

# KRC TIMES

## STAY-ENRICHED

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### PERSPECTIVE

We are relaxing our population control policy for certain indigenous communities of Assam, which risk extinction.

~ Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma, Assam CM

## Assam Rifles apprehends two Myanmar-based militants attempting border infiltration in Manipur

IMPHAL

Assam Rifles personnel have detained two members of an armed group operating from Myanmar whilst they attempted to cross into India through Manipur's Chandel district, the paramilitary force announced on October 22. The operation, conducted on October 18 near Sajik Tampak in the border district, prevented what authorities describe as an organised militant infiltration across the India-Myanmar frontier. Both individuals have been identified as cadres of the United Tribal Volunteers Group. Intelligence inputs enabled security forces to intercept the suspects before they could enter Indian territory, according to the official statement.

The detained men have since been transferred to Chakpikarong Police Station for questioning and further legal proceedings.

Chandel district's proximity to the Myanmar border has made it a sensitive zone for security operations, particularly amid concerns about cross-border militant activity potentially exacerbating the state's existing tensions.

#### WHO SAID WHAT



**We will not tolerate attacks on our Muslim communities or any form of anti-Muslim hatred.**

~ Keir Starmer, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

## Assam Rolls Back Two-Child Policy for Indigenous and Tea Tribe Communities



GUWAHATI

The Assam government on October 23 announced the exemption of tribals, tea tribes, Morans, and Motoks from the two-child policy for government jobs, aiming to protect these communities from gradual extinction.

Addressing a press conference after chairing the state cabinet meeting, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said, "The cabinet decided

to exempt members of the tea tribes, Morans, Motok, and Scheduled Tribes from the provision restricting the number of children to two under the population policy. If we stick to the policy, these populations will lose their distinct identities and gradually become extinct in the next 50 years."

Sarma noted that the Moran community's population is estimated at just around one lakh, and social scientists

advised that relaxing the two-child norm was essential for the survival of these micro communities. The CM reiterated that the two-child policy, which came into effect in January 2021 under the Assam Public Services Rules, 2019, will continue to apply to other communities.

The CM also announced that the government will gradually implement the two-child policy for availing benefits under specific state welfare schemes but will not enforce it for these indigenous groups to ensure their preservation.

On other cabinet decisions, Sarma said the Tiwari Commission Report on the 1983 Nellie massacre will be tabled in the upcoming assembly session in November. "This report has not been tabled so far because the copy with the Assam government did not have the signature of the commission chairman.

We verified it through interviews with officials of that period and forensic checks," he added.

The CM also highlighted plans to amend the Land Ceiling Act to distribute 2.9 lakh bighas (nearly 96,000 acres) of land among four lakh tea tribe families, describing it as a major social development initiative.

In addition, the cabinet approved an increase in the project cost of Assam Petro-Chemicals Ltd's 500 TPD Methanol unit and 200 TPD Formalin unit from Rs 1,709.18 crore to Rs 2,267.22 crore, including additional equity contribution from the state government.

This move by the Assam government marks a significant step toward preserving the identity and livelihood of vulnerable indigenous communities while continuing broader development initiatives.

## Itanagar Tragedy: Teen's Suicide Note Accuses Two Top Officials of Sexual Exploitation



ITANAGAR

A 19-year-old man was found dead in his rented accommodation in Lekhi village near Itanagar on October 23, with a suicide note naming two senior government officials and alleging prolonged sexual abuse and harassment.

Gomchu Yekar's body was discovered around 11 am after a neighbour noticed his door open and received no response when calling out. Police have registered a case of unnatural death under Section 194 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita at Nirjuli police station.

The victim's father, Tagom Yekar, has filed an FIR accusing IAS officer and former deputy commissioner Talo Potom and Rural Works Department executive engineer Likwang Lowang of abetment

to suicide. The complaint alleges his son faced sustained harassment and coercion from both officials.

Suicide notes left by the deceased contain serious allegations of sexual exploitation, manipulation and threats. According to the notes, Yekar claimed he was recruited into a post by one of the officials, which led to a situation he described as leaving him "no way of living". He alleged he had contracted HIV and was subsequently abandoned and blackmailed. The notes also referenced unfulfilled promises of financial assistance amounting to one crore rupees and threats to "destroy his life" if he disclosed the alleged abuse. "If I die, it will be because of him. Please give me justice," one note stated.

Hours after being named in the suicide note, engineer Likwang Lowang reportedly died by suicide himself. Inspector Talum Nekam, the officer in charge at Nirjuli police station, confirmed the case registration and said further details would be shared on October 24. The allegations have sent shockwaves through Arunachal Pradesh, raising serious questions about the conduct of senior officials and workplace exploitation.

## Eco Park Kohima set to open before Hornbill Festival: CM Neiphiu Rio



KOHIMA

Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio has announced that the much-anticipated Eco Park Kohima is nearing completion and is expected to open to the public before the start of the Hornbill Festival 2025.

The Chief Minister inspected the ongoing construction at the park site on Thursday and expressed satisfaction with the progress of work.

Located between the Capital Cultural Hall and the Indoor Stadium—opposite the Red Cross building—the Eco

Park is being developed as a major urban green space and cultural hub under the Nagaland Forest Management Project (NFMP), funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) through an Official Development Assistance (ODA) framework.

Speaking to reporters at the site, Rio said that efforts were being made to complete the park in time for the Hornbill Festival, scheduled from December 1 to 10, adding that several activities and exhibitions would be held at the venue during the event. "The park will showcase Naga products, handloom and handicraft, Second World War antiques, and Naga artifacts, all aimed at promoting 'Made in Nagaland'," Rio said.

According to officials, the Eco Park will feature a Kohima Peace Memorial symbolising Indo-Japanese friendship, a view tower inspired by Naga and Japanese architecture, an open-air amphitheatre, and parking for around 50 vehicles.

In addition, stalls representing all 17 Naga tribes will be set up for showcasing handloom, handicraft, and traditional art forms, along with cafeterias and restaurants designed to enhance visitor experience.

Once inaugurated, the Eco Park is expected to become one of Kohima's most attractive landmarks—celebrating Nagaland's culture, resilience, and natural beauty while strengthening international friendship through sustainable development.

## CM Sarma Launches Major Women's Empowerment Mission at Sribhumi

SILCHAR

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday launched a major economic empowerment drive in Ramkrishna Nagar under Ratabari LAC, distributing cheques to women beneficiaries under the Mukhyamantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan (MMUA). The initiative, part of the government's flagship Lakhpati Didi mission, aims to make rural women self-reliant micro-entrepreneurs. Addressing a large gathering, the Chief Minister said that nearly 20,000 women from Ratabari and Ramkrishnanagar would receive Rs 10,000 each under the MMUA scheme. "This is not just financial assistance; it is an investment in the dreams and determination of women who will shape Assam's future economy," Sarma said. Encouraging women to take up entrepreneurship and income-generating activities, he added, "If the women of this constituency remain committed and dedicated, they, too, can become Lakhpati Didis. Our government wants to ensure that every woman in Assam has the opportunity to earn with dignity."

The MMUA scheme is designed to foster entrepreneurship among women's self-help groups, helping them build small-scale businesses and sustainable livelihoods. Sarma noted that the initiative aligns with the state's broader vision of financial inclusion and rural transformation.

The Chief Minister also an-



nounced that the Orunodoi assistance scheme—which provides monthly financial support to women from low-income households—will see an upward revision early next year, further enhancing household income stability. Praising Ratabari MLA Bijoy Malakar for his dedication, Sarma highlighted that development projects worth Rs 1,000 crore have already been implemented in the constituency. "Ratabari has set an example in development and community

participation," he said. Sarma also announced that a major development project for Son Beel, Asia's second-largest wetland, is under consideration, assuring his personal intervention for its early execution. Reaffirming his government's focus on grassroots empowerment, he said that the MMUA and Lakhpati Didi initiatives would together build a foundation for an economically self-reliant Assam, where women lead the state's progress through enterprise, skill, and resilience.

