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PERSPECTIVE

"We stand with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. His life and teachings have shown the path of love, tolerance, and truth. In today's world, where there is growing unrest and division, His Holiness continues to inspire millions of people with his message of non-violence and spiritual unity,"

SIKKIM BHUTIA LEPCHA APEX COMMITTEE (SIBLAC)

Manipur to Shut Relief Camps by Dec, Unveils Three-Phase Resettlement Plan for Displaced Persons

IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Secretary PK Singh announced on Friday that the state government aims to shut down all relief camps by December 2025, with a three-phase plan to resettle internally displaced persons (IDPs).

The announcement was made on the sidelines of an event in Imphal, where PK Singh detailed the government's strategy to address the ongoing displacement crisis. Speaking to the media, PK Singh revealed that the number of IDPs has decreased from 62,000 to 57,000, with some already returning to their homes. "We have devised a three-phase plan after discussions with the central government and the Ministry of Home Affairs," he said. "The first phase, targeting those who can return immediately, is underway and expected to be completed by July. The second phase will conclude by October, and the final phase by December." To support the resettlement, the government has allocated financial assistance for affected families. "For those whose houses were destroyed, we are providing Rs 1.3 lakh plus an additional Rs 1.73 lakh to rebuild," PK Singh ex-



plained. He also noted that approximately 7,000 IDPs whose homes remain intact but have deteriorated due to two years of neglect will receive monetary aid for repairs.

For those unable to return to their original homes—estimated at 8,000 to 10,000 people from areas like Moreh, Churachandpur, and Kangpokpi—the government is constructing an additional 1,000 prefabricated houses. "These will

serve as temporary accommodations for those who cannot return by December," PK Singh said, emphasizing the goal to close all relief camps by year-end. Addressing concerns about free movement within the state, PK Singh expressed optimism, stating, "Efforts are underway involving the central and state governments, civil society organizations, and community leaders. Free movement is likely to be restored very soon." He highlighted positive developments, noting that farming activities have resumed with communities working side by side, sharing resources like water. "This is a very good sign," he added, while urging civil society organizations to maintain peace despite occasional incidents caused by "mischievous elements."

On rumors of a potential visit by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he clarified, "We are not aware of any such plans as of now, though expectations remain."

Chief Secretary also shared that several infrastructure projects, including the Civil Secretariat and Manipur Bhavan in Delhi and Kolkata, are ready for inauguration. "These can be inaugurated together," he noted, signaling progress in the state's development efforts.

Protests and welcomes marks Gaurav Gogoi's Karbi Anglong visit

SUSHANTA ROY

DIPHU :Gaurav Gogoi, Member of Parliament (MP), Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) President, and Deputy Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, faced a mixed reception during his two-day visit to Karbi Anglong district.

While party workers extended a warm welcome at the Deithor Mandal Congress Committee and Bokajan Block Congress Committee, locals in Santipur under Borpathar Police Station staged protests against him.

The protests in Santipur saw locals holding placards with slogans such as "Gaurav Gogoi Go Back", "Pakistani Agent Gaurav Gogoi Go Back," and "Congress Party Muraabad" reflecting discontent among some community members.

The demonstrations echo recent controversies surrounding Gogoi, including allegations raised by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma about his alleged links with

Pakistan, which have stirred political tensions in the state.

Despite the protests, Gogoi was warmly received by Congress party workers at the Deithor Mandal and Bokajan Block Congress Committee offices.

Several party members gathered to show their support, emphasizing the party's commitment to addressing local issues and strengthening its organizational base in the region.

Gogoi's visit comes at a time when the Congress party is grappling with challenges in Assam, including a recent electoral setback in the panchayat polls, particularly in Jorhat, his home constituency.

The protests in Santipur highlight the polarized political climate in the state as the 2026 assembly elections approach.

His visit aimed to engage with local party units and address grassroots concerns, but the protests underscore the challenges he faces in maintaining public support amidst ongoing controversies.

Tipra Motha leader begins 2,500-km march to Delhi seeking action on infiltration

AGARTALA

In an effort to draw national attention to the long-standing issue of infiltration in Tripura, Tipra Motha Party (TMP) leader David Murasing has embarked on a 2,500-km march from Agartala to New Delhi. Murasing, who is also the zonal chairman of the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) at Birchandraman in South Tripura district, said his march is aimed at urging the Centre to take tougher measures to curb infiltration, which he believes poses a threat not just to Tripura but to the country as a whole. "Infiltration has been a serious issue in Tripura for 75 years. This is not only Tripura's problem but a national issue. If the demography of the northeastern state changes further due to infiltration, the country will face serious challenges," Murasing told reporters before setting off on foot.

He said his mission is to reach New Delhi's Jan Tar Mantar, where he plans to submit a memorandum demanding stringent action from the central government to stop illegal immigration.

Murasing also reminded the Centre of its promise to fulfil the Tiprasa Accord, signed in March 2024 between the Centre and the state government, which he says has seen no concrete outcome even after a year.

No official word yet on PM Modi's visit to Manipur: Chief Secretary



IMPHAL

Amid growing speculation over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's possible visit to Manipur later this month, Chief Secretary PK Singh on Friday clarified that the state government has not received any official communication regarding such a plan.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a programme in Imphal, Singh responded to media queries, saying, "We are not aware of any such plans. Expectation is there, but nothing has come as of now."

This statement comes even as some media outlets reported that two high-level meetings were recently held — one chaired by Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan and another by Governor Ajay Bhalla — where discussions allegedly included preparations for a potential visit by the Prime Minister. Reports also suggested that security forces have been alerted about the possibility.

PM Modi is currently on a five-nation tour from July 2 to July 9, and the Monsoon Session of Parliament is scheduled to begin on July 21 and continue until August 12.

The Prime Minister has not visited Manipur since ethnic unrest erupted in the state in May 2023, making any prospective visit politically significant. However, as of now, no official confirmation has been received by the state administration.

Assam bank employees mobilise in Guwahati for July 9 nationwide strike

GUWAHATI

The Assam Provincial Bank Employees' Association (APBEA) held a General Mass Meeting in Guwahati on July 1 to mobilise support for the All India General Strike scheduled for July 9, 2025.

The meeting was addressed by Ramen Das, General Secretary of the Assam unit of the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC).

The upcoming strike, backed by 10 Central Trade Unions—INTUC, AITUC, HMS, CITU, AIUTUC, TUCC, SEWA, AICCTU, LFP, and UTUC—is part of a nationwide protest opposing the Central government's new labour law reforms and the increasing trend toward privatisation of public sector enterprises.

Speaking to media, APBEA General Secretary Gaurav Sharma expressed strong concerns over the four new labour codes being implemented by the government. "These codes are anti-worker and will result in higher unemployment, removal of job security through hire-and-fire policies, and restrictions on employees' ability to negotiate fair working conditions," Sharma said.

He further warned that the government's move to privatise or lease long-standing public sector undertakings could undermine institutions that have served the country for decades.

The July 9 strike is expected to see widespread participation beyond the banking sector, with workers from the Railways, LIC, GIC, and various other public sector services joining in. Central Trade Unions and sector-specific federations are coordinating efforts to stage joint protests across the country.

Assam among top performers in NATGRID usage for intelligence operations



GUWAHATI

In a significant boost to its internal security and surveillance capabilities, Assam has emerged as one of the top-performing states in the use of the NATGRID (National Intelligence Grid) solution during the first half of 2025. This recognition was highlighted in an official communication from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. In a letter dated July 3, 2025, addressed to all DGPs and Heads of Police across states and UTs, NATGRID Chief Executive Officer Piyush Goyal, IAS, lauded Assam, along with Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra, for their consistent and effective usage of the intelligence platform between January and June this year.

The NATGRID platform, designed to strengthen India's coun-

terterrorism and intelligence-gathering mechanisms, allows law enforcement agencies to access and analyze data seamlessly. Assam Police's proactive adoption of this tool has been instrumental in improving intelligence operations and ensuring peace and security across the state.

