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PERSPECTIVE

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Tripura Sets October 31 Deadline to Fully Digitalise Healthcare Services

AGARTALA
Tripura has set October 31 as the deadline for fully digitalising healthcare services across the state, with the government aiming to create a more integrated, technology-driven and patient-friendly medical system.

Health and Family Welfare Secretary Kiran Gitte announced the deadline on Tuesday while addressing a workshop on the Integrated Health Management Information System (IHMS) at Praga Bhavan in Agartala.

Gitte said several health-related councils, including those governing medical, pharmacy, nursing and allied health services, had already shifted to online systems.

He said the digitalisation of drug procurement and supply-chain management had also demonstrated that technology-driven systems could be implemented despite manpower constraints.

"If these councils and supply chain management for drug procurement can function digitally despite limited manpower, implementing digital systems across all other healthcare sectors is entirely achievable," he said.

The government intends to extend digital systems across healthcare facilities in the state within the October 31 deadline.

Gitte said the initiative would reduce dependence on manual processes, improve coordination between healthcare facilities and make patient services faster and more efficient.

He compared the proposed transformation with the widespread use of digital platforms for services such as ticket booking, banking, insurance payments and school admissions, saying similar integration was possible in healthcare.

WHO SAID WHAT



When a man lacks the courage to speak the truth, his silence speaks for him. Amit Shah's silence is his confession. ~ Rahul Gandhi, Leader of the Opposition, Lok Sabha

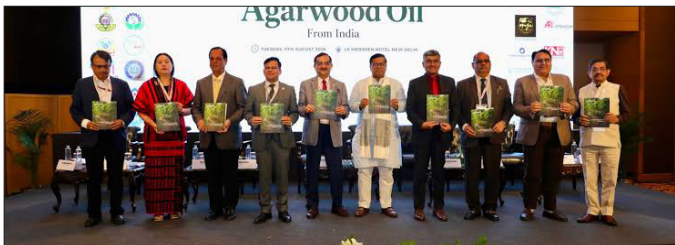
Northeast targets global oud market with new agarwood export roadmap

GUWAHATI
The Centre has unveiled a roadmap to transform the Northeast's vast agarwood resources into a globally competitive industry, with emphasis on processing, technology, branding and exports rather than the supply of raw material to international luxury markets.

The roadmap was released at an industry summit on the prospects and export of agarwood oil from India, organised by the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER) and CHEMEXCIL in New Delhi on August 11.

The Northeast accounts for more than 96 per cent of India's estimated 139.89 million agarwood trees. Assam has around 114.3 million trees, while Tripura accounts for approximately 15.15 million. Agarwood is also cultivated and found in Manipur, Nagaland, Meghalaya and other northeastern states.

Under the new strategy, the government is seeking greater



private investment in processing and distillation facilities close to production centres. It is also pushing for advanced extraction technologies, scientific cultivation, quality standards, traceability and origin-based branding to help the region capture a larger share of the high-value global oud and fragrance market.

Minister of State for DoNER Sukanta Majumdar urged industry stakeholders to invest in the sector, develop globally competitive brands and establish commercial partnerships in international markets.

In a message read out at the summit, DoNER Minister Jyotiraditya M. Scindia said the

Northeast should move beyond its role as a supplier of raw agarwood and emerge as the "origin, the standard, the science and the brand of Indian agarwood".

Scindia identified five key priorities for the sector: developing long-term market linkages with farmer producer organisations and clusters; expanding processing and distillation capacity in production areas; promoting technology partnerships; establishing standards, certification and traceability; and creating a strong global identity for Indian oud.

The broader objective is to ensure that a greater share of the economic value generated by



KRC TIMES

STAY ENRICHED

VOLUME:1, ISSUE 848 | SILCHAR WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2026. EAST AND NE INDIA EDITION | e-mail: krctimes@gmail.com ,www.krctimes.com

Nine Houses Torched in Attack on Naga Village in Manipur's Kangpokpi



IMPHAL
An armed group attacked a Naga village in Manipur's Kangpokpi district on Tuesday night, firing several rounds

before setting fire to at least nine houses, officials said on Wednesday.
The incident took place around 9.30 pm at Tokpa Liangmai Naga village, near Tumnoupokpi Thangal village.

Most of the houses targeted in the attack were reportedly kutchra structures.
Residents from nearby villages rushed to the area and helped contain the fire, officials said. No casualties were immediately reported.
Additional security personnel have since been deployed in and around the village to prevent further violence and restore normalcy, officials said.
The Liangmai Naga Council, Manipur, condemned the attack and alleged that armed men from another community were responsible.
The organisation claimed that 10 houses and a church were burnt in the incident.
In a statement, the council described the alleged targeting of civilians, residential properties and a place of worship as a "grave and reprehensible act of violence".
It demanded the immediate arrest and prosecution of those responsible for the arson and called for security to be strengthened in the area.
The latest incident comes amid continuing tensions and sporadic violence in parts of Manipur, raising fresh concerns over the security of vulnerable villages and communities in the state.

Akoijam calls for review of Manipur SoO pact, seeks action over alleged violations

IMPHAL
Inner Manipur MP Angomcha Bimol Akoijam on Tuesday urged the Centre to review the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement with Kuki militant organisations, calling for strict action against groups found to have violated its ground rules.
Raising the issue in the Lok Sabha under Rule 377, Akoijam asked the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to examine compliance with the ceasefire arrangement and consider ending the pact wherever violations are established.
The MP had earlier submitted a notice on August 7, citing alleged highway extortion and the involvement of certain SoO signatory groups in criminal activities, including the reported abduction and killing of six Liangmei civilians.Akoijam said the Union government should review the functioning of the agreement and take action against any groups found to be involved in unlawful activities.The demand comes amid renewed tensions over allegations of extortion, abduction and attacks on civilians involving armed groups operating under the SoO framework.Lawmakers had also sought to raise the issue of escalating violence in Manipur's hill areas during Zero Hour, demanding a discussion on civilian safety and accountability of armed groups. However, the House was adjourned before the matter could be taken up.
The reported abduction and killing of six Naga villagers from Kangpokpi district has further intensified demands for action. The victims were allegedly taken from Leilon Vaiphei village on May 13 and subsequently found dead, triggering protests and widespread concern among Naga civil

society organisations.
Manipur Deputy Chief Minister Losii Dikho had publicly alleged the involvement of the Kuki National Front-Presidential (KNF-P), a group operating under the SoO framework, in the incident. He described the killings as a serious crime and said the Union government had a responsibility to enforce the terms of the agreement.
Dikho also appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to intervene against what he described as rogue elements and review the agreement if it was being misused by militant factions.
The incident sparked protests by the United Naga Council (UNC) and other Naga organisations, which demanded accountability and the abrogation of the SoO agreement with Kuki militant groups. Highway blockades were also launched in parts of the state, disrupting the movement of vehicles and essential supplies.Amid the heightened tensions, state leaders appealed to communities to maintain peace and avoid generalising the alleged actions of individual armed groups to the wider Kuki community.Officials and representatives of the UNC subsequently held discussions aimed at easing tensions and addressing concerns over alleged violations of the SoO ground rules.The tripartite SoO agreement was signed in August 2008 between the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, the Manipur government and umbrella organisations representing Kuki-Zo militant groups, including the Kuki National Organisation (KNO) and the United People's Front (UPF).
The arrangement was intended to suspend hostilities, restrict cadres to designated camps and create conditions for political dialogue.

