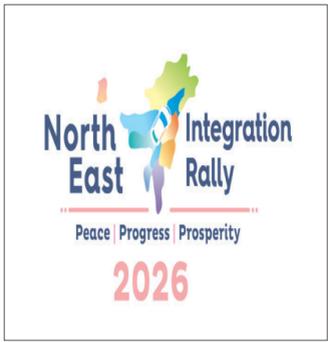




# KRC TIMES

## STAY-ENRICHED



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### PERSPECTIVE

The faster you move, the more paths appear. Momentum is the currency of new opportunities. ~ Russell Brunson, Author

## Nagaland PAC stresses consolidation of Naga political forces, avoid factionalism

**KOHIIMA**  
The Political Affairs Committee (PAC) convened today, September 3 at the State Banquet Hall, Kohima, under the leadership of Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio. The high-level meeting was attended by Deputy Chief Ministers, Ministers, Members of Parliament, Advisors, and MLAs.  
During the session, the Committee unanimously endorsed the Ungma Statement of August 23, 2025, which emphasizes the unity, courage, and enduring commitment of the Naga people to a shared future. The PAC urged all Naga Political Groups, with the collective support of the Tribal Hohos, to come together on a Common Ground to articulate and pursue a unified political vision rooted in the historical and political rights of the Naga people.  
The Committee also stressed the resumption of peace talks at the political level to accelerate the ongoing negotiation process. In addition, the PAC reaffirmed key resolutions from the Consultative Meeting of September 12, 2024, which included the participation of Tribal Hohos, civil society representatives, mass-based organizations, church bodies, NGOs, gazetted officers' unions, student bodies, and political parties. These resolutions highlighted: Appreciation for the Government of India and the Naga Political Groups for maintaining ceasefire principles and sustaining the Indo-Naga dialogue despite decades of challenges.

**WHO SAID WHAT**

Today marks 4 years of the signing of the Karbi Peace Accord under the leadership of Adarniya @narendramodi ji and the support of Adarniya @AmitShah ji, which has ensured that the beautiful region is now completely peaceful and on the path of development taking all along.

~ Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, CM Assam.

## Manipur achieves India's lowest infant mortality rate as nation records dramatic health gains

**IMPHAL**  
Manipur has emerged as India's healthcare champion, recording the country's lowest infant mortality rate of just 3 deaths per 1,000 live births, according to the latest Sample Registration System report released by the Registrar General of India.  
The northeastern state's remarkable achievement comes as India celebrates a historic milestone in public health, with the national infant mortality rate dropping to a record low of 25 in 2023—a 37.5 per cent decline from 40 recorded in 2013.  
Manipur's exceptional performance puts it ahead of traditionally healthcare-leading states, with Kerala coming second at 5 deaths per 1,000 live births, making it the only large state to achieve single-digit infant mortality rates.  
The infant mortality rate serves as a critical indicator of healthcare accessibility and quality, measuring deaths of children under one year per 1,000 live births. Lower numbers reflect better healthcare systems and living conditions.  
India's progress becomes even



more striking when viewed over five decades. The SRS 2023 report reveals an 80 per cent decline in infant mortality from 129 deaths per 1,000 births in 1971 to the current 25, marking one of the most significant public health transformations in the developing world.  
However, challenges remain concentrated in certain regions. Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Uttar Pradesh continue to struggle with the highest infant mortality rates at 37 deaths per 1,000 births, highlighting persistent healthcare disparities

## MHA extends Suspension of Operations deal, agrees to reopen NH-2

**NEW DELHI**  
Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has reached an agreement with Kuki-Zo insurgent groups to extend the Suspension of Operations (SoO) deal, ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's potential visit to conflict-hit Manipur.  
The MHA has also successfully persuaded tribal civil society groups to reopen highways that the groups had blocked for Meitei people for over two years following the ethnic violence that began on May 3, 2023. The government confirmed that officials from the MHA held a series of discussions with a Kuki-Zo Council (KZC) delegation in recent days to finalise the agreement.  
Kuki National Organisation (KNO) spokesperson Seilen Haokip confirmed that the MHA representatives and the KNO finalised the deal.  
For the past two years, the MHA has continuously negotiated with Kuki-Zo insurgent groups to renegotiate the terms of the SoO agree-



ment. The Centre, the Manipur government, and the Kuki-Zo groups signed the updated tripartite deal, which ensures that Manipur's territorial integrity remains intact.  
As part of the deal, the agreement relocates seven militant camps from conflict-prone areas, and the groups have committed to working toward lasting peace in the state.  
The Kuki-Zo Council has agreed to reopen National Highway-2 to allow free movement of people and goods, pledging to cooperate with Indian security forces stationed

along the highway. While the Kuki-Zo Council, an umbrella group of Kuki-Zo factions, has not yet issued an official statement, the agreement marks a critical step in reducing tensions.  
Since the May 2023 violence, the ethnic divide in Manipur has left Meitei people in the valley and Kuki-Zo communities in the hills.  
The Centre initially signed the SoO agreement in 2008 and renewed it annually until February 2024, when the MHA suspended it due to allegations that some insurgent groups were involved in the ethnic conflict. The groups have denied the charges. Former Chief Minister Biren Singh and his supporters have demanded the cancellation of the agreement, while Kuki-Zo groups have urged the Centre to renew it.  
Under the original terms of the SoO pact, militants had to stay in designated camps with strict movement controls, and they stored weapons in a double-lock system, overseen by both the groups and the security forces.

## Manipur Congress MP demands PM Modi's apology to people, cites ongoing suffering

**IMPHAL**  
Congress MP from Inner Manipur, Angomcha Bimol Akoijam, on September 3 demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi apologise to the people of the violence-hit state for the hardships they have been enduring since ethnic clashes erupted last year.  
Akoijam said that if the Prime Minister visits Manipur this month, as speculated in sections of the media, he must not limit it to a symbolic appearance but acknowledge the pain and suffering of the citizens. "The Prime Minister should apologise to the people if he has any shame. The visit should not be a symbolic gesture but an acknowledgement of the suffering faced by the citizens," the Congress leader asserted.  
Opposition parties have repeatedly criticised Modi for not visiting Manipur since the outbreak of ethnic violence between the Meitei and Kuki communities in May 2023, which has so far claimed at least 260 lives and displaced thousands. President's Rule was imposed in the state



earlier this year after Chief Minister N Biren Singh resigned in February.  
Reports suggest Modi may combine his Mizoram visit this month with a trip to Manipur. The Prime Minister is scheduled to arrive in Mizoram on September 12 and inaugurate the Bairabi-Sairang railway line the next day. However, senior Manipur government officials and BJP leaders said there has been no official confirmation of his Manipur visit. It also called for improving cancer care facilities in high-incidence regions to address disparities in access and treatment.

## NEC allocates Rs 12.18 crore for development projects across North East



**GUWAHATI**  
The Ministry of the North Eastern Council (NEC) on Thursday announced the release of Rs 12.18 crore to fund multiple development projects across the North East region, including Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya, and Manipur.  
The funding aims to promote agriculture, animal husbandry, education, skill development, and livelihood generation in the region.  
The NEC has allocated funds for a variety of initiatives. Key allocations

include Rs 2.33 crore for Scientific Smoked Meat Production units and Rs 2.93 crore for Phase-III of Scientific Pig Breeding Units. Rs 1.24 crore has been earmarked for a Multi-Agriculture Project promoting fishery and piggyery in Manipur and Meghalaya, while Rs 54.18 lakh will be used to establish a piggyery value chain in Imphal West, Thoubal, and Bishnupur districts of Manipur.  
The council has also allocated Rs 50.42 lakh for setting up an avocado orchard and Rs 2.07 crore for the constitution of the Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE) as a nodal institute.  
Additionally, Rs 8.55 lakh has been set aside for NEC Merit Scholarships, and Rs 1.08 crore and Rs 1.10 crore for Multi-Agriculture allied and piggyery promotion projects in Manipur and Nagaland.  
Further allocations include Rs 8 lakh for a national conference on ethical journalism titled Empowering Voice in North East India, Rs 10 lakh for a Workshop on Financial Inclusion in Mizoram (Phase-II), and Rs 9.95 lakh for the Government Achievement Expo 2025.  
An NEC official said these initiatives are part of a wider strategy to boost sustainable development, strengthen livelihoods, and enhance skill development across the North Eastern states.