"I would like to highlight and commend the consistent usage of NATGRID solution by... Assam, which are the top performers for the period Jan-June 2025," the letter noted, underlining the state's significant role in operationalizing data-driven policing tools.

The letter also mentioned that Tamil Nadu had shown substantial improvement in increasing the number of active users on the platform during the same period.

The Ministry has urged other states to ramp up their usage of NATGRID by organizing more training and feedback sessions, as well as appointing nodal officers to oversee implementation. It further offered dedicated training support upon request.

With this achievement, Assam continues to stand at the forefront of adopting advanced technological solutions to maintain law and order, reaffirming its commitment to national security goals.

Meghalaya pressure group demands Amit Shah for ILP extension to state amid security concerns

SHILLONG

HITO appeals for urgent ILP extension to secure Meghalaya's borders. Concerns raised over infiltration supported by foreign intelligence agencies. Thousands of fake IDs reportedly used to access welfare schemes.

Meghalaya pressure group Hyniewtrep Integrated Territorial Organization (HITO), has written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, seeking the urgent extension of the Inner Line Permit (ILP) regime to the entire state.

The letter raises serious concerns over growing internal security threats, demographic shifts, and alleged infiltration along the India-Bangladesh border.

In a detailed memorandum submitted to the Home Minister, HITO highlighted what it termed as "alarming geopolitical developments" that have implications for Meghalaya's internal security. The group cited recent ceasefire developments along the India-Pakistan western front and the "credible intelligence" on increased infiltration from Bangladesh, allegedly supported by Pakistan's ISI, as pressing reasons to tighten border regulations in the Northeast.

"The growing number of illegal infil-



trations into Meghalaya—allegedly facilitated through monetary inducements—raises pressing concerns," the letter stated. HITO warned that such activity not only undermines India's sovereignty but could serve as a conduit for sleeper cells and terror networks. Raising further alarm, HITO claimed that thousands

of fake Aadhaar and EPIC cards have reportedly been used by infiltrators to illegally access welfare schemes and blend into local populations. The organization also cited the recent murder in Sohra, reportedly involving non-locals from Madhya Pradesh, as an example of why better regulatory mechanisms are urgently re-

quired. Calling the incident "avoidable," HITO reiterated its long-standing demand for the implementation of the Inner Line Permit system, which is already operational in several other northeastern states including Mizoram, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh.

"The need for implementing ILP in Meghalaya is no longer a matter of cultural protection alone but is now a strategic necessity in the interest of national security," the letter emphasized.

The group argued that the ILP system, under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act of 1873, would help in:

1. Enhance border security by regulating unchecked entry.
2. Safeguard indigenous communities and maintain demographic stability.
3. Help detect and deter the entry of anti-national elements and sleeper cells.
4. Reinforce national efforts against cross-border terrorism and infiltration.

HITO has appealed to the Home Minister to act swiftly in consultation with the state government and local institutions to protect Meghalaya's demographic and cultural fabric. "We place our trust in your leadership and commitment to the unity and integrity of India," the letter concluded.

Manipuri film 'Kainkhol' wins best social message award at ISSFA 2025



IMPHAL

"Kainkhol" (translated as My Family), a feature film portraying the life and struggles of the Anal Naga community from Manipur, has won the Best Feature Film on Social Message at the International Silver Screen Film Award 2025, held in New Delhi on June 28, 2025.

Directed by Sng Pearson Anal and produced by Kankhu Film & Entertainment Society, Chandel, the film captivated audiences and critics alike with its emotionally charged narrative.

Kainkhol follows the story of a man whose gambling addiction shatters his family, offering a compelling social message about the consequences of addiction and the strength of familial bonds. The film,

which had its premiere in December 2024 at Chamdel Town Hall, Panchai in Chandel district, features powerful performances by HB Ruwngthung, Sr Hringniyam, and Wng Mowarhman in the lead roles. Director Sng Pearson Anal is no stranger to accolades. His debut film Perol Thingbol received widespread acclaim at the 1st Tribal Film Festival in Tamenglong (2023), winning Best Feature Film, Best Director, Best Screenplay, and Best Supporting Role.

His second feature, Dangteri, was named 3rd Best Feature Film at the North East International Film Festival. Speaking after the recent recognition, Pearson said Kainkhol's blend of emotional intensity and a socially relevant message has resonated deeply with audiences, adding that it represents a meaningful step forward for contemporary Manipuri cinema. The film also highlights the cultural richness of the Anal tribe, a Scheduled Naga Tribe primarily residing in Chandel district, with populations extending into parts of Myanmar (Burma).



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WORLD PEACE, AN URGENT NECESSITY

Throughout human history, wars and conflicts have emerged time and again resulting in trails of destruction, trauma, and long-lasting instability. The causes are complex, competition for resources, political power struggles, territorial disputes, ideological clashes, and nationalist ambitions. Also, religious divisions, terrorism, ethnic tensions, colonial ambitions, revenge, self-defense, and, often, failures in negotiation and diplomacy et al. Yet despite recurring wars and conflicts, the consequences of war have been almost universally devastating.

In every era, war has inflicted untold human suffering: death, destruction, the collapse of institutions, mass displacements, psychological trauma, and economic hardships. Generations are scarred by violence, and communities often never fully recover from the damage inflicted by prolonged conflicts. These impacts stretch far beyond the battlefield, affecting the mental health, livelihoods, and future prospects of civilians.

During the recent India-Pakistan standoff, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi firmly stated, "This is not an era of war." Emphasizing the importance of diplomacy over conflict, he conveyed a similar message to Russian President Vladimir Putin, stressing that war is not the answer and that meaningful dialogue is the only path to lasting peace. "I know that war cannot solve problems. Peace cannot prevail amidst bombs, guns, and bullets. We must find a way forward through dialogue," he asserted. In his conversation with the Iranian President as well, PM Modi expressed deep concern over escalating tensions and urged for immediate de-escalation through diplomatic engagement and constructive dialogue.

Philosophers throughout the centuries have debated the morality and inevitability of war. Thomas Hobbes viewed conflict as an intrinsic part of human nature, believing that without strong authority, chaos and violence would prevail. In contrast, thinkers like Immanuel Kant believed that although war may seem unavoidable, it could ultimately push humanity towards a more rational, cooperative, and peaceful world order. Kant's vision in perpetual peace promoted the idea of federations and treaties as means to end the cycle of war. The "Just War Theory," a longstanding philosophical tradition, has also sought to establish conditions under which war might be morally justified, requiring just cause, proportionality, and intention. Yet even this theory acknowledges the moral weight and danger that war inherently carries.

Despite such philosophical reflections, the reality on the ground remains dire. According to the Global Peace Index (GPI), the world is currently experiencing the highest number of active conflicts since World War II, with 56 conflicts ongoing. As of the latest data, 92 countries are involved in conflicts beyond their borders. In 2023 alone, conflict-related deaths reached 1,62,000, the second-highest death toll in 30 years. The wars in Ukraine and Gaza were responsible for nearly three-quarters of these deaths. Ukraine recorded over 83,000 deaths, while Palestine saw approximately over 57,800 fatalities. If this rate continues, 2025 will mark the deadliest year since the Rwandan genocide of 1994.

Beyond the human toll, the economic cost of violence is staggering. In 2023, the global economic impact of violence was estimated at \$19.1 trillion, equivalent to \$ 2,380 per person. This represents a \$ 158 billion increase from the previous year, largely due to a 20% surge in GDP losses from ongoing conflicts. In 2024, this figure rose further to approximately \$19.5 trillion, driven by escalating conflict zones and rising defense budgets. By 2025, the cost is projected to reach \$20.1 trillion, or over \$2,470 per person, reflecting not only ongoing wars but also the long-term impact of internal violence and crime. By contrast, global expenditure on peacekeeping and peace building stood at only \$49.6 billion in 2023, increased marginally to \$ 51.2 billion in 2024, and is expected to reach \$ 53 billion in 2025, still less than 0.6% of total military spending. These numbers highlight a global imbalance: while massive funds are poured into weapons and warfare, only a fraction is invested in securing peace.

