

# Protesters demand justice for six slain Naga villagers in Manipur

**The Hindu Bureau**

GUWAHATI

Hundreds of people took to the streets in Manipur's capital, Imphal, on Saturday, demanding justice for six Naga villagers whose dismembered bodies were recovered almost a month after they were allegedly abducted in May.

The six, including a pastor, went missing from Leilon Vaiphei village in Kangpokpi district after three church leaders were ambushed and killed in another part of the district on May 13.

The All-Naga Students' Association, Manipur (ANSAM) organised the protest rally, seeking government intervention to ensure accountability in the case.

The organisation accused the armed Kuki National Front-Presidential (KNF-P) group of having carried out the execution of the six Naga villagers.

ANSAM president Anteshang Maring said the



All Naga Students' Association Manipur demonstrators march through the city to demand justice for the six Naga civilians. ANI

protest was organised to draw attention to the families and community seeking justice for the six civilians, "who were held hostage for over 20 days" before being killed.

"Unfortunately, no arrest has been made in connection with the case," he said, criticising the pace of the investigation.

The ANSAM also demanded the abrogation of the "misused" Suspension of Operations agreement

with 25 Kuki-Zomi extremist groups, and the removal of Deputy Chief Minister Nemcha Kipgen for the alleged links between her family and the KNF-P.

## Railway line to Moreh

Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Saturday said a peaceful environment was necessary to extend the railway network in the State up to Moreh, which lies on India's border with

Myanmar. Addressing a public welfare camp in Imphal West district, he said Imphal would be on the country's railway map within the next two years.

"The railway line (from Jiribam on the Assam-Manipur border) has already reached Khongsang, and is expected to reach Imphal in two years," he said. Khongsang, in Tamenglong district, is about 100 km west of Imphal.

Mr. Singh added that the rail network is planned to be extended up to Moreh, about 105 km southeast of Imphal. He indicated that Moreh could then serve as a gateway to Southeast Asia under India's Act East policy.

The Chief Minister reiterated, however, that there could be no development in Manipur without a peaceful environment.

He urged all communities in the State to keep their differences aside and pursue dialogue to ensure long-lasting peace.

# CJP presses for Education Minister Pradhan's resignation at second Jantar Mantar protest

**The Hindu Bureau**

NEW DELHI

Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) founder Abhijeet Dipke returned to the capital on Saturday after demonstrations in six cities and held a second protest at Jantar Mantar, which police moved to evacuate after the permitted 5 p.m. deadline. Mr. Dipke vowed to continue the agitation until Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigned, the key demand of the CJP, which gained over two crore social media followers in a matter of days last month.

Crowds at the venue were comparable to those at the June 6 protest, when Mr. Dipke came straight from the airport after arriving from the U.S. However, the crowds largely started dispersing after police repeatedly announced over loudspeakers that the permission for the demonstration had expired at 5 p.m. A few hundred protesters nevertheless stayed back, surrounding Mr. Dipke,



Abhijeet Dipke, founder of the Cockroach Janta Party seen during a protest against the Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan at Jantar Mantar, in New Delhi on Saturday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

amid concerns within the CJP that he could be detained.

As the 5 p.m. deadline approached, Mr. Dipke declared that the protest was not over and that it would continue until Mr. Pradhan stepped down. Mr. Dipke then shared a handwritten letter requesting permission from the police to extend the demonstration. While the police ruled out

extending the CJP's sanctioned protest time, they also reduced their presence at the site later in the evening as the crowds thinned out.

Late into the evening, Mr. Dipke remained on the stage constructed at the venue even as the police restricted access to the stretch of the Jantar Mantar road where protests are usually permitted.

Mr. Dipke said that food and water were not being allowed into the venue, calling it a "human rights violation". He said that, like Mahatma Gandhi, they too were prepared to fast.

After sunset, authorities switched off the floodlights, forcing protesters to rely on mobile phone flashlights. He urged the police to restore lighting. "If anything happens to me

in this darkness, those who switched off the lights will be responsible," he said. The police later relented, turning the floodlights back on and allowing water into the venue.

"Why is Dharmendra Pradhan still continuing as Minister?" Mr. Dipke asked amid the evacuation. "Is the law only for us? You [Delhi Police] are giving us a warning that your protest time has ended. You should also give a warning to Dharmendra Pradhan that your time in the Ministry has ended."