## Police nab mastermind behind fake medical degree racket

SILCHAR

In a major breakthrough against one of Assam's longest-running medical frauds, the Cachar Police have arrested Jayanta Prasad Das, the alleged mastermind behind a sprawling fake medical degree racket that has been operating for nearly two decades under the guise of alternative medicine.

Confirming the arrest, Cachar Superintendent of Police (SSP) Numal Mahatta told the media on Thursday that Das's detention marks the 14th arrest in the district's ongoing crackdown on quacks and fraudulent medical institutions. A

Preliminary investigations revealed that Das had been posing as a medical professional while running an unrecognised institute named the National Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS). The so-called institute, police said, issued fake medical degrees, including forged M.D. (Alternative Medicine) certificates, to unqualified individuals who later used them to practise medicine illegally across the region.

"Das has never studied in any recognised Indian medical institution. His



claimed medical degrees were obtained from unverified Bangladeshi institutes. These fake credentials were later sold to unsuspecting individuals, enabling them to pose as doctors and treat patients unlawfully," SSP Mahatta stated.

The arrest was made in connection with Silchar P.S. Case No. 786/25, registered under sections 125/271/318(4)/319(2)/336(4)/340(2)/112(2)/110 of the Bharatiya Nyaya

Sanhita (BNS). The investigation first led to the arrest of fake doctor Pulok Malakar, who was found to have obtained his fraudulent degree from NIMS. According to police sources, Das operated a well-structured criminal network that produced and distributed counterfeit medical credentials. None of the certificates issued by NIMS had any legal recognition or affiliation with the National Medical Council (NMC) or other

statutory authorities. "Pulok Malakar was just a small part of the chain — Das is the true mastermind," an official close to the investigation said, adding that the accused had misused the image of medical authority for personal profit while endangering countless lives. Police said Das's fraudulent operation had severely undermined public trust in the healthcare system, as untrained individuals were allowed to handle critical medical situations. "This operation not only compromised patient safety but posed a grave threat to public health at large," SSP Mahatta added. Das has been produced before court and remanded to police custody for further interrogation. Investigators believe the network extends beyond Cachar district, and more arrests are likely as authorities trace the beneficiaries, recruiters, and collaborators linked to NIMS's operations. Cachar Police said the latest arrest marks a significant step in dismantling Assam's most enduring quack network, which for years exploited public trust and the desperation of job-seekers under the false banner of "alternative medicine."



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## HYPOCRISY OF PAKISTAN OVER POJK

For over seven decades, Pakistan has projected itself as the self-styled guardian of the Kashmiri people often involving the rhetoric of "Self-Determination" and accusing others of oppression. Yet, in the very territory under its own control Pakistan occupied Jammu Kashmir (POJK) including Gilgit Baltistan and so-called "Azad Kashmir" the ground reality exposes a striking paradox. Instead of empowerment, local communities face political disenfranchisement, economic exploitation and social neglect. While Pakistani leaders repeatedly champion human rights in global forums, their policies in illegally occupied POJK reflect consistent denial those very rights; repression of dissent, extraction of resources and silencing of local voices. This gap between rhetoric and reality is what many analysts call the hypocrisy of Pakistan over POJK. The hypocrisy is not just an abstract charge; it has a tangible consequences. It fuels recurrent unrest in POJK, undermines Islamabad's moral credibility in international discourse and destabilizes the fragile peace of south Asia. The consequence of this gross root anger over economic hardships and political privilege exploded in to one of the biggest uprisings in POJK, the region illegally occupied by Pakistan since 1948. These protests started in the last week of September, 2025 and continued for five consecutive days. Initially sparked by economic grievances, the protests had escalated into a wider gross roots movement reflecting deep-seated public frustration. Violent confrontation between demonstrators and security forces have claimed the lives of at least ten people including three police officers while leaving dozen more injured there by underscoring the growing volatility in the region. Markets remained shuttered, roads deserted, internet and mobile network blocked since Sept.28. The shutdown, spear-headed by the Joint Action Committee of POJK has brought life to a standstill across several districts of POJK with nearly four million residents caught in the cross fire of state's paralysis. This time the protests were so intense that Pakistan Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif had to dispatch a high-powered delegation to Muzaffarabad to find a negotiable solution to the problem. Ultimately, after four days of intense discussion an agreement was signed on 4th October, 2025. Therefore, it is utmost important to know the history of these unrest since 1948 (the time Pakistan illegally occupied POJK) and the causes of unrest. The history of protests in Pakistan occupied Jammu and Kashmir since 1948 reflects decades of resentment, exploitation and political suppression under Pakistani control. After illegal occupation of part of Jammu and Kashmir in 1947-48, Pakistan promised autonomy to local population. However, these assurances soon turned hollow as POJK was systematically deprived of political rights, development, and representation. The first major protests began in the year 1950's, when locals opposed Islamabad decision to impose direct control through the Azad Jammu Kashmir Council, curtailing local governance. The people demanded genuine self rule, but such movements were brutally suppressed by Pakistani authorities. In 1970's and 1980's a new wave of demonstration emerged in areas like Mirpur, Muzaffarabad, and Kotli, when citizens protested land grabs, unfair taxation, and political interference from Islamabad. The construction of the Mangla Dam in 1967, which displaced thousands without adequate compensation, sowed long lasting anger and sporadic uprisings. In the 1990's amid rising militancy across the region, dissenting voices in POJK were crushed under the pretext of national security. Journalists and activists calling for democratic rights or criticizing the military rule faced arrests, torture and disappearances. Since 2000 growing awareness through social media has reignited the protests against unemployment, lack of health care, corruption and resource exploitation by Pakistani Corporations. In recent years mass demonstrations in Muzaffarabad, Bagh and Rawalakote have drawn global attention. The protesters in POJK have condemned sky rocketing electricity bills, inflation, and Islamabad's exploitation of local resources without benefits to residents.

The May 2024 unrest, where several civilians were killed by Pakistani forces, exposed the deep rooted alienation of the people. Over seven decades, POJK protests have evolved from demands for autonomy to cries for basic human rights, economic justice and freedom from Pakistan's political and military stranglehold marking a continuing struggle of a silenced region yearning for dignity and self-determination. Another important issue among POJK people is the development of the region in comparison to Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. In fact, development in terms of infrastructure, health care, and education in POJK has remained stagnant due to deliberate policy, neglect and political control by Islamabad.

i) Infrastructure projects were meager with poor connectivity, inadequate roads and unreliable power supply. The so-called Azad Kashmir Government lacks true authority, as most resources are diverted by Pakistan's federal agencies and military establishments. In contrast the Jammu Kashmir & Ladakh has witnessed a massive infrastructure growth, high ways, railways and smart cities under successive development programs.

ii) Health care in POJK paints a grim picture. There are very few hospitals, often without proper equipment or qualified doctors. Rural areas are devoid of even basic medical facilities, forcing people to travel long distances for treatment. Infant and maternal mortality rates remain high, while Pakistan's Government spends negligible amount on public health in the region. In comparison, health care in Jammu and Kashmir has seen revolution, with AIIMS, Jammu GMCs, and district hospitals offering modern facilities and telemedicine services.

iii) Education in POJK suffers from chronic neglect. Schools are under funded, teachers are underpaid and higher education institutions are scarce. The literacy rates remain far below the natural average of Pakistan. Textbooks are filled with propaganda rather than quality content leaving generation deprived of scientific and rational education, whereas establishment of institutions like IIT, IIM and central universities have transformed the landscape of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

How little can be done under the spirit of fear. - Florence Nightingale

# Trump claims he has stopped eight wars. So why is he starting a new one with Venezuela?



RAMESH RAMACHANDRAN

Why is Trump, who has said a zillion times that the war between Ukraine and Russia would never have started if he were the President, training his guns on Maduro? That's the question that is agitating many a mind around the world, including Venezuela.

