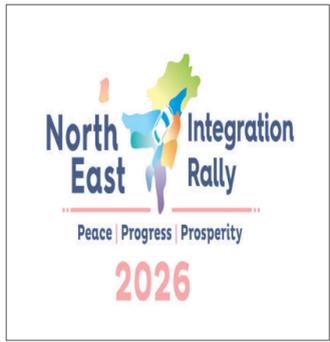




KRC TIMES

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VOLUME:1, ISSUE 586 | SILCHAR SATURDAY, OCTOBER 04, 2025. EAST AND NE INDIA EDITION | e-mail: krctimes@gmail.com ,www.krctimes.com

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PERSPECTIVE

Patience is not merely the ability to wait, but also the ability to maintain a good attitude while waiting.

Manipur: Postal services resume in Churachandpur after over two years

IMPHAL



Postal operations have resumed in Manipur's Churachandpur district, with a mail van entering the area for the first time since ethnic violence erupted in May 2023, officials confirmed on Saturday.

According to officials, the van reached the district headquarters at around 11:30 a.m. on Friday and delivered letters, parcels, and other postal items.

It departed for Imphal at approximately 12:40 p.m.

Postal services in Churachandpur had been suspended for over two years following the outbreak of violence that claimed more than 260 lives and displaced thousands.

The return of mail delivery is seen as a step toward restoring basic services and communication in the conflict-affected region.

WHO SAID WHAT



There is a group of people who are misusing the #ZubeenCase for political gains by spreading misinformation. See how this group is spreading a Photoshopped Image to defame the Assam Government. These individuals are not fans of #BelovedZubeen, they are criminals. ~ Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Assam CM

Fresh twist in Zubeen Garg's death: Bandmate claims signs of poisoning, foul play

GUWAHATI

A shocking development has emerged in the death of Assam icon Zubeen Garg, as police have arrested Siddharth Sharma following allegations that he and Shyamkanu Mahanta poisoned the singer and staged his death as an accidental drowning during a yacht trip in Singapore.

Shekhar Jyoti Goswami, in a statement recorded under Section 175 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), has alleged that Siddharth Sharma and Shyamkanu Mahanta poisoned the victim and deliberately chose a foreign venue to conceal their conspiracy.

The explosive testimony forms the basis for Sharma's arrest on charges of criminal conspiracy, murder, and culpable homicide, as detailed in the grounds of arrest signed by Dr Rosie Kalita, Senior Superintendent of Police at CM's Special Vigilance Cell in Assam.

Goswami, who stayed with Sharma in Room 3010 at Pan Pacific Hotel in Singapore, claims that prior to Garg's death, a conspiracy was formulated to portray his



death as accidental. He alleges observing suspicious conduct in the days leading up to the incident.

The witness statement paints a disturbing picture of the events aboard the yacht. According to the document, Sharma forcibly seized control of the vessel from its sail-

or, causing it to wobble dangerously in mid-sea and endanger all passengers.

During the critical moments when Garg was gasping for breath and almost drowning, Sharma was allegedly heard shouting "Jabo de, jabo de" — an Assamese phrase

meaning "let him go, let him go."

Goswami's most compelling claim centres on Garg's swimming ability. The witness emphasised that Garg was an expert swimmer who had trained both him and the accused, and therefore could not have died due to drowning.

When Garg began frothing at the mouth and nose, Sharma allegedly dismissed it as acid reflux and assured others there was nothing to worry about, instead of arranging necessary medical facilities. Police allege this inaction facilitated Garg's early demise.

The arrest grounds also mention that Sharma instructed Tannoy Phukan, an NRI member of the Assam Association in Singapore, not to arrange drinks, claiming he alone would provide them.

In what investigators view as an attempt to suppress evidence, Sharma allegedly instructed Goswami not to share yacht videos with anyone. Police say their case is built on material evidence collected during the investigation, including documentary records, financial transactions, and witness statements that establish Sharma's culpability. The arrest complies with Article 22(1) of the Constitution of India and Supreme Court precedents in landmark cases, including Pankaj Bansal v Union of India. The document notes that Sharma has failed to provide any satisfactory explanation regarding the events leading up to Garg's death.

Zubeen's second post-mortem report handed over to wife Garima

GUWAHATI

The second post-mortem report of Zubeen Garg, conducted at Gauhati Medical College and Hospital (GMCH), has been handed over to his wife, Garima Saikia Garg on October 4. Special Investigation Team (SIT) officer Moromi Das delivered the documents to Garima at their residence in Kahilipara. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had previously stated that the decision to make the report public would rest entirely with Garima. The Singapore post-mortem report was also handed to her on October 2. Meanwhile, the SIT continues its investigation into Zubeen Garg's death. A shocking development has emerged in the death of Assam icon Zubeen Garg, as police have arrested Siddharth Sharma following allegations that he and Shyamkanu Mahanta poisoned the singer and staged his death as an accidental drowning during a yacht trip in Singapore.

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Assam CID mulls roping in ED, I-T to probe Shyamkanu Mahanta's financial 'crimes'

GUWAHATI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Income Tax (I-T) Department are expected to join the Assam CID in investigating alleged large-scale financial crimes and benami property acquisitions linked to event manager Shyamkanu Mahanta, a key accused in the death of cultural icon Zubeen Garg.

The state CID, already probing Garg's mysterious death in Singapore on September 19, has uncovered financial irregularities stretching back over two decades. During raids at Mahanta's home and office on September 25 and 26, investigators seized multiple PAN cards under the same firm, nearly 30 stamp seals of different companies and government officials, and records of benami property transactions.

According to officials familiar with the matter, ED and I-T teams have already visited the CID headquarters in Guwahati for discussions. A formal decision on their involvement is expected soon. "They are likely to join the probe with CID," one official said, declining to share more details due to the sensitivity of the case.

Hagrama Mohilary open to returning to NDA alliance, but on his own conditions

KOKRAJHAR

Bodoland People's Front (BPF) president Hagrama Mohilary on Friday announced that his party is open to rejoining the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) if the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) agrees to drop the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) from the coalition.

Speaking to reporters after chairing a crucial Policy Making Body (PMB) meeting at the Bodoland Guest House in Kokrajhar, Mohilary stressed that the decision reflects the sentiments of the people of Bodoland. "If BJP removes UPPL from the NDA, then BPF has no problem in aligning with the NDA again. Our condition is very clear," he stated firmly.

Mohilary, who is set to take oath as the Chief of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) on October 5, also revealed that seven to eight new executive members are expected to be sworn in alongside him. He highlighted that the primary focus of the new council would be to provide land pattas to the people of Bodoland, underscoring that land rights and ownership remain central to the party's agenda.

