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PERSPECTIVE

Real pleasure comes from overcoming challenges, feeling confidence in your abilities, gaining fluency in skills, and experiencing the power this brings.

~ Robert Greene, Author

Manipur: COCOMI rejects independent tribunal report, calls it politically motivated

IMPHAL

The Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI) has strongly rejected the recently released Independent People's Tribunal (IPT) report of the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL), terming it biased, misleading, and politically engineered.

Speaking on behalf of the people of Manipur, COCOMI asserted that the report unfairly vilifies the Meitei community while attempting to legitimise what it described as the separatist aspirations of Chin-Kuki "narco-terrorist" groups. COCOMI convenor Khuraijam Athouba dismissed the report as lacking both legitimacy and credibility. "The PUCL report does not serve the cause of peace, justice, and reconciliation. Instead, it emboldens narco-terrorist groups and undermines national security," Athouba said.

The committee maintained that the narrative presented in the PUCL report distorts the ground reality of the Manipur crisis and could further aggravate tensions rather than contribute to stability and resolution.

WHO SAID WHAT



I appeal to the citizens of our country to prioritize purchasing goods that are Made in India. Whether it's decorative items or gifts, let us choose products manufactured within our own nation. I also encourage businesses to refrain from selling items sourced from other countries. These small yet impactful steps can play a significant role in driving our nation's progress and prosperity.

- Narendra Modi, PM

Manipur's Wounds Deepen with Claims of Orchestrated Strife, Ex-CM Warns



IMPHAL

Former Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh alleged that a report of Delhi-based non-profit organisation PUCL claiming that the ethnic violence in the northeastern state was "orchestrated and not spontaneous" serves only to deepen the divide, prolong mistrust and

may even promote misunderstanding. Singh was the chief minister of Manipur when ethnic violence, which has claimed over 260 lives and rendered thousands homeless so far, erupted between Imphal Valley-based Meiteis and adjoining hills-based Kukis in May 2023. BJP's Rajya Sabha MP Leishemba Sanajaoba said that "more than 3,000

DoNER Cancels Four Assam Infrastructure Projects, Seeks Refund from Agencies

GUWAHATI

In a major setback to Assam's infrastructure push, the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) has scrapped four long-pending projects worth nearly Rs 20 crore, citing dismal progress and non-completion. With this foreclosure, the state government has been directed to refund Rs 7.68 crore to the Centre, raising serious questions about the utilization of development funds. The decision came during the 58th meeting of the Empowered Inter-Ministerial Committee (EIMC) of NESIDS-OTRI held recently in New Delhi. Officials noted that despite repeated extensions and substantial financial releases, the projects had failed to show meaningful outcomes. The four scrapped projects include:

Haflong Water Supply Scheme, Dima Hasao - Sanctioned ₹1.42 crore, received ₹0.65 crore; negligible work completed.

Greater Mahur Town Water Supply Scheme, Dima Hasao - Sanctioned ₹5.12 crore in 2006, received ₹1.61 crore; no significant progress.

Improvement of Denow-Dehing

Road (10.125 km) with RCC bridge, Demow sub-division - Sanctioned ₹7.60 crore in 2012, received ₹5.42 crore; major delays due to contractor payment issues.

Construction of road from NH-31 to Kashimpur Suplekuchi - Sanctioned ₹5.63 crore; foreclosure recommended "as is where is."

The worst hit is Dima Hasao district, where two crucial drinking water projects—Haflong and Greater Mahur—have been shelved, leaving residents without basic amenities. Inspectors reported that the Haflong scheme scored just 5 points on outcome assessment, with one of its water sources washed away in a natural calamity and its Chemical House lying unused. The Mahur scheme, pending since 2006, was also deemed unviable, with the State-level Empowered Committee (SLEC) recommending foreclosure.

The Denow-Dehing Road and bridge project faced severe delays due to irregular contractor payments. It scored just 3 points in outcome review during inspection. The Executive Engineer of the Public Works Department

confirmed "huge delays" in execution, prompting foreclosure with refund. This is not the first time DoNER has pulled the plug on projects in Assam. Officials acknowledged that several schemes have been scrapped in recent years due to persistent delays, poor execution, and lack of accountability. For backward districts like Dima Hasao, where potable water and reliable road connectivity remain urgent needs, such cancellations have been perceived as a serious blow. Ironically, even as essential projects collapse, the state is moving forward with extractive ventures. The Assam Pollution Control Board (APCB) has scheduled a public hearing on September 23, 2025, at Umrango for the proposed Garampani Coal Mine in Dima Hasao. Spread over 109 hectares, the project will be developed by the Assam Mineral Development Corporation Limited (AMDCL). Local residents, NGOs, and civil society groups have been invited to participate in the hearing, where the company will present its Draft Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

Shoot-at-sight order to remain in force in Dhubri till Durga Puja: Himanta

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on August 26 said that the "shoot at sight" order imposed in Dhubri will continue to remain in effect until the conclusion of Durga Puja celebrations, as a precautionary measure to maintain peace and security in the district.

Responding to a media query on the law-and-order situation, Sarma clarified that there is currently no unrest in Dhubri and no fresh incidents of violence have been reported. However, he stressed that the directive has not been withdrawn and will stay in force to deter any attempt at disturbing communal harmony.

"Anyone attempting to create unrest in Dhubri will face severe consequences. Here, people of Sanatan Dharma are a minority, and their protection from extremists is our priority," the Chief Minister said.

Sarma reiterated the government's commitment to safeguard-



ing peace during the upcoming Durga Puja festivities, assuring that strict action would be taken against those trying to disrupt the situation.

'People of Assam Want Himanta in Jail, Not Office,' Alleges Gaurav Gogoi



GUWAHATI

Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi launched a scathing attack on Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, alleging that his government has rendered people from every community in the state homeless through arbitrary eviction drives.

Addressing the media, Gogoi accused the Chief Minister of targeting all sections of society, including Bengalis, tribals, religious

minorities, Scheduled Castes, and Other Backwards Classes. He claimed that the government's actions, carried out under the guise of reclaiming land, had left thousands of families without shelter. "The Chief Minister has spared no one in his greed to accumulate property in the name of his family. They have made people from all communities homeless by bulldozing their houses," Gogoi said. He further alleged that the widespread displacement has eroded public trust, leading to a steady decline in the government's popularity. Taking his criticism a step further, the Congress leader remarked that people of Assam would eventually want to see Himanta Biswa Sarma not as the Chief Minister but behind bars for what he described as "injustice and misuse of power." The remarks come amid growing debates over eviction drives and land recovery initiatives launched by the state government, which it maintains are aimed at clearing encroached government and forest land. However, opposition parties have repeatedly accused the ruling BJP of using the exercise selectively to target vulnerable communities.

NEW DELHI

Seven teachers from India's northeastern states have been recognised among the 45 recipients of the National Teachers' Awards 2025, highlighting the region's dedication to educational excellence despite its geographical challenges.

The awards, announced by the Ministry of Education's Department of School Education and Literacy, will be presented by President Droupadi Murmu on Teachers' Day, September 5. Each recipient receives Rs 50,000 in cash, a certificate, and a silver medal.

Leading the northeastern representation is Nang Ekthani Moulglang from Government Secondary School Pachin in Arunachal Pradesh's Papum Pare district. The state's remote terrain often makes educational delivery challenging, making such recognition particularly significant for mountain educators.

From Nagaland, Pelelo Petenilhu of John Government Higher Secondary

School in Viswema, Kohima, joins the prestigious list. Nagaland has consistently invested in education infrastructure, with teachers playing crucial roles in bridging cultural and linguistic diversity.

