns. Yet it must also

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

The nation will never forget the treachery of the lapdogs. By serving up hate, the lapdogs who run their families on it—Modi has abandoned you and landed on Insta. The Jantar Mantar movement accomplished a massive task. The youth declared, "Lapdog media, you keep groveling to Modi; we'll build our movement through Insta, X, and Facebook."

~ Sanjay Singh, MP (RS), Delhi, National Spokesperson AAP



be acknowledged that as long as Hindu nationalism remains the principal source of the Indian state's political legitimacy, the balance of dialogue between the state and society is likely to remain uneven. If mass movements are to regain their effectiveness and if the economic and social concerns of ordinary people are to return to the centre of national discourse, this situation will need to change. The struggles waged by social reformers such as Jayaprakash Narayan, Anna Hazare, Baba Amte, and Medha Patkar, inspired by Gandhian ideals of social transformation, will continue to serve as enduring sources of inspiration in the history of Indian democracy. Their vision of decentralised popular struggle, equality, and an inclusive society remains relevant for future generations. In a democratic system—particularly one as vast and diverse as India—the central focus of politics should be the people and their real-life concerns, rather than issues that divert attention from pressing social, economic, and environmental challenges. At such a moment, the younger generation has a responsi-

Around 1,000 Supply Trucks Stranded on NH-37 as Security Convoy Shortage Disrupts Manipur Lifeline

IMPHAL

Nearly 1,000 trucks and oil tankers carrying essential commodities to Manipur remained stranded between Jiribam and Jirighat in Assam's Cachar district after the absence of adequate security convoys brought traffic movement to a standstill along National Highway-37 (NH-37), officials said on Monday.

The disruption, which began on July 26, triggered a massive traffic backlog on the highway, severely affecting the movement of smaller vehicles and delaying the supply of essential goods to Imphal.

NH-37, the state's crucial alternative supply corridor, has been witnessing mounting pressure as the number of vehicles awaiting es-



corted passage into Manipur continues to rise. Officials said the existing security deployment is struggling to cope with the growing demand despite efforts to expand convoy sizes.

Authorities have increased the number of vehicles in each convoy from around 100 to nearly 150. However, transporters say the available security arrangements remain insufficient. At present, eight companies of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) have been deployed to provide security escorts for vehicles travelling along the vulnerable highway.

The logistical challenge has been compounded by the deteriorating condition of NH-37, where damaged stretches have significantly slowed traffic movement. A journey of just

222 kilometres between Imphal and Jiribam now takes empty trucks two to three days, while loaded vehicles transporting supplies to the state capital require between three and five days to complete the route.

Transport operators also report prolonged waiting periods before being allowed to join a security convoy. Trucks often remain stranded for five to ten days, with fuel tankers and LPG carriers receiving priority clearance because of their importance in maintaining essential supplies.

The prolonged delays have disrupted supply chains and increased operational costs for transporters while adding to the difficulties faced by drivers navigating the challenging route. Transporters' and Drivers'

Council (TDC) president Hijam Ranjit said recurring traffic disruptions have become a major concern for both transport workers and security personnel deployed along the highway. He urged the authorities to strengthen convoy security by increasing the number of escort teams and to undertake immediate repairs on the damaged sections of NH-37 to restore the smooth movement of essential goods.

NH-37 has become increasingly critical for Manipur's supply network, particularly during periods of disruption on other transport corridors. Transporters warn that unless convoy capacity is expanded and road conditions improve, delays in the movement of essential commodities into the state are likely to persist.

Assam to Send High-Level Team to Assess Flood Damage in Upper Assam: Atul Bora

GUWAHATI

The Assam government will dispatch a high-level delegation to flood-ravaged districts of Upper Assam to conduct a comprehensive assessment of damage to rural infrastructure, Panchayat and Rural Development Minister Atul Bora announced on Monday. The decision was taken during a high-level review meeting chaired by Bora in Guwahati to evaluate the progress of key rural development programmes and chart the next course of action for flood-hit areas. Acting on the directions of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, the Panchayat and Rural Development (P&RD) Department will send senior officials to affected districts for an on-ground assessment of losses. The team will work in coordination with district administrations, Zila Parishads and Panchayat representatives to evaluate damage to rural roads, houses and community assets falling under the department's jurisdiction.

