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# KRC TIMES

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2026

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### PERSPECTIVE

**Don't be so quick to believe what you hear because lies spread quicker than the truth.**

### IEDs defused, destroyed in Kakching

IMPHAL

In a series of operations, the Indian Army, Assam Rifles, and civil police averted potential tragedies by detecting Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) in Manipur's Kakching district on Wednesday, officials reported on Thursday.

Based on intelligence inputs hinting at the presence of several anti-social activists, the police reported that the joint team conducted an operation at the vulnerable location of the Kaibung areas under the jurisdiction of the Wangoo police station in the southern Kakching district.

During the operation that lasted around 3 hours, the joint Bomb Disposal Squad (BDS) of the Manipur police and Assam Rifles defused one IED weighing 1.7 kilograms, without causing any damage.

The BDS also detected one wax cover weighing 683 grams, 3 kgs of sand, a splinter weighing 2.7 kgs, Explosive TNT weighing 470 grams, twelve screws, one electric detonator, electric wire, one meter in length, and one booster (C3) primer. During the operations, the IED and its related explosive materials were later destroyed in situ, though no arrests were made, the report states.

The police, however, stated that a case in this regard has been registered for further investigation and legal proceedings.

### WHO SAID WHAT

**Arattai instant messaging app developed by @Zoho is free, easy-to-use, secure, safe and 'Made in India'. Guided by Hon'ble PM Shri @narendramodiji's call to adopt Swadeshi, I appeal to everyone to switch to India-made apps for staying connected with friends and family. Download: <https://arattai.in/download.html>**

~ Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of Education, GoI

## Zubeen Garg death: Security forces patrol near Mahanta residence



GUWAHATI

Security forces were seen patrolling the streets near Shyamkanu Mahanta's residence in Geetanagar on Thursday.

Mahanta is under the scanner after the death of singer Zubeen Garg during a yacht trip in Singapore.

Authorities have upped the ante on efforts to locate the organiser of the Northeast India Festival.

The Assam government has al-

ready banned Mahanta and his associated organisations from hosting any events in the state.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had stated that the government will hold back financial grants, advertisements, and sponsorships from any events linked to him, directly or indirectly.

CM Sarma announced the sweeping ban on Tuesday via X (formerly Twitter), stating: "The State Government has decided to prohibit Shri

Shyamkanu Mahanta and any organisation associated with him from holding any functions or festivals within the State of Assam. Further, the State Government will not provide any financial grant, advertisement, or sponsorship to any event with which he is associated, either directly or indirectly."

By involving the central government, the state aims to block financial backing at all levels.

Political observers see this as a decisive step to cut Mahanta's influence from Assam's cultural platforms.

The decision is expected to significantly impact organisations and events previously connected to him.

Public anger has surged in the wake of the tragedy, with many demanding a thorough investigation into the circumstances surrounding Garg's final hours.

People have also raised questions about who organised the Singapore trip and the safety protocols they followed.

Several civil society groups have alleged indirect links between Mahanta's activities and controversies tied to Zubeen's demise.

## "No one will be spared": Himanta Biswa Sarma orders SIT probe into Zubeen Garg's death

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday, September 24 announced the constitution of a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the untimely death of iconic singer Zubeen Garg, assuring the people of Assam that no stone will be left unturned in the investigation.

The Chief Minister, addressing the media after a high-level meeting with the Director General of Police (DGP), Additional DGP (CID), Chief Secretary, and other senior officers, said that the SIT would be composed of the "best officers of Assam Police" and granted full independence to investigate the case with "complete professional integrity."

He further informed that viscera samples of the late singer would be sent to the Central Forensic Laboratory (CFL), Delhi, for advanced forensic examination. "In regard to the untimely death of our beloved Zubeen Garg, we will not spare anyone," Sarma



asserted, underlining his government's commitment to uncovering the truth.

Zubeen Garg's sudden demise in Singapore has left the state in shock, with widespread demands for transparency and a thorough investigation. The SIT formation is being seen as a crucial step to ensure accountability and address the concerns of millions of grieving fans.

## NIA to probe Rs 18 crore bank robbery in Manipur



IMPHAL

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has registered a case to investigate the robbery of over Rs 18.85 crore from a Punjab National Bank (PNB) branch in Manipur in 2023.

The incident occurred on November 30, 2023, at the PNB branch in Viewland, Ukhrul district, according to the NIA's FIR. Authorities said the robbery was allegedly carried out by armed cadres of the eastern faction of the NSCN/IM (National Socialist Council of Nagaland/Isak Muivah), led by self-styled Lt Col (then Major) P Joseph alias P Jackson from Kamjong district's Roni village. The group is believed to have aimed to procure sophisticated weaponry to strengthen its position in Myanmar.

The case was registered following an order from the Union Home Minis-

try dated September 3, 2025, after Joseph and other cadres were arrested by Nagaland Police on July 30, 2025, and handed over to Manipur Police the next day.

The Ministry noted the gravity of the offence, its national and international ramifications, and the potential to unearth a larger conspiracy, prompting the NIA to take over the investigation.

Manipur has witnessed ongoing ethnic clashes between Meitei and Kuki communities, leaving at least 260 people dead and thousands homeless since May 2023. The state has been under President's Rule since February 2025, following the resignation of Chief Minister N. Birendra Singh.

The NIA's probe aims to bring clarity to the robbery and its links to wider security threats in the region.

## Three Tripura University scientists named in Stanford University's prestigious top 2% list for 2025

AGARTALA

In a proud moment for Tripura University and the scientific community of Northeast India, three distinguished faculty members have been named in Stanford University's globally acclaimed "Top 2% Scientists" list for 2025.

The honorees include: Professor Binod Chandra Tripathy, Department of Mathematics, Dr Arabinda Ghosh, Department of Molecular Biology & Bioinformatics and Dr Ratan Das, Department of Physics, a release said.

Prof. Tripathy, a renowned professor of Mathematics, has made significant contributions in areas such as classes of sequences (crisp and fuzzy), characterisation of matrix classes, duals of sequence spaces, spectra of matrix operators, convergence acceleration, and series analysis.

Dr Arabinda Ghosh, an Assistant Professor in Molecular Biology & Bioinformatics, specialises in computational systems biology, recombinant DNA technology, enzymology, and computer-aided drug design.

De Ratan Das, an Assistant Professor of Physics, focuses his research on material science and condensed matter physics.

This recognition places them among the world's most influential researchers, based on stan-

dardised citation metrics developed by Stanford University in collaboration with Elsevier and Scopus. The Stanford/Elsevier list is one of the most respected global databases, ranking the top 2% of scientists across 22 scientific fields and 174 subfields.

The evaluation includes composite citation scores, h-index, co-authorship adjustments, authorship positions, career-long and single-year impact, as well as adjustments for self-citations and retracted papers.

The inclusion of Prof. Tripathy, Dr. Ghosh, and Dr. Das highlights Tripura University's growing research strength in mathematics, molecular biology, and physics. Their high-impact publications, interdisciplinary collaborations, and global contributions underscore the university's rising stature in the world of research and education.

In 2025, over 5,300 Indian scientists earned a place on Stanford's prestigious list, showcasing India's expanding role in global scientific scholarship. For Tripura University, this milestone marks a significant step in strengthening Northeast India's footprint in international research.

Prof BC Tripathy, Department of Mathematics, said, "This system was introduced in 2020, and I feel very good about it because

the name of our university is rising higher. People are getting inspired when they see me."

"My research subject is General Mathematics. In the beginning, our ranking was 318. There are four members in our team. In 2020, my name appeared on the list along with another professor from the Chemistry department. That made us very happy," he added.

"The struggle was huge, because we used to reach the university by 10 a.m. or even earlier and worked until around 7:30 or 8 p.m. We never took any holidays—whether it was Sunday or any other public holiday, we always came and worked," he further said.

Arabinda Ghosh, Assistant Professor, Department of Molecular Biology, told ANI, "It feels really good when a scientist or researcher receives such an award. For many people, this kind of recognition is like a dream."

"In 2015, when I completed my Ph.D., I thought about how to move my research career forward. I joined Gauhati University as an Assistant Professor and started my research work there. As time went on, we continued working steadily. For research, students are very important because they are our pillars," he added.

## 'Members assisting investigating authorities': Assam Association Singapore on Zubeen Garg's death

GUWAHATI

The Assam Association Singapore cannot comment publicly on the death of renowned singer Zubeen Garg as some members are cooperating with investigating authorities, the organisation announced on social media.