Manipur's contribution comes through Kojiam Machasana from Ghari Upper Primary School in Imphal West, while Sikkim is represented by Karma Tempo Ethenpa from PM SHRI Mangan SSS. Both states have made notable strides in primary education accessibility. Dr Heipor Uni Bang from KB Memorial Secondary School in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills brings recognition to the state known for its high literacy rates. Meghalaya's matrilineal society has traditionally valued education, particularly for girls.

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma also took to Twitter to congratulate Dr. Bang. The chief minister said the achievement was a matter of great pride for Meghalaya as it reflected Dr. Bang's unwavering

dedication and impactful contribution to education. "Congratulations to Dr. Heipor Uni Bang ... for being selected for the prestigious National Teachers' Awards 2025," Sangma wrote, adding that the honour highlighted his "exceptional service" to the field of education.

Tripura's Bidisha Majumder from Hariananda English Medium H.S. School in Gomati district and Assam's Debajit Ghosh from Namsang TE Model School in Dibrugarh complete the northeastern contingent.

Northeast states, despite facing unique challenges including connectivity issues and diverse linguistic backgrounds, continue producing dedicated educators.

Nationally, Maharashtra and Bihar lead with three teachers each, while states such as Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal contribute two teachers each. Five teachers from the Prime Minister Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI) programme will also receive recognition.

Mirabai Chanu, Rishikanta Singh Shine with Commonwealth Golds; Manipur Governor Praises Duo



IMPHAL

Governor of Manipur, Ajay Kumar Bhalla, conveyed his warm felicitations to Tokyo Olympics silver medalist Mirabai Chanu and Chanambam Rishikanta Singh for winning gold medals at the Commonwealth Weightlifting Championships held in Ahmedabad.

At the 2025 Commonwealth Championships, Rishikanta Singh lifted a total of 271kg (120kg snatch and 151kg clean and jerk) in the men's 60kg category, securing the top position.

Mirabai Chanu claimed gold in the women's 48kg category by lifting a total of 193kg on Monday, August 25.

In his X post, the Governor wrote, "Mirabai Chanu continues

to be one of the shining prides of Manipur, inspiring countless youths with her dedication and excellence. Her remarkable and record-setting performance in the women's 48kg category has brought immense glory to the nation."

Former Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh also extended his congratulations via X, stating, "I extend my warmest congratulations to Shri Chanambam Rishikanta for bringing glory to Manipur and the nation by clinching the gold medal with a 271kg lift at the Commonwealth Weightlifting Championship. Your dedication, discipline, and hard work have once again proven the extraordinary sporting spirit of Manipur. I wish you even greater success in the days ahead."

A 694-PAGE report by Delhi-based non-profit organisation PUCL, authored under the chairmanship of former SC judge Justice Kurian Joseph, alleged that the violence was not spontaneous but orchestrated.

FIRs will be lodged against PUCL for its claim.

Their reactions came after Imphal-based human rights organisation Human Rights International Freedom (HRIF) threatened to take legal measures against the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) for its claim.

PUCL's 694-page report, authored under the chairmanship of former Supreme Court judge Justice Kurian Joseph, alleged that "the violence was not spontaneous but orchestrated."

HRIF, in a letter to the editor of the PUCL, alleged that its report titled 'Inde-

pendent people's tribunal on the ongoing ethnic conflict in Manipur' is "not only blatantly one-sided but is also replete with unverified facts, misinformation, and a clear bias in favour of the Kuki community, while deliberately omitting and distorting the narrative, facts and suffering of Meitei community".

HRIF also said the report "contains unverified and inflammatory allegations. Without providing any credible evidence" and that "the language and selective reporting have the potential to exacerbate tensions and promote enmity between different groups and disturb the fragile peace process in the state".

Singh said, "Well done HRIF for taking the lead. I believe many right-minded organisations are preparing to follow with legal actions against a biased and divisive organisation like the PUCL for attempting to divide Manipur through its obnoxious report."

"At a time when Manipur needs healing, reconciliation and unity, such publications serve only to deepen the divide and prolong mistrust, and it may even promote misunderstanding," Singh added.



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FROM IIT TO IIM

The story of Guwahati has often been told in terms of its geography and trade-the city as the ancient gateway to the Northeast, as a river port, as a commercial hub. But in the last three decades, another story has been unfolding, more quietly yet no less significantly: the transformation of Guwahati into a city of ideas, research, and higher education.

What began in 1994 with the founding of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Guwahati on the banks of the Brahmaputra has since matured into a broader arc of institutional expansion. Today, Guwahati is not only home to the IIT but also the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), the National Law University and Judicial Academy (NLUJA), and several national research centres. The city is slowly but surely carving out a reputation as a knowledge capital for the Northeast-one that has the potential to transform not only Assam but the wider region.

Yet, like all transitions, this one comes with challenges. Guwahati's aspirations to be a knowledge city demand far more than the presence of marquee institutions. They require planning, civic foresight, and a deliberate integration of these centres of learning into the economic and cultural fabric of the city.

The establishment of IIT Guwahati marked a turning point for Assam. For decades, the Northeast had felt distant from India's national imagination in higher education. While IITs in Kharagpur, Kanpur, or Bombay had produced generations of engineers and entrepreneurs, Assam's brightest often had to leave for Kolkata, Delhi, or Bengaluru. The founding of an IIT in Guwahati was not just a gift of prestige; it was an act of recognition.

In three decades, IIT Guwahati has built a reputation for excellence in engineering and science research, particularly in areas such as nanotechnology, water resources, and energy. Its faculty and alumni are now counted in global academic and industry networks. Just as importantly, the institute has served as a magnet-attracting thousands of students from across India to Guwahati and gradually changing the city's demographic and intellectual profile.

The IIT alone, however, could not carry the burden of building an ecosystem. That expansion has come in waves. The opening of IIM Shillong in 2008 was followed a decade later by the decision to locate IIM Assam in Guwahati. Meanwhile, the setting up of AIIMS Guwahati addressed the long-felt need for advanced medical education and research in the Northeast.

In the legal field, the establishment of NLUJA in 2009 provided a pathway for nurturing lawyers, judges, and policy experts within the region, reducing dependence on metropolitan centres. Together, these institutions signify that Guwahati is no longer a peripheral outpost but a node in India's map of higher education.

More recently, research clusters such as the Institute of Advanced Study in Science and Technology (IASST), the National Research Centre on Pig, and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research centres have created avenues for specialised research linked to the region's unique ecology and economy.

But Guwahati's rise is not just about campuses and degrees. The bigger test lies in how the city itself adapts to its new role. Knowledge cities are not made by institutions alone; they are sustained by the urban ecosystem that surrounds them.

Bengaluru, Pune, or Hyderabad illustrate this well. Universities and research centres there thrived because the city offered the infrastructure, connectivity, and quality of life to retain talent. Young students became entrepreneurs because cities offered co-working spaces, start-up incubators, and cultural life beyond classrooms.

In Guwahati, this remains a pressing challenge. While the city has grown rapidly, it has done so unevenly. Traffic congestion, inadequate public transport, and periodic flooding highlight the fragility of its urban planning. For a knowledge economy to flourish, Guwahati must ensure that its civic infrastructure does not remain its weakest link. A student who comes to study in Guwahati should be able to see a future in the city, not just a temporary sojourn. There is also the question of how Guwahati positions itself within the Northeast. For all practical purposes, Guwahati has long been the region's cultural and commercial hub. Its rise as a knowledge city could cement this role, turning it into a centre from which ideas, innovation, and trained professionals radiate outward into Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, and Manipur. But this requires a conscious commitment to inclusivity. It cannot be that Guwahati benefits while the surrounding states are left behind. One way to avoid this trap is by fostering collaboration between Guwahati's institutions and universities in other Northeastern states-joint research programmes, student exchanges, and region-specific studies on environment, ethnic cultures, agriculture, and conflict resolution.

