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PERSPECTIVE

The best revenge is to move on, get over it, and continue to succeed. Never give someone the satisfaction of watching you suffer.

'Nagas are Nagas, Indians are Indians': Muivah

GUWAHATI
From his birthplace Somdal village in Manipur, NSCN-IM leader Thuingaleng Muivah on Tuesday reiterated that the outfit would not deviate from its long-held position on the Naga political issue.

"They (Government of India) started giving ultimatums... We were forced to tell them that come what may, we will stand our ground. We know who the Indians are and their history," the 91-year-old leader said.

Muivah, who is also the chief negotiator in the Centre's peace talks with the NSCN-IM, declared,

"We will not come taking your (India's) history to surrender to you. We will never do that. Whether it is today or tomorrow, Nagas are Nagas and Indians are Indians."

He added that there was no uncertainty within the NSCN-IM regarding its stand.

"If you don't come to understand us and appreciate us, then there is no point in our going to you. The peace negotiators representing the Government of India have understood our position clearly, though some of them have said they face difficulties," Muivah stated.

Muivah returned to Somdal in Ukhrul district last week after more than six decades, having left home in 1964 to join the Naga revolutionary movement.

At an event in Ukhrul town on October 22, he asserted that the "historic national decision" for a sovereign Nagalim had been "defended and consolidated from the battlefield to the negotiating table."

WHO SAID WHAT



We have carried out the largest crackdown on illegal workers in British history. ~

Keir Starmer, PM, United Kingdom

AGARTALA

The BJP held a high-level meeting in Agartala to address internal divisions and alliance challenges with Tipra Motha ahead of key elections. The meeting, led by BJP North East Coordinator Sambit Patra, focused on resolving organisational issues and strengthening the alliance with Tipra Motha. Tipra Motha's influence in tribal regions makes alliance management crucial for BJP's strategy in upcoming elections.

Amid widening factional rifts within Tripura's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and escalating tensions with its alliance partner Tipra Motha, the saffron party convened a high-level meeting at its state headquarters in Agartala on Wednesday, October 29.

The closed-door meeting, chaired by BJP North East Coordinator and MP Sambit



Patra, and attended by state in-charge Rajdeep Roy, state president and Rajya Sabha MP Rajib Bhattacharjee, along with ministers, MLAs, and key office bearers, sought to address internal dissent and alliance-related challenges ahead of the upcoming TTAADC and Village Committee elections.

Party insiders revealed that discussions centered on assessing organizational lapses, realigning strategies, and reinforcing coordination with Tipra Motha—a key ally holding considerable sway in

Tripura's tribal-dominated regions. Speaking to reporters, BJP Tripura President Rajib Bhattacharjee said, "Our central leaders, including BJP North East Coordinator and MP Sambit Patra and Prabhari Rajdeep Roy, have arrived here. Today's meeting with ministers, MLAs, morchha leaders, and office bearers aims to further Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Har Ghar Swadeshi' and 'Vocal for Local' campaigns, and to observe the 150th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai

Patel on October 31."

He added that detailed discussions on strengthening the party's organizational framework were also on the agenda.

Referring to the recent civil society strike and the ensuing violence, Bhattacharjee said, "All our leaders, including Chief Minister Manik Saha, former CM Biplab Kumar Deb, and I myself, have strongly condemned the incidents. We must remain united and work for the progress and development of the state. To build a 'Srestha Tripura', contributions from both tribal and non-tribal communities are essential. Our state government, in close alignment with the Central government, is committed to the welfare of tribal areas."

Bhattacharjee further informed that dialogue with Tipra Motha will continue, with regular discussions planned to address ongoing issues and maintain coordination.

Manipur bans manufacture and sale of gutkha, tobacco or nicotine

IMPHAL

The Government of Manipur has imposed a statewide ban on the manufacture, storage, distribution, and sale of Gutkha, Pan Masala, and other chewing tobacco products containing tobacco or nicotine for a period of one year, effective immediately.

The order, issued by Sumant Singh, Commissioner of Food Safety and Commissioner-cum-Secretary (Health & Family Welfare), cites provisions of the Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restriction on Sales) Regulations, 2011 and the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006. The notification aims to protect public health from the harmful effects of tobacco-laced food products.

According to the notification, the ban covers all forms of Gutkha, Pan Masala, Khaap Tobacco, Pure Tobacco, Khaini, Zarda, and scented or flavoured tobacco, irrespective of their brand or packaging style. The order also prohibits the sale of tobacco and pan masala marketed separately

but often sold together in a way that enables consumers to mix them easily.

The decision follows the Supreme Court's 2016 directive in the Central Area-nut Marketing Corporation vs. Union of India case, which urged states and union territories to ensure total compliance with the ban on gutkha and similar products containing tobacco and nicotine.

Citing the serious threat posed by these products to human health, the Commissioner of Food Safety emphasized that the measure is taken "in the interest of public health" and warned of strict action against violators under the relevant provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act.

The ban will remain in force for one year from the date of issue of the notification, covering the entire state of Manipur. Foreigners need to register with the CID Office in Imphal, and hotels in Imphal can assist with registration formalities if they are willing to stay overnight.

Meghalaya TMC vice-president Zenith Sangma resigns, likely to return to Congress



SHILLONG

In a significant political development ahead of next year's autonomous district council elections, Meghalaya Trinamool Congress (TMC) vice-president and former minister Zenith Sangma resigned from the party and its primary membership on Tuesday, ending his three-year association with the AITC.

In a resignation letter addressed to the party leadership, Zenith Sangma said the decision came "after much thought and reflection," describing it as a difficult but necessary step to pursue a new path that aligns with his personal vision and the aspirations of the people he serves.

"This has not been an easy decision. My journey with the AITC has been filled with invaluable experiences, lessons, and memories. I will always remain grateful for the trust, support, and friendship I received from colleagues, workers,

and well-wishers throughout my tenure with the party," said Sangma, who is the younger brother of Opposition Leader Mukul Sangma.

He expressed gratitude to the All India Trinamool Congress (AITC) and its Meghalaya unit for the opportunities given to him, adding that he wishes the party continued success in its mission to serve the people of the region and the nation.

"Every phase in life has its time and purpose. Today, I feel it is the right moment for me to move on and begin a new chapter—one that aligns more closely with my personal vision and the aspirations I hold for the people I serve," he stated. Zenith Sangma, a prominent leader from the Garo Hills, had joined the TMC along with his brother Mukul Sangma and several MLAs in 2021, after breaking away from the Congress. His exit comes at a time when the Meghalaya TMC has been grappling with internal discontent and declining organisational strength.

Political observers in the state suggest that Zenith may return to the Congress, the party where he began his political career and served as a minister in earlier governments, though no official confirmation has been made from either side.

The TMC leadership in Meghalaya has not yet issued any formal statement on his resignation.

NEW DELHI

Union Minister of Communications and Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) Jyotiraditya M. Scindia participated in three High-Level Task Force meetings, pressing for integrated development of the tourism, agriculture and transport sectors across the North Eastern Region, the government informed on Tuesday.

The High-Level Task Force (HLLTF) meetings were convened on October 27, which saw the presence of chief ministers of respective states, namely Mizoram, Meghalaya and Sikkim, an official statement said.