The increase in regional conflicts, such as those in Ethiopia, Gaza, and Ukraine, is particularly concerning. These conflicts not only result in immediate destruction but also increase the risk of larger, more widespread wars in the future. The steep fall in global peacefulness in recent years, driven largely by these regional wars and is a grim reminder of how quickly violence spreads and destabilizes entire regions.

War between nations inevitably brings widespread death, displacement, material destruction and long-term physical and psychological trauma. It disrupts education, healthcare, economies, and food systems. The environmental damages are: deforestation, water pollution, destruction of agriculture, and climate degradation that further harms communities and future generations.

So, the big question remains, "Do wars solve anything?"

If the goal is justice, progress, peace, or development, then history clearly shows that war is not the solution. Military victories may bring short-term strategic gains, but they rarely address the root causes of conflict. Instead, wars often breed future resentment, cycles of revenge, and the hardening of divisions. True resolution can only come from addressing the grievances through open dialogue, mutual respect, cooperation, and diplomacy. Today, the world peace is not a utopian dream, it is an urgent necessity.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"As you start to walk on the way, the way appears."

-Rumi

INDIA'S COMPASS IN A SHIFTING WORLD



MAJ GEN SANJEEV DOGRA (RETD)

Just weeks ago, General Asim Munir—mastermind of the Pahalgam attack—was a pariah in global diplomacy. Today, he shares a luncheon table with Donald Trump. Pakistan, long backed by China, is now gravitating towards the U.S. Iran, once a vocal supporter of Pakistan during Operation Sindoor, finds itself cold-shouldered as Islamabad denies any nuclear commitment. Meanwhile, the Israel-Iran conflict has erupted into a dramatic military escalation. Over 125 U.S. aircraft joined Israel in a joint bombing operation—"Midnight Hammer"—on Iran's nuclear sites, triggering missile retaliation, symbolic strikes on U.S. bases, and widespread regional anxiety. And yet, in the middle of this chaos, most Islamic nations have chosen silence. The diplomatic world is shifting, not in decades—but in days.

What we are witnessing is a surge in the standard deviation of diplomacy. The volatility and volume of influencing variables—public sentiment, technological triggers, leadership pivots, regional realignments—have expanded dramatically. Traditional doctrines of alignment are being replaced by reactive, transient arrangements. Yesterday's adversary is today's partner; today's partnership might not survive tomorrow's headline. This accelerating realignment of national interests is driven by three forces: the compression of time in decision-making due to digital media, the multiplying influence of real-time public perception, and the growing interdependence of security, economy, and technology. What was once a decade-long posture can now shift in a matter of months.

To steer through today's geopolitical turbulence, India must fuse two decisive strategic lenses—Fluidity Theory and the OODA loop. Fluidity Theory posits that modern

states behave based on evolving incentives rather than fixed doctrines or ideological anchors. Simultaneously, the OODA loop—Observe, Orient, Decide, Act—emphasizes compressed decision cycles to outpace adversaries. When combined, these models urge India to watch the horizon sharply, make sense of fast-changing patterns, choose timely actions, and act before competitors can react. In a fluid world, shortening the diplomatic OODA loop becomes vital. Lag is liability.

This environment also demands that India adopt a Bayesian mindset, where policies are continuously revised based on new evidence. Instead of clinging to fixed assumptions or historical postures, we must be open to change—probabilistically forecasting outcomes, regularly updating our strategic priors, and being comfortable with ambiguity. Working with Iran on logistics while engaging the U.S. on maritime security is not a contradiction—it's calibrated realism. Sitting with China in BRICS while countering its assertiveness through QUAD is not confusion—it is strategic duality. India must become adept at managing overlapping interests across domains without being boxed into ideological labels.

To convert this complexity into advantage, India must now execute a structured yet flexible foreign policy reset, anchored in five key principles.

First is Anticipatory Diplomacy. India needs a dedicated Strategic Foresight Cell within the Ministry of External Affairs that integrates AI-powered analytics, behavioral modelling, and scenario mapping. This unit should anticipate not just military risks but emerging tech disruptions, regime changes, supply chain vulnerabilities, and shifts in global public opinion. In a world where alliances can be disrupted by a drone strike or a presidential tweet, foresight is national

security.

Second is building Modular, Domain-Specific Partnerships. India must move beyond bloc-centric diplomacy and form flexible, issue-based coalitions. Defence ties with France, the U.S., Russia, and Israel; energy partnerships with Russia and the Gulf; technology collaboration with Israel and Japan; and trade connectivity with Iran and Southeast Asia must be pursued. These engagements should remain modular-reversible, interest-driven, and free from ideological rigidity—enabling India to pivot swiftly in a dynamic global environment.

Third is Decentralized Diplomatic Execution. Our embassies, regional envoys, and domain experts must be empowered with decision-making autonomy. Bureaucratic lags and hierarchical bottlenecks must give way to field-level responsiveness. Just as the military deploys Quick Reaction Teams in volatile zones, the foreign policy apparatus must operate with similar agility—especially during crises or strategic opportunities.

Fourth, India must elevate Public Diplomacy as Grand Strategy. In an era where perceptions shape policy, narrative becomes a weapon. Diplomats must now be communicators, story-crafters, and reputation managers. India must proactively shape global opinion—counter disinformation, present its moral clarity, and lead conversations through thought leadership. Soft power is no longer supplementary; it is strategic capital.

Fifth, India must evolve into a Global Norm-Setter. Instead of reacting to frameworks set by others, we must shape emerging global norms on AI ethics, digital governance, multilateral institutional reform, data sovereignty, and climate justice. We have the civilizational depth and democratic legitimacy to frame these con-

versations—and the strategic need to ensure they don't evolve without our voice. In conclusion, the world is no longer guided by predictable patterns—it spins on fast-changing screenshots. The Trump-Munir meeting, U.S.-Iran escalations, and silence from the Islamic world are not permanent shifts—they are transient configurations. The real lesson for India is not to react to every headline, but to anticipate the arc behind it. We must become the axis around which change stabilizes—not by resisting the flux, but by mastering it. In this age of volatility, the winners will not be those who shout the loudest or hold the oldest doctrines—but those who adapt the fastest, think the clearest, and act with both agility and resolve.

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

Advocate Ashwini Upadhyay addresses the causes of the violence in Manipur and raises various issues such as poppy plantation, illegal immigration and foreign fundings which have inflicted the state. The drugs business being run by Kuki militants has severely impacted the youths across the nation, and it was Shri N Biren Singh's Government which took up strong efforts to tackle the menace. Ashwini Upadhyay points out that the irrational reaction against the High Court order on ST demand was an excuse to burn the state. He further highlights the fact that various academics & journalists have been brought by drugs money and they have teamed up to vilify the Meitei community.

- Sanajaoba, Research Scholar, Department for South-East Asian Studies, Manipur University



BY THE NUMBERS: DECONSTRUCTING INDIA'S UNPRECEDENTED POVERTY DECLINE

SANTOSH CHAUBEY

The global narrative of poverty reduction has an Indian imprint in the latest data releases. The decline in poverty, confirmed by a confluence of national and international assessments, is a significant landmark on India's developmental journey. Reduced poverty means more empowered citizens, a factor that reflects the dynamic interplay of sustained economic growth, year after year, focusing on meticulously targeted welfare architecture.

Even as global goals on poverty estimation shift—evidenced by the World Bank's recent adoption of a stricter poverty threshold—India's performance remains a hope—a journey of encouragement—on its path to become a developed country by 2047.

Data tells its story. According to a discussion paper from NITI Aayog, a staggering 24.82 crore people, a quarter of a billion souls, escaped the clutches of multidimensional poverty in the nine years between 2013-14 and 2022-23 alone. 29.17% of India was multidimensionally poor in 2013-14, which was reduced to 11.28% in 2022-23.