CorCom calls August 15 shutdown, urges boycott of Independence Day

IMPHAL
The Coordination Committee (CorCom), an umbrella body of six banned underground organisations in Manipur, has called for a statewide general strike on August 15 and urged people to boycott Independence Day celebrations.
According to a statement issued by the outfit, the shutdown will be observed from 1 am to 6:30 pm on August 15. It is expected to affect public transport, commercial establishments and normal activities across the state during the stipulated period.CorCom said essential services, including medical emergencies, electricity, water supply, fire services, the press and religious ceremonies, would remain exempt from the strike.The coalition comprises the Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP), Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL), People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK), PREPAK-Progressive, Revolutionary People's Front (RPF) and United National Liberation Front (UNLF).In its statement, CorCom said India's Independence Day had no historical or political connection with Manipur, which it refers to as Kangleipak. It also appealed to people to stay away from the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign being observed nationwide from August 9 to August 17.
The outfit reiterated its long-standing position that Manipur existed as an independent sovereign entity before the signing of the Merger Agreement on October 15, 1949.
CorCom described the merger as an alleged violation of international law and Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter. It further claimed that the continuing conflict in Manipur should be viewed as an international armed conflict rather than an internal insurgency.
The organisation also sought to reinforce its political argument by comparing Manipur's population and geographical area with those of smaller sovereign states that are members of the United Nations.

Kuki Group Lifts Highway 202 Blockade as Manipur Pushes for End to NH-2 Shutdown

GUWAHATI
Kuki civil society organisation has lifted its counter-economic blockade and total shutdown along National Highway 202, the Imphal-Ukhrul road, following assurances from the Manipur government on the free and non-discriminatory movement of people and essential commodities.
The decision was announced on Tuesday by the Kuki Civil Society Working Committee-Ukhrul (WCKCSOS-Ukhrul) after a meeting with a state government delegation led by Home Minister Konhthoujam Govindas.The organisation had imposed the counter-economic blockade on July 27 and escalated it into a total shutdown on August 5. It was protesting what it described as a selective economic blockade imposed by Naga and Meitei groups against the Kuki community. According to the organisation, the government delegation informed it that an understanding had been reached between Naga and Meitei groups to end the selective blockade targeting Kukis along NH-202.A handwritten agreement was also signed between the organisation and government representatives. The government assured the Kuki group

that adequate security would be provided along the highway and that attempts by any group to impose blockades or disrupt traffic would be prevented.
"In view of this development and the government's assurance of free and non-discriminatory movement of essential commodities, the WCKCSOS-Ukhrul hereby lifts the counter-economic blockade and total shutdown from 4:30 pm today," the organisation said in a statement.
The move immediately facilitated the movement of stranded vehicles. Government spokesperson and MLA Thokchom Radheshyam said around 300 goods-laden trucks stranded in Ukhrul district had resumed their journey towards Imphal.
Radheshyam said the government hoped to achieve a similar breakthrough on National Highway 2, the state's principal supply route.
The NH-2 blockade has remained in place since May 17 after the United Naga Council (UNC) imposed an economic blockade to protest the abduction of six Nagas by suspected Kuki militants. The bodies of all six were subsequently recovered from Kangpokpi district.

Assam Cabinet approves Rs 2,100 crore Aerotropolis project, Rs 450 crore for BTC

GUWAHATI
The Assam Cabinet has approved Rs 2,100 crore for the Aerotropolis Satellite City Project in Guwahati and sanctioned Rs 450 crore for the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) as the first instalment of its State-Owned Priority Development (SOPD-G) fund for 2026-27.
The decisions were taken at a Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday, with several other measures approved covering infrastructure, welfare, employment and administration.
For the Aerotropolis Satellite City Project, the Cabinet granted administrative approval for Rs 2,100 crore, primarily for land acquisition and development. The project is aimed at supporting planned urban expansion and strengthening infrastructure around Guwahati.
The Cabinet also approved Rs 450 crore for the BTC as the first instalment of its SOPD-G allocation for the 2026-27 financial year.Among the welfare measures, the government allocated Rs 118.58 crore for the Chief Minister's Jibon Prerana scheme during 2026-27.
The Cabinet also approved a measure allowing six communities included in Assam's state Other Backward Classes (OBC) list but not in the Central OBC list for the state to obtain OBC Non-Creamy Layer (NCL) certificates in the format prescribed by the state government.
In another decision, candidates selected for government jobs will be required to undergo police verification covering

their character, antecedents, nationality and the authenticity of documents submitted during the recruitment process.
The police will have up to six months to complete the verification. Candidates, meanwhile, will continue to be required to submit notarised affidavits, a measure aimed at preventing delays in the appointment process. The Cabinet also revised the payment structure for Foreign Language Training-cum-Implementation Partners (FL-TIP) under the CM-FLIGHT programme.Under the revised system, Rs 30,000 will be paid after three months of training and another Rs 30,000 after six months. A further Rs 40,000 will be released after completion of the training and submission of a foreign language proficiency certificate. Candidates will also receive Rs 50,000 as post-placement assistance.
The Cabinet approved a draft lease agreement between the Assam Industrial Development Corporation Ltd (AIDC) and Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL) for the proposed development of a Taj Gateway hotel at the former HPCL premises in Jagiroad.
The agreement is expected to facilitate the development of the hospitality project at the industrial site.
The Cabinet also granted a temporary relaxation to the Moran and Matak communities from Assam's restriction on new Aadhaar enrolment for people aged 18 years and above. The relaxation will remain in force until March 31, 2027.

Nagaland Governor Calls for Stronger Action Against Illicit Liquor and Drug Trafficking

KOHIMA
Nagaland Governor Nand Kishore Yadav has called for stronger enforcement mechanisms and greater institutional capacity to tackle the trafficking of illicit liquor and drugs in the state.Yadav made the remarks on Tuesday while reviewing the functioning of the Department of Excise and Prohibition at Lok Bhavan.The Governor stressed the need for the department to address operational and manpower constraints while continuing to contribute to public health and effective governance, according to a statement issued by Lok Bhavan.During the meeting, department officials highlighted several challenges affecting enforcement, including porous borders, manpower shortages, the discontinuation of inter-district check-forts, outdated firearms and limited operational mobility. The department said its current personnel-to-population ratio stood at 1:6,000, compared with 1:2,000 in neighbouring Mizoram. The meeting reviewed the department's enforcement record from

April 2021 to March 2026, including cases registered under the Nagaland Liquor Total Prohibition (NLTP) Act and drug-related offences.
Authorities seized various forms of illicit liquor and narcotic substances during the period, including Indian-made foreign liquor (IMFL), country liquor, poppy straw, opium, heroin, cough syrup and drugs in the form of capsules and tablets.
Officials also briefed the Governor on recent seizures, the destruction of confiscated drugs and liquor, and awareness campaigns conducted across the state to highlight the dangers of substance abuse.
The department reported total excise revenue collection of Rs 22.51 crore between April 2021 and March 2026. Annual collections rose from Rs 3.17 crore in 2021-22 to Rs 5.92 crore in 2025-26. The department's future roadmap focuses on strengthening enforcement, combating organised crime, protecting public health, improving governance, increasing revenue collection and expanding personnel capacity.