The high-level meeting, attended by senior leaders in-



cluding former minister Pramila Rani Brahma and other top members of the BPF's policy-making body, discussed the party's future strategy and governance priorities. Mohilary reiterated the BPF's commitment to addressing key public issues

and strengthening the political roadmap for Bodoland's development. The statement marks a fresh twist in Bodoland's political landscape, where shifting alliances and conditions continue to shape the balance of power.

Mary Dawngi: The refugee singer who turned pain into melody in Mizoram



AIZAWL

Mary Dawngi's journey from war-torn Myanmar to Mizoram's music scene is a story of sheer hope and survival. Fleeing Myanmar's brutal civil war in 2022, the young singer found refuge in the Mizoram capital where she found a platform to 'voice' her dreams.

Before the 2021 military coup in Myanmar, Mary had been part of a vibrant local music scene. But the conflict shattered her world, forcing her to abandon her home in Kalemoy. The civil war left the country in turmoil, with the military and pro-democracy forces engaged in violent clashes.

Despite the chaos Mary did not let her passion for music dim. In Aizawl, she met Mizo singer Saiwannah, and together they recorded Ka Pa Khuma, the Mizo version of the poem, "The Miller of the Dee". The song quickly went viral,

amassing over 15 million views on YouTube.

Though Myanmar's economic collapse did not bring any financial gains from the song, Mary found something more valuable in Mizoram: a growing fan base. The State's deep cultural ties with Myanmar made her music resonate, and soon, she was winning prestigious awards, including Best New Artist and Song of the Year at the Lelte Awards ceremony. Mizoram has long had a thriving music industry, supported by platforms like Music Domain Mizoram, which helps artists generate revenue. Artists like Mary are finding success not just locally, but internationally, with invitations to perform in places like Washington, London, and Sydney. But despite her growing fame, Mary's path is not without challenges. Her fear of being conscripted into Myanmar's resistance army haunts her, and her role

as the sole provider for her family back home keeps her in India. She is torn between her love for her homeland and her duty to her family. Mary's music has made her a household name in Mizoram, with her collaborations and solo releases like Duhaisam and Aw Bawhte becoming instant hits. She continues to tour, and her voice is a permanent fixture in Mizoram's music scene. However, despite international recognition, visa issues have hindered her ability to perform abroad. "Music is my way of bridging divides," says Mary. Though her success is celebrated, she still faces the stigma of being a "refugee singer" on the social media. But for Mary, her music is a symbol of resilience and hope in the face of overwhelming adversity. Now residing in Aizawl with her brother, Mary is registered as a refugee with a local NGO, finding a new life far from the conflict she left behind

Assam Gov constitutes one-man commission to probe Zubeen Garg's death

GUWAHATI

The Governor of Assam has constituted a One-Man Commission of Inquiry, headed by Justice Soumitra Saikia of the Gauhati High Court, to investigate the circumstances surrounding the death of singer Zubeen Garg in Singapore on September 19, 2025.

Issued on October 3, the notification under Section 3 of the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952, outlines the commission's terms of reference, which include examining the sequence of events before and after Garg's death, identifying any lapses or negligence by individuals or authorities, and investigating the possibility of external factors, foul play, or conspiracy. The commission is mandated to submit its report within six months from the date of the notification.

The one-member panel will also investigate if there were any lapses, acts of omission or commission, or negligence on the part of any individual, authority or institution in

connection with the popular singer's demise, the notification said. Besides, it will "ascertain whether any external factors, including the possibility of foul play, conspiracy, or unlawful acts, contributed to or were connected with the incident". Garg died under mysterious circumstances in Singapore while swimming in the sea. He had gone to the Southeast Asian nation to attend the 4th edition of the NorthEast India Festival, organised by Shyamkanu Mahanta and his company.

The Assam CID is currently probing Garg's death, after more than 60 FIRs were lodged across the state against Mahanta and around 10 others, including the singer's manager Siddharth Sharma, and band members Shekharjyoti Goswami and Amritprabha Mahanta.

The festival organiser, Garg's manager and the two band members have been arrested in the case and sent to 14 days of police remand.



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'PROTECTING', A CAMOUFLAGE TO 'INCITING'

The people of this country, it can be felt, are matured enough to see through the political tricks played by some disgruntled politicians with intent to grab power who otherwise seem to be quite unmindful of consequences of playing such tricks for the country, its democratic set up, its autonomous democratic institutions, constitutional obligations and values, a well established rule of law and a just equilibrium between different state organs. Come lawlessness and unrest for any reason whatsoever, devastation and huge losses of assets built over decades are the only "gains" to them. A few very over ambitious politicians are seemingly nursing the prospects of some type of Sri-Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal unrest and violence to happen here, in this country too. Rahul Gandhi's Save Samvidhan call to Gen-Z, youth and students, "stop vote theft, "protect" democracy, I stand with Gen-Z, students, youth..." cannot be brushed aside as an ordinary clarion call. But he must clarify explicitly as to which provision of the constitution is violated, even in the least, and when? Where is the need arisen to "defend" democracy and only at the hands of the Gen-Z, the youth, students etc? Which vote theft, where and whence? In which court, is the case of such a "theft" being heard? We heard a lot about detonating some Atom Bomb followed by a Hydrogen Bomb but to quote famous lines of Mirza Galib – "Thee khabar garam, ki Galib kay udain gay purzay; dekhney hum bhi gaye, par tamasha na hua". Or, there was a hot news that Galib would be blown to pieces, however, we too set out to see that really happening but it was not even a damp squib. The only and only aim behind this "clarion call" appears to unseat a constitutionally elected government as through the well established constitutional route and devised manner, the dislodgment could not take place because the people willed so, all these three general elections. This "protecting" is therefore a camouflage to spreading unrest and anarchy. This "call" is seen as a politically cryptic coloration. These few politicians, unfortunately frustrated and anguished, for reasons of being out of power, cannot be allowed, in any case, to cause any damage, even in the least, to the constitutional and democratic writ and system of the country. People will neither tolerate such tantrums nor fall in any trap and never ever allow that to happen here. India is neither Bangladesh nor Nepal, India is Bharat, an awakened Bharat.