## Gauhati University ranks 9th among India's top state universities in NIRF 2025



**GUWAHATI**  
Gauhati University has achieved a significant milestone by securing the ninth position among India's top 10 state public universities in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2025 rankings announced by the Ministry of Education.  
The achievement marks a notable recognition for the Assam-based institution, which competed against numerous state universities across the country. Assam's Education Minister Ranoj Pegu celebrated the accomplishment on social media, calling it a "proud moment" for the state.

According to the NIRF rankings, Jadavpur University in Kolkata claimed the top spot, followed by Anna University in Chennai at second place. Panjab University, Chandigarh rounded out the top three positions.  
The rankings also featured Andhra University, Visakhapatnam (4th), Kerala University, Thiruvananthapuram (5th), Cochin University of Science and Technology (6th), Osmania University, Hyderabad (7th), and University of Kashmir, Srinagar (8th) ahead of Gauhati University. Bharathiar University, Coimbatore secured the tenth position. The NIRF

rankings evaluate institutions based on parameters including teaching, learning resources, research and professional practices, graduation outcomes, outreach and inclusivity, and perception. The framework serves as India's official ranking system for higher education institutions. Meanwhile, Assam Minister Ranjit Kumar Dass attended the inaugural ceremony of the Western Zonal Youth Festival held at Abhayapuri College in Bongaigaon. Speaking on the occasion, the minister lauded Gauhati University's recent achievement of climbing from the 11th to the 9th position in the national rankings. Calling it a "positive step," Dass congratulated the entire Gauhati University fraternity for their collective effort in attaining this milestone at the all-India level. This recognition places Gauhati University among the country's premier state-funded educational institutions, highlighting its academic standards and overall performance in various evaluation criteria set by the national ranking body.

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## SCO UNITED AGAINST TERROR



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The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Tianjin has reaffirmed an enduring truth: terrorism is not a local problem; it is a global scourge that demands a united, uncompromising response. The unanimous condemnation of the Pahalgal attack and the clear rejection of “double standards” in the fight against terror mark a significant diplomatic moment—especially for India. This is the second major international platform, after the recent BRICS summit, where India has succeeded in highlighting terrorism as a core global security challenge, even in the presence of countries that have historically adopted ambiguous positions on the issue. What makes this achievement even more noteworthy is the contrast with the last SCO foreign ministers’ meeting, which failed to reach a consensus on a joint statement against terrorism. This declaration, therefore, is more than symbolism; it is a reflection of changing geopolitical equations and the growing recognition that terrorism threatens not only regional stability but also the global economic order.

India’s stand has always been consistent and uncompromising: terrorism and talks cannot go together. Prime Minister Modi delivered a strong message—calling out “double standards” and urging the international community to oppose terrorism in every form—in the presence of Pakistan’s Prime Minister, making the statement even more powerful. Pakistan’s attempt to raise concerns about terrorism during the summit exposed its duplicitous stance, given its well-documented role in sponsoring cross-border terror. This duplicity is now harder to conceal when multilateral declarations explicitly call for action against sponsors, organisers and enablers of terrorism.

Equally significant is China’s position. Historically, Beijing has shielded Pakistan diplomatically, blocking UN sanctions on Pakistan-based terror groups and individuals. Yet, at Tianjin, China joined the consensus, endorsing language that condemns terrorism “in all forms” and rejects the practice of using terrorist groups for “mercenary purposes”. This shift is not altruistic; it reflects China’s growing realisation that selective tolerance of terrorism is a strategic liability, especially in an interconnected world where instability anywhere can reverberate across supply chains, trade and investment flows.

The broader geopolitical context cannot be ignored. The world is grappling with economic fragility exposed by ongoing tariff wars, disruptions in global trade, and rising energy insecurities. In such an environment, developing nations—already burdened by billions in security expenditures—can ill afford the costs of prolonged conflict and terrorism. For the Global South, the message is clear: resources wasted on countering terror are resources diverted from growth, infrastructure and human development. Without peace, the dream of economic parity with developed nations remains elusive.

The SCO was conceived as a platform to counter Western dominance and foster regional cooperation. However, this vision can only be realised if member states address mutual concerns honestly and build trust. For India, this means accountability from both Pakistan and China—whether on cross-border terrorism or infrastructure projects in Indian-claimed territories. For China, if it truly seeks a formidable partnership with Russia and India to counterbalance Western influence, it must rethink its policy of strategic indulgence toward Pakistan. Continued support for Pakistan’s state-sponsored terror infrastructure will remain the single biggest obstacle to India-China rapprochement.

Foreign policy, as always, is a game of give and take. India understands this dynamic. It has shown through surgical strikes, the Balakot airstrikes, and Operation Sindoor that it will act unilaterally when necessary. But India also knows that lasting impact requires a coalition of willing nations, united not just in words but in coordinated action. The recent summits have shown glimmers of this possibility. The next step must be to translate declarations into deliverables. China, as a major power, must use its influence to nudge Pakistan away from using terrorism as an instrument of state policy.

The way forward is clear: economic cooperation and security cannot exist in isolation. Just as nations converge on trade and energy for mutual benefit, they must also converge on eliminating terrorism as a shared mission. The SCO summit has brought friends and foes to the same table; now, it must ensure that this rare consensus becomes a sustained commitment.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

“Education isn’t something you can finish.” - Isaac Asimov

# India-China | Why the glass brought back from Tianjin is half-full



M K BHADRAKUMAR

Surveying Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s two-day visit to Tianjin, most China experts and ex-bureaucrats are sceptical whether an India-China rapprochement is possible. India’s “permanent establishment”, with its tunnel vision, is wary of China’s intentions. Like in Bertolt Brecht’s existential play *Waiting for Godot*, they would rather await Donald Trump’s arrival. Thus, it is largely left to the global audience to take note of the geopolitics of Modi’s visit.

If Modi travelled to China with hopes of rebuilding the India-China relations from ground zero, he returned home with a glass half-full. That is not because the visit and the meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping weren’t meticulously planned. On the contrary, high-level discussions in New Delhi between top officials of the two countries had preceded the visit up to the eleventh hour.

First, the impact of the visit on bilateral cooperation. Xi told Modi that achieving a “dragon-elephant dance” is the right choice for the two neighbouring countries. Modi argued that peace and tranquillity at the border are prerequisites for bilateral ties. While Xi flagged that the bilateral ties cannot be defined merely by the boundary issue, Modi added, and Xi agreed, that India and China are partners, not adversaries, and would have far more consensus than differences. Both agreed that differences should not turn into disputes.

Both India and China see the potential to leverage the external environment of tariff walls to build greater mutual understanding to advance commercial ties. Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri stated at a media briefing that this is a discussion going on at many levels between the two governments, and businesses and entities that are involved in trade in the two countries, “and we will have to see how it evolves”.

China is very much interested in the expansion and deepening of business ties, and more importantly, is conscious of the role that the Indian and Chinese

economies can play in stabilising world trade. Thus, Modi and Xi agreed, once again, that there is need to proceed from a political and strategic direction to reduce India’s trade deficit, facilitate bilateral trade and investment ties and inject transparency and predictability into business conditions.

Another significant outcome is to accelerate implementation of the understandings reached between the two countries’ special representatives at their 24th round of talks on the boundary held in New Delhi just a fortnight ago. There was understanding on the need to maintain peace on the border using the existing and new mechanisms, and to avoid disturbing the overall relationship.