Garg, one of Assam's most celebrated musicians, died on September 19 during a yacht trip to Singapore's Saint John Island with members of the local Assamese community. The 52-year-old singer was in Singapore to headline a cultural festival marking Northeast India's traditions and the 60th anniversary of India-Singapore diplomatic relations, alongside India ASEAN Year of Tourism celebrations.

"As some of our members are currently assisting the investigating authorities in their inquiry into the tragic demise of our beloved Zubeen Da, the Assam Association Singapore is not permitted to make a public comment on



the issue until the investigation process is complete," the organisation's management committee stated.

The three-day festival, scheduled for September 19-21, was immediately cancelled by the High Commission of India following news of Garg's death. The event would have showcased the rich cultural

heritage of India's northeastern states to Singapore's diverse community.

Garg's sudden passing has devastated the Assamese diaspora in Singapore and fans across the region. Known for hits in Assamese, Hindi and other regional languages, he had built a massive following over three decades in the mu-

sic industry.

"The untimely passing of our beloved Zubeen Da has left the entire Assamese community in Singapore in deep sorrow. We stand together in grief and extend our heartfelt condolences to his family, as well as to our community in Assam and beyond," the association added in their state-

ment. Meanwhile, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced a complete ban on Shyamkanu Mahanta and associated organisations from conducting events in Assam, marking the state government's strongest action yet in connection with beloved singer Zubeen Garg's tragic death in Singapore.

"The State Government has decided to prohibit Shri Shyamkanu Mahanta and any organisation associated with him from holding any functions or festivals within the State of Assam. Further, the State Government will not provide any financial grant, advertisement, or sponsorship to any event with which he is associated, either directly or indirectly," Sarma tweeted on September 24.

The investigation into the circumstances surrounding Garg's death continues, with authorities yet to release further details about the incident on the recreational boat trip.

## Tripura minister seeks central support for new tourism projects



AGARTALA

Tripura Tourism Minister Sushanta Chowdhury met Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman today in New Delhi to discuss the state's ongoing tourism initiatives and future development plans.

The meeting aimed at securing central support to advance new projects designed to boost Tripura's tourism sector.

During the discussion, Minister Chowdhury highlighted the current activities of the Tripura Tourism Department and presented proposals for upcoming projects intended to enhance the state's appeal as a tourist destination. The Union Finance Minister assured him of "all possible cooperation" to support the growth and development of tourism in Tripura.

The Secretary and Director of the Tourism Department were also present at the meeting, emphasizing the collaborative approach between the state and central government.

Chowdhury expressed confidence that with central assistance, Tripura's tourism sector would achieve significant growth, contributing not only to economic development but also to the promotion of the state's rich cultural heritage.



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## THE QUIET TOLL OF CLIMATE EXTREMES

This year hasn't given people much of a breather. A punishing summer rolled straight into a relentless monsoon, and many families have lurched from coping with extreme heat to mopping up after floods. We count lives lost and homes damaged, as we should. But we rarely make space for the quieter toll—*anxiety, sleeplessness, trauma, and the long shadow these events cast on people's ability to study, work, and rebuild their lives.*

The summer of 2025 was one of the harshest on record for India. The Lancet Countdown warns that Indians are exposed to hundreds of hours of heat stress annually, and doctors across India reported spikes in psychiatric emergencies, sleep disorders and confusion during the peak heatwave. Even the ministry of earth sciences has acknowledged symptoms such as anxiety, palpitations, and behavioural changes linked to extreme temperatures, showing that the mental health toll of heat is no longer invisible.

Then came the rains. By early September, all-India monsoon rainfall was nearly 8 percent above normal, which is good for reservoirs but was marked by an erratic intensity. In many places, the rains arrived with cloudbursts, floods, and landslides that uprooted families, especially the poorest in low-lying settlements or on unstable slopes.

While the national numbers for 2025 are being compiled, last year offers a perspective: 5.4 million disaster displacements through 2024, including 2.4 million due to monsoon floods. Displacement is not just physical movement; it is psychological dislocation that can linger for years. Research after floods in Uttarakhand, Kerala and Assam found consistently high prevalence of posttraumatic stress, depression, and anxiety among survivors, often persisting long after the waters recede.

Yet, when we look at policy, heat and mental health continue to move in silos rather than converging. Heat action plans, now numbering more than a hundred across states, districts and cities, have saved lives through early warnings, work-hour advisories and hydration support. But reviews highlight weak localisation, unclear funding, and the absence of mental health considerations.

At the same time, India has expanded access to mental healthcare. Tele-MANAS, launched in 2022, has fielded over 2 million calls across 36 states and Union territories. The district mental health programme operates in more than 700 districts, offering a platform on which climate-linked stress could be integrated without creating a new structure.

The national guidelines on psychosocial support in disasters were updated in 2023, urging integration of such care into disaster systems. Civil society has contributed to NGOs in Kerala and Assam, which have piloted community-based interventions after floods, working with schools, women's groups, and youth clubs. These examples show that India has assets to build on. The challenge is that they remain scattered and disconnected from climate resilience frameworks.

That disconnection is precisely what needs to be addressed. Heat action plans and disaster management plans should be expanded to include modules on psychosocial support. These can set out simple protocols for frontline workers—ASHAs, anganwadi workers, teachers, panchayat members, and relief volunteers to recognise distress, offer psychological first aid, and refer cases onwards to formal care. Training people in these skills before each summer or monsoon season is inexpensive, yet it can make a measurable difference to recovery.

Equally important is the creation of data systems that capture climate-linked stress. Currently, Tele-MANAS does not enable counsellors to tag calls related to heat or flood trauma. Adding such categories would, over time, build a map of where distress spikes after extreme events, helping authorities deploy resources where they are most needed. Without such information, planning remains blind to one of the most pervasive effects of climate extremes.

Preparedness must also extend to adolescents. Evidence shows that young Indians carry a heavy psychological burden after disasters if support is delayed. Schools, therefore, should be part of recovery strategies, offering group sessions that help normalise reactions, rebuild routines, and identify students who need specialised care. This is not about labelling every emotional response as a disorder, but about ensuring that distress does not harden into long-term damage.

Another critical gap is resources. Psychosocial care often slips off the priority list during budget allocations. Creating a dedicated budget line for mental health within climate and disaster resilience plans would signal seriousness and ensure continuity. Linking relief and livelihood support with mental health outreach can also help, since financial stress is often the most powerful trigger of psychological distress after a disaster.

India does not need to reinvent the wheel. The foundation is already established. What is required is a deliberate effort to link these pieces together under one climate-resilience agenda. If that happens, the country will be able to move beyond merely counting lives saved from heatstroke or houses rebuilt after floods, to also ensuring that survivors can sleep, work, study and hope without carrying the silent weight of unaddressed trauma.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

“One who believes in himself has no need to convince others.” - Lao Tzu

# TRUMP'S VISA FEE HIKE: BRAIN DRAIN AND INDIA'S TALENT IMPERATIVE

PROF. D. MUKHERJEE

In September 2025, the Trump administration introduced a \$100,000 annual H-1B fee per worker, a major increase over previous costs of a few thousand dollars. Indians, who constitute the largest H-1B group—78% of 265,777 visas in FY2023 and over 70% in recent years—have relied on this program to migrate as engineers, IT specialists, scientists, and healthcare workers. The H-1B system has supported U.S. innovation, wages, and Indian remittances and knowledge transfer. The new fee may deter or block many prospective migrants and their employers, potentially altering established migration flows.

Trump's policy under 'Make America Great Again' aims to protect U.S. workers by limiting reliance on foreign talent through higher visa fees and stricter regulations, sometimes using points-based caps. Critics argue this could weaken U.S. competitiveness in tech, AI, and biotech, which rely on global expertise. Despite this, the U.S. continues to attract ambitious Indians and others with higher wages, advanced labs, strong infrastructure, career prestige, and opportunities for research, entrepreneurship, global networks, and permanent residency. In contrast, home countries often face funding shortages, bureaucratic delays, and weak innovation systems. This drives steady migration, reinforced by earlier migrants' success and remittances. India, for example, loses highly trained professionals in medicine and engineering, weakening healthcare, universities, and innovation while deepening urban-rural inequalities.

For the U.S., brain drain is a strategic gain—foreign-trained talent drives innovation, patents, and global market leadership, strengthening its techno-economic power. India, by contrast, must curb outflow by improving domestic conditions: better infrastructure, labs, funding, and competitive pay to retain professionals. Cutting bureaucracy, offering tax breaks, grants, and fellowships can attract returnees, while valuing international experience boosts collaboration. Long-term, India should build world-class universities and foster entrepreneurship through strong IP rights, venture capital, and incubators, enabling talent to thrive and scale ventures at home.

