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PERSPECTIVE

Only in Gujarat! 186 Jains come together, buy luxury cars worth 149 crore - and save 21 crore in the bargain. When Gujaratis say "business is religion", they mean it.
~ Harsh Goenka, Chairman, RPG Enterprises

HOLIDAY NOTICE
On 20th October, on the auspicious occasion of Diwali and Kali Puja, the KRC TIMES e-copy will not be published. Our next edition will be available on 21st October 2025. We wish all our readers, family members and friends a Happy, Safe & Green Diwali.
Happiness always! ~ Editor

NIT Silchar to illuminate over 1 lakh earthen lamps honouring

SILCHAR

The National Institute of Technology (NIT) Silchar is set to host Deepotsav 2025 preparing to light 1,11,111 earthen lamps across its campus. This year's celebration, themed 'Operation Sindoor', will also hold special emotional significance as the institute will pay a heartfelt tribute to Assam's musical legend and cultural icon, Zubeen Garg, whose artistry and spirit continue to inspire millions.

The sight is expected to be both breathtaking and deeply symbolic, reflecting the shared emotions of remembrance, reverence, and resilience that Zubeen embodied through his music and life. Speaking ahead of the celebration, Prof. Dilip Kumar Baidya, Director of NIT Silchar, said, "We have been celebrating Deepotsav at NIT Silchar for several years, but this time it's being planned on a grand scale. With 1 lakh diyas symbolising purity, devotion, and collective strength, this year's celebration bears a special significance as we pay tributes to the singing legend and heartthrob of Assam, Zubeen Garg."

WHO SAID WHAT



Deeply saddened by the loss of three young Afghan cricketers, Kabeer Agha, Sibghatullah, and Haroon, whose dreams were cut short by a senseless act of violence. The loss of such promising talent is a tragedy not just for Afghanistan but for the entire cricketing world. We stand in solidarity with the Afghanistan Cricket Board and all those mourning this heartbreaking loss.
~ Jay Shah, Chairman, International Cricket Council

Nirmala Sitharaman to visit Assam on Nov 7; CM reviews preparations in Dispur

GUWAHATI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will visit Assam on November 7 and 8, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced, on Saturday. Sarma made the announcement after chairing a high-level preparatory meeting in Dispur to review arrangements for the Union Minister's visit.

Taking to social media, the Chief Minister said he held detailed discussions on Sitharaman's scheduled programmes and events, and directed officials to ensure that all preparations are completed in a timely and coordinated manner.

"Chaired a preparatory meeting in Dispur to review arrangements for the forthcoming visit of Hon'ble Union Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman to Assam on 7th and 8th November. Took detailed stock of the programmes and directed officials for timely coordination," Sarma posted on a micro-blogging website.

This would be Sitharaman's



second visit to the Northeast in four months. Earlier in July, the Finance Minister took a four-day tour of Meghalaya, where she inaugurated the Northeast Conclave and several development projects. Also Read - From lamps in fields to lights in shops, state observes Kati Bihu & Dhanteras together Meanwhile, the Centre on Saturday said that the benefits of recent GST cuts, which came into force from September 22, have been extended to consumers during the festive season, as consumption remains one of the key drivers of economic growth. Addressing the press, Finance Minister Sitharaman said that the recent GST reforms have brought about a positive trend in terms of consumption. "Tax reductions have not only happened for the festive season. These reductions mean more collections, so better fiscal room to give something back. Demand will sustain even after the festive season," the Minister said. She added that the GST dispute resolution mechanism has

taken off very well. Since the implementation of the recent reforms, the National Consumer Helpline logged 3,981 calls concerning GST-related issues as of October 2. Of these, 31 per cent were general queries and 69 per cent were formal grievances sent for further action. Out of the total grievances, 1,992 have been forwarded to the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) for redressal, while 761 were referred in real time to relevant companies for direct resolution. According to the Finance Minister, most complaints are related to a mismatch between consumer understanding of GST cuts and their actual implementation. On sectoral impact, Sitharaman said GST reductions on drugs, medicines, and related equipment are being closely monitored to ensure the benefits are passed on to consumers. "The automobile sector has been very encouraging about GST cuts being passed on, which has led to an increase in sales," she added.