In other words, Guwahati's institutions must not become ivory towers. They must remain rooted in the unique challenges of the Northeast: from ethnic diversity and ecological fragility to the geopolitics of sharing borders with China, Myanmar, and Bangladesh.

For Assam, the economic implications of a knowledge city are significant. The region has long been dependent on tea, oil, and coal, with limited industrial diversification. By fostering a knowledge economy-research, innovation, start-ups, biotech, IT services-Guwahati can reduce this dependence. Already, there are promising signs.

IIT Guwahati's technology transfer initiatives, incubators, and tie-ups with industry are encouraging young graduates to turn ideas into enterprises. Similarly, the presence of IIM offers a platform for nurturing entrepreneurship and managerial talent locally, which in turn can benefit small businesses, tourism, and agriculture. The challenge, however, is to create a pipeline that connects research with industry and policy. Too often in India, universities remain disconnected from real-world application. Guwahati has the opportunity to avoid this trap by building innovation corridors-linking academic institutions with industry clusters, start-up hubs, and government policy initiatives.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

This cures everything except stupidity, which is an epidemic on the rise.

- Carlos Ruiz Zafón

When Voter ID Matters And When It Doesn't

SHYAM G MENON

When the government chooses to either ignore or use identity documents only when it suits them, it shakes people's sense of stability, observes Shyam G Menon.

Finally, the voter ID card seemed to matter.

For me, that was the most memorable thing about July 29, 2025, a day that otherwise held little interest despite discussions on Operation Sindoor underway in Parliament.

As the debate over Operation Sindoor raged in the Lok Sabha, the citizen in me found himself tuned off the discussion and lost to mundane chores.

What killed interest was this sense of how things would be eventually reported.

One could foresee it in the media, that day's and the next - everything that the Treasury benches said would be applauded and publicised; the Opposition would be a severely judged side act.

It's a boring pattern. And so, it was my tired, reluctant eye, which noticed in the news updates of the day, a report on what Home Minister Amit Shah said in Parliament about the terrorists killed in Operation Mahadev.

What caught my attention was a sentence in the relevant report: "The home minister said security forces had recovered Pakistani voter IDs of two of the killed terrorists as well as chocolates made in Pakistan and the weapons."

On July 30, I visited the Web site of the Bharatiya Janata Party to cross check the news report as the person being quoted was the home minister. The BJP Web site had a press release containing the salient points of what Shah said during the discussion on Operation Sindoor in Parliament.

One paragraph therein said: "Hon'ble Union Home Minister said that he felt saddened when the former Home Minister of the country, Chidambaram, questioned the evidence proving that the terrorists came from Pakistan. He raised this question right before the Parliament was to discuss the matter."

"What does Chidambaram want to convey, and why does he want to shield Pakistan? Let me inform you that two of the three terrorists were found with Pakistani voter ID cards."

"The chocolates recovered from Dhok were also manufactured in Pakistan. By raising such a question, Chidambaram, a former Home Minister, is essentially giving a clean chit to Pakistan."

"He is even questioning the Indian strike on Pakistan. While our MPs went across the world and all nations acknowledged that Pakistan was behind the attack, Chidambaram's attempt to save Pakistan is now understood by every citizen of the country - this conspiracy will not go unpunished."

The highlighted text is as highlighted on the Web site. For those needing context - Operation Sindoor was the Indian military operation against Pakistan (with the specific intention of dismantling terror infrastructure), which followed the April 2025 attack on tourists in Pahalgam by terrorists that left 26 civilians dead.

I don't question any of the proof tabled. Not even the chocolates, although I must confess to wondering whether the country of origin of any product used in times of globalisation, may be considered as proof of identity.

It can be confusing because so many of the things we use every day are made in so many different places.

Perhaps the late Raj Kapoor got it right when he sang of shoes made in Japan, trousers

fashioned in the English style, a red hat from Russia and yet a heart that is Indian.

Shree 420 was released in September 1955. That long ago. Brilliant forecast of a future yet to be! Anyway, my mind, as I read of Shah's reference to the voter ID, was on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), currently on in Bihar.

The exercise, which seeks to refine electoral rolls and initially declined to consider popular ID cards like Aadhar and voter ID as supportive documents, has been criticised by the political Opposition and sections of the Indian electorate.

Expectedly, it has been supported by those approving of the ruling party and the ruling government.

Once again, knowing well the image management and majoritarian guidance of opinion that would come into play, I elected to watch the SIR from a distance, resigned to a fate authored by the ruling party, which never tires of reminding us that it and its cohorts will rule us for decades.

The only time I grew concerned by the SIR was when the Election Commission appeared to dilute the value of our Aadhar cards and voter ID cards.

For each of these cards, citizens had set aside time, stood in line and patiently waited to obtain them. And when he or she got them, the average individual felt that much more secure in an Indian life that is otherwise a vicious rat race.

These documents have also since their introduction, settled in as ID cards used in day-to-day life.

As some observers pointed out in the wake of the SIR, given only citizens get to vote in an election, diluting the sanctity of voter ID cards after many years of their use by citizens at large, appeared illogical.

Having such hard-earned cards rubbished, appeared to me, stressful. After all, as stated in parliament in February 2024 by the then minister of state for external affairs, the total number of Indians owning valid passports was only 9,26,24,661.

This, in a country with over 146 crore people as of 2025. I was among those who felt relieved when the Supreme Court subsequently asked the Election Commission to consider including Aadhar and voter ID as valid ID proof even as the SIR exercise stayed on track.

It therefore engaged to see the home minister state in Parliament that Pakistani voter IDs were among things used to establish the identity of the killed terrorists as Pakistani.

At least in that context, voter IDs (among other items of evidence) seemed acceptable to Indian authorities to fix a person's identity. Advantage voter ID - I thought.

By August 12, 2025, matters had grown more complicated. The Bihar SIR was about refining and revising the electoral roll.

The questioning of the validity of already issued ID cards was collateral damage with some semblance of a healing balm offered courtesy the Supreme Court's suggestion that Aadhar and voter ID be considered.

On August 7, Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi presented before the media, claims of fraud involving manipulated electoral rolls pertaining to one assembly seat in Karnataka.

He accused the Election Commission of colluding with the BJP to steal elections. In response, the chief electoral officers concerned issued notices to Rahul Gandhi and others who raised similar allegations.

If these allegations related to the sanctity of the voting process sullied, then less than a week later, the eligibility to vote came under a

cloud bigger than the one experienced before in the wake of the Bihar SIR. On August 12, Live Law reported, "In a significant order, the Bombay high court while denying bail to an alleged Bangladeshi national, held that merely having documents such as Aadhar Card, PAN Card or a Voter ID Card, does not make someone a citizen of India and in fact the concerned person must place on record the verification of these documents."

Theoretically, I imagine, the court's observation opens up some questions. First, as mentioned earlier, voter ID cards have been used in elections before. If as a category they are held suspect, wouldn't it amount to questioning the validity of votes already cast using those cards and thereby, the validity of whole elections?

Second, the passport, which is the document now emerging lofty and high based on what critics of the lesser ID cards have to say, also has its share of fakes. In other words, the problem is counterfeiting and the urge to counterfeit.

Third, if only the passport is enshrined as acceptable to prove citizenship and thereby used for voting, then as the earlier quoted figure of total valid passports shows, the pool of the eligible will be a terribly small portion of India's adult population.