VOLUME:1, ISSUE 848

DON'T TURN GEN Z AGAINST ITSELF

The recent nationwide student protests were more than a reaction to alleged irregularities in public examinations. They represented a wider assertion of a generation that is increasingly unwilling to accept opaque systems, institutional failure and the absence of accountability. What began as a demand for transparency in examinations quickly became a larger expression of Gen Z's aspirations for a fairer and more responsive India.

From Delhi to several other cities, students from diverse social, linguistic and religious backgrounds came together to raise concerns about examinations, opportunities and institutional credibility. The political response underscored the seriousness of the moment. Opposition leaders, including Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi, criticised the alleged use of force against protesters and called for an impartial investigation. The resignation of the Union Education Minister amid mounting criticism further demonstrated the political weight of the issue.

It is against this backdrop that the social media campaign calling for the removal of reservation has gained visibility. Whether the campaign is spontaneous or organised is less important than the larger question it raises: why should the legitimate anger of young people over examination systems, education and employment opportunities be redirected towards one of India's most sensitive social questions?

The answer matters because India's youth are confronting a very different set of anxieties. They want credible examinations, quality education, affordable higher learning, employment and genuine avenues for upward mobility. Turning these aspirations into a battle over caste risks obscuring the institutional failures that triggered the protests in the first place.

The reservation debate is neither new nor simple. The implementation of the Mandal Commission recommendations in 1980 triggered intense political and social mobilisation. Since then, reservation has repeatedly returned to the centre of national politics, particularly during periods of economic uncertainty and political transition.

But any serious discussion on reservation must begin with the constitutional rationale behind it. Affirmative action was not conceived as a political favour or a permanent privilege. It emerged from the recognition that formal equality cannot by itself produce substantive equality in a society marked by centuries of caste-based exclusion and unequal access to education, land, employment and public institutions.

India may have travelled a considerable distance since Independence, but caste continues to influence social mobility and economic opportunity. Discrimination, caste violence, untouchability and social exclusion remain realities in different parts of the country. The persistence of such inequalities makes it difficult to argue that the historical conditions that gave rise to affirmative action have been completely overcome. The more constructive question, therefore, is not simply whether reservations should exist or be abolished. It is whether India is doing enough to create the conditions under which reservation may eventually become less necessary.

A child who attends an under-resourced school cannot be expected to compete on equal terms with a student who has access to expensive private schooling, coaching and digital resources. A first-generation learner entering a highly competitive national examination is not starting from the same position as someone whose family has accumulated educational and professional advantages over generations.

Merit, therefore, cannot be discussed in isolation from opportunity. The criticism that reservation compromises merit also deserves greater scrutiny. The real test for a democratic society is not whether every institution can claim abstract meritocracy, but whether its institutions reflect the diversity of the society they serve. Persistent underrepresentation of historically disadvantaged communities, particularly in senior positions in higher education and public institutions, suggests that equal opportunity remains an unfinished project. At the same time, reservation cannot be a substitute for educational reform. Governments must invest far more seriously in school education, teacher quality, public universities, vocational training and affordable coaching. Competitive examinations must become transparent, technologically secure and accountable. Recruitment systems must be protected from paper leaks, manipulation and administrative negligence. These are the issues that should occupy the political imagination of a young India. There is also a danger in allowing social media campaigns to define complex constitutional questions through slogans. "Remove reservation" may fit neatly into a hashtag, but it does not answer the difficult questions of historical disadvantage, unequal access or representation. Nor does it offer a solution to the unemployment, examination failures and educational inequalities that young people are protesting against.

Affirmative action is not unique to India. Democracies across the world have adopted various measures to address historical and structural disadvantage. The forms and legal frameworks differ, but the underlying principle is familiar: where inequality has been produced by social structures, governments may need targeted interventions to create meaningful equality of opportunity.

India must, however, continually evaluate its reservation policies. Questions of creamy layer, benefits reaching the most disadvantaged, periodic review, institutional representation and the effectiveness of affirmative action deserve informed public debate. Reservation should neither become politically untouchable nor be dismissed through simplistic calls for abolition. The danger is particularly acute when young people are encouraged to view one another primarily through caste identities. Gen Z should not be reduced to a constituency to be mobilised through grievance. It is a generation that has grown up with unprecedented access to information and is demanding accountability from institutions. Its concerns extend far beyond caste: jobs, education, technology, climate change, economic security, mental well-being, freedom and dignity are all part of its political imagination.

The challenge before political parties is to respond to these aspirations rather than exploit divisions within them.

The ultimate objective of affirmative action should indeed be a society in which such measures are no longer necessary. But that destination cannot be reached by simply removing the mechanism while leaving the underlying inequality intact. It can be reached only by dismantling the social and economic barriers that made affirmative action necessary in the first place.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

It is literally true that you can succeed best and quickest by helping others to succeed.
- Napoleon Hill

AMAZING RESULTS OF CWG 2026



ASHWANI KUMAR CHRUNG00

The Commonwealth Games (CWG) 2026 which began on 23 July, 2026 came to a glittering close on 2-3 August 2026 at Glasgow, the capital city of Scotland (UK). The Indian contingent did its best under the circumstances and brought home 39 medals including 13 gold, 17 silver and 9 bronze. The flag and baton of the CWG were handed over to the Indian officials at the end of the closing ceremony in recognition of the fact that the next CWG in 2030 would be held in India at Ahmedabad. The Indian Olympic Association President, P.T.Usha, Javelin Throw Champion, Neeraj Chopra and the Dy. Chief Minister of Gujarat, Harsh Sanghavi received the flag and the baton with the deserved honour and protocol of the Games.

This handover officially marked India taking charge to host the 2030 historic Centenary Commonwealth Games in Ahmedabad. The first such games were held in Hamilton-Canada in 1930. Hosting the 2030 Games is expected to boost India's global sporting profile, accelerate world-class sports infrastructure development, and showcase the country's organisational capabilities on the international stage. It should also be seen particularly in context of the preparations for the Asian Games to be held in September this year in Japan followed by the Olympics to be held in the US in 2028.

