

Normal life hit in 5 Manipur districts on Day-2 of strike over NRC demand

IMPHAL, Aug 19 (PTI)

NORMAL life was affected on Wednesday with closures of markets, educational institutions and business establishments in five valley districts of Manipur on the second day of a 48-hour statewide strike called by a students' organisation demanding NRC implementation before the census. Public transport remained off the roads, but a few private vehicles were seen plying in the valley districts.

Strike enforcers in different parts of Imphal East and Imphal West districts blocked the roads with bamboo poles and stone boulders.

They staged protests and put up posters with 'No NRC No Census' written on them. Three other valley districts - Thoubal,



Demonstrators block the movement of security personnel and vehicles on the second day of a 48-hour Statewide strike at Lamlong area in Imphal East district, Manipur on Wednesday. (PTI)

Kakching and Bishnupur - saw thin attendance at government offices, while educational institutes remained closed. The Statewide strike called by the Campaign for Just and Free

Delimitation (JFD) did not have any effect on hill districts, including Churachandpur.

The self-enumeration phase of Census 2027 was scheduled to begin on August 17.

J&K an important part of India: Gor

US will reconsider travel advisories



J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah in conversation with US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor, in Srinagar on Wednesday. (X/ANI)

SRINAGAR, Aug 19 (IANS)

US Ambassador to India, Sergio Gor, who arrived in Srinagar on Wednesday on his maiden visit to Jammu and Kashmir, said that the United States will reconsider advisories on travel to the Union Territory, adding that that Jammu and Kashmir is an important part of India.

After meeting Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, the US Envoy said: "It's a pleasure to be here. US will reconsider its advisories on travel to Jammu and Kashmir. This is an important part of India."

"I am here, visiting for the first time. It is an incredibly beauti-

ful place. I am thrilled to be here, thrilled to see this place. We just had a very good meeting. We have some follow-ups, so we hope to take them back to Washington, back to Delhi." "But a very warm, a very cordial welcome, and we look forward to building this relationship forward."

Abdullah said he discussed with Gor the relations between New Delhi and Washington with a specific focus on Jammu and Kashmir. "It was a very good meeting. We had an opportunity to discuss the relations between our two countries, but with a specific focus on what the US can do with Jammu and Kashmir," the Chief Minister said.

Trump declares Hormuz as 'New US Territory'

The Hormuz Strait is open and operating. All water mines have been removed or detonated. US naval blockade of Iranian ports remains in full force and effect.

--Trump posted on Truth Social

NEW YORK, Aug 19 (IANS)

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump doubled down on his plan to take over the Strait of Hormuz, posting on Tuesday a map of the crucial artery for global energy supplies showing it as "New US Territory".

After posting the map on Truth



Social a day after the memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Iran imploded, he said: "The

Hormuz Strait is open and operating. All water mines have been removed or detonated."

Trump, who is under domestic pressure because of the price rise attributed to the Hormuz crisis, added that the US naval blockade of Iranian ports "remains in full force and effect".

However, shipping has not resumed anywhere near normal levels, according to various agencies monitoring shipping in the Strait.

Attacks on ships continued Tuesday with a British monitor of maritime incidents reporting that a "bulk carrier was struck by an unknown projectile whilst conducting a transit of the Strait of Hormuz", resulting in damage to the vessel and crew casualties.

The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations agency, which also reported a similar attack on Monday, said: "Vessels are advised to transit with caution."

We will correct delusions of this deluded man: Iran

TEHRAN, Aug 19 (ANI)

AS DONALD Trump continued his assertions over control of the Strait of Hormuz, Iran hit back at the US President, warning that his claims would be "corrected", while labelling his claims as delusions.

Sharing the image in a post on X, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi, described the US President as a "deluded man" and said that while Trump had correctly referred to the "eternal Persian Gulf", his claims over the Strait

of Hormuz would soon be corrected, either by circumstances or by Iran itself.

Iran's head of Supreme National Security Council, Mohsen Rezaei, also criticised Trump, saying there was a wide gap between Washington's claims and its ability to influence strategic waterway.

Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said Tehran would not reopen the Strait until the US fulfills commitments under the 14-point MoU, including lifting the blockade.

Govt proposes E10 fuel for coastal trade ships from '29

KOLKATA, Aug 19 (IANS)

AIMING at reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the maritime sector, the Central Government has released a draft roadmap for promoting the progressive adoption of low-carbon and renewable marine fuels in line with the National Maritime Decarbonisation Policy Framework, the National Policy on Biofuels, 2018, and India's broader maritime decarbonisation objectives.

"Biofuels, particularly suitable drop-in biofuels and their blends with conventional marine fuels, provide an immediate and practical pathway for reducing lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions associated with marine transportation without requiring substantial modifications to existing shipboard fuel systems," a document released by the DGMA says.

In order to provide a predictable transition pathway for the maritime industry, promote the availability of sustainable marine biofuels and progressively reduce the carbon intensity of vessels operating in Indian coastal waters, the DGMA has decided to introduce a phased framework for the use of biofuel blends in marine fuels, it says.

The objective is to promote the use of renewable and lower-carbon marine fuels; reduce lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions from coastal shipping; develop and strengthen domestic production, supply and bunkering infrastructure for sustainable marine biofuels; facilitate a smooth transition towards low- and zero-carbon marine fuels; and support implementation of the National Maritime Decarbonisation Policy Framework.

The order to use blended fuel shall apply to all vessels engaged in Indian Coastal Trade, irrespective of flag, which are required to obtain or operate under a licence or permission for engagement in the coastal trade of India. "The requirements of this Notice shall apply to vessels using the following conventional marine fuels: Marine Gas Oil; Very Low Sulphur Fuel Oil; and Fuel Oil, including applicable residual marine fuel grades used for propulsion or auxiliary machinery. The requirements shall apply, as applicable, to shipowners, ship managers, operators, charterers, masters, bunker suppliers, fuel producers/blenders and other stakeholders involved in the procurement, blending, supply, bunkering and use of marine fuel by vessels engaged in Coastal Trade," the document says.

Nirmala, Goyal in Singapore for talks to deepen trade, investment ties

NEW DELHI, Aug 19 (PTI)

FINANCE Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal are in Singapore for high-level talks aimed at deepening economic ties with the Southeast Asian financial hub.

While a 70-member Indian business delegation accompanying Goyal will seek new investment, trade and technology part-



FM Nirmala Sitharaman, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, and MoS Jitin Prasada engage in a discussion with Singapore's High Commissioner to India Simon Wong in the 4th ISMR. (PTI)

nerships, Sitharaman is leading a ministerial delegation that includes External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Goyal, and

Minister of State for Electronics and IT and Commerce and Industry Jitin Prasada for the fourth India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable (ISMR).

The meeting is scheduled for August 20, according to official statements. The ISMR, established in 2022, is the main high-level economic mechanism between the two countries and covers advanced manufacturing, connectivity, digitalisation etc.

79% rise in killings, enforced disappearances in Balochistan in 2025



Photos of victims of enforced disappearances seen displayed outside a military camp in Balochistan. (AP file photo)

BALUCHISTAN, Aug 19 (ANI)

BALUCHISTAN witnessed a severe deterioration in its human rights situation in 2025, with a sharp rise in enforced disappearances, killings, and suppression of peaceful dissent, according to a report by the Human Rights Council of Balochistan (HRCB).

According to the report, Pakistani forces, secret agencies, and their backed local militias were responsible for 1,482 cases of enforced disappearances in 2025, marking a 79 per cent increase compared with 2024.

The report documented 598 killings during the year, representing an approximately 25 per cent increase from the previous year. Of the total killings, 325 cases, or 54.3 per cent, were attributed to security forces and state-sponsored death squads, the report said.

Children were also among those affected by the alleged violations. According to the HRCB report, 108 minors were among the victims of enforced disappearances, while 29 minors were killed in 2025. The Frontier Corps (FC) was identified in the report as the primary perpetrator in both enforced disappearances and killings.