Talent retention in India requires transparent governance, merit-based growth, and improved healthcare and education. The diaspora should be leveraged for investment, research, and technology transfer. The U.S. visa fee hike, introducing a \$100,000 annual H-1B employer fee, highlights the risk of brain drain but also presents an opportunity for India to strengthen domestic education, infrastructure, and innovation systems. India, the largest H-1B source, accounted for 71% of approvals in FY2024, with 2.9 million Indians living in the U.S. by 2023, many earning median H-1B salaries of \$118,000—far above Indian pay scales. With the right policies, outflow can become 'brain gain' through return migration, remittances, and education spillovers, as studies show emigration can boost domestic human capital. Global lessons, like Burkina Faso's reforms under Captain Traoré, demonstrate that focused governance and investment in local capacity can counter talent loss. Managing migration requires shared responsibility between sending and receiving nations.

Of roughly 3.86 million H-1B approvals in a recent year, about 2.74 million went to Indians, whose median \$1,18,000 salaries generate an estimated \$32.4 billion annually for the U.S. economy. For India, this means a loss of productivity and about \$3.1 billion in public educational investment, given the ~\$11,400 cost of training each graduate. Still, migration yields gains: India received \$125–135 billion in remittances in 2023–24, much from the U.S., supporting consumption, small investments, and technology and knowledge transfers through diaspora ties.

Remittances soften losses but cannot replace the drain of doctors, professors, innovators, and entrepreneurs whose absence weakens India's long-term growth, while the U.S. gains patents, research strength, and competitiveness funded partly by Indian investment. To respond, India must act quickly. Raising R&D spending from under 1% of GDP to 2–3% within a decade, securing academic jobs with fair pay, and incentivizing



return migration through tax-free start-up grants or fast-track research posts can help. Building incubators in Tier-2/3 cities, reforming student loans, and expanding scholarships would reduce financial pressure to emigrate. Strategic diaspora engagement—via venture capital, fellowships, and partnerships—can further boost innovation. Sector-specific steps, like competitive medical residencies and better university pay, are also vital to retain talent.

These measures will not end brain drain immediately but can signal that India values her talent, turning the challenge into renewal through short-term incentives and long-term reform. The Burkina Faso case under Captain Ibrahim Traoré illustrates the importance of economic sovereignty: efforts like domestic gold refineries aim to retain value and reduce dependency, though his rule faces criticism for authoritarianism and instability. For India, the lesson is not the governance model but the principle—investing in industries, infrastructure, and human capital to create opportunities that reduce migration pressures.

Policies to curb brain drain must rest on accountability and democratic institutions; otherwise, autonomy efforts risk undermining stability. For India, the lesson is not to mirror Burkina Faso but to build self-reliance through strong institutions. The U.S. visa fee hike underscores America's reliance on foreign talent and India's dependence on remittances. India's best strategy is not to block migration but to make staying or returning equally attractive—through greater R&D and education investment, incentives for circular migration, stronger startup financing, and improved public services.

In terms of cost-benefit analysis, in FY2024, approximately 2.74 million Indians received H-1B approvals, each earning a median salary of \$1,18,000, contributing around \$32.4 billion annually to the U.S. economy. Training an Indian engineering graduate costs about \$11,400, so educating these 2.74 million professionals represents a \$3.1 billion annual investment effectively flowing abroad. India, however, benefits from remittances, which totalled \$125–135 billion in 2023–24, with roughly \$30–34 billion coming from the U.S., partially offsetting the loss. While dollar-for-dollar the flows are roughly balanced, India suffers long-term costs in domestic innovation and human capital, whereas the U.S. gains sustained advantages in patents, startups, and intellectual property leadership.

Financially, remittances from India's diaspora—around \$125–130 billion in 2023–24, with \$30–34 billion from the U.S.—offset much of the economic outflow from 2.74 million skilled professionals migrating to the U.S., each earning a median \$1,18,000, contributing over \$32 billion annually to the U.S. economy. Yet the structural impact on India is far deeper: the loss of

engineers, scientists, doctors, and researchers erodes domestic innovation, knowledge transfer, and institutional capacity. While remittances provide macroeconomic support, they cannot replace the multiplier effect of talent in labs, universities, hospitals, and startups. The U.S. gains both immediate wages and long-term advantages in patents, AI, biotech, and entrepreneurship. The recent \$100,000 annual H-1B fee underscores the urgency for India to retain and leverage her human capital through better research funding, education infrastructure, and incentives for return migration.

India must adopt a multi-pronged strategy to retain and leverage talent. R&D spending should rise to 2.5–3% of GDP from 0.7%, with competitive salaries, secure tenure, and well-funded labs to attract top researchers. Incentives like tax exemptions, return fellowships, and diaspora engagement can encourage mid-career professionals to reinvest skills domestically. A strong startup ecosystem, expanded quality education in Tier-2/3 cities, and targeted support for healthcare and universities are essential. Skilled migration is a global challenge, requiring South-South collaboration for circular migration and fair talent-sharing frameworks. Lessons from Burkina Faso emphasize economic sovereignty: India should assert control over strategic resources, including human capital, to maximize internal value creation and long-term development.

Addressing India's talent outflow requires investment, incentives, and systemic reform. R&D spending should rise to 2.5–3% of GDP, paired with competitive research careers, secure tenure, and well-funded labs to strengthen academic and technological infrastructure. Return and circular migration incentives—tax exemptions, fellowships, and recognition of international experience—can bring professionals back with knowledge, networks, and capital. Expanding startups, protecting IP, reducing regulatory friction, and scaling high-quality education to Tier-2/3 cities, alongside diaspora engagement programs like 'India Connect,' further retain and leverage talent. Sector-specific measures for doctors, researchers, and academics are critical to maintain domestic capacity. Globally, India should engage in South-South collaborations and assert economic sovereignty, ensuring talent contributes to domestic growth. The goal is not just to stem brain drain but to foster brain circulation, transforming the challenge into a strategic advantage and positioning India as a hub for ambition, innovation, and opportunity.

The U.S. visa fee hike exposes India's structural vulnerability: over \$3 billion in annual education subsidies and \$32+ billion in wages flow to the U.S., highlighting how India's human capital fuels foreign growth. Other emerging economies like Nigeria, the Philippines, and Bangladesh face similar pressures, losing talent

critical for innovation, healthcare, and education. Regional collaboration and fair migration policies can help retain talent.

Lessons from Burkina Faso emphasize economic sovereignty: nations must invest in domestic capacity rather than exporting skilled professionals. For India, the solution lies in robust investment in education, research, innovation, and entrepreneurship, alongside brain circulation programs that allow professionals to return and contribute. With sustained reforms, India can transform brain drain into brain gain within a decade, emerging as a global talent hub while preserving strategic, economic, and intellectual sovereignty. This is the high time for India to look beyond myopic optics and curb brain drain if not stopped totally to Make India Great Again (MIGA).

### DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

**The State Government has decided to prohibit Shri Syamkanu Mahanta and any organisation associated with him from holding any functions or festivals within the State of Assam. Further, the State Government will not provide any financial grant, advertisement, or sponsorship to any event with which he is associated, either directly or indirectly. The State Government will also request the Government of India not to extend any financial assistance or sponsorship to him in any manner. ~ Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Assam CM**



## WHAT A STUDENT UNION POLL INDICATES ABOUT BANGLADESH'S FUTURE

PINAK RANJAN CHAKRAVARTY

While the similarities between the causes of the recent upheavals in Dhaka and Kathmandu have been highlighted, the differences in administrative reactions are also telling. The interim government in Nepal has promised to hold elections within 6 months, whereas Bangladesh's interim government has procrastinated by insisting on reforms before elections. Facing domestic and international pressure, the Muhammad Yunus regime has finally proclaimed elections will be held in February 2026—more than 17 months after Sheikh Hasina was overthrown.

The Yunus regime is in a vice-like grip of Jamaat-e-Islami, the country's foremost Islamist organisation, and of the Islamist-oriented student leaders who led the revolt against Hasina. Promising sweeping reforms and establishing several commissions to recommend them are the hallmarks of the Yunus regime. The regime has facilitated the rise of Islamist parties and other radical groups. Lawlessness has continued despite the presence of a combined army-police force.

Human rights organisations have logged thousands of incidents of communal violence against minorities—mainly Hindus, but also Buddhists, Christians, Ahmadis, and Sufi groups. Many such attacks were pre-planned and the Yunus-regime has remained a spectator at best. A February 2025 UN report accused the interim government of failing to act against the perpetrators of communal violence.