Mr. Dipke had asked supporters to arrive with metal utensils and bang them during the protest, echoing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call in 2020 for citizens to express gratitude for frontline workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The protest followed similar demonstrations in Pune, Lucknow, Amritsar, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Jaipur.

*(With inputs from Nikhil M. Babu)*

# NEET-UG retest to be held today amid tight security

22 lakh aspirants are likely to attend the exam after previous test was cancelled over paper leak allegations; CCTV, jammers installed at all exam centres; additional staff and invigilators deployed

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

**A**mid unprecedented security, over 22 lakh aspirants are scheduled to take the NEET (UG) 2026 re-examination on Sunday across 5,440 centres in 551 cities in India and 14 centres abroad.

The National Testing Agency (NTA) had cancelled the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (Undergraduate) held on May 3 following allegations of paper leak.

The NTA has put in place comprehensive arrangements to ensure a fair, secure and candidate-friendly examination on Sunday, it stated in an official release on Saturday.

The test will be held at more than 95,000 examination rooms, each



Security personnel at a NEET-UG examination centre during a mock drill on Saturday, ahead of the retest. ANI

equipped with CCTV. A total of 1,38,560 CCTV cameras have been installed, with feeds monitored virtually at the national, State and Ministry levels. To secure the examination against electronic malpractice, 51,311 jammers have been deployed.

A nationwide mock drill was conducted on Satur-

day to verify all systems, including jammers, CCTV, and frisking arrangements.

A large number of personnel have been mobilised for examination-day duties. Each of the more than 95,000 examination rooms will have two invigilators, and every centre will have more than 10 additional examination staff.

Candidate verification has been strengthened with the deployment of 38,795 frisking staff and 48,448 personnel for biometric verification. A centre systems officer has been deployed at each of the centres to monitor the CCTV feed and resolve any technical issue on the spot.

There has been extensive mobilisation of the State and district administrations for the re-test. Paramilitary forces and the Indian Air Force are also involved in the exercise, apart from the police and postal departments. On average, around 40 to 50 security personnel will be deployed at each examination centre.

The NTA is monitoring social media and is taking action against rumour-mongering and fraudulent "paper leak" claims.

# Israeli strikes in Lebanon kill 16 after claims of truce

Israel stays committed to truce and will continue to act against any threat to country or its forces, says a statement; Hezbollah claims that it will not permit Israeli freedom of movement in Lebanon

Reuters

ZURICH/DUBAI/WASHINGTON

Israeli strikes killed 16 people in Lebanon on Saturday, hours after a truce took effect, with Israel saying it was responding to attacks from Hezbollah and the Iran-backed group saying it would not allow Israel "freedom of movement" in Lebanon.

A halt to fighting in Lebanon is a condition for starting 60 days of U.S.-Iranian talks on Tehran's nuclear program and other issues key to forging a more durable deal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and stabilise global oil supplies. It was not clear when those talks might begin.

Lebanon's state news agency NNA said Israeli warplanes and drones struck locations across southern Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley on Saturday, both Hezbollah strongholds.

Lebanon's Civil Defence service said 16 people were killed in the raids.

An Israeli military official said Hezbollah fired



**Crushed dreams:** A child stands at the site of an Israeli strike in Qennarit, southern Lebanon on Saturday. REUTERS

more than 50 projectiles at Israeli forces in southern Lebanon overnight, and that Israel had attacked what it described as Hezbollah targets in response.

A military statement added that Israel was committed to the ceasefire and would continue to act against any threat to Israel or its forces.

A Hezbollah statement said its fighters had confronted Israeli forces trying to infiltrate the Ali al-Taher hill area in southern Lebanon overnight, and had inflicted casualties.

A senior Hezbollah official said that the group

would not allow Israeli forces freedom of movement in Lebanese territory.

**'Committed to truce'**

The Hezbollah statement said the group remained committed to the ceasefire but would respond to any attempt by Israel to seize territory or expand its occupation.

Lebanon was drawn into the regional war when Hezbollah attacked Israel after the U.S. and Israel began their war on Iran. Israel responded with an offensive against Hezbollah

that included invading south Lebanon.

One of the deadliest Israeli strikes on Saturday hit a three-storey residential building in the town of Barish in the Tyre district, killing a father, a mother and their two children, a town official said.

The Lebanese army said an Israeli strike had also killed a soldier on the Kfar-rumman-Nabatieh road.