Measurement of multidimensional poverty based on the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) is a more holistic metric developed by the UNDP and the University of Oxford in 2010. This index, as its name suggests, measures poverty across multiple,

overlapping dimensions—health, education, and living standards—offering a granular, non-monetary picture of deprivation at the household level. The largest declines in multidimensional poverty were registered in some of the nation's most populous states, with Uttar Pradesh leading the charge by liberating 5.94 crore people, followed by Bihar (3.77 crore), Madhya Pradesh (2.30 crore), and Rajasthan (1.87 crore). This exodus, on the path of empowerment, is corroborated by the World Bank's "Spring 2025 Poverty and Equity Brief," which notes the lifting of 17.1 crore people from extreme poverty in the country. Going by the old poverty rate of USD 2.15 per person per day, India's population had 16.2% extremely poor people, living on less than USD 2.15 a day in 2011-12. It fell significantly to 2.3% in 2022-23. The World Bank assessment notes that these populous states, which accounted for 65% of India's extreme poor in 2011-12, were responsible for an astonishing two-thirds of the overall national poverty decline by 2022-23. The progress has permeated both rural and urban landscapes with equal force. Rural poverty saw a dramatic fall from 18.4% to just 2.8% between 2011-12 and 2022-23, while urban poverty in the same period dwindled from 10.7% to a mere 1.1%.

Consider the impact of the World Bank's recalibrated international poverty line to USD 3 per

person per day (in 2021 Purchasing Power Parity, released in May 2024) from USD 2.15. While this statistical adjustment instantly swelled the ranks of the world's extreme poor, fresh household-consumption data from India reveals a story of remarkable resilience of the country. The recalibration should have added 22.6 crore people worldwide to its extreme-poverty count, but the real addition was just 12.5 crore, thanks to India's positive indicators and reduced numbers.

Updated consumption data and changed survey methods to its poverty indicators and headcount ratio reflect that India is doing extremely well on meeting positive indicators to reduce poverty. According to the new international poverty line, the percentage of extremely poor people in India rose from 16.2% (or 20.59 crore people) in 2011-12 to 27.12% (or 34.47 crore people).

The latest data shows a significant decline in these numbers, corroborating India's growth story. Under the new line—poverty fell drastically, from 27.12% in 2011-12 to 5.25% in 2022-23. In absolute terms, the headcount dropped from 34.45 crore to 7.52 crore over the same period—a striking decline that underscores India's continuing progress—of addressing needs of the most vulnerable strata of the society.

Also, according to the NITI Aayog's discussion

paper, between 2005-06 and 2015-16, the annual rate of decline was 7.69%. However, in the subsequent period from 2015-16 to 2019-21, this rate surged to an impressive 10.66% annually. This acceleration puts India firmly on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal of halving multidimensional poverty well before the 2030 deadline.

Furthermore, as India navigates evolving global benchmarks, its progress holds firm. If we go by the previous poverty rates, at the lower-middle-income poverty line of USD 3.65 per day, the poverty rate was more than halved in the country, dropping from 61.8% to 28.1% over the decade from 2011-12 to 2022-23. This suggests that millions (37.8 crore people in absolute numbers) are not just crossing the threshold of extreme poverty but are continuing on an upward trajectory.

Perhaps most tellingly, this growth has not come at the expense of equality. The Gini Index, a standard measure of income and consumption-based inequality, actually declined from 28.8% in 2011-12 to 25.5% in 2022-23, indicating that the fruits of economic expansion are being distributed more broadly than before. India's journey is a powerful demonstration that rapid, large-scale poverty reduction is an achievable reality, providing a solid foundation upon which the aspirations of a developed nation can be confidently built.

Manipur state commission for ST marks 2nd foundation day; CS proposes celebration in hill districts next year

IMPHAL

The Manipur State Commission for the Scheduled Tribes (MSCST) observed its 2nd Foundation Day today at Sangai Hall, Hotel Imphal, under the theme "Promoting Unity in Diversity."

The Chief Guest of the event, Chief Secretary of Manipur Prashant Kumar Singh, proposed that next year's Foundation Day celebration be held in one of the hill districts to ensure broader participation from tribal communities. He expressed hope that with the improving situation in the state, the next celebration would witness participation from every tribal community across Manipur.

Reflecting on the theme "Promoting Unity in Diversity," Singh remarked that India's diversity is one of its greatest strengths, and Manipur exemplifies this



even more vividly. He noted that each district in the state has its own unique language, culture, dance forms, dialects, and traditions.

Additional Chief Secretary, Tribal Affairs and Hills, Anurag Bajpai, stated that the Foundation Day reaffirms the state's commitment to the welfare and development of Scheduled Tribes. He described the estab-

lishment of the Commission in 2014 as a key milestone in empowering tribal communities.

Highlighting Manipur's rich tribal diversity, Bajpai emphasised the need for inclusive and equitable development. He urged continued collaboration between the Commission, government, and civil society organisations to address key issues such as education, livelihood, and cultural preservation.

Delivering the keynote address, MSCST Chairperson T. Mathieu Rongmei highlighted the persistent challenges faced by the Commission, particularly the limited financial resources provided through grant-in-aid from the state government. Despite this constraint, he noted that the Commission has actively carried out its responsibilities, including administrative duties, district tours, legal awareness

programmes, and health and skill training initiatives across the state.

The Annual Report of MSCST was formally released by the Chief Guest, offering insights into the Commission's achievements and ongoing initiatives over the past year. An accompanying art exhibition showcasing creative works that reflect the cultural richness of Manipur's tribal communities was also inspected by the Chief Guest.

The event featured an opening song by Silentliu Kamei, a special performance by Jeena Pamei, and a vibrant Traditional Tribal Attire Show.

Distinguished dignitaries, including Additional Chief Secretary (Finance) Vivek Dewangan and Chairperson of the Manipur State Commission for Women, Thumlip Tiningpham Monsang, also attended the programme.

Imphal West DC orders removal of unauthorized structures and debris by July 11



IMPHAL

The Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Imphal West, has issued a strict directive for the removal of all unauthorized structures, debris, and construction materials obstructing roads and footpaths across the district. The deadline for compliance is 3:00 PM on July 11, 2025.

As per Order No. DC(IW)/8/6/Eviction/2025, the district administration has sought the immediate attention and cooperation of the public to ensure smooth traffic flow and public safety in Imphal West.

in the form of house extensions, shops, sheds, and other structures—both permanent and temporary.

Additionally, large quantities of sand, stones, construction materials, waste, and debris have been found accumulated along National Highways, State Highways, Inter-District Roads, Inter-Village Roads, and footpaths, causing inconvenience to the public and posing safety risks for commuters.

Citing powers under Section 3 of the Manipur Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act, 1978, the Deputy Commissioner has directed all unauthorised encroachers and individuals responsible for such obstructions to remove them voluntarily within the specified time.

The order clearly states that failure to comply will result in strict penal action, including eviction, demolition, and removal of the structures and debris by the district administration, police, and relevant line departments. The cost of removal will be borne by the encroachers or applicable individuals.

The district administration has sought the immediate attention and cooperation of the public to ensure smooth traffic flow and public safety in Imphal West.

Preparatory meeting on mining activities



SUSHANTA ROY

DIPHU : The Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council led by Chief Executive Member Tuliram Ronghang, convened a preparatory meeting yesterday evening at the KAAC Secretariat, CEM Block, ahead of the comprehensive review on the status of mining activities in Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong districts. The meeting was attended by Executive Member Tiluttoma Hasnu, Members of Autonomous Council, the Principal Secretary, Secretaries, the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, and Heads of Departments concerned with mining, forest, and environment sectors. This initial session served to discuss and finalize updated data, policy directions, and coordination strategies to be presented during the main review meeting scheduled for July 7, 2025. The discussion focused on mining operations, regulatory frameworks, and sustainable practices to ensure transparent, lawful, and ecologically responsible resource management. KAAC reaffirmed its commitment to balanced development that prioritizes both community interests and environmental preservation.

Manipur Govt reinforces confidentiality rules for official documents

IMPHAL

The Manipur Government has reiterated the need to uphold the confidentiality of official documents, notings, or files, following instances where government servants and others, including former officials and non-official persons, were found quoting or retaining classified materials marked 'Secret' or 'Confidential' in their representations and appeals.