Misri disclosed that an immediate follow-up can be expected in the coming days and weeks to flesh out the recent decisions of the special representatives with regard to setting up an expert group to “explore early harvest in boundary delimitation” in the border areas; setting up a working group “to advance effective border management”; creating general level mechanisms in the eastern and middle sectors; and discuss de-escalation.

Overall, there is no question that the meeting at Tianjin injected new momentum into the bilateral relations. Both leaders actively signalled cooperation. The involvement of Cai Qi, a senior politician in Xi’s inner circle for many years, is noteworthy.

The importance of being Cai Qi should be understood. He is the first-ranked member of the Secretariat of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), fifth-ranking member of the CCP Politburo Standing Committee and director of the CCP General Office—making him the de facto chief of staff to CCP General Secretary Xi. In his capacity as director of CCP’s General Office, Cai supervises the implementation of top-level decisions, internal and external alike.

The ministry of external affairs readout said that Modi “shared with Cai his vision for bilateral relations and sought his support to realise the vision of the two leaders”. According to Xinhua,

Cai said China “is willing to work with India to enhance friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation, properly manage and resolve differences, and promote further improvement and development of China-India relations”.

Presumably, such robust political signalling and the new formulation that India and China are “development partners and not rivals” go to convey that Beijing and New Delhi are making strategic choices based on their own interests. However, the paradox remains that the cup is still only half-full. What will happen remains to be seen.

In the recent past, *Global Times* featured two commentaries on the “confrontational nature” of the Quad. The more recent one coinciding with the Xi-Modi meeting noted, “Regional countries should approach alliance relations with a more cautious and pragmatic mindset. A regional architecture based on strategic autonomy and win-win cooperation, rather than blindly following others, serves the interests of stakeholders better.”

The bottomline is that Beijing, like most world capitals, is awaiting the denouement that will inevitably appear to the US-Indian alienation. But the pantomime playing out at different levels involves multiple actors. The tidings from Tianjin, for instance, and the one-hour intense conversation on Sunday between Modi and Russian president Vladimir Putin inside the latter’s limousine—that is insulated from eavesdropping by spy agencies—hinted at an extraordinary Russian-Indian convergence. That said, the fate of Russian oil in the Indian market as such remains uncertain.

A day later, Anant Ambani, son of billionaire Mukesh Ambani, revealed in his first address at Reliance’s annual general meeting of shareholders that there is pressure in purchasing Russian oil. Make no mistake that when Washington criticises India for buying Russian oil, the implication is that it wants India to “pick a side”—the same logic behind drawing India into the Quad. And that

goal is nothing more than to turn India into a pawn in Washington’s so-called Indo-Pacific Strategy. But Delhi is still confused whether such small political cliques align with its pursuit of full strategic autonomy.

The talks in Tianjin provide a rare window of opportunity for improving the China-India relationship. Challenges do remain, but the two countries’ willingness for pragmatic cooperation introduces a positive variable into global strategic balance. That beginning augurs well, but Modi needs to follow up.

### DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

As an elected MP in Lok Sabha, under the Constitution of the country, I do not represent Akoljam Sagei or Angom tribe/clan, let alone the Meitei community. I represent the people, the citizens - irrespective of caste, creed, tribe, community or religion - enlisted in the voter list - of my parliamentary constituency, namely, the “Inner Manipur Parliamentary Constituency”. That’s the way, I think, feel and act. But those who suffer from the virulent viruses called “communalism” and “tribalism” think, feel and act like he or she is there to represent his/her religious community or tribe of his Lok Sabha or the Assembly constituency. Such a person whose personality is afflicted by communalism and/or tribalism, will forget that Indian Constitution does not entertain “communal representation”. But following affirmative political thought/philosophy, it does follow reservation policy for Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes. Thus, seats are reserved in the Lok Sabha as well as in the State Assemblies for ST and SC proportionate to their percentage in the population. Thus, in Manipur, based on the census of 1961 (ST percentage was then 31%), the then available census data before the amendment of the Constitution of 1971 that granted full statehood to Manipur, 19 seats out of 60 (which is 31%) were reserved for ST. In these seats, non-ST were deprived of their Constitutional right to contest election. Out of the remaining 41 seats, one was reserved for the SC, and the rest (40 seats) are left as Unreserved (general) seats where all the citizens listed in that constituencies enjoy both the right to contest as well as the right to cast her/his vote. So, if a Hmar person represents a Constituency such as Churachandpur AC, she/he represents not only Hmar tribe but Paite, Thadou etc, including Meitei electorates in that Constituency. Similarly, if a Kuki person is the MLA of Kangpokpi AC (which is, by the way, an Unreserved/General seat), she/he represents not only “Kuki” but also all the electorates of that Constituency, including those belonging to other communities such as Nepalis, Meiteis etc. The same goes for Unreserved constituencies such as Thangmeiband, Sagolbaid, Uripok, those elected members represent their electorates which also includes ST, SC, Marwaris, Sikhs etc. Likewise, reserved seats like Tengnoupal or Chandel etc, are not reserved for any specific ST, let alone the “Kukis”. And their MLAs don’t represent their respective tribes alone. So, if there are 30 or 40 Meitei MLAs, they are elected by their electorates from the Unreserved seats based on the constitutional spirit and schemes of this country. And thus, they don’t represent their sages or tribe/clan, let alone Meitei community. They represent their electorates - irrespective of tribe, caste and creed etc. That’s the foundation, the letter and spirit of the Constitution. However, people who are afflicted by communalism and tribalism will think, feel and act against such Constitutional spirit and schemes by seeking to present this reality as “communal representation”. They not only preach and act against the Constitution, guided by their compulsive communalism and tribalism, they also preach, produce and pursue hatred and bloodshed in society and polity. All the democrats and the lovers of freedom and peace must be mindful and wary of such people, and defeat their nefarious communal agendas.

- A. Bimol Akoljam, MP, Inner Manipur

## HOW TO JUDGE JUDGEMENTS

SAAI SUDHARSAN SATHIYAMOORTHY

The natural use of the word ‘judgement’ is to denote a mental act of attributing a predicate to a subject. In that sense, the act of judging primarily involves inference, that is, determination of the connotation of the subject, or attribution of certain property to the object even if the inference arrived at, or the attribution cast upon, are not justified or derived through argumentation.

This conception, rooted in the classical tradition extending from Aristotelian logic through contemporary analytic philosophy, generally understands judgement as the attribution of properties to particular objects or subjects.

In the legal context, where a judge is required to deliver a judgement based on facts and to justify the inference or attribution, this conception reflects as the determination that particular factual or normative claims are true or false. This determination carries significant practical consequences.

When a court determines that a person is guilty of negligence, it is making a substantive assessment about the relationship between ‘individual agency’ and the legal consequence of the use of the agency. The underlying conclusion is the result of determinations about personal identity over time, the nature of causal responsibility, and the ontological status of legal properties. In this case, the court has passed a judgement that a person is guilty of a particular offense, and it

differs from a more generalised judgement that “negligence must be punished with liability”.

However, some judgements do not involve such attributions or objects. This dimension concerns their relationship with truth—as a determination, recognition or attribution of truth values to factual or normative claims.

Take the Kesavananda Bharati (1973) judgement, which arguably represents the most important example of such truth value attribution in Indian constitutional law.

The Supreme Court held that parliament’s power to amend the Constitution was subject to implicit limitations that preserve the Constitution’s basic structure. Here, the alethic dimension manifested through the court recognising the truth of a constitutional interpretation that curbed parliament’s powers.

The language of judicial judgements is the language of logic. These conceptions reveal that judicial judgements, much like other judgements, emerge not just as a derivative phenomenon but as the fundamental structure within which cognitive activity occurs. Institutions ensure that questions about the characterisation of persons and events are addressed through processes that take seriously both epistemic concerns about truth and concerns about fair procedure.