Israel's Arabic-language military spokesperson said calm and stability could be achieved if Hezbollah ceased what she described as hostile activities and violations of agreements. She said Israel's presence in Lebanon was intended to remove threats, not to harm Lebanese civilians.

Lebanon's Health Ministry said that Israeli attacks since March 2 had reached 4,057 dead, including 135 health and emergency workers, and 12,121 people wounded.

Israel says at least 32 Israeli soldiers and four civilians have been killed in the conflict with Hezbollah.

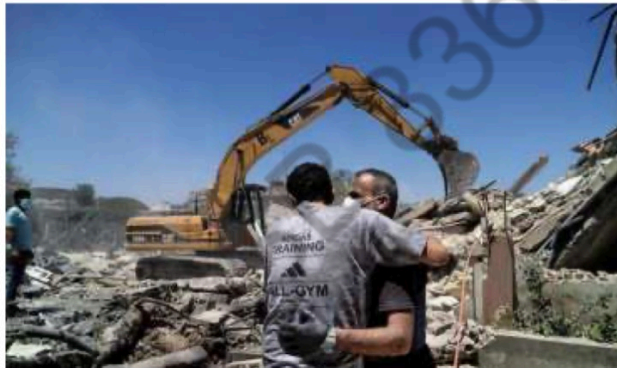
# Iran 'closes' Hormuz amid Israeli attacks on Lebanon

Will 'plan and take further measures' if Israeli attacks continue, says Iran while citing 'violations' of the ceasefire MoU; according to Pakistan's statement, 'technical talks' were set to restart today

**Stanly Johny**

Iran's military on Saturday said it had once again closed the Strait of Hormuz, citing "violations" of the first clause of a recently signed memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the U.S., as Israeli strikes on Lebanon continued.

"In light of the United States' clear breach of its commitments on ending the war, and in response to the continuous and relentless violations of the ceasefire by the Zionist regime in southern Lebanon..., as well as considering the failure of the occupying Zionist forces to withdraw from southern Lebanon, it is announced that the Strait of Hormuz will be closed to vessel traffic," Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central



**More damage:** Rescue workers react at the site of an Israeli air strike in the city of Barish in southern Lebanon on Saturday. REUTERS

Headquarters said in a statement.

The announcement came after Pakistan, which mediated the ceasefire between the U.S. and Iran, said "technical talks" between the two sides were set to restart in Geneva, Switzerland, on Sunday.

Talks were expected to resume on Friday, but Iran de-

clined, citing the Israeli bombing of Lebanon.

The MoU, reached between the U.S. and Iran on June 15, states that a ceasefire should come into force on all fronts, "including Lebanon". After the MoU was signed, Iran had eased restrictions on the strait and U.S. President Donald Trump had said the critical

waterway was fully open.

The Iranian military command on Saturday said the closure of the strait "is the first step of response to the enemy's breach of trust". If Israel continued the attacks on Lebanon, "further measures will be planned and taken," it added. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps also announced that the strait is closed and issued a warning to all ships to back away. "Do not approach the Strait of Hormuz; otherwise, your security will be jeopardised," the Guards Navy said in a statement.

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# Iran 'closes' Hormuz as Israel attacks Lebanon

U.S. Vice-President J.D. Vance, however, said there is no evidence that the strait is closed again. "We are not seeing any evidence the Iranians are still closing down the Strait of Hormuz," the U.S. Vice-President told Fox News. "We actually got 16 million barrels of oil out of the strait yesterday (Friday). So you are seeing those ships move," he said.

"The U.S. and Iran and their allies in the current war declare the immediate and permanent termination of military operations on all fronts, including in Lebanon, and undertake from now on not to initiate any war or any military operation against each other, and to refrain from the threat or use of force against each other, and ensuring the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon," reads the first clause of the Memorandum, signed by U.S. President Donald Trump and his Iranian counterpart Masoud Pezeshkian. The U.S. has also lifted its maritime blockade on Iranian ports as it promised in the MoU after its signing.

But Israel, which occupies parts of southern Lebanon, has stated that it would not withdraw forces from the territories it has seized. Over the past two days Israel has carried out multiple air strikes in Lebanon, killing dozens of people. It claims it is responding to attacks from Hezbollah, the Iran-backed Shia militia which is resisting the Israeli occupation.