Based on the findings of the field survey, the government will prepare a detailed reconstruction and restoration plan aimed at rebuilding damaged infrastructure and restoring essential rural services at the earliest. The review meeting also examined the implementation of the department's 100-Day Action Plan and assessed the progress of several flagship programmes, including the VB-GRAM-G initiative, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G), the Tea Garden Roads project and the construction of paver block roads across every Gaon Panchayat in the state.

Bora further reviewed the performance of the Assam State Rural Livelihoods Mission (AS-RLM), stressing the importance of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in enhancing women's economic empowerment and strengthening sustainable livelihoods in rural Assam.

IIM Shillong unveils former President APJ Abdul Kalam's bronze statue, commemorates final lecture

GUWAHATI

Marking the 11th remembrance year of former President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, the Indian Institute of Management, Shillong (IIM Shillong) on Monday unveiled his eight-foot bronze statue, commemorating his final lecture at the institute. It was on this day in 2015 that Dr Kalam collapsed while delivering a lecture at IIM Shillong and died soon after at a hospital. At the time, the institute was in Shillong's Nongthymmai area and has since shifted to its permanent campus at Umsawli on the city outskirts.

The statue was unveiled by Shishir Kumar Bajoria, Chairman, Board of Governors (BoG), IIM Shillong. He paid tribute to the enduring legacy of Dr Kalam, emphasising that his ideals of integrity, innovation, and service to society continued to inspire the Institute.

Bajoria noted that the IIM Shillong community continued to cherish Dr Kalam's deep association with the institute and his

invaluable interactions with its students.

"The statue stands as a symbol of Dr Kalam's towering contribution to the nation and his lifelong dedication towards education, innovation and scientific advancement," IIM Shillong said in a statement.

On July 27, 2015, during his final interaction with students at IIM Shillong, Dr Kalam delivered his inspiring lecture on "How to Make Our Planet More Liveable."

In his address, he had emphasised the collective responsibility of governments, institutions, scientists, industry leaders, and citizens, particularly the youth, in creating a sustainable future through innovation, environmental consciousness, ethical leadership, and responsible action.

"Fondly remembered by students as 'Kalam Sir,' Dr Kalam continues to inspire generations through his humility, compassion, wisdom, and unwavering commitment to education," the statement said.

Manipur CM Unveils Ima Market, Two Bridges in Andro; Announces Rs 10 Crore Road Development Package

IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Monday inaugurated the newly constructed Ima Market and two bridges in Andro Assembly constituency and announced a Rs 10 crore package for the construction and improvement of inter-village roads, reaffirming the government's focus on infrastructure-led development.

The Chief Minister inaugurated the Ima Market along with two bridges over the Thoubal River at Khungdongbam Mapa (MN04115) and Wangkhem Siphai Leikai (MN04116) in the presence of Andro MLA Thounaojam Shyamkumar and other public representatives.

Addressing the gathering, Singh said it was his second visit to Andro since assuming office under the new government, reflecting the administration's commitment to accelerating development in the constituency.

Describing Andro as one of Manipur's most historically and



culturally significant regions, the Chief Minister highlighted its unique natural fire phenomenon, which attracts researchers, tourists and visitors from across India and abroad. He said the government was committed to preserving the area's rich cultural heritage while simultaneously strengthening its physical infrastructure to support long-term development.

To improve rural connectivity, Singh announced that the state government would sanction Rs 10 crore for the construction and upgrading of

small inter-village roads across the constituency. He also assured residents that a dedicated Municipal Council office would be established in Andro to strengthen local governance and improve public service delivery.

Referring to the ethnic conflict that has affected Manipur for nearly three years, the Chief Minister stressed that lasting peace remains the cornerstone of the state's development agenda. He appealed to communities living in both the hills and the valley to work collectively towards restoring peace and re-

building trust, expressing hope that Manipur could regain the spirit of unity that existed before May 3, 2023, when ethnic violence first erupted.

During the programme, several local organisations, youth clubs and welfare associations submitted memoranda to the Chief Minister seeking additional development initiatives for the constituency. The memoranda included demands for improved roads, construction of retaining walls, appointment of primary school teachers, establishment of a Municipal Council office and implementation of other civic infrastructure projects. The inauguration of the new market and bridges, coupled with the road development announcement, forms part of the state government's broader efforts to improve public infrastructure while promoting economic activity and connectivity in Andro, even as it continues to emphasise peace and reconciliation as essential prerequisites for Manipur's long-term growth.