India had sent a contingent of 191 members headed by Chief de Mission Rohit Rajpal and Deputy Chief de Mission Ravi Bengani. The contingent included 126 athletes (77 men and 49 women) and 51 team officials to participate in the games. Those who participated included 32 competitors (22 men and 10 women) in Athletics, 15 representatives each in Boxing & Judo and 12 competitors in weightlifting. There were only 10 sports disciplines plus the para sports this time which surely impacted the results as well for India. Shooting, wrestling, archery, hockey, badminton and table tennis - the mainstay sports of India - which bring a lot of fortunes for it traditionally were not included in the games this time. Ever since the inception of CWG in 1930, India continued to participate in the games barring only three times including the first one. It got the best results in the CWG 2010 when the games were organised in Delhi. It stood second in the medal tally with 101 total medals including 38 gold, 27 silver and 36 bronze. The second best performance by India was in CWG 2002 at Manchester when it won 30 gold, 22 silver, 17 bronze with a total of 69 medals. The performance this time at Glasgow with a tally of 39 medals was also satisfactory and encouraging. It secured 5th place on the overall medal table of the games and the first place among the Asian countries in the CWG 2026. This time the boxers from India exhibited a great class and character; and made history by entering into the 10 final events of the discipline. It won seven finals and also got 7 gold medals and 3 silver medals. This is India's best ever boxing performance. The gold finishers for India

included Jasmine Lamboria, Preeti Pawar, Sakshi Chaudhary, Priya Ghanghas, Arundhati Chaudhary, Sachin Siwach and Ankush Panghal. The champion weightlifter Mirabai Chanu secured gold in the 48kg women's category. In this way, she was able to successfully achieve a historic third consecutive CWG title.

Sharmila Dhankar won gold in the women's shot-put F57, leading the record-making campaign for Indian para-athletes. Dilip Gavit won a historic gold in the men's 100m T47 event with a game record time of 10.71 seconds. This is the men's first-ever para-athletic gold at the CWG. Mohammed Basil got silver in the same category thus giving India a 1-2 finish in the finals. While Soman Rana won gold in the men's shot-put F57 para-athlete event, Shubham Juyal got a silver medal in the same event. Shilpa Shyla secured a bronze medal in the women's shot-put F57 para-athlete event following a successful appeal.

Gulveer Singh created a new history and became the first Indian track and field athlete to win two individual medals at a single CWG (silver in 10,000m and bronze in 5,000m). The ace champion Neeraj Chopra alongside debutant Yash Vir Singh won silver and bronze respectively in the Javelin throw. Asmita Dey and Harsh Singh clinched first-ever gold in the Judo competition marking India's strong entry into the elite club of the sports men and women of the discipline.

These remarkable achievements of India at an international

platform is the reflection of the sports policy of India coupled with the infrastructure development at a grass-root level. Training methodology, investment in the sports sector and the grooming of sports men and women at a tender age are basics to the development of sports in the modern context. Then there are centres of sports men and women in a number of states in India where special arrangements have been made to groom the budding talent under national and international experts of various games and sports.

A number of the athletes revealed that they were fully supported by their state governments and also the big institutions in the country. Great international players like Virat Kohli have also sponsored some key athletes who have shown exemplary results. The scenario in India has drastically changed and improved in context of the athletes taking part in international competitions like CWG, Asian Games, Olympics and the other important competitions held intermittently. Big companies and other organisations have been coming forward to help and support the deserving talent in the country.

The CWG overall medal table highlights the most successful nations in the history of the competition. Australia continues to lead the all-time standings with an incredible 2,773 medals, followed by England and Canada, while India proudly holds fourth place with 602 medals. The rankings reflect decades of excellence across multiple sports and generations of world-class athletes. Keeping in view the next CWG 2030, the government of India immediately after the announcement of the Centenary CWG 2030, being held in India, took a number of major initiatives to take India to developing modern infrastructure in this regard. The Gujarat government has allocated ₹1,331 crore to transform Ahmedabad into an Olympic-ready city. The investment is intended to strengthen India's bid to host the 2036 Olympic Games as well. The project focuses on developing world-class sports infrastructure in India in the coming four years.

The Asian Games are also about to start in Aichi Prefecture and



Nagoya, Japan from 19 September to October 4 this year. In the previous edition of the games in 2022 at Hangzhou-China, India for the first time crossed the 100-medal mark. The performance marked India's highest-ever medal haul in the history of Asian Games with 28 gold, 38 silver and 41 bronze totalling 107 medals. India finished fourth on the overall medal table after China, Japan and Korea. With the kind of encouraging results from Glasgow, the Indian Olympic Association, Ministry of Sports, Sports Authority of India and the respective sports institutions in various states should be surely thinking big in regard to the Asian Games 2026. There will be 43 sports span-

ning 469 medal events in the 2026 Asian Games in Japan, therefore the preparations are also supposed to be of the same nature and the required standard. The Olympics 2028 at Los Angeles is a little far away issue but thinking and planning has begun in this regard at various levels. India's records at the Olympics excepting in Hockey aren't so great but over the last two decades, some important strides have been taken and those have given good results as well. There are some big names who have brought laurels for the country and themselves in the Olympics. Some of them are as fol-

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

The Modi government is ready for every kind of discussion in Parliament. But the opposition's aim is not to discuss, but to create chaos. The opposition should submit a letter to the Lok Sabha Speaker for discussion; we are ready to discuss from 3 PM today until 3 PM tomorrow. I will answer each and every question from the opposition tomorrow. Then the public will decide who wants to discuss and who is running away.
~ Amit Shah, Union Home Minister



Major Dhyani Chand and Balbir Singh Sr. of Hockey are among the extra-ordinary Indian Olympic champions recognized globally. Besides them, who made a mark in their respective sports with Olympic medals for the last three decades include Lendre Peas, Karnam Malleswari, Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore, Abhinav Bindra, Vijendra Singh, Sushil Kumar, MC Mary Kom, Vijay Kumar, Saina Nehwal, Gagan Narang, Yogeshwar Dutt, Neeraj Chopra, PV Sindhu, Sakshi Malik, Mirabai Chanu, Shreejesh, Harmanpreet Singh, Ravi Kumar Dahiya, Lovlina Borgohain, Bajrang Punia, Manu Bhaker, Sarabjot Singh, Swapnil Kusale and Aman Sahrawat. India has till date in its Olympics history won 41 medals comprising 10 gold, 10 silver and 21 bronze.

The results of the recently held CWG, Asian Games and the different international sporting and athletic events in favour of India beckon Indian sports, sports men and women and the government to focus on Olympic Games and their standards. Much needs to be done in this context regardless of the previous results. The present generations need to take inspiration from our civilizational roots which had sports as an essential element of its greatness and grandeur all along. The modern sports and competitions demand great planning, high thinking, ultra-modern technical knowhow, high value infrastructural facilities & logistics, consistent practice and competitions on different geographic pitches. This has been well acknowledged by the Union Sports Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya. He has further reinforced these preparations on-ground, noting that multi-sport continental events serve as prime platforms for podium finishes rather than mere exposure tours. In this connection, Prime Minister Narendra Modi also expressed full confidence that Indian athletes will significantly surpass their previous records at the upcoming Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, emphasizing that the government will fully support the preparations on ground. Hope to see bewildering results forthcoming in order to usher joy, pride, enthusiasm and happiness all around. (The author is a senior BJP & KP leader)

Manipur SIR may leave displaced voters out of rolls, Kuki Inpi flags documentation hurdles

IMPHAL

The Kuki Inpi Manipur, the apex body of the Kuki tribes, has raised concerns that the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Manipur could exclude a significant number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) unless authorities address documentation difficulties arising from the ethnic conflict. In a memorandum submitted to the Governor of Manipur and the Chief Electoral Officer, the organisation said thousands of displaced people had lost their homes, belongings and essential identity documents during the conflict.

It said the loss of documents, coupled with the displacement of people from their original places of residence, had made voter verification particularly difficult for many IDPs.