However, as Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr of the US Supreme Court once noted, “The whole outline of the law is the resultant of a conflict at every point between logic and good

sense.” In Common Law (1881), Justice Holmes elaborated: “The actual life of the law has not been logic; it has been experience. The felt necessities of the times, the prevalent moral and political theories, intuitions of public policy, avowed or unconscious, even the prejudices which judges share with their fellow-men, have had a good deal more to do than syllogism.”

As legal realists would attest, judges’ background, beliefs, temperament and even the demeanor of the arguing counsels affect the manner in which issues are framed and weighed. This, however, is not because the judges are acting in bad faith or pursuing an agenda. Rather, their lived experiences, which is what Justice Holmes refers to as “good sense”, lead them to see the same legal issues differently, even if the language of their judgements follow the same logic. For example, one cannot deny that Kesavananda Bharati was a product of its time.

How does one then criticise judgements, especially ones that deal with constitutional issues? One way would be evaluating the judgements based on their fidelity to formal logic and its methods. Yet, this may not always capture the undercurrents driving legal developments.

Another way would be adopting pragmatism, to judge judgements on the basis of their practical outcomes. There always being a competing “good sense”, as long as the outcomes are not anathematic, the judgement must stand. Finally, we may judge also on the basis of whether the

judge has adequately acknowledged and tested their pre-suppositions in the form of adherence to procedure.

Take the recent interim order of the Madras High Court staying an amendment taking away the governor’s power to appoint vice chancellors. The criticism of the order primarily focused on what some labelled as “misplaced urgency”, pendency of a transfer petition before the Supreme Court, and an alleged lack of opportunity to file a counter.

However, the criticism ignores the fact that Tamil Nadu had already constituted search committees, issued government orders, published advertisements, and commenced the selection process for vice-chancellor appointments. The criticism fundamentally misunderstands judicial duty. The SC had given no stay order or oral injunction, preventing the high court from proceeding. All of these, including the issue of opportunity to file counters, are dealt with in the order.

It is not that the high court’s order is immune to critique. The inadequacy of the criticism simply points to a broader problem: we tend to criticise constitutional judgements through result-oriented attacks or procedural nitpicking. A better approach would be to engage with alternative constitutional interpretations and their practical consequences, while maintaining transparency about our own motivations, values and assumptions.

## Thadou, Karbi and Dimasa bodies condemn killing of Nehkam Jomhao, demand NIA probe

**KARBI ANGLONG:**

Five community organisations — Thadou Inpi (TI), Karbi Students' Association (KSA), Dimasa Students' Union (DSU), Thadou Students' Association (TSA) and Thadou Women's Association (TWA) — have strongly condemned the killing of Thadou leader Nehkam Jomhao on August 30 at Manja village in Karbi Anglong, allegedly by cadres of Kuki militant groups KRA, UKDA and KLA.

According to the organisations, seven militants have been arrested and confessed to the crime, but the masterminds, including leaders of the three outfits, remain at large. Two of those arrested are reportedly from Manipur and had recently joined the groups. Jomhao's body, allegedly mutilated, has



yet to be recovered. Jomhao had attended a "Road to Peace" community meeting in Imphal on August 6 as part of a Thadou delegation. Thadou Inpi clarified that the delegates did not represent the Kuki community. However, the groups said Kuki organisations subsequently targeted the Thadous with threats, social boycotts and hate campaigns.

The bodies alleged that the killing was part of a wider pattern of persecution of Thadous by Kuki militant groups, describing it as "cultural genocide." They also released a timeline of escalating hostilities:

May 2024: Kuki militants allegedly ordered the Thadou Students' Association to dissolve.  
Nov 2024: A complaint was filed with Assam Police but no

action followed.  
March 2025: KRA, UKDA and KLA reportedly banned the Hun-Thadou Cultural Festival.

April 2025: Kuki National Assembly-Assam allegedly carried out an unlawful census of Thadou households and declared Thadou delegates as "enemies."

The organisations said the killing has strained long-standing ties between the Thadou, Karbi and Dimasa communities. They noted that Manja holds historical significance, having been gifted by Karbis to the Thadous after the 1992-93 Kuki-Thadou violence. Jomhao's brother was also a victim of that conflict.

In a joint statement, the groups demanded the following from the central and state governments:

1. Immediate arrest of the

masterminds and militant leaders.

2. Recovery of Jomhao's body.
3. Transfer of the case to the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

4. Removal of Kuki militants from Karbi Anglong and Assam.

5. Cancellation of the Suspension of Operation (SoO) with KRA, UKDA and KLA, and their declaration as terrorist outfits.

6. Ban on Kuki militant and anti-peace organisations.

7. Establishment of a peace memorial park in Karbi Anglong in honour of Jomhao.

The organisations warned that the unchecked activities of Kuki militants were fuelling lawlessness and recalled past ethnic clashes, including the Kuki-Thadou violence in 1992-93 and the Kuki-Karbi clash in 2003.

### Nagaland CM urges cultural preservation at mini hornbill festival

**KOHIWA**

Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio used the platform of the Mungmung-cum-Mini Hornbill Festival in Longkhim, Tuensang, on September 3 to stress the importance of safeguarding and promoting Naga cultural heritage. Addressing the gathering, Rio said festivals go beyond celebration and play a vital role in reconciliation, unity, and spiritual renewal. He underlined the government's initiatives, including the Hornbill Festival and regional cultural events, as part of efforts to promote traditional values. Reflecting on ancestral practices, Rio described the resilience of past generations as "savage wisdom" rooted in hard work. He called on people to adopt such traditions for sustainable livelihoods and harmony with nature. On the ongoing demand of the Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation (ENPO) regarding the Frontier Nagaland Territory, he appealed for understanding and dialogue. The event also featured remarks from state advisor H. Sethrongkyu Sangtam, who highlighted the unifying role of the festival, and speeches from ENPO president A. Chingmak and Sumi Hoho president Vihoto, who spoke of solidarity and cultural pride. Li-odong of Phir Ahi village explained the cultural significance of Mungmung. Traditional performances formed the core of the celebrations. Male folk dances were presented by groups from Phir Ahi, Chimonger, Chungtor, Tronger, and Tsungti Mulong Singrep villages, while female troupes from Kiding, Angangba, Tsuru, and Holongba villages showcased their heritage. Festival-goers also witnessed demonstrations of fire-making, top-spinning, log drum beating by youths from Angangba, and cotton spinning by women of Chimonger. A special song titled "Oh Mungmung" was performed by Shujingla Thonger and Kohjungli Jingru, adding a musical tribute to the occasion.

### COCOMI condemns killing of peace advocate Nehkam Jomhao, blames narco-terror networks

**IMPHAL:**

The Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI) has strongly condemned the brutal killing of 59-year-old advocate and Thadou Literature Society chairman Nehkam Jomhao, calling it an attack on peace and unity in the region.

Jomhao was assassinated on August 30 at his residence in Chonghang Veng, Manja, Karbi Anglong. According to COCOMI, the killing was carried out by extremists linked to Chin-Kuki militant groups UKDA and KRA. His mutilated body was allegedly thrown into a nearby river and has yet to be recovered.

Describing Jomhao as "a respected advocate for peace," COCOMI said his participation in the August 6 "Road to Peace - Covenant of Community Understanding" in Imphal reflected his commitment to reconciliation among communities. The organisation alleged that such peaceful voices are being deliberately targeted by "narco-terrorist networks" seeking to destabilise Manipur and silence

those calling for unity.

"This tragedy is not an isolated incident but part of a calculated suppression of collective will," COCOMI said in a statement, warning that networks of militants, strategists and financiers must be dismantled rather than focusing only on individual arrests. Six suspects have so far been taken into custody.

The committee also criticised the Government of India for what it called a failed policy of appeasement. It argued that Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreements with groups like KRA and UKDA have allowed militant factions to operate with impunity, shielding them under the cover of peace talks while indigenous communities continue to face violence.

COCOMI appealed to all communities in Manipur to stand together against extremism. "This is a time for solidarity, resilience and unyielding resolve," the group said, adding that Jomhao's death should serve as a call to renew the struggle for peace and unity.