On the other hand, it is interesting as well as disturbing to see that most of the countries including the US having been enviably all praises for our election process, while Congress and some supportive parties have chosen to strike at the very roots of the probity, fully independent and autonomous character, non partisan role and transparent working of the Election Commission of India. "Vote Chori" or vote theft, a manufactured narrative against the Election Commission, perhaps, as a last political resort for the time being, has put the political standard of this country at the lowest ebb, doing no service either to the pilots of such narrative or to the country in itself. Elon Musk is on record having praised eloquently our election process saying "India successfully counted 640 million votes in a single day using voting machines (EVMs), California is still counting votes even after 19 days". He further lamented, "Our system is broken." Greek PM Mitsotakis praised India saying it is an example how democracy can deliver stronger economic growth, "you are an example to the world". He increasingly hailed India's election system saying "the country's poll system is an example that convincingly challenges any flawed notion that significant scale is a barrier to democracy." Not only that, 75 delegates from 23 countries witnessed the poll process in 2024 general elections which drew international admiration not merely attention. These delegates are on record highly appreciating transparency in election process and innovative Green Polling Stations as "inspirational". These delegates from foreign countries evoked keen interest in and highly appreciated the technology driven process – at scale – including during randomization of EVM – VVPATs. What is absolutely important to note is that these delegates from 23 countries were wonder struck by noticing an unwavering faith and commitment of Indian voters towards strengthening democratic ideals.

A country where some opposition parties have traditionally thrived and want to continue to thrive politically by getting votes from the gullible voters on the worn out, obsolete, redundant and irrelevant narrative of "poverty", "people dying of hunger", "nothing to eat", "no employment", "reeling under high inflation" etc etc, are quite upset and undone over such a conventional "treasure" of theirs getting gradually exhausted. They have no alternative but to keep continuing to negate any achievement of development and alleviation of poverty by the government, not to speak of lifting as many as 25 crore of poor people from out of absolute poverty to claim niches in neo middle class and above, on account of experiencing an upward income trajectory and directly benefitting from numerous social welfare schemes and fruits of economic liberalisation.

These political parties, therefore, must find fault with improved education, infrastructural boom, better healthcare facilities and health insurance, using more of consumer goods and the like by this new "aspirational" class. A rough estimate of mobile phones in use in the country puts it at above a whopping 96 crore, means as many owners can afford to spare a minimum of Rs.300 to Rs.500 per month towards recharging expenses. The current CPI inflation of 2.7% is 20 years lowest, still cries of "Mehengai" are made to spread gloom and pessimism. A strong, stable government with fastest growing economy backed by drastic cuts in GST rates recently appears to cause upending of the apocryphal of some opposition parties? They should instead celebrate each and every achievement but agreeably not compromising on their right to question, hold accountable and criticise the government on genuine issues. We, however, are seeing how economic welfare policies introduced by the government backed by direct benefit to the beneficiaries through Bank accounts, circumventing any misuse, have taken the wind out of the sails of most of the opposition parties who expect their boats in the deep political waters to be very less propelling not to move any forward hence to implicitly try enacting the likes of more of Shaheen Baghs, more of Kissan agitations and blockades, even giving a clarion call to GEN-Z to "redeem" their lost fortunes.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

The second half of a man's life is made up of nothing but the habits he has acquired during the first half.

- Fyodor Dostoyevsky

INDIA-PAKISTAN: OPTICAL CONVERGENCE, DNA DIVERGENCE



AYUSHMAN SINGH JAMWAL

For years Pakistan has posed itself as a responsible international player that has adhered to the rule of law and global conventions. From Pakistani civil society to the political discourse, its socio-economic challenges, tumultuous history and struggles with reputation have often been ignored to paint a golden picture of progress and prosperity, or chalked up to foreign conspiracies by long-time adversaries and 'back-stabbing allies'.

Despite Pakistan's looming legacy of military incursions and the shadow of terror as a state policy, India has always experimented with peace with its neighbour, dealing with an ecosystem that poses Pakistan as a mirror image of India in terms of language, culture and heritage. The calls for dialogue often look to the social and cultural convergences, to create a dual world narrative in Pakistan, hoping that nurturing the educated, peace loving side will overpower the war mongering, radical and propaganda-driven one. The optics look great in songs, films and conferences, but the tangible core of Pakistan, that manages the reality around that ecosystem, is what India has to really contend with. The core pillars of our two nations are fundamentally different – and moral sermons or viral campaigns do little to change that reality. It is the only reason why an iron fist approach to Pakistan is the only tangible foreign policy.

For nearly eight decades, Pakistan has struggled to live up to its democratic promise. Periodic elections may give the impression of representative rule, but behind the ballot boxes lies a system distorted by military dominance, feudal strangleholds, minority exclusion, foreign dependency, and the dark shadow of terror.

Roughly 33 years out of 78 since Pakistan's independence can be classified as sustained democratic periods where civilian governments were elected and survived without being overthrown by a coup. Yet even those years were marred by presidential dismissals, weak civilian control and strong military influence. The single greatest impediment to democratic consolidation in Pakistan has been the military's outsized role in

governance. From coups to engineered elections, the generals have long treated Pakistan as their preserve. This imbalance has hollowed out civilian institutions, leaving parliament weak and political parties pliant. Look no further than Field Marshal Asim Munir, the head of the Pakistani military, who strides ahead of the elected prime minister of Pakistan to lead the nation's foreign policy and trade negotiations.

The next core pillar that shows Pakistan as divergently different from India is the grip of the landlord class, another poison in Pakistan's political bloodstream. For millions in rural Pakistan, voting is not a matter of free choice, but of loyalty to the local feudal lord who controls land, credit, and livelihoods. These dynasties dominate parliaments but rarely legislate for reform. Comprehensive land reform, rural education, and empowered local governments are something India achieved fairly immediately after independence. In Pakistan, the zamindari system is still alive and kicking, delivering 50% of the nation's prime ministers since independence. Pakistan's ballot box mirage ignores this oligarchical DNA, which will not allow the son of a tea-seller to achieve the highest political office of the land.

Nations with diversity often see friction between different communities, and India is no exception. However, what sets Pakistan different from India is the legal codification of discrimination. Pakistan's legal system has long been weaponized to persecute minorities, embedding structural discrimination into both law and practice. The most glaring example is the blasphemy laws, introduced under General Zia-ul-Haq and retained in the Pakistan Penal Code, which prescribes harsh punishments including death for alleged insults to Islam or the Prophet. These laws are routinely misused against Christians, Hindus, Ahmadis, and even dissenting Muslims. The Ahmadi community is legally barred from calling themselves Muslim or practicing the core tenets of their faith, with constitutional amendments and penal provisions criminalising their religious expression. In addition, discriminatory personal laws restrict the rights of Hindu and Christian women in marriage and inheritance,

while forced conversions of minority girls remain a pervasive problem with little recourse in courts.

Terror as a state policy has merged itself into Pakistani society, another core pillar that sets the nation apart from India. Top leaders from Bilawal Bhutto to Khawaja Asif have called it the 'Dirty work of the West', but among the top 5 nations with globally designated terrorists and terror groups on their soil – Pakistan is second to Afghanistan where the Taliban is in power. Even as Pakistan projects itself as a beacon of Islamic modernity, no democracy can survive when terror groups operate with impunity. Pakistan's decades-long policy of nurturing jihadist proxies for foreign policy goals has come at a devastating domestic cost – thousands of lives lost, civic space eroded, and politics held hostage by extremists.