According to the Kuki Inpi, the situation



could result in genuine and eligible voters being left out of the electoral rolls due to circumstances beyond their control. "The present circumstances risk excluding a significant number of genuine and eligible voters from the electoral roll," the organisation said, highlighting difficulties faced by displaced citizens in retaining, retrieving or replacing documents required for verification. The organisation also drew attention to the financial and administrative challenges involved in obtaining replacement documents. It said birth certificates, among the documents reportedly required for verification, could cost around Rs 300 to Rs 600 in processing fees, creating an additional burden for displaced families already facing financial hardship. The large number of people seeking replacement documents has also reportedly led to long queues and delays. Documents that were lost or destroyed

during the conflict may take considerable time to be reissued, the organisation said. The Kuki Inpi urged authorities to extend the SIR deadline by an adequate and reasonable period, citing the exceptional circumstances prevailing in Manipur. It also sought dedicated verification and facilitation mechanisms for IDP voters, including those currently living away from their original places of residence.

The organisation called for flexibility in the verification process and the use of alternative methods in cases where documents have been lost, destroyed or become inaccessible because of conflict and displacement.

It further demanded an expedited and simplified mechanism for displaced citizens to obtain replacement civil and identity documents. The apex tribal body said safeguards were necessary to ensure that no genuine voter was removed from the

electoral roll solely because circumstances beyond their control prevented them from producing the required documents.

"No citizen should lose their right to vote simply because conflict and displacement deprived them of the documents needed to prove their identity and eligibility," the Kuki Inpi said.

The organisation maintained that unless the practical and structural difficulties faced by displaced voters are addressed, the SIR exercise could disproportionately affect IDPs and undermine the objective of maintaining an inclusive electoral roll.

The Kuki Inpi has sought immediate intervention from the Governor and the Chief Electoral Officer to ensure that eligible displaced voters are not excluded from the electoral process because of documentation difficulties caused by the conflict.

Climate change, Indian Ocean Dipole may have intensified Assam floods: Pegu

GUWAHATI

Assam Education Minister Ranaj Pegu has said climate change and a weather phenomenon in the Indian Ocean, known as the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), may have contributed to the extreme rainfall and flooding witnessed in Upper Assam last month.

Speaking at the ceremonial inauguration of the 'Brikhya Bondhu' programme at Srimanta Shankardev Kalakshetra in Guwahati, Pegu said the recent floods highlighted the growing impact of climate change on Assam's weather patterns.

"Although there are different reports going around about the causes or reasons behind the recent Upper Assam deluge, scientists believe a phenomenon similar to El Niño in the Pacific Ocean is taking place in the Indian Ocean, called the Indian Ocean Dipole, and its effects have been felt here," Pegu said.

Drawing attention to extreme weather events in other parts of the world, including unprecedented heatwaves in Europe, the minister said such developments indicated that climate change was increasingly affecting weather patterns across regions.

Pegu referred to the July 19 floods in Assam and described the scale of the disaster as unprecedented.

"This time, we witnessed a situation which we had never seen in the last 100 years. Why did it happen? Today, the heat is soaring, while just a few days ago there was torrential rainfall," he said. The minister stressed the need for greater public participation in efforts to address climate change, arguing that expanding forest and tree cover remained one of the most effective measures available to communities. "The only weapon in the hands of people to fight climate change is afforestation and plantation, to increase the green cover," Pegu said.

Protests Erupt Along Assam-Arunachal Border Over Gogamukh Firing

GOHPUR

Protests were held at Rajgarh in Gohpur along the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border over an alleged firing incident at Mingmang Badati in Assam's Dhemaji district, triggering fresh concerns over security along the inter-state boundary.

The protest was jointly organised by the Tribal Migrants' Protection Committee (TMPK) and several local organisations, which condemned the alleged indiscriminate firing by people from Arunachal Pradesh and demanded stringent action against those responsible.

Protesters raised slogans and displayed placards calling for the immediate arrest of the accused and strict punishment under the law.

The incident has also prompted organisations and local residents in Dhemaji to call for a district-wide bandh in protest

against the firing.

Protesters said the recurrence of such incidents along the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border was a matter of serious concern, particularly for communities living in vulnerable frontier areas.

They urged the administration to take immediate steps to strengthen security and prevent further escalation of tensions along the inter-state boundary.

The protesters also called for better coordination between the administrations of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh to ensure the safety of residents and prevent similar incidents in the future.

The latest protest comes amid longstanding sensitivities along parts of the Assam-Arunachal border, where disputes and allegations of encroachment have periodically triggered tensions between communities and authorities on both sides.

NEW DELHI

Amid the row with China over the renaming of places in Arunachal Pradesh, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) reiterated that the northeastern state is an "inalienable and integral part of India".

"Let me reiterate this once again that Arunachal Pradesh is an inalienable and integral part of India and this is a fact that is self-evident. At the same time, let me also underline that nothing can change this indisputable reality," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated during a media briefing.

The remarks came after India formally identified 27 locations in Arunachal Pradesh by their standard names on the official Survey of India map, amid China's repeated attempts to assign Chinese names to places in the state.

The government highlighted that the step is intended to guarantee precise geographical recognition of these sites whilst



enhancing public awareness regarding their historical and spatial importance.

New Delhi has steadfastly dismissed Beijing's practice of inventing nomenclature for areas within Arunachal Pradesh,

noted sites possess immense strategic and historical resonance, including Long Ju, which witnessed an early Sino-Indian military clash in 1959, and Thag La, where initial engagements of the 1962 conflict unfolded.

The official list further incorporates Jairampur, a key logistical centre in eastern Arunachal Pradesh, alongside Jaswant Garh and the Sher-e-Thapa Memorial, both erected to honour the valorous Indian soldiers of the 1962 war. This decisive measure follows Beijing releasing multiple lists of fabricated designations for territories in Arunachal Pradesh, which it claims as "Zangnan".

China issued its inaugural list of six names in 2017, followed by 15 designations in 2021 and an additional 11 in 2023.

India has consistently repudiated these assertions as "fictitious", stressing that such unilateral attempts merely seek to manufacture "baseless narratives" without impacting ground reality.

Manipur Cabinet to Recommend September 2 Assembly Session to Governor



IMPHAL

The Manipur Cabinet has decided to recommend to the Governor that the state Legislative Assembly be summoned for its eighth session on September 2, according to an official statement. The decision was taken at a Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Tuesday. The Cabinet fixed September 2 for making the recommendation to the Governor to summon the eighth session of the 12th Manipur Legislative Assembly. The seventh session of the Assembly was adjourned sine die on March 18.

The Cabinet also approved enhanced cash incentives for Manipur sportspersons winning medals at the Commonwealth Games.

Under the revised rewards, gold medalists will receive Rs 20 lakh, while silver and bronze medalists will get Rs 15 lakh and Rs 10 lakh, respectively. Participants will receive Rs 4 lakh.

In another major decision, the Cabinet gave in-principle approval

for setting up a government medical college at Senapati with an annual intake of 100 MBBS students. The existing district hospital at Senapati will be upgraded to meet the requirements of the proposed medical college.