These task forces are fostering interstate collaboration, enabling policy alignment, and ensuring that development efforts are regionally integrated rather than state-bound, the statement noted.

The HLLTF on the North East Economic Corridor, chaired by Mizoram Chief Minister Pu Lalduhoma, reviewed short, medium and long-term interventions to develop roads, rail, air links, inland waterways, energy, digital connectivity, trade corridors and border trade infrastructure across the North Eastern region.

The inputs from Meghalaya, Assam and Manipur were sought, and Scindia asked the Mizoram

Northeast states' meet stresses world-class tourism circuits, transport upgrade



government to submit a final report incorporating feedback.

At the HLLTF on Tourism, chaired by Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma, members discussed preliminary recommendations to develop world-class tourist circuits and adopt a bottom-up action plan.

The HLLTF on Agriculture and Horticulture, chaired by Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang, reviewed the progress of ongoing initiatives in the agriculture and horticulture sectors across the Northeastern Region, the statement said.

The Ministry of Development of the North-East Region said that the attendees, including senior state officials, APEDA officials and NABARD office bearers, deliberated on strategies to enhance value addition, processing, and market linkages for key agri-horti products.

The Task Force focussed its discussions on developing integrated cold chain infrastructure, promoting organic farming, cultivating in clusters, and branding region-specific products with a unified 'Organic' label, the government statement noted.

G-Eazy set to headline the Music Head Festival in Itanagar this November

PRANTIK DEKA

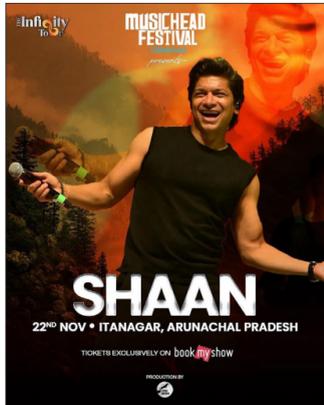
The Music Head Festival promises to captivate audiences with a remarkable lineup featuring international stars, Bollywood icons, and local talents, including G-Eazy and Shaan.

Renowned in the global hip-hop scene, Gerald Earl Gillum, an American artist and music producer widely recognized as G-Eazy, is scheduled to make a comeback to India by headlining the Music Head Festival 2025. The vibrant energy and pulsating beats of G-Eazy's music promise to create an unforgettable experience for the audience under the starlit skies of Itanagar. This exciting festival is scheduled to take place in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh, from November 22nd to November 23rd, 2025.

This marks G-Eazy's second trip to India, succeeding his initial visit in February 2024, which featured a tour across three cities: Gurgaon, Bengaluru, and Mumbai.

The event, making its inaugural appearance this year, is anticipated to attract passionate music enthusiasts from all corners of the nation.

The festival is also set to showcase a diverse array of talent, encompassing both



international and Indian artists, including performers from Arunachal Pradesh and notable Bollywood figures such as Shaan, and chart-topping rapper and pop sensation King. Crafted to provide exceptional musical experiences for enthusiasts while offering regional musicians an opportunity to

perform alongside international artists, the event is anticipated to attract a substantial audience.

Although the complete schedule for both days has not been disclosed, it has been confirmed that both Shaan and King are scheduled to perform on November 22, marking

the commencement of the festival, whereas G-Eazy is set to headline on November 23, signaling the conclusion of the event.

Mark your calendar for an evening of musical enchantment that will resonate across the region's topography, creating a harmonious tapestry of lasting recollections.

Welcome Tilak Das

Adviser, NEIR 2026

www.northeastintegrationrally.in



VOLUME:1, ISSUE 606

RECONNECT WITH INDIA'S ROOTS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's latest Mann Ki Baat address was not just another routine communication with citizens—it was a clarion call to reconnect with India's soul, its cultural roots, and the self-reliant spirit that once fuelled the nation's freedom struggle. By urging citizens to celebrate 150 years of Vande Mataram, the Prime Minister rekindled the emotional and patriotic fervour that inspired millions during the Independence movement. The national song, penned by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay and first sung by Rabindranath Tagore, symbolises India's unity, pride, and civilised grandeur. In an age dominated by technology and social media, where instant gratification often overshadows deep reflection, the PM's appeal is a timely reminder. Remembering Vande Mataram is not merely about celebrating a song—it is about reviving the values it represents: sacrifice, resilience, and love for the motherland. This initiative, marking 150 years of the song, serves as an opportunity for citizens, especially the younger generation, to relive the spirit of patriotism that guided our ancestors. It encourages us to look back not just with nostalgia but with a renewed commitment to protect and promote India's cultural and moral legacy.

Equally significant in the PM's address was his emphasis on the swadeshi spirit—a concept that defined India's independence struggle and continues to hold immense relevance today. From the revival of indigenous dog breeds like the Mudhol and Rampur Hounds by the BSN and CRPF to the cultivation of coffee by women in Odisha's Koraput, these examples underline India's ability to thrive through local resources, skills, and enterprise. The Prime Minister's praise for these grassroots initiatives is a reaffirmation of his belief that India's strength lies in its villages, its traditions, and its people's creativity. The cultivation of coffee in regions like Koraput, where women have taken the lead, is particularly inspiring. This illustrates the synergy between economic empowerment and cultural revival. India's coffee diversity—from Chikmagalur to Wayanad—is a testament to the country's vast potential when innovation meets dedication. When citizens turn to indigenous production, they do not just create livelihoods—they uphold the spirit of self-reliance, the very foundation of the Atmanirbhar Bharat vision.

Moreover, the Prime Minister's reflections on the role of social media in promoting Sanskrit showcased how ancient traditions can adapt to modern tools. The growing popularity of Sanskrit among young content creators, as highlighted in his address, indicates that India's cultural heritage is not fading but evolving. The integration of tradition with technology is shaping a new narrative—one that respects the past while embracing the future. Festivals too, as the PM rightly emphasised, are much more than moments of celebration. They embody social unity, economic rejuvenation, and cultural continuity.

The Prime Minister beautifully captured how these occasions strengthen the bonds of community life. They also stimulate local economies, from artisans to small vendors—reviving commerce at the grassroots level. In a nation as diverse as India, such festivities become crucial instruments of social harmony and inclusive growth.

This month's Mann Ki Baat was thus a profound reflection of India's journey—from the struggles of the past to the aspirations of a self-reliant future. The Prime Minister once again demonstrated how leadership rooted in history can illuminate the path ahead. His message carried an implicit call: development must not come at the cost of cultural amnesia. Economic growth, technological progress, and social reform must coexist with reverence for heritage, nature, and community.

As India marches toward the goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047, the Prime Minister's words serve as both a reminder and a roadmap. The story of India's rise is not written merely in GDP figures but in preserving its values, languages, and traditions. The spirit of Vande Mataram continues to guide the nation—urging every citizen to rise with pride, act with purpose, and build a future worthy of the sacrifices of those who came before. The PM has shown the path; it's for people to follow it. True progress lies in blending modern aspiration with ancient wisdom, economic self-reliance with cultural pride, and national development with spiritual awakening.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The aim of argument or discussion should not be victory, but progress."