Finally, the distortion of military history, and the pattern of denial, silence and admission is another thing that sets Pakistan apart from India. Every nation's government is accused of propaganda and misinformation, but Pakistan has a record of simultaneously bungling and doubling down on its own misinformation to an embarrassing degree. In the first India-Pakistan war over Jammu & Kashmir, Pakistan long framed the campaign as an indigenous revolt by 'tribal irregulars', downplaying state direction, planning, provisioning and the movement of Pashtun tribes in the weeks leading to the 1947 invasion. Pakistan commemorates September 6 as 'Defence Day', celebrating the 'repulse' of Indian offensives near Lahore and Sialkot in 1965, and often presenting the war as a win, even when it failed in its objective to take control of Jammu and Kashmir.

On the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War, U.S. diplomatic cables described the Pakistani army's crackdown as 'genocide'. Pakistan's own 'Hamoodur Rahman Commission' – suppressed for decades and later leaked – recorded evidence of widespread atrocities by Pakistani troops. During the 1999 Kargil War, India recovered the bodies of several Pakistani soldiers. When offered to Pakistan through the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Pakistani Army refused to accept them, in order to maintain the fiction that only 'irregulars' were involved. The Indian Army conducted the last rites with full military honours

THE RISE AND RISE OF PAKISTAN'S FIELD MARSHAL

M K BHADRAKUMAR

The 'family photo' from the White House after an almost-90-minute meeting last Thursday between the US President Donald Trump, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir would have stunned the Indian foreign and security policy establishment. Things are getting to be very serious indeed.

That the meeting was a foreign policy strategy session is apparent from the presence of two other participants – Vice-President J D Vance and the Secretary of State and acting National Security Advisor Marco Rubio, who form the core group in Trump's foreign policy team. The event underscored the high importance Trump attaches to a constructive partnership with Pakistan in the geopolitical arc of what Americans traditionally called the Greater Middle East – stretching from the Levant to the Persian Gulf and Central Asia including Afghanistan.

Trump's first term as president ended with a foreign policy 'scoop' in 2020 – the Abraham Accords, aimed at Israel's integration into its Muslim neighbourhood. But the four years since have witnessed phenomenal changes in regional politics – in particular, the October 2023 attacks on Israel and the ensuing Gaza war that has resulted in Israel's regional isolation, a diplomatic rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and Iran's surge as a nuclear-threshold state. All of this has significantly eroded American influence in the region, as evident most glaringly in the BRICS membership of Egypt, the UAE and Iran, and even

Saudi Arabia just outside the tent looking in.

By hedging its bets, Saudi Arabia called attention to its acute need of improved security and political relations by diversifying its network of international partners and its assertion as an independent regional powerhouse. Trump took note of it when he picked up the threads where he left them in January 2020, and prioritised the Saudi demand for a defence pact to safeguard its security and a peaceful nuclear programme to match Iran's.

Unsurprisingly, neither the US nor Israel has condemned the Saudi-Pakistan defence pact. Trump received the Pakistani leaders, civilian and military, within a fortnight of the signing of the pact. Iran has been left to figure out that in any future war with the US, retaliation against American attack would need to exclude Saudi territory, especially Saudi oil fields and assets in the Persian Gulf.

Suffice to say, both Washington and Tel Aviv visualise the Saudi-Pakistan pact as a cornerstone of the New Middle East emerging against the backdrop of an unrestrained Israel, a wounded Iran, and an unpredictable US.

The Saudi-Pakistan pact was a few years in the making and it should not be seen as a reaction to the present moment. But it can be regarded as a response to the broader tectonic shifts in the region – a moment where both Saudi Arabia and Pakistan need to create options for themselves.

Of course, the two countries have been intertwined for decades. Pakistan's long road to the

nuclear club was paved with Saudi petrodollars. Pakistani troops were deployed on Saudi Arabia's northern border during the Iran-Iraq war. Saudi money for Afghan Mujahideen was routed through Pakistani intelligence. Pakistani military advisors help train the Saudi military; a former army chief commands the Saudi counter-terrorism force. That said, Pakistan's relationship with Saudi Arabia has not always been smooth. Pakistan refused to join the Saudi-led air strikes on Yemen in 2015. Again, Saudis have long sought nuclear technology from Pakistan.

For Trump, an American presence in Afghanistan is vital for advancing the containment strategy towards Iran. But recently, the Taliban rebuffed his demand that the Bagram air base be under US control. The US is left with no option but the ouster of the Taliban government. The only country that can deliver on Afghanistan is old ally Pakistan, which also views the Taliban in hostile terms.

Notably, just three days after the Pakistani military chief's meeting with Trump and his team in the White House, Taliban authorities have abruptly capped fibre-optic internet access in the country. Telephone communications in Afghanistan are largely routed through the country's fibre optic network; hence the shut-down has affected mobile and fixed-line telephone services as well. Conceivably, Taliban is circling its wagons, sensing danger. Shades of Generation Z protests? Afghan resistance has ties with Western intelligence.

and as per Islamic traditions. Despite its initial denials, Pakistan subsequently acknowledged the dead as its own soldiers and conferred gallantry awards posthumously.

For the Pakistani state, these are non-negotiable attributes, written in stone, with no signs of active civil movements for deep, meaningful institutional change. Its core realities necessitate a hardline foreign policy stance. Unfortunately, the Pakistani citizenry exists in a fragile 'theatre' of democracy, ignorant or blissfully unaware that sustained democracy cannot be delivered by generals, oligarchs, extremists or foreign patrons. Peace at least requires some level of convergence of national characters. The drastic divergence of national DNAs is a reality we must accept.

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

Netflix is deliberately choosing to pay people to create sexualized content for children. Freedom of speech should be respected, but this is PAID speech. Netflix is going out of their way and reaching into their wallet to push this. ~ Elon Musk, American Entrepreneur



A third dimension to the Saudi-Pakistan pact is the role the Pakistani military can undertake as an 'Islamic' peacekeeping force in Gaza under the 20-point plan that is based on a Saudi blueprint, which Trump has unveiled as a personal initiative. The plan proposes that Hamas's rule in Gaza would end and be replaced by a 'technocratic, apolitical Palestinian committee' that would be overseen by a supervisory Board of Peace led by Trump as chairman.

The Pakistani military enjoys a high reputation for its professionalism and would have wide acceptability both in the West and the East, besides the Muslim world, to be the lynchpin of the post-war normalisation process in Gaza. Trump has big plans for Gaza with huge business spin-offs that could fuel MAGA.