Governor Bhalla Inspects Construction of World's Tallest Rail Bridge in Noney District



IMPHAL

Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla on Saturday inspected the world's highest railway pier bridge being constructed over the Ijei river in Noney district. Railway engineers briefed the Governor on the ongoing railway line construction.

The engineers stated the bridge is expected to be completed within the current financial year. The railway bridge is being constructed along the ongoing

111-km Jiribam-Imphal railway line, one of the crucial connectivity projects in North East India. Also Read - Meghalaya police rescue man accused of practicing 'witchcraft' in Lawmei Advertisement The 141-metre-high bridge which is being constructed at Khumji village in Noney district, 70 km west of Imphal, will surpass the 139-metre Mala-Rijeka viaduct in Montenegro. The bridge which is projected to be 555 metres long, is among the 11 major bridges and 137 minor bridges, out of which five major bridges and 101 minor bridges have already been completed. The Imphal-Jiribam railway line was taken up as national project in 2008. Also Read - Naga Students Federation urges stronger ILP regime enforcement in Nagaland Earlier, on his arrival at the Noney district headquarters, the Governor was received by Deputy Commissioner Dr Sharath Chandra Arroju, SP and other senior officers. The Governor also inspected staff set up by various government departments showcasing agricultural, horticultural and handicraft products.

Bhalla later chaired a meeting at the Deputy Commissioner's office, where he was briefed by the DC, SP and District Level Officers (DLOs). The Deputy Commissioner apprised the Governor of various development initiatives undertaken in the district. He also highlighted key issues related to infrastructure development.

Amit Shah: Infiltration curbed in Assam, but Bengal rolling out 'red carpet' for illegal immigrants

GUWAHATI

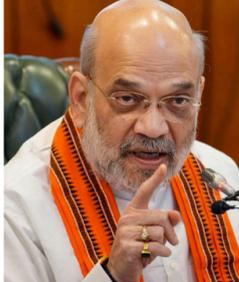
Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday claimed that while infiltration across the India-Bangladesh border has been successfully curbed in Assam, it continues unabated in West Bengal due to what he described as the state government's "red carpet welcome" for illegal immigrants.

Speaking at a media conclave organised by ABP News and Hindustan in Patna, Shah said infiltration has been effectively checked in BJP-ruled Assam but remains a concern in neighbouring West Bengal because of political patronage.

"When people cross over from Bangladesh, the local police and officials in Bengal don't raise an alarm because they are under instructions from above to give infiltrators a red-carpet welcome," Shah said.

He urged West Bengal voters to oust Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in next year's assembly elections, promising that a BJP government would "drive out every infiltrator" from the state.

Backing the Election Commission's ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, Shah said the exercise would help eliminate bogus voters and infiltrators from electoral lists.



"It is surprising that the opposition is objecting to an initiative that aims to clean up the voter rolls. I fully support the SIR, and it will eventually be carried out across the country," he said.

Responding to opposition criticism that infiltration reflects poorly on the Centre's handling of border security, Shah pointed to the difficult terrain along the Bangladesh border.

"Those sitting in Lutyens Delhi don't understand the reality of the border — dense forests, flooding rivers, and washed-away patrol boats make continuous fencing and vigilance impossible," he explained.

Shah also took aim at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, mocking him for "abandoning" his al-

legations of electoral malpractice. "In the past 15 days, Rahul Gandhi hasn't repeated his 'vote theft' charge even once. Perhaps Bihar's feedback made him drop it," Shah said, referring to Gandhi's Voter Adhikar Yatra in the state earlier this year.

Defending the proposed 130th Constitutional Amendment Bill, which provides for the removal of ministers jailed for 30 days or more, Shah rejected claims that it was aimed at destabilising opposition-ruled states.