— Joseph Joubert

Indo-US Diplomatic Tussle at ASEAN Summit

26 OCTOBER 2025
KUALA LUMPUR



ASAD MIRZA

The 47th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit and related meetings began in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on Sunday (26 October) under the theme "Inclusivity and Sustainability." The summit is keenly watched due to the absence of the Indian PM and presence of the POTUS, who'll try to get a deal done with the Chinese leadership, present at the summit.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not travel to Malaysia but instead attended the ASEAN Summit's inaugural ceremony virtually on Sunday. In a social media post on Thursday, PM Modi said that he held a conversation with his Malaysian counterpart, Anwar Ibrahim and congratulated him on Malaysia assuming the ASEAN Chairmanship.

Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim will host leaders from ASEAN member states, along with top officials from the US, China, Japan, South Korea, and other key partners, for the three-day summit held from October 26-28. More than 30 heads of state and government from the 10 member states of the association, commonly referred to as ASEAN, are invited.

Among the invitees from outside the ASEAN bloc is US President Donald Trump. And PM Modi will be conspicuous by his absence in Kuala Lumpur. Currently the brouhaha between the two leaders seems to have vanished, as both claim to be working in the interest of their countries. PM Modi by buying Russian oil, despite American tariffs threat and POTUS determined to stop India from the cheap Russian oil. Meanwhile, both leaders have tried to downplay tensions as the tariff standoff continues.

However, PM Modi's decision could be described as one based on principles, the most obvious one being economic but also siding with a longtime trusted ally. While on the other POTUS might have brought-up the issue during a much-expected meeting between the two, but the core of his travel to Kuala Lumpur is to ease tensions with China, over tariffs imposed by him on Chinese goods.

At the moment the brouhaha between the two leaders seems to be facing choppy waters. When Modi and Trump shared a bear hug at the White House in February, expectations were high that the warm relationship the leaders enjoyed during Trump's first term would continue.

However, India soon realised it would not receive special treatment as Trump rolled out sweeping tariffs, which included a 25% levy on some Indian exports.

In August, the Trump administration said India's purchases of Russian oil were funding Moscow's war in Ukraine, and slapped on an additional 25% tariff, bringing the total to an eye-watering 50%, souring US-India ties to their lowest point in decades. Last week, Trump rocked the boat further by claiming for the first time that Modi "assured" him that India would stop buying Russian oil.

However, Reuters reported on Thursday that the top Indian buyer of Russian crude oil, Reliance Industries, was preparing for a "massive cut" in Russian oil imports. "We don't anticipate it will go to zero immediately as there will be some barrels coming into the market" via intermediaries, a refinery source told the news agency on condition of anonymity. "Recalibration of Russian oil imports is ongoing and Reliance will be fully aligned to the Government of India's guidelines," a Reliance spokesperson told Reuters.

The report comes after the US announced landmark new sanctions on Russia's largest oil producers, Rosneft and Lukoil, which US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said were responsible for funding the Kremlin's "war machine."

The move, the first direct targeting of Russia's war from the second Trump administration, freezes all US assets belonging to the Russian oil giants, while allowing for secondary sanctions on foreign banks that do business with them. This could mean banks in India would face penalties for facilitating Russian oil imports.

As the Russian oil rumours swirl, India's Foreign Ministry has continued to emphasise that the country's priority remains maintaining Indian energy independence and keeping energy prices low for consumers.

Last week, Indian Foreign Ministry spokesman Randhir Jaiswal said Washington had shown interest in deepening energy cooperation and talks on that were underway. Jaiswal had emphasised that India's priority on oil imports was to "safeguard the interests of the Indian consumer in a volatile energy scenario."

India's oil purchases from Russia grew nearly 19-fold from 2021 to 2024, from 0.1 to 1.9 million barrels a day, making Russia India's top source of crude oil. In 2022, New

Delhi began buying barrels from Russia at a discount after Moscow launched its war and was hit with sanctions to cut off oil revenues. India has argued that at one point, the US had actively supported Indian oil purchases from Russia to help stabilise global oil prices.

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump has said he was confident of hashing out a deal with Chinese President Xi Jinping, after top economic officials from both countries reached a preliminary consensus in trade talks that concluded on Sunday.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Trade Representative Jamieens Greer met with Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng and top trade negotiator Li Chenggang in Kuala Lumpur for a fifth round of in-person discussions since May. "I think we have a very successful framework for the leaders to discuss on Thursday," Bessent told reporters.

Bessent told NBC's "Meet the Press" that he anticipated the agreement would defer China's expanded export controls on rare earth minerals and magnets and avoid a new 100% US tariff on Chinese goods threatened by Trump.

He said Trump and Xi would discuss soybean and agricultural purchases from American farmers, more balanced trade and resolving the US fentanyl crisis, which was the basis of 20% US tariffs on Chinese goods.

Trump arrived in Malaysia on Sunday, his first stop in a five-day Asia tour that is expected to culminate in a face-to-face with Xi in South Korea on October 30. After the trade talks, he struck a positive tone, saying, "I think we're going to have a deal with China."

The two leaders have spoken at least three times this year and Trump has said direct talks are the best way to resolve issues including tariffs, export curbs, agricultural purchases, fentanyl trafficking, geopolitical flashpoints such as Taiwan and the war in Ukraine.

"We'll be talking about a lot of things. I think we have a really good chance of making a very comprehensive deal," he said.

Among potential agenda items is the US's Taiwan policy. Xi has pushed for Washington to officially declare that it "opposes" independence for the self-ruled democracy, a concession that would amount to a major diplomatic win for Beijing. The longstanding US position is that it does not support Taiwan's independence. Secretary

of State Marco Rubio told reporters on Saturday the Trump administration will not abandon long-standing US support for Taiwan in the negotiations.

It would not be wrong to surmise that PM Modi has exhibited the tough resolve of a good diplomat by not choosing to attend the ASEAN Summit and tossing the ball into the opponent's court. While for POTUS it could be said that currently he seems to be more focussed on China and workout a mechanism by which the US could get the Chinese rare earth minerals, without any hindrance, and overall, his intentions seem to be obviously selfish, during his Asia tour.

(Asad Mirza is a New Delhi-based senior commentator on national, international, defence and strategic affairs, environmental issues, an interfaith practitioner, and a media consultant.)

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

Son of @INCIndia President Priyank Kharge, has insulted Assam's youth and Assam Cong doesn't even have the courage to condemn him. He is a FIRST CLASS IDIOT.

~ Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Assam CM



HOW THE BJP REDEFINED LEADERSHIP IN INDIAN POLITICS

HARDEEP SINGH PURI

For much of independent India's history, politics was shaped by a sense of entitlement that confused inheritance with legitimacy. One family and one party came to believe they were born to rule. Over time, this mindset hollowed out institutions and conditioned generations to treat political privilege as a birthright. That assumption is now being challenged by a new political ethic rooted in merit, accountability and performance.

A recent article in The Indian Express, titled "One Nation, a Few Parivars", raises an important question about the persistence of dynastic politics in India. The issue it highlights is real, but the interpretation is incomplete. Dynasties do exist across parties, including within the BJP. Yet what distinguishes the BJP is that family background does not translate into automatic leadership. This is a party where opportunity must still be earned, where an individual's rise depends on work, commitment and public trust, not lineage. In the BJP, a family name may open a door, but it cannot keep it open.