If the 20-point plan takes off, Trump will have taken a big step in reviving the Abraham Accords, leading to Saudi-Israeli ties – and, possibly, Pakistan-Israel diplomatic relations, too. Trump has brought back his son-in-law Jared Kushner, who had previously played a role in shaping Middle East policy. Kushner, a Jew and a businessman, is well-liked by the Israelis and the Saudis. His return will be a confidence-building measure for Israel. It cannot be a coincidence that videogame maker Electronic Arts is going private in a massive \$55-billion deal unveiled on Friday that is funded by a US-Saudi consortium led by Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund and Kushner's Affinity Partners. Reportedly, they are paying \$210 a share, making it the largest buyout on record.

Zubeen's wife to take call on public disclosure of post-mortem report: Himanta

GUWAHATI

The Singapore postmortem report in the Zubeen Garg death case has been handed over to the singer's wife, Garima Saikia, with the Gauhati Medical College Hospital (GMCH) report set to follow on October 4. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced that the decision to make the GMCH postmortem findings public will rest entirely with Garima, while both reports will also be submitted to the court.

Speaking during a Facebook live session on October 3, Sarma addressed questions that had been raised about whether the Singapore postmortem report would be received. "Yesterday, we handed the post-mortem report to Zubeen Garg's wife. The postmortem report conducted at Gauhati Medical College will also be handed to Garima tomorrow," he stated.

The Chief Minister detailed the government's actions since the incident, emphasising his personal involvement as a fan of

the artist. "As a fan, within a single day, I arranged for the postmortem in Singapore and brought his mortal remains to Delhi. From Delhi, the body was brought to Assam, preserved for public viewing, and made available for millions of fans." Sarma said, adding that throughout the process, he acted "not as the Chief Minister of Assam, but as a devoted fan."

In a significant development, the state secured a 14-day police remand for four accused persons—Shyamkanu Mahanta, Sidharth Sharma, Sekharjyoti Goswami, and Amrit Prabha Mahanta. Sarma highlighted this as an exceptional achievement, stating, "No court usually grants a 14-day remand. Our efforts in this case were exceptional. For the first time, we were able to secure a 14-day remand for an accused."

The government is now awaiting cooperation from the Assamese community in Singapore for the investigation, with Sarma warning of strict action if cooperation is not forthcoming.



A judicial commission headed by sitting High Court judge Justice Saumitra Saikia will be formally constituted on Saturday. Sarma revealed that this marks the first time a judicial commission would comprise sitting High Court judges rather than retired ones, following a special government request.

The Chief Minister put social media users on notice, stating that those who posted about the matter on YouTube and Facebook would be required to submit affidavits before the judicial commission. "We will keep track of those who claimed to be Zubeen's fans online but did not cooperate with the judicial commission. Now the ball is in their

court. How they handle it will show who truly is a fan of Zubeen Garg," he said.

Sarma also referenced a 2020 incident when four youths attacked Zubeen Garg in Ganeshguri, Guwahati, during the COVID period, noting he had provided security to the singer despite his criticism of the CAA.

The Chief Minister accused some individuals of exploiting the artist's death for political purposes and criticised the use of AI-manipulated photos showing Shyamkanu Mahanta's arrest. He also pointed to what he termed a "paper connection" between opposition leaders Akhil Gogoi and Debabrata Saikia, and accused Shyamkanu Mahanta, noting all three had demanded a CBI investigation and expressed lack of faith in Assam authorities.

"No one can divert me. I will ensure justice for Zubeen and tirelessly fight for the nation and community. I challenge those who play petty games—countless blessings of the people of Assam are with me," Sarma concluded.

Nagaland aims for ODF-Plus status, minister highlights progress on Swachh Bharat Diwas

KOHIMA

Nagaland is steadily progressing towards achieving Open Defecation Free (ODF) Plus status, Minister for Public Health Engineering and Cooperation Jacob Zhimomi said on Thursday, October 2.

Speaking at the state-level programme of Swachh Bharat Diwas in Dimapur, Zhimomi outlined the milestones achieved in sanitation under the Swachh Bharat Mission. He recalled that the state successfully constructed more than 9,000 household toilets, enabling Nagaland to be declared ODF on October 2, 2018, a year ahead of the national deadline in 2019.

"The impact of this movement is visible across all districts of the state," Zhimomi stated, while emphasizing that the journey towards ODF-Plus now demands collective participation, expert guidance, and consultancy support.

He noted that the central government's ambition is to see all states progress towards ODF-Plus, which requires not only sustained efforts but also an accelerated pace to keep up with the rest of the country. The minister also praised the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) for its role in implementing sanitation programmes, saying its efforts have significantly contributed to improving rural sanitation and public health standards in Nagaland. Mission Director of Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen, Er Gwatilo Tep, further underlined that the campaign's success goes beyond fulfilling sanitation targets. "It is about reaffirming our collective commitment to cleanliness, health, and dignity for every citizen," he said.

Manipur: Meitei man rescued in Kangpokpi during Kuki-Zo Separation Day

IMPHAL

Central paramilitary personnel, in a special operation, rescued a 35-year-old man, a Meitei who had strayed into Kangpokpi district, where the Kuki-Zo tribal community observed Separation Day at the Martyrs' Cemetery on Friday. According to Manipur police reports issued on Saturday, security forces rescued Soyam Sanayamba Thomas (35), a resident of Thamnopki village under Yaingangpokpi police station in Imphal East district. He had strayed into Twinomjang village in Kangpokpi district. The police reported that the rescued individual has been safely handed over to his family. The Committee on Tribal Unity (CoTU) in Kangpokpi district observed the 29th Separation Day at the Martyrs' Cemetery on Friday, calling for a 12-hour complete shutdown along National Highway-2 (NH-102), a crucial lifeline route in Manipur, from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm. The outfit reiterated

its long-standing demand for a separate administration for the Kuki-Zo people in Manipur.

The Meiteis face de facto restrictions on entering Kuki-dominated areas of Manipur due to the ongoing ethnic violence that began in May 2023. This violence has caused significant displacement and a hardening of internal boundaries, making travel unsafe or prohibited for members of opposing communities.

Heavily guarded buffer zones, manned by security forces, separate the Meitei-dominated Imphal Valley from the Kuki-dominated hill districts.

Kuki groups have repeatedly warned Meiteis against crossing these areas. Kuki civil society groups have stated that there will be no free movement of Meitei civilians on key routes, such as National Highway-2, which passes through Kuki-dominated territory.

