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PERSPECTIVE

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Nine arrested in Baksa violence during shifting of Zubeen Garg case accused

GUWAHATI

Nine people have been arrested in connection with the violent protests that erupted during the shifting of five accused in Zubeen Garg's death case to Baksa district jail in Assam, police said on Saturday, October 18. Several others involved have been identified, and a manhunt is underway for those still absconding, Baksa Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Ujjal Pratim Baruah added.

"We have arrested nine people so far. More have been identified. Some of the accused are absconding but we will apprehend them soon. We have taken this investigation very seriously, and a team is taking it forward. The media, local people, all are helping us," the SSP said.

The violence broke out near Baksa jail on Wednesday after a Guwahati court remanded the five accused — NEIF chief organiser Shyamkanu Mahanta, Zubeen Garg's manager Siddhartha Sharma, his cousin and police officer Sandipan Garg, and his personal security officers Nandeswar Bora and Prabhin Baishya — to judicial custody. Protesters hurled stones at the vehicles transporting the accused and torched several other vehicles, injuring police personnel and media persons. Police responded with baton charges and tear gas to bring the situation under control.

WHO SAID WHAT

Team NDA, Team Assam

Stronger Together

~ **Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, CM Assam**



Nagaland officer associations demand restoration of merit-based IAS recruitment clause

KOHIMA

Five civil service associations have challenged the Nagaland government's withdrawal of a recruitment circular, alleging the move was designed to accommodate an irregularly appointed candidate into the Indian Administrative Service.

The Joint Coordination Committee, representing CANSSEA, FONSESA, NIDA, NSSA, and NE&ASA, issued a statement on October 17 disputing the government spokesperson's characterisation of the controversy as a "bureaucratic procedural lapse."

The dispute centres on a vacancy circular issued on March 10, 2025, which required candidates for IAS induction to have entered service through the Nagaland Public Service Commission. The circular was subsequently withdrawn, prompting allegations that the decision was made to benefit a candidate who did not meet this criterion.

According to the committee, an identical circular with the same eligibility requirements was issued on July 6, 2020, with chief ministerial approval, resulting in the selection and induction of a candidate into the IAS. "As alleged, if the bureaucracy fell short of procedural



duties and responsibilities in processing the circular, when it concerns the greater good of the State and the people, it is expected of the concerned authorities who has a moral and legal duty to ensure that the lapse of procedure is addressed rather than removing the circular," the statement read.

The associations condemned what they termed a "mis-statement" by the

government spokesperson regarding officers inducted into IAS from non-State Civil Service quotas. They called the list "biased and incomplete" and claimed it incorrectly categorised NPSC-qualified IAS officers as non-NPSC appointees.

The committee argued that the withdrawal violated Article 16 of the Constitution, which guarantees equal opportunity in public employment. They

KRC TIMES

STAY-ENRICHED

VOLUME:1, ISSUE 597 | SILCHAR SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2025. EAST AND NE INDIA EDITION | e-mail: krctimes@gmail.com , www.krctimes.com



BPF leader Charan Boro sworn in as Assam Cabinet minister

ASSAM CM WELCOMES BPF BACK TO NDA, VOWS CONTINUED PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

GUWAHATI

Charan Boro's induction into the Assam Cabinet marks the Bodoland People's Front's return to the National Democratic Alliance, strengthening the alliance ahead of future elections. The oath-taking ceremony at Raj Bhavan, attended by key political figures, highlighted the strategic importance of the Cabinet expansion for Assam's ruling alliance. Boro's appointment reflects a generational shift within the BPF, emphasizing youth representation and fresh perspectives in governance. In a key development for Assam politics, Bodoland People's Front (BPF) leader Charan Boro was sworn in as a Cabinet Minister, following the expansion of the Assam state cabinet on Saturday, October 18.

The oath-taking ceremony was held at Raj Bhavan at 11 a.m., where Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya administered the oath of office. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and BPF chief Hagrama Mohilary were also present on the occasion.

Charan Boro's induction into the



Cabinet marks the official return of the Bodoland People's Front to the ruling NDA alliance, after years of serving in the opposition. The move is seen as a strategic alignment ahead of the next assembly polls, strengthening the party's role in state governance.

A graduate of Cotton College and a postgraduate from Gauhati University, Boro is considered one of the promising young leaders of the BPF. He was first elected from the Mazbat constituency in 2016 and re-elected in 2021, serving from the opposition benches until now.

Despite the presence of several

senior BPF leaders, including Durga Das Boro, the party chose the comparatively younger Charan Boro, born in 1979, for the ministerial berth. This decision signals a potential generational shift within the party's leadership and highlights the BPF's focus on youth representation in governance. The Bodoland People's Front (BPF) rejoined the NDA, with Assam's Chief Minister emphasizing the focus on peace and development in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma highlighted his longstanding relationship with BPF leadership, expressing confidence in the coalition's future as December elections approach. No new election strategy has been finalized yet, with plans to consult all coalition partners, including the UPPL, to ensure a unified approach for the December 26 elections.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday, October 18 warmly welcomed the Bodoland People's Front (BPF) as it officially rejoined the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA), assuring that the coalition will continue its focus on peace and development in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR).

Speaking on the occasion, the CM clarified that no new election strategy has been finalized yet. He added that consultations with all parties, including the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL), will take place ahead of the upcoming December 26 elections.

"I have maintained good relations with Hagrama Mohilary for a long time. Over the past four years, the BPF has been supporting us, and together we will continue to work for the peace and progress of the region," the Chief Minister said, expressing confidence that the December elections will reflect a positive and vibrant political scenario in Bodoland.

Earlier in the day, Mazbat MLA Charan Boro was sworn in as Assam's new Transport Minister at Raj Bha-

van, with Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya administering the oath of office. Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma and BPF chief Hagrama Mohilary were present during the ceremony.

The induction of Charan Boro into the Cabinet carries significant political weight, coming just months ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections. With this development, the BPF, once a key opposition party, has formally returned to the NDA fold, marking a strategic realignment in Assam's political landscape.

A graduate of Cotton College and a postgraduate from Gauhati University, Boro is regarded as one of the promising young leaders of the BPF. First elected from the Mazbat constituency in 2016 and re-elected in 2021, he had been serving from the opposition benches until now.

Despite the presence of several senior BPF leaders, including Durga Das Boro, the party opted to nominate the relatively young Charan Boro, born in 1979, for the ministerial position, signalling a potential generational shift in leadership within the party.

Tripura eyes power export to Nepal, awaits Centre's approval: Minister



AGARTALA

Tripura is considering exporting electricity to Nepal, a move that could expand the state's role as a regional energy supplier, Power Minister Ratan Lal Nath announced on October 17. The final decision on the proposal will rest with the Central Government.

Nath shared the development after inaugurating the 132 KV Gokulnagar Sub-Station in Sepahijala district, built under the North Eastern Region Power System Improvement Project. The Rs 43.98-crore facility is expected to ensure uninterrupted and high-quality electricity supply to local consumers.

The minister noted that Tripura's

power generation depends mainly on natural gas, but reserves are shrinking. "Earlier, the state had around 7.21 lakh power consumers. In the past seven years, that number has risen to 10.38 lakh," he said. "As modernisation progresses, so does the demand for a reliable power supply. Our government is committed to modernisation and sustainable energy growth."