This distinction is fundamental. Political kinship is not a problem in itself. Hereditary control is. When leadership becomes the property of a single family, when internal debate is replaced by fealty to bloodlines, democracy withers. The contrast between political cultures is stark. Since 2000, the Bharatiya Janata Party has had eight national presidents, Bangaru Laxman, Jana Krishnamurthi, Venkaiah Naidu, L.K. Advani, Rajnath Singh, Nitin Gadkari, Amit Shah and J.P. Nadda. Each emerged from different regions and backgrounds, and each rose through the discipline of organisational work. During the same period, the Congress has had only three presidents, two of them Gandhis. Sonia Gandhi held

the post for nineteen years, and even today the family retains the final word.

The Express analysis, by flattening these differences, ends up equating fundamentally different political realities. It counts the number of legislators with relatives in politics without distinguishing between incidental kinship and institutional capture. Out of 2,078 BJP legislators, 84 come from political families, about four per cent. The Congress has 857 legislators, 73 of them dynasts, nearly nine per cent. When measured proportionally, the Congress's dynastic density is twice as high. Yet the article's framing, by citing absolute numbers, creates a false symmetry. Even beyond the Congress, the concentration of power in family hands defines several regional parties. The Samajwadi Party moved from Mulayam Singh Yadav to Akhilesh Yadav. The Rashtriya Janata Dal remains under the Yadav family. The DMK passed from M. Karunanidhi to M.K. Stalin and now to Udhayanidhi Stalin. The Trinamool Congress revolves around Mamata Banerjee and her nephew Abhishek. The Soren family continues to control the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha. These are not examples of plural leadership but of inherited command. Remove the family, and the party collapses.

To understand why the BJP functions differently, one has to look at its institutional design. The BJP's organisation is layered, collegiate and mission oriented. Cadre are identified early, trained through structured programmes, and tested through responsibility at the booth, mandal, district and state level. Performance at each stage determines the next opportunity. Elections are contests to be won, but they are also audits of the organisation's capacity to mobilise, persuade and deliver.

This architecture creates a culture where service, discipline and delivery are the currency of advancement.

The leadership pipeline tells the same story. Since 2014 the party has elevated first-generation leaders who reflect India's social mobility. Vishnu Deo Sai, the first tribal Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh, built his career through sustained grassroots work. Mohan Majhi in Odisha spent years in organisation and legislature before being entrusted with the chief ministership. Nayab Singh Saini in Haryana comes from a modest background, and Bhajan Lal Sharma in Rajasthan rose through years of constituency work and party responsibility. None of them inherited political office. Each is a case study in how leadership can be earned within a merit-oriented party.

The BJP's parliamentary and governmental experience also demonstrates the distinction between access and ascendancy. Many young leaders are given visibility and responsibility, but they are judged by delivery. Ministers are evaluated on outcomes, reforms and public communication. Party positions are time bound and performance linked. This does not eliminate error or ambition, no human institution can, but it creates incentives that privilege competence over pedigree.

By contrast, hereditary parties struggle to innovate because succession is predetermined. Talent is hemmed in by the need to protect the heir apparent. Internal debate is dulled by fear of contradicting the family line. Organisational networks come to revolve around courtiers and fixers rather than administrators and legislators. The result is not only political stagnation but also a corrosion of public trust. Voters eventually recognise the difference between leadership that is earned and leadership that is transferred.

It is important to acknowledge history. The Congress normalised political inheritance in the national imagination. Many regional dynastic outfits, from the YSR Congress and BRS to the Trinamool, are offshoots of the Congress and have replicated its hereditary structure. Over decades this culture transformed political parties into family enterprises, where ideology yielded to loyalty and succession planning replaced leadership development. That model may deliver short bursts of electoral success, but it rarely builds durable institutions or a broad bench of capable leaders.

Critics sometimes ask whether the BJP is entirely free of dynastic figures. The honest answer is that it is not, nor is any large democratic party. The relevant question is different. Do such figures enjoy positions solely because of their lineage, or have they earned the trust of the organisation and the electorate through sustained work. The BJP's record shows that family background can be a biographical fact, but it is not a sufficient credential. The pathway to leadership remains the same for everyone, karyakarta to leader, worker to representative, representative to minister, each step earned through performance.

This distinction also explains the BJP's ability to expand its social and geographic base. A merit-oriented party can integrate new communities and regions because it offers pathways for participation that do not depend on proximity to family. It can identify local talent, give it responsibility, and reward results. That is how a party becomes national in character while remaining rooted in local realities. It is also how a party translates ideology into governance, through leaders who have been trained to deliver rather than merely to inherit.

Tripura CM launches Wi-Fi facilities in 11 government colleges



AGARTALA

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on October 28 emphasized the importance of embracing Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Internet for the welfare and advancement of society. He said that technology, when used responsibly, can become a powerful tool for progress in every field.

CM Saha made these remarks while launching Wi-Fi facilities in 11 government colleges (Phase II) and inaugurating the Mukhyamantri Yuba Yogayog Yojana for the academic year 2024-25 at a function held at the Government Arts and Crafts College, Lichu Bagan, Agartala. The event was jointly organized by the Information Technology Department and the Higher Education Department.

Highlighting the benefits of digital connectivity, the Chief Minister said, "Having a Wi-Fi system brings multiple benefits to both students and institutions. So far, Wi-Fi services have been launched in 19 government colleges across the state. Today, we are extending this facility to 11

more institutions. This initiative will greatly enhance students' access to technology and learning resources."

He further acknowledged Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a technologically empowered India, noting that the youth play a central role in shaping the nation's future.

"India's youth, aged between 18 and 35 years, constitute about 60-65 percent of the total population. This is our greatest strength and a matter of pride, as no other country in the world has such a vast young population," CM Saha said.

The Chief Minister expressed confidence that the youth will play a pivotal role in realizing the Prime Minister's dream of a 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India) by 2047.

Speaking about the state's progress, CM Saha said, "Tripura is advancing rapidly in all sectors. Recently, Tripura was declared the third fully literate state in the country, as per UNESCO guidelines — after Goa and Mizoram. Technology now influences every sphere of life, and we must continue to integrate it effective-

ly." "With Wi-Fi now available in colleges, students won't have to spend from their own pockets for Internet access," he added.

CM Saha also mentioned that the state government has introduced a Start-up Policy to encourage innovation and attract investment. "Investors from outside the state are showing keen interest. Airtel has already been allotted space to establish data centers," he said.

The Chief Minister underscored the growing importance of technology in all fields — from medical science and agriculture to communication and entrepreneurship.

"AI and the Internet must be used to accelerate growth and improve lives. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp demonstrate how deeply technology is integrated into our daily routines. The ultimate goal should be to use these tools for the betterment of society," he emphasized.

CM Saha concluded by urging everyone to use technology ethically and purposefully, stating,

Assam's Debasish Das Creates History with India's First Taekwondo Medal at Asian Youth Games



GUWAHATI:

In a landmark moment for Indian sports, Debasish Das from Assam has etched his name in history by winning India's first-ever Taekwondo medal at the Asian Youth Games 2025 held in Bahrain.