"I resigned when a case was pending against me and only returned after acquittal. Governments cannot be run from behind bars," he asserted.

Shah also invoked a past incident involving Gandhi, accusing him of disrespecting then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh by tearing up an ordinance designed to protect convicted lawmakers.

The ordinance, he said, was widely believed to have been introduced to benefit RJD leader Lalu Prasad Yadav.

The Home Minister's remarks come amid renewed political sparring over voter list revisions and infiltration issues, with the BJP seeking to sharpen its narrative on national security and illegal immigration ahead of upcoming state elections.

'Colours of Nagaland' Autumn festival to light up Delhi ahead of 26th Hornbill Festival

KOHIMA

The 4th edition of Nagaland's 'Autumn Festival' is set to be held in New Delhi on October 24-25, offering a vibrant preview of the state's iconic Hornbill Festival, officials announced on Saturday.

Organised by Nagaland's Tourism Department with support from the Union Ministry of Tourism, the two-day event will take place at the lawns of Nagaland House in Delhi.

It aims to bring the essence of the Hornbill Festival to the national capital, particularly for those unable to visit Nagaland in person.

The Hornbill Festival, held annually from December 1 to 10 at Kisama Heritage Village, is celebrated as the "Festival of Festivals" and showcases the state's rich tribal heritage, cultural performances, handicrafts, indigenous games, and traditional cuisine.

The Autumn Festival serves as a curtain-raiser to this flagship celebration.

Delhi Tourism, Art and Culture Minister Kapil Mishra will attend the event as the chief guest.

Speaking ahead of the festival, Nagaland's Tourism and Higher Educa-



tion Minister Temjen Imna Along said, "The previous three editions of the Autumn Festival received an overwhelm-

ing response from the people of Delhi. This year, we return with renewed enthusiasm and fresh experiences to

bring the best of Nagaland to the heart of India." The festival will feature an extensive display of Naga brands, artists, and cultural experiences.

Visitors can enjoy traditional Naga cuisines, live handicraft and weaving demonstrations, and exhibitions of textiles, jewellery, and art reimagined for a global audience.

Music will be a major highlight, with performances by prominent artists and bands including Colored Keys, The Mahila Band from India's Got Talent, and The Eastory Project.

Participating departments and brands include Made in Nagaland, Kintem, the Department of Sericulture with its award-winning Eri Silk, the Department of Horticulture showcasing seasonal produce, and the Department of Tribal Affairs.

The first day of the festival will be an exclusive, invitation-only event, while the second day will be open to the public.

Since its launch in 2000, the Hornbill Festival has evolved into a landmark cultural event, and this year marks its 26th edition, promising to continue the tradition of celebrating Nagaland's vibrant heritage on a national stage.

Over 70% of Assam's jail inmates are under-trials, only 29.1 % convicts: MHA

GUWAHATI

A large majority of the inmate population lodged in jails of Assam are 'under-trials' and less than 30 per cent are 'convicts'. There were a total of 10,652 prisoners in the State as on December 31, 2023. Of the total, as many as 7,08 per cent were under-trials, while 29.1 per cent were convicts and the remaining 0.1 per cent were 'detenues', as per latest official data released by the Ministry of Home Affairs. The population of prisoners in Assam consisted of 3,066 convicts and 7,546 under-trials at the end of 2023. Prison inmates lodged in jails are categorized as convicts, under-trials and detenues. A convict is a person found guilty of a crime and sentenced by a court of law and who is serving a sentence in prison. An under-trial is one who is currently on trial in a court of law, while a detenue is any individual held lawfully in custody. In addition, there is also an 'Other' category among prisoners. In Assam, there were 10 detenues as of the last day of 2023. However, there were no prison inmates in the 'Other' category in the State during the year under review. Also Read - Assam sees surge in Hand, Foot and Mouth

diseases: Health experts According to the data, out of the total convicts, 3,020 were male and 76 were female. On the other hand, among the under-trials lodged in the jails of Assam, 7,217 were male and 329 were female. All the 10 detenues were male as on December 31, 2023. With regard to the convicts in Assam, 1,011 were lodged in central jails, 1,982 were lodged in district jails, 18 in sub-jails, 19 in open jails, and 66 were in special jails.