Gaurav Gogoi Dismisses Centre's Anti-Paper Leak Bill as 'Cosmetic', Questions Commitment to Education Reform

NEW DELHI

Congress MP and Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president Gaurav Gogoi on Monday launched a sharp attack on the Centre over its proposed anti-paper leak legislation, calling it a "cosmetic Bill" and alleging that the BJP-led government lacks the political will to undertake meaningful reforms in India's education system.

Gogoi's remarks came amid a heated political exchange in Parliament following the resignation of former Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan after weeks of nationwide protests over the NEET paper leak controversy. The criticism coincided with BJP MPs felicitating Pradhan in the Parliament complex, welcoming him with a traditional cap and stole while raising slogans in his support. Opposition members responded with chants accusing the government of failing to prevent examination leaks, further intensifying the confrontation

in the Monsoon Session. Questioning the proposed amendments to the anti-paper leak law, Gogoi argued that introducing a fast-track investigation mechanism would not address the root causes of recurring examination scams if investigations continue to be weak.

"I see that this government is not serious about reforming the Indian education system. Therefore, they have brought a cosmetic Bill," Gogoi told reporters. Referring to previous examination leak cases, he claimed that key accused had escaped conviction because investigators failed to gather sufficient evidence. "What use is this fast-track amendment Bill when the BJP government is hell-bent on protecting those indulging in such scams?" he asked.

The Congress leader also questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement of a new high-powered committee on education reforms, saying a similar panel

headed by former ISRO chairman K. Radhakrishnan had been constituted two years ago but failed to produce tangible results. "Prime Minister Modi is projecting this new high-powered committee as a major reform. But two years ago, another committee with the same objective was formed under K. Radhakrishnan. Nothing happened. It remained only on paper," Gogoi said. He alleged that despite the committee's limited outcomes, the BJP continued to portray Dharmendra Pradhan as a successful education minister. "So clearly, the BJP government and Prime Minister Modi do not want to reform the Indian education system," he added. Gogoi also raised the issue of police action against student protesters during demonstrations on July 20, accusing the Centre of attempting to shield Union Home Minister Amit Shah from parliamentary scrutiny. He alleged that students participating in protests in BJP-ruled states were facing criminal cases and arrests,

creating what he described as "a fear of reprisal."

Reiterating the Opposition's demand, Gogoi said the Home Minister should make a statement in Parliament explaining the circumstances surrounding the police action against students.

"Our demand remains the same: the Home Minister must make a statement on the floor of the House explaining how the police brutality of July 20 took place," he said.

The political confrontation unfolded as Parliament continued to witness sharp exchanges over the NEET paper leak controversy. While the Centre has defended its proposed legislation as a step toward strengthening safeguards against examination fraud, the Opposition maintains that legal amendments alone cannot restore confidence without broader structural reforms and accountability for those responsible for the alleged irregularities.

Tripura Expands SIT to 10 Members in DGP Anurag Dhankar Death Probe

AGARTALA

The investigation into the death of Tripura Director General of Police (DGP) Anurag Dhankar has gathered pace, with the state police expanding the Special Investigation Team (SIT) from three to ten members to strengthen the high-profile probe.

Dhankar, a 1994-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the Tripura cadre, was found dead under unexplained circumstances inside the washroom attached to his official chamber at the state police headquarters in Agartala on July 20.

A three-member inquiry team headed by West Tripura Superintendent of Police Namit Pathak was initially constituted on July 24. However, in view of the sensitivity and complexity of the case, the state police have now broadened the investigation by inducting officers from multiple specialised units.

The reconstituted SIT includes Additional Superintendent of Police (Urban), West Tripura, Dhruva Nath, officers-in-charge of the Cyber Crime Police Station, Amtali Police Station, West Agartala Women Police Station, Battala and Ramnagar outposts, an inspector from the KTD Singh Police Training



Academy, and the previous investigating officer, Subhojit Deb.

According to an official order, the expanded team has been instructed to conduct the investigation in a coordinated, impartial and confidential manner while ensuring strict adherence to legal procedures.

