

Assam, Mizoram draft rules to curb illegal immigration

Soon, only District Commissioners will have the power to issue Aadhaar cards, says Assam CM; in Mizoram, plans on to confiscate identity cards of Myanmar nationals who frequently cross border

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Two northeastern States have toughened their stand on identification documents to curb unauthorised cross-border movements of Bangladesh and Myanmar nationals.

The Assam government has decided to implement a policy to issue Aadhaar cards to adult citizens only through the District Commissioners (DCs) to prevent Bangladeshi nationals from acquiring them, while the Mizoram government plans to retain the identity cards of Myanmar nationals to regulate movement across the border.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the need to toughen the rules of issuing Aadhaar cards was discussed at the State Cabinet meeting on Friday. "Usually, people who come to Assam and Bharat from Bangladesh [illegally] are adults. Since we have already achieved 100% Aadhaar coverage, we will thoroughly enquire into the applications of new adults," he told press-



High vigilance: BSF personnel patrol the India-Bangladesh border at Golakganj in Dhubri district of Assam. AFP

persons in Guwahati.

"Soon, only the DCs will have the power to issue Aadhaar cards. If such a policy is made, it will be difficult for Bangladeshi people to obtain Aadhaar. Detecting and pushing them back will be easy if they do not possess this document," he said, hours after announcing that 20 more illegal Bangladeshi immigrants were pushed back.

The Bharatiya Janata Party-led government has been working on plugging the vulnerabilities of Aadhaar since April, when, Mr. Sarma said, people who

did not apply for inclusion in the National Register of Citizens have been barred from getting the unique identification number.

In September 2024, he said that four Assam districts had more Aadhaar cardholders than their projected population. Bengali-speaking Muslims are a majority in these districts – Barpeta bordering Bangladesh, Dhubri, Morigaon, and Nagaon.

"We found that 103.74% of the population were issued Aadhaar cards in Barpeta, 103.48% in Dhubri, 101.74% in Morigaon, and 100.68% in Nagaon. Some

immigrants definitely managed to take Aadhaar," the Chief Minister had said.

In Aizawl, Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma proposed the confiscation of the identity cards of Myanmar nationals who cross over into India frequently, amid the civil war in their country. He came up with this proposal at a meeting with Surinder Bhagat, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs and Protector General of Emigrants, at the Chief Minister's Office recently.

Acknowledging the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar forcing many to take refuge in Mizoram, Mr. Lalduhoma said, "Many refugees are law-abiding, but there are some who continue to cross the border to and from Myanmar, exploiting the ongoing crisis there."

He warned of stern action against those misusing the shelter provided, including the seizure of their Myanmar-issued identity documents. He suggested that such IDs be collected from each Myanmar national for the duration of their stay in Mizoram.

Gujarat Congress Vice President, son arrested in ₹7.3 cr MGNREGA 'scam'

ADITIRAJA

VADODARA, JUNE 27

OVER A month after an FIR was filed against two Gir-Somnath based agencies for an alleged MGNREGA scam of ₹7.3 crore in Bharuch district, the district police Thursday arrested Gujarat Congress Vice President Hira Jotva and his son Digvijay Friday for allegedly siphoning off the funds from government treasury.

An outsourced technical staff, Ramesh Tailor, was also arrested for his alleged "involvement".

The arrest triggered a political slugfest with the Gujarat unit of Congress slamming the "vindictive nature of BJP" even as the latter refused to react to the Opposition's remarks.

The Bharuch district police, which had summoned Jotva and



Gujarat Congress Vice President Hira Jotva

brought him to the district late on Thursday night, said that evidence pointed at Jotva and Digvijay being partners in both firms and "having used the siphoned funds" from the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee (MGNREGA) scheme.

Bharuch district SP Mayur Chavda told *The Indian Express*, "We have evidence that Jotva and his son Digvijay were sleeping partners in both the agencies that were contracted in Bharuch and had a direct involvement in the irregularity, being investigated. We are also probing the money trail as there is direct evidence that Jotvas have used the money that was siphoned off... Hira Jotva was brought to Bharuch and arrested late on Thursday night while Digvijay was arrested on Friday."