Highlighting the impact of dwindling gas supply, Nath said the output at the Rokhia power project has dropped from 63 MW to just 19 MW. To address this, the state government, with World Bank assistance, is investing Rs 935 crore to upgrade the facility with combined cycle gas turbine (CCGT) technology, which boosts efficiency without increasing gas consumption.

Tripura is also pursuing an 800 MW pumped storage project at Chawmanu, with the Detailed Project Report currently being prepared. Additionally, a 400 KV sub-station is planned at Suryamani Nagar to strengthen transmission capacity and reinforce Tripura's position as a power hub in the region.

"We are already supplying power to Bangladesh," Nath said. "Now, we aim to extend this to Nepal as well. A meeting on this proposal is being held in Delhi today, and the Centre will take the final call."

The minister added that all government offices in Tripura will soon be equipped with rooftop solar power systems, part of the state's broader push toward clean and sustainable energy.

BJP will craft inclusive 2026 poll strategy, plan expected by December: CM Sarma

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, on Saturday, said that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is yet to finalise its strategy for the 2026 Assembly elections, but a plan is expected by December.

Speaking on the sidelines of the swearing-in ceremony of BPF leader Charan Boro, Sarma said, "In 2026 polls, we will craft a collaborative poll strategy because everyone wants a stable government in Assam under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Though we haven't discussed it yet, by December we should be able to give some idea of our approach."

Boro, a second-time MLA from Majbat constituency, was inducted into the Assam cabinet, marking the Bodoland People's Front's (BPF) official entry into the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). Reports indicate that Boro will likely be assigned the Transport Department portfolio. Expressing gratitude to BPF chief Hagrama Mohilary, Sarma said, "We will together work for the upliftment of all communities in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). In a couple of days, the Assam cabinet will also meet with BJP executive members, and we will coop-



erate with the BPF government for the region's development."

Sarma highlighted his long-standing association with Mohilary, dating back to 2001-02, noting that their connection remained strong even during the last five years when he was out of power. Speaking on relations with United People's Party Liberal (UPPL), Sarma added that Minister Urkha Gwra Brahma continues in the cabinet, and the

government will engage with all alliance partners ahead of the 2026 elections.

"We must have discussions with all our alliance partners to craft an inclusive poll strategy," he reiterated. Earlier, during the October-5 swearing-in of the new BPF council, Sarma had assured that the state government would fully support the new administration while allowing it to operate independently.

Centre sets up tribunal to examine ban on Nagaland insurgent group NSCN-K

NEW DELHI

The Central Government has constituted a special tribunal to decide whether the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang) should be declared an unlawful association under anti-terror laws.

In a notification dated October 17, 2025, the Ministry of Home Affairs announced the formation of "The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal" headed by Justice Nelson Sailo, a judge of the Gauhati High Court.

The tribunal will assess if there is "sufficient cause for declaring the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang) [NSCN (K)] with all its factions, wings and front organisations as Unlawful Association."

ers granted by the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, which allows the government to ban organisations deemed threats to national security and public order.

NSCN-K has been a prominent militant outfit operating in Nagaland and neighboring regions. The faction, named after its late leader SS Khaplang, split from the parent organisation in 1988 and has been involved in various insurgent activities in Northeast India.

The tribunal's findings will determine whether the organisation will face a formal ban, which would make membership, support, or association with the group a criminal offense. Such declarations typically result in freezing of assets, restrictions on meetings, and prosecution of members.

The move comes under pow-



VOLUME:1, ISSUE 598

WHY ALL THAT GLITTERS NOT BE GOLD

Uncertainty, fear of the debasement of purchasing power through inflation, and the comfort of real things are driving investors to invest in commodities. Gold has been one beneficiary alongside oil and gas, as well as transition-critical minerals such as copper, nickel, cobalt, lithium and rare earths.

The focus is scarcity-driven due to stagnant investment in new production. But investors, both direct and those seeking exposure through funds, face challenges in investing in these assets.

There are two main ways of investing in commodities—shares in resource firms or in the minerals themselves. Both present unique complexities.

Investment in shares of resource companies is complicated by multiple factors. Pure exposure to the desired commodity is difficult to obtain. Many miners are diversified. BHP, the world's largest mining company by market capitalisation, is a producer of iron ore, copper and metallurgical coal. Storied Anglo-American has operations covering diamonds, copper, iron ore, coal, nickel, manganese and platinum group metals.

Asset portfolios are constantly changing through mergers, acquisitions, joint ventures and divestments. In 2022, BHP shifted its oil and gas assets into a joint venture to reduce involvement in carbon-based fuels. After rejecting a takeover offer from BHP, Anglo-American proposed a complex restructure to focus on copper and iron ore. Oil and gas firms have vacillated about renewable energy investments.

Even where a 'pure play' exists, there are other issues. Estimates of reserves may be incorrect. In 1997, Bre-X Minerals, a major Canadian miner, collapsed with large losses to investors after fraudulently contaminating core samples with gold derived from other sources. An old definition of a mine is 'a hole in the ground with a liar standing next to it'.

The exposure may be diluted by currency effects as resource companies operate in different jurisdictions. Many firms hedge their commodity price exposure to ensure revenues are sufficient to ensure satisfactory returns. For an investor seeking exposure to price appreciation of the commodity, this alters the investment dynamics. A hedged producer does not necessarily benefit from higher prices.

Hedging introduces new risks. A number of companies have faced financial distress as a result of increased margin requirements on hedges. In 1999, a sharp rise in gold prices drove Ghana's Ashanti Gold, which had locked in the metal's price, to near bankruptcy.

There are other problems too. Production difficulties, including weather factors, may dilute commodity price effects. Lower output from one producer may adversely affect shareholders. The risk of accidents and legal liabilities—such as the Brazilian tailing dam failure which affected BHP and Vale, or BP's Mexican Gulf oil spill—is ever present. Increasingly, political risk—sanctions, expropriations, trade restrictions—and changing local regulations are also rising concerns.

Corporate financial engineering—the amount of leverage, refinancing risk, borrowing costs—affects the share price performance of individual firms. The US shale oil industry is heavily dependent on the cost and supply of credit. Exposure to the stock may not translate into exposure to the commodity sought.

Direct investment in the commodity itself is equally fraught. Commodities are not traded in the same way as financial assets making it difficult to obtain exposure. There is frequently no spot market with most transactions undertaken under long term contracts. Physical ownership is difficult due to issues like storage, transportation, insurance, logistics and risk of fraud. The risk of confiscation is real. In 1933, the US forbade hoarding of gold, requiring all persons to sell their holdings to the Federal Reserve at a fixed price.

In practice, investors use funds or other collective investment vehicles which concentrate on liquid instruments to cover fund redemptions. Most track indicators such as the Goldman Sachs Commodity Index which are heavily weighted to tradeable commodities such as oil and gas and currency-like precious metals like gold and silver. It is difficult to get exposure to rare earths, titanium, nickel or lithium, which generally require fund investors to accept exposure to illiquid small companies. Most commodity funds' disclosure documents include special warnings on this point.

Funds often use commodity derivatives to gain exposure to commodities because of difficulties in trading the underlying. The fund is then exposed to the risk of failures of the counterparty, typically banks, traders or hedge funds. As derivatives transactions require collateral, the funds are exposed to unexpected margin calls.