# Mines, logistics, deep uncertainty threaten Middle East oil rebound

Shipowners remain wary of Hormuz journey until it is clear crew will be safe

Lisa Friedman &  
Rebecca F Elliott  
Rome, June 20

OIL IS trickling out of the Persian Gulf as stranded tankers take advantage of the fragile detente between the US and Iran to cross the Strait of Hormuz.

The preliminary deal to try to end the war promised a formal reopening of the Strait, a narrow waterway on Iran's southern coast. But the agreement has brought no great flood of oil-laden ships — at least not initially.

Shipowners are eager to get out but generally remain wary of risking a journey through the strait until it is clearer that their crews will be safe. Oil producers in the area confront a similar calculus: They are ready to ramp up production but want to see evidence that a critical mass of vessels is returning to the Persian Gulf to pick up their oil. And any escalation of the regional conflict, like the violence involving Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah militants on Friday, could



As Israel continued attacks in Lebanon, Iran closed the Strait of Hormuz again Saturday. AP

deliver a blow to efforts to kick-start the flow of energy.

Still, the companies in the region that pump and distribute oil are pressing ahead with plans to expand pipelines and fuel storage. The past 16 weeks have left them keen to become less dependent on the strait.

"We are thinking seriously of having larger storage facilities all over the world," Yasir O Al-Rumayyan, chair of Saudi Arabia's state oil giant, Saudi Aramco, said on Thursday at a conference in Rome.

This month, Sheikh Nawaf Al Sabah, CEO of state-owned oil company Kuwait Petroleum, said in Washington that the firm was in talks with Saudi Arabia and the UAE about expanding the pipeline systems in those

countries to move Kuwaiti barrels around the strait.

Kuwait has been among the hardest hit by the strait's closure because its location, sandwiched between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, leaves it no alternative route for exporting its oil.

"When you look at pipelines, they are only as safe as the export facility at the end of it," Sheikh Nawaf said, noting that during the war, Iran launched attacks on Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

The conflict caused the largest oil supply disruption in history, and analysts said the recovery would be uneven, particularly in the Middle East. The continuing reverberations will be felt globally because the strait acts as a major artery, supplying about one-fifth of

the world's oil.

Some oil has been flowing. On Thursday, 25 ships moved through the waterway, including 14 tankers, higher than the average of recent weeks, according to Kpler, a maritime data company. Some appeared to be carrying oil out of the Gulf, and one tanker was carrying liquefied natural gas. Several empty oil tankers were returning to the Gulf, presumably en route to load oil that had accumulated in storage there. Fewer ships moved through the strait on Friday amid the bursts of regional violence.

Analysts at JPMorgan Chase said in a report on June 12 that the strait was "starting to creak open," with an estimated 5.1 million barrels of oil flowing

through it a day, compared with 2.9 million barrels per day in May. That uptick lifted Persian Gulf oil exports to nearly 9 million barrels a day in June, JPMorgan Chase estimated, the highest level since the war began, with much of the oil leaving through ports that did not require transit through Strait.

In Saudi Arabia, the East-West pipeline, which connects the country's Gulf fields to export terminals on the Red Sea, was a "lifeline" for the kingdom's economy, Al-Rumayyan said.

"All the regional producers are preparing to increase oil production and get more oil out of the strait as soon as they can," said Greg Brew, a senior analyst with the Eurasia Group, a consulting firm.

Many shipowners remain cautious. Jerry Kalogiratos, a CEO of Greek oil and gas shipping firms, said he was looking not only for an end to the fighting in the Persian Gulf, but also for evidence that his vessels would be able to navigate the strait safely and secure insurance to do so.

Ensuring the waterway is safe from mines could take weeks, experts said. And shipping companies will need to secure war risk coverage from maritime insurers.

Also a hurdle: getting tankers back in through the strait to help drain regional storage facilities, which companies have filled to the brim. NYT

# Bolivia declares state of emergency; major military deployment to follow

**Reuters**

LA PAZ

Bolivia's crisis intensified on Saturday as President Rodrigo Paz declared a state of emergency, enabling wider military deployment to clear blockades and restore order after protests brought the economy to a halt over the past 50 days.

The move came in a live message to the nation just hours after Mr. Paz unveiled a deal struck on Friday with the main union, the Bolivian Workers' Confederation, (COB) that aimed to ease tension.