The FIR in connection with the case was lodged by the Assistant MGNREGA account officer PU Chaudhary of the Bharuch District Rural Development Authority.

According to the FIR, the agencies — Veraval-based Jalaram Enterprises, owned by

Piyush Nukani and Murlidhar Enterprises by Jodha Sabhad — defrauded the state government of Rs 7.30 crore.

The FIR states, "The irregularity relates to MGNREGA projects in Amod, Jambusar, and Hansot talukas of the district... As per the process, e-tendering was undertaken to procure materials... As per the provisions, works above Rs 5 lakh can be sanctioned by the Executive Engineer while for under Rs 5 lakh, the Deputy Executive Engineer can sanction the same. As per the complaint received from an infrastructure company, the two agencies contracted to supply material had passed bills in violation of tender conditions..."

The arrest of Jotva, Digvijay and Tailor is the first in the case as Nukani and Sabhad are "on the run", police said.

Chavda added that the two agencies, as per the procedure under MGNREGA, had appointed an outsourced technical assistant, Ramesh Tailor, who was stationed at the office of the Taluka Development Officer (TDO) of Hansot taluka and created forged documents at Jotva's behest.

Senior BJP leaders refused to comment on the Congress' stand in the issue. Jotva, who is among the nine Vice Presidents of Gujarat Congress, had unsuccessfully contested the Lok Sabha polls in 2024 from Junagadh and also the Keshod Assembly Constituency in the Gujarat Assembly polls of 2022.

His son Digvijay was on Wednesday elected as Sarpanch of Supasi village in Junagadh, in the recently concluded panchayat elections in Gujarat.

India: IWT arbitration court illegal, decision a charade at Pak behest

Court issued 'supplemental award' concerning Kishenganga, Ratle projects

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 27

INDIA ON Friday rejected the authority of an arbitration court "illegally" formed under the Indus Waters Treaty after the body issued a "supplemental award" on its competence to hear cases on the Kishenganga and Ratle hydroelectric projects in Jammu & Kashmir.

The Indian government has consistently opposed the proceedings of The Hague-based Court of Arbitration ever since its constitution by the World Bank in October 2022.

In a statement Friday, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) termed the move as the "latest charade at Pakistan's behest" and said that this is an attempt by Islamabad to escape accountability for its role as the global epicentre of terrorism.

"India has never recognised the existence in law of this so-called Court of Arbitration, and India's position has all along been that the constitution of this so-called arbitral body is in itself

a serious breach of the Indus Waters Treaty and consequently any proceedings before this forum and any award or decision taken by it are also for that reason illegal and per se void," said an MEA statement.

The Court of Arbitration had said Thursday that India's position of holding the treaty in abeyance "does not deprive the Court of Arbitration of competence".

India is constructing the Kishenganga project on the Kishenganga river, a tributary of the Jhelum, and the Ratle project on the Chenab river.

In 2015, Pakistan objected to their design features and moved the World Bank to seek a settlement through a neutral expert. But it withdrew its request a year later and asked for adjudication through a Court of Arbitration instead.

India, for its part, sought a neutral expert to rule on the differences. On October 13, 2022, the World Bank appointed Michal Lino as the neutral expert. The same day, it also appointed a Court of Arbitration.

India has opposed the court since then, saying it could not be "compelled to recognise illegal and parallel proceedings not envisaged by the Treaty".

India has continued participating in the "Treaty-consistent Neutral Expert proceedings".

The MEA statement on Friday said: "Following the Pahalgam terrorist attack, India has in exercise of its rights as a sovereign nation under international law, placed the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance, until Pakistan credibly and irrevocably abjures its support for cross-border terrorism. Until such time that the Treaty is in abeyance, India is no longer bound to perform any of its obligations under the Treaty. No Court of Arbitration, much less this illegally constituted arbitral body which has no existence in the eye of law, has the jurisdiction to examine the legality of India's actions in exercise of its rights as a sovereign."