Increasing financialisation of the commodity supply chain means that traders, rather than producers and users, now shape prices. Derivatives now dominate over the fundamentals of supply and demand. Commodity traders, who operate across the entire supply chain, can alter prices through derivative trading and control over operations. Pricing peculiarities such as backwardation—when forward prices trade below spot prices—mean that derivatives do not always track the underlying commodity price to which the investor seeks exposure.

At best, commodity funds provide generalised investment in the asset and an inaccurate hedge against inflation. Investors end up exposed to the index used and a variety of extraneous factors because of their construction and fund operation. In recent years, commodity indices have under-, or over-performed because of their heavy energy weighting providing inaccurate exposure to sectors such as transition critical materials and agricultural prices.

These difficulties have led to a search for alternatives. Some have experimented with proxies. This entails investing in firms that might gain or lose from price movements such as trading companies or commodity users, such as airlines or electronics firms. Others have used currencies—the Australian dollar, Brazilian real and pre-sanction Russian rouble—that respond to commodity price fluctuations.

At best, investors end up with investments whose actual returns may not accurately track commodity price moves. They may be right, at least in their theoretical investment logic, but are practically unable to capture it in their results. It may leave investors sympathising with poet Emily Dickinson: "I want to move to theory. Everything works in theory."

QUOTE OF THE DAY

You're braver than you believe, and stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.

A.A. Mine

INDIA-CHINA BORDER CONUNDRUM: THE MCMAHON LINE!!

JAGMOHAN SHARMA

It was 20th of October 1962 when the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) literally rolled down over the Thangla Ridge (16,900 ft) on the NEFA frontier (presently Arunachal Pradesh) into India. This was after a sustained build up by the Chinese over time. To quote Chairman Mao of China, this was to "teach India a lesson" for its "transgression" on the "border" between the two countries. It is believed that around 600 soldiers of the Indian Army, completely unprepared, clothed in summer uniform, poorly fed, poorly supplied, low on arms and ammunition and other military tools and tackles, with no place to take shelter in, were pitted against a well-entrenched, fully motivated and trained, strategically deployed Chinese Army with a strength of around 20,000 soldiers. Chinese had established strategic depth and fully sustainable supply lines through Tibet to fall back upon. China had "annexed" Tibet in 1950. Slowly and steadily, it had tightened its stranglehold on this territory.

Our troops in the battlefield were "outnumbered and out weaponed." Instead of making good the shortcomings communicated incessantly to Army Head Quarter, Defense Ministry and to the Government of India by the Army Officers on the frontline, the slogan of "moving on hard scales and pouch ammunition" was coined. The requirements and assessments of the situation on the border by the senior field officers of the army were thrown into the dustbin.

Our ill-prepared troops engaged the Chinese in battles at the heights of 15,000 and 16,000 feet and that too during the chilly months of October and November and further plummeting temperatures. In spite of shortcomings, our forces fought well. However, wars are not won by the valour of individual units/soldiers but by the "whole of government approach." This approach, unfortunately, was missing in 1962.

The Chinese claimed that Indian soldiers had intruded into their territory and established their posts. So did the Indian Government about the Chinese intrusion into our area. Which was true and false – both!

"It was true and false – both" as no one really knew where the Indian territory ended and where the Chinese territory began (or vice versa). There was a "perception" of borders, bordering on a situation of flux that was a sure recipe for conflict.

The fact remains that the borders along the Himalayas were "loosely defined or loosely marked on maps" between India and Tibet through treaties amongst many actors throughout the history. It was Tibet that was our neighbour in the north, beyond the "impregnable" Himalayas and not China.

The boundaries that were bequeathed to independent India in 1947 by the outgoing British Empire may have addressed the commercial and security requirements of British India, but these "hazy borders" eventually put the security of India at risk.

McMahon Line defined the border in north-east between British India and Tibet while the border in the western Himalayas was broadly defined by the Chushul Treaty signed between the Dogra Ruler of Jammu, Raja Gulab Singh (under suzerainty of Sikh Empire) and the Tibetan government in September 1842. After the treaty of Amritsar on March 16, 1846, when Kashmir came under the Dogra rule (after collapse of Sikh Empire) the British tried to demarcate borders between JandK and Tibet and China.

The borders, mostly uninhabited, were defined using such vague terms as "based on the history, traditions and historical usage." This writup is about the McMahon Line and as such the western Himalayan borders are not discussed.

Tibet was autonomous or independent depending upon the strength of the central authority in China. If China was strong, they exercised suzerainty over Tibet and if not, Tibet was independent. In that sense Tibet was "independent" on the 15th of August 1947 (since 1912) as the central government in Beijing couldn't exercise its authority far and beyond. China was in the grip of a deadly civil war. CCP under Mao Zedung, was consolidating its position and the Nationalist Party was facing reverses. Mao's objectives were very clear. He went ahead consolidating his power in China internally while not losing sight of its external borders. For him a secure China meant a secure nation that was

secure internally and also capable of defending its well-defined borders.

During this period India was also in the process of consolidating its territories. Under the stewardship of Sardar Patel India integrated more than 565 princely states into the newly emerging Indian Union. However, India failed to take note of the events unfolding in the neighbouring China. Going by the documents in the public domain it seems that the external borders of India were taken for a given by the Indian government because of the existing treaties with various stakeholders. Prime Minister, Jawahar Lal Nehru, believed that China would adhere to these treaties. His belief proved to be misplaced after China annexed Tibet in 1950.

Coming back to McMahon Line, the border between the two nations in the Indian north-east!

The McMahon line separating India & China in the north-east has a story that is seeded in history. Presently this is the Line of Actual Control (LAC) between the two nations. China does not recognize this line as a border.

In 1911/12 the rebellion against the ruling Qing dynasty of China resulted in the abdication of the emperor. Consequent uncertainties led to the Chinese revolution and steady consolidation of power under Mao Zedung. The People's Republic of China (PRC) emerged on the world scene on 01.10.1949. It was announced by Mao Zedung at Tiananmen Square, in Beijing, marking the end of civil war between the CCP and the Nationalist Party (Kuomintang or KMT).

Since inception of PRC in 1949 Mao Zedung and other Chinese leaders made their intentions very clear regarding incorporation of Tibet into China. Though Tibet was literally independent since 1912 with its own passport, currency and foreign policy but the new dispensation of China fell back upon the "historical relationship" between the two territories and declared national sovereignty over Tibet. On 07.10.1950 the Chinese army invaded Tibet and captured the city of Chamdo, on the main trade route between Sichuan province and Lhasa, thus building up pressure on Tibet to accept their demand. On May 23rd, 1951, after signing a 17-point agreement with Tibet was incorporated into China.

Thereafter it was China that became India's neighbour and Tibet, as a buffer state between India and China, ceased to exist!

Here I must refer to Gen. JJ Singh, former Chief of the Indian Army, for his seminal work "The McMahon Line, A Century of Discord." This is a book that goes into minutest details of the "evolution of the McMahon Line" between India and China and makes for an informative and captivating read.

It was British India that sought to demarcate the boundaries between Tibet and China and Tibet and North-Eastern Parts of India and Burma (now Myanmar). As already mentioned, historically, the relationship between China and Tibet was always fluctuating and the Russians, Chinese and the British were always suspicious of each other's intentions with respect to Tibet.