Similarly, among the under-trial prisoners, 3,192 were lodged in central jails, 3,922 in district jails, 39 in sub-jails, and 383 were in special jails of the State on the last day of 2023. All the 10 detenues on that date were lodged in central jails. Of the total number of convicts in the jails of Assam, 593 (or 19.2 per cent) were in the age group of 18-30 years, 1,842 (59.5 per cent) were in the 31-50 age group, and 661 (21.4 per cent) were 51 years of age and above. At the same time, of the under-trials lodged in prisons, 3,402 (or 45.1 per cent) were of 18-30 years age group, 3,312 (43.9 per cent) were of 31-50 age, and another 832 (11 per cent) were in the age group of 51 years or above at the end of 2023.



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THE JOY OF INNOCENCE

'Happiness is not hidden in wealth or status; sometimes, it floats gently in a paper boat on rainwater.'

It was memory in the making – the kind only innocence knows how to write. Today in the market place

I saw a child who had come with his parents. While they were engrossed in conversation, he was busy tapping away on his phone seemingly disconnected, yet entirely aware of his surroundings. When his father called him to come along, the boy, though clearly listening, chose to pretend he had not heard. It was a playful silence, not defiance. As soon as his parents stepped out, he stood up – ready to follow. But unaware of his intent his father returned to call him again. And here, the most innocent game unfolded. On seeing his father approach, the child, quickly sat back down, feigning disinterest. The father, now in on the game, played along pretending to leave once more. In that very moment, the boy leapt up again and ran behind him unable to contain his giggles. What unfolded wasn't just a child's mischief. It was innocence in motion – pure, unfiltered and heartwarming; a simple moment that brought smiles to the faces of everyone around. Through this little game the child reminded me of a powerful truth: Innocence doesn't need grand gestures. It finds joy in the simplest of acts.

Innocence is often misunderstood as naivety, but in truth, it is the art of seeing the world with open eyes and an open heart. It helps us approach life without excessive expectations, material desires, judgment, or without the constant weight of comparisons. This simplicity allows us to truly enjoy life – the small joys, the fleeting moments, and the beauty around us.

As children, our hearts beat with innocence and simplicity – we find delight in the little things. But as we journey through life, we often drift away in the endless pursuit of wealth and possessions, weaving our once-simple lives into tangled webs of complexity. The serenity of being with nature is quietly traded for the constant motion and clamor of modern progress. The simple pleasure of building sandcastles is replaced by the pride of owning luxurious houses. The laughter once shared on walks and in noisy school buses is now confined within the quiet luxury of gleaming cars. The excitement of buying four toffees with a single rupee is overshadowed by the race for infinite money. The simple joy of walking with friends or riding school buses while enjoying snacks from local hawkers is quietly lost to the comfort of luxurious cars, grand vehicles, and expensive meals. The fun of playing in scorching heat or dancing in the rain and the pure laughter of friends without the interruption of phones is overtaken by the silent glow and the cold light of our phones. The moments of entire family once gathered around a single TV or VCR are now fragmented, with each room boasting its own LCD. Somewhere along the way, the carefree laughter shared with friends is overtaken with sophistication and showmanship. The art of living in the moment is made insignificant by the urge to capture everything on a screen. In this chase for comfort and excess, the simple joys that once sparked laughter and wonder—the innocent delights found in trivial, everyday moments—gradually get drowned, slipping quietly out of reach. These contrasts reveal how materialism and complexity slowly erode our ability to appreciate the simple joys that once defined happiness. And in that exchange, we lose the very essence of what it means to truly live and feel alive.