Child marriage cases in India surge six-fold in 2023; Assam accounts for 90%:NCRB

NEW DELHI

Cases registered under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, surged six-fold in 2023 compared to the previous year, with Assam accounting for nearly 90 per cent of the national total, according to the latest data released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).

The report shows that 6,038 cases were filed under the Act in 2023, a sharp increase from 1,002 cases in 2022 and 1,050 cases in 2021. The spike, officials say, reflects both improved enforcement and reporting as well as persistent challenges in curbing the social practice.

Among states, Assam reported 5,267 cases, far outnumbering others. Tamil Nadu (174 cases), Karnataka (145), and West Bengal (118) followed, though at much lower levels. In contrast, states and Union Ter-



ritories such as Chhattisgarh, Nagaland, Ladakh, and Lakshadweep reported no cases under the Act during the year. The law prohibits the mar-

riage of girls under 18 and boys under 21 and penalises those who organise, perform, or facilitate such unions. Assam's disproportionately high share

is being attributed to the state government's targeted crackdowns in recent years, which have brought the issue into sharper legal focus.

The NCRB data also highlighted another troubling dimension: abductions for marriage. In 2023, 16,737 girls and 129 boys were reported kidnapped or abducted for marriage, underscoring the coercive and criminal aspects linked to underage marriages. Experts have expressed concern that despite increased enforcement, the prevalence of such practices threatens the safety, autonomy, and rights of minors, particularly girls. They emphasised the need for a multi-pronged approach combining legal action, community awareness, and support services to dismantle the deep-rooted traditions that sustain child marriage across parts of the country.

Tripura suspends jailor, four warders after six undertrial prisoners escape

AGARTALA

The Tripura government on Thursday suspended five jail officials—including one jailor and four warders—and initiated disciplinary proceedings following the escape of six undertrial prisoners from Dharmanagar Sub-Jail in North Tripura on Wednesday. One of the escaped prisoners has since been re-arrested.

An order from the Inspector General of Prisons stated that disciplinary proceedings are being contemplated against Sri Dhananjay Bhattacharya, Jailor of Dharmanagar Sub-Jail. Bhattacharya has been placed under immediate suspension, and during this period, his headquarters will be at Kamalpur Sub-Jail,



Dhalai Tripura. He is not allowed to leave the headquarters without prior permission from the com-

petent authority.

In a separate order, four warders—Parikhan Jamatia,

accountability and maintain security within correctional facilities.

Gedu Mia, Notan Lodh, and Pallab Kanti Bhowmik—have also been placed under suspension while disciplinary action is contemplated. During their suspension, they are to remain at Kailashahar District Jail, Unakoti Tripura, and are prohibited from leaving without prior approval from the competent authority.

The Tripura government said the suspensions are part of its efforts to ensure accountability and maintain security within correctional facilities.

Dr PM Nair is also keen to attend North East Integration Rally in January

SILCHAR

Dr PM Nair IPS (ret'd as Director General of Police with NDRF, Govt of India), internationally acclaimed expert on anti-human trafficking, is attending the North East Integration Rally 2026 (NEIR 2026), which will be held in January.

A 1978-batch IPS officer, Dr Nair served for 35 years across Bihar, CBI, NHRC, CRPF, United Nations (as Expert on Human Trafficking matters), NDRF, and several positions of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs. He played key roles in high-profile investigations, including the Rajiv Gandhi assassination, the Purulia arms drop, the Sajoy Ghose Abduction in Majuli, Assam, the ISRO espionage case, and the Bofors Scandal. Over his career, he investigated more than 15,000 cases, including thousands of crimes against women and children, and prevented many more crimes.

Beyond policing, Dr Nair has dedicated over four decades to fighting human trafficking. His work began in 1982 when, as SP of Palamu, he personally rescued 133 bonded children. Since then,



he has facilitated the rescue of more than 65,000 women and children across India. He continues to travel widely, training officials and NGOs and advocating and implementing stronger anti-trafficking measures. Originally from Trivandrum and now based in Chennai, Dr Nair is of the firm view that the anti-human trafficking mission is a divinely ordained lifelong calling.

His presence at the rally will give value addition besides being an inspiration for the campaigners of NEIR 2026.

Dr. Nair will be one of the key proponents of the Disaster Management campaign during the event.

Loktak Lake's Plight Highlighted at Global Stage: Azam Siddiqui's Photograph Spotlights Dying Wetland at Ramsar COP 15

WAARI SINGBUL NETWORK

IMPHAL: Loktak Lake, the largest freshwater lake in northeastern India and a Ramsar Site of international significance, is facing an existential crisis, a fact poignantly captured by visual communicator and environmentalist Azam Siddiqui.

His striking photograph of the lake, selected for the prestigious Ramsar Sites Photo Exhibition at the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe (July 23-31, 2025), has brought global attention to the ecological and cultural treasure that is on the brink of collapse.

Loktak Lake, often called the "soul of Manipur," is renowned for its unique floating islands, or *phumdis*, and is home to the Keibul Lamjao National Park, the world's only floating national park, which shelters the endangered Sangai deer. As a major tourist attraction, the lake draws visitors to Manipur, significantly contributing to the state's economy through tourism and its vibrant fishing industry. Beyond its economic value, Loktak plays a critical role in regulating the climatic conditions of the hill state and continues to inspire creativity among locals and visitors alike.

However, the lake is dying. Encroachment by a barrage that has killed its natural



water flow, pollution, and siltation threatens its delicate ecosystem, endangering its biodiversity and the livelihoods of communities dependent on it.

Azam Siddiqui, an NDTV video journalist and dedicated animal activist, captured the lake's fragile beauty in a photograph that stood out among global submissions for its creativity, visual impact, and powerful representation of Loktak's ecological significance. Selected by a distinguished jury, his image was featured at COP15, am-

plifying the urgent need to protect this vital wetland.

The Ramsar Convention's COP15, attended by 172 contracting parties, adopted 25 resolutions and a new Strategic Plan for 2025-2034, emphasising wetland restoration, climate resilience, and sustainable management. India's resolution on promoting sustainable lifestyles for wise wetland use was a key highlight, aligning with efforts to safeguard sites like Loktak. The conference also saw the adoption of a 4.1% budget increase

to CHF 15.5 million for 2025-2027 to support conservation efforts, alongside the Victoria Falls Declaration, which underscored global commitment to wetland protection.

Siddiqui's photograph serves as a clarion call to action. "Loktak is not just a lake; it's the heartbeat of Manipur," he said. "Its decline is a warning of what we stand to lose—biodiversity, culture, and livelihoods. My image is a plea to the world to act before it's too late."

As Zimbabwe takes over the presidency of the Ramsar Convention from China, the global spotlight on Loktak Lake underscores the need for urgent action. With India's leadership in promoting sustainable wetland use, there is hope that collaborative efforts can restore Loktak to its former glory, preserving it for future generations and ensuring it remains a beacon of Manipur's natural and cultural heritage.