An official memorandum issued by the Secretariat, General Administration Department, Government of Manipur, cautioned that referencing, excerpting, or retaining copies, either in part or whole, is not only improper but also a violation of Rules 8 to 11 of the Cen-

tral Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964, and Section 5 of the Official Secrets Act, 1923.

The memorandum further emphasized that any individual contravening these provisions is liable to prosecution, and government servants found violating the said Act and Conduct Rules may face penalties under relevant disciplinary rules, depending on the facts and circumstances of each case.

It strongly urged all employees under the State Government, including those in PSUs, autonomous bodies, boards, societies, agencies, commissions, companies, universities, and aided bodies, to refrain from unauthorized access, retention, or use of such documents in any form.

First border pillar installed along Assam-Meghalaya disputed area: CM Himanta Biswa Sarma

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced on Friday that officials erected the first boundary pillar along a previously disputed section of the Assam-Meghalaya border. This marks a major step toward resolving the decades-old border dispute between the two states.

Sarma described the boundary pillars as "pillars of clarity and peace" that will bring clear governance to areas once mired in ambiguity and conflict.

He shared the news on X, calling it a key milestone in implementing the 2022 agreement signed between Assam and Meghalaya.

When Meghalaya separated from Assam in 1972, Sarma explained, a significant portion of the boundary remained undefined, causing frequent tensions. After nearly 50 years, the two states signed a historic memorandum of understanding (MoU) in 2022 under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership and in the presence of Home Minister Amit Shah, aiming to clearly define the border.



Sarma said the states have resolved disputes in six out of twelve contested areas so far. The first pillar's installation represents tangible progress from the agreement, and Sarma noted that establishing jurisdiction through these markers will improve governance for local communities and adminis-

trations in these formerly disputed zones. He tagged Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma, highlighting ongoing cooperation between the states.

At a joint press conference on June 2, Sarma and Sangma pledged to install boundary pillars in five disputed areas before Independence Day. They acknowledged differences over the sixth disputed site, Pilingkata, and agreed to resolve it through discussions between district officials. They also committed to continue talks on the remaining six disputed areas, with no fixed timeline yet.

The Assam-Meghalaya border stretches about 885 kilometers and includes twelve disputed areas. The 2022 agreement, signed in New Delhi with Home Minister Amit Shah present, settled six disputes by dividing roughly 36.79 square kilometers almost equally—18.46 to Assam and 18.33 to Meghalaya.

The border dispute stems from Meghalaya's creation from Assam territory in 1972. Since then, Meghalaya has contested the Assam Reorganisation Act, 1971, which Assam uses to define the border.

Tripura CM launches TSAAF to elevate school standards, vows to make state a hub of educational excellence

AGARTALA

Tripura Chief Minister Dr. Manik Saha on Friday launched the Tripura School Assessment and Accreditation Framework (TSAAF), a transformative initiative aimed at enhancing the quality of education and infrastructure in schools across the state.

The new framework, aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP), is designed to evaluate institutional performance, identify gaps, and promote a culture of continuous improvement within the school system.

"I want each school in Tripura to become a centre of excellence to fulfil Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dream of a Viksit Bharat by 2047," said CM Saha while addressing the gathering at the launch event. He emphasised that the state government is investing



heavily in education infrastructure and that the overall learning environment in Tripura has improved considerably in recent years.

Highlighting recent academic achievements, the Chief Minister noted that Tripura is now the third fully literate state in India after Mizoram and Goa. "The pass percentages at both the Class 10 and

higher secondary levels have shown significant improvement this year. Vidyalayoti schools affiliated with CBSE recorded remarkable growth, with pass percentages rising by 26% and 21% respectively compared to 2024," he said.

Dr. Saha also addressed the issue of teacher shortages in the state. Referring to the controversial termi-

nation of 10,323 teachers following a Supreme Court verdict, he said, "Everyone knows a vacuum was created in the teaching workforce due to reasons known to all." He assured that the government is actively working to bridge this gap.

"We are recruiting qualified teachers through the Tripura Teachers' Recruitment Board (TRBT). Recently, 226 graduate and undergraduate teachers have been appointed. The government is committed to filling vacancies without compromising on quality," he added.

With the launch of TSAAF, Tripura aims to institutionalise standards-based assessment across its schools and lay the foundation for an inclusive, future-ready education system.

Naga tribal groups to resume agitation over job quota policy from July 9



KOHIMA

The Committee on Review Reservation Policy (CoRRP) – representing five major Naga tribes – on Thursday announced resumption of the second phase of agitation over its demand for review of the state's job reservation policy.

The push for review of Nagaland's job reservation policy intensified after the five major tribal bodies – Angami, Ao, Lotha, Rengma and Sumi – under the banner of the '5-Tribe CoRRP', submitted a joint memorandum to the state government.

The CoRRP has maintained that the policy, which has been in place since 1977, no longer reflects the current socio-economic and educational scenario of various communities in the northeastern state.

During a meeting convened by Deputy Chief Minister Yanthungo Patton on June 3, the state govern-

ment had assured the tribal bodies that a commission would be constituted to look into the matter by June 17.

However, on Wednesday, Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio had said the commission's task is "very detailed" and cannot deliver immediate results.

He also stated that any reforms – be it in administration, reservations, or delimitations – should be carried out only after the national census, which is expected to begin in 2027.

Unhappy with the state government's response, CoRRP announced that a sit-in protest will be held at the Nagaland Civil Secretariat in Kohima on July 9. This marks the second phase of their protest, which had been suspended since June 3.

CoRRP member-secretary G K Zhimomi told: "It will be a one-day protest for now. We'll observe the government's response and take further steps accordingly."

Nagaland AG office refutes allegations, reaffirms timely pension delivery

KOHIMA

In light of recent allegations in a news report that could potentially mislead the public about the functioning of the office, the Office of the Principal Accountant General (A&E), Nagaland, convened a press conference on July 4, 2025, to clarify its role and procedures.

Addressing the media, Principal Accountant General Frederick Syiemlieh, IAAS, along with Sr. DAG (Audit) Kahoto J. Yephthomi, IAAS, and Sr. DAG Azhar Jamal, IAAS, provided detailed insights into the office's system, particularly regarding pension authorisations.

The officials clarified that the Pension Sanctioning Authority for State Government employees is the respective Department under which the employee served. Only after the Department ensures all documentation is complete are the pension papers forwarded to the AG's office, which then processes and authorises the pension or family pension.

As per the Citizens' Charter of the AG's Office, pension payment orders are to be issued within 30 working days upon



receipt of complete pension documents. Highlighting the office's performance, they stated that over the past 12 months, 3,927 pension cases were received. Of these, 2,415 were submitted within 0-6 months of retirement, 922 between 7-12 months, and 590 after more than a year of retirement. Notably, 3,515 of these cases were settled within the prescribed 30-working-day

timeline.

To uphold transparency, details of authorised pension cases, including the name, contact number, and email ID of the officer in charge, are made publicly available on the official website (<https://cag.gov.in/ae/nagaland/en>) and on the office notice board.

In response to an RTI-related matter,

the office clarified that the names and contact information of the Public Information Officer (PIO) and Assistant PIO are prominently displayed on the website and at the office's Reception Cell. Likewise, names and mobile numbers of the Grievance Redressal Officer and all Branch Officers are also made available for easy public access.

For those wishing to meet officials in person, the AG office facilitates meetings on all working days except Wednesdays in the Visitors' Room.

The AG office reiterated its commitment to providing high-quality and timely service to pensioners and welcomed suggestions for further improvement.

For grievance redressal related to Accounts and Entitlements such as GPF and Pension, applicants can:

Submit grievances via the Complaints/Suggestions section on the website: <https://cag.gov.in/ae/nagaland/en/ae-complaint-suggestion> or email directly to: agaenagaland@cag.gov.in

If unsatisfied, escalate the grievance to the Sr. Administrative Officer (Complaint) at grstated2@cag.gov.in or via CPGRAMS

For other queries, use the "Contact Us" tab on the official website. The press conference concluded with a strong assurance that the AG's office will continue its efforts toward efficiency, transparency, and accountability in all its service delivery mechanisms.