To monitor progress closely, the police headquarters has made daily morning briefing sessions and evening review meetings mandatory. These meetings will assess the status of the investigation, review evidence, assign responsibilities and determine the next course of action.

Investigating officers have also been directed to submit daily progress reports to the Superintendent of Police, West Tripura, detailing evidence collected, technical analysis undertaken and proposed follow-up measures. In addition, a consol-

idated weekly report will be submitted every Saturday to the Inspector General of Police (Law and Order) for oversight.

Meanwhile, demands for an independent judicial inquiry into Dhankar's death have continued to grow.

Congress Working Committee member and former Tripura minister Sudip Roy Barman has reiterated his party's demand for an investigation monitored by a sitting judge of the Tripura High Court, arguing that the circumstances surrounding the death warrant an independent and transparent probe.

Describing the case as an issue of national importance rather than a political matter, Roy Barman said the circumstances of the DGP's death were highly suspicious and called on the state government to ensure complete transparency throughout the investigation.

The CPI(M), CPI and several other opposition parties have also sought a High Court-monitored judicial inquiry. Both the Congress and the Left parties have organised separate protest demonstrations across Tripura, demanding an independent investigation into the death of the state's senior-most police officer.

Dhankar was cremated with full state honours at his ancestral town of Baraut in Uttar Pradesh's Baghpat district on July 22. His son, Abhishek, performed the last rites in the presence of family members, senior police officials and hundreds of mourners. He took charge as Tripura's Director General of Police on May 17, 2025, succeeding Amitabh Ranjan. Before assuming the state's top policing post, Dhankar served as Director General of Police (Intelligence) and held several key assignments in national and international agencies, including the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), and the United Nations Mission in Kosovo.

He also headed the Special Investigation Team constituted by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs to investigate the 1984 anti-Sikh riots. His tenure as Tripura DGP was scheduled to continue until May 2027.

With the expansion of the SIT and enhanced oversight mechanisms, investigators are expected to intensify efforts to establish the circumstances surrounding the senior IPS officer's death, even as calls for a judicial inquiry continue to dominate the political discourse in the state.

Assam Assembly Debates Arecanut Board, Healthcare and Infrastructure During Budget Session

GUWAHATI

The Assam Legislative Assembly on Monday deliberated on a range of public welfare issues, including healthcare, agriculture and infrastructure, as the ongoing Budget Session focused on governance and development across the state.

The day's proceedings commenced with the Question Hour, followed by a Calling Attention motion under Rule 54 moved by MLA Bhupen Roy, who sought the Chief Minister's intervention on a matter of public importance.

Several legislators also raised Special Mentions under Rule 301, drawing attention to issues affecting different sectors and regions of Assam. Congress MLA Zubair Anam Mazumder urged the state government to establish an Assam Arecanut Board, arguing that a dedicated institution would provide policy support, improve market access and strengthen the livelihoods of arecanut growers across the state.

MLA Paniram Brahma highlighted the challenges faced by farmers and called for enhanced government support to boost agricultural productivity and improve rural livelihoods.

Raising concerns over infrastructure, MLA Sanjoy Kishan stressed the need to accelerate road construction and improve the quality of projects executed by the Public Works Department (PWD), saying better connectivity is vital for economic growth and public convenience.

The Assembly later took up a discussion under Rule 50 initiated by MLA Jakir Hussain Sikdar on improving healthcare services for patients suffering from serious and life-threatening illnesses.

The debate centred on strengthening Assam's healthcare infrastructure, expanding access to specialised medical treatment and improving healthcare delivery, particularly for patients requiring advanced care.

Members underscored the importance of enhancing medical facilities and ensuring equitable access to quality healthcare across urban and rural areas of the state. The Budget Session continued with discussions on a broad spectrum of issues, reflecting the Assembly's focus on agriculture, infrastructure, healthcare and other matters of public welfare as legislators pressed the government for policy interventions and improved service delivery.

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RAF fired plastic pellets, other non-lethal munitions during July 20 CJP protest march: Police record

NEW DELHI

An official police record has revealed that the Rapid Action Force (RAF) fired multiple rounds of non-lethal munitions, including two rounds of plastic pellets, while dispersing protesters during the July 20 ‘Sansad Chalo’ march over the NEET paper leak near Jantar Mantar.