There's no doubt that the South American country is in Trump's cross-hairs. He's made it clear that he wants Maduro out.

Trump has sent an armada to Venezuela's shores. There are 10,000 U.S. troops in position, most of them at bases in Puerto Rico, in addition to a contingent of Marines on amphibious assault ships. In all, the U.S. Navy has eight surface warships and a submarine in the Caribbean.

And what's more, the U.S. just carried out a fifth missile-strike on a suspected boat, killing 6 more people off the coast of Venezuela. A 30-second video, which Trump posted on Truth Social, appeared to show a stationary vessel in a body of water being hit with a projectile before exploding. He said that the 14th October strike had been carried out against a designated terrorist organisation. He did not share details of the strike. It was the latest such operation in recent weeks as the U.S. builds up military forces in the region. The U.S. military has blown up five such boats so far, killing 27 people in all.

A day later, on 15th October, three B-52 bombers of the U.S. Air Force were spotted near Venezuela. They flew through the Gulf of Mexico, passing between Mexico and Cuba, before approaching Venezuela and circling over the Caribbean Sea.

Trump further heightened fears that the U.S. might be preparing for a full-scale invasion of Venezuela by saying that he is considering strikes targeting Venezuelan drug cartels on land.

"We are certainly looking at land now, because we've got the sea very well under control," Trump told journalists at the White House.

Trump also confirmed that he authorised the Central Intelligence Agency — the U.S. foreign intelligence agency — to conduct covert operations in Venezuela, marking a sharp escalation in U.S. efforts to put pressure on Maduro.

"I authorised for two reasons, really. Number 1, they have emptied their prisons into the United States of America. And the other thing [is] drugs. We have a lot of drugs coming in from Venezuela".

"I think Venezuela is feeling [the] heat. But

I think a lot of other countries are feeling [the] heat, too."

It is The New York Times that first reported the classified directive. It said that American officials have been clear, privately, that the end goal is to drive Mr. Maduro from power.

Just so you know, the U.S. has a long history of covert action in Latin America and the Caribbean:

— In 1954, the agency orchestrated a coup that overthrew President Jacobo Arbenz of Guatemala, ushering in decades of instability;

— the C.I.A.-backed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961 ended in disaster, and the agency repeatedly tried to assassinate Fidel Castro;

— that same year, the C.I.A. supplied weapons to dissidents who assassinated Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina, the leader of the Dominican Republic;

— the agency also had its hands in a 1964 coup in Brazil;

— the death of Che Guevara and other machinations in Bolivia;

— a 1973 coup in Chile;

— and the Contra fight against the leftist Sandinista Government of Nicaragua in the 1980s;

That's not all. In 2010, the then U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton issued an official apology for a U.S.-funded syphilis experiment that took place in Guatemala during the 1940s. In the experiment, U.S. doctors deliberately infected hundreds of vulnerable Guatemalan people with sexually transmitted diseases without their consent.

Venezuela rejected Trump's bellicose language. In a televised meeting with his military brass and supporters, Maduro blasted the U.S. for its failed forever wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya.

"No to regime change, which reminds us so much of the endless, failed wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and so on. No to C.I.A.-orchestrated coups d'etat, which recall the 30,000 disappeared in the C.I.A.-backed coups against Argentina. Pinochet's coup, and the 5,000 young people who were killed or disappeared."

"Listen to me, not war, yes peace, the people [of] United States, from the people [of] Bolivarian Republic," he added for good measure, speaking this time in English.

Maduro has repeatedly alleged that the U.S. is hoping to remove him from power. In fact, the U.S. has put a bounty of 50 million dollars on Maduro — double the bounty on Osama bin

Laden.

Maduro has since ordered more military exercises. State T.V. showed images of armoured vehicles deploying in a Caracas suburb.

The strikes indicate Trump's efforts to use U.S. military power in new ways, from deploying active-duty U.S. troops in Los Angeles to carrying out counter-terrorism strikes against drug-trafficking suspects. But are U.S. actions legal, is the question? Some U.S. officials say that the legal explanations given by the Trump Government for killing suspected drug traffickers at sea instead of apprehending them, fail to satisfy requirements under the law of war. But Trump defends his actions by saying that taking "politically correct" actions has not helped in the past! He's even joked about how the strikes are having the desired impact on the ground; how it's making people nervous about venturing out to sea. "In fact nobody wants to go fishing anymore, nobody wants to go anywhere near the water," he said in jest.

But, jokes aside, why is someone who calls himself The Peace President and Peacemaker-in-Chief spoiling for a fight with Maduro? It has to do with geopolitics — code for China. Venezuela sees China as a geopolitical ally. China imports large quantities of oil from Venezuela. A Chinese military blogger on the video platform Bilibili has analysed Venezuela's importance to China in both strategic and practical terms. He says that the decisive factor is geography. Venezuela sits close to the Panama Canal, one of the world's most vital shipping arteries, and only about 1,700 kilometres from the U.S. mainland, well within range of medium-range missiles. For Beijing, he argues, location is the real reason why Venezuela has become one of China's closest partners. The blogger suggests that the U.S. sees Latin America as its backyard and cannot tolerate a defiant Venezuela trading oil outside the U.S. dollar system, which recalls the fate of Iraq's former leader Saddam Hussein. Therefore, from Beijing's perspective, Venezuela is a frontline partner for China in balancing U.S. influence.

That's not all. Venezuela has the world's largest, proven oil reserves. Enough to rival Saudi Arabia. As well as massive deposits of natural gas, bauxite and iron-ore. Also, coltan. Electronic devices rely on components containing elements that are extracted from coltan. From smartphones to laptops, a range of electronic devices have coltan as a funda-

mental building block. Add gold, lithium and uranium to the mix and what you have is a mineral jackpot!

Evan Ellis, a Latin America researcher at the U.S. War College, said that the fact that the U.S. ships sailing off the coast of Venezuela have soldiers on board, suggest that the U.S. might be planning some kind of escalation. Ellis would know, for he served under Trump during his first term.

So, is an all-out war imminent? Polymarket says that as of noon Saturday (0630 G.M.T.), there's a 50 per cent chance that a direct U.S. — Venezuela military clash will erupt by 31st December. (Polymarket is a U.S.-based cryptocurrency-based prediction market.) It is in the news for correctly predicting that this year's Nobel Peace Prize will go to Venezuela's Maria Corina Machado. Just putting it out there.

### DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

**Islam must not be exempt from the critical scrutiny that applies to all other religions. It must undergo an enlightenment process by questioning the inhuman, unequal, unscientific, and irrational aspects of the religion.**

~ Taslima Nasreen, Author



## MELTDOWN IN PAKISTAN AS INDIA, TALIBAN RESET TIES

RAMESH RAMACHANDRAN

The unprecedented visit of Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi to India could reshape regional power dynamics

It's a seismic shift. Mawlawi Muttaqi's visit to India points to a diplomatic thaw that's shaking up South Asia's fragile fault lines. More on the how and why of it in just a bit but first a quick word about the man at the centre of it all. Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi is the Taliban's acting foreign minister. Mawlawi is a title; it means an Islamic scholar of repute. Born in 1970 in Afghanistan's dusty Helmand province, Muttaqi cut his teeth as a young jihadi fighting the Soviets in the 1980s. He fled to Pakistan as a refugee; steeped himself in religious studies.