The international concern on persecution of minorities led Yunus to visit the revered Dhakeshwari temple and publicly say the right things: "Whatever faith or ideology one follows, whether rich or poor, every per-

son is first and foremost a citizen. All rights of citizens are guaranteed in the Constitution." Yunus visited the temple along with A F M Khalid Hossain, the religious affairs advisor to the interim government who is also vice-president of the radical organisation Hefazat-e-Islam.

Hefazat has demanded Islamisation of Bangladesh by introducing Sharia law, removing all statues from public places, changing the national anthem written by Rabindranath Tagore, and expunging all text from school books written by Hindu writers. It spearheaded the campaign against Chhimoy Das, who had called on Hindus to demand their rights as citizens.

The hypocrisy has not gone unnoticed—Das languishes in prison, accused of treason and denied bail, while Durga idols are being broken at more than 10 places. Violence between Muslim sects has also skyrocketed over doctrinal interpretations, control of religious sites, and political influence, erupting in clashes between Wahabi, Salafi, and Deobandi groups.

A notable feature is the space given to radical organisations like the Hizb-ut-Tahrir, which marched on the streets of Dhaka demanding an Islamic caliphate. Islamists have also demanded that music and dance teachers in schools be replaced by religious teachers. A new alliance of Islamist parties has taken over the streets led by Jamaat, and supported by Islami Andolan, Khelafat Majlis, Nizam-e-Islam Party, Khelafat Andolan, and Jatiya Ganatantrik Party. While the mainstream parties want the elections expedited, the Islamist alliance wants them postponed and proportional representation introduced.

Islamists have never bagged more than 20 of the 350 parliamentary seats and the National Citizen Party

(NCP), the new party formed by students, will be a first-timer. The procrastination on holding national elections is feared to be related to creating an uneven political field, cleared of rivals to the Jamaat, its Islamist allies and the NCP.

The recent Dhaka University union election was a clear signal. The Islami Chhatra Shibir, Jamaat's youth wing, unexpectedly won 23 of the 28 positions. Some observers attributed the result to anger and fatigue against the mainstream parties, Awami League and Bangladesh Nationalist Party.

The Jamaat, regarded the fifth-column of Pakistan since the 1971 Liberation War, has burnished its credentials by adapting and cultivating younger generations through social programmes. It has also expressed regret for its 1971 role in drabbles, hoping to influence youths who have no memory of the bloody war. Jamaat and Shibir are also fairly disciplined and not tainted by corruption because they have been out of power for long. For first-time voters, changing the status quo holds greater priority than Jamaat's past.

In this mix has emerged a new player—the Dacca Institute of Research & Analytics—allegedly with support from a 'planner' of the August revolution and funds from the US and Turkey. Clearly, the organisation's objective, as laid out on its new website, is to influence politics through the prism of the July revolution.

Meanwhile, geopolitical contestation over Bangladesh has intensified. Operation Pacific Angel 25-3, a week-long joint military exercise between the US and Bangladesh militaries was recently conducted with around 1,000 American service personnel airlifted to Chittagong near Myanmar's Rakhine province. In an

act of balancing, the Bangladesh Army also announced that it participated in Zapad 2025, a joint strategic exercise in Russia, during September.

Knowing that China will be suspicious of military exercises with the US and reports about St Martin's island being used to set up US military facilities, Yunus made a grand statement that Bangladesh would move forward hand in hand with China to advance their comprehensive strategic cooperation. American forces are said to have been barred from the island.

Bilateral ties with India remain strained. The Yunus regime has slapped hundreds of cases of corruption and murder against Hasina and her family members. Selected trade and visa restrictions have been imposed by India on Bangladesh. Notwithstanding these restrictions, food, cotton, yarn, electricity, fuel, and many other items are still being traded. The marginal growth of about 4 percent in Indian exports during 2024-25 shows trade has been insulated from the tensions.

Bangladesh's posturing about diversifying trade with Pakistan causes Delhi to worry about security. But supply-demand imperatives remain crucial binding factors between the immediate neighbours. Besides, Bangladesh imports more than 15 percent of its electricity from India.

India's core concern will remain security and the capture of political power through manipulated elections by forces inimical to India. But despite all this, Delhi will engage with whichever government comes to power in Dhaka.

Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty | Former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, and former High Commissioner to Bangladesh

# Manipur: JAC submits charter of demands after RIMS director fails to meet them over alleged medical negligence death

IMPHAL

The Joint Action Committee (JAC) formed against the unnatural death of 35-year-old Chingsubam Manju has expressed deep disappointment after the Director of the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) allegedly refused to meet them when they arrived to submit their charter of demands.

The delegation, which reached RIMS around noon on Wednesday, said they waited for nearly three hours before finally handing over their demands to the director's secretary.

Addressing media at the Manipur Press Club, JAC convener Chingsubam Ingenthaba condemned what he described as the "apathetic and disrespectful attitude" of the RIMS authorities, especially given the gravity of the incident. "Death of Chingsubam Manju was heart-



breaking and emotional as it occurred due to alleged medical negligence. But the refusal of the RIMS director to meet us, even briefly, is very disappointing," he said.

According to the JAC, Manju—who had undergone regular check-ups with no reported complications—was admitted to RIMS on September 20 for delivery on the advice of her consulting doctor. She underwent two operations that day, the first allegedly without the presence of her consulting doctor. Following the second operation, which also resulted in the removal of her womb, Manju was shifted to the ICU. Despite receiving blood transfusions, she succumbed to excessive bleeding around 2:30 am on September 21.

The JAC's charter of demands includes the immediate publication of an inquiry report into Manju's death, stern

action against doctors allegedly involved, due compensation for the bereaved family in favor of the newborn child, and assurance that no FIR or counter-FIR will be registered in connection with the incident at RIMS on September 21.

The convener warned that the JAC would launch various forms of agitation if their demands are not fulfilled promptly.

The case has already triggered unrest at RIMS, with Manju's death sparking protests that escalated into violence. Aggrieved locals reportedly assaulted a doctor—who sustained serious injuries and is now in the ICU—and vandalised hospital property, including the Medical Superintendent's office.

On the other hand, Administration of RIMS, Imphal, after due consideration of all events leading to the demise of the pa-

tient and in recognition of the possibility of lapse in the medical procedure done in this case, has constituted an internal Committee to inquire into the matter and to submit its finding to the Competent Authority of RIMS, Imphal, for taking further appropriate Administrative action in

The Administration has also taken up the matter with the State Government to have another independent external Authority to also inquire into the matter, for taking appropriate action, as per law, and to ensure that justice prevails.

The Administration appeals to all with humility to maintain peace. As the controversy deepens, public pressure is mounting on authorities to ensure accountability and justice for Manju's death, which has reignited debates over alleged lapses in healthcare services at RIMS.

## DSU Karbi Anglong condemns sexual assault on minor, demands swift action

SUSHANTA ROY

**DIPHU:** The Dimasa Students' Union (DSU), Karbi Anglong District Committee, has expressed deep anguish and has condemned the molestation and sexual assault of a 12 year old Dimasa school girl in Howraghat of Karbi Anglong District.

According to the DSU, the accused has been identified as Khorgesor Bora of Bokolia Adarsha village under Diphu Sub Division, who is currently residing in Howraghat.

He was serving as a government school headmaster at Jilangso LP School. The incident came to light when the victim became pregnant and disclosed the abuse to her parents. It was further revealed that the assault had been ongoing for several months.

The student body demanded immediate and decisive action from the administration and law enforcement agencies under child and women protection laws, and called for immediate termination of the accused from his service.

The DSU stressed that authorities must leave no stone unturned to ensure swift arrest and justice for the perpetrator, noting that condemnation alone is not enough without visible administrative commitment to protecting children.

Reaffirming its commitment to student safety, the DSU urged the public to remain vigilant and cooperate with authorities in combatting such crimes.

## Assam: Kaziranga opens gates for Durga Puja visitors

GUWAHATI

Assam's famed Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, home to the world's largest population of the one-horned rhinoceros, is preparing to welcome tourists ahead of the festive season.

In a move aimed at enriching the Puja holiday experience for visitors, the park authorities have announced phased openings of its ranges, offering nature enthusiasts an early opportunity to explore the UNESCO World Heritage site.

"In order to enhance your Puja celebration experience, we are pleased to announce the opening of the Bagori Range (Limited Circuit) of Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve from 26th September 2025.

•Kohora Range (Central Range): Likely to open in the 2nd

week of October 2025.

•Elephant Safari: To begin from 1st November 2025.

We invite every one of you to celebrate the season amidst the rich biodiversity and natural beauty of Assam's pride, Kaziranga.