As we grow older, it isn't just materialism that distances us from innocence – it's also the quiet development of certain non-material traits like ego, judgment, discontentment, and unhealthy comparison. As children, we are blissfully unaware of these tendencies; our hearts are open, curious, and unburdened. But with time, the degree of these traits grows with us, subtly shaping our thoughts and behavior. When we repeatedly nurture emotions like envy, pride, or constant judgment, we begin to build invisible walls around our hearts. These walls keep us from fully embracing the little joys and simple wonders that once came naturally to us as we begin to lose the sensitivity to feel these small yet profound pleasures – the very moments that make life truly beautiful. Letting go of these habits allows us to breathe more freely -to find fulfillment in small victories and to notice the everyday beauty that often goes unseen beneath the clutter of our judgments.

Just imagine a life untouched by the uncontrolled material desires and negative traits – wouldn't it be a picture of beautiful simplicity? A life where purity of heart prevails, contentment flows effortlessly, and joy blossoms in the most ordinary moments. It is high time we realize that the small, simple joys that once filled our days – those moments of genuine happiness untouched by extravagance – are gradually fading from our lives. Let us pause to reflect and acknowledge that true happiness has never been about wealth or luxury; it has always been about perspective. A person with little may live a deeply content life, while one surrounded by abundance may still feel a void – for real joy arises from seeing life through an innocent, open-hearted lens, cherishing simple moments, nurturing curiosity, and celebrating everyday wonders.

Let us play, laugh, dance without hesitation, pursue hobbies with excitement, and laugh without restraint. Let you remind yourself that life is meant to be lived deeply, not merely measured by achievements or possessions.

Otherwise, someday later in life, you may find yourselves softly humming a song:
 Yeh daulat bhi le lo, yeh shohrat bhi le lo
 Bhale cheen lo mujhse meri jawani
 Magar mujhko lauta do bachpan ka saawan
 Woh kagaz ki kashti, woh baarish ka paani...
 Kadak dhoop mein apne ghar se nikalna
 Woh chidiya, woh bulbul, woh titli pakadna
 Woh gudiya ki shaadi pe ladna-jhagarna
 Woh jhoolon se gima, woh girke sambhalna
 Woh pital ke chhallo se pyaare se tohfe
 Woh tooti hui chudiyon ki nishani
 Woh kagaz ki kashti, woh baarish ka paani.....
 a melody that so beautifully captures the essence of lost innocence and the simple joys of childhood – and the song continues, evoking memories that remind of a time when life was effortlessly pure and joyful.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

How little can be done under the spirit of fear:

- Florence Nightingale

“THE TIGER OF CHEDDIKULAM” A TRUE STORY OF COURAGE AND FAITH



COL AKS MACHHRAI (RETD)

Dedication
 To my comrades, the brave soldiers of A Company, Jat Regiment, who stood tall in the jungles of Cheddikulam (IPKF) in 1988. Their courage still echoes where silence meets duty.

"Karmanyevadhikaraste ma phaleshukadachana, Makarma-phala-heturburma tesangostvakarmani."
 (You have the right to perform your duty, but not to the fruits thereof.)

Let not the result of action be your motive, nor let your attachment be to inaction.)
 Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, Verse 47.

Introduction
 This story is a solemn and long-overdue tribute to the five jawans of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) who were ambushed and martyred by PLOTE militants on 20 October 1988, during the operational handing/ taking over, near the railway line at Cheddikulam, Northern Sri Lanka.

In the unforgiving jungles where humidity met hostility, a newly inducted company faced its baptism by fire. The ambush was meticulously planned by militants with silent claymores, crossfire from concealed flanks, and sudden radio silence, all meant to cripple the Indian soldiers before they could establish control.

Amid the chaos and loss, one man stood unshaken, Major Kumar, a battle-hardened officer of the Jat Regiment. Renowned for his composure under pressure with mastery of jungle & mountain warfare. He had already proved his mettle in Poonch, in a daring action against the armed enemy forces for which he was recommended for a gallantry award.

What followed was not retaliation, but righteous retribution. Driven by the memory of his fallen men and the sacred vow of a soldier to avenge his brotherhood, Major Kumar led a relentless hunt through the dense forests of Cheddikulam.