The Indus Waters Treaty was signed on September 19, 1960, after nine years of negotiations between India and Pakistan.

Then Indian Prime Minister Pt Jawaharlal Nehru and then Pakistani President Mohammed Ayub Khan signed the treaty in Karachi. The treaty has 12 Articles and 8 Annexures (from A to H). As per the provisions of the treaty, all the water of "Eastern Rivers"—Sutlej, Beas and Ravi—shall be available for the "unrestricted use" of India. However, Pakistan shall receive water from "Western Rivers"—Indus, Jhelum and Chenab.

In January 2023, India had issued a notice to Pakistan seeking the "modification" of the Treaty. This was the first such notice in the more than six decades of the Treaty's existence.

India upped the ante in September 2024, by issuing Islamabad another formal notice, this time seeking the "review and modification" of the IWT. The word "review", according to experts, effectively signals New Delhi's intent to revoke, and renegotiate the Treaty which will turn 65 this year. India decided to keep in abeyance the IWT on April 23 Pahalgam terror attack, in which 26 people were killed.

FINAL ROUND OF TALKS BEFORE JULY 9 TARIFFS DEADLINE

We are going to open up India: Trump on trade deal as Delhi team reaches US

Market access in agriculture, other sensitive areas remain sticking point

RAVI DUTTA MISHRA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 27

AHEAD OF the arrival of Indian trade negotiators in the US Friday for the final round of in-person talks before the end of the July 9 deadline for reciprocal tariffs, President Donald Trump said the US and India "may" sign a deal that will "open up India".

"Everybody wants to make a deal and have a part of it... We just signed with China yesterday. We are having some great deals.

We have one coming up, may be with India. A very big one, where we are going to open up India. In the China deal, we are starting to open up China," Trump said at a White House event.

"We are not going to make deals with everybody. Some, we are just going to send them a letter, say thank you very much... My people don't want to do it that way. They want to do some of it, but they want to make more deals than I would do," he said.

The final round of talks
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US President Donald Trump
at the White House. AP

India's oil imports from US surged over 270% in first four months of year

**RAVI DUTTA MISHRA
& AGGAM WALIA**
NEW DELHI, JUNE 27

INDIA'S OIL imports from the US jumped over 270 per cent year-on-year in the first four months of 2025, underscoring Delhi's strategy of enhancing American imports amid trade pact negotiations and diversifying its

sources of crude oil in a volatile geopolitical and geo-economic environment.

Negotiations between India and the US for an interim trade deal by July 9 have entered their final phase.

According to the latest available data with the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIIS),
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● India's oil imports from US surged over 270% in first four months of year

India imported 6.31 million tonnes of US crude in January-April, sharply up from 1.69 million tonnes in the year-ago period.

With this, the US accounted for 7 per cent of India's oil imports for January-April 2025, significantly higher than 2 per cent in the corresponding four months of 2024.

In value terms, India's US crude imports in the first four months of the current calendar year stood at \$3.78 billion, a big jump from around \$1 billion in the year-ago period. It is worth noting that not just volumes, but oil price fluctuations also play a crucial role in determining the value of imports.

India is stepping up imports from the US across categories to address America's key concern of a widening goods trade deficit. Under the likely trade deal, India is also expected to open up its

INDIA'S OIL IMPORTS FROM U.S.

	2024*	2025*	Change
April	9.61	35.57	270%
March	3.64	12.62	247%
Feb	2.34	6.41	174%
January	1.67	8.49	408%

*lakh tonnes; year-on-year

Source: Commerce and Industry Ministry

market to a range of American goods – from cars and defence equipment to agricultural products. Official data show that while India's overall imports in April rose by only 19 per cent, imports from the US jumped 63 per cent to \$5.24 billion, up from \$3.20 billion in April 2024. This rise in imports narrowed India's goods trade surplus with the US to \$3.1 billion, down from \$3.4 billion.

Expanding energy trade with the US would, to an extent, allay Washington's concerns about the balance of trade between the two countries. Also, from a strategic and energy security perspective, stepping up purchases of American oil helps India with some leverage with other supplying nations, whose supply volumes may be dented as a result, according to sources.