Worse, it is very likely that this pool will also align with economic inequality as most high net worth individuals and the financially well-off would already be passport holders.

This has happened before in history - democracy's evolution has chapters wherein, the right to vote was reserved for a select eligible class till the push for universal adult franchise won the tussle.

Left unaddressed, what's happening in India risks nudging us to a state of selective franchise. It is a deeply worrying drift.

It is important that ID documents bringing the country's many divides, are considered till such time as everyone is aboard on the same platform.

I hope that the validity of our voter ID cards is preserved. Not just for the right to vote; being able to retain the validity of these cards is one headache less in a daily existence increasingly prone to life being decided by political agenda not all of us approve of.

Instead of allowing the citizen adequate stability to build his/her life, the general tenor has been to keep switching directions to ideological, political and administrative paradigms suiting whichever party is in power.

Rocking the boat, keeping it rocking perennially - that is an old technique in the playbook for ruling a people.

Scared, people gravitate towards political masters for protection. We saw a lot of that in the past decade of BJP rule.

From demonetisation to SIR, the ground has been heaving and quaking periodically.

The distressing thing is how such playbooks have become the guiding light for rulers - mainly the insecure Right-Wing sort - globally.

For what it says of a citizenry or an electorate is that the people are merely a means for rulers and oligarchs to corner power.

Attributing that approach to a Machiavelli, Chanakya, Sun Tzu or some such strategic brilliance doesn't restore dignity to human beings reduced to the level of statistic for others to grab power and hold on to it.

Some more years of this madness and I would probably disappear inside me. All that remains for the outside world would be a body identifiable by whatever ID card the ruling dispensation of the day deems right as per its fancy. And my legacy? A bunch of ID

cards, each signifying to a future archaeologist stumbling on my meagre possessions, the mad imagination of whoever ruled when I was alive.

It is called the times one lived in. There was, however, one silver lining to reflections around the Parliament debate. My friends told me that our Opposition leaders spoke well.

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

After Jamaat-e-Hind's outburst demanding my dismissal yesterday, a Delhi-based team - Harsh Mander, Wajahat Habibullah, Fayaz Shaheen, Prashant Bhushan, and Jawahar Sircar - is now camping in Assam.

Their sole aim is to paint the lawful evictions as so-called "humanitarian crisis." This is nothing but a planned attempt to weaken our fight against illegal encroachers.

We are alert and firm - no propaganda or pressure will stop us from protecting our land and culture.

~ Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Assam, CM



BJP VP GOOGLY: TIME FOR NEW BEGINNING

POONAM I KAUSHISH

Finally, the suspense is over. The old order is giving way to the new. After much dilly-dallying pouring over various nominations amidst various caste-State credentials, BJP-led NDA picked Maharashtra Governor CP Radhakrishnan, one of BJP's tallest leaders in Tamil Nadu with 40-year experience in politics wearing many hats and twice-over Coimbatore MP, as its Vice Presidential (VP) candidate, the second highest Constitution position in the country following the sudden and controversial resignation of Dhankar for 9 September election.

The first RSS pedigree RSS-Jan Sangh incumbent for a Constitutional post with strong ideological moorings, Radhakrishnan does not carry any political baggage and is seen as a mellow, inclusive person who will build consensus and statesmanship given his amiable soft-spoken personality with friends across Party lines.

Besides, he is said to be familiar with Modi's working style. In Maharashtra his interventions were centered around institutional experience and ideological alignment and he has spoken against Stalin's son's comments on Santana Dharma, dismissing him as a child.

Undeniably, BJP has made a calculated move that blends hard electoral arithmetic with a deeper regional strategy. Radhakrishnan nomination is not merely a reward for loyalty but a clever choice - it signals the Party's renewed push to penetrate the not-so-favourable political terrain of South India, expand its footprint in Tamil Nadu, Telangana and

Kerala where it has historically struggled to gain traction. The 68-year old incumbent VP signals reliance on OBC social engineering and though BJP on its own has a limited vote share in the State that fiercely resists its Hindi-Hindutva ideological push, the Party hopes to send a signal to the people and do better in an alliance with AIADMK in next year's election in Tamil Nadu.

Though the OBC Gounder caste credentials of Radhakrishnan are not going to be a big element in Tamil Nadu as Dravidian politics are centred around marginalised castes and social justice, it would certainly further the BJP's inclusive Hindutva narrative in the North, where the Mandalisation of politics is a big factor.

Southern States are also complaining of political marginalisation and economic discrimination, a trust deficit that is expected to widen with the ensuing delimitation of Lok Sabha constituencies. BJP, therefore, is attempting to court voters in South India with such symbolic gestures like choosing the VP nominee from the region.

Undoubtedly, Radhakrishnan's candidature is a googly for the Dravidian parties - the ruling DMK and Opposition AIADMK, both which have so far kept a firm grip on the State. A politics that challenges mainstream North Indian Hindi political rhetoric. The Hindutva Brigade's move to introduce a three-language curriculum has put the Party in a particularly dubious position in Tamil Nadu, where Chief Minister Stalin is spearheading the agitation against what it calls "Hindi imposition."

While AIADMK calls it a "strategic and clever move which shows BJP's inclusive attitude." But asked whether the VP's choice would change electoral realities in Tamil Nadu, it averred it could be "another way of giving a checkmate to those people who try to play the part of divisive politics, peddling fake narratives and fake news peddlers from the DMK." DMK with 32 MPs and being Tamil Nadu's largest party faces a dilemma: Should it support its State's candidate, especially since State elections are due next year? On the face of it, the Party welcomes the move. He is a Tamilian and if elected Radhakrishnan will become the third leader from the State to be Vice President.

But added its pet peeve, projecting a Tamilian is not pro-Tamil Nadu. Said a senior leader, "Representation of South in Central Government is lacking. We expect him to be more fair in Raja Sabha if he gets elected... Centre is not giving proper funds, even for education, they are not supporting Tamil Nadu in everything."

BJP hopes to split INDIA bloc ranks as in the past, Presidential and VP regional sentiments had triggered cross-alliance and cross-Party voting. Opposition circles are a buzz whether DMK and its allies can withstand the eminent BJP push to add "Tamil pride" to Radhakrishnan's candidature. As rival DMK plays to the gallery.

Predictably, this has put Opposition INDIA bloc in a dilemma which is holding its cards close to its chests though Tamilian MPs aver the bloc is likely to pick DMK's Raja Sabha MP Thiruchi Siva as its can-

didate, in a strategic move that would pit one senior Tamil Nadu politician against another in the upcoming election and overcome the key hurdle posed by regional politics. Or ISRO scientist Annaduria. Either way it matters little as NDA has the numbers. With Lok Sabha and Raja Sabha strength standing at 786, the NDA's with its combined strength of 422 MPs is above the majority mark of 394 required to win. Parties like BJD, YSRCP, and BRS which together hold 22 MPs, might back the NDA.

Despite this, the Opposition avers its candidate is to underscore democratic principles and unity within its ranks ahead of crucial elections in Bihar later this year and Bengal and Tamil Nadu in 2026.

Yet BJP is leaving nothing to chance. Recall, when Congress-led UPA nominated Pranab Mukherjee both Mamta's TMC and CPM-CPI backed him amid excitement about the first Bengali becoming President. Similarly, when Congress fielded Pratibha Patil for the top post Shiv Sena, despite being part of NDA supported her due to their shared Maharashtra roots.

When BJP-led NDA nominated Kovind, Nitish Kumar's JD(U) in spite of then being in the Opposition supported him because he was Bihar Governor. Vajpayee-led NDA's Presidential candidate APJ Kalam got Congress and Akhilesh's Samajwadi support due to their competitive enthusiasm for a Muslim President. Indira Gandhi's named Zail Singh as Congress candidate, arch rival Akali Dal backed him as first Sikh elected to the country's highest post.