According to a general diary entry made at the Parliament Street police station on July 22 at 1.24 pm, the action was reported by a Deputy Commandant of the RAF, who was deployed in Zone 1 of the Jantar Mantar area alongside a Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP)-rank officer of the Delhi Police, officials said on Monday.

Acting on the directions

and two rounds of plastic pellets during the operation, officials said, citing the police station record.

Officials clarified that each round of the non-lethal plastic pellets contains four pieces and differs from metal pellets that can pierce the body.

They said the plastic pellets are designed to cause minimal harm.

The disclosure comes amid a political row over the police response to the protest, with Opposition parties demanding a statement from Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Parliament over the reported use of force.

There have been two to three reports of protesters suffering grievous pellet injuries during the march, which was organised

the NEET-UG paper leak controversy.

Pradhan resigned on Saturday, following which the month-long CJP protest was called off.

Several personnel from the Delhi Police, RAF and CRPF were also injured during the clashes.

The Delhi Police has maintained that the claims of use of pellets against “peaceful protestors” were completely false and misleading.

The CRPF and the RAF have not issued an official response on the matter so far.

“Now, since agitation has been called off, and assembled people have dispersed, we would make a professional post-event assessment, like we do after every major assignment,



of the DCP, the RAF fired 55 non-electrical shells, 15 electrical shells, five tear smoke grenades, two rounds from anti-riot guns

by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) to demand the resignation of then Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over

and then let you know the view of the Force Hq (headquarters).” CRPF Director General (DG) G P Singh has said.

Opposition to decide future course of action, Centre must assure no injustice will be done to students: Akhilesh Yadav



NEW DELHI

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav said the Opposition would decide its future course of action on Tuesday over the anti-paper leak bill, while reiterating its demand that the Centre assure students that no injustice would be done to them and provide compensation to the families of those affected amid the ongoing row over the police action on student protesters.

Speaking to reporters, Yadav said the government must clearly

state that students would not face any injustice in the future.

“A decision on the course of action will be taken tomorrow. We demand that the government clearly state that no injustice will be done to the students, their families will receive compensation, and they will not face any injustice in the future either,” he said.

Meanwhile, Congress MP Imran Pratapgarhi rejected Union Minister Kiren Rijiju’s criticism of the Opposition, asserting that Parliament was meant for debate

and not for the Opposition to function on the government’s terms. He said the Opposition was willing to participate in the discussion but insisted that Union Home Minister Amit Shah should first come to the House and respond to the issue.

“Kiren Rijiju needs to understand that the Opposition is not a puppet that dances to your tune. We should participate in the discussion, but why should we do so on your terms? What is Parliament for? The Opposition does not come here simply to agree to whatever

you say... We will certainly participate in the discussion, but we have one condition: the Union Home Minister must first come to the floor of the House and provide a response,” said the Congress MP.

Echoing similar demand, CPI MP P Sandosh Kumar said Amit Shah should make a statement in Parliament on the alleged police lathi-charge on students. He also expressed concern over reports of similar incidents in several states, particularly Bihar, and alleged a coordinated attempt to suppress the student protest across the country. He said the issue would be raised again in Parliament on Tuesday.

“We demand that Union Home Minister Amit Shah come to the House and make a statement regarding the police lathi-charge on students...What is even more shocking is that this did not happen only in Delhi; similar incidents have been reported from many parts of the country...The reports coming from Bihar are particularly disturbing. It has been reported that an AK-47 was used by a police officer. There appears to be a coordinated attempt to suppress the students’ movement across the country. It seems that directions may have been issued, particularly in NDA-ruled states...This is a very disturbing situation. The CJP has already registered its protest, stating that there has been a breach of the assurances that were given. We will raise this issue again tomorrow,” he said.

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigned on Saturday. The Centre on Monday tabled the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill in Lok Sabha to curb paper leaks in the country.

INTERNATIONAL

Trump defends his sweeping tariffs and watches ‘America First’ drag races during Michigan stop



MILFORD

President Donald Trump came to Michigan on Monday and argued that his economic policies have revived the auto industry and American manufacturing, even as some businesses contend that the sweeping tariffs he’s imposed have actually hurt the state.