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'Modi will bow to Trump': Rahul Gandhi attacks PM ahead of US tariffs deadline

NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday stepped up his criticism of Prime Minister Narendra Modi over a potential Indo-US trade deal, alleging that Modi would "bow" to US President Donald Trump ahead of an impending tariff deadline.

The Lok Sabha LoP's comments came a day after Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said India would not enter into any agreement under externally imposed deadlines.

"Piyush Goyal can beat his chest all he wants, mark my words, Modi will meekly bow to the Trump tariff deadline," Gandhi said in a post on X. Trump had set a 9 July deadline for countries, including India, to finalise a trade deal, after which tariffs imposed in April -- currently under a 90-day pause -- are set to take effect. Notably, the Congress has criticised PM Modi over the tariff row as well as for remaining silent on Trump's repeated claims of mediating a halt to India-Pakistan hostilities following the Pahalgaon terror attack.

Goyal had on Friday claimed that India would accept the proposed trade deal with the US only when it is fully finalised, and in the national interest.

The Free Trade

Agreements are possible only when both sides benefit and involve a win-win agreement, Goyal told reporters when asked about the proposed interim trade agreement with the US. "National interest should always be supreme. Keeping that in mind, if a deal is made, then India is always ready to deal with developed countries," he said.

Commerce ministry sources had said that New Delhi is not desperate for an interim trade deal with the US before the July 9 deadline. They added that efforts are on for closure of a deal before the deadline, but reiterated that India will not compromise on its interest in order to finalise an early deal.

On April 2, the US imposed an additional 26 percent reciprocal tariff on Indian goods but suspended it for 90 days. However, the 10 percent baseline tariff imposed by America remains in place.

On June 26, Trump had hinted that a "very big" agreement with India could be next after wrapping up a trade deal with China. "We are having some great deals. We have one coming up, maybe with India. Very big one. Where we're going to open up India," he had said.

A month earlier, the US President had

claimed that India is willing to cut 100 percent tariffs on American goods, while saying that a trade deal between New Delhi and Washington is coming soon.

Notably, India is seeking full exemption from the additional 26 percent tariff, while the US is demanding duty concessions in both agriculture and dairy sectors. But these segments are difficult and challenging areas for India to give duty concessions to the US as Indian farmers are into sustenance farming and have small land holdings.

Therefore, these sectors are politically very sensitive.

India has not opened up dairy sectors for any of its trading partners in any free trade pacts the country has signed so far.

The US wants duty concessions on certain industrial goods, automobiles - especially electric vehicles, wines, petrochemical products, dairy, and agricultural items like apples, tree nuts, and genetically modified crops.

India is seeking duty concessions for labour-intensive sectors like textiles, gems and jewellery, leather goods, garments, plastics, chemicals, shrimp, oil seeds, grapes, and bananas in the proposed trade pact.

Nipah strikes again in Kerala: Teen who died tests positive, one critical



PALAKKAD/ KOZHIKODE

Triggering fresh concerns, the deadly Nipah virus has resurfaced in Kerala, claiming the life of an 18-year-old girl from Malappuram. Another person, a 39-year-old woman from Palakkad, is in a critical condition after having contracted the virus.

The samples of the two tested positive at the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune, on Friday.

The teenager had died at a private hospital in Kozhikode on July 1, while the woman is under treatment at a private hospital in Perinthalmanna, Malappuram.

The fresh Nipah cases have prompted heightened vigil in Kozhikode, Malappuram and Palakkad districts. Health

Minister Veena George has directed authorities in the three districts to remain on high alert and initiate coordinated containment and surveillance activities.

On June 28, the teenager from Makkaraparamb in Malappuram was taken to Kozhikode from a private hospital in Kottakkal with high fever and severe vomiting. According to doctors, the Plus-II student was brain dead when she was brought to the hospital. As many as 43 healthcare workers who came in contact with the girl have been quarantined.

The patient from Palakkad is currently on ventilator support. "The woman developed fever nearly 20 days ago and sought treatment at two places -- a local clinic near her home in Palode and

a facility in Karingillathani. Her movement across multiple clinics has expanded the scope of contact tracing and risk assessment," said a senior health officer from Palakkad.

According to the health department, 211 people from Malappuram, 91 from Palakkad and 43 from Kozhikode are in the contact list of the two persons.

Amid concerns of the virus spread, the health minister said any unnatural deaths reported during this period must be thoroughly investigated to rule out possible Nipah links.

To strengthen surveillance and containment efforts, 26 rapid response committees have been formed in each of the three districts. Police assistance will also be

sought to prepare detailed contact tracing lists.

Public announcements have been mandated in all containment zones to inform residents about restrictions and precautions. The district collectors have been directed to lead local containment and monitoring operations. Both state and district-level helplines will be activated for public aid and updates.

As a precautionary measure, Kozhikode Collector Snehil Kumar Singh, who is also the chairperson of the District Disaster Management Authority, has ordered allocation of a section of a pay ward at the Kozhikode MCH to admit suspected Nipah patients.

In Malappuram, a meeting of district programme officers, epidemiologists and related officials was held under the chairmanship of District Medical Officer R Renuka on Friday to assess the situation.

A team of healthcare specialists led by District Surveillance Officer Dr C Shubin conducted an inspection at the place where the suspected case was reported.

"Those included in the contact list of the patient should follow quarantine until the day advised by health workers and should avoid interacting with family members, the public, etc," the DMO said.

Health department officials have urged the public to seek help if anyone exhibits symptoms.

A 39-year-old woman from Palakkad is in a critical condition after having contracted the virus. She is currently on ventilator support at a hospital in Perinthalmanna.

The samples of a Malappuram girl, who died while under treatment at a private hospital in Kozhikode on July 1, have also tested positive

INTERNATIONAL

'Very unhappy with Putin': Trump floats sanctions after Russia's largest attack on Ukraine



KYIV

US President Donald Trump said Russia just wanted to "keep killing people" and hinted at sanctions after Moscow launched its largest ever drone and missile attack on Ukraine in the three-year-old war.

Trump said Friday he was "very unhappy" about his telephone call with Russian leader Vladimir Putin, saying, "He wants to go all the way, just keep killing people, it's no good."

The US president said he and Putin talked about sanctions "a lot," adding, "He understands that it may be coming."

Hours-long Russian bombardments sent Ukrainians scurrying for shelters across the country and came after the call between Trump and Putin, which ended without a breakthrough.

AFP Journalists in Kyiv heard

drones buzzing over the capital and explosions ringing out throughout the night as Ukrainian air defence systems fended off the attack.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky also spoke to Trump Friday and said they agreed to work on bolstering Kyiv's defences.

"We spoke about opportunities in air defence and agreed that we will work together to strengthen protection of our skies," Zelensky said on social media after the call.

Tymur, a Kyiv resident who said he had experienced previous Russian attacks, told AFP that the assault in the early hours of Friday felt different from others.

This combination photo shows US President Donald Trump (L) and Russian President Vladimir Putin (R).

Trump backs bill pushing 500% tariffs on Russia's trade partners; India and China in dilemma

"Nothing like this attack had ever happened before. There have never been so many explosions," he said.

The Kremlin said Friday it was "preferable" to achieve the goals of its invasion through political and diplomatic means.

"But as long as that is not possible, we are continuing the special operation," spokesman Dmitry Peskov said, referring to Russia's invasion.

At least three people were wounded in Russian drone and artillery strikes on several parts of Eastern Ukraine overnight Friday to Saturday, regional governor Sergiy Lysak said on Telegram.

Zelensky said Friday air alerts began echoing out across the country as the Trump-Putin call was getting under way.

He urged the United States in particular to increase pressure on Moscow, which on Friday announced fresh territorial gains on the front line with the capture of a village in the Donetsk region.

Poland said its embassy building in Kyiv had been damaged in the attack but that staff were unharmed.

In Kyiv, one person was pulled from the rubble after the strikes, which also wounded at least 26 people, emergency services said.

The barrage, according to the air force, comprised 539 drones and 11 missiles.

A representative of Ukraine's air force told Ukrainian media that the attack was the largest of the Russian invasion.