One of the clauses in Anglo-Tibet treaty of 7th September 1904 after Young husband's expedition to Lhasa sought to create an impression that Tibet was to become a protectorate of the British Empire. Young husband had marched into Lhasa to demonstrate the power of the British Empire to the "recalcitrant Dalai Lama" (who escaped to Mongolia) and to ensure that he did not come under the influence of the "expansionist" Russia. This was the time when Chinese felt too weak to halt the onslaught of Young husband. Though the Chinese Amban did not sign the treaty, but he facilitated its signing in the Potala palace.

The Chinese policy makers were overawed and shocked by the "blitzkrieg of Young husband" into Tibet. Therefore, they concluded that they must deploy their forces to control the outlying regions of Yunnan and Sichuan provinces enabling them to have their say in Lhasa too. For this purpose, they appointed Chao Er-feng as commissioner of the territories mentioned above. He opened the roads linking Sichuan and Yunnan with Lhasa. The commissioner, though a great strategist was very ruthless and thus gained the acronym of a "butcher" for his atrocious behaviour. However, he changed the "political landscape of Eastern Tibet from 1906-1911" in favour of China." During this period

and especially during 1910-11 the British were alarmed when they noticed Chinese presence in Tsangpo Valley and in the southern slopes of Himalayan tribal territories. British considered the presence of Chinese in these areas as a threat to their prosperous tea estates and oil fields in Assam.

These reports coupled with the uncertainties arising out of the October 1911 events in China made the British to see an opportunity for settlement of boundaries between Tibet and China as also between Tibet, India and Burma (now Myanmar). It was a herculean task not only because of the politics involved but also as it meant that the hitherto uncharted and difficult north-easters Indian terrain would have to be fully mapped in a very short time.

Discussions on settlement of boundaries commenced on 13th October 1913 when the committee of Lonchen Shatra representing Tibet, Ivan Chen from China and AH McMahon from British India met for the first time in Simla. McMahon was elected as the president for the deliberations. The committee held its meetings in Simla and Delhi and after a lot of wrangling, shuffling and shuffling over points and counterpoints, concessions and steadfastness or simple brazenness of one participant or the other coupled with threats of leaving the conference midway as well as consultation with the respective governments a conclusion was drawn where the boundaries between China and Tibet and those between Tibet and India and Burma were agreed to and marked on a map.

The negotiations involved a lot of give and take especially between Tibet and China where Tibetans conceded several of Chinese demands with the purpose of clinching the issue. The Chinese proved to be very tough negotiators and displayed intransigent attitude all through the meetings. It is also recorded that the Tibetan representative and his team was meticulous with their records and documentation while the Chinese representative was always evasive and not forthcoming.

The committee under McMahon came up with the concept of "Outer Tibet" & "Inner Tibet." Outer Tibet was envisaged to be "fully autonomous and under temporal and spiritual control of the Dalai Lama, with minimum presence of the Chinese, although it would remain under the suzerainty of the Chinese" while as the Dalai Lama was to have a limited power in the "Inner Tibet." The line demarcating "Inner Tibet" from China on map was further extended to demarcate the border between Tibet and Burma and India. This extended line came to be known as McMahon Line.

On 27th of April 1914, after a lot of hassle and pushing the "concurrence of all three representatives of the committee were obtained on the (Simla) convention and the attached maps". The India-Tibet border (McMahon Line) was also delineated on a "small scale map" and became an important part of the Simla convention.

However, the joy of closing the convention successfully after a string of grueling meetings between 13th October 1913 and 27th April 1914 in Delhi and Simla was short lived as on the 29th of April 1914 the Chinese representative informed the committee that the "Chinese government had repudiated the signing of the convention." McMahon continued to expect that the Chinese would change their mind especially in view of the territorial and political concessions granted to them at the cost of the Tibetans. Finding no response from the Chinese the conference was concluded on 3rd July 1914 with the "British and Tibetan representatives proceeding to initial and seal the convention". The Chinese representative attended the ceremony but made it known that "the Chinese government would not recognize any treaty or similar document that might now or hereafter be signed between Great Britain and Tibet". This was probably the last time when the Chinese and Tibetans sat as equals on a negotiating table.

As per Gen. JJ Singh, within a month of signing this agreement "first world war was unleashed on the world, and it overshadowed all matters otherwise engaging the attention of the world powers – Tibet being one of them". But the impact of this agreement should not be lost on anyone as this, as concluded by General Singh, is the biggest service by McMahon to inde-

pendent India as this boundary has a worldwide recognition and has proved to be a big boon to India during negotiation of border issues with China.

It is across this line that Indian and Chinese forces clashed in 1962. The trigger was the ill-conceived forward policy of Nehru which literally envisaged establishment of forward posts in areas that were unoccupied on the border and wait for Chinese response, if any, to these movements. Nehru believed that the Chinese would not take any big action, and confrontation might be limited to small and manageable skirmishes.

Nehru was compelled to adopt "forward policy" as a face saver under public pressure as it dawned on Indians around 1957 that the Chinese had built a road connecting Tibet to Sinkiang province of China through the Indian territory of Aksai Chin in Jammu and Kashmir.

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

A civilisation built over three thousand years cannot be erased in an attempt to root out a handful of individuals who turned their back.
~ N. Biren Singh, Former CM, Manipur



SKIPPING THE GAZA PEACE SUMMIT

HARSHA KAKAR

PM Modi skipped the Gaza peace summit in Sharm el-Sheikh despite personal invitations from both hosts, US President Donald Trump and his Egyptian counterpart Abdel Fattah El-Sisi. This was considered by some as India missing a major opportunity on the global stage. Shashi Tharoor in a tweet termed it as 'Strategic restraint or missed opportunity?' He added, 'India's choice could be seen as signalling a preference for strategic distance, which our statements don't convey.'

India was represented by minister of state for external affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh, who was irrelevant compared to the presence of global leaders, unofficially referred to as Trump's fan club, which includes Pak PM Shehbaz Sharief. Simultaneously, India had welcomed the Gaza accord with PM Modi tweeting on it for days, praising both Trump and Israeli PM Netanyahu. Hence it was expected he would attend.

Even Netanyahu was missing from the summit as was the Iranian president. They were both aware of what could unfold in such a gathering. Netanyahu claimed it was too close to the holidays to attend, though the reality is that he himself doubts whether the agreement would hold. Trump, a co-host, arrived two hours late, delayed in Tel Aviv while addressing the Israeli Knesset. Apart from the Egyptian PM and Trump, the

summit had leaders from UK, Canada, France, Hungary, Italy, Pakistan, Turkey and Qatar, amongst others. US, Egypt, Turkey and Qatar signed the agreement as guarantors. Neither Israel nor Hamas, the two main protagonists inked the agreement. The deal thus far only includes release of prisoners and hostages as also an end to the fighting. Nothing else.

Major issues including disarming of Hamas and pull back of Israel have still to be cleared. There are already cracks emerging in the deal. The agreement has been officially called "Trump Peace Agreement", to satisfy his ego and enhance his chances of gaining a Nobel award. It appears similar to the ceasefire agreed to in Oct last year and breached in Jan this year. Will this hold, despite major issues yet to be agreed upon, is questionable.