Debasish secured a bronze medal in the Boys' Individual Poomsae category, marking a breakthrough for both Assam and the nation in a sport where India has long sought recognition on the continental stage.

Hailing from a modest training academy in Assam, Debasish's journey to Asia's biggest youth sporting platform is a story of perseverance, discipline, and quiet determination. Coaches and fellow athletes have hailed his performance as a defining moment for Indian Taekwondo, one that could inspire a new generation to take up the sport.

"This victory is not just about a medal — it's about proving that talent from any corner of India can shine on the world stage," said his coach.

With this historic win, Debasish Das has not only brought pride to his state but has also opened a new chapter for Indian martial arts, showing that dedication and belief can turn even the smallest dreams into national milestones.

Village Chief Beaten to Death by Suspected UKNA Cadres in Churachandpur

CHURACHANDPUR:

Tension gripped Churachandpur district after suspected cadres of the United Kuki National Army (UKNA) allegedly abducted and brutally killed a village chief in the Henglep subdivision on Monday evening.

The victim, identified as Mangthang Haokip (50), son of late Jangsei Haokip from T' Khononphai village, was reportedly taken by suspected UKNA members around 4:30 pm for what they claimed was a "talk."

According to local sources, Mangthang was later found grievously injured and lying in a pool of blood at Kholejang village around 5 pm. He was immediately rushed to Churachandpur District Hospital but succumbed to his injuries on the way. His body was later brought back to his native village.

Police have registered a case at Henglep Police Station and launched an investigation into the

incident. Sources said the UKNA is not a signatory to the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement between the Government of India and Kuki militant groups, and has been linked to several violent incidents in the region.

The Henglep Headquarters Area Chiefs' Association strongly condemned the killing, calling it "unfortunate" and "deeply disturbing," especially at a time when the community continues to suffer from the ethnic unrest that has plagued Manipur over the past two years.

In June this year, at least four people—including an elderly woman and a leader of the Kuki National Organisation/Kuki National Army (KNO/KNA)—were killed in an ambush by suspected UKNA militants in the same district.

Police said the situation in Henglep remains tense, and additional security measures have been put in place to prevent further escalation.

Press Club of India raises concern over alleged harassment of senior Tripura journalist after MLA files FIR over news

GUWAHATI

Press Club of India has expressed concern over the alleged harassment of senior journalist of Tripura, Pranab Sarkar, who is also a member of the Press Club of India and President of the Agartala Press Club, reportedly by Tipra Motha Party MLA Ranjit Tripura.

The Press Club of India, in a statement, said that the Tripura Journalists' Union, while condemning the incident, mentioned that a surrendered militant leader and current MLA of the Tripura Assembly threatened journalist Mr. Sarkar by filing a false complaint to prevent the publication of the alleged "misdeeds" of that leader.

"We urge upon the media fraternity to stand by the victim journalist. We also urge the state government to provide necessary



protection to journalist Sarkar," the statement said. On October 26, MLA Ranjit Tripura filed an FIR against Mr. Sarkar, who is the owner and news editor of Tripura's renowned channel Headlines Tripura National, after the channel broadcasted a report questioning the MLA's nationality. "Most surprisingly, on 24.10.2025

and onwards, the electronic media named 'Headlines Tripura National' started broadcasting a vibrant and shocking news item with a fake Bangladeshi Voter ID Card and a fabricated Birth Certificate in respect of me", the FIR reads.

It further reads, "Mr. Pranab Sarkar, the owner-cum-editor of

'Headlines Tripura National', the President of Tripura Press Club, Agartala, is a permanent citizen of Tripura and has well conversant knowledge regarding my place of birth, schooling, and college education as well. Mr. Sarkar and his associates broadcasted such news on his channel deliberately and intentionally with a view to destroy my personal image as well as my bright political career. Under the above circumstances, I hereby request your kind office to register a specific criminal case against Mr. Pranab Sarkar and his associates under specific sections of law of BNS-2023, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, and the Indian Information Technology Act, 2000, for broadcasting such intentional and deliberate publications against me," the FIR reads.

Meghalaya invests Rs 1,000 crore annually to strengthen education sector: Conrad

SHILLONG

Meghalaya has over 14,000 schools supported by 55,000 teachers, with nearly Rs. 1,000 crore spent annually on grants to private, ad hoc, and deficit schools — a reflection of the government's commitment to strengthening the education sector despite challenges such as high dropout rates and low pass percentages.

Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma reaffirmed this commitment while attending the closing ceremony of the Silver Jubilee Celebration of St. Anthony's Higher Secondary School, Pynursla, on Tuesday, in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister Prestone Tynsong.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister reiterated the state government's initiative to support non-government schools in expanding their higher secondary sections. Congratulating the institution

for 25 years of service in delivering quality education, he praised its dedication to nurturing both academic and moral excellence.

"Today, we celebrate not just 25 years of the Higher Secondary School, but nearly 70 years since the founding of the LP section — a journey of faith, sacrifice, hard work, and commitment," he said. Highlighting the government's focus on improving educational infrastructure, particularly in rural and border areas such as Pynursla, Sangma stressed that the education sector remains a top priority for the administration to ensure inclusive and equitable access.

He acknowledged the invaluable role of the Salesians of Don Bosco in shaping Meghalaya's education system, saying, "The Salesians have contributed to our state, our region, and our country like no other congregation." Quoting an age-old Chinese

proverb, he reminded the audience of the importance of investing in human potential: "If you want returns in one year, plant flowers. If you want returns in ten years, plant trees. But if you want returns for eternity, plant people." Informing that 15 per cent of Meghalaya's annual budget Rs. 3,654 crore — is allocated to education, the chief minister said, "We are proud of this investment. Because of it, our education system has grown and evolved, even though we still face challenges such as high dropout rates and low pass percentages."

To further strengthen private institutions, Sangma announced that the government will extend financial support ranging from Rs. 50 lakh to Rs. 1 crore to selected schools across the state for upgrading their higher secondary sections.

He added that the scheme will help non-government schools

enhance infrastructure and introduce new academic streams, assuring that St. Anthony's Higher Secondary School, Pynursla, will be among the first beneficiaries.

Sharing an anecdote about his late father, P. A. Sangma, he lauded the church's transparency and efficiency in utilising public funds, recalling how a Rs. 5 lakh contribution once helped build a two-story school building with 14 classrooms.

He extended his gratitude to the Salesian fathers, past and present school leaders, and teaching and non-teaching staff for their contribution to shaping generations of students.

Deputy Chief Minister Prestone Tynsong, who also attended the event, commended St. Anthony's for its 25 years of dedicated service, calling the milestone "a moment of pride and gratitude for the entire community."

Unique boat rally spreads NIPUN Mission awareness across Tripura's remote islands

AGARTALA

In a unique initiative to take the message of education to the remotest corners of the state, the Tripura School Education Department organised a colourful boat rally on the Dumboor reservoir in Karbook, Gomati district, as part of the ongoing NIPUN Fest celebrations.