Kaziranga National Park & Tiger Reserve," Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on social media on Wednesday.

The announcement brings cheer to both tourists and local communities that rely heavily on the tourism economy. As migratory birds begin to arrive and wildlife activity intensifies with the retreat of the monsoon, Kaziranga promises a vibrant wilderness experience. Authorities have assured that visitor safety and conservation protocols will be strictly observed, ensuring a responsible and enjoyable opening for the season.

## Magisterial probe ordered against Tezpur University authorities for 'disrespecting' Zubeen Garg

TEZPUR

A magisterial inquiry has been ordered against Tezpur University authorities by the Sonitpur district administration following allegations of disrespect toward cultural icon Zubeen Garg after his tragic death last week. The order comes amid growing unrest among students and staff at the central university.

Sonitpur District Magistrate Ananda Kumar Das stated that students raised concerns that the university authorities failed to organize any formal Shradhdhanjali programme to honor the late singer, deeply hurting their sentiments. He also noted reports that Vice Chancellor Shambhu Nath Singh allegedly made derogatory comments toward students who had independently arranged a tribute event.

The situation escalated on Mon-



day evening when heated exchanges occurred between the VC and students, forcing him to leave the campus abruptly, further agitating the student body. "Due to all the provocative actions by the university authorities, particularly the VC, students approached my office demanding an apology and remedial action," Das said in the order.

Additional District Magistrate

remain part of a system that "stifles voices" and undermines the interests of students and the university's founding ethos.

In response to public outrage, Tezpur University announced plans to install a statue of Zubeen Garg on campus and consider conferring an honorary doctorate posthumously to the singer. Meanwhile, teachers, students, and non-teaching staff have demanded the immediate removal of the Vice Chancellor and appointment of a leader capable of uplifting the historic institution.

Zubeen Garg, a beloved singer of Assam, passed away on September 19 while swimming in Singapore during the Northeast India Festival. His mortal remains were cremated with full state honours on the outskirts of Guwahati on Tuesday, drawing tributes from across the region.

## Zubeen Garg's death: Akhil Gogoi likely to meet Assam Governor



GUWAHATI

Rajior Dal Chief & Sivasagar Legislator Akhil Gogoi is likely to meet the Governor of Assam Lakshman Prasad Acharya on Thursday here in connection with the "suspicious death" of legendary

young singer Zubeen Garg.

"A letter has been sent to the governor. If permitted; a meeting with him will be held demanding investigation by Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and immediate arrest of Shyamkanu Mahanta the organiser of Northeast India

Festival and Siddharth Sharma the manager of Zubeen Garg into the death of the legendary singer Zubeen Garg." Akhil Gogoi said on Wednesday afternoon.

If our demand is not accepted which is the demand of each and every Assamese then we will launch movement further.

"Puja na saan aaru aibar..... We will not see Durga Puja this time, will launch massive protest." Akhil Gogoi, one of the boldest leader of India, said further while talking to journalists.

Zubeen Garg who was a living legend of India as much popular as Michael Jackson, unfortunately died at the age of 52 due to alleged negligence of a section of authorities in Singapore and Assam.

He was only 52 at the time of

death. Zubeen Garg had gone to perform in Northeast India Festival organised by Shyamkanu Mahanta who is reportedly said to be the brother of Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta the former Director General of Assam Police.

Big Questions rise to Zubeen Garg's manager also that in spite of certain health issues with the singer for which entering in water-bodies like sea must be avoided, Sharma allegedly show carelessness.

The people of Assam and his fan across the globe want a free and fair probe to know what actually had happened with the young singer who never returned alive back to his native place Assam to which he used to love like mother.

## Tripura CM warns against political violence, promises strict action for attacks on BJP workers



AGARTALA

Tripura Chief Minister Dr. Manik Saha today condemned recent incidents of political violence in the state and assured that those responsible for the attack on BJP workers would face strict action.

Dr. Saha visited GB Pant Hospital, where several injured BJP karyakartas, including Janajati Morcha Pradesh Vice President Mangal Debbarma, are undergoing treatment following an alleged attack on September 21, ahead of the Seva

Pakhwada programme at Hejaramara.

"I met the injured workers and ensured that they receive proper medical care. Such attacks are unacceptable, and those involved must be brought to justice," the Chief Minister said.

Referring to the Tipra Motha Party, an ally of the BJP in the state, Dr. Saha added, "Even though they are our alliance partner, any wrongdoing must be addressed. Law will take its own course, and we will not tolerate unnecessary violence. We stand for peace, not politics of physical assault."

He also highlighted the recent vandalism of a BJP Mandal office, suggesting a possible conspiracy by certain groups. "The people of Tripura will not accept such acts. The government stands firmly against political violence and is committed to maintaining law and order," Dr. Saha said.

The Chief Minister's visit and statements underscore the government's commitment to ensuring justice for victims and deterring future incidents of political unrest in the state.

## Golden-haired tube-nosed bat discovered in Mizoram

AIZAWL

A team of scientists from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) has recorded the rare golden-haired tube-nosed bat (*Harpiola isodon*) in Mizoram, marking its first appearance in India and extending its known global range westward by over 1,000 km.

The discovery was made by bat researcher Dr. Uttam Saikia during a systematic survey of bat fauna in the forested areas of Hmufang village, Aizawl district. For a detailed comparative analysis, Dr. Saikia collaborated with Dr. Gabor Csorba from the Hungarian Natural History Museum, Dr. Manuel Ruedi of the Natural History Museum of Geneva, and Dr. Rohit Chakravarty of Nature Conservation Foundation.

Using museum specimens from abroad and DNA analysis of the



Mizoram sample, the team confirmed the species' identity. Researchers also revisited an older specimen collected from Sairep village in Lunglei district, preserved

at ZSI Kolkata, and verified that it too belonged to the golden-haired tube-nosed bat.

First discovered in Taiwan in 2006, the species has since been re-

ported in southern China and Vietnam. Believed to inhabit mountain forests, scientists suggest that Harpiola isodon may also be present in other Southeast Asian countries, including Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, and Myanmar.

This small bat, measuring 32-36 mm in forearm length, is easily recognizable by its golden-tipped hairs and distinctive tube-shaped nostrils. Dr. Saikia and his team have spent over a decade studying bat fauna in the Indian Himalayas, documenting several new species and new records for India.

ZSI Director Dr. Dhriti Banerjee highlighted the significance of the discovery, emphasizing the need for focused research in northeast India, a region located within two global biodiversity hotspots. "With this addition, the confirmed tally of bat species in India currently stands at 136," she noted.

The discovery of the golden-haired tube-nosed bat in Mizoram not only enriches India's wildlife diversity but also reinforces the importance of conserving mountain forest habitats in the northeast.

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## Government will continue ban on wheat, flour exports: Prahlad Joshi



NEW DELHI

Union Minister of Food and Consumer Affairs Prahlad Joshi on Wednesday declined the industry's request for permission to export wheat and flour, emphasising that domestic needs will be prioritised over exports.

India has maintained a ban on wheat exports since 2022. During his address to the Roller Flour Miller Federation of India (RFMFI), he urged the industry to help in expanding wheat acreage and increase production to meet domestic requirements and buffer stock.

Wheat production has not met expectations since 2022, hindering the country's ability to achieve its procurement targets. The procurement levels reached 43.32 million metric tonnes (mmt) in 2021-22, but experienced a sharp decline due to

adverse weather.

According to government data, procurement came down to 18.78 mmt in 2022-23 and then rose to 26.58 mmt in 2023-24; 26.59 mmt in 2024-25, and 30.02 mmt in 2025-26 during the rabi marketing season.

This year there are concerns regarding wheat production in Punjab - India's food bowl. The state is facing severe siltation of agricultural fields due to the worst flooding in four decades, which may adversely affect wheat sowing and production. Punjab received around 50% more rainfall than normal, according to the IMD data. In the 2024-25 procurement season, Punjab contributed 11.92 mmt, accounting for approximately 40% of the total central pool.

According to the RFMFI, five major districts in Punjab - Fazilka, Mansa, Amritsar,

Ferozepur, and Gurdaspur - may experience delays in sowing due to siltation. Such delays could disrupt the wheat trading ecosystem and negatively impact both quality and production.

"Siltation has affected large areas in these districts," said Navneet Chitlangia, president of RFMFI. "It will delay sowing and impact grain flow in the market," Chitlangia added. The siltation has also affected areas like Kapurthala, Pathankot, and Hoshiarpur.