Trump, as expected, used the occasion to grab media limelight projecting himself as the global peacemaker, whereas peace is still afar. He termed the agreement as "the historic dawn of a new Middle East?". In his second and final tenure, Trump, like most US Presidents, is desperate to leave behind a legacy. His address highlighted the number of wars he claims to have stopped, many of which remain fantasies. He forgets that his dream of obtaining a Nobel award is now a global joke.

Trump, keen to listen to praise and needing

an ego boost, invited Pak PM Shehbaz Sharief to speak, mentioning 'say what you said to me the other day,' and Shehbaz, like an obedient child happily obliged. He, in his about five minutes address, termed Trump as a 'man of peace' and 'most eligible candidate for the Nobel peace award', even mentioning 'I would like to salute you for your exemplary leadership.' Trump, aware of what Shehbaz would mention mockingly responded, 'Wow! I didn't expect that. Let's go home – there's nothing more I have to say.'

Shehbaz was subsequently roasted in Pakistan. His words were termed as 'nauseating' and he was described as 'an embarrassment for Pakistanis across the world.' A Pakistani even tweeted, 'Not sure about Trump, but if there is a Nobel Prize for bootlicking, Shahbaz Sharief is the biggest contender for it.'

At one stage Trump mentioned that his favourite field marshal is Asim Munir. He went on to add 'I think Pakistan and India are going to live very nicely together,' and looked at Shehbaz and mentioned, 'right.' Sharief had no option but to nod his head like a trained pet.

This was not the end. Trump embarrassed most world leaders present individually when he addressed some of them from the stage, calling a few forward to shake hands, ignoring others. Many wondered just why did they come. After all, they were treated as extras on a set. Most world

leaders who were present on the stage are facing flak at home for their presence as Trump's fan club.

Had PM Modi been there, Trump would have attempted to get both him and Shehbaz Sharief to shake hands on the stage while announcing he brought about peace. He had done the same with the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan some time ago. The absence of PM Modi as also the foreign minister Dr S Jaishankar, prevented India from being embarrassed on a global platform with Trump's outrageous actions. Now it is Shehbaz Sharief who is facing the wrath from his own nation.

Trump had attempted a similar game when PM Modi was returning from the G7 where the two could not meet due to Trump having to return early. PM Modi in a tele conversation had categorically told him that Operation Sindoor ended with Pak requesting India for a ceasefire and not because of his involvement.

But this never stopped Trump, who invited Modi to halt in the US on his return which was rejected as the PM was visiting Croatia. That was the same time when Asim Munir was joining Trump for lunch at the White House. The Armenia-Azerbaijan incident could have been repeated, embarrassing Modi. Trump, despite being told off on a number of occasions continues to harp on resolving the conflict.

Dengue cases spike in Manipur; 102 new infections reported across six districts

IMPHAL

Manipur continues to witness a surge in dengue cases, with 102 new infections reported on Thursday across six of the state's 16 districts, officials said. According to a report from the Health and Family Welfare Department, at least 2,585 people have tested positive for dengue so far in 2025, while one death has been reported in Bishnupur district due to the vector-borne disease.

The department noted that dengue-positive cases this year have risen by 91 per cent compared to the same period last year. Between January 1 and October 12, 6,093 people were tested, of whom 2,585 were confirmed positive.

Officials highlighted that this represents a spike of 1,232 cases compared to 2024, when 1,353 cases were reported during the same period. The rising numbers have prompted health authorities to intensify surveillance and preventive measures across the state.



Of the state's 16 administrative districts comprising valley and hilly regions, Imphal West reported the highest number of cases at 1,839, followed by Imphal East (434), Bishnupur (79), Thoubal (67), Senapati (45), Kakching (37) and Ukhrul (23).

Shyamkumar Among the most affected areas, Imphal West, Imphal East, Bishnupur, and Thoubal districts fall within the crowded Imphal Valley region, while Senapati, Kakching Ukhrul districts are located in the hill regions. The lone dengue-related death was reported in Bishnupur district in the Manipur valley region, the report said. An official of the Health and Family Welfare Department said that, as per the guidelines of the National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBD-CP), the department, in collaboration with other departments, has been trying to spread the disease. "Rising num-

ber of dengue cases, especially in the Imphal valley region, highlights growing concerns over the spread of the disease," the official said and attributed the surge to prolonged monsoon rains and stagnant water accumulation that led to create ideal breeding conditions for the Aedes mosquito. The Health and Family Welfare Department has intensified vector control measures, including fogging operations and public awareness campaigns across affected areas.

Various authorities, including the Municipal bodies and Urban Development Department, have urged people to keep their surroundings clean, remove stagnant water, and use mosquito repellents and nets to curb further transmission. Officials have also advised people showing symptoms such as high fever, body aches, and rashes to seek immediate medical advice to prevent complications.

Manipur: Security forces arrest four KCP cadres and aide during counter-insurgency operation in state

IMPHAL

Security forces in Manipur arrested four active cadres belonging to different factions of the proscribed outfit Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP), along with one civilian accused of providing them shelter. The arrests were made during separate operations carried out across Bishnupur, Thoubal, and Churachandpur districts.

According to official sources, the first operation was conducted on October 15, 2025, when a joint team of Security Forces apprehended Moirangthem Shanta Singh (62) of Ningthoukhong Kha Ward No. 6, Bishnupur district, from his residence. Singh was allegedly involved in harbouring members of the KCP (Taibanganba) faction.

During the raid, two active cadres of the same faction were also nabbed from his residence.

Ningthoujam Rakesh Singh alias Luchingpuri (21) of Bishnupur Ward No. 6, and Laishram Birjit Singh alias Lucky (35) of Khongjom Bazaar Maning, Thoubal district.

Following initial interrogation, the Security Forces launched a follow-up operation that led to the arrest of another active cadre of KCP (Taibanganba), identified as Laishram Kishan Singh alias Pamuba (23) of Tuibong Zion Veng Mamang, Churachandpur district. He was apprehended from Nakhrou Panthong area under Bishnupur Police Station jurisdiction.

During the operation, the forces recovered several incriminating items, including:

- One .32mm pistol with a magazine and five live rounds,
- Five mobile phones, and
- One side bag.

In a separate incident on October 16, 2025, Security Forces arrested another active insurgent, Pebam Heera Singh alias Lakpa (60) of Tekcham Mayai Leikat under Khongjom Police Station, Thoubal district. He was identified as a member of the KCP (Nongrenkhomba) faction and was allegedly involved in extortion, recruitment of cadres, and transportation of arms and ammunition. A mobile phone was seized from his possession.

North Tripura named among top 5 districts under PM-JANMAN program



AGARTALA

North Tripura has been named one of the five best-performing districts under the PM-JANMAN (Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan) program, according to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

The award was presented to District Magistrate Chandni Chandran by President

Droupadi Murmu during a formal ceremony.

The North District Administration shared the news on Facebook, stating that the recognition "is a testament to the excellent work done by the DWO, BDOs, and all line departments under the guidance of the Tribal Welfare Department, Government of Tripura." Alongside North Tripura, Dhantari in Chhattisgarh, Shivpuri in Madhya Pradesh, Udham Singh Nagar in Uttarakhand, and Navsari in Gujarat were also felicitated for their outstanding performance under the program.

Officials highlighted that the award reflects sustained efforts to improve welfare and administrative delivery for tribal communities, aligning with the central government's focus on inclusive development.