The Cabinet also approved the formation of a government company to mobilise and utilise corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds for promoting and developing sports in the state. The proposed entity, to be named the Manipur Sports Development Foundation, will include government officials and non-official members from the fields of sports, finance and sports science.

The foundation is expected to help mobilise CSR resources for sports development and support athletes and sporting infrastructure across the state.

In a social media post following the meeting, Singh said the Cabinet had discussed key policy and administrative matters, with the welfare and aspirations of the people at the centre of its decisions.

Pijush Hazarika attacks Congress over Jharkhand student protest, challenges Rahul Gandhi

GUWAHATI

Assam Minister Pijush Hazarika on Tuesday launched a sharp attack on the Congress party over the alleged police action against protesting students in Jharkhand and challenged Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to face a debate in Parliament instead of disrupting proceedings.

Addressing a press conference at the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Bhawan in Guwahati, Hazarika condemned what he described as "barbaric" police excesses against students protesting in Ranchi over alleged irregularities in recruitment examinations and alleged question-paper leaks.

Hazarika alleged that the students had been protesting peacefully and in a disciplined manner while demanding action over issues concerning their employment opportunities and future.

He accused the Congress-Jharkhand Mukti Morcha government of using excessive force against the protesters and alleged that tear gas, water cannons and lathi charges were used during the agitation.

The Assam minister also referred to visuals from the protest and alleged that some female protesters' clothes were torn during the police action. These allegations were part of the BJP leader's



criticism of the Jharkhand government's handling of the student agitation.

Hazarika alleged that Rahul Gandhi and other Congress leaders, who frequently speak about student issues, had remained silent over the Ranchi protests.

"Rahul Gandhi must answer," Hazarika said, questioning why the Congress leader had not travelled to Jharkhand to meet the protesting students and assess their grievances.

He alleged that the Congress was adopting "double standards" depending on whether an issue offered political advantage to the party.

Hazarika further alleged that the alleged police action against the students had taken place under directions linked to Rahul Gandhi, though he did not provide evidence for the claim.

He demanded that the Congress and JMM government immediately address the grievances of the protesting students and said the BJP stood with the youth and student community of Jharkhand. The minister also turned his criticism

towards the ongoing political confrontation in Parliament, accusing Rahul Gandhi of repeatedly changing his demands and preventing the House from functioning.

Hazarika claimed that Rahul Gandhi had initially demanded the resignation of the Education Minister and later sought a discussion on NEET. He said the government subsequently agreed to discussions and strengthened legislation relating to question-paper leaks.

The Assam minister also referred to Rahul Gandhi's demand for a statement from Union Home Minister Amit Shah over the recent protest-related issues.

Hazarika said the government had made it clear that the Home Minister was prepared to respond on the floor of Parliament if the House was allowed to function.

"Rahul Gandhi ji, the Hon'ble Home Minister is ready to answer every question you have raised. Now, do not flee the battlefield. Do not be afraid of debate,"

Hazarika said.

He also criticised Rahul Gandhi over his recent remarks regarding alleged firing during a protest at Jantar Mantar, claiming that no firing had taken place.

"When not a single shot was fired at Jantar Mantar, Rahul Gandhi has nevertheless levelled an allegation of firing. Rahul Gandhi must stop spreading falsehoods," Hazarika said.

Hazarika alleged that the Opposition did not genuinely want the Home Minister to respond in Parliament and claimed that a substantive debate would expose what he described as misinformation being spread by Rahul Gandhi.

The minister's remarks came amid an intensifying political confrontation over the Jharkhand student protests. Opposition leaders, including Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, have backed the protesting students and criticised the use of force against them.

The Jharkhand agitation has centred on demands by students and job aspirants for action over alleged irregularities in recruitment examinations. The protests intensified in Ranchi after demonstrators marched towards the state Assembly, leading to a confrontation with police.

The issue has since moved into the political arena, with the BJP attacking the Jharkhand government over the handling of the protests, while Congress leaders have demanded that the grievances of the students be addressed.

Hazarika concluded by accusing the Congress of political hypocrisy and asserted that the BJP would continue to stand with students and young people demanding action over recruitment-related issues.

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Centre ready for Parliament debate on students’ issues, says Rijiju; accuses Rahul of ‘running away’



NEW DELHI

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju on Tuesday said the central government is ready for a detailed discussion in Parliament on students’ protest while accusing Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of “running away” from a debate.

Speaking to reporters in the Parliament House complex, Rijiju said the government is willing to go beyond a statement and hold a full-fledged discussion on the issue.

“Rahul Gandhi ji has been saying from the beginning that the home minister should make a statement. We are saying, why just a statement? We will have a full discussion. A statement is only a formal written document. We are ready to go beyond a statement and have a full-fledged discussion for the entire day, or even for two days, and give answers to every single point,” he said.

Rijiju also said a detailed discussion will bring clarity on all aspects related to students’ protest.

“The protest has several aspects. If we discuss it in detail, everything will come out in the open and the truth will become clear,” he said.

The minister said that NDA MPs have also urged Rahul Gandhi not to “run away” from the debate.

“It is unfortunate that the Congress has again run away from a discussion. Today, our NDA colleagues also demanded that Rahul Gandhi should not run away. But he has run away again today,” Rijiju said. The government made the offer on Monday and it is prepared to provide detailed answers on the students’ issue, he said.

“Yesterday, we had said that the government is ready for a detailed discussion on whatever incidents that took place during the students’ protest. We kept the answers ready, and Home Minister Amit Shah ji was also ready. But they (opposition) did not allow the discussion to take place,” he said.

“Even today, we were fully prepared from the morning. All the NDA MPs were ready for the discussion to begin. The home minister was also sitting prepared to give his response. But the Congress again ran away and started raising slogans outside the House, not allowing the discussion to take place. It has become clear before the people of our country that we are ready for a discussion,” Rijiju said.

He also appealed to the Congress to agree to a detailed discussion on the students’ protest during the remaining days of the Monsoon Session, which ends Thursday.

“The Monsoon Session has now reached its final phase. In the remaining days, the Congress should not run away from a detailed discussion that the government has offered on the students’ protest,” Rijiju said. On Monday, Rahul Gandhi said the country is not interested in Amit Shah’s opinion in Parliament on “general topics” and wants to know if he ordered firing of pellet guns at protesting students, after the government said the minister was ready to reply to a debate on student protests and police action.

The principal opposition party said it has been consistent with its three demands – that Shah should come clean on whether he ordered the firing on students, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi should speak about the Ram Temple donations theft and apologise on both the issues – asserting that these were “non-negotiable”.

PM Modi shares new Instagram video; urges citizens to celebrate Independence Day with honour, pride



NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday called on citizens to mark Independence Day with honour, pride and glory and take a pledge to build a developed India. In an Instagram post, Modi also shared a video of NDA MPs and Union ministers waving the tricolour and raising slogans of “Vande Mataram” and “Bharat Mata Ki Jai” as he arrived for the ruling coalition’s weekly ‘Mangal Milan’ in Delhi.

“Let us pay tribute to our freedom fighters. Let us take a pledge for a developed India. Har Ghar Tiranga, Ghar Ghar Tiranga, Har Mann Tiranga (Tricolour in every home,

tricolour in every heart). Come, let us hoist the tricolour at every home. Bharat Mata Ki Jai, Vande Mataram, Vande Mataram, Vande Mataram,” Modi said in the Instagram video.