Nagaland sees massive protest over brutal murder of 31-year-old woman

DIMAPUR

Thousands in Nagaland's Dimapur joined a peaceful protest rally on August 25, demanding justice for a 31-year-old woman, whose body was found near a pond at Pimla village under Chumoukedima district on April 7.

The rally, held at Naga Shopping Arcade, was jointly organised by the Zeliangrong Youth Organisation Nagaland (ZYON), Zeliangrong Students' Union Nagaland (ZSUN), Zeliangrong Mipui Organisation (ZMON), Western Naga Youth Front and supported by Dimapur-based civil society groups.

The victim, Kesutlunge Newme, wife of Chubatamsu Jamir of Mhaikam village under Peren district, was a daily wage earner and had



gone to fetch vegetables when she was brutally murdered.

Speaking at the rally, ZYON president R. John Zeliang said the government had failed to deliver justice to the victim's family, adding that "we are not going to remain silent." He urged Nagas to remain united and speak the truth without fear. "It is high time to join hands for a common cause and fight for our rights," Zeliang said.

Representatives from various organisations who addressed the gathering also demanded justice, stressing that the issue was not just of the Zeliangrong community, but of all Nagas.

Following the rally, an ultimatum was submitted to the Dimapur police commissioner demanding that the names of the culprits in-

involved in the case be made public within 15 days.

They also sought submission of the pending Forensic Science Laboratory report within the same timeframe. In a joint memorandum signed by ZYON, ZMON and ZSUN, the organisations expressed disappointment that despite repeated representations, no concrete action had been taken so far.

They alleged that the continued withholding of the culprit's name and the FSL report amounted to a "serious lapse in the investigation and contrary to the principles of justice."

Officials said at 7:52 pm on April 7, Chumoukedima police station received a telephonic report about a suspected murder at Pimla. Police personnel and forensic experts

rushed to the spot and shifted the victim's body to the District Hospital Dimapur for post-mortem examination after proper identification.

An FIR was lodged the next morning by Teusing Newme, VDB secretary of Mhaikam village, following which Women PS Case No. 006/25 was registered under Section 103/118 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, police said.

A Special Investigation Team led by an officer in the rank of Additional DCP was also constituted.

According to police, the body of Kesutlunge was discovered near a pond around 7 pm.

Police said they arrested a person on April 10, who they claimed committed the crime "in a fit of rage while under the influence of alcohol."

Himanta Biswa Sarma hails Assam's legacy of resistance, calls it an 'eternal saga of heroism'

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has invoked the state's centuries-long history of defiance against foreign invasions, describing it as an "eternal saga of heroism." In a post shared on his official 'X' handle, Sarma highlighted the valor of Assam's rulers and warriors who repeatedly repelled invaders at a time when much of India succumbed to successive dynasties.

Referring to Maharaja Prithu of Kamrup, who in 1206 CE crushed Bakhtiyar Khilji's army, Sarma reminded citizens that Khilji's Tibet expedition ended disastrously in Assam. "Assam's story of resistance does not end with Maharaja Prithu. It is a saga that continues for five centuries, culminating in the decisive Battle of Itakhuli in 1682," he wrote.

The Chief Minister went on to list landmark battles:

1257 CE - King Sandhya, aided by the Chutia ruler, ambushed and annihilated Tughril Khan's army during the monsoon. 1337 CE - King Durlabh Narayan defeated Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq's vast cavalry. 1532 CE - Ahom rulers Suhungmung and Suklenmung overcame Turbak and Hussain Khan; Turbak was slain and Hussain executed. 1637-1639 CE - Mughal generals Mir Zainuddin and Allah Yar Khan suffered defeats at Gauhati. 1661-1663 CE - Mir Jumla briefly occupied Gargaon but retreated amid floods, famine, and relentless resistance. 1668-1671 CE - Lachit Barphukan's legendary defense of Guwahati ensured Mughal defeat on the Brahmaputra.

1682 CE - The Battle of Itakhuli, led by Chetia Barphukan and Dihingia Alun Barbaruah, pushed Mughal forces beyond the Manas River, ending their ambitions in Assam.

Tripura minister lays foundation for Rs 126 crore transmission project to ensure 24x7 power

AGARTALA

Tripura Power Minister Ratan Lal Nath on August 25 laid the foundation stone for the reconductoring of HTLS conductors of nine 132 kV transmission lines at Bodjung Nagar near Agartala, marking a significant step toward modernising the state's power sector. The project, costing ₹126.33 crore, is being implemented by Tripura Power Transmission Limited (TPTL) with financial support from the DoNER Ministry's Special Infrastructure Development Project. Speaking at the function, the minister said an uninterrupted power supply is essential for the state's development and that the initiative will make the power transmission system more efficient and reliable. He noted that Tripura's power demand is expected to rise to 700 MW by 2031-32, and modernisation of infrastructure is crucial to meet this target.

Highlighting the state's progress since 2018, Nath said the number of 132 kV substations has increased from 12 to 20, with two more under construc-

tion, while 33 kV substations have risen from 44 to 75. "We are working to provide 24 hours of power. At present, we are able to supply 23 hours on average, but factors like power theft, overloading, and storms create interruptions," he explained.

The minister also underscored the growing shift toward renewable and sustainable energy. He said that electric trains will soon be introduced at Agartala Railway Station on August 27, marking a move away from diesel-run locomotives. He added that the state is promoting PM Surya Ghar while also working to replace nine transmission lines within a year to reduce losses and ensure energy efficiency. Calling for public participation, Nath urged citizens to be self-reliant and adopt smart facilities such as smart meters. "The government is committed to providing modern infrastructure, but people, too, must embrace self-reliance. The whole world is now following Swami Vivekananda's vision, and we must move forward with modern facilities," he said.

Rs 809-Cr projects lined up to fuel Arunachal's food, steel & bamboo industries: CM

ITANAGAR

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu, on Tuesday, asserted that the state is scripting a "bold new growth story" driven by innovation, investment, and entrepreneurship.

He asserted that the newly launched Industrial Development & Investment Policy 2025 will serve as the cornerstone of this journey, aimed at attracting large-scale investments and creating a conducive business environment.

Also Read - Manipur Zoo achieves first successful artificial incubation of Asian Giant Tortoises

He said that projects worth Rs 809 crore are already in the pipeline, spanning food processing, steel, and bamboo-based industries.

In a post on social media,



he said that state is also banking on robust industrial infra-

structure.

With 15 industrial estates, one growth centre, and one integrated development centre spread across more than 736 acres, Arunachal Pradesh is setting up the framework to support diverse enterprises, Khandu said.

This effort is further reflected in the rise of 21,982 micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) across the state, particularly in food, textiles, and hospitality sectors, he added.

The Chief Minister also said that the Arunachal Pradesh Innovation & Investment Park is nurturing 50 start-ups annually, with a major focus area being the start-up ecosystem.

"Between 2021 and 2024, 106 start-ups were incubated, and the year 2025 alone has seen an overwhelming 512 applications, testimony to the growing entrepreneurial spirit of the

youth," he added.

Khandu also underlined the government's commitment to empowering youth and women entrepreneurs.

Through the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Swavalamban Yojana (DDUSY), more than Rs 488 crore has been invested in 2,648 entrepreneurs across sectors, he said.

The Chief Minister announced that over 25,000 jobs and self-employment opportunities are expected to be created in the next five years under the SEE Trinity framework (Skill, Employment, and Entrepreneurship).