Baloch leader urges Trump to act over Pakistan airstrikes

WASHINGTON, Aug 19 (IANS)

THE Baloch American Congress president, Tara Chand, has written to US President Donald Trump seeking urgent intervention over recent Pakistani military airstrikes in Balochistan's Surab district that reportedly killed more than 30 civilians, including women and children.

In his letter addressed to Trump, Chand wrote, "We respectfully urge your administration to investigate these serious allegations and determine whether any US-origin aircraft, weapons, drones, technology, components, or other military equipment were used in the reported operation." On behalf of the Baloch community, he also urged the American administration to investigate the reported airstrikes and civilian casualties in Surab.

Ukrainian drones target massive logistics in Moscow

MOSCOW, Aug 19 (AP)

WAVES of Ukrainian drones targeted the massive logistics centre outside Moscow overnight. The next morning, it was still ablaze, dark smoke rising into the sky from what was one of Russia's largest retail warehouses.

Hundreds of miles away, Ukrainian drone crews had barely paused after the night's work before starting to prepare for another attack.

A small group of soldiers quickly assembled in a sunflower field in southern Ukraine, gathering around 20 small plane-like drones laden with explosives, before launching them toward Russia.

The launch by the Ukrainian 413th "Raid" Unmanned Systems Regiment on Sunday morning was observed by a team of Associated Press journalists -- a



A Ukrainian FP-1 long-range attack drone is launched on a deep-strike drone mission to hit Russian targets. (AP)

rare glimpse into a rapidly expanding part of Ukraine's war effort. It's Ukraine's latest tactic -- long-range drones designed to carry the war deep inside Russia, striking military, industrial and logistical sites far from the front line. Kyiv has stepped up its

attacks on Russia this year, with long-range missiles and swarms of drones targeting military industries and energy facilities. It has also increasingly pummeled giant Wildberries depots, burning billions of dollars' worth of merchandise belonging to the Russian online retail giant.

Those attacks have brought the war home to the Russian public, nearly 4.5 years into Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The scale of the attacks has also forced Russia's military to stretch air defences over a larger area, disrupted airports, sparked fuel shortages and undermined morale in Russia. The regiment's commander, Yevhen Karas, said his unit had also taken part hours earlier in the strike on the Wildberries warehouse during one of Ukraine's largest attacks on Russia to date.

UGC-NET June 2026 exam to be conducted again in Sept: Govt to HC

NEW DELHI, Aug 19 (PTI)

THE Centre on Wednesday informed the Delhi High Court that a retest is being conducted for three subjects, including Sociology, of the UGC-NET June 2026 examination following complaints of some errors in the questionnaires.

Taking note of the submission of Solicitor General (SG) Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, Justice Jasmeet Singh disposed of a plea filed by a candidate, who appeared for the Sociology paper

on June 30, seeking a stay on the declaration of results pending an independent probe and re-conduct of the exam following allegations of paper leak.

While the English and Commerce papers will be held on September 9, the Sociology paper will be held on September 10, the SG told the High Court.

He said nothing survived in the petition as the authorities have decided to re-conduct the test.

Justice Jasmeet Singh record-

ed the statement of the law officer and said: "In view of the statement of the Solicitor General,



the prayer in the petition does not survive and the petition is disposed of".

The National Testing Agency (NTA) conducted the UGC-NET June 2026 examination from June 22 to 30 across 87 subjects for award of Junior Research Fellowship (JRF), eligibility for assistant professor and admission to PhD programmes.

The SG made the statement at the outset of the hearing on the petition, which sought a stay of declaration of results pending an independent probe and to re-conduct the examination for the subjects if the leak is confirmed.

Petitioner Aman Singh Yadav, the candidate who appeared for the Sociology paper on June 30, sought interim protection against declaration of results pending an independent investigation into the allegations that the question paper was leaked and commercially circulated hours before the examination.

The plea said the petitioner has already given representation to the NTA regarding serious errors in the paper and also on the leak, but no response has been received yet.