Experts warn that the excessive siltation could make cultivating land difficult, resulting in substantial financial losses and long-term impacts on agricultural productivity. It may also lead to ongoing land degradation, making farming in affected areas more challenging and costly in the future.

Additionally, the RFMFI has advised the government to increase procurement levels to stabilise market prices. "The government needs to keep its stocks higher than usual. The current year-end stock stands at 7.5 mmt, which should be increased to 18 mmt," Chitlangia said.

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## Restrictions continue in Leh after violent protests over Ladakh statehood, Sixth Schedule demand

SRINAGAR

Restrictions under Section 163 continued in Ladakh's violence-hit areas on Thursday, a day after clashes over statehood and Sixth Schedule demand left four dead and 80 injured, with a shutdown in neighbouring Kargil.

The police and paramilitary personnel have been deployed in strength in the riot-hit Leh district and are keeping close watch on the situation.

The shops, business establishments, government offices and educational institutions remained closed in the district on Thursday.

A police official said restrictions under Section 163 of BNSs are being enforced strictly.

"The situation is under control and adequate security men have been deployed on the roads to maintain law and order and peace," he said.

Four people were killed and 80 others injured, some of them critically, in the violent clashes between protesting youth and security personnel in Leh district headquarters yesterday.

Hundreds of youth took to the roads in Leh yesterday to stage a protest in support of their demand for the grant of Sixth Schedule status and statehood to the Ladakh UT, which was bifurcated from erstwhile J&K state. Protests turned violent as angry youth set fire to the BJP office, the CEC Leh Hill Council office, police and CRPF vehicles, and damaged several private and government vehicles.

A police vehicle is set on fire during a protest by locals demanding federal statehood from the Indian government, in the high-altitude Leh town, in the region of Ladakh, India, Wednesday, Sept. 24, 2025.

As the clashes intensified, the security personnel resorted to firing. It was for the first time in Ladakh's history that the region had seen violent

protests.

After the violence, climate activist and innovator Sonam Wangchuk called off his 35-day hunger strike on demand for statehood and Sixth Schedule status to Ladakh.

Wangchuk appealed to the youth not to follow a violent path and instead tread the path of nonviolence. "The resort of violence will defeat our five-year efforts and agitation for statehood and Sixth Schedule status to Ladakh," Wangchuk said.

He said the protest by youth was an outburst of their anger, a type of Gen Z revolution. "For five years, they are unemployed and jobs are denied to them and democratic rights are not granted to them. I have been saying that unemployment and denial of democratic rights is the cause of social unrest in the society".

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), however, blamed Sonam Wangchuk's provocative speeches for unrest in Leh.

"It is clear that the mob was incited by Sonam Wangchuk through his provocative statements. Incidentally, amidst these violent developments, he broke his fast and left for his village in an ambulance without making serious efforts to control the situation," the MHA statement said.

On allegations by LAB and KDA that MHA was delaying talks and should postpone the October 6 talks, MHA said, "The process of dialogue through has yielded phenomenal results by increasing reservations for Ladakh scheduled tribe from 45% to 84%, providing 1/3 women reservations in the councils and declaring Bhoti and Purgi as official languages. With this, process for recruitment of 1800 posts was also commenced".

"However, certain politically motivated individuals who were not

happy with the progress made under HPC have been trying to sabotage the dialogue process. The next meeting of the High-Powered Committee has been scheduled on Sixth October, while meetings are also planned on 25th and 26th September with the leaders from Ladakh," it reads.

The MHA said over 30 police/CRPF personnel were injured in the mob attacks in Leh yesterday. "In self-defence, police had to resort to firing in which unfortunately some casualties are reported. The situation was brought under control by 4 PM".

Meanwhile, LAB chairman and former BJP MP Thupstan Chhewang said a peaceful shutdown was observed yesterday, with some violence in Leh. "Three to four youth were martyred in the cause," he said, adding, "the sacrifices of the youth won't go in vain".

"LAB will continue to fight for the cause of people. I appeal to the central government and Home Minister Amit Shah that Ladakh is a very sensitive place and such incidents are neither in the interest of the country nor in interest of national security. We know that two enemies of our country are on the border and they would like to benefit from it. We are nationalists and believe in the constitution of India. Whatever struggle we have staged so far has been peaceful and within democratic norms," Thupstan said.

"I don't want to blame the youth for the violence but the Indian government is also responsible as for such a long time our agitation is going on, they should have made efforts to peacefully resolve the issue. There was a delay on their part".

"On behalf of Ladakh people, I appeal to the Home Ministry that the central government should restart the dialogue process soon and resolve key issues including grant of Sixth sched-

ule and statehood with legislature," the LAB chairman said.

Meanwhile, a complete shutdown is being observed in Kargil district on the call of Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) in support of their demand for grant of 6th Schedule and statehood to Ladakh and preponing of talks by the Centre from October 6 to this month.

The authorities have also imposed restrictions under Section 163 BNSs in Kargil district and banned the processions and assembly of more than four persons at a single place.

On August 5, 2019, the Centre abrogated Article 370 and 35A and downgraded and bifurcated the erstwhile J&K state into two UTs - Jammu and Kashmir (with legislature) and Ladakh (without legislature).

After the abrogation of Article 370 and the downgrading and bifurcation of the erstwhile J&K state into two UTs, people in Leh had celebrated the decision, while those in the Kargil district had opposed the move.

However, later parties in Leh joined hands with political, religious and trade leaders of Kargil to jointly agitate for 4-point demands to safeguard the local identity and fragile environment of the UT.

The Leh Apex Body (LAB) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), which is an amalgam of various political, social, trade and religious groups of Leh and Kargil districts of Ladakh UT, have been spearheading peaceful agitation by holding series of protests and sit-ins in Ladakh, Jammu and Delhi to press the centre to fulfil their 4-point demands - grant of statehood (with legislature), 6th Schedule status, separate Public Service Commission and two Lok Sabha seats for Ladakh UT. Korea's President Lee Jae Myung and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa.

## INTERNATIONAL

## Talks with India 'incredibly productive', Trump and Modi share 'very positive' relationship: US official

WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi share a "very, very positive" relationship and will meet, a senior State Department official has said, while underlining that planning is underway for the next Quad Summit, expected either later this year or in early 2026.

India is slated to host leaders from the US, Australia, and Japan for the Quad summit. The 2024 edition of the summit was held in the US at Wilmington, Delaware.

"In terms of meetings coming soon, I certainly don't want to get ahead of announcing anything for the President, but I'm sure you'll see the two (PM Modi and President Trump) meet," the State Department official told.

"They have a very, very positive relationship. We've got a Quad Summit, we're working on planning, so at some point that will happen, if not this year, early next year. Working on the dates of that," the official said.

Describing the ongoing US-India engagements as "incredibly productive", the official said "continuous positive developments" are expected in the coming months.

"We have differences. It's been clear over the last few weeks that we've been working through some differences, particularly when it comes to trade and the purchase of Russian oil. We're working through those," the official said.

The official also referred to Trump's recent phone call to Modi to wish him on his 75th birthday, describing the exchange as "incredibly positive."

On the diplomatic front, the official said US Ambassador nominee to India and Special Envoy for

South and Central Asia Sergio Gorrer is one of the closest people to the President.

"He will be confirmed very soon and will be the US representative in New Delhi. I think that shows the importance the President puts on this (US-India relationship)," the official said.

The official further underlined that US Secretary of State Marco Rubio's first meeting on the margins of the 80th UN General Assembly session was with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.

Describing the hour-long meeting on Monday as "incredibly productive", the official said talks covered a wide range of issues, including trade, defence, and technology.

While acknowledging that there has been "a bit of turbulence" in ties, the official in the briefing, underlined that President Trump is candid about his views and "not shy when he is frustrated with countries," which offers a transparent view of US positions.

"We're frank with our friends and we see India as a good friend and as a partner, and as really a partner of the future," the official said.

On India's continued purchase of Russian oil, the official confirmed that the matter was raised in the bilateral meeting between Rubio and Jaishankar earlier this week.

The issue was "absolutely discussed as it's discussed in every single engagement we have... The President has been incredibly clear. He wants to end the war in Ukraine. He does not want revenue going through Russia... He's been clear with our European partners. He's been clear with India. So we raise that at every opportunity that we wish to cut off this revenue stream

for (Russian President Vladimir) Putin," the official said.

Responding to questions about the US not applying similar pressure on China, the official asserted that the Trump administration is dealing with Beijing "on its own right, and they are hearing a lot of these messages."

India, the official said, is certainly not different from the continuous pressure the Trump administration is placing elsewhere, including on the European Union, which is also having to hear this "tough" message.