In October 1996, following the Taliban's conquest of Kabul, he became the Acting Minister of Information and Culture and the official spokesperson for the group. He went on to hold the portfolio of Education Minister in 2000. Today, he's the face of a regime that's desperate for legitimacy. He is one of several Taliban leaders who is under U.N. sanctions. There's a travel ban against him and his known assets are frozen.

So, how did this visit come about? And why is it being called unprecedented? On 30th September, the U.N. Security Council's

Taliban Sanctions Committee, chaired by Pakistan no less, granted Muttaqi a rare exemption. It enabled him to visit India from 9th to 16th October. No Taliban leader had set foot in India since the group recaptured Kabul on 15th August 2021. So, Muttaqi is the first top Taliban minister to visit New Delhi for talks that could, potentially, rewrite the neighbourhood's rulebook.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met Mawlawi Muttaqi in person for the first time on 10th October. Towards the end of their talks, India announced its decision to further deepen its engagement in development cooperation projects, particularly in the sectors of healthcare, public infrastructure and capacity-building. India also announced the delivery of food supplies to those affected by the recent earthquake. For his part, Minister Jaishankar handed over five ambulances to the visiting Afghan minister. This was part of a larger gift of 20 ambulances and other medical equipment that India has decided to send to Kabul as a gesture of goodwill. For his part, Mawlawi Muttaqi invited Indian companies to invest in the mining sector.

Minister Jaishankar had one other announcement to make. "India is fully committed to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Afghanistan. Closer cooperation between us contributes

to your national development, as well as regional stability and resilience. To enhance that, I am pleased to announce today the upgrading of India's Technical Mission in Kabul to the status of Embassy of India," he told his guest.

So does the decision to re-open the embassy mean that India recognises the Taliban Government or is on course to recognising it? Yes, says Dilip Sinha, a former Indian ambassador. As of today, India is among the more-than-a-dozen countries that have either decided to re-open, or have already re-opened, their embassy in Kabul. The list includes China, Pakistan, the U.A.E., Qatar, Turkiye, Saudi Arabia and Iran, among others. But only Russia has formally recognised the Taliban Government so far — a step it took in July this year, by accepting the credentials of a Taliban-appointed ambassador and updating the Afghan Embassy's flag in Moscow.

Incidentally, Russia was one of three holdouts, along with India and Iran, who were ranged against the Taliban when the group captured Kabul in 1996. In response to the Taliban takeover, Russia, India and Iran had offered support to the Northern Alliance, a coalition of anti-Taliban groups. At the time, the Taliban was only recognised by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the U.A.E. But today, while these three countries are

hedging, Russia has gone ahead and recognised the Taliban Government in Kabul.

The thaw in India's ties with the Taliban-ruled Afghanistan didn't happen overnight. The ice has been melting for some time. In fact, the ball was set rolling immediately after the Taliban stormed Kabul in 2021.

— India's ambassador to Qatar at the time met Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai, the head of Taliban's Political Office in Doha on 31st August, a little over a fortnight after Taliban came to rule Afghanistan for the second time in two decades. New Delhi said that among other things, the Indian envoy raised India's concern that Afghanistan's soil should not be used for anti-Indian activities and terrorism in any manner.

— In November 2024, an Indian diplomat, J.P. Singh, called on Afghanistan's acting defence minister, Mullah Muhammad Yaqoob, the son of Taliban's late founder Mullah Muhammad Omar in Kabul. Mullah Omar was also the Emir of the country from 1996 till 2001. — India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri called on Muttaqi in Dubai in January 2025.

— Muttaqi hosted an Indian diplomat Anand Prakash in Kabul on 27th April.

— Minister Jaishankar spoke to Muttaqi in May. The phone call took place after the Taliban Government condemned the 22nd April terror attack at Pahalgam in India.

# Akhil Gogoi slams Assam CM: "If seeking justice for Zubeen is madness, you are a Hitler"

SIVASAGAR

Sivasagar MLA Akhil Gogoi has sharply criticised Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma over his remarks on the ongoing demand for justice in the mysterious death of beloved singer Zubeen Garg.

In a Facebook live session, Gogoi said, "If demanding justice for a loved artist is considered madness, if seeking punishment for the accused is madness, and if citizens expressing their demand for justice is interpreted as defiance against the government, then such a ruler cannot be called a democratic leader but must be called a monarch. And in your place, Chief Minister, you would be comparable to Hitler. Do you consider yourself a Hitler?"

Gogoi clarified that he and his supporters have never incited any "madness" but it is the Chief Minister who, according to him, has reacted irrationally



ally to the public's strong demand for a transparent and fair investigation into Zubeen Garg's death.

He accused Sarma of attempting to cover up the truth and protect the accused, saying the government's response has sparked outrage among Assam's people, who remain resolute in seeking justice for their beloved artist.

The MLA's remarks come amid ongoing debates over the state government's handling of the case, highlighting widespread frustration among fans and citizens demanding accountability.

Gogoi emphasised that public calls for justice are legitimate and must not be misconstrued as rebellion against the authorities.

The response comes after Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has strongly spoken about the late singer Zubeen Garg, urging that the artist should remain a beloved figure of the people rather than being politicised or

associated with government agendas.

Addressing the media on October 23, the Chief Minister highlighted that Zubeen Garg did not consume alcohol, and even if he occasionally did, it was only in times of sorrow. "I have met Zubeen personally; he was not someone who drank alcohol," Sarma stated, emphasising that the singer's reputation should not be maligned in the name of justice.

"Some people are attempting to destroy Zubeen's identity and soul under the pretext of seeking justice," the Chief Minister said. "We will remember Zubeen Garg through his songs. We will not honour his memory by associating him with alcohol."

"What is going on...who is running this.. Akhil Gogoi sends people in batches followed by the Congress, they are trying to associate Zubeen with only alcohol and nothing more than that... so dont make that mistake," he added.

## Congress slams NC Hills Autonomous Council chief over alleged death threat, demands probe

HAFLONG

Congress slammed North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council Chief Debolal Gorlosa for allegedly issuing death threats to a local resident identified as Neijaylal Khelma, from NEEPCO Colony in Umrangso, the industrial hub of the district. According to the FIR filed by Khelma at the Umrangso Police Station, the incident occurred on October 9 at around 7:25 PM, when Khelma allegedly received a phone call from the mobile number of NCHAC member Prajit Hojai.

During the call, CEM Debolal Gorlosa allegedly threatened to shoot him and his family, saying that "no one will even find your body."

The complainant further stated that on October 16 around 9 AM, Gorlosa summoned his brother, Neijoythang Khelma, and pressured him to withdraw the complaint filed against him. Following the FIR, Umrangso police registered a case and launched an investigation into the allegations. In view of the seriousness of the complaint, security personnel have been deployed for Khelma's protection. Meanwhile, addressing a press conference at Rajiv Bhawan in Haflong, Dima Hasao District Congress spokesperson Nelson Riam strongly condemned the alleged threat, calling it "a blatant misuse of power and a dangerous precedent." He stated that a person holding a constitutional post like the CEM should be safeguarding public peace and development instead of intimidating citizens. Riam also alleged that this was not the first instance of such behavior. He cited a previous incident from July 12, where Gorlosa allegedly issued a similar death threat to another individual, Ripunjay Langthasa of Maibang. Despite a police complaint, no visible action was taken, he claimed.

## Tripura prioritises timely, high-quality implementation of PM-SURYA free solar scheme

AGARTALA

Tripura is giving top priority to the swift and high-quality rollout of the PM-SURYA Free Solar Scheme, officials said. Speaking at a review meeting held on Wednesday at the Corporate Office of Tripura State Electricity Corporation Limited (TSECL), Power Secretary Abhishek Singh (IAS) stressed that the flagship initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi must be implemented efficiently across the state. The meeting, attended by all agencies and vendors involved in the project, focused on ensuring the timely installation of solar panels in every eligible household while maintaining strict quality standards. Singh underlined a zero-tolerance policy toward negligence, warning that agencies or vendors failing to meet their responsibilities would face strict action. He also reminded stakeholders that agencies will remain accountable for the five-year warranty period of the installations.