"With focused policies, massive investments, and a vibrant start-up culture, Arunachal Pradesh is no longer on the fringes of economic growth. We are scripting a bold new chapter of prosperity," Khandu added.

BTC poll campaign heats up: CM Himanta, CEM Pramod Boro, BPF chief hold massive rallies

GUWAHATI

With the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) elections nearing, political campaigns have intensified across the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) with Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma addressing large gatherings in Kalipukhuri (Salakati BTC Constituency) and Khasiyabari (Jamduar BTC Constituency) as part of the Sankalp Samabek on August 25.

In his speeches, CM Sarma emphasized the BJP's goal of becoming the strongest political force in the upcoming BTC elections. He criticized the current BTC administration and the former ruling parties, the Bodoland People's Front (BPF) and the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL), for their alleged failure to bring devel-



opment to the region. "Despite years of BPF and UPPL governance, many areas still lack adequate development.

Welfare schemes are not reaching the people, and most government initiatives are not being implemented on time," said Sarma.

He further stated that if the BJP comes to power in BTC, the era of corruption and middlemen, particularly in VCDC (Village Council Development Committee) affairs, would come to an end.

"We want first-class citizens in BTR, not second-class treatment for anyone," he added, urging the people to bring BJP to power in BTC, just as they have done in Delhi, Dispur, and now aim for Kokrajhar.

Meanwhile, BTC Chief Executive Member and UPPL President Pramod Boro held a massive rally titled "Harmonious Bodoland" at Kokrajhar town, drawing a crowd of over 20,000 supporters.

Addressing the rally, Pramod

Boro expressed confidence in UPPL's growing popularity and declared that his party aims to win all 12 BTC constituencies in Kokrajhar district.

"UPPL is committed to peace, progress, and inclusive development in Bodoland. The massive public support today reflects our strength and the people's trust in us," said Boro.

As the campaign momentum builds, both BJP and UPPL are intensifying efforts to capture the political landscape of the BTC. With high voter interest and large-scale public rallies, the upcoming BTC elections are expected to be one of the most closely watched contests in the region.

BPF Chief Hagrama Mohilary also attended huge campaigning at Saralpara and parbatjhar for upcoming BTC elections on today.

We are hunting for talents to prepare them for future competitions: Nagaland Shooting Sports Association



BISWADEEP GUPTA

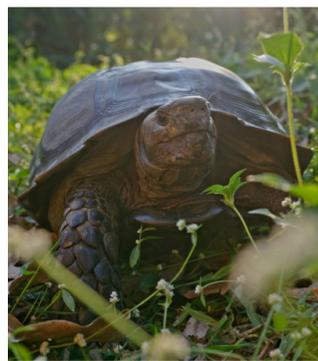
DIMAPUR :A two-week free training and competition program for air rifles and air pistol events that started from August 22 at the Temjen Toy Indoor shooting Range, NSSA, Multi-Disciplinary Sports Complex, in Dimapur, saw a good response, ranging from 10 years to 45 years of age, registering for this training. Around 109 participants are getting trained in two shifts.

Nagaland Shooting Sports Association organises the free training in collaboration with the Department of Youth Resources and Sports, Govt. of Nagaland. The training on shooting sports is in full swing,

started for athletes of 10m air rifle and air pistol on the safety, weapon handling, techniques, tactics, physical parameters, and mental conditioning.

Hito Swu, Shooting Instructor, Department of Youth Resources and Sports, Govt. The Hon. Secretary of Nagaland Shooting Sports Association said that in Nagaland, participant has a suitable body structure for rifle shooting. He echoed, We are hunting the talents. Through this competition, the champions will be provided sponsorship for six months to mentor and prepare them for the upcoming competition in line with the National Rifle Association of India.

Breakthrough at Manipur Zoo: First Artificial Incubation of Asian Giant Tortoises



way with the conservation of these tortoises, Manipur Zoological Garden is now all set to initiate a conservation breeding programme, to release them in the wild. This will contribute to increasing the numbers of this highly threatened species and return them to their native habitats.

MZG also conducted a one-day capacity building workshop in collaboration with ITCF on 21 August 2025, focussed on training 25 Zoo-keepers and Frontline forest staff on conservation and management of tortoises and freshwater turtles. "As valued

as MZG is for the flagship breeding of Sangai or Brow-antlered deer, we look forward to initiating the conservation of another magnificent yet lesser-known reptile, the Asian Giant Tortoises. Dedicated facilities will be developed and efforts will be put to conduct successful breeding of the species every year and continue with phase-wise releases in the wild", said Mr. Laishram Biramangol Singh, Director, MZG.

The hatchlings are now under proper husbandry care and it is believed to be an important landmark event in the field of tortoise and turtle conservation in the state. Sushmita Kar, Project Coordinator for ITCF said, "We will simultaneously conduct assessments for suitable habitats for the species and collect information on its native distribution ranges in different districts of Manipur to understand their population status and address the specific conservation requirements for Asian Giant Tortoises in Manipur". The project team thanked the PCCF and Chief Wildlife Warden, Manipur for extending huge support leading to this success. The initiative has been actively supported by Dr. L. Sarat Chandra, Veterinarian, MZG, Georgie Yumnam, Range Officer, MZG and Durga Charan Kar-makar, Animal attendant, MZG.

Quest!
In Australia, there are spiders that are so big, they can even eat snakes.

IMP[HAL]
The Asian Giant Tortoise is a critically endangered species and native to northeast Indian states such as Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram, Assam and Meghalaya. Making head-

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‘Sudarshan Chakra’ air defence system will need huge tri-services efforts: CDS Chauhan



MHOW:

The ‘Sudarshan Chakra’ air defence system will entail development of a robust infrastructure comprising a range of key tri-services military assets such as missiles and surveillance systems to create an impregnable strategic shield, Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan said on Tuesday.

In an address at a conference, Gen Chauhan said a “whole of the nation” approach will be required to develop the shield.

Gen Chauhan also suggested that the Sudarshan Chakra will be on the lines of Israel’s Iron Dome all-weather air defence system, known as a very effective missile shield.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 15 announced the project to develop an indigenous air defence system to protect India’s vital military and

civilian installations and to deliver a decisive response to any enemy threat, a move that came amid concerns over security challenges emanating from Pakistan and China.

In his first remarks on the project, the Chief of Defence Staff said the military will have to look at multi-domain ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance) integration of ground, air, maritime, undersea and space, sensors.

Gen Chauhan said a huge amount of efforts will be required by the three services to integrate various systems for the Sudarshan Chakra project.

“A colossal amount of integration will be required and multiple fields will need to be networked to provide a very true picture,” he said.

Gen Chauhan suggested that the project will also feature use of artificial intel-

ligence, advanced computation, data analytics, deep data, analytics and quantum technology.

PM Modi announced the Sudarshan Chakra project days after Pakistan Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir reportedly hinted at targeting Indian assets along the border, including Reliance Industries Ltd’s Jamnagar refinery in Gujarat, in case of any future military confrontation between the two countries.

The project is planned to be implemented by 2035.

In his address at the Ran Samwad conference at the Army War College, Gen Chauhan also underlined the need for greater tri-services integration.

The two-day conclave brings serving military professionals to the forefront of strategic dialogue and it will witness Defence Minister Rajnath Singh delivering the plenary address on the final day.

A few joint doctrines and the technology perspective and capability roadmap will also be released during the event.

The event is a first-of-its-kind initiative, wherein each thematic session will be led by serving officers sharing their first-hand operational insights and reflections from modern battlefields.

It has been curated by Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff and Centre for Joint Warfare Studies, in cooperation with the Army Training Command, under the overall guidance of the Chief of Defence Staff.