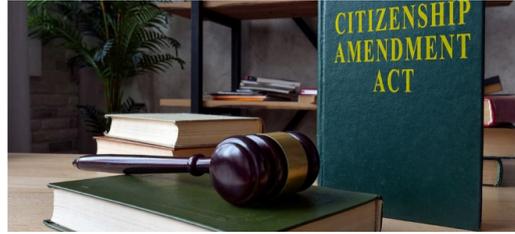
## CAA extension insult to Assam Accord and Assamese sentiment: Opposition

**GUWAHATI**

Opposition parties in Assam have strongly criticised the BJP-led governments at the Centre and in the state over the recent order allowing non-Muslims from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan to stay in India without valid travel documents if they entered the country till 2024.

The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA) provides a pathway to Indian citizenship for Hindus, Jains, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis from the three neighbouring countries who arrived on or before December 31, 2014, after residing in India for five years. However, the September 1 notification extended the cut-off by a decade, enabling immigrants to remain in the country until 2024.

The Assam Jatiya Parishad



(AJP), Congress, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the CPI(M) termed the move a direct violation of the Assam Accord, which had fixed March 25, 1971, as the cut-off date for identifying and deporting illegal migrants.

AJP president Lurinjyoti Gogoi accused the BJP of endangering the Assamese community's survival for electoral gains. "By extending the CAA deadline by another 10 years, the BJP has increased Assam's

burden from 43 years of foreigners to 53 years. This is a grave injustice and the biggest crime ever committed against the Assamese people," he said. AJP workers staged a protest at the party headquarters in Guwahati, burning copies of the order in a symbolic show of defiance.

Leader of the Opposition in the Assam Assembly, Debabrata Saikia of the Congress, said the notification would allow nearly five lakh illegal foreign-

ers to remain in the state, undermining the Assam Accord. "The extension is an insult to the Accord and to every Assamese sentiment. We demand its immediate withdrawal or at least exemption for Assam," he added.

The AAP also condemned the decision, with its state general secretary Rajib Saikia calling it "dictatorial" and urging the Centre to roll back the order. The CPI(M) echoed the demand, warning that the move would have dangerous consequences for Assam's social fabric.

Meanwhile, officials said the notification, issued under the recently implemented Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025, was intended to provide relief to many, particularly Hindus from Pakistan who entered India after 2014 and were uncertain about their status.

## RSS felicitates Vir Chakra awardee Squadron Leader Rizwan Malik in Imphal East

**IMPHAL**

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) today felicitated Vir Chakra awardee Squadron Leader Rizwan Malik at his residence in Keikhu village, Imphal East, hailing his extraordinary bravery during Operation Sindoor and describing him as "a role model for the youth of Manipur and the entire nation."

A team of senior RSS leaders, led by Kh. Rajen Singh, Karyawah of Assam Kshetra, and Dr. Sunil Mohanty, Prachar Pramukh of Assam Kshetra, along with senior functionaries from RSS Manipur, visited Rizwan's home, where they were warmly welcomed by his father Hafizuddin Malik, family members, and local leaders.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Mohanty praised Squadron Leader



Rizwan's courage, composure under fire, and unwavering devotion to duty. He said Rizwan's heroism during Operation Sindoor epitomised the indomitable spirit of India's Armed Forces, which always place the nation above personal safety.

"His gallantry highlights the strength of our Armed Forces and the timeless values of discipline, teamwork, and sacrifice that define India. Rizwan stands as a true role model for the younger generation,"

he said, adding that India's defence system remains strong because of its integrated approach combining the Armed Forces, political leadership, and diplomacy.

The gathering also recalled the legacy of Colonel Shaikat Ali Malik of the Indian National Army under Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and Niyamat Tulla, who fought in the Battle of Khongom. They noted that Rizwan's honour continues Keikhu village's long tradition of courage and sacrifice.

Addressing the gathering, Squadron Leader Rizwan reflected on the teamwork and discipline of the Indian Armed Forces, stressing that his achievement was possible only because of his team. He drew inspiration from former President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, whom he described as his role model, and

recalled that even amidst conflict, the Indian Army upholds humanity and respect for adversaries.

The RSS leaders also remembered the bravery of BSF Constable Deepak Chingakhom of Manipur, who was awarded the Vir Chakra for counter-terrorist operations. They said the sacrifices and courage of soldiers like Rizwan and Deepak reflected the indomitable spirit of Manipur's youth in defending the nation.

Concluding the event, the RSS leaders said Rizwan's Vir Chakra honour not only brings glory to Manipur but also strengthens the message of unity, patriotism, and service to the nation. They expressed confidence that his example will inspire future generations to dedicate themselves to India's progress and security.

## Tripura to honour 24 top schools and colleges on teachers' day

**AGARTALA**

Tripura's government will honour 24 schools and colleges for their achievements in academics, sports, culture, technology, and community initiatives during the state-level Teachers' Day celebration on September 5.

The Directorate of Secondary Education has released the list of institutions selected across multiple categories. The awards will cover areas such as board exam results, student attendance, sports performance, cultural activities, cleanliness, and implementation of government schemes like PM POSHAN.

Among the awardees, Dudpur High School in Unakoti district will be recognised for best attendance, while Kathalia Girls HS School in Sepahijala has been chosen for top results in the TBSE board exams. Rajnagar Colony HS School in South Tripura topped in CBSE performance.

In sports, PM SHRI Nabagram HS School of West Tripura will be awarded, while Golden Valley HS School in North Tripura and Tellamura HS School in Khowai have been selected for cultural and co-curricular excellence.

Four schools, including PM SHRI Jnanoday English Medium School in South Tripura and

Radhakishor Institution in Unakoti, will be honoured for effective implementation of the PM POSHAN scheme. Recognition in the IT category will go to Kirit Bikram Institution in Gomati, Sabroom Girls HS School in South Tripura, Mungjabari HS School in Khowai, and Khudiram Basu English Medium School in West Tripura.

Cleanliness awards under the Swachhata category will be presented to Ratan Roaja Para High School in Dhalai and West Bokafa HS School in South Tripura. Bhagat Singh English Medium HS School in West Tripura has been declared the best overall performer.

For higher education, Netaji Subhas Mahavidyalaya in Gomati will receive the award for best degree college, while TTAADC Polytechnic in West Tripura will be honoured as the best polytechnic.

Additionally, five schools will receive special recognition for green initiatives, including Mendi Hour High School in Dhalai and Bir Bikram Institution in North Tripura.

District Education Officers have been asked to formally invite the heads of these institutions to the state-level programme, where the awards will be presented.

## Assam State Award 2025: 15 Teachers recognised for excellence in education

**GUWAHATI**

The Department of School Education, Government of Assam, has announced the names of 15 distinguished teachers for the State Award 2025, recognizing their outstanding contributions to the field of education.

Among the awardees, eight teachers represent the secondary education category, while seven have been chosen from elementary education. The selected teachers come from different districts of Assam, reflecting a wide representation of the state's teaching fraternity.

From secondary education, the awardees are Ngi Yot Weingken of Taiphake High MP School; Liladhar Upadhyay of Rashtra Bhasha Vidyalaya HES, Duliayan; Ranjit Bikash Chetia of GB Chowkhani HS School; Swapnali Gogoi of Moran Public High School; Bhrihu Prasad Sarmah of Panigaon HS School; Rajesh Bordoloi of Adarsha Tribal HS School; Damaru Dhar Newar of PM Shri Tarioni Borbil HS; and Sufian Siddiquee Barbhuya of PM Shri Jamira Higher Secondary School.