Trump visited a sprawling General Motors facility in the Detroit suburb of Milford that is a testing ground for its vehicles. He pumped a fist after watching a trio of drag races that involved muscle cars and luxury vehicles like the Corvette Z06, Cadillac Escalade V, and EV Hummer — events the announcer promised were “all America First power.”

It was the kind of thundering speed the president is expecting at an IndyCar race in Washington next month, which is part of America’s 250th birthday cel-

ebrations.

In a subsequent speech inside a design facility, the president cheered GM’s plans to expand production domestically in coming years and declared himself a president who was standing up for auto workers “at long last.”

“I’ve done more for you than your parents, OK?” he joked.

Michigan was one of the 2024 battlegrounds Trump flipped after it backed Democrat Joe Biden in 2020. But the state has seen parts of its economy affected by the president’s tariffs, including on imported cars and auto parts. Automakers have long said tariffs increase the cost of doing business, which leads to higher prices for consumers.

Company officials led Trump on a tour where he saw various GM models, including the latest versions of the Chevrolet Suburban, GMC Sierra and

Chevrolet Silverado — the production of which he argued had been boosted by tariffs.

President Donald Trump, center left, speaks with Mary Barra, chair and CEO of General Motors, center right, and General Motors President Mark Reuss, right, as Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy listens at left, during a driving demonstration at General Motors proving ground, Monday, July 27, 2026, in Milford, Mich.

At one point, POTUS grabbed a pen and signed the hood of a white Corvette that was made specifically for America’s 250th birthday.

“They’ve come a long way,” he said to reporters about the Detroit-based automaker during the tour. “It’s amazing what tariffs are doing for GM.” Trump said he’s been good to the company but he declined to say more.

“The rest of the world doesn’t love me, but that’s OK,” he said, alluding to tariffs. “It’s called ‘America first.’”

The president’s speech lasted more than an hour and was wide ranging — hitting on the economy, the war in Iran and the U.S. military operation that toppled the leader of Venezuela.

He also touched on communism, crime rates, his administration’s efforts to transform the nation’s capital and even how carefully he treads to keep from tripping while on stage or deplaning from Air Force One.

With early primary voting already underway, Trump called on stage Republican Reps. Lisa McClain, Tom Barrett and Tim Walberg, as well as gubernatorial candidate John James and Senate candidate Mike Rogers.

Rogers is unopposed in the Senate primary, but the GOP gubernatorial contest pits James, who is backed by Trump, against Perry Johnson, a businessman turned politician who has launched unsuccessful campaigns before, including for president in 2024.

A new round of steep import levies is taking effect on dozens of U.S. trading

partners. Yet Trump has singled out Canada with tariffs as high as 50% on a wide array of its products, including cars.

The GM facility he toured is in Oakland County, which encompasses much of Detroit’s northern suburbs. Once a Republican stronghold, it has increasingly leaned Democratic, backing Biden against Trump in 2020 and Vice President Kamala Harris against Trump four years later.

GM says its facility is the oldest dedicated vehicle testing operation in the United States, where 4,200 employees work to refine nearly every vehicle the company makes before they reach consumers. It has more than 150 miles of test roads and the early innovations perfected on site include the first mass-produced automatic transmission, known as the “Hydra-Matic.”

Michigan’s economy relies heavily on Canada, meaning the new tariffs — coupled with inflation still running high and gas prices rising again as the already unpopular war in Iran escalates — have created additional economic concerns statewide. Some advocacy groups citing import and tariff data, says tariffs have cost Michigan businesses billions of dollars just since last spring.

The latest tariffs come at a time when voters across the country were already increasingly dissatisfied with Trump’s handling of the economy.

Jason Roe, a former executive director of the Michigan Republican Party who tried unsuccessfully to distance it from Trump’s “Make America Great Again” movement in 2021, said that more than coinciding with his new round of tariffs, Trump’s visit is a function of Michigan’s relatively late primary and is meant to ensure that James secures the nomination.

But Roe also said it was a risk for the president to tie himself too closely to top Republicans before the general election, calling it “kryptonite to November voters.”

Ukraine to buy up to 20 Gripen jet fighters, Sweden to donate 16



STOCKHOLM

Ukraine plans to buy up to 20 latest-model Gripen fighter jets and Sweden will donate 16 older models to boost its air defence, the two countries said Thursday during a surprise visit to Sweden by the Ukrainian president.