The official also cited a bipartisan bill in the US Congress, co-sponsored by 85 Senators, that proposes 500% tariffs on countries buying Russian oil, adding that the current 25% tariff imposed by Washington "doesn't look so bad" in comparison.

"But we continue to put pressure on these countries to stop, to cut off the revenue when it comes to Russian energy," the official said.

The Trump administration has imposed an additional 25% tariff on India as a penalty for its purchases of Russian oil, taking the total levies imposed on the country by the US to 50%, among the highest in the world.

The official said the US "absolutely" still sees India as a "critical partner" in the Indo-Pacific.

The official also confirmed that the US is revoking exceptions under the Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act (IFCA) related to Afghanistan reconstruction, including those involving India's use of Chabahar Port in Iran.

"This President has returned to a campaign of maximum pressure (on Iran)... and with that comes the revocation of licenses for every country, not just India, to access

Chabahar port. Any revenue that would go to the IRGC (Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps) will now be targeted for sanctions, and Chabahar port is included in that," the official said.

On the issue of the recently announced USD 100,000 fee for new H-1B visa applicants, the official said the US has been in "close touch" with India on the issue.

The official said the US was "very clear", following the proclamation, that the fee is for new applicants and not for current H1B holders.

"We were very clear with them (India). We have not had any major pushback or concern. We'll see how this works. Part of it is to go after fraud in the process.

Companies and organisations that want to bring highly skilled workers will continue to do so, so long as they pay the fee," the official said.

The official referred to US Vice President JD Vance's visit to India earlier this year, where he described India-US ties as "one of the most important relationships that is going to define the 21st century."

"That is the belief of this administration, and so we continue to work through those issues in the relationship," the official said.

The official recalled that the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting in January was Secretary Rubio's first engagement after taking office. It was followed by bilateral meetings with Jaishankar and Prime Minister Modi's visit to the White House in February.

"So when you step back from this brief moment and look at the relationship, it is really on a positive trajectory and it's only expanding," the official asserted.

## At UN, Ukraine's president says world is in 'the most destructive' arms race in human history

UNITED NATIONS

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy told global leaders Wednesday that the world is in "the most destructive arms race in human history" and urged the international community to act against Russia now, asserting that Vladimir Putin wants to expand his war in Europe.

In a bleak view of today's world, he told the annual high-level meeting of the UN General Assembly that weak international institutions including the United Nations haven't been able to stop wars in Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan and elsewhere, and international law can't help nations survive.

"Weapons decide who survives," the Ukrainian leader said. "There are no security guarantees except friends and weapons."

Zelenskyy spoke from the podium of the vast assembly chamber a day after he met with US President Donald Trump, who expressed support for Ukraine's efforts and criticized Russia.

Trump said on Tuesday that he believed Ukraine could win back all territory lost to Russia, a dramatic shift from the US leader's repeated calls for Kyiv to make concessions to end the war sparked by President Vladimir Putin's February 2022 invasion of its smaller neighbour.

Zelenskyy did not comment on the surprise US pivot, saying only that he had "a good meeting" with Trump and with many other "strong leaders."

"Together, we can change a lot," he said, expressing appreciation for support from the United States, and Europe and urging all UN member nations to condemn Russia

while it "keeps dragging this war on."

If Putin isn't stopped now, the Ukrainian president warned the assembly that he will keep driving the war forward, "wider and deeper."

"Ukraine is only the first, and now Russian drones are already flying across Europe, and Russian operations are already spreading across countries," he said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy addresses the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly, Wednesday, Sept. 24, 2025.

Trump in speech to UN says world body "not even coming close to living up" to its potential.

Zelenskyy said neighbouring Moldova is defending itself again from Russian interference and should not be allowed to move toward dependency on Russia as Georgia and Belarus are. "Europe cannot afford to lose Moldova, too," he said, stressing that the country needs funding and energy support, not just "political gestures."

Since Russia invaded Ukraine, Zelenskyy said, weapons and especially drones "are evolving faster than our ability to defend ourselves."

While drones previously were used by major countries, he said, "Now, there are tens of thousands of people who know how to professionally kill using drones." Recently, European airports had to shut down because of drones, Zelenskyy said, and last week North Korea announced the test of "a tactical drone" which means even countries with limited resources can build dangerous weapons.

"We are now living through the most destructive arms race in human history, because this time it includes artificial

intelligence," he said. "Companies are already working on drones that can shoot down other drones, and it's only a matter of time -- not much -- before drones are fighting drones, attacking critical infrastructure and attacking people all by themselves -- fully autonomous and no human involved except the few who control AI system."

Zelenskyy echoed U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in calling for global rules on how AI can be used in weapons, stressing that "this is just as urgent as preventing the spread of nuclear weapons."

Stopping Putin now is cheaper than trying to protect every port and airport and every ship from drone attacks, and having to build underground schools and health centers as Ukraine has been forced to do to protect its citizens, he said. "Stopping Russia now is cheaper than wondering who will be the first to create a simple drone carrying a nuclear warhead." "So we must use everything we have together to force the aggressor to stop, and only then do we have a real chance that this arms race will not end in catastrophe for all of us," the Ukrainian leader said. The Ukrainian leader said his country doesn't have "big fat missiles dictators love to show off in parades" but it is producing drones that can fly 2,000 to 3,000 kilometers which have been used against Russia. Zelenskyy said Ukraine is building a new security architecture, and more than 30 countries are part of its coalition, and "we have decided to open up for arms exports -- and these are powerful systems tested in a real war when every international institution failed."

India recorded 314 extreme weather days in 2022, more than 200 involved floods and landslides,” Prof. Oinam



**BISWADEEP GUPTA**

At the Eighth Conference on Urban Water Security and Management held in NUIST, Nanjing, China on 19-21 September 2025, experts emphasized the mounting challenges posed by natural and anthropogenic changes on global flow regimes.

Prof. (Dr.-Ing.) Bakimchandra Oinam from the Department of Civil Engineering, National Institute of Technology (NIT) Manipur, delivered a session titled “Synergistic Impacts of Natural and Anthropogenic Changes on Flow Regimes: Emphasis on Floods and Their Mitigation.” He highlighted how India’s flood vulnerability is shaped by the southwest monsoon, glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), rapid land use change, and inadequate urban drainage.

“India recorded 314 extreme weather days in 2022, of which more than 200 involved floods and landslides,” Prof. Oinam noted. “The Imphal Valley and Brahmaputra

basin remain particularly at risk, with increasing flood frequency and intensity under projected climate scenarios.” The study presented by Prof. Oinam, based on CMIP6 climate models, indicated a 31-37% rise in streamflow by the 2050s and 2090s in north-eastern catchments such as Loktak Lake. This trend, he cautioned, could overwhelm water systems, trigger landslides, and endanger wetland ecosystems.

The session also discussed existing frameworks like the National Disaster Management Authority’s guidelines, AMRUT, and Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUDP). While these provide a policy backbone, Prof. Oinam stressed the need for “effective implementation, robust monitoring, and community participation” to build climate resilience.

The conference brought together global experts to deliberate on securing water systems in a rapidly urbanizing and warming world.

## JIRIBAM DISTRICT LAUNCHES “EK DIN, EK GHANTA, EK SAATH” CLEANLINESS DRIVE



JIRIBAM

With a pledge to make cleanliness a part of our everyday life, the District Administration Jiribam under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner, Jiribam Krishna Kumar, IAS in coordination with Jiribam Municipal Council, 87th Bn CRPF, 215 Bn CRPF under 156th Bn CRPF on Thursday launched the “Ek Din, Ek Ghanta, Ek Saath” cleanliness drive under Swachhta Hi Seva campaign from the Jiribam Railway station.

The voluntary cleanliness drive was carried out as a part of the nationwide launched of the biggest cleanliness mission of the year “Ek Din, Ek Ghanta, Ek Saath” which aims to promote cleanliness and community engagement in the district to create a garbage-free Bharat.

The drive was carried out to pay tribute to Mahatma Gandhi’s vision of

a clean Bharat by voluntarily participating in the cleanliness drive. It also encourages citizens of the district to actively clean their surroundings and maintain public spaces, foster collective effort and community participation to make a visible difference in cleanliness.

Citizens of Jiribam were also encouraged to volunteer for one hour to clean public places, including roadsides, railway tracks and water bodies.