In the elementary education category, the awardees are Niju Rava of Pub



Zaloni LP School, Gunindra Gohain of Dangarchuk LP School, Urbashi Das of 10 No. Mazirgaon Krm LP School; Nobin Chandra Das of 1 No. Parangonia Jyoti LP School; Nandita Rajput of Silbheta LP School; Anil Chandra Hazarika of 295 No. Kulumjogonia LP School; and Dipika Sab-

hapandit of Baligaon MV School. The State Award to teachers is an annual recognition given by the Assam government to honour educators who have made exemplary efforts in shaping young minds and contributing to the overall progress of school education in

the state. The awardees will be felicitated at a State-level function on September 5, in Tezpur University, where they will be presented with citations and honours in recognition of their dedication and service to the teaching profession.

**Quest!**  
An Apollo astronaut lost his wedding ring during his trip to the moon and found it again during a spacewalk.

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## Congress terms GST rate cuts partial fix, calls it 'GST 1.5'; says wait for true GST 2.0 continues



NEW DELHI

The Congress on Wednesday dismissed the GST Council's recent rate cuts as a partial fix and termed it a "GST 1.5".

Responding to the overhaul of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime announced on Wednesday, Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh reiterated that the wait for a full-fledged "GST 2.0" still continues.

The opposition leader also criticised the workflow where Prime Minister Narendra Modi had already outlined key GST reforms in his August 15 Independence Day address, even before the official GST Council meeting. Ramesh questioned whether the Council was being reduced to a mere formality.

He said that a key demand of the states made in the true spirit of cooperative federalism—namely, the extension of compensation for another five years to fully protect their revenues—remains unaddressed. In fact, that demand assumes even greater importance now, he said. "The Congress has for long

been advocating for a GST 2.0 that reduces the number of rates, cuts the rates on a large number of items of mass consumption, minimises evasion, mis-classification, and disputes, does away with inverted duty structure (lower tax on output as compared to inputs), eases the compliance burden on MSMEs, and expands GST coverage," Ramesh posted on X.

He noted that Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has made major announcements last evening after the meeting of the GST Council, which is a constitutional body.

"However, even before the GST Council meeting, the Prime Minister had already proclaimed the substance of its decisions in his Independence Day speech of August 15th, 2025. Is the GST Council to be reduced to a formality?" Ramesh said.

He also said that the Congress had already highlighted the GST flaws in 2017.

"Faced with a lack of buoyancy in private consumption, subdued rates of private investment, and endless classification disputes, the Union Finance

Minister has finally recognised that GST 1.0 had reached a dead end. In fact, the very design of GST 1.0 was flawed and this had been pointed out by the INC (Indian National Congress) way back in July 2017 itself, when the PM had made one of his typical U turns and decided to introduce GST," Ramesh's post on X also read.

It was meant to be a 'Good and Simple Tax' but turned out to be a 'Growth Suppressing Tax', Ramesh said.

The Congress functionary further said that Wednesday evening's announcements have certainly made headlines since the prime minister had already laid down the pre-Diwali deadlines. Presumably the benefits of rate cuts will be passed on to consumers, he added.

"However, the wait for a true GST 2.0 continues. Whether this new GST 1.5, if it can be called that, stimulates private investment—especially in manufacturing—remains to be seen. Whether this will ease the burden on MSMEs, time alone will tell," Ramesh said.

## BJP, Congress both rely on national party figures - Modi, Rahul more than local leaders in Bihar

NEW DELHI

As Bihar edges closer to its upcoming assembly elections, the political atmosphere is intensifying. The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) is preparing a robust counter to the rising challenge posed by the Opposition's Voters Adhikar Yatra, spearheaded by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and RJD's Tejashwi Yadav.

Their slogan, Vote Chori (Vote Theft), directed squarely at the BJP, appears to have struck a chord with sections of Opposition-leaning voters, injecting new momentum into what was previously seen as a relatively one-sided contest. In a well-calculated way to counter down, the BJP is likely to launch state-centric outreaches and campaigns after September 9 (once the Vice Presidential election concludes), focusing on the "double engine" model of governance—development at the Centre under Prime Minister Modi, along with administrative continuity under Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's NDA government in the state.

However, Nitish's leadership no longer commands the unchallenged stature it once did. His repeated political realignments and weakening public connect have prompted the BJP to recalibrate its electoral focus towards Modi's personal brand of governance and the NDA's performance in Bihar, without officially sidelining Nitish as the coalition's face.

Unlike in previous campaigns, the Congress, historically a peripheral player in Bihar's political landscape, is now assuming a more central role as a key ally of the RJD-led Mahagathbandhan (Grand Alliance). Rahul Gandhi's cross-regional mobilisation through the Voters Adhikar Yatra is being pitched by Congress strategists as a grassroots pushback against what they describe as the NDA's democratic erosion.

The slogan 'Vote Chori' is not only resonating at the ground level but is also being used strategically to unite disparate caste and community blocs, particularly among Dalits, backward classes, and minority groups. Sources within the Mahagathbandhan from Bihar said that



Gandhi's increased engagement with the grassroots is helping project him as a viable alternative to Modi—particularly among younger and first-time voters who feel politically marginalised.

To play it down, the BJP is reportedly deploying senior leaders, including Union ministers and influential MPs from Bihar, to undertake an extensive outreach programme. These leaders are set to tour all 38 districts in the coming weeks, holding public meetings (jan sabhas) and engaging in booth-level interactions. The focus will be on countering what the BJP claims is Opposition-led misinformation regarding electoral integrity (through the Vote Chori slogan) and governance failures.

An internal BJP strategist, speaking on condition of anonymity, remarked that while the Congress and RJD are relying on emotional narratives, the BJP intends to respond with data, development indicators, and the credibility of Modi's leadership. The strategist argued that Rahul Gandhi's slogans may attract attention, but Bihar's electorate ultimately seeks stability and proven results, and for that NDA comes as the first choice.

Despite the high-decibel campaign

surrounding the Opposition's recently concluded Yatra, public sentiment in Bihar remains nuanced and unpredictable. In past elections, large crowds have not always translated into votes. A significant segment of voters—particularly women and the youth—tend to remain silent but play a decisive role on polling day. This demographic often views state politics through a national lens, rather than solely a local one. And, the BJP-led NDA, through many centric welfare schemes has moved in towards wooing these sections of voters.

While the BJP continues to benefit from a strong organisational structure and Modi's enduring appeal among urban and aspirational voters, but undeniably, discontent is simmering in the rural areas, especially concerning employment, migration, and persistent caste disparities.

It comes to the fore when one visits the rural belts of Bihar, where the people acknowledge the works done by the NDA government in the state on roads and electricity but lament on the employment and law and order front.

On the other side, Tejashwi Yadav remains a popular figure among young and backwards caste voters. However,

the legacy of the so-called 'jungle raj' and ongoing intra-party tensions within the RJD remain significant hurdles.

The Congress, under Rahul Gandhi's more pronounced leadership presence, is attempting to expand its local base and narrative, though converting this visibility into actual vote share remains a considerable challenge. Rahul Gandhi's past and present statements often become political fodder for the NDA, allowing the BJP to shape the election narrative.

In a recent example, Prime Minister Modi responded forcefully to alleged derogatory remarks made by Opposition figures against his late mother. On Thursday, the BJP in Bihar observed a 5-hour Bihar Bandh condemning the alleged abuses hurled against PM Modi's mother from the stage of Opposition during the Voters Adhikar Yatra and seems determined to make it an emotional issue against the opposition at a time when the assembly elections are coming closer.

Speaking to nearly two million women via an online cooperative scheme launch, Modi framed the attack as an insult to all mothers, daughters, and sisters—a message expected to resonate strongly with Bihar's women voters, who are known to play a decisive role in elections. Dr Ravinder K Verma, a noted political analyst from Bihar, observed that the Prime Minister is likely to continue using this issue to galvanise women voters in upcoming rallies.

As Bihar's political stage unfolds, the contest is increasingly being framed as a Modi versus Rahul showdown—a clash of two national figures in what is technically a regional election. For the BJP, the challenge lies in aligning national appeal with local delivery. For the Opposition, the real test is whether rhetorical momentum can be transformed into electoral gains. With both camps launching aggressive, high-voltage campaigns, Bihar's electorate may once again emerge as the ultimate arbiter—not just of local governance, but of the shifting balance in national political narratives.