The conflict initially erupted after Mr. Paz abruptly cut long-standing fuel subsidies to shrink the deficit, amid a worsening dollar crunch and talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Despite later steps to stabilise fuel prices and reverse unpopular land reforms, protests intensified into broader discontent, with unions demanding wage increases, an end to fuel and dollar shortages, and Mr. Paz's resignation.

Protesting groups have cut off key roads, stranding trucks and choking supplies of food, fuel and medicines to many areas.

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# President Donald Trump unveils the new Air Force One, a converted Qatari jet

**Associated Press**

JOINT BASE ANDREWS

U.S. President Donald Trump on Friday showed off the new Air Force One, a formerly Qatari-owned jumbo jet that has been converted into the official U.S. presidential aircraft.

The new aircraft eschews the Kennedy-era robin's egg blue exterior of the old plane for a bolder look, with the underbelly of the plane painted navy blue with a red stripe above it. The plane's left side, where the President boards,

features the presidential seal, while the tail of the aircraft has a massive American flag on it.

"This plane was transformed into a flying White House at a level of luxury that nobody has ever seen before," Mr. Trump said from inside the massive Joint Base Andrews hangar, as a couple hundred assembled Air Force personnel looked on.

The gift from Qatar is serving as a "bridge" aircraft to carry the President until the new planes ordered directly from Boeing arrive. That is currently slated for 2028.

# Meloni hits back as Trump escalates G7 photo spat

**Agence France-Presse**

WASHINGTON

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni fired back at U.S. President Donald Trump on Saturday, saying his “constant, unprovoked attacks are senseless” after he escalated a diplomatic row by accusing her of repeatedly seeking a photograph with him.

The clash has opened an unusually personal rift between Mr. Trump and one of Europe’s most prominent right-wing leaders, who had sought to cast herself as a bridge between Washington and the continent during Mr. Trump’s return to power.

Mr. Trump had initially told Italian broadcaster *La7* that Ms. Meloni “begged” him for a picture at this week’s G7 summit in France, saying he agreed only because he “felt sorry for her”.

Ms. Meloni angrily denied the claim, calling it “made up,” but Mr. Trump doubled down in a post on Truth Social, saying Ms. Meloni had asked “over and over” for a photograph during the summit.

He also accused her of trying to repair relations with Washington for dom-



**Frosty handshake:** Donald Trump had initially told *La7* that Giorgia Meloni ‘begged’ him for a picture at the G7 summit. AFP

estic political reasons after Italy failed to support U.S. action against Iran.

“Now, after the United States defeated Iran militarily, she wants to be friends again in order to get her ‘numbers up.’ No thanks!!!” he wrote.

He said Ms. Meloni was doing “poorly in Italy” and suggested this was linked to her refusal to let the United States use Italian “landing strips or runways” during the conflict with Iran.

Mr. Trump also revived his long-running complaint that the United States spends heavily to protect “so-called” NATO allies, saying Washington contributes hundreds of billions of dollars to defend Italy

and others.

Ms. Meloni, in a blistering response on Instagram, accused Mr. Trump of “constant, unprovoked... senseless” attacks and said her popularity did not depend on her relationship with the U.S. President.

“Being your friend certainly has not helped it, nor does it depend on my relationship with you,” she wrote. She rejected Mr. Trump’s criticism over the use of U.S. military facilities in Italy, saying they were governed by agreements that Rome had respected.

Ms. Meloni sought to draw a line under the spat, saying Saturday’s response would be her last remarks on the subject.

## Diplomats hold talks on U.S.-Iran deal in Swiss resort

**Agence France-Presse**

GENEVA

Diplomats from several countries were meeting on Saturday at a Swiss retreat in a bid to maintain dialogue on the preliminary U.S.-Iran deal to halt the West Asia war, said Bern.

The Swiss Foreign Ministry said diplomats were in discussions at the luxury Burgenstock resort near Lucerne in central Switzerland, without giving further details. A diplomatic source said the discussions under way on Saturday were preparatory in nature.

Senior-level talks at the hotel complex were initially planned for Friday, but were called off, with the process shrouded in layers of uncertainty, as Israel carried out deadly strikes in southern Lebanon.

Swiss public broadcaster *RTS* said technical delegations from the U.S. and Iran, plus from mediators Qatar and Pakistan, were present at the discussions.

“Diplomats from various countries currently present are continuing their efforts to maintain the dialogue,” the Foreign Ministry said.