Earlier, as soon as the prime minister entered the venue of the NDA parliamentary party meeting, the GMC Balayogi Auditorium at the Parliament House complex, the ministers and MPs greeted him by waving the national flag and raising ‘Vande Mataram’ and ‘Bharat Mata Ki Jai’ slogans. The prime minister reciprocated the gesture by himself holding a national flag and waving towards the members present.

Those who attended the meeting

included BJP president Nitin Nabin, Union ministers Amit Shah, Nirmala Sitharaman, Nitin Gadkari, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, and S Jaishankar.

Ministers belonging to NDA constituent parties - HD Kumaraswamy (JD-S), Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu (TDP), Ramdas Bandu Athawale (RSP-A), and leaders Praful Patel (NCP), Upendra Kushwaha (RLM), and Satabdi Roy (NCPI), and others also attended it. The NDA parliamentary party meeting also saw a presentation by Union Minister of Jal Shakti C R Paatil on different aspects of the Jal Shakti ministry, which is responsible for laying down policy guidelines and programmes for

the development, conservation and management of water as a national resource.

The ministry is also responsible for an overall national perspective of water planning and coordination in relation to diverse uses of water.

The NDA parliamentary party meeting is held on every Tuesday when Parliament is in session.

The Monsoon session of Parliament, which began on July 20, is set to conclude on August 13.

Soon after the meeting, the NDA MPs staged a protest outside Parliament’s main gate, ‘Makar Dwar’, where they came face-to-face with opposition INDIA bloc MPs, who staged another protest.

The ruling alliance members protested and raised slogans over “brutal” police action on job aspirants in Jharkhand and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi allegedly “running away” from a debate on student protests in different parts of the country.

The opposition block protested over the issues surrounding the alleged embezzlement of donations at the Ayodhya Ram temple and demanded accountability from Union Home Minister Shah over alleged police excesses during the July 20 student protests over paper leaks.

The Monsoon session has seen repeated adjournments and virtually no business except the debate on two bills, including The Public Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026, which was passed by Parliament.

Four more bills were passed by the two Houses with little or no debate and three other bills were passed by the Lok Sabha, amid unrelenting protests by the opposition.

The opposition parties initially protested over the NEET paper leak and alleged embezzlement of donations at the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

They later pressed for a discussion on the police action against students protesting over the NEET paper leak and also demanded the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the home minister and their statements.

INTERNATIONAL

North Korea launches another missile toward sea ahead of US-South Korean military drills



SEOUL

North Korea on Wednesday performed its second ballistic missile test in less than a week, its neighbors said, a likely protest of the upcoming South Korea-US military drills that North Korea views as an invasion rehearsal.

South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said a ballistic missile fired from the North’s eastern coastal Wonsan area around 6 am flew more than 700 kilometers (435 miles). The Japanese Defense Ministry also detected the launch, saying the weapon landed in waters outside its exclusive economic zone, between the Korean Peninsula and Japan.

The launches, within days of each

other, were seen as part of North Korea’s extended run of weapons tests as the country has refused to return to talks with the US and South Korea for years.

Experts say North Korea often uses its rivals’ military training as a pretext to boost its own testing activities.

South Korea’s military said it remains ready to repel any provocation by Pyongyang in cooperation with the United States. South Korea’s national security council called North Korean ballistic missile launches “acts of provocation” and urged the North to halt them immediately.

Japanese Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi told reporters that Japan strongly protested the North

Korean launch through their embassies in Beijing. “It’s a serious problem that affects the safety of the Japanese people,” he said.

The latest launch came two days after South Korea and the United States announced they will kick off their annual large-scale military drills on Aug. 17 to beef up readiness against North Korean threats. North Korea has previously responded to the Ulchi Freedom Shield training and other major South Korea-U.S. military exercises with provocative weapons tests and harsh rhetoric. The US and South Korea have repeatedly said their training is defensive in nature.

After last year’s Ulchi Freedom

Shield training exercises began, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said the drills showed the U.S. and South Korea’s “will to ignite a war” and claimed they have grown more provocative than before, which has prompted North Korea to respond with “proactive and overwhelming” countermeasures.

A TV screen shows a file image of North Korea’s missile launch during a news program at Seoul Railway Station in Seoul, South Korea, Wednesday, Aug. 12, 2026.

North Korea to expand nuclear arsenal, boost military intelligence operations targeting South Korea

On Aug. 6, South Korea, the U.S. and Japan detected the launch of a short-range ballistic missile from North Korea in what was the North’s first ballistic weapons testing activity since late June. North Korea didn’t confirm the reported launch, though it usually releases details of weapons tests a day later. Multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions ban North Korea from launching ballistic missiles. But North Korea has ramped up ballistic and other weapons testing activities to expand its nuclear and missile arsenals since Kim’s high-stakes diplomacy with U.S. President Donald Trump fell apart in 2019. Experts say Kim likely hopes to use his enlarged arsenals to wrest concessions from the U.S., such as relaxing international economic sanctions on the North.

In recent years, Kim has boosted his diplomatic footprint by strengthening cooperation with Russia by supplying troops and ammunition to support its war against Ukraine. He’s also recently taken steps to bolster ties with China, the country’s traditional ally and economic pipeline. Chinese President Xi Jinping visited the North Korean capital Pyongyang in June for the first time in seven years.

Taiwan condemns China’s plan for navy drill with Indonesia off island’s east



TAIPEI

Taiwan has condemned China’s plan to hold a navy drill with Indonesia this month off the democratic island’s east coast, saying Beijing seeks to create the “false impression” that it has jurisdiction over the area.

China claims Taiwan is part of its territory and insists it has authority over the waters surrounding the island, which Taipei rejects.

The Chinese defence ministry said Tuesday one of its warships and an Indonesian frigate will conduct a “passage exercise” east of Taiwan in mid-August to “enhance the joint operational capabilities of the two navies” and “jointly safeguard regional peace and stability”.

Taiwan’s top China policy body hit back late Tuesday, saying it “strongly condemned the CCP military provocation”,

referring to the Chinese Communist Party.

“This move is, in reality... aimed at creating the false impression for the international community that the CCP has jurisdiction over waters east of Taiwan and blatantly infringing upon our national sovereignty and maritime rights and interests,” the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) said in a statement.

The Indonesian military did not immediately respond to AFP’s request for comment.

China’s announcement came as Taiwan holds its largest military drills of the year, aimed at preparing its population for a potential Chinese invasion. Beijing deploys warships, fighter jets and coast guard vessels around Taiwan on an almost daily basis to assert its claim of sovereignty.

In June, Chinese ships began to patrol an area of the Western Pacific near

Taiwan’s east coast, which Taipei branded as “provocative” and “expansionism in disguise”.

During that operation, the China Coast Guard for the first time radioed cargo ships passing Taiwan for information about their crew and destination. That was followed last week by China’s Guangdong Maritime Safety Administration announcing “traffic control measures” for the Taiwan Strait as Typhoon Dolphin swept towards the region. Ships entering the sensitive waterway from the south would be “required to strictly comply with the traffic control regulations, seek shelter in safe waters, and follow the instructions of on-site maritime authorities to ensure safety,” the August 5 announcement said.