## INTERNATIONAL

### Trump extends his reach into Congress in ways large and small

WASHINGTON

The invitation arrived in the final days of the summer recess, President Donald Trump's political team summoning House Republican staff to an early morning meeting about the One Big Beautiful Bill Act and the coming midterm elections.

"Attendance will be tracked by Team Trump—see you there!" read the flyer obtained by The Associated Press.

On Wednesday morning, staffers lined up to check in to the private meeting at Republican National Committee headquarters across the street from the US Capitol.

What would have been a routine political strategy session with White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt, pollster Tony Fabrizio and political director James Blair showcased the depth of Trump's reach into the affairs of the legislative branch, with Republican majorities in Congress being led by a powerful executive.

As Congress returns for a busy fall stretch, Trump was pushing lawmakers to drop their probe into the Jeffrey Epstein files—"it's enough," he said at the White House—despite a groundswell of bipartisan support for a full airing of the Justice Department's information about the former financier accused of sex trafficking.

Trump has unleashed squadrons of federal law enforcement and National Guard troops in Washington, D.C., and is eyeing similar incursions into other cities, including Chicago, even after a federal judge said his use of the military to quell protests in Los Angeles broke the law.

And perhaps most threatening in the erosion of the separation of powers, Trump has utilized a highly rare administrative tool to claw back federal funds Congress had already approved, in what has been viewed as a brazen, muscular display of unchecked executive authority that is courting a federal government shutdown Sept. 30.

"Time and time again, we are seeing priorities that are out of line with what the American people want," Democratic Rep. Pete Aguilar of California, the



chairman of the House Democrats, said at a Wednesday press conference at the Capitol.

Perhaps nowhere is the acquiescence of the Congress, where Republicans hold the majority, so revealing than in the morning meeting at the Capitol Hill Club on the third floor of RNC headquarters.

"At least one staffer per office expected," the invitation read.

Lawmakers piled in first, with almost full attendance, and then staff attended a separate private session. They were shown polling, particularly on voter attitudes about the big bill of tax breaks and spending cuts that Trump signed into law, as Republicans prepare to defend their majority ahead of next fall's midterm elections.

The takeaway: The "One, Big, Beautiful Bill Act" is now called "The Working Families Tax Cuts Act."

"It's not a rebranding," said House Speaker Mike Johnson said afterward. "What we have to do to sell it is tell the truth."

Trump had initially named the bill himself, coming up with it during a White House meeting back in spring. The moniker stuck, and was typed out on the title page of the sprawling, nearly

1,000-page package—until Democrats in the Senate succeeded in stripping it out, on technical grounds.

But two months after Trump signed the bill into law at a Fourth of July ceremony at the White House, even the president has acknowledged it wasn't his best marketing.

"I'm not going to use the term 'great, big, beautiful,'" Trump said during a Cabinet meeting last week. "That was good for getting it approved. But it's not good for explaining to people what it's all about."

Johnson, who said he missed the morning session to take his son to school, also said he spoke with Trump near midnight and "fully" endorses the strategy.

"This was all pre-arranged with me," Johnson said. "We're closely coordinating with the White House."

Johnson acknowledged the big bill has not proven popular with voters, but he insisted that's because they don't fully realize what's in it.

The big bill extends tax rates and brackets that have been in place since Trump's first term. It offers new cuts, including no taxes on tipped income, higher tax credits for children and deductions for some seniors. It also

imposes new Medicaid work requirements and extends work requirements for those receiving food stamps assistance.

Half of U.S. adults expect the new tax law will help the rich, according to a poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Most—about 6 in 10—think it will do more to hurt than help low-income people.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has estimated some 10 million more Americans will go without health care coverage and 2.4 million fewer people will qualify for food stamps under the new law.

CBO also estimated it will result in less income for the poorest Americans, with more money for the wealthy.

"Republicans don't have a branding problem, they have a substance problem," Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said Wednesday.

"Americans hate the Republicans' big, ugly bill."

While leadership from the White House can prove powerful in motivating lawmakers to fall in line behind a president's priorities, Trump is leading the GOP into a new era of executive power that is steamrolling past the legislative branch in a way unseen in peacetime presidencies.

Senators are considering rare rules changes that would allow Republicans to meet Trump's demands to more speedily confirm his executive branch nominees, even as the president has summarily fired the newly confirmed head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the White House engages in a legal battle to oust Lisa Cook, a Senate-confirmed member of the Federal Reserve Board.

Also Wednesday, House Republicans quietly approved a resolution to stand up a new committee to reinvestigate the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol as they continue to contest what happened after Trump sent a mob of supporters to fight the 2020 election he lost to Democrat Joe Biden.

Trump was impeached for inciting the 2021 insurrection at the Capitol, but was later acquitted.

## Trump hints at action if dissatisfied with Putin's response



WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump hinted Wednesday at fresh Russia sanctions if it fails to end its Ukraine war, saying "you'll see things happen" if he's dissatisfied with President Vladimir Putin's response.

Trump will also speak with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Thursday, a White House official told, after the Zelensky and European leaders said earlier that they expected a call.

"I have no message to President Putin, he knows where I stand, and he'll

make a decision one way or the other," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office as he met Polish President Karol Nawrocki.

"Whatever his decision is, we'll either be happy about it or unhappy. And if we're unhappy about it, you'll see things happen."

Trump's comments came as Putin, who attended a huge military parade in Beijing with Xi Jinping of China and Kim Jong Un of North Korea vowed to carry on fighting in Ukraine if a peace deal cannot be reached.

The US president's diplomatic efforts to secure a

peace deal appear to have stalled.

Putin has shown little inclination to agree to a two-way meeting that Trump said he was arranging between the Russian and Ukrainian leaders. Trump meanwhile has remained vague on what he will do if Putin fails to play ball.

But Trump rejected suggestions that he was soft on Moscow—citing recent secondary sanctions on India for buying Russian oil, and indicating that more could be on the table.

"You call that no action? And I haven't done phase two and phase three yet," added Trump, without elaborating.

Trump is now set to speak to Zelensky and European leaders on Thursday.

"I'm having a conversation with him very shortly and I'll know pretty much what we're going to be doing," Trump said in response to a question from an AFP reporter.

A White House official later told: "President Trump was referring to Zelensky. They will be speaking tomorrow."

The Paris gathering will be held in a mixed format, some leaders attending in person and others via video link. The summit will be followed by phone talks with Trump, to begin at 1200 GMT, and a 1300 GMT press conference, the French presidency said.

Zelensky said earlier Wednesday that he hoped to push Trump for new sanctions.

## WILL 50% TARIFFS RESHAPE THE GLOBAL ORDER AND FORGE STRONGER ALLIANCES — OR UNRAVEL THEM?



**O**n August 27, 2025, the United States did something that shook not just boardrooms but the very foundation of its most celebrated strategic partnership in Asia. In a sweeping move, Washington slapped an additional 25% tariff on a wide range of Indian goods — on top of the 25% duties already in place. The result: a punishing 50% tariff burden across some of India's most critical export sectors.

For New Delhi, the move landed like a thunderclap. It was one of the harshest trade penalties imposed on India in recent memory and an unmistakable message: America is willing to weaponize trade to penalize India's refusal to fully align with US energy sanctions against Russia. The economic shock has been immediate and profound. Tens of billions of dollars in exports are at risk, millions of jobs could be affected, and a once-ascendant trade corridor between the world's largest and oldest democracies now finds itself under heavy clouds. But behind the tariffs lies a deeper question — one that could define the balance of power in Asia for decades to come: Will this escalation force India closer to America, as pressure often intends, or will it instead accelerate New Delhi's march toward a multipolar future, one in which US influence is less commanding and its alliances less stable?