The cleanliness drive saw active participation from personnel of 87th Bn CRPF, 215 Bn CRPF, Volunteers from Jiribam Municipal Council, officials and staff from NF Railway and other key officials including Tapan Kumar, CO 87th Bn CRPF, Kumar Rakesh Ranjan, 2nd CO 87 Bn CRPF, Ajay Kumar Singh, Dy CO 87th Bn CRPF, Omarkar Singh CO 215 Bn CRPF, Laishram Tarajeet Singh, MCS, Sub-Divisional Officer, Jiribam, Nameirakpam Bidyananda Singh, District Information Officer, Jiribam, Dr. Vinay Prasad Sahu, Chief Medical Officer, Jiribam District Hospital, Dr. Yunus, MO CHC Jiribam, Thoudam Amurashi Chanu, ZEO Jiribam, Moirangthem Surjit Singh, EO JMC, Bijendro Atom, SDC Jiribam, Dr. H. Usharani Devi, District Veterinary Officer, Jiribam, H. Ibeyaima District Child Protection Unit, Jiribam, Konthoujam Lily, Inspector, District Sericulture, Bijendro Atom, SDC Jiribam, L. Dinesh Singh, Station Master Jiribam Railway Station, DLOs staff of DC Office, Jiribam.

## SPACE FOR YOU ONLY

Rs. 150/- per day

### NAME CHANGE

I. M. GunadonSingha, S/o. Purnachand B Singha, R/o. House No. 33, New Link Road, ADC Colony, Rongpur Part-IV, Silchar Pin Code - 788009, Cachar, Assam have changed my name to GunadonSingha for all future purposes.

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## Everest Conqueror Ningthoujam Bidyapati Devi Joins North East Integration Rally

**IMPHAL**

Manipur’s trailblazing mountaineer Ningthoujam Bidyapati Devi, the first woman from the state to scale Mount Everest, has extended her support to the upcoming North East Integration Rally scheduled for January 2026.

Bidyapati created history in 2013 when she reached the summit of Mount Everest at 9.30 am as part of the First North East India Mount Everest Expedition. Standing at 29,029 feet, she became the first woman mountaineer from Manipur and the second climber from the state after Nongmaithem Suresh, who achieved the feat in 2010.

The daughter of Kokngang and Bormani from Mongjam Maning Leikai, Bidyapati was among three climbers from the expedition to summit Everest on that day. Anand Gurung from Sikkim reached first at 7.35 am, followed by Nima Lama from Arunachal Pradesh at 8.30 am, before Bidyapati’s triumphant climb at 9.30 am.

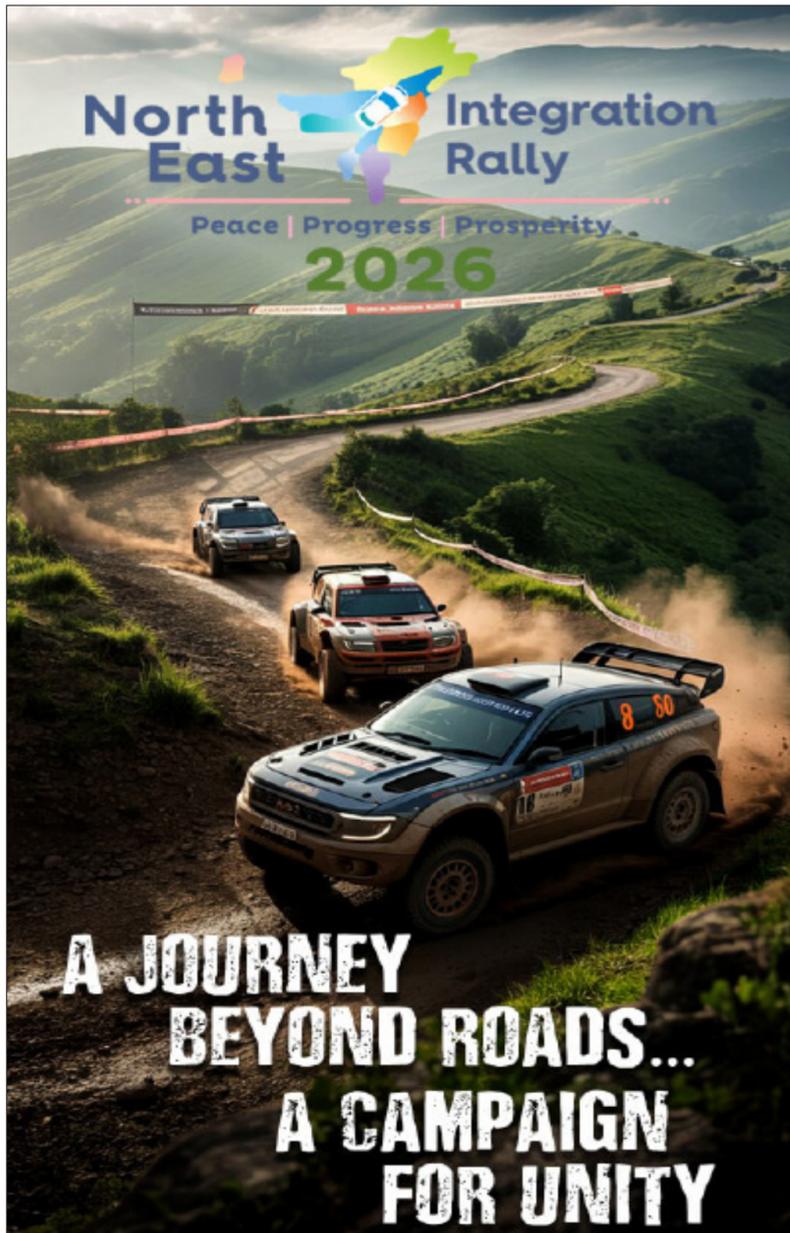
The expedition, flagged off from the historic Kangla by then Manipur Governor Gurbachan



Jagat on February 25, 2013, and later from Rashtrapati Bhavan by President Pranab Mukherjee on March 20, 2013, remains a milestone moment for the Northeast’s mountaineering history.

Speaking about her association with the North East Integration Rally, Bidyapati said, “I am happy to be part of this rally which will be held in January 2026. It is more than just a rally. Come, let’s join and celebrate unity in diversity.”

NEIR, which is highlighting Northeast achievers as part of its campaign, has described Bidyapati’s participation as a proud recognition of her pioneering achievement and her role in inspiring the next generation.





## BARAK FESTIVAL

JANUARY 10-12, 2025

**ACTIVITY PROGRAM**





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



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



**11 JAN**  
**Barak Valley Conclave**  
Potential Issues and Challenges of Barak Valley to be discussed by stakeholders. Includes NGOs and Governmental organization for their participation. Registration is through invitation only. Different awards are provided.



## BARAK FESTIVAL

JANUARY 10-12, 2025

**ACTIVITY PROGRAM**



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



**10 JAN**  
**Media Conclave**  
Media Conclave (Webinars, Seminars, Guest Panel, Talks and Conferences) are part of the 'Barak Festival 2025'. Theme: 'One for All, All for One'. Welcome your views, suggestions, proposals, queries & comments for any sponsors, guests, speakers, members.



**11 JAN**  
**5E For Success Conclave**  
The 4th 5E For Success Conclave is going to be held on the theme: 'From School to Campus to Corporate'. Schools, Educational Institutions and corporate houses can join the Conclave as sponsors.



**11 JAN**  
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## BARAK FESTIVAL

JANUARY 10-12, 2025

**ACTIVITY PROGRAM**



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



**10-12 JAN**  
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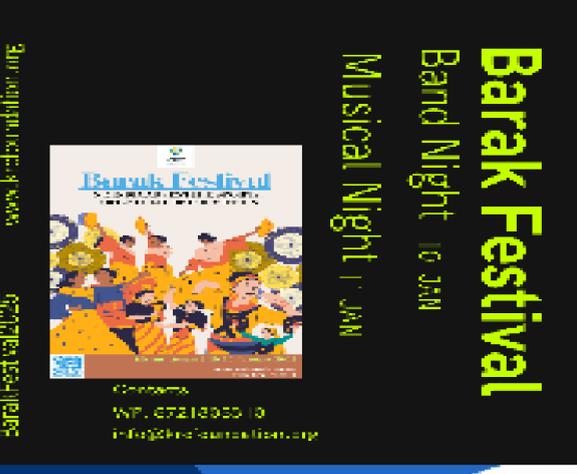
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**Book Bank**  
Anti-Book Campaign | Book Bank | E-books | e-audio | e-video.



**10-12 JAN**  
**Book Club**  
Meet Authors, Publishers, Read & Discuss, Buy and Sell Books.



**10-12 JAN**  
**Painting Carnival**  
Water Colour painting and Draw-Paint Campaign.



**10 JAN**  
**Band Night**  
**11 JAN**  
**Musical Night**



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