As India's dynamic Environmental Minister Bhupendra Singh championed the nation's commitment to sustainability at COP15 in Zimbabwe, positioning Bharat as a global leader in environmental stewardship with wetland conservation at its core, there is renewed hope for Loktak Lake's revival. To secure its future, urgent conservation measures, including the decommissioning of national hydropower projects threatening its ecosystem, must be prioritised to restore this vital Ramsar Site and preserve Manipur's ecological and cultural lifeline for generations to come.

For more information on wetland conservation efforts, visit [Ramsar Convention](https://www.ramsar.org).

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BJP hits back, says Rahul has become a flag-bearer of anti-India forces abroad



NEW DELHI

The BJP on Friday launched a scathing attack on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his remarks at a seminar in Colombia, claiming he has become the "flag-bearer of anti-India forces" and is promoting their agenda in the country.

Party spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi criticised Gandhi's comments, saying they show that the

Congress, controlled by the Nehru-Gandhi family for over a century, is now succumbing to "anti-India" elements. Referring to Gandhi's statement about India having 16-17 languages, Trivedi said, "You will now see that he will try to create a conflict over the issue of languages. Attempts have already been made in the past to create a North-South conflict."

Trivedi called Gandhi

the "jhanda bardar" (flag-bearer) of "anti-India forces" and appealed to the public to be wary of him and the Nehru-Gandhi family. "Today it seems that having a leader of the opposition like him is like a thorn in the heart of Indian democracy," he said.

He added, "Those in the Congress, who are aware of the party falling into the clutches of dangerous foreign forces are committing treason. I appeal to those who are not aware of this to show due diligence and stop such leaders."

Trivedi also criticised the Congress leadership as "immature," saying that the party once had mature leaders like Indira Gandhi and P.V. Narasimha Rao, who knew how to handle the Ultra-Left. "Today, it is being used. It's not a problem just for the Congress but a matter of concern for the country as well," he said. Trivedi also targeted Congress leader Udit Raj, who allegedly called Prime Minister Narendra Modi "a symbol of modern Ravan".

He said, "I only want to simply remind those who supported the killers of Rambhakt karsevaks did not attend the inauguration of Ram Temple in Ayodhya but visited Babar's memorial three times to pay their obeisance." He added: "People know very well who the symbols of Ravan's propensity of Lord Ram's 'sanskar' are."

Pak lost dozen aircrafts including F-16 jets during Op Sindoor: IAF chief

NEW DELHI

At least a dozen Pakistani military aircraft including US-origin F-16 jets were destroyed or damaged in Indian strikes during Operation Sindoor, Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal A P Singh said on Friday while describing Islamabad's narrative on India's losses as "fanciful stories" (Manohar Kahaniyan).

The Air Chief Marshal also said that Indian action damaged a large number of military installations in Pakistan that included hangars in three locations, radars in at least four places, command and control centres in two sites and runways in two air bases.

Air Chief Marshal Singh was addressing a press conference days ahead of the annual Air Force Day.

On reports that various terror groups in Pakistan are relocating their bases to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province following the Operation Sindoor, he said it was expected and that the Indian Air Force have the capability to go deep inside to hit their hideouts with absolutely accurate targeting.

Singh said the IAF has finalised its plan to expand its combat capabilities under Roadmap 2047 and the force would need 35 to 40 new aircraft including combat jets annually for next two decades to boost its air power.

To questions, he provided details of Pakistan's losses during Operation Sindoor, citing intelligence reports and evidence collected through electronic surveillance.

"What we have gathered from the intelligence report is that because of these strikes, radars at least four places, command and control centres at two places, runways at two places and then three of their hangars in three different stations have been damaged," he said.

In hangars as well as on tarmac, we have signs of one C-130 class of aircraft, one AEW&C (Airborne Early Warning & Control) class of aircraft and at least four to five fighter aircraft, most likely F-16, were hit on the ground, he said.

Sharing details of strikes in the air, the Chief of Air Staff said the IAF has clear evidence of one long-range



strike with more than 300 kms range hitting an AEW&C or SigNit (Signals intelligence) aircraft, along with five high-tech fighters between F-16 and JF-17 class.

"This is what our system tells us," he said.

While there were reports of damages to Pakistan's F-16 jets in a hangar, it was the first time the IAF confirmed hitting the US-origin jet in the air.

The JF-17 is a Chinese jet. The details shared by the IAF Chief takes the total number of aircraft lost by Pakistan to 12 to 13.

On Pakistan's claim of shooting down Indian aircraft, the IAF chief called that narrative as "Manohar Kahaniyan".

"Let them be happy, as they need to show something to their audience to protect their reputation. It doesn't matter to me," he said "If they think they shot down 15 of my jets, let them think about it. I hope they're convinced about it, and they'll cater for 15 less aircraft in my inventory when they come to fight again," he said.

The Chief of Air Staff declined to divulge details of India's losses during

the May 7 to 10 hostilities.

"I won't say anything on what happened, how much damage was done, how it happened, because let them find out," he said.

Air Chief Marshal Singh also questioned the veracity of Pakistan's claim on damages to India.

"Have you seen a single picture where something fell on any of our airbases, something hit us, a hangar was destroyed, or anything like that? We showed so many pictures of their places," he said.

"However, they couldn't show us even a single picture. So, their narrative is 'Manohar Kahaniyan'. Let them be happy," he said.

In response to the Pahalgam terror attack, India launched Operation Sindoor on May 7, targeting terrorist infrastructure in territories controlled by Pakistan.

The strikes triggered four days of intense clashes that ended with an understanding on stopping the military actions on May 10.

On the IAF's ambitious plan to procure 114 Multi-Role Fighter Aircraft (MRFA), Singh said Rafale fighter jet is

among the options and the aircraft was to be the best suited during the evaluation for the Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft (MMRCA) programme.

"Now, whether it is Rafale or something else, it really doesn't matter, but yes, Rafale is easy to absorb," he said.

Over 12 years ago, the Defence Ministry had completed ground work for procurement of a fleet of Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft (MMRCA).

However, the project didn't go through.

In April 2019, the IAF issued an RFI (Request for Information), or initial tender, to acquire 114 Multi-Role Fighter Aircraft (MRFA) at a cost of around USD 18 billion.

It was billed as one of the world's biggest military procurement programmes in recent years.

The Government is now looking at expediting the MRFA project.

The Chief of Air Staff also dropped hints at IAF's interest in procuring additional batches of S-400 surface-to-air missiles.

The missile system proved to be very effective during Operation Sindoor.