US issues draft notice to enforce 50% tariffs on India from Aug. 27; Pharma, electronics exempted

NEW DELHI

The United States on Tuesday notified the implementation of additional 25% duties on Indian goods, thereby raising the overall tariff to 50%, to be effective from August 27.

According to the notice issued by the US Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the tariff will cover a wide spectrum of Indian exports, including textiles, gems and jewellery, leather, machinery, furniture and marine products. However, a few items like steel, copper and aluminium and sectors like pharmaceuticals, electronics and automobiles – passenger vehicles like SUV and sedan – have been exempted.

The additional tariffs are being imposed to give effect to the President’s Executive Order 14329 of August 6, 2025, titled “Addressing Threats to the United States by the Government of the Russian Federation.”

The CBP clarified that from 12:01 am eastern daylight time on that day, the higher tariffs will apply to all products of India that are either entered for consumption in the US or withdrawn from warehouses for consumption.

Industry exporters fear the new tariff will affect their profit margins and eventually slowdown in shipments to the US.

With Washington being India’s largest export market for a large chunk of the goods, exporters fear tapping a new market with similar demand will be challenging for many sectors.

The Commerce Ministry has assured exporters that the government will take all possible measures to safeguard them from the ongoing global uncertainties. However, the Indian government hasn’t come up with any retaliatory measures so far against the US.

On July 30, US President Donald Trump announced a 25% tariff on Indian imports as part of a broader trade war in which he imposed duties on more than



90 countries. A week later, on August 6, he imposed an additional 25% levy, calling it a “penalty” for India’s continued purchase of Russian oil, taking total tariffs on New Delhi to 50%.

On Monday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi remained firm ahead of the 50% US tariffs on Indian goods, saying his government will find a way out regardless of the economic pressure by Washington.

He assured small shopkeepers, farmers, and livestock rearers that the government would protect their interests. “We will bear any pressure. Modi will never allow you to be harmed,” Modi

said.

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said on Monday that the central bank will provide special support for sectors impacted by tariffs and noted that the overall impact on the economy would be minimal, expressing confidence that trade negotiations for lower duties would eventually bear fruit.

Last week, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar had outlined India’s “red lines” in ongoing trade talks with Washington and sharply criticised what he called “unjustified and unreasonable” tariff hikes imposed by the Trump administration. He added that India

would not compromise on the interests of its farmers and small producers.

“Trade is really the major issue between our countries,” Jaishankar said.

“The negotiations are still going on. The bottom line is, we have some red lines. And those are the interests of our farmers and small producers. That’s not something we can compromise on,” he added.

With the new tariffs taking effect immediately, exporters are bracing for a turbulent period ahead, even as exempted sectors attempt to leverage their reprieve.

INTERNATIONAL

A first! Netanyahu says ‘deeply regrets’ Israeli airstrike on Gaza hospital that left 21 dead, including journalists

TELAVIV

In an uncharacteristic admission, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he “deeply regrets the tragic mishap” at Nasser Hospital, where an attack killed at least 21 people, including five journalists.

“Israel deeply regrets the tragic mishap that occurred today at the Nasser Hospital in Gaza,” read a statement posted on X.

Netanyahu’s office went further. “Israel values the work of journalists, medical staff, and all civilians,” its statement read.

His office went on to add, “The military authorities are conducting a thorough investigation. Our war is with Hamas terrorists. Our just goals are defeating Hamas and bringing our hostages home.”

Journalists from Reuters, the Associated Press and Al Jazeera were among those killed, the organisations confirmed.

The victims included Mariam Daqqa, 33, who had freelanced for AP since the Gaza war began; Al Jazeera’s Mohammed Salam; Reuters contractor cameraman Hussam al-Masri; Moaz Abu Tahar; and Ahmad Abu Aziz.

In this family handout photo, a person shows the blood-stained camera that freelance journalist Mariam Dagga, 33, was carrying when she was killed in a double Israeli strike on Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, Monday, Aug. 25, 2025.

The Gaza Government Media Office later reported that another journalist, Hassan Douhan of



Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, was fatally shot by Israeli forces in al-Mawasi, Khan Younis.

“We call on the international community and groups involved in journalism and media work in all countries of the world to condemn the crimes of the [Israeli] occupation, deter them, and prosecute them in international courts,” the office said in a statement.

Since October 2023, more than 200 journalists have been killed while reporting on the Gaza conflict, many in what local groups allege were targeted attacks.

Al Jazeera reported that the attack plunged Nasser Hospital into chaos and panic.

In an uncharacteristic admission, Israeli Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu said he “deeply regrets the tragic mishap” at Nasser Hospital, where an attack killed at least 21 people, including five journalists.

The incident has drawn widespread condemnation from across the globe. Reporters Without Borders (RSF) denounced the killing of journalists, saying evidence showed “all were deliberately targeted”.

“RSF is once again calling for an emergency UN Security Council meeting to end this massacre of journalists,” the organisation said.

Qatar described the assault as “a new episode in the ongoing series of heinous crimes committed by the occupation against brotherly Palestinian people and a blatant violation of international law.”

Germany’s Foreign Ministry urged an investigation, stressing that the work of journalists was “indispensable for depicting the devastating reality” of the war.

Doctors Without Borders (MSF) also condemned what it called “horrendous” Israeli attacks on the hospital. Later in the day, US President Donald Trump claimed the Gaza war would reach a “conclusive ending” within three weeks.

“I think within the next two to three weeks, you’re going to have pretty good, conclusive ending,” Trump told reporters.

His administration has continued to provide billions of dollars in military aid to Israel while opposing international recognition of a Palestinian state.

‘Neither piggy bank nor doormat’: Trump threatens tariffs on countries targeting US tech firms



WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump on Monday threatened further tariffs and export restrictions against countries that he says are targeting American tech firms.

“Digital Taxes, Digital Services Legislation, and Digital Markets Regulations are all designed to harm, or discriminate against, American Technology,” Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.

His comments appear targeted at European countries and others who have created laws regulating the online world.

The European Union for example has rules like the Digital Markets Act (DMA) and the Digital Services Act (DSA) covering competition and con-

tent moderation. The UK also has a tax on digital companies, although Trump did not name specific countries or regions.

But he said that unless what Washington deemed as “discriminatory actions” were removed, he would “impose substantial additional tariffs” on countries’ products and institute export restrictions on US tech and chips.

“America, and American Technology Companies, are neither the ‘piggy bank’ nor the ‘doormat’ of the World any longer,” Trump wrote.

In June, Trump called off trade talks with Canada in retaliation against Ottawa’s planned digital services tax, which would have applied to US multinational companies such as Alphabet, Amazon and Meta that provide serv-

ices to Canadians. Shortly after, Canada said it would rescind the taxes impacting US tech firms.

Since returning to the presidency in January, Trump has imposed tariffs on allies and competitors alike, with varying rates for different countries’ products. But sectors he has singled out for separate action – such as steel, aluminium and autos – are spared from these country-wide levels.

Instead, they have been hit with sector-specific duties.

Trump has wielded tariffs as a means to pursue various goals. A doubling of US tariffs on Indian products is set to take effect this week over its purchase of Russian oil, a key revenue source in Moscow’s war in Ukraine.

Chakma Students and Mizoram's Medical Journey: Resilience, Merit, and the Pursuit of Equity

In the remote southern corner of Mizoram, where the quiet forests of the Chittagong Hill Tracts give way to the villages along the Karnaphuli River, a quiet educational revolution has been underway. The Chakma community-long a small, marginalized minority within the state-has begun to script a new chapter of achievement in higher education, particularly in medicine.