The event, held amid the scenic waters of Dumboor — where boats remain the primary mode of transport — saw the participation of 20 beautifully decorated boats and representatives from 15 schools. Each boat carried messages promoting the NIPUN Mission (National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy), spreading awareness about the importance of foundational literacy and numeracy among children.

Abhijit Samajpati, Nodal Officer of NIPUN Tripura Mission, said, "This one-of-a-kind rally was aimed at ensuring that every child, even in the state's remotest islands, gets access to education. The boats travelled from Naukaghat to various islands, urging parents to send their



children to school."

The rally, marking the third anniversary of NIPUN Tripura and the fourth anniversary of NIPUN Bharat, was inaugurated by Rajib

Dutta, Director of Elementary Education. Commending the enthusiasm of teachers, students, and parents, Dutta said that effective implementation of the NIPUN Mission

would strengthen early education, reduce dropout rates, and boost learning outcomes across the state.

He also highlighted that such community-based educational initiatives contribute to reducing child marriage rates and increasing literacy levels in rural Tripura.

Adding colour and cultural vibrancy, tribal students performed traditional songs and dances in the Kokborok language, while a tableau procession on land showcased creative displays inspired by the NIPUN Mission's themes of learning and inclusion.

Among the dignitaries present were Shyamjoy Jamatia, SDM Karbook; Gamanjoy Reang, SDPO Karbook; Bikram Kishore Jamatia, IS Karbook; noted social worker Atindra Reang; and the Headmaster of Karbook Panjiam School, along with headmasters and teachers from nearby schools.

Since the launch of NIPUN Fest on October 1, Tripura has witnessed over 3,700 rallies and 1,700 street plays, making it a statewide celebration of education and community participation.

With this symbolic boat rally, Tripura has not only reaffirmed its commitment to the NIPUN Mission but also sent a powerful message — that education must reach every child, no matter how distant or isolated their home may be.

MNF calls 10-hour shutdown in Mizoram to protest extension of Forest Act

AIZAWL:

The Mizo National Front (MNF), the main opposition party in Mizoram, has called for a 10-hour statewide shutdown on October 29 to protest the extension of the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act (FCAA), 2023 to the state.

MNF media and publicity cell secretary Lalremruata Jongte announced that the shutdown will be observed from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. across all districts except Mamit, due to preparations for the upcoming by-election in Dampa scheduled for November 11. During the shutdown, all government and private offices, educational institutions, business establishments, and vehicles (except those under emergency services) will remain closed. The MNF stated that the move is a mark of protest against what it described as an "imposition" by the ruling Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) government. The MNF has consistently opposed the state assembly's adoption of the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act, alleging that it undermines the interests and sentiments of the Mizo people. The party has urged the state government to convene a special assembly

session to reconsider and withdraw the resolution supporting the Act.

MNF leader Zoramthanga, a former Chief Minister, accused the current government of failing to safeguard Mizoram's forest rights and autonomy. The People's Conference Party and the Joint Civil Society Mizoram (JCSM), along with several NGOs and political groups, have also extended support to the shutdown call.

The controversy stems from the Mizoram Assembly's decision during its monsoon session on August 27, when it adopted a resolution extending the FCAA, 2023, to Mizoram — a move that reversed a similar resolution passed in August 2023 opposing its implementation. Critics of the Act argue that it allows the central government to take over land within 100 km of international borders for projects deemed strategic or security-related, which they claim could endanger local land rights and environmental balance. Meanwhile, the JCSM has also announced a peaceful demonstration in Aizawl on Wednesday to coincide with the MNF-led shutdown, demanding that the Act be withdrawn from application in the state.

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Roads are national assets, accountability and quality are non-negotiable: Minister Gadkari



NEW DELHI

Union minister for road transport and highways Nitin Gadkari on Tuesday sought accountability, transparency, and ownership among contractors, consultants, and officials to ensure that India's highways are built and maintained to world-class standards.

He announced that stricter measures would be implemented to ensure transparency and performance-linked accountability across all projects.

All road projects will undergo performance audits and ratings based on quality and accident data, he said.

"Every stakeholder, from the contractor to the engineer to the policymaker, must take ownership of their work. Accountability and quality are non-negotiable... Roads must not only be built but also maintained to international standards. Roads are national assets. Those who build or manage them must be answerable to the people of India," Gadkari said.

The minister was delivering a keynote address at the Smart Roads Conference 2025, organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in New Delhi.

He said that details of project officials, contractors, developers and consultants would be displayed publicly to enhance accountability to citizens and poor quality work or negligence will invite penalties and blacklisting.

Reaffirming the Government's target of a five trillion economy by 2027, Gadkari underscored that the path to this vision lies in creating world-standard infrastructure across water, power, transport, and communication, which together form the backbone of India's economic progress. "If infrastructure is strong, industry, trade, and employment will grow; income will rise, and poverty will decline," he said.

He also added that the ministry's annual revenue, which is currently at Rs 55,000 crore, is projected to rise to Rs 1.4 lakh crore within two years, reflecting the immense

growth potential of the sector.

He added that a comprehensive 2027 infrastructure plan was discussed in the Cabinet, which includes sustainable initiatives such as the use of 80 lakh tonnes of segregated plastic waste in road construction and the reuse of treated water from purification plants for road building.

The minister also outlined his vision around three core pillars- People, Prosperity, and Planet. "Roads should bring comfort, convenience, and safety. Modern roadside amenities, electric charging stations, and clean, accessible toilets are being developed to enhance the travel experience. Performance audits and transparent monitoring will ensure accountability at every level," he added.

Gadkari emphasised balancing infrastructure growth with ecological responsibility.

"We will not compromise on quality. Together, government, industry, and engineers must deliver world-standard roads that ensure safety, sustainability, and comfort for every Indian," Gadkari said.

Man dies by suicide in Bengal, leaves note mentioning NRC

KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee charged the BJP with spreading fear over the National Register of Citizens on Tuesday, hours after the alleged suicide of a man near Kolkata, who reportedly left behind a note blaming the NRC for his death.

Barrackpore Police Commissioner Muralidhar Sharma said after visiting the spot that 57-year-old Pradeep Kar was found hanging at his residence in Panihati in North 24 Parganas on Tuesday morning.

A suicide note was found in which NRC was mentioned, Sharma said, adding that preliminary investigations revealed the person was in depression after announcement of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls on Monday.

The BJP asserted that the cause of the suicide must be determined only by the investigating agencies, and not through political rhetoric.

Condemning what she described as the BJP's "politics of fear and division," the CM alleged that the party's campaign around the National Register of Citizens (NRC) has created panic among people.

"It shakes me to the very core to imagine how, for years, BJP has tormented innocent citizens with the threat of NRC, spreading lies, stoking panic and weaponising insecurity for votes," Banerjee said in the post.

She charged the BJP with turning "constitutional democracy into a theatre of fear", and said the "tragic death" was the result of "venomous propaganda".

"They have turned Constitutional democracy into a theatre of fear, where people are made to doubt their own right to exist. This tragic death is the direct consequence of BJP's venomous propaganda. Those who sit in Delhi and preach nationalism have pushed ordinary Indians to such despair that they are dying in their



own land, fearing they will be declared 'FOREIGNERS'," she added.