**A Crisis Met with Calculated Calm**  
India's response, at least in the first week after the tariffs hit, has been measured, not reactionary. Senior officials describe the situation as "serious but not catastrophic." Rather than retaliate in kind, New Delhi is focusing on a blend of immediate economic mitigation and longer-term strategic recalibration.

Domestically, ministries have begun coordinating emergency support packages — targeted credit lines, tax rebates, regulatory relaxations — for the industries hardest hit. Export promotion councils are already redirecting outreach to Europe, the Gulf, ASEAN, and Latin America. Meanwhile, analysts point to a timely cushion: India's vast internal market, which has been steadily gaining strength. A surge in domestic consumption, particularly during the upcoming festive season, may blunt some of the export shock.

Internationally, India is doing what it has been preparing to do for years — diversify. Trade envoys have moved quickly to accelerate talks with the United Kingdom, the European Union, Gulf nations, ASEAN economies, and Latin America. Even China, with whom relations remain fraught, has quietly resumed exploratory dialogues about easing certain trade barriers. And Russia, the root cause of Washington's ire, remains not only an energy supplier but also a partner India seems unwilling to sacrifice.

**The Human Cost: Industries Under Siege**  
For millions of Indian workers, the tariffs are not a geopolitical abstraction — they are an existential threat. The sectors targeted are disproportionately labor-intensive, MSME-driven industries that form the backbone of India's export story.

- **Textiles and Apparel:** Worth \$10.8 billion in US exports, this sector faces an effective tariff leap from 13.9% to over 63.9%. The textile belts of Tiruppur, Noida-Gurugram, Bengaluru, Ludhiana, and Jaipur face disruptions that could ripple through millions of households.

- **Gems and Jewellery:** With the US buying 40% of India's \$10 billion output, tariffs above 52% put Surat, Mumbai, and Jaipur artisans in jeopardy.

- **Seafood and Marine Products:** Indian shrimp exports — around \$2.4 billion — now bear duties of 60%, opening the door for Ecuador and other low-tariff competitors.

- **Leather Goods and Footwear:** From Agra to Kanpur, a \$1.2 billion industry now competes at a disadvantage against Vietnam, Indonesia, and Mexico.

- **Agriculture and Processed Foods:** Basmati rice, spices, and tea — roughly \$6 billion in exports — are now 50% more expensive for American buyers, to the benefit of Pakistan, Thailand, and Vietnam.

- **Handicrafts and Carpets:** India's artisanal clusters, long admired worldwide, are suddenly priced out of a critical market, yielding ground to Turkey, Pakistan, and Nepal.

- **Automotive Components:** Valued at \$6.6 billion, many components are now under a flat 50% duty, disrupting global

**Memories are worth more than money.**

supply chains and investor confidence. Some sectors were spared — notably pharmaceuticals (\$8.7 billion in US exports), electronics, and petroleum products — reflecting Washington's desire to avoid self-inflicted pain in critical industries. But for India, the damage in employment-heavy areas is already substantial.

**The Festive Season: A Domestic Life-line**

India's economy has a peculiarity that may prove decisive: it is not just export-driven — it is consumption-powered. Between September and December, the country enters its most lucrative retail period, when festivals like Diwali, Navratri, Durga Puja, and Christmas converge to create a spending surge unmatched in most markets.

Historically, these months account for 30–40% of annual sales across apparel, electronics, vehicles, jewelry, and home appliances. Early surveys for 2025 indicate that over 90% of Indian consumers intend to maintain or increase their festive spending despite global headwinds. E-commerce, quick-commerce, and discount-driven omnichannel retail are positioned to capitalize on that demand.

For India's policymakers, this isn't just a seasonal uptick — it's a strategic buffer. If domestic consumption remains strong, it buys time for affected exporters to identify alternative buyers and for trade diplomacy to open new doors.

**A Misstep in Washington?**  
Many trade strategists see the 50% tariffs as a gamble that could easily backfire. The US has spent over a decade cultivating India as both a market and a strategic partner in the Indo-Pacific — a democratic counterweight to China. Yet by punishing New Delhi over Russian oil procurement, Washington risks alienating precisely the partner it most needs.

Higher tariffs on Indian goods do not occur in a vacuum. They raise costs for US consumers, especially in price-sensitive sectors like textiles and jewelry. They drive American importers toward alternative suppliers — often China or Vietnam — undermining Washington's own supply-chain diversification goals. And geopolitically, they push India toward a more autonomous, less US-aligned posture.

China, by contrast, has made no secret of its willingness to exploit such rifts. Every step that weakens US-India trust provides Beijing with space to maneuver, both economically and diplomatically.

**If India Endures, US Influence Weakens**

Should India absorb this tariff shock — through a combination of domestic demand, new trade agreements, and energy diversification — it would be a remarkable demonstration of resilience. It would also send a message to the rest of the developing world: economic coercion, even from the United States, can be managed — and resisted.

That prospect carries profound implications. It would embolden other nations to hedge against US pressure, pursue multipolar alliances, and seek trade autonomy rather than alignment. Washington's leverage would diminish, not just in Asia, but across Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America — precisely where great-power competition is now most acute.

**The Quiet Realignment: New Partners, New Pathways**  
In the wake of the tariffs, Indian diplo-

mats have intensified engagement with a diverse array of partners:

- **United Kingdom:** A finalized free trade agreement provides tariff-free access for Indian goods into a major Western market.
- **United Arab Emirates & Gulf Cooperation Council:** Rapid expansion of energy, logistics, and investment links.
- **European Union:** Accelerated negotiations for a broad trade pact.
- **ASEAN Nations:** Efforts to deepen regional integration and supply-chain cooperation.
- **Russia:** Continued energy and defense cooperation, signaling strategic defiance of Western sanctions.
- **China:** Quiet, selective thawing in trade dialogues — economic pragmatism overriding political hostility.
- **Eurasian Economic Union and Latin America:** Emerging platforms for market diversification.

This multidirectional outreach reflects not panic, but strategy: reduce reliance on any single partner, build resilience, and exploit the very multipolarity the global order is already drifting toward.

**The Quad and Beyond: Strategic Trust at Risk**

Perhaps the most unintended casualty of the tariffs is the Quad — the four-nation security dialogue among the US, India, Australia, and Japan. Designed explicitly to balance China's regional influence, it relies on mutual trust and political alignment. Treating India with tariff aggression akin to China risks weakening the very foundation of this security grouping.

If India begins to question the reliability of US partnership — particularly in economic matters — it may adjust its level of security cooperation accordingly, reshaping the Indo-Pacific balance.

**The Legal Wildcard: A Court Ruling in Washington**

Adding complexity is a legal twist in the United States itself. A federal appeals court recently ruled that former President Donald Trump exceeded his authority by using the International Emergency Economic Powers Act to impose sweeping tariffs. Though the ruling is stayed until October 14, 2025, and likely to be appealed to the Supreme Court, it introduces uncertainty.

For India, the ruling is both a flicker of hope and a cautionary note. If upheld, some tariffs may be rolled back, strengthening India's position in trade talks. But not all duties are necessarily covered — earlier tariffs may still stand, meaning exporters cannot yet count on relief.

**The Broader Lesson: The Limits of Economic Coercion**

Ultimately, the 50% tariffs on Indian goods may prove less a demonstration of American power than a case study in its limits. They have triggered economic pain but also strategic recalibration. They have strained an alliance but not yet broken it. And they have forced India to accelerate what it had already begun: building a web of partnerships that make it less vulnerable to any one nation's pressure. If India emerges from this episode more self-reliant, more globally integrated, and more diplomatically autonomous, it will have transformed a punitive challenge into a geopolitical advantage. In doing so, it may also signal to the world that the post-Cold War hierarchy of economic power is giving way to a more fluid, contested, multipolar reality.

For Washington, the lesson is equally stark: tactical trade leverage must not obscure strategic necessity. In Asia's great power contest, allies are not easily replaced — and trust, once eroded, is rarely restored without cost.

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