This combination photo shows US President Donald Trump (L) and Russian President Vladimir Putin (R).

US won't send some weapons pledged to Ukraine following a Pentagon review of military aid

Overnight Russian attacks have escalated over recent weeks.

An AFP tally found Moscow launched a record number of drones and missiles at Ukraine in June, when direct peace talks between Kyiv and Moscow appeared to stall.

In Kyiv, AFP journalists saw dozens of residents of the capital taking shelter in a metro station.

Yuliia Golovkina, who said she sheltered at the metro regularly, described the worry that came with hearing an explosion during an attack.

"Will there be another one? Will something collapse on you?" the 47-year-old said.

"In those seconds, you just hold your breath and wait to see what happens next," she added.

In Kyiv, concerns mounted over whether the US would continue delivering military aid, which is key to Ukraine's ability to fend off the drone and missile barrages.

The US announced this week it was reducing some of its aid deliveries.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said this was a clear signal that the 27-nation European Union needed to "step up".

Ukraine has also ramped up its retaliatory strikes in Russia, where a woman was killed by a Ukrainian drone attack overnight, the acting governor of the Rostov region said. Talks, spearheaded by the United States to secure a ceasefire, have stalled.

Delegations from the two sides last met more than a month ago, when they agreed to exchange 1,000 prisoners each.

Russia announced a fresh swap of prisoners of war with Ukraine on Friday as part of that agreement.

24 dead in Texas floods and more than 20 children missing from a girls summer camp

KERRVILLE

Months worth of heavy rain fell in a matter of hours on Texas Hill Country, leaving 24 people dead and many more unaccounted for Friday, including more than 20 girls attending a summer camp, as search teams conducted boat and helicopter rescues in fast-moving floodwaters.

Desperate pleas peppered social media as loved ones sought any information about people caught in the flood zone. At least 10 inches (25 centimeters) of rain poured down overnight in central Kerr County, causing flash flooding of the Guadalupe River.

At a news conference late Friday Kerr County Sheriff Larry Leitha said 24 people had been killed. Authorities said 237 people had been rescued so far, including 167 by helicopter.

The missing children were attending Camp Mystic, a Christian camp along the Guadalupe River in the small town of Hunt. Elinor Lester, 13, said she and her cabin mates had to be helicoptered to safety.

A raging storm woke up her cabin around 1:30 a.m., and when rescuers arrived, Lester said they tied a rope for the girls to hold as the children in her cabin walked across bridge with floodwaters whipping around the calves and knees.

"The camp was completely destroyed," she said. "A helicopter landed and started taking people away. It was really scary."

The situation was still developing and officials said the death toll could change, with rescue operations ongoing for an unspecified total number of missing.

Authorities were still working to identify the dead.

A river gauge at Hunt recorded a 22 foot rise (6.7 meters) in about two hours, according to Bob Fogarty, meteorologist with the National Weather Service's Austin/San Antonio office. The gauge failed after recording a level of 29 and a half feet (9 meters). "The water's moving so fast,

you're not going to recognize how bad it is until it's on top of you," Fogarty said.

On the Kerr County sheriff's office Facebook page, people posted pictures of loved ones and begged for help finding them.

At least 400 people were on the ground helping in the response, Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick said. Nine rescue teams, 14 helicopters and 12 drones were being used, with some people being rescued from trees.

About 23 of the roughly 750 girls attending Camp Mystic were among those who were unaccounted for, Patrick said.

Search crews were doing "whatever we can do to find everyone we can," he said.

Ingram, Erin Burgess woke to thunder and rain at 3:30 a.m. Just 20 minutes later, water was pouring into her home directly across from the river, she said. She described an agonizing hour clinging to a tree and waiting for the water to recede enough so they could walk up the hill to a neighbor's home.

"My son and I floated to a tree where we hung onto it, and my boyfriend and my dog floated away. He was lost for a while, but we found them," she said.

Of her 19-year-old son, Burgess said: "Thankfully he's over 6 feet tall. That's the only thing that saved me, was hanging on to him."

Matthew Stone, 44, of Kerrville, said police came knocking on doors at 5:30 a.m. but that he had received no warning on his phone. "We got no emergency alert. There was nothing," Stone said. Then: "a pitch black wall of death."

Stone said police used his paddleboat to help rescue a neighbor. He and the rescuers thought they heard someone yelling "help!" from the water but couldn't see anyone, he said.

At a reunification center set up in Ingram, families cried and cheered as loved ones got off vehicles loaded with evacuees. Two

soldiers carried an older woman who could not get down a ladder. Behind her, a woman in a soiled T-shirt and shorts clutched a small white dog.

Later, a girl in a white "Camp Mystic" T-shirt and white socks stood in a puddle, sobbing in her mother's arms.

Barry Adelman, 54, said water pushed everyone in his three-story house into the attic, including his 94-year-old grandmother and 9-year-old grandson. The water started coming through the attic floor before finally receding.

"I was horrified," he said. "I was having to look at my grandson in the face and tell him everything was going to be OK, but inside I was scared to death."

Onlookers survey damage along the Guadalupe River after a flash flood swept through the area, Friday, July 4, 2025, in Kerrville, Texas.

The forecast had called for rain, with a flood watch upgraded to a warning overnight for at least 30,000 people. But totals in some places exceeded expectations, Fogarty said.

Patrick noted that the potential for heavy rain and flooding covered a large area.

"Everything was done to give them a heads up that you could have heavy rain, and we're not exactly sure where it's going to land," Patrick said. "Obviously as it got dark last night, we got into the wee morning of the hours, that's when the storm started to zero in."

Asked about how people were notified in Kerr County so that they could get to safety, Judge Rob Kelly, the county's chief elected official, said: "We do not have a warning system."

When reporters pushed on why more precautions weren't taken, Kelly responded: "Rest assured, no one knew this kind of flood was coming."

"We have floods all the time," he added. "This is the most dangerous river valley in the United States."

Myanmar's Upcoming Election Demands Vigilant Oversight



As our immediate neighbour Myanmar (also known as Burma and Brahmadesh) plans for a nationwide election in the next few months, the anti-junta and pro-democracy groups have come out with strong voices that the 'military junta has no legal or political legitimacy to hold an election' and it does not have the effective territorial or administrative control over southeast Asian Buddhist majority nation to conduct an inclusive poll.

Progressive Voice, a participatory, rights-based policy research and advocacy organization, asserted that 'with relentless junta attacks causing widespread instability and mass displacement, its planned election would be neither free & fair nor credible.'

Reacting to the proposed election by Myanmar military rulers, a UN official also termed it a mirage (of establishing a legitimate civilian government).

Tom Andrews, the UN special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, also added that the country cannot have an election in a real sense when the military dictators continue imprisoning and even torturing & executing on. He also asserted that the world community needs to do more to support the people of Myanmar by denying the junta's so-called election.

Myanmar junta chief Min Aung Hlaing on a number of occasions stated that the next general election will be conducted by the end of this year or early days of 2026.

Without mentioning a date for the polls, the acting President of Myanmar said, "We are currently making the necessary preparations to hold the elections as widely and extensively as possible," adding that 'the elections must

be free and fair'. He also justified the 2021 military coup to save the country from any misdirection to be orchestrated by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi-led National League for Democracy (NLD) government after winning the polls in 'fraudulent ways'.

In a recent announcement, published by the state-sponsored newspaper Global New Light of Myanmar, the election authority reaffirmed its plan to hold the election soon. Union Election Commission (UEC) also disclosed that any individual or group may apply for permission to form a political party in Myanmar.

UEC chairman U Ko Ko also added that the commission will use electronic voting machines in the nationwide polls to get a quick, accurate, and transparent outcome.

The current batch of dictators, who grabbed power in Naypyitaw on 01 February 2021 after toppling the democratically elected government of Suu Kyi, continue declaring that they would go to the polls and hand over the power to nearly 55 million Burmese nationals.

It is, however, assumed that the octogenarian pro-democracy icon, who has been behind bars for years, and her party, NLD, will be excluded from participation in the forthcoming election. By now, the military rulers have extended the state of emergency many times.