Ukraine plans to allocate 2.5 billion euros (\$2.9 billion) from an EU loan for the new aircraft, the Swedish government said in a statement.

Regarding the latest model Gripen E jets, “the aim is to quickly conclude a final agreement with deliveries as of 2030”, Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said at a joint press conference with President Volodymyr Zelensky at an air base in Uppsala, 70 kilometres (45 miles) north of Stockholm.

The 16 donated aircraft will be delivered in early 2027, Kristersson said.

“This is a historic decision for Sweden, but it also strengthens Ukraine’s air defence significantly,” he added.

The two countries signed

a letter of intent in October on Kyiv’s purchase of 100 to 150 Gripen E aircraft.

Zelensky said Ukraine, battling Russia’s invasion since 2022, hoped to buy all 150 planes.

“We hope we will be able to secure financing for all of them,” he said.

Sweden in 2024 suspended plans to send Gripen jets to Ukraine after partner countries requested that priority be given to providing US F-16 fighters.

Sweden gives Ukraine \$2.7 billion military aid; Gripen jets, \$400M for drones to counter Russian strikes

Thursday’s announcement was part of Sweden’s 22nd military aid package to Ukraine, worth a total of 25.2 billion kronor, the Swedish government said.

The Scandinavian country is a strong supporter of Ukraine, providing military aid worth more than 128 billion kronor (\$13.7 billion) since the start of the Russian invasion.

Zelensky meanwhile said Kyiv was awaiting a formal response from the United States to its request

for more ammunition for its Patriot air defence systems to counter Russian ballistic missiles.

Ukraine is largely reliant on its Western allies to down Russian missile barges, despite having pioneered a system for intercepting long-range drones that is the envy of some of the world’s most advanced militaries.

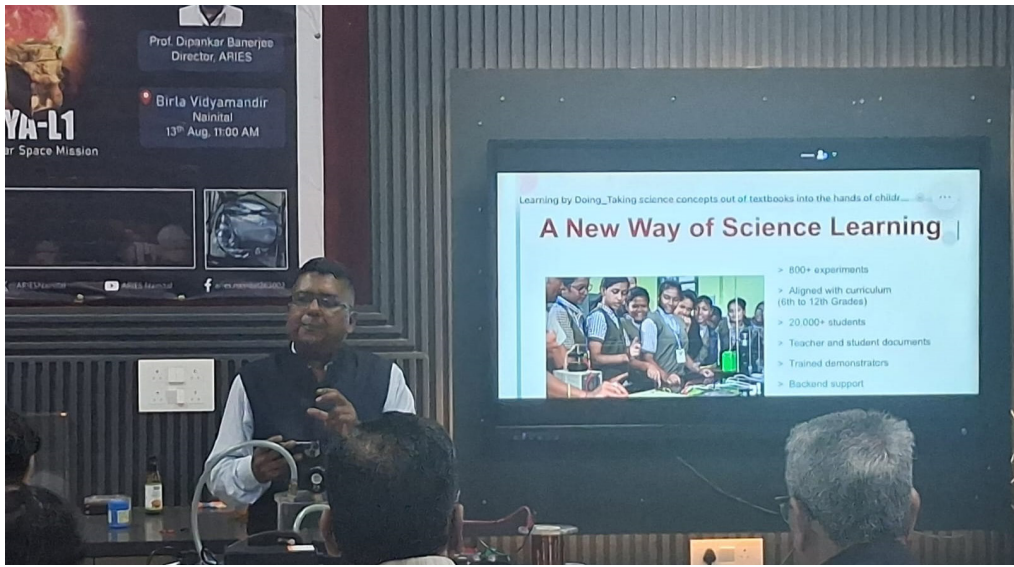
Zelensky sent a letter to US President Donald Trump and the US Congress, dated May 26, asking Washington to either supply more Patriot missile systems or give Ukraine licences so it can produce its own.

“We are expecting a response,” Zelensky said, adding that he had met with members of Congress and senators on Wednesday.

“They support the proposals that were addressed to Congress and to the White House,” he said, adding that he was “counting on an official response”.

“I believe they need to act faster. We are insisting, very insistently. Winter is ahead,” Zelensky said.