Zubeen Garg case: Singapore asks Assam public to avoid targeting officials online



GUWAHATI

Government of Singapore has formally written to the Centre, expressing concern over a surge of social media messages from Assam targeting its officials and political leaders.

It has urged the Government of Assam to appeal to citizens to refrain from such online activity while the investigation into singer Zubeen Garg's death is ongoing. Confirming the development, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma told the press that the communication from Singapore was received on Friday morning.

"On Friday morning, the Government of Singapore sent a formal letter to the Government of India expressing its disappointment over various unpleasant

messages sent to the social media accounts of its government officials and political leaders from Assam," Sarma said.

He added, "The Singapore Government has requested us to appeal to the people of Assam not to post anything on the social media accounts of Singaporean government officials or political leaders relating to the ongoing matter. They have assured us that they will discuss the issue with the Assam Police and make the report of their investigation public after three months."

The Chief Minister reiterated that officials from the Singapore Police and the Assam Police Special Investigation Team (SIT), led by ADGP Munna Gupta, will meet on October 21 to coordinate the progress of

the probe. "After the meeting, it will become clearer how the Singapore Police is proceeding with the investigation. Once the Assam Police returns, we will have the opportunity to obtain more details," he said. Sarma also urged the people of Assam to remain patient and allow the investigation to continue without unnecessary speculation. "The Singapore authorities have assured full cooperation and transparency. I would request everyone to wait for the official updates from the investigating agencies," he said. The upcoming meeting between the two police forces is expected to play a key role in determining the next steps of the investigation, as both governments aim to ensure a transparent and coordinated approach to the sensitive case.

"Reforms for MCS are priority," says CM as Meghalaya seeks separate IAS cadre



SHILLONG

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma, on October 17, said that the state has been actively pursuing the creation of a separate state cadre of the Indian Administrative Service

(IAS) since 2019 and expressed optimism that the proposal will be realised soon.

Addressing the annual conference of the Meghalaya Civil Service Officers' Association (MCSOA), Sangma stressed that reforms for

the Meghalaya Civil Service (MCS) remain a key focus for his government. "I have been pursuing the creation of a separate Meghalaya cadre since 2019, and I am hopeful this will soon be achieved. Reforms for the MCS are a priority, just as they are for other services," he said.

The chief minister praised MCS officers for their dedication and reiterated the government's commitment to strengthening the state's administrative framework. "At the end of the day, we are all working for the same goal — to serve the people of our state. No work, no policy and no decision is meaningful unless we remind ourselves that our purpose is to make a positive difference in people's lives," he added.

Sangma urged officers to remain guided by purpose and service,

noting that "positions and ranks will change, but the purpose must remain constant." Highlighting the importance of initiative and empathy in governance, he said, "India will truly begin to change when politicians learn to say 'no' and officers learn to say 'yes'."

The chief minister also pointed out Meghalaya's strong economic performance, noting that the state is currently the second fastest-growing economy in India, with over 10 per cent growth, expected to reach 12-14 per cent in the coming years.

MCSOA president Ashish M. Sangma thanked the chief minister for his continued support and called for recognition of the MCS as the premier state service, timely promotions, and an increase in the retirement age from 58 to 60 years.

Manipur launches updated climate action plan amid rising climate threats



IMPHAL

The Governor of Manipur, Ajay Kumar Bhalla, called for urgent implementation of climate initiatives as the state launched its updated State Action Plan on Climate Change at the closing session of the Indian Himalayan Region Climate Change Conclave.

The two-day conclave, organized by the Directorate of Environment and Climate Change at the City Convention Centre, brought together around 400 participants, including government officials from 12 Himalayan states, researchers, scientists, NGOs, and private sector representatives.

During his visit, the governor toured exhibitions showcasing community-led innovations and released five

publications covering topics from wetlands and alien species to floating treatment wetlands. He also inaugurated the State Environment & Climate Data Centre virtually.

Highlighting the growing climate risks in Manipur, the governor noted that 2024 saw extreme heat with Jiribam reaching 43°C and highly unpredictable rainfall patterns. "The updated action plan must translate into real action, not remain on paper," he said, stressing its integration of district-level vulnerability assessments and alignment with national climate goals.

He highlighted ongoing initiatives such as the Model Carbon-Positive Eco-Village at Phayeng, the Integrated Ecosystem Services Project at Nungkot Sarbel Macheapat, conservation projects at Loktak Lake, and the Spring Rejuvenation Programme in Ukhrul, Kamjong, and Senapati, where over 490 natural springs have been mapped to enhance water security and climate resilience.

The governor emphasized that combining policy, science, and community participation is crucial for building climate resilience and making environmental action a core part of Manipur's development strategy.

51 trips, 388 days away: Tezpur University VC's travel history sparks unrest among students

AGARTALA

Tezpur University is grappling with a deepening crisis as widespread student protests erupt over Vice Chancellor Prof. Shambhu Nath Singh's prolonged absences and alleged administrative mismanagement. The situation has snowballed into one of the most serious internal unrests in the university's recent history.

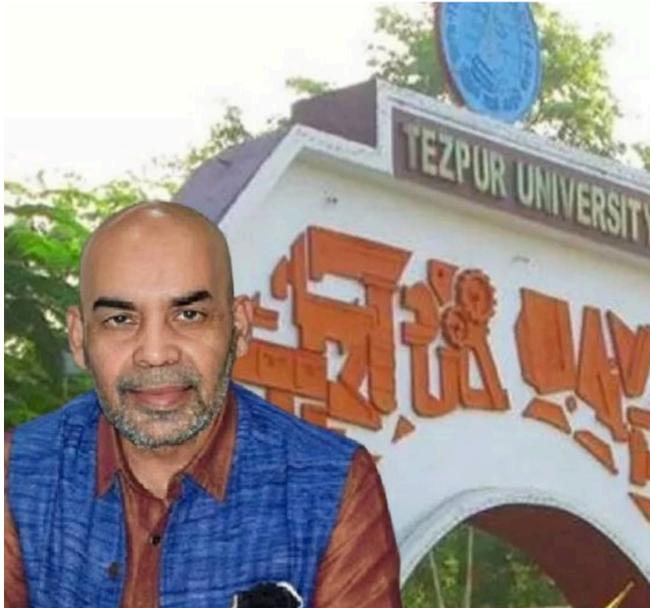
Prof. Singh undertook 51 official visits between April 2023 and September 2025, spending an extraordinary 388 days away from the campus. The majority of these trips were to New Delhi, with occasional visits to Jaipur and Guwahati.

Over his 2 years and 5 months in office, Prof. Singh averaged nearly 16 days of travel per month, with his longest trip lasting 22 days (from February 4 to 25, 2025), and his shortest a one-day visit in July 2024.

Students have accused the Vice Chancellor of neglecting his academic and administrative responsibilities, claiming that his frequent absences have led to administrative stagnation and a growing communication gap

Quest!

Psychology says, sometimes silence is the most powerful scream and indication of something being terribly wrong.



between the university leadership and its students.

The discontent reached a flash-

point on October 8, when hundreds of students launched a renewed protest movement after learning that Prof.

Singh had been off-campus for the third consecutive week. Demonstrators gathered across the university premises, demanding his immediate resignation and calling for greater accountability from the administration.