Since the latest military coup, over 6,500 Myanmar locals have been killed by the security forces, and more than 3.5 million individuals were displaced, many of whom left for neighbouring countries like Thailand, Bangladesh, and India.

No less than 22,000 people were detained by the armed forces, where the ousted Myanmar President Win Myint and over 25 journalists are still inside different jails without trials.

Realizing the ground situation, a United Nations official recently made a serious comment on the Myanmar rulers

that there cannot be an election when they imprison and torture, and execute opponents.

More precisely, the Min Aung Hlaing-led junta today fully controls only half of the townships in Myanmar.

According to the National Unity Government (NUG), around 144 out of 330 Myanmar townships are currently under the control of ethnic armed organizations and other people-led resistance forces.

Over 75 townships continue to face armed challenges from the people with guns in other hands. Technically over 75% of Myanmar territory is now controlled by the civilian administrations after being snatched away from the military government by anti-junta armed forces.

In western Myanmar, Rakhine State (Arakan) province

has virtually gone out of the military, where they effectively control only three townships (namely Rakhine capital Sittwe, Manaung, and parts of Kyaukphyu) out of 17.

Fighters belonging to the Arakan Army had captured all those townships with their offensive against the Tatmadaw.

Progressive Voice, while terming the junta-planned polls as a sham election, asserted that amid escalating attacks on civilians, the junta has continued its relentless efforts to whitewash its atrocities through the promise of the election, which is nothing but a façade.

"The junta's recent arbitrary dissolution of 40 political parties (including the NLD, which overwhelmingly won in 2015 and 2020 elections) makes its real intention crystal clear. In addition, the illegitimate election authority said that voting would take place in 267 townships, a figure based on the junta's illegal reconfiguration of the 330 officially recognized townships to artificially increase the number of townships under its control and create a false impression of broad electoral coverage," said a statement of Progressive Voice adding that the planned election is its 'strategy to seek and entrench false legitimacy so it can reinforce its tyranny'.

Speaking to this writer from Yangon (formerly Rangoon), Khin Ohmar, chairperson of Progressive Voice stated that the international support for the junta's sham election (whether direct or indirect) poses an imminent threat to Myanmar people's fight for freedom and democracy by entrenching military tyranny and reinforcing the very structure of violence. The international community must unequivocally denounce the junta's planned election and support the Myanmar people's efforts to build federal democracy from the ground up, said the Burmese democracy activist adding that any international support of the junta's sham election plan—whether through direct engagement or in ways that lend false legitimacy—only serves to embolden its brutality and continue the vicious cycle of military violence.

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Students can apply for a three-months internship with KRC Foundation. During the internship the student can get an opportunity to work on a live project. On successful completion the student is awarded a certificate. Apply to 5E for Success: 5eforsuccess@gmail.com For Details Visit: <https://bit.ly/krcstudentinternship> or www.krcfoundation.org/products-services/training-development-5e-for-success/internship

NE INDIA WRITING STAR CONTEST

Participate in NE India Writing Star Contest and get your writings published. Eligibility: From Class VI onwards. Each participants receives a digital participation certificates. Send articles at: info@krcfoundation.org For Details Visit: <https://bit.ly/NEIndiaWritingStarContest> www.krcfoundation.org/campaigns-csr/ne-india-writing-star-contest

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BARAK FESTIVAL

JANUARY 10-12, 2025

ACTIVITY PROGRAM



10 JAN
NE Cultural Fest
Any Form of Art and Cultural showcase can be showcased here. The Top performances will be invited to perform in the Main Event. Schools, Colleges, University Department, Individual & Group Competition.





11 JAN
Adventure Sports
Trekking & Canoe, Obstacle Navigations, Sport Climbing, Disaster Management Technique, Water Sports.



11 JAN
Barak Valley Conclave
Potential Issues and Challenges of Barak Valley to be discussed by stakeholders. Includes NGOs, and Government officials, industry representatives, local community and government employees. Participation through invitation only. Different awards are provided.

10 Jan
Barak Festival: Peace Progress & Prosperity



Barak Festival

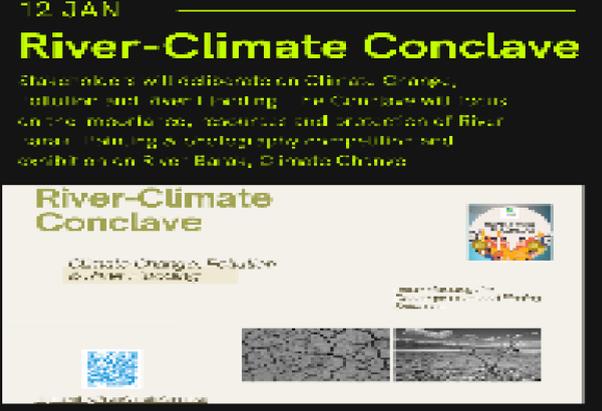
Adventure Sports, Art & Culture Promotion



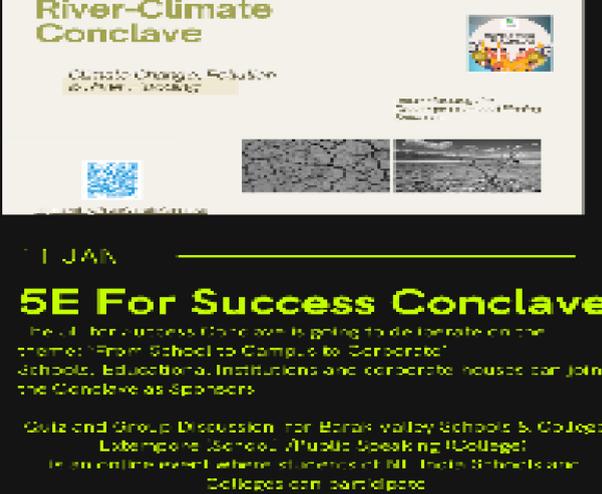
JAN'25
Online Global Fest
All can participate online and send a video clip on Poems, Songs and Dance Performances, Bengali, English, Hindi & Manipuri. Last Date: 31st December 2024.



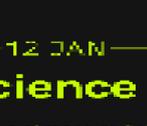
10 JAN
Media Conclave
Media Conclave (Webinars, Seminars, Guest Panel, Talks and Conferences) are part of the 'Barak Festival 2025'. Theme: 'One for All, All for One'. Welcome panelists, students, journalists, media & corporate representatives, guests, speakers, sponsors.



12 JAN
River-Climate Conclave
State leaders will deliberate on Climate Change, pollution and river flooding. The Conclave will focus on the importance, technical and practical of River Barak, Planning & Geography, environment and health in the River Barak, Climate Change.



11 JAN
5E For Success Conclave
The 4th Annual Success Conclave is going to be held on the theme: 'From School to Campus to Corporate'. Schools, Educational Institutions and corporate houses can join the Conclave as sponsors. Quiz and Group Discussion for Barak valley Schools & Colleges, Extension Schools, Alumni Speaking (College) & an online event where students of NE India Schools and Colleges can participate.



Barak Festival

Band Night | 10 JAN
Musical Night | 11 JAN



10-12 JAN
Science Studio
Use a glimpse of Science to see how things work. Class VI-XI | Teachers | Seniors, Administrators | Parents. Raw science out of textbooks into real-life experiences of students.



10-12 JAN
E-Sports
Full Blown! Don't miss! CASH PRIZES | Trophy



DEC'24-JAN'25
Photography
Online Photography Contest: River Barak | NE India | Art & Culture of NE | NE Culture. Real-Time Photography Contest of 'Barak Festival 2025'.



11 JAN
film festival
Award-Giving (One month) Film from Manipur. Short Films from Barak Valley, NE India, W & Media Talk | Exhibitions | Meet & Greet.



10-12 JAN
Book Bank
Anti-Book Campaign Book Bank (to reduce waste) | Online Book Club
Meet Authors, Publishers, Read & Discuss, Buy and Sell Books.
Painting Carnival
Water Colour and Paint and Draw with Campaign.

5E SUCCESS

STUDENT INTERNSHIP

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