Science Labs Must Become Centres of Learning, Not Store Rooms: Educationist Dr B Singh



BISWADEEP GUPTA

Science education cannot be effective without practical learning, and school laboratories must evolve from being mere rooms filled with equipment into vibrant spaces where students develop curiosity, creativity and problem-solving skills. This was the central message shared by renowned educationist Dr B Singh during an interview with Biswadeep Gupta, founder of the 5E for Success philosophy.

Dr Singh, who has spent decades in the field of education as a teacher, principal and academic leader, is currently engaged in consulting on school management and educational development. Drawing from years of experience and extensive research, he expressed concern over the poor utilisation of science laboratories in schools across India. According to Dr Singh, a survey conducted in more than 1,000 schools revealed that while many institutions have invested in setting up science laboratories, the facilities are often underused. In many schools, expensive equipment remains locked away or is used only during examinations, defeating the very purpose of practical science education.

“Science is not something students should only read about in textbooks. It must be experienced through observation, experimentation and discovery,” he said.

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He observed that only a small number of well-managed schools

have laboratories that function efficiently throughout the academic year. In most cases, laboratory sessions are irregular, equipment is poorly maintained, and students receive limited exposure to hands-on experiments.

Dr Singh stressed that practical learning should become an integral part of the school curriculum rather than being treated as an optional activity. Every school, he suggested, should prepare a well-planned practical-based curriculum that clearly outlines laboratory activities for each class. This curriculum should be displayed prominently so that both teachers and students remain aware of the practical work expected during the academic session.

He also emphasised the need for schools to maximise the utility of laboratory resources. “Buying equipment is not enough. Schools must ensure that every instrument is used effectively and regularly,” he said.

One of his innovative suggestions was to connect classroom learning with skilled professionals from the community. Students, he said, can gain valuable practical knowledge by interacting with people such as plumbers, electricians, gardeners and other skilled workers. Such collaborations would help students understand how scientific principles are applied in everyday life, making learning more meaningful and relevant.

Dr Singh also highlighted the importance of creating awareness among young people about the value of scientific thinking. Schools, he suggested, should organise regular awareness programmes through slogans, talks, group discussions, role plays, debates and poster competitions. Importantly, parents and family members should also be involved in these initiatives so that scientific learning extends beyond the classroom.

He further recommended that schools introduce systematic mechanisms to improve laboratory management. Proper maintenance of laboratory registers, regular quality audits, continuous monitoring and periodic observations should become standard practice. These measures, he said, would help ensure that laboratories remain functional, safe and beneficial for students throughout the year.

“Monitoring is not about finding faults. It is about ensuring that laboratories continue to serve their educational purpose,” Dr Singh explained.

Reflecting on the broader objective of science education, Dr Singh said that laboratories should inspire students to ask questions, investigate problems and devel-

op innovative solutions. When laboratories become active learning spaces rather than storage rooms, they can play a crucial role in nurturing scientific temper among young learners.

As India's education system continues to place greater emphasis on experiential learning under the National Education Policy, Dr Singh believes that strengthening laboratory education should become a priority for schools, policymakers and educators alike.

His message is clear: meaningful science education requires more than infrastructure. It requires consistent use, effective planning, community participation and a commitment to making practical learning an everyday experience for every student.



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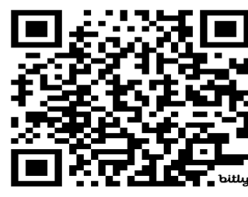
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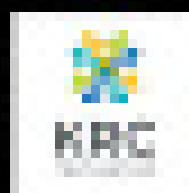


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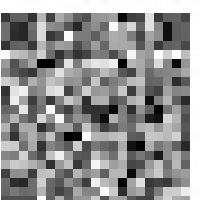


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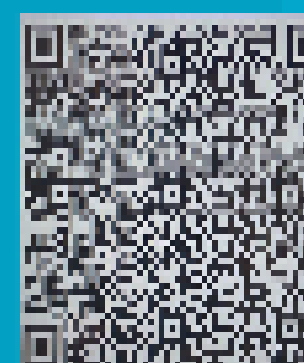
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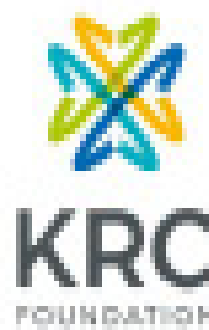
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