Agency representatives raised concerns about delays in bank loan approvals, which were affecting project timelines. In response, the Secretary assured that he would personally engage with senior bank officials if necessary. He also promised government support to address logistical challenges, including the transport and supply of materials between companies and vendors. TSECL Managing Director Biswajit Basu said the project is under his direct supervision, affirming that no negligence will be tolerated and that officials at all levels would provide full cooperation. "Our goal is to reduce electricity bills for every consumer in the state," Basu added.

Deputy General Manager (Corporate) Shishir Debbarma provided a progress update, reporting that 16,855 consumers have registered for the scheme, 7,365 have submitted the required documents, and 1,112 households have already received installed solar panels.

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma revealed that the state narrowly avoided a potential disaster in Kokrajhar after a portion of a railway track was damaged in an IED blast late Wednesday night, October 22.

"Yesterday in Kokrajhar, our state narrowly escaped a terrible accident. Around 3 AM, the DGP called to inform me that a part of a special train route had been damaged in an IED blast. Fortunately, the train had already passed when the loco pilot noticed the explosion site," said the Chief Minister while speaking to the media.

The loco pilot immediately alerted the authorities, including the Railways and Railway Police, preventing what could have been a catastrophic mishap. "Had the loco pilot not noticed it in time, we might have woken up to very tragic news by 3 AM," Sarma



said.

The Kokrajhar Police swiftly launched an overnight investigation, and the damaged railway track was repaired the same night, allowing train services on the route to resume normal operations.

Sarma further informed that a suspect involved in the incident has been identified. "The person has multiple cases registered against him in both Assam and Jharkhand. It is highly likely that the Assam Police will soon apprehend the suspect," he said,

adding that whether the individual is linked to any organisation will be determined later.

Assam Director General of Police, Harmit Singh, visited Kokrajhar on Thursday, October 23 to review the security situation after a powerful IED explosion damaged a section of railway track between Kokrajhar and Salakati stations around midnight. DGP Singh chaired a high-level meeting with senior police officers and security officials at the 7th Battalion police camp in Charaikhola to assess the incident and discuss preventive measures to avoid any further disruptions.

During the meeting, the DGP directed authorities to intensify security surveillance across the district, focusing on railway lines and other vital installations. He emphasised the importance of coordinated efforts among state police, railway police, and central security forces.

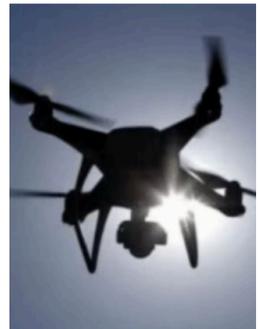
## Naga students' body condemns drone strike in Mon district; calls for AFSPA repeal and international probe

IMPHAL

The Naga Students' Federation (NSF) has strongly denounced a drone assault reportedly carried out by Indian armed forces on October 20, 2025, at Khammoi village, Mon district, which resulted in the death of two unarmed civilians and the destruction of private property.

Among the victims were Late Eno Khampei Wangsa, a promising student leader and Joint Secretary of Khammoi Students' Union, and eight-year-old Late Phiphot Wangsu, a Grade-1 student at Khammoi Mission School. The NSF described the attack as "an act that defies every standard of humanity."

The federation criticised the use of combat drones and explo-



sive payloads in civilian-populated areas, stating it violates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the Geneva Conventions' prohibition against targeting civil-

ians, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), among other international laws. NSF warned that such actions reflect a pattern of militarised suppression, weaponised fear, and systemic impunity under the cover of domestic legislation such as the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA). The federation urged the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to initiate an independent, international fact-finding mission, and called on the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to issue a situational report on violations occurring under AFSPA. Domestically, NSF highlighted that AFSPA provides legal immunity to armed forces, creating a system where accounta-

bility becomes optional.

In protest against militarisation and state-sponsored violence, NSF announced non-cooperation with armed forces across all its federating units and subordinate bodies until AFSPA is repealed.

Extending condolences to the families of the victims, NSF stated that their loss "is a collective wound upon the conscience of humanity" and reaffirmed its solidarity in mourning and demanding justice.

The federation also appealed to democratic nations, humanitarian organisations, and conscience-driven citizens worldwide to condemn the attack and ensure that the perpetrators are held accountable under international criminal law.

## Tripura CM warns against divisive politics, vows legal action against threats to BJP

AGARTALA

Tripura Chief Minister Prof. (Dr.) Manik Saha strongly condemned attempts to create divisions in the state, particularly targeting the Janajati community.

Speaking at the inauguration of the Takajala Mandal office in West District, he said politics aimed at sowing rifts—reminiscent of past communist strategies—will not succeed.

"Tripura's people value peace, development, and democracy. Our government will not tolerate the use of muscle power under any circumstances. If anyone attacks us, we will respond firmly through legal channels," Dr. Saha asserted.

During the event, 690 new voters from 200 families joined the Bharatiya Janata Party. Dr. Saha recalled the sacrifices of BJP founders, including Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, and reiterated the party's guiding principles inspired by Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya. "Those who think they can threaten us are living in a dream. Temporary obstacles or acts of violence will not deter us," he added.

Dr. Saha contrasted the BJP's governance with previous regimes, citing incidents of violence during Communist and Congress



rule. "Politics should be conducted with dignity. The BJP believes in 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas'—progress must include everyone. Under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we are working to ensure development for all," he said.

Focusing on the Janajati community,

the Chief Minister emphasised that their socio-economic development is a priority for the government. "Earlier, the community was used for vote-bank politics and misled onto the streets. Since our government came to power, we have taken steps to empower them and ensure fair development," he noted.

He added that while the BJP does not seek conflict, it will take legal action against anyone attempting to harm its workers or obstruct development. "We want a peaceful environment in Tripura. People are welcome to voice their opinions, but any unjust aggression will be met with justice through proper legal channels," Dr. Saha said.

KRC TIMES

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## At least 20 killed as Hyderabad-Bengaluru private bus catches fire in Andhra



### KURNOOL

At least 20 passengers were killed and several others sustained injuries after the private bus they were travelling in caught fire after accident near Chinnatekuru village on National Highway 44 in Kurnool district on early hours of Friday.

According to preliminary reports, the bus, traveling from Hyderabad to Bengaluru caught fire around 3:30 am after it struck a motorcycle and dragged it for some distance, generating sparks that ignited the blaze. There were approximately 42 people on board at the time.

While 12 passengers managed to escape with minor injuries by breaking open the emergency exit

and window panes, many others were trapped inside as the flames consumed the vehicle.

Police and fire services rushed to the scene and shifted the injured to Kurnool Government Hospital. However, heavy rainfall in the area severely hampered rescue operations. The bus crew, including the driver, reportedly fled the scene immediately after the accident.

The accident led to a massive traffic jam on the highway, with vehicles stranded for hours. Police registered a case and are investigating the incident.

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, who is currently on an official visit to Dubai, expressed deep anguish over the tragedy. Upon being briefed

by senior officials, he held discussions with the Chief Secretary and directed top administrative personnel to rush to the accident site and oversee rescue and relief efforts.

The Chief Minister instructed that all necessary medical assistance be provided to the injured and that support be extended to the bereaved families. He emphasised the need for swift action to prevent further casualties and assured that the government would stand by the victims during this difficult time.