The aim there would be to nudge them to offer oil to India at even better prices in a bid to protect their market share.

Additionally, given the tensions in West Asia, sourcing oil from regions that can completely bypass the region's shipping routes is strategically important for India, which depends on imports to meet over 88 per cent of crude oil requirement. High import dependency and growing energy consumption make the country an attractive market for oil and gas exporters.

US President Donald Trump has been eyeing increasing energy exports to India. He had said earlier that India and the US have agreed to take steps towards making Washington "a leading supplier of oil and gas to India", which could help bridge trade deficit between the two.

India, China to continue dialogue to achieve progress on border issues

Saurabh Trivedi

NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh firmly conveyed India's stance on cross-border terrorism to his Chinese counterpart, Admiral Dong Jun, during a bilateral meeting held on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' meeting in Qingdao, China, on Friday.

During in-depth discussions on the need to maintain peace and tranquillity along the India-China border, the two Ministers agreed to continue consultations at various levels to achieve progress on issues related to disengagement, de-escalation, border management and eventual delimitation through existing mechanisms.

Mr. Singh acknowledged the work being undertaken by both sides to bring back normalcy to the bilateral ties. He highlighted the ne-



All for peace: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with his Chinese counterpart, Admiral Dong Jun, in Qingdao. PTI

cessity of solving complex issues through a structured road map of permanent engagement and de-escalation. He stressed border management and a permanent solution of bor-

der demarcation by rejuvenating the established mechanism on the issue.

The Ministers discussed de-escalation, disengagement, demarcation, and Special Representatives-le-

vel talks. He emphasised the need to create good neighbourly conditions to achieve the best mutual benefits and to cooperate for stability in Asia and the world. He called for bridging the trust deficit created after the 2020 border stand-off, by taking action on ground.

Key milestone

The Defence Minister highlighted the important milestone of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. He appreciated the resumption of the Kailash Manasarovar yatra after a gap of five years.

Mr. Singh briefed his counterpart on the terrorist attack in Pahalgam and India's Operation Sindoor aimed at dismantling the terrorist networks in Pakistan.

EDITORIAL

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China removes senior General, naval chief and military scientist

PRESS TRUS OF INDIA

BEIJING, JUNE 27

THE PURGE of China's powerful defence and security establishment continued as top military officials, including a senior general, chief of navy and a nuclear scientist, were expelled from the national legislature on Friday.

General Miao Hua along with Vice Admiral Li Hanjun, chief of staff of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), and Liu Shipeng, deputy chief engineer of China National Nuclear Corporation, have been removed from the National People's Congress (NPC), the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported.

Li is the latest of a string of PLA generals and a handful of defence industry executives to have been implicated in a sweeping crackdown in the military, the Post reported.

Both have been stripped of their membership of the legislature, the report said.

State-run Xinhua news agency reported that the standing committee of the NPC, which concluded its session here on Friday, also voted to remove top General Miao Hua from his position as a member of the Central Military Commission (CMC), the overall high command of the

Chinese military, headed by President Xi Jinping.

Miao, the youngest general in the Chinese military hierarchy, has been under probe for serious violations of discipline since November last year. He was dismissed from the NPC in April this year.

Miao was also director of the Political Work Department of the CMC, a role critical in managing Communist Party ideology and personnel changes within the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

His career advanced significantly after Xi assumed power, leading to roles in the Chinese Navy as a political commissar and eventually becoming the PLA's youngest admiral.

The defence ministry said Miao was being investigated for suspected serious violations of discipline, a phrase used as a euphemism for corruption.

Since he took over power towards the end of 2012, 72-year-old Xi has carried out massive purges in the country's over two-million-strong military, removing or punishing dozens of senior generals for corruption and indiscipline.

Those who were punished included two defence ministers as Xi consolidated his hold on the armed forces and the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC).