"Obviously, that has done good. So, there's a requirement to have more such (systems); there is no limit to numbers that you can buy. Again, I'm keeping quiet on what the plan (is) whether we want to buy more, how much etc," he said. "It has proved to be a good weapon system. We have our own system also being developed. So we will take a call on that," he said.

To a question, the IAF chief said all three services have started working on the 'Sudarshan Chakra' air defence system.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 15 announced the project to develop an indigenous air defence system to protect India's vital military and civilian installations and to deliver a decisive response to any enemy threat.

On Operation Sindoor, Singh also said that the world has to learn a lesson from India on how to start and terminate a conflict at the earliest possible opportunity.

INTERNATIONAL

Death toll from Indonesian school collapse rises to 14 as crews pull more bodies from rubble



SIDOARJO

The death toll from a school collapse in Indonesia rose to 14 on Friday after recovery crews pulled multiple bodies from beneath the rubble. Dozens of students remain unaccounted for and the death toll is expected to rise.

Rescuers initially searched by hand for survivors after the building caved in Monday. But with no more signs of life detected by Thursday

they turned to heavy excavators equipped with jackhammers to help them progress more rapidly.

By Friday evening, they had found nine bodies, bringing the confirmed death toll to 14, with nearly 50 students still unaccounted for.

The structure fell on top of hundreds of people on Monday in a prayer hall at the century-old al-Khoziny Islamic boarding school in Sidoarjo on the eastern side of Indonesia's Java island.

Two of the bodies found Friday were in the prayer hall area and one was found closer to an exit as if he had been attempting to escape, according to Suharyanto, the head of Indonesia's National Disaster Mitigation Agency, who goes by one name as is common in Indonesia.

The students were mostly boys in grades seven to 12, between the ages of 12 and 19. Female students were praying in another part of the building and managed to escape,

survivors said.

Thirteen-year-old Rizalul Qoib, one of 104 survivors, returned to the scene on Friday to look at what was left of his school, and said he was lucky to have gotten out with only a minor gash to his head.

He said, like the others, he had been praying when he heard something like the sound of falling rocks, which got louder and louder.

"I stopped praying and fled when I felt the floor shaking," he recalled. "Suddenly the building collapsed, the debris of the roof fell on my head, my face."

Then the room went dark, but he heard someone shouting "this way, this way" and he followed the voice until he eventually found a narrow gap in the rubble.

"I just followed the light," he said. Many of the others who were injured but escaped or were rescued suffered serious head trauma and broken bones and are still being treated in the hospital.

Authorities have said the building was two stories, but two more levels were being added without a permit. Police said the old building's foundation apparently was unable to support two floors of concrete and collapsed during the pouring process.

School officials have not yet commented.

Crews worked in the hot sun Friday to break up and remove large slabs of concrete, with the smell of decomposing bodies as a grim reminder of what they would find underneath.

Suharyanto, of the National Disaster Mitigation Agency, told reporters at the scene on Friday that the recovery efforts were expected to be complete by the end of Saturday.

Vladimir Putin orders government to soften trade imbalance with India



MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin has expressed enthusiasm for his upcoming visit to India in early December and instructed his government to develop measures to address the trade imbalance caused by India's substantial crude oil imports from Russia.

Speaking at the Valdai Discussion Club, an international forum of security and geopolitical experts from 140 countries, including India, held in the Black Sea resort of Sochi on Thursday evening, Putin underscored the enduring and cordial relationship between Moscow and New Delhi.

"We have never had any problems or interstate tensions with India. Never," the Russian leader stated, highlighting the "special" nature of Russia-India ties dating back to the Soviet era, when India was fighting for its independence.

"In India, they remember this, they know it, and they value it. We appreciate that

India has not forgotten it," he said.

Putin referred to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a "friend" and described their relationship as based on trust and mutual respect. He praised India's nationalist government under Modi, calling the Prime Minister a "balanced, wise," and "nationally oriented" leader.

He further lauded India's firm stance on continuing oil imports from Russia despite pressure from the United States, noting, "The losses faced by India due to punitive US tariffs would be balanced by crude imports from Russia. Plus, it will gain prestige as a sovereign nation."

To help reduce the trade imbalance, Putin proposed increasing Russian imports of Indian agricultural products and pharmaceuticals. "Certain steps can be undertaken from our side for medicinal products, pharmaceuticals," he noted.

While acknowledging the

vast potential for economic cooperation between the two nations, Putin stressed the importance of resolving practical issues in financing, logistics, and payment systems. "We need to solve the whole range of tasks to unlock our opportunities and potential advantages," he remarked.

He also recalled that the declaration of a "special strategic privileged partnership" between Russia and India will soon mark its 15th anniversary, adding, "That's what it really is." "Our foreign ministries work very closely together," Putin said, emphasising that Russia and India regularly coordinate their positions on key international issues.

In a notable gesture towards future cooperation, Putin welcomed a proposal by Dr Arvind Gupta, Director General of New Delhi-based Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF), to create a joint fund for the development of artificial intelligence and other cutting-edge technologies.

Indian Army Successfully Scaled Mount Gorichen



In a remarkable display of courage, endurance, and teamwork, the expedition team of the Indian Army completed the Expedition to Mount Gorichen, showcasing the grit, discipline, and adventurous spirit of the soldiers in the challenging terrain of the Eastern Himalayas.

The expedition was flagged off by the GOC, Spear Head Division, from Likabali Military Station on 20 August 2025. The advance party had moved earlier on 13 August 2025 for reconnaissance, liaison, and coordination. The team thereafter moved through Missamari, Tenga, and Senge, carrying out systematic acclimatisation and preparatory training up to Senge (9,500 feet). This phase ensured that the soldiers were physically conditioned and

operationally ready for the demanding climb ahead. Commencing the climb from Mago Road Head (12,200 feet) on 01 September 2025, the expedition advanced via Merathang Base Camp, Chokarsum, Camp I, and Summit Camp. Braving harsh weather, icy ridges, and thin air, the team steadily moved upwards, establishing the intermediate camps, fixing ropes, and carrying load ferries en route.

On 19 September 2025, the soldiers of Spear Corps successfully scaled Mount Gorichen (21,286 feet / 6,488 m), unfurling the National Flag at the summit — symbolising indomitable courage and pride. The expedition thereafter commenced its return journey via the established camps and road heads and was flagged in by GOC Spear Corps, Lt Gen AS Pendharkar, AVSM, YSM at Dimapur on 03 October 2025.

The successful conduct of the Mount Gorichen Expedition 2025 reaffirms the adventure ethos of the Indian Army, while epitomising physical endurance, mental resilience, and operational excellence in extreme altitudes and unforgiving terrain.

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