Ministers B.C. Janardhan Reddy and K. Atchannaaidu also expressed shock over the incident and conveyed their condolences to the families of the deceased.

## Indian Ocean Region no longer passive, Navy strengthens presence, strategic capabilities: Rajnath Singh

### NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday highlighted changes in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), which he said is "no longer passive."

Addressing the top hierarchy of the Indian Navy, the Defence Minister said, "IOR has become the center of contemporary geopolitics. It is no longer passive; it has become an area of competition and cooperation."

He added that the Indian Navy, through its multidimensional capabilities, has played a leadership role in the region. "In the last six months, our ships, submarines, and naval aircraft have been deployed at an unprecedented scale. In addition, our Navy has provided safe passage to approximately 335 merchant vessels, equaling around 1.2 million metric tons of cargo and a trade value of 5.6 billion dollars. This is proof that India has now become a trusted and capable partner in the global maritime economy," Singh said while speaking at the Naval Commanders Conference.

The Defence Minister's statement follows his earlier emphasis on India's strategic location in the IOR and the increasing threats in the region.

Singh had underscored the Government's resolve to strengthen the Navy, calling it a necessity due to India's economic dependence on maritime security. "India's economic prosperity is linked to maritime security. It is, therefore, necessary to protect our territorial waters, ensure freedom of navigation, and keep sea routes, which are our maritime highways, safe," he had said at an event in January 2025 organized to commemorate 2024 as the "Year of Naval Civililians."

He also noted the possibility of increased threats in the Gulf of Aden, Red Sea, and waters adjacent to East African countries, explaining that the Indian Navy is working to further expand its presence.

Singh emphasised the critical importance of safeguarding India's sea lines of communication, pointing out that around 90 per cent of India's trade and 80 per cent of its energy



requirements (oil and gas) are transported via the sea.

He highlighted the strategic importance of key chokepoints such as the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, connecting the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and, by extension, the Indian Ocean.

On Thursday, the Defence Minister further added, "Maritime preparedness is no longer only about ships or submarines; it is based on technology-driven, network-centric, and autonomous systems. We need to protect ourselves from our adversaries' modern technologies while enhancing our capabilities in these areas. We have the potential and the capabilities. We're manufacturing our equipment on our own soil."

He described the Indian Navy's presence in the IOR as a matter of "comfort for the friendly nations" and "discomfort for those who seek to destabilise the region."

Singh underlined the importance of balancing strategy formulation with acquisition of state-of-the-art equipment to fight modern wars.

"No nation can win a war solely with equipment and warships. Technology gives us an edge, but geography, deception, timing, and human judgment must always be factored into the tactical framework. Fleet size and modernisation are important, but tactically utilising platforms is equally crucial. Agility and adaptability are essential in planning," he said.

He stressed the need to advance naval strategy and thinking in sync with the rapidly evolving world.

"We must work together in three areas: capability, people, and partnerships. Capability means technology & strength; people mean sailors & their families; and partnerships mean industries, academia & international cooperation. When these three come together, our Navy will emerge as an even more reliable and powerful force," he added.

Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh, Secretary DDR&D and Chairman DRDO Dr Samir V. Kamat,

and Naval Commanders were present on the occasion.

As TNIE reported earlier, the top echelons of the force have gathered in New Delhi for the second edition of the biannual Naval Commanders' Conference 2025, scheduled to run for three days from 22 to 24 October.

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The conference serves as a platform for close interaction with national leadership and bureaucrats, and fine-tunes the Indian Navy's outlook towards mitigating multi-dimensional challenges in the current geo-strategic environment.

The Navy's apex leadership is reviewing its operational preparedness on western and eastern seaboard, boosting indigenisation and innovation under the Make-in-India scheme, furthering the Government's vision of MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security Across all Regions), and promoting the Indian Navy as the Preferred Security Partner in the IOR and Indo-Pacific.

## INTERNATIONAL

## Putin deplores US sanctions as 'unfriendly', says it will have 'consequences' for Russia

### BRUSSELS

The European Union on Thursday heaped more economic sanctions on Russia, adding to U.S. President Donald Trump's new punitive measures the previous day against the Russian oil industry. Russian President Vladimir Putin called Washington's move an "unfriendly act" that could backfire by spiking global oil prices.

The American and European sanctions are intended as part of a broadened effort to choke off the revenue and supplies that fuel Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, compelling Putin to negotiate an end to the war.

Speaking to reporters in Moscow, Putin acknowledged that the "serious" U.S. sanctions will have "certain consequences" for Russia, but maintained that they will not significantly impact its economy.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who has long campaigned for the international community to punish Russia more comprehensively for attacking his country, hailed the new restrictions.

"We waited for this. God bless, it will work. And this is very important," Zelenskyy said in Brussels, where EU countries attending a summit announced the latest round of Russia sanctions.

Despite U.S.-led peace efforts in recent months, the war shows no sign of ending after nearly four years, and European leaders are increasingly concerned about the threat from Russia.

Ukrainian forces have struggled to stem slow but steady advances by Russia's bigger army along a roughly 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front line that snakes along eastern and southern Ukraine. Almost daily Russian long-range strikes have taken aim at Ukraine's power grid before the bitter winter, while Ukrainian forces have targeted Russian oil refineries and



manufacturing plants.

Energy revenue is the linchpin of Russia's economy, allowing Putin to pour money into the armed forces without worsening inflation and avoiding a currency collapse.

International crude prices jumped more than \$2 per barrel Thursday on news of the new U.S. sanctions against Russia's oil giants Rosneft and Lukoil.

Putin said he warned Trump that an attempt to curb Russian oil exports will destabilize global oil markets and backfire against the United States. "A sharp reduction in the amounts of our oil and oil products sent to global markets will lead to price increases," he said, adding that consumers at U.S. gas stations will feel the impact. The sanctions don't take effect for almost a month, until Nov. 21, potentially giving Putin a chance for a change of heart.

Chris Weafer, CEO of the Macro-Advisory Ltd. consultancy, said "that's a window where they hope Russia will more seriously engage, and if it does, then those sanctions could be suspended."

"You can be sure that every oil buyer in Asia today is trying to find anything that floats that they can buy Russian oil before that sanction kicks

in," Weafer told The Associated Press from London. "And therefore, Russia will sell a lot of oil in the next 30 days, which probably will help the budget for a few months."

He also noted that, unlike the European sanctions, the U.S. measures carry the threat of secondary penalties against anyone violating them. China and India are major importers of Russian oil. The effectiveness of economic sanctions in forcing Putin's hand is questionable, analysts say. Russia's economy has proved resilient so far, although it is showing signs of strain.

The new EU measures also target Russian oil and gas. They ban imports of Russian liquefied natural gas into the bloc, and add port bans on more than 100 new ships in the Russian shadow fleet of hundreds of aging tankers that are dodging sanctions. The latest sanctions bring the total number of such ships to be banned to 557.

The measures also target transactions with a cryptocurrency increasingly used by Russia to circumvent sanctions; prohibit operations in the bloc using Russian payment cards and systems; restrict the provision of artificial intelligence services and high-performance computing services

to Russian entities; and widen an export ban to include electronic components, chemicals and metals used in military manufacturing.

A new system for limiting the movement of Russian diplomats within the 27-nation EU will also be introduced.

The U.S. sanctions came after Trump said that his plan for a swift meeting with Putin in Budapest was on hold because he didn't want it to be a "waste of time." It was the latest twist in Trump's hot-and-cold efforts to end the war as Putin refuses to budge from his demands.

Putin deplored the U.S. sanctions as an "unfriendly act" that would damage relations with Washington and said that Moscow wouldn't yield to pressure.

"Such action by the U.S. administration certainly damage Russia—U.S. relations," he said. "It's an attempt to exert pressure on Russia, but no self-respecting country and self-respecting people make any decisions under pressure."