NO INTELLIGENCE INPUT SAYS IRAN MOVED URANIUM: US DEFENCE CHIEF

Talks with US 'complicated' by US strike on nuclear sites, says Iran

AGENCIES

DUBAI, JUNE 27

IRAN'S TOP diplomat said the possibility of new negotiations with the United States on his country's nuclear programme has been "complicated" by the American attack on three of the sites, which he conceded caused "serious damage".

The US was one of the parties to the 2015 nuclear deal in which Iran agreed to limits on its uranium enrichment program in exchange for sanctions relief and other benefits.

In an interview on Iranian state television broadcast late Thursday, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi left open the possibility that his country would again enter talks on its nuclear program, but suggested it would not be anytime soon.

"No agreement has been made for resuming the negotiations," he said. "No time has been set, no promise has been made, and we haven't even talked about restarting the talks." The American decision to intervene militarily "made it more complicated and more difficult" for talks on Iran's nuclear program, Araghchi said.

In Friday prayers, many imams stressed Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's message from the day before that the war had been a victory for Iran.

Cleric Hamzeh Khalili, who also is the deputy chief justice of Iran, vowed during a prayer serv-



People mourn during the funeral of Mahan Setareh, a member of the paramilitary Basij force who was killed in Israeli attacks in Tehran on Thursday. AP

ice in Tehran that the courts would prosecute people accused of spying for Israel "in a special way".

During the war with Israel, Iran hanged several people who it already had in custody on espionage charges, sparking fears from activists that it could conduct a wave of executions after the conflict ended. Authorities reportedly have detained dozens in various cities on the charge of cooperation with Israel.

Hegseth on Iran nukes

Reuters adds: US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth on Thursday said he was unaware of any intelligence suggesting Iran had moved any of its highly enriched uranium to shield it from US strikes, amid continuing questions about the state of Iran's nuclear program.

US military bombers carried out strikes against three Iranian nuclear facilities early Sunday lo-

cal time using more than a dozen 30,000-pound bunker-buster bombs. The results of the strikes are being closely watched to see how far they may have set back Iran's nuclear program, after President Donald Trump said it had been obliterated.

"I'm not aware of any intelligence that I've reviewed that says things were not where they were supposed to be, moved or otherwise," Hegseth told an of-

ten fiery news conference.

Trump, who watched Hegseth's exchange with reporters, echoed his defense secretary, saying it would have taken too long to remove anything.

"The cars and small trucks at the site were those of concrete workers trying to cover up the top of the shafts. Nothing was taken out of (the) facility," Trump wrote on his social media platform, without providing evidence.

U.S. Supreme Court curbs judges' power on citizenship

Reuters

WASHINGTON

The U.S. Supreme Court dealt a blow on Friday to the power of federal judges by restricting their ability to grant broad legal relief in cases as the justices acted in a legal fight over President Donald Trump's bid to limit birthright citizenship, ordering lower courts that blocked the policy to reconsider the scope of their orders.

However, the Court's 6-3 ruling authored by conservative Justice Amy Coney Barrett did not let Mr. Trump's policy go into effect immediately and did not address the policy's legality.

The Justices granted a request by the Mr. Trump administration to narrow the scope of three nationwide injunctions issued by

Court ruling specified that President Trump's executive order cannot take effect until 30 days after Friday's ruling

federal judges in Maryland, Massachusetts and Washington State that halted enforcement of his directive while litigation challenging the policy plays out.

With the Court's conservatives in the majority and its liberals dissenting, the ruling specified that Mr. Trump's executive order cannot take effect until 30 days after Friday's ruling.

Justice Sonia Sotomayor, in a dissent joined by the court's other two liberal members, wrote, "The majority ignores entirely whether the President's executive order is

constitutional, instead focusing only on the question whether federal courts have the equitable authority to issue universal injunctions. Yet the order's patent unlawfulness reveals the gravity of the majority's error and underscores why equity supports universal injunctions as appropriate remedies in this kind of case."

On his first day back in office, Mr. Trump signed an executive order directing federal agencies to refuse to recognise the citizenship of children born in the United States who do not have at least one parent who is an American citizen or lawful permanent resident, also called a "green card" holder.

More than 1, 50,000 newborns would be denied citizenship annually under Mr. Trump's directive.