Taiwan’s MAC described the order as a “trampling of the international order and norms” and “utterly ridiculous”.

Panu Babu of Sreemangal: The Sacrifice, Struggle and Unrecognised Legacy of Dhirendra Datta Chowdhury



SANGRAM DATTA:

The story of Bangladesh's Liberation War is filled with individuals whose contributions have never received official recognition. Some fought on the battlefield, others organised resistance, mobilised communities or devoted their lives to public service long after independence. Among them was Dhirendra Datta Chowdhury of Noagaon village in Sreemangal, widely known as "Panu Babu". Although he played an active organisational role during the 1971 Liberation War, he was never officially recognised as a freedom fighter. His life remains a story of sacrifice, political conviction, persecution, public service and historical neglect.

Dhirendra Datta Chowdhury was born during British rule in Noagaon village of Sreemangal, then part of South Sylhet Subdivision in the Sylhet district (now Moulvibazar district). He was the fourth of several siblings born to Jatindramohan Datta Chowdhury and Bindubasini Datta Chowdhury.

His family was one of the area's prominent and well-established households. His father served as a local leader of the Indian National Congress during the British colonial period and, following the introduction of Union Parishad administration in 1960, became one of the first elected members of the local council.

Dhirendra began his education at Noagaon Government Primary School before completing secondary education at Sreemangal Victoria High School. After graduation, he was offered a teaching post at his former primary school but declined the position because of the low salary. Instead, he pursued higher education at a college in Kailashahar, Tripura, India, where he completed his Intermediate (IA) studies. He was later offered a government job in India but chose to return home, driven by his attachment to his homeland.

After returning to East Pakistan, local informants allegedly revealed his whereabouts to the Pakistani military. He was arrested and taken to Comilla Cantonment, where he was subjected to severe torture, including electric shocks. The abuse caused lasting physical and psychological damage, the effects of which he carried for the rest of his life.

Following his release, he resumed political activities with the National Awami Party (NAP-Muzaffar). As the independence movement intensified in 1971, he worked alongside leaders and activists from the NAP, the Awami League and the Student Union to organise local resistance.

Throughout March and April, he helped mobilise volunteers, arrange

basic training for prospective fighters and support a range of resistance activities.

He later joined Liberation War operations moving through Moulvibazar, Sherpur and Sylhet. As Pakistani forces launched large-scale offensives, accompanied by heavy bombardment and encirclement, Liberation fighters were forced to retreat. He subsequently crossed into India.

While in India, he remained actively involved in the war effort, working in training camps to campaign for Bangladesh's independence, encourage young volunteers and help send newly recruited fighters to the front.

After Bangladesh achieved independence in December 1971, he returned to Noagaon and dedicated himself to rebuilding the war-ravaged country. Setting aside partisan politics, he became involved in a range of local development initiatives.

In Bangladesh's first Union Parishad election in 1973, he contested for the position of member under the Fish election symbol and won by a substantial margin. As an elected representative, he earned a reputation for honesty, integrity and commitment to public welfare.

The political climate changed dramatically following the events of 1975, when the National Awami Party entered a difficult period. His elder brother, Rasendra Datta Chowdhury, was arrested for political reasons. Despite mounting pressure, Dhirendra remained committed to his political ideals. He continued organisational work for the NAP and distributed the Soviet publication Udayan and the party newspaper Natun Bangla, promoting political awareness among local residents.

In 1979, during a procession organised by the eight-party alliance near Sulav Bhandar in Sreemangal's New Market, activists associated with the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) allegedly attacked the march. Dhirendra Datta Chowdhury was assaulted during the incident. Witnessing the attack from a distance, his elder brother Rasendra rushed to protect him but was also beaten. It later emerged that Rasendra had been the principal target, although both brothers became victims of political violence.

In 1983, during the military rule of President Hussain Muhammad Ershad, Rasendra Datta Chowdhury was elected Chairman of Sreemangal Union Parishad. His tenure saw the implementation of significant local development projects that remain well remembered in the area.

Dhirendra Datta Chowdhury never married. Although he came from a prosperous and respected family, he chose a modest lifestyle. Despite opportunities for secure government employment, he devoted himself to politics and public service. Honesty, courage and a deep commitment to ordinary people defined his character throughout his life.

When the government introduced an online application process for official



freedom fighter recognition in 2014, he was seriously ill and unable to apply. His family also acknowledges that, because of a lack of awareness and organisational follow-up, his name was never included on the official list of the guerrilla force jointly organised by the National Awami Party, the Communist Party and the Student Union. As a result, he was excluded from subsequent state recognition as a freedom fighter.

The family, however, continues to preserve an official testimonial issued by Professor Muzaffar Ahmed, President of the National Awami Party, certifying Dhirendra Datta Chowdhury's role in the Liberation War. They regard the document as an important historical record of his wartime contribution.

After 2004, the family says a group led by local figures identified as Joyanal and Harun, allegedly encouraged by influential interests in Noagaon, attempted to seize the property of three unmarried siblings. According to the family, they were intimidated into signing legal papers on a 13-inch stamp. The attempt was ultimately thwarted through the

intervention of former Sreemangal Municipality Mayor Md Ahad Mia and several officers of Sreemangal Police Station, leading to the arrest of those allegedly involved. The family claims that attempts to seize their property have continued.

His final years were marked by illness and financial hardship. He received only limited medical treatment before dying on 20 December 2015.

Dhirendra Datta Chowdhury's name does not appear on the state's official list of recognised freedom fighters. Yet in Noagaon and across Sreemangal, he is still remembered as Panu Babu—an honest politician, a committed organiser of the Liberation War and a man who devoted his life to public service.

His story serves as a reminder that the history of Bangladesh's Liberation War extends beyond official registers and state recognition. It also belongs to the countless men and women whose sacrifices, ideals and dedication survive through community memory, local history and the enduring respect of those who knew them.

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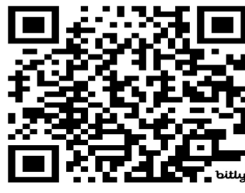
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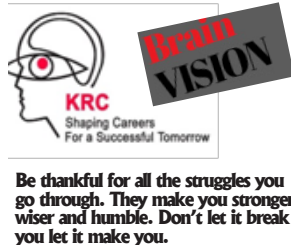
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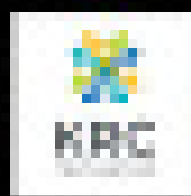


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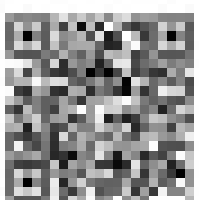


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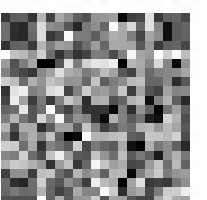


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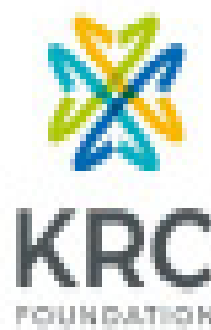
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