The Russian leader warned that any attempt by Ukraine to strike deep inside Russia with longer-range weapons supplied by the West will mark an escalation and trigger a "very serious not to say stunning" response from Russia. "Let them think about it," he said.

Commenting on Trump's decision to put the planned summit on hold, Putin emphasized that it was the U.S. that proposed holding it and added that it should be well prepared.

"It would be a mistake for me and the U.S. president to take it lightly and come out after the meeting without an expected result," he said. "A dialogue is always better than confrontation."

## India needs 136.49 billion dollars annually to support farmers against climate change: Report

### LONDON

India needs \$136.49 billion per year to support its smallholder farmers in mitigating the impacts of climate change, a new report by Climate Focus for the Family Farmers for Climate Action, an international agency, revealed.

The analysis showed that smaller Indian farmers have been facing climate change impacts, such as reduced crop yields, increased pests and diseases, water shortages, and more frequent droughts or floods.

The estimated funds can be invested in establishing early warning systems for crop safety, crop insurance, accessing climate-resilient seeds, and measures to prevent pest attacks, manage diseases, and address water shortages, all aimed at maintaining the quantity and quality of grains.

The report underlined the importance of smallholders in maintaining global food supply, as they contribute 70% of global food production.

For instance, small-holding Indian farmers produce the majority of rice, making the country the world's largest rice exporter. Similarly, smallholders in Vietnam produce coffee, making Vietnam the second-largest coffee producer in the world.

The report underlined that the consistent or severe impact of climate change in Asian countries, especially India, will affect the global food supply chain.

Small-holding Indian farmers produce the majority of rice, making the country the world's largest rice exporter.

The report further revealed that Asian farmers from Vietnam, Indonesia, and India, where the survey was conducted, spent an average of US\$2,560 per hectare in 2024



on adaptation measures such as improved irrigation, soil conservation techniques and crop and livestock diversification.

Meanwhile, the region-wide analysis showed that South Asia's smallholder farmers require an annual investment of \$150.3 bn a year to build climate resilience and adaptation. Interestingly, around 91% of the needed funds will go to India, which constitutes the world's most significant number of small holders.

However, the report accounts for small holders of land up to 10 hectares, which is in contrast with India's standard. In India, around 88% of landholders are in the small and marginal category, with landholdings of up to 2 hectares.

The investment in South Asia is needed to incentivise sustainable, resilient practices such as agroecology (\$125bn), introduce early warning systems and adaptive safety nets, such as crop insurance (\$23bn), and provide digital services, such as localised weather forecasts (\$2bn).

Contrary to the requirement, only US\$0.21 billion in international public finance was targeted at small-scale family farmers in South Asia in 2021 - just 0.13% of the estimated need.

Globally, Climate adaptation is severely underfunded. The UN estimates the global adaptation finance gap will be US\$187 billion to US\$359 billion a year by 2030.

According to the report, globally, \$443 billion a year is needed to cover the climate adaptation costs of smallholder farmers, who produce half of the world's food calories. This is less than the US\$470 billion a year in agriculture subsidies, which the UN estimates are spent on measures that fuel the climate crisis, degrade the environment and drive inequality by excluding smallholders.

Climate Focus conducted the research for the Family Farmers for Climate Action - a new global alliance representing 95 million small-scale producers across Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Pacific.

## Muivah's Return: From Rebellion to Reconciliation, Manipur Finds a New Language of Peace

**W**hen Thuingaleng Muivah, the long-time supreme of the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (Isak-Muivah), stepped onto the soil of Somdal in Manipur's Ukhrul district on October 22, 2025, it was not merely a homecoming. It was a profound moment in the political and moral evolution of Manipur—a moment when the past's armed idealism met the present's weary yearning for peace.

For the first time in over five decades, the state's many fractured communities—Meiteis, Nagas, Kukis, Zomis, and Pangals—stood on common ground, literally and figuratively. The roads to Ukhrul were lined with people from across ethnic lines, waving, weeping, and watching a chapter of Manipur's troubled history close before their eyes.

What made this homecoming historic was not just that Muivah returned—it was that Manipur, after decades of war, suspicion, and ethnic violence, had learned the political maturity to receive him without fear. His arrival, permitted under the current BJP-led administration and during President's Rule, represented a strategic and symbolic reconciliation between the Indian state and one of its most enduring rebels.

From Revolutionary Exile to Moral Pilgrimage Muivah's story has long been intertwined with the idea of rebellion. As one of the founding architects of the Naga nationalist movement, he spent most of his adult life in exile—negotiating, resisting, and redefining the politics of identity. His organization, the NSCN (IM), fought under the banner of "Greater Nagalim," an idea that once shook the foundations of the Northeast.

That idea was not merely territorial; it was a vision rooted in the demand for self-determination and the assertion of cultural distinctiveness. Yet, over the decades, the demand for a unified Naga homeland came to be perceived as an existential threat by neighboring communities—especially the Meiteis and Kukis—who feared the dismemberment of Manipur's territorial integrity.

The scars of that conflict remain visible. The Naga-Kuki clashes of the early 1990s left hundreds dead and thousands displaced. The infamous June 18, 2001 uprising in Imphal, sparked by the Centre's extension of the NSCN (IM) ceasefire "without territorial limits," saw 18 protesters killed, etching deep mistrust between valley and hills.

Back then, Muivah's name evoked apprehension. His visit to Manipur in 2010 was blocked by the Ibobi Singh-led Congress government, fearing violence. But in 2025, the same figure returned to his homeland amid cheers, not slogans of resistance.

This change speaks volumes—not just about Muivah's transformation, but about Manipur's own political evolution.

The Symbolism of Return At 91, Muivah's journey back to Somdal carries both personal and political symbolism. Personally, it was a homecoming after a lifetime of exile. Politically, it was a statement—a closing of the insurgency chapter not through surrender, but through dialogue and mutual acknowledgment.

The sight of his convoy moving through Ukhrul, escorted by security forces and welcomed by thousands, reflected a subtle but historic recalibration. The state, once threatened by his ideology, now protected his return.

It wasn't triumphalism; it was reconciliation in its purest form.

The return was facilitated not by Naga organizations alone but through unprecedented coordination among non-Naga civil society groups. That broad coalition—spanning Meitei, Kuki, Pangal, and Zomi organizations—embodied something that Manipur had rarely experienced: a shared emotional and civic space that transcended ethnic boundaries.

From Ethnic Assertion to Shared Destiny The most remarkable dimension of Muivah's homecoming was the response from groups that once viewed him as an adversary.

Meitei Leepun, a powerful socio-cultural organization from the valley, described the decision to allow Muivah's return as a "wise and compassionate gesture" by New Delhi. Its chief, Pramot Singh, called Muivah "a respected leader not only of the Naga people but of all indigenous communities striving to preserve their identity."

Such words mark a profound transformation in Meitei political consciousness. Historically, the Meiteis have been the most vocal opponents of the Greater Nagalim concept, viewing it as a direct threat to Manipur's territorial unity. That the same community now extends public goodwill toward Muivah reflects a larger realization: peace cannot be achieved through fear of loss, but through recognition of shared destiny.

Similarly, the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI)—the very group that once led valley-wide protests against Naga integration—hailed Muivah's return as "a moment of historic significance."

COCOMI's spokesperson, K h u r a i j a m Athouba, acknowledged Muivah as "a tall leader whose life's work transcends community boundaries."



ies."

This subtle change in rhetoric—from protectionism to partnership—signals a philosophical shift in how Manipur imagines itself. The "Idea of Manipur" is evolving from one defined by boundaries to one based on belonging.

Kukis and Zomis: Choosing Peace Over Pain Perhaps the most powerful message came from the Kuki and Zomi communities—groups that suffered the most during the Naga-Kuki clashes of the 1990s.