Demanding that the Centre put an end to what she called a "heartless game," Banerjee reiterated that Bengal would "never allow NRC" and would protect the dignity and rights of its people.

"Our soil belongs to Maa, Mati, Manush (mother, land and people), not to those who thrive on hate. Let the Delhi Zamindars hear this loud and clear: Bengal will resist, Bengal will protect and Bengal will prevail," she added.

Later, talking to the media, Barrackpore Police Commissioner Muralidhar Sharma said Kar's body was found hanging inside his room at his residence in Panihati.

"After a preliminary investigation and speaking to his family members and relatives, we found that Mr Kar

had been very depressed due to the NRC. He had been under severe stress for quite some time, especially since yesterday's announcement regarding the rollout of the SIR of electoral rolls," Sharma told reporters.

The IPS officer said the deceased had dinner on Monday night and then went to his room to sleep.

"His family members could not understand what was going on in his mind. On Tuesday morning, he was found hanging from the ceiling of his room," Sharma said. The deceased's elder sister claimed that her brother had been frightened about the implementation of the NRC.

"My brother was very scared about the implementation of the NRC. He used to tell us that he would be taken away in the name of NRC," the sister said.

Responding sharply to the chief

minister's comments, BJP's IT cell chief Amit Malviya accused Banerjee of "resorting to lies and theatrics" over the incident.

"The tragic death of Pradeep Kar must be investigated thoroughly - the cause of suicide can and must be determined only by the law and investigating agencies, not through political rhetoric," Malviya said in an X post.

"Let's also get the facts right - there is NO NRC anywhere in the country. Mamata Banerjee is lying and deliberately spreading panic to stoke fear among people for political gain," he added.

Malviya alleged that it was the TMC and not the BJP, that "weaponised fear" by exploiting the anxieties of poor Hindu refugees who fled religious persecution and sought shelter in India.

"The same fear was used to loot, assault, and suppress voices, as seen in Sandeshkhali and during the riots in Malda and Murshidabad," the BJP leader wrote.

Malviya accused Banerjee of using the incident as a tool to spread anxiety among voters ahead of the now-announced SIR exercise.

"Mamata Banerjee knows that a proper Special Investigation Report (SIR) will expose the rot in her administration and mark the beginning of her political downfall. The SIR will also ensure that illegal infiltrators, who double up as TMC's votebank, are IDENTIFIED and DELETED from the voter list. That's why she's resorting to lies and theatrics once again.

"Truth and accountability will prevail - not fear mongering," he stated.

Asked to respond to the BJP leader's comment, TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee sounded dismissive.

"Amit Malviya has no understanding of the Bengali language. The suicide note is written in Bangla. Let him learn the language first and then he can make his comments," he said.

INTERNATIONAL

North Korea touts missile tests as Trump visits South Korea



SEOUL

North Korea said Wednesday its recent test firings of sea-to-surface cruise missiles were successful, in another display of its growing military capabilities as U.S. President Donald Trump visits South Korea.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said the missiles fired Tuesday flew for more than two hours before accurately striking targets in its western waters. It said the weapons would contribute to

expanding the operational sphere of the country's nuclear-armed military.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the military had detected the North Korean launch preparations and that the cruise missiles were fired in the North's northwestern waters at around 3 p.m. Tuesday. The joint chiefs said South Korea and the United States were analyzing the weapons and maintaining a combined defense readiness capable of a "dominant response" against any North Korean provocation.

The North Korean report came hours before an expected summit between Trump and South Korean President Lee Jae Myung in the city of Gyeongju, where South Korea is hosting this year's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meetings. Speaking with reporters aboard Air Force One en route from Japan to South Korea, Trump downplayed the North Korean launches.

"He's been launching missiles for decades, right?" he said, apparently referring to Kim Jong Un. Trump reiterated he still

wants to meet with Kim, whom he met three times in 2018 and 2019 before their diplomacy derailed over disagreements on U.S.-led sanctions against the North.

"We had a really good understanding of each other," Trump said.

KCNA said the tests were attended by senior military official Pak Jong Chon, who also inspected training for sailors aboard North Korea's newly developed destroyers Choe Hyon and Kang Kon, which leader Kim Jong Un has described as key assets in his efforts to strengthen the navy.

North Korea's latest launches followed short-range ballistic missile tests last week that it said involved a new hypersonic system designed to strengthen its nuclear war deterrent.

During his South Korean visit, Trump is scheduled to meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping. However, South Korean officials have said a Trump-Kim meeting is unlikely.

North Korea has shunned any form of talks with Washington and Seoul since Kim's high-stakes nuclear diplomacy with Trump fell apart in 2019 during the American president's first term.

Kim's top foreign policy priority is now Russia. In recent months, he has sent thousands of troops and large quantities of military equipment to help fuel President Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine, while embracing the idea of a "new Cold War" and positions his country as part of a united front against the U.S.-led West.

Last month, Kim reiterated he wouldn't return to talks with the United States unless Washington drops its demand for North Korea's denuclearization, after Trump repeatedly expressed his hopes for new diplomacy.

Pakistan says peace talks with Afghanistan 'failed'



ISLAMABAD

Pakistan said Wednesday negotiations for a lasting truce with Afghanistan had "failed to bring about a workable solution", warning it would take steps to protect its people.

"Regrettably, the Afghan side gave no assurances, kept deviating from the core issue and resorted to blame game, deflection and ruses," Information Minister Attaullah Tarar said on X after four days of talks in Istanbul, brokered by Qatar and Turkey.

"The dialogue thus

failed to bring about any workable solution."

The Istanbul talks aimed to secure peace after the South Asian neighbours' deadliest border clashes in years, which erupted following explosions in Kabul on October 9 that the Taliban authorities blamed on Pakistan. Relations between the one-time allies have soured in recent years over accusations from Islamabad that Afghanistan harbours militant groups which stage attacks in Pakistan.

After an initial 48-hour ceasefire lapsed,

a second truce emerged on October 19 following talks in Doha.

Tarar said Pakistan engaged with Afghanistan in the spirit of peace, but accused Kabul of "unabated support to anti-Pakistan terrorists".

"We will continue to take all possible measures necessary to protect our people from the menace of terrorism," Tarar added, vowing to "decimate the terrorists, their sanctuaries, their abettors and supporters".

There was no immediate comment from Afghanistan.

Amidst anti-gender push, hope pins on ICFP 2025 to shift gears towards SRHRJ for all

SHOBHA SHUKLA

Despite right to health and gender equality being fundamental human rights, the world is off the track from delivering on these goals in next 62 months (by 2030). Anti-rights and anti-gender pushbacks have made the situation even more grim. Activists are pinning hope on an upcoming global meet to galvanise a stronger and equitable response to deliver on these goals.

World's largest meet on sexual and reproductive health, rights and justice (SRHRJ) would open in next two weeks in Colombia on the theme: Equity through action, advancing SRHRJ for all. Formally called the International Conference on Family Planning or #ICFP2025, this meet also marks 30 years since Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action were adopted in 1995.

80th United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting was held last month to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the 4th World Conference on Women (where Beijing Declaration 1995 was adopted along with its Platform for Action).