Amid the ongoing turmoil, Tezpur University witnessed yet another internal shake-up. Acting Registrar Pritam Dev was officially relieved of his duties on October 16, following his resignation request submitted to Acting Vice Chancellor Prof. Raja Rafiqul Haque, who subsequently approved it.

Sources within the university suggest that the continuing administrative instability has further eroded confidence among faculty and students alike, with several academic activities and administrative processes reportedly delayed or disrupted. The current unrest marks a critical moment for the central university, which has long been regarded as one of Assam's premier higher education institutions. With students intensifying their agitation and demanding transparency from the administration, pressure is mounting on the Ministry of Education to step in and address the crisis.

As of now, university authorities have yet to issue an official statement regarding Prof. Singh's travel record or the growing student unrest.

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PM Modi turns 'mauni baba' over Trump's Russia oil claims: Congress

PM Modi, Amarasuriya discuss pathways for stronger India-Sri Lanka bonds

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and visiting Sri Lankan PM Harini Amarasuriya held comprehensive talks on Friday, focusing on strengthening cooperation across multiple sectors and addressing the sensitive issue of Indian fishermen's welfare.

According to a post by PM Modi on X, the meeting between the two leaders covered a "broad range of areas," including education, women's empowerment, innovation, and development cooperation. Importantly, the "welfare of our fishermen" was also a key discussion point, underscoring the ongoing challenge in maritime boundary issues.

Calling Sri Lanka a "close neighbour," Modi stressed the "immense importance" of their cooperation for the prosperity of the people of both countries and the shared region.

The meeting with Prime Minister Modi followed Amarasuriya's discussions on Thursday with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. Dr Jaishankar had said that their talk centred on India's continued support to Sri Lanka and bolstering cooperation in education and capacity building.

The high-level engagements reaffirm India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy and signal a renewed momentum in the strategic partnership between New Delhi and Colombo.

Prime Minister on Thursday also met Egypt's Foreign Minister Dr Badr Abdelatty and applauded President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi's "crucial role" in securing the recent Gaza Peace Agreement, calling it a "vital step" toward regional stability.

The meeting took place as part of the inaugural India-Egypt Strategic Dialogue, a high-level



review aimed at accelerating cooperation under the strategic partnership signed last year. Following the talks, PM Modi posted on X that the partnership continues to "grow from strength to strength," citing progress in trade, technology, energy, defence, and people-to-people exchanges.

Abdelatty also made a sharp contextual assessment, stating that resolving the Palestinian question is key to making progress on the ambitious, US-backed India-Middle East Economic Corridor (IMEC) during a press meet.

The IMEC, announced in September 2023 as an alternative

to China's Belt and Road Initiative, aims to connect India to Europe via sea and rail through the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Israel.

"The IMEC is an important project but we have to understand that... escalation [in the region] could hinder the cooperation, the connectivity," Abdelatty told reporters, adding that "connectivity is very important as part of a final settlement of the Palestinian cause." He confirmed that Egypt, a critical transit nation, is open to joining the multi-nation project.

The Egyptian foreign minister also quantified the significant economic impact of the regional

conflict. He revealed that Egypt has suffered losses exceeding \$9 billion since the Iran-aligned Houthis group began targeting ships in the Red Sea in solidarity with Palestinians.

"We are paying a heavy price," Abdelatty said, noting that the daily number of ships crossing the Suez Canal has dropped by at least 60%, from about 75 ships to a maximum of 25 to 50.

During his visit, Abdelatty actively sought to boost economic ties, announcing that Egypt is encouraging the establishment of an "Indian industrial zone alongside the Suez Canal Economic Zone."



NEW DELHI

Taking a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Congress on Saturday said the PM suddenly becomes a "mauni baba" whenever US President Donald Trump states that he stopped Operation Sindoor or that India will reduce its oil imports from Russia.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said President Trump has yet again stated that he has been assured by his "good friend" that India will cut back on its imports of oil from Russia.

"But that good friend suddenly becomes a Mauni Baba whenever President Trump says he stopped Operation Sindoor and now when he says that India will reduce its imports of oil from Russia," Ramesh said in a post on X, taking a dig at PM Modi.

Meanwhile, India's trade deficit with China during April-Sep 2025 increased to USD 54.4 billion as compared to USD 49.6 billion in

the same period last year, the Congress leader said.

His remarks come hours after the US president repeated his claims that India will not be buying oil from Russia, saying that the country has already "de-escalated" and is "pulling back".

This is the second time that Trump has made such claims.

India on Thursday said it is "broad-basing and diversifying" its sourcing of energy to meet market conditions, hours after Trump claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi assured him that New Delhi will stop procuring Russian crude oil.

External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, responding to Trump's remarks, said it has been New Delhi's consistent priority to safeguard the interests of the Indian consumer in a volatile energy scenario.

He said India's import policies are guided entirely by national interest, adding India has been looking at

expanding energy ties with the US as well.

The Congress on Thursday alleged that Modi is "frightened" of Trump and appears to have outsourced key decisions to America.

The opposition party had also alleged that the foreign policy of the Modi government has "completely collapsed" and said the Centre must take opposition leaders into confidence by either calling an all-party meeting or speaking to them one-on-one.

Washington has been maintaining that India is helping Putin finance the war through its purchase of Russian crude oil.

The relations between New Delhi and Washington have been reeling under severe stress after Trump doubled tariffs on Indian goods to a whopping 50 per cent, including a 25 per cent additional duty for India's purchase of Russian crude oil.

India described the US action as "unfair, unjustified and unreasonable".

INTERNATIONAL

Trump tells Zelensky to 'make a deal' as Tomahawk plea misfires

'They're pulling back': Trump again claims India won't be purchasing Russian oil



WASHINGTON

Donald Trump told Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Friday to make a deal with Russia, pouring cold water on Kyiv's hopes for Tomahawk missiles as the US leader renews a push to settle the war.

Trump said as recently as last month that he believed Ukraine could take back all its territory - but a day after agreeing to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin for a new summit the American had changed his tune.

After meeting with Zelensky at the White House, Trump said on social media that their talks were "very interesting, and cordial, but I told him, as I likewise strongly suggested to President Putin, that it is time to stop the killing, and make a DEAL!"

"They should stop where they are. Let

both claim Victory, let History decide!" he posted online, while flying to his Florida estate.

Upon landing, he told reporters that Ukraine and Russia should "stop right now at the battle line."

"Go by the battle line wherever it is or else it gets too complicated," he added. Zelensky meanwhile said after the meeting that Russia was "afraid" of the US-made long-range Tomahawk cruise missiles, and that he was "realistic" about receiving the weapons from Washington.

He told reporters that while he and Trump talked about long-range weapons they "decided that we don't speak about it because... the United States doesn't want escalation."

Zelensky came to Washington after weeks of calls for Tomahawks, hoping to capitalize on Trump's growing frustration with Putin after a summit in Alaska failed

to produce a breakthrough. But the Ukrainian left empty-handed as Trump eyes a fresh diplomatic breakthrough on the back of last week's Gaza peace deal.

Trump has appeared far more upbeat about the prospects of a deal since his two-and-a-half hour call with Putin on Thursday, in which they agreed to meet in Budapest.

"Hopefully we'll be able to get the war over with, without thinking about Tomahawks," Trump told journalists including an AFP reporter as he hosted Zelensky at the White House.

Trump added that he believed Putin "wants to end the war."