The Zomi Re-Unification Organisation (ZRO) called Muivah's return "a moment of joy and reflection," acknowledging his lifelong struggle and extending solidarity to the Naga people. Likewise, the Eastern Kuki Chiefs Association (EKCA) in Chassad, Kamjong district, praised his visit as "a historic bridge between divided communities."

That these organizations chose dialogue over bitterness is no small gesture. Their participation reflects an emotional maturity that Manipur's conflict-torn society has long lacked.

For decades, ethnic politics in the state was dominated by competing victimhoods—each community narrating its suffering as unique and irreconcilable. But the welcome given to Muivah, even by those whose ancestors suffered during the height of the conflict, suggests a new willingness to write a different chapter—one of coexistence.

Pangals and the Politics of Inclusion The Pangal community, Manipur's Muslims, also played a pivotal role. The All Manipur Muslim Organisations Coordinating Committee (AM-MOCOC) welcomed Muivah's visit, calling it "a symbol of peace that includes every community."

The Pangals' participation is especially meaningful. Often positioned as a minority caught between the valley-hill divide, their endorsement of the event highlighted a longing for collective healing that cuts across faith and ethnicity.

In a region where communal boundaries have often been manipulated for political ends, this collective response represents something rare: an inclusive nationalism rooted in shared survival rather than competing sovereignties.

New Delhi's Calculated Gamble

For the Union government, the decision to allow Muivah's return after more than 50 years was not merely a gesture of goodwill. It was a calculated political gamble—an act of controlled risk-taking aimed at reshaping narratives in the Northeast.

Under President's Rule in Manipur, New Delhi had direct control over law and order. The timing was therefore deliberate: the Centre sought to project an image of confidence and inclusivity at a time when Manipur has been reeling under ethnic violence between Meiteis and Kukis since May 2023.

By allowing the visit, the BJP government positioned itself as a facilitator of reconciliation, signaling that peace with the Nagas is not incompatible with stability in Manipur.

This move also subtly underscores the Centre's long-term strategy—to replace insurgent-led separatism with state-led reconciliation. The message is clear: political engagement, not secessionist ideology, is now the road to dignity.

A Generational Shift in the Naga Struggle For Muivah himself, this homecoming marks a moral turning point. The NSCN (IM), once synonymous with militant insurgency, has evolved into a political force that negotiates more than it fights.

Since the signing of the 2015 Framework Agreement with the Government of India, the NSCN (IM) has gradually transitioned from a revolutionary outfit to a quasi-political entity. While final settlement talks continue, the tone of the dialogue has shifted from defiance to partnership.

In that sense, Muivah's visit was not about reviving the old dream of Nagalim—it was about redefining it. The struggle for sovereignty is being replaced by a quest for shared governance, cultural autonomy, and mutual respect.

To the new generation of Nagas, many of whom grew up far from the sounds of gunfire, Muivah represents not a warrior but a witness—a living reminder of what conflict costs and what peace requires.

The Moral Architecture of Reconciliation What unfolded in Ukhrul was not a political

In this emerging idea, Manipur's strength lies not in uniformity but in its diversity. Muivah's life story, with all its controversies and contradictions, is now part of that larger narrative—a reminder that even the most divisive figures can become symbols of unity when societies outgrow their fears.

Challenges Ahead Of course, the journey from symbolism to substance is long. The wounds of the past remain deep. The Kuki-Meitei conflict of 2023 still festers, displacing thousands. The Naga peace process remains unresolved, with contentious issues like separate flags and constitutions yet to be settled.

Moreover, there are those who view Muivah's return with skepticism—questioning whether it will translate into tangible reconciliation or remain a photo-op. For many valley-based groups, the fear of political marginalization persists. For some hill communities, mistrust toward the state machinery lingers.

Yet, even amid these uncertainties, the homecoming stands as a moral benchmark—a reminder that dialogue, however imperfect, is preferable to division.

The Road Ahead: Healing as a Political Act The lesson from Ukhrul is simple but profound: healing is not a sentimental process—it is a political act. It requires courage, restraint, and the willingness to reimagine one's adversary as a partner.

Manipur has taken that first step. Whether it can sustain this spirit will depend on its ability to institutionalize peace—through inclusive governance, equitable development, and cultural respect.

Muivah's presence in Somdal is thus not the end of an era but the beginning of one. The insurgent has returned home not to reignite rebellion, but to complete the circle—to remind the land that no revolution is greater than the peace it seeks.

As dusk fell over Ukhrul and hymns filled the air, a quiet realization spread among the crowd—that perhaps the time had come to forgive history, not out of weakness but out of wisdom.

For Manipur, a state haunted by decades of division, Muivah's return was more than a spectacle. It was an act of collective maturity—a signal that Manipur, once fractured by maps and memories, is ready to belong to itself again. In that sense, Thuingaleng Muivah's homecoming is less about the past he represents and more about the future he inspires—a Manipur where every community, from the valley to the hills, learns not just to coexist, but to heal together.

### 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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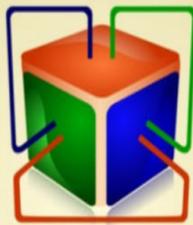
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## BARAK FESTIVAL

JANUARY 10-12, 2025

**ACTIVITY PROGRAM**





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



**11 JAN**  
**Adventure Sports**  
 Trekking & Canoe, Obstacle Navigation, Sport Climbing, Disaster Management Technique, Water Sports.  
[www.krcfoundation.org](http://www.krcfoundation.org)



**11 JAN**  
**Barak Valley Conclave**  
 Potential, Issues and Challenges of Barak Valley by different youth organizations.  
 Includes: MOCA, and D-governance as a platform for development, awareness, awareness, and awareness through participation through involvement of different youths and professionals.



**12 JAN**  
**River-Climate Conclave**  
 Climate Change will influence on Climate Change, pollution and river flooding. The Conclave will focus on the importance, technical and protection of River Barak. Training & Geography competitive and certification River Barak, Climate Conclave.

**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.



**BROADCAST PARTNER**



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



**10 JAN**  
**Media Conclave**  
 Media Conclave: Media Conclave, Workshops, and the Fund, Talks and Conferences are part of the "Barak Festival 2025". Theme: "One for All, All for One".  
 Media Conclave: Workshops, Seminars, and Conferences for students, parents, teachers, members.



**PAINTING CARNIVAL**  
**NE CULTURAL FEST**  
**E-SPORTS**  
**FILM FESTIVAL | EXHIBITION**  
 BOOK CLUB | AWARDS | GUEST | RARE BIRDS | RECORDS

**10-12 JAN**  
**Science Studio**  
 Real a glimpse of Science to its new heights. Class VI-XI | Teachers | Seniors, Administrators | Parents.  
**Raw science out of textbooks into real-life experiences of students.**

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

**Barak Festival**  
**Band Night 10 JAN**  
**Musical Night 11 JAN**

**10-12 JAN**  
**E-Sports**  
 Full-Blown Demos | CASH PRIZES | Trophy



**11 JAN**  
**film festival**  
 Award-Giving Ceremony | Film from Member Short Films from Barak Valley, NE India, Ws, Media Talk | Exhibitions | Meet & Greet



**5E SUCCESS**  
**STUDENT INTERNSHIP**  
 Discover valuable experience and learn more about the industry.

**10-12 JAN**  
**Book Bank**  
 #NoOneLeftBehind Campaign | Book Bank | Donate | Borrow | Exchange

**Book Club**  
 Meet Authors, Publishers, Read & Discuss, Buy and Sell Books

**Painting Carnival**  
 Water Colour and Oil and Saw Paper Campaign



**Watch Out!**  
**Film Festival**