"The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is the most ambitious global political commitment on women's rights ever achieved. It affirmed that the rights of women and girls are not separate, secondary, or negotiable - they are human rights. It has helped to power advances in some critical areas - legal protection, political participation, education, maternal mortality, recognizing the need to tackle violence against women as a global priority, and more. But progress has been slow and uneven, and no nation has achieved full equality for women and girls and gender diverse peoples," said Shobha Shukla, Host of SHE & Rights (Sexual Health with Equity & Rights) and Lead Discussant for SDG-3 at the United Nations High Level Political Forum (HLPF 2025).

Separating signal from the noise "International Conference on Family Planning (ICFP 2025) has received a record number of 5174 abstract submissions - highest-ever in its history. This means that there were many more ideas competing for attention. Bigger responsibility was for the organisers and different ICFP committees to separate the signal from noise itself. There are signals emerging across the scientific programme and community agenda from the ICFP 2025. For example, you will see there are topics around climate SRHRJ popping up everywhere and from the heat supply chains or displacements to financing, resilience, shrinking civic spaces, among others. Topics like youth leadership has moved into the core ICFP 2025 programme. There are a lot of youth-focused sessions including a youth pre-conference which is 100% led by the young people from all over the world. Youth sub-committee meetings have taken place every month in the lead up to ICFP 2025," said Dina Chaerani, Host of Sex O'Clock News, Family Planning News Network (FPNN) and YIELD Hub.

"There are many more pre-conferences happening around ICFP 2025. For example, on youth, comprehensive sexuality education, and other issues," said Dina.

SRHRJ trends turning into actual practices

"ICFP 2025 is doubling up on the accessibility. There are plenary sessions, ICFP Live stage sessions, and select high impact sessions will be live streamed on YouTube as well and recorded to an online library, so people that cannot be there physically can also watch them online or virtually. If you want deep technical dives into ICFP 2025 programme, then there is a paid virtual scientific stream as well," added Dina.



Give yourself permission to cut negative people from your life, and surround yourself with people who bring out the best in you.

Dina was one of the keynote speakers for SHE & Rights

Women's rights, bodily autonomy and SRHRJ are not negotiable



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session held ahead of International Conference on Family Planning (ICFP 2025) on the theme: "It is time for accountability and action after UNGA High Level Meeting around Beijing+30."

80th UNGA saw progress but also pushbacks

At 80th UN General Assembly this year, there were attempts made by USA to "torpedo" gender equality and human right to health. USA government categorically said at UN High Level Meeting on Non-Communicable Diseases and Mental Health (on 25th September 2025) that it does not recognise "constitutional or international right to abortion."

However, at the United Nations Economic and Social Council, decision to revitalise United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was adopted by consensus, which gives hope. It was also decided that first United Nations High Level Meeting on ending violence against women and girls would be held at 70th UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70) in 2026. "CSW revitalisation process is an effort by the UN to strengthen the mandate of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). We put out an advocacy brief that made 3 clear demands," said Shiphrah Belonguel, Global Advocacy Officer, Fos Feminista (International Alliance for Sexual and Reproductive Health, Rights and Justice - SRHRJ). Fos Feminista also serves as co-convenor of Women's Rights Caucus (WRC), a global self-organised feminist space that engages with CSW process.

Shiphrah lists out the 3 key asks:
1. Defending and strengthening the mandate of the CSW as a robust normative platform for gender equality.

2. Ensuring that the agreed conclusions that come out of the process remain a central and ambitious normative framework, reaffirming member states' commitments to the Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action, and
3. Safeguarding civil society participation and preventing any rollback of civic space.

"So, demand-3 has been a particularly contentious point of advocacy especially with several member states who have pushed back against institutionalising practices related to civil society participation, such as the civil society town hall. Since our collective advocacy, the revitalisation resolution has already been adopted within the framework of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)," said Shiphrah.

Women's rights, bodily autonomy and SRHRJ are not negotiable

"It is also important to contextualise all of this - like all of these processes that are happening in the UN helps us understand how governments are pushing gender equality. We have seen that during the UN High Level Meeting, some are twisting gender equality language to push for more pronatalist agenda framing women's lives only through the lens of fertility and population. And we know that's deeply dangerous," added Shiphrah.

ed Shiphrah.

"When we get to ICFP 2025, we need to be clear. We need to come together as a community and really think through and about how family planning is being tied to 'panic around fertility crisis' or demographic panics. We have to insist as a community of SRHRJ advocates that women's rights, bodily autonomy and reproductive justice are not negotiable - and they will always be integral to any family planning programming and activities," rightly added Shiphrah. "For now, our priority is to keep feminist movements inside these processes and monitoring them and disrupting as necessary, making sure that UN reform does not hollow out civil society space and does not sideline gender and human rights, but elevates them."

SHE & Rights session was together hosted by Global Center for Health Diplomacy and Inclusion (CeHDI), International Conference on Family Planning (ICFP) 2025, Y-PEER Asia Pacific, Y-PEER Laos, Family Planning News Network (FPNN), International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW), Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR), Asia Pacific Media Alliance for Health and Development (APCAT Media) and CNS.

Despite promises made by all the governments to deliver on gender equality and right to health, progress remains patchy and sketchy - and fragile - at best. We need to walk the talk on commitments enshrined on so many UN legally binding treaties, agreements, declarations and other instruments along with the UN Charter.

Shobha Shukla - CNS (Citizen News Service)

(Shobha Shukla is a feminist, health and development justice advocate, and an award-winning founding Managing Editor and Executive Director of CNS (Citizen News Service). She was also the Lead Discussant for SDG-3 at United Nations inter-governmental High Level Political Forum (HLPF 2025). She is a former senior Physics faculty of prestigious Loreto Convent College; current President of Asia Pacific Regional Media Alliance for Health, Gender and Development Justice (APCAT Media); Chairperson of Global AMR Media Alliance (GAMA received AMR One Health Emerging Leaders and Outstanding Talents Award 2024); and Host of SHE & Rights (Sexual Health with Equity & Rights). Follow her on Twitter/X @shobha1shukla or read her writings here www.bit.ly/ShobhaShukla)

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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



11 JAN
Barak Valley Conclave
 Potential Issues and Challenges of Barak Valley by different stakeholders.
 Includes: NGOs, and Governmental institution for development, awareness, awareness, awareness, and awareness through participation through involvement of different stakeholders and institutions.



12 JAN
River-Climate Conclave
 Climate Change will influence on Climate Change, climate and environment. The Conclave will focus on the importance, technical and practical of River Barak, Planning & Geography, environment and development in River Barak, Climate Change.

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



REGISTER HERE

Contact: info@krcfoundation.org
 WP: 0721300019



11 JAN
5E For Success Conclave
 The 4th 5E 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, Extension, School, Public Speaking (College).
 In the online event, various 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 journalists, publishers, bloggers, and content creators, sponsors, guides, speakers, members.



PAINTING CARNIVAL
NE CULTURAL FEST
E-SPORTS
FILM FESTIVAL | EXHIBITION
 BOOK CLUB | AWARDS | GUEST | NEW SERIES | RECORDS

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 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 | Buy | Sell

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

Painting Carnival
 Water Colour and Oil and Sawdust Painting



Watch Out!
Film Festival