This year's National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) 2025 results once again shone a spotlight on the remarkable strides made by Chakma students. With several of them securing notable ranks despite overwhelming odds, their story is not just one of individual brilliance but also of collective resilience in the face of systemic challenges.

At the center of this unfolding story is a growing recognition: Chakma students are no longer exceptions in Mizoram's academic journey. They are emerging as vital contributors to the state's future healthcare system, demonstrating that determination and merit can prevail, even when the odds seem stacked against them.

The Chakma people, numbering a little over one lakh in Mizoram, form the third-largest tribal community after the Mizos and Lais. Concentrated largely in the Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC) headquartered at Kamalanagar, they have historically been at the margins of the state's socio-political and educational landscape.

For decades, access to higher education for Chakma students remained limited, shaped by a combination of poverty, lack of infrastructure, and systemic barriers in Mizoram's reservation framework. The State Technical Entrance Examination (STEE) Rules, 2016, divided indigenous Scheduled Tribes into three categories for seat allocation in professional courses.

Category-I: Predominantly Mizo/ Zo ethnic groups, who received a staggering 95% of the total reserved seats.

Category-II: Minority tribes like the Chakmas, Paites, Brus, and Hmars, given just 4% of the reserved seats.

Category-III: Children of Central or State Government employees serving in Mizoram but not permanently domiciled, who received 1%.

The result was a system that, while ostensibly inclusive, severely restricted opportunities for smaller tribes. Chakma students, even when they performed well in national-level examinations, found themselves with disproportionately fewer chances to pursue medicine, engineering, or other professional courses within Mizoram.

This imbalance was not merely statistical. It translated into fewer Chakma doctors, engineers, and professionals-further entrenching the community's under-representation in crucial sectors of state development.

Recognizing the discriminatory impact of the 2016 rules, the Mizoram Chakma Students' Union (MCSU) filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the Gauhati High Court in 2016. Their argument was straightforward: all indigenous Scheduled Tribes of Mizoram deserved equal treatment under reservation policies.

In 2019, the High Court delivered a landmark judgment, scrapping the discriminatory amendment and restoring Chakmas and other minority tribes to Category-I, placing them on par with Mizo/ Zo candidates. The ruling was more than a legal victory; it was an affirmation of the principle that reservation frameworks should enable inclusivity, not perpetuate exclusion.

For Chakma students, the judgment opened new doors. While challenges remained, the ruling ensured that merit and effort had a more level playing field in determining educational outcomes.

This year's NEET results underscored just how far Chakma students have come.

Dr. K. Joseph Chakma, a native of Kamalanagar, who completed his MBBS from Zoram Medical College (ZMC) in 2024, cleared the NEET-PG 2025 with an impressive 525/800, securing an All-India Rank of 17,128. His success stands as a beacon for younger aspirants, proving that students from remote regions can excel at the national level with determination and discipline.



Among undergraduates, Helang Chakma secured Rank 22 in Mizoram with a score of 383, while Nimika Chakma earned Rank 77 with 338 marks. Several others placed competitively within the state merit list, signaling a growing trend of sustained academic excellence.

Such performances are not one-off successes but part of a consistent trajectory. Over the past decade, Chakma students have increasingly featured in NEET merit lists, often despite studying in under-resourced schools or depending on private coaching far from their hometowns.

Barriers Beyond Exams Yet, the story is not without its difficulties. Even today, many Chakma families struggle with economic hardship. The average household income in CADC areas lags behind state averages, and educational infrastructure remains sparse. High-quality coaching centers, laboratories, and libraries are concentrated in Aizawl, far from Chakma-majority villages.

Additionally, social challenges linger. Prejudice and stereotyping continue to affect Chakma students, who sometimes face alienation in urban educational spaces. Stories abound of students overcoming language barriers-Mizo being the dominant medium in schools and state institutions-while preparing for national-level exams conducted in English and Hindi.

These barriers highlight the extraordinary nature of Chakma students' achievements. Their success is not just academic but also social-breaking through invisible ceilings of marginalization. Contribution to Mizoram's Healthcare System One of the most tangible impacts of Chakma success in medical education has been the slow but steady increase in Chakma representation in Mizoram's healthcare system. Graduates from Zoram Medical College, regional institutions, and national universities are now serving as doctors across the state.

Many return to their native villages and towns, working in Community Health Centers (CHCs) and Primary Health Centers (PHCs) in Lawngtlai, Lunglei, and Saiha districts. These areas, often underserved by mainstream health infrastructure, benefit immensely from professionals who understand the socio-cultural context of the communities they serve.

The ripple effect is profound. A Chakma doctor serving in a rural PHC not only provides healthcare but also inspires the next generation of students, creating a cycle of aspiration and achievement.

The Larger Narrative: Inclusion and Representation The success of Chakma students must be seen within the larger narrative of Mizoram's evolving educational and social fabric. Education has long been a powerful tool for integration, bridging divides between communities while offering opportunities for collective growth.

For Mizoram, the inclusion of Chakma students in professional fields like medicine is a sign of inclusive development. It ensures that the state's growth story is not limited to its majority community but shared by its diverse ethnic groups.

Moreover, the achievements of minority students strengthen the legitimacy of institutions like Zoram Medical College, which serve as crucibles of diversity and talent.

Balancing Merit and Reservation The Chakma story also invites reflection on the complex relationship between merit-based access and reservation policies. While affirmative action is crucial to addressing historical disadvantages, its design must avoid creating new forms of exclusion.

The 2016 rules, by allocating 95% of seats to one community, had inadvertently undermined the very spirit of reservation. The Gauhati High Court's correction, therefore, was essential to restore balance.

Chakma success in NEET demonstrates that when opportunities are equitable, merit flourishes across communities. It is a reminder that inclusivity strengthens, rather than dilutes, the academic and professional pool.

Looking Ahead: A Roadmap for Growth The road ahead is both promising and challenging. For Chakma students to continue excelling, several measures remain crucial:

1. Strengthening Infrastructure in CADC: Investment in schools, libraries, laboratories, and digital classrooms in Kamalanagar and surrounding areas can reduce dependence on urban centers.
2. Scholarship Support: Targeted scholarships for minority students can alleviate financial barriers that often deter talented youth from pursuing higher studies.
3. Coaching and Mentorship: Establishing coaching hubs within Chakma areas, along with mentorship programs connecting students with successful alumni, can sustain the momentum.

4. Policy Vigilance: Continuous judicial and civil society oversight is essential to ensure reservation policies remain inclusive and balanced.

Beyond Chakmas: A Lesson for Northeast India

The achievements of Chakma students also resonate beyond Mizoram. Across the Northeast, smaller tribal and minority communities face similar challenges-navigating reservation frameworks dominated by larger ethnic groups, struggling with infrastructure deficits, and confronting social prejudices.

The Chakma example offers hope: that perseverance, legal advocacy, and community-driven educational movements can yield transformative outcomes. It suggests that inclusive policies combined with community determination can reshape the educational landscape of the entire region.

A Legacy in the Making The image of a young Chakma student from Kamalanagar cracking NEET, boarding a bus to Aizawl with dreams of wearing a doctor's coat, is more than a personal milestone. It is a symbol of a community reclaiming its space in Mizoram's story.

As more Chakma doctors, engineers, and professionals step into roles of responsibility, they bring with them the lived experience of resilience, diversity, and hope. Their journey-from classrooms with leaky roofs in CADC to the examination halls of NEET-is a reminder that education remains the most powerful equalizer.

In the end, the story of Chakma students in Mizoram is not just about exam ranks or reservation rules. It is about the transformative power of opportunity-when merit is given room to breathe, when communities are allowed to dream, and when resilience finds its rightful place in shaping the future of a state.

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