Zelensky, who came to push for the long-range US-made weapons, said however that he would be ready to swap "thousands" of Ukrainian drones in exchange for Tomahawks.

Zelensky congratulated Trump on his recent Middle East peace deal in Gaza and said he hoped he would do the same for Ukraine. "I hope that President Trump can manage it," he said.

Diplomatic talks on ending Russia's invasion have stalled since the Alaska summit.

The Kremlin said Friday that "many questions" needed resolving before Putin and Trump could meet, including who would be on each negotiating team.

But it brushed off suggestions Putin would have difficulty flying over European airspace.

Hungary said it would ensure Putin could enter and "hold successful talks" with the United States despite an International Criminal Court arrest warrant against him for alleged war crimes.

Since the start of his second term, Trump's position on the Ukraine war has shifted dramatically back and forth.

Initially Trump and Putin reached out to each other as the US leader derided Zelensky as a "dictator without elections."

Tensions came to a head in February, when Trump accused his Ukrainian counterpart of "not having the cards" in a rancorous televised meeting at the Oval Office.

Relations between the two have since warmed as Trump has expressed growing frustration with Putin.

But Trump has kept a channel of dialogue open with Putin, saying that they "get along."

The US leader has repeatedly changed his position on sanctions and other steps against Moscow following calls with the Russian president.

Putin ordered a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, describing it as a "special military operation" to demilitarize the country and prevent the expansion of NATO.

Russia now occupies around a fifth of Ukrainian territory - much of it ravaged by fighting.

On Friday the Russian defense ministry announced it had captured three villages in Ukraine's Dnipropetrovsk and Kharkiv regions.



WASHINGTON

Days after claiming that India will not importing oil from Russia, US President Donald Trump has once again doubled down on his assertion, claiming that New Delhi has already "de-escalated" and "more or less stopped" its oil purchases from Moscow.

Trump made these claims while speaking to the media during a bilateral lunch with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky, on Friday.

"India will not be buying oil from Russia, they have already de-escalated and they have more or less stopped. They are pulling back. They have bought about 38 per cent of the oil, and they won't be doing it anymore," the US President said while replying to a question.

Notably, India on Thursday pushed back saying that it is "broad-basing and diversifying" its sourcing of energy to meet market conditions, hours after Trump claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi assured him that New Delhi will stop procuring Russian

crude oil. Washington has maintained that India is helping Putin finance the war through its purchase of Russian crude oil - a claim New Delhi has rejected, asserting its energy independence.

Relations between both nations have remained strained after Trump doubled US tariffs on Indian goods to a whopping 50 per cent, including a 25 per cent additional duty for India's purchase of Russian crude oil.

India described the US action as "unfair, unjustified and unreasonable."

US President Donald Trump speaks to reporters after arriving on Air Force One, Friday, Oct. 17, 2025, at Palm Beach International Airport in West Palm Beach, Fla.

Meanwhile, Trump has once again repeated his claims about resolving the war between India and Pakistan, adding that Prime Minister of Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif has said, "I have saved millions of lives."

"The Prime Minister of Pakistan said I saved millions of lives by interceding... you

look at Pakistan and India as an example that would have been a bad one for two nuclear nations," the US President said.

Since May 10, when Trump announced on social media that India and Pakistan had agreed to a "full and immediate" ceasefire after a "long night" of talks mediated by Washington, he has repeated his claim dozens of times that he "helped settle" the conflict between India and Pakistan.

India has consistently maintained that the understanding on cessation of hostilities with Pakistan was reached following direct talks between the Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of the two militaries.

India launched Operation Sindoor on May 7, targeting terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in retaliation for the April 22 Pahalgam attack that killed 26 civilians. India and Pakistan reached an understanding on May 10 to end the conflict after four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes.

NORTH EAST INTEGRATION RALLY PRE-LAUNCH CEREMONY HELD IN SHILLONG

Tourism minister Timothy D. Shira extends support, calls for regional unity, growth



SHILLONG

The pre-launch ceremony of the North East Integration Rally (NEIR) 2026 was held in Shillong on Friday evening, marking the beginning of a movement aimed at strengthening cultural and regional integration across the northeastern states.

The event, organised by the NEIR 2026 organising committee, witnessed enthusiastic participation from dignitaries, policymakers, and members of civil society who came together to celebrate the spirit of unity in the region.



Win in silence. Let them think you're losing.

Speaking at the ceremony, Meghalaya tourism minister Timothy D. Shira lauded the organisers for initiating such an ambitious and meaningful programme. "It is important for all of us to work together to bring prosperity and development to our region," he said, commending the efforts of KRC Foundation founder Biswadeep Gupta for conceptualising and leading the initiative.

The minister highlighted the vast potential of the people of the Northeast, emphasising the need to nurture skills and channel collective energy toward progress. He also assured support from the Tourism Department for the upcoming rally, which is scheduled to be held in January 2026. "I hope many people from across the Northeast will participate and make this rally a grand success," he added.

MLA and NEIR Patron A. L. Hek, who also addressed the gathering, wished the organisers success and underscored the importance of such movements in fostering mutual understanding and solidarity among the states of the region.

Other speakers included Joydeep Gupta, co-chairman of FICCI's Assam State Council, Prof. (Dr.) Sukamal Deb, and Col. Shanti Singh (Retd), who shared their perspectives on regional cooperation, economic empowerment, and the role of youth in nation-building.

Delivering the keynote address, Biswadeep Gupta outlined the concept and vision of NEIR, along with its upcoming campaigns, cultural activities, and outreach programmes designed to promote unity and collaboration among the north-eastern states.

The evening also featured a cultural segment that captured the essence of the movement. K. Bobin from Imphal performed the NEIR theme song, drawing applause from the audience and symbolising the emotional and cultural bonds that tie the region together.

Earlier in the day, the NEIR organising committee met Timothy D. Shira at the Meghalaya Secretariat to brief him about the initiative and its planned activities. During the meeting, the minister reiterated his appreciation for the effort, calling NEIR a "meaningful step toward building stronger bonds among the people of the Northeast."

The North East Integration Rally, scheduled for January 2026, aims to serve as a unifying platform that celebrates shared heritage, promotes inter-state collaboration, and highlights the collective aspirations of the region.

MEBAAI Group also presented details program for Meghalaya chapter. Youths from Meghalaya Grassroots Music project (MGMP) also with their talents entertained the crowd

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12 JAN
River-Climate Conclave
 Climate Change will influence on Climate Change, pollution and river flooding. The Conclave will focus on the importance, treatment and protection of River Barak. Training & Geography competition and exhibition on River Barak, Climate Change.

11 JAN
Media Conclave
 An Online Event



REGISTER HERE

Contact: info@krcfoundation.org

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'.
 Welcome your news anchors, journalists, media & corporate PR, sponsors, guests, speakers, members.

10 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.
 Quiz and Group Discussion for Barak valley Schools & Colleges, Extempore, Debate, Public Speaking (College).
 In an online event, where students of NE India Schools and Colleges can participate.



10-12 JAN
Science Studio
 Get 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 Manipur, Short Films from Barak Valley, NE India, Ws, Media Talk, Exhibitions, Meet & Greet.



10-12 JAN
Book Bank
 #NoLike Campaign | Book Bank | e-copies | e-books | e-news

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

Painting Carnival
 Water Colour and Oil and Saw Paper Campaign