Within weeks, guided by instinct and intelligence, he personally planned and led a midnight raid on 11/12 November 1988 at the Musalkutti PLOTE Camp, neutralizing the militant stronghold commanded by the dreaded area commander, Plot Raja.

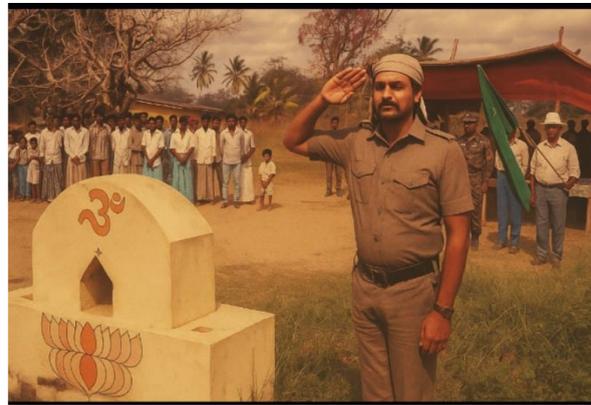
Cheddikulam: October 1988
 In the sweltering humidity of October 1988, Major Kumar arrived at the forward operating camp in Cheddikulam. Deployed amidst intermittent rain and jungle mist, he carried the calm resolve of a man who had seen too many battles within and beyond the battlefield. Sent from Vavuniya, he was tasked with suppressing insurgent activity in the jungle corridors infested with LTTE and PLOTE militants.

A man of few words, Commando-qualified and trained at the CLJW School, Major Kumar led his men, by instinct and example. His silence commanded respect. His men trusted his intuition; his enemies feared his unpredictability.

On the third day of the handing/taking over of charge, a patrol party under his command was ambushed, in a text-book type PLOTE trap. The silent claymore IEDs, crossfire, and lobbing of grenades along the railway track, resulted in the loss of his five men in no time. It was a major setback!

But, unshaken Major Kumar instantly regrouped, chased the attackers through the thorny undergrowth, and tried to turn their trap against them, but success eluded him.

When the General Officer, accompanied by the Commanding Officer, visited the ambush site, he asked only one question:



"How were they ambushed?" Kumar replied calmly, "Sir, the party was busy in handing/ taking over the charge of the area of responsibility along the rail-road opening site."

It's a war zone, sir anything can happen. After reaching here, we had not even fully taken over, when all this happened!"

The General nodded. "Then settle down and get me five dead bodies of militants," he said, and left towards his helicopter as I responded, "Yes Sir!"

Kumar performed the last rites of his fallen men, saluted the pyres, and spent sleepless nights in planning and counting the days to deliver those five bodies as promised.

Allies in the Shadows
 During operations, Maj Kumar caught a young boy 'Chotu' suspected to be an ex-LTTE cadre. Barely nineteen, Chotu had defected PLOTE. Wounded, broken, and bitter, he confessed during interrogation:

"I'll help you, anna. Not for India, not for the Army but for my sister. They killed her when she tried to escape."

Moved by his pain, Kumar saw in the boy not an enemy, but a bridge.

Soon through Chotu, he met Neelam, a local school-teacher who had once worked as an underground worker with the LTTE but later aligned with the ENDLF. She had seen enough of war to hate it.

With Neelam's intelligence and Chotu's knowledge, Kumar discovered the location of a PLOTE militant camp deep in the jungle near the village of Musalkutti. Determined to avenge his fallen comrades, he immediately began planning its destruction.

Operation Vajra: The Last Flame
 The final mission, Operation Vajra, was set to destroy the PLOTE camp at Musalkutti. Maj Kumar discussed everything & planned in detail on the sand- model and then the execution was briefed to his junior leaders. The final reconnaissance was to confirm ingress/ egress routes and positioning of the cut-off groups to block militants' escape or reinforcement.

On the night of 11th/12th October 1988, local intelligence traced the exact location of PLOTE, hideout to a marshy pocket five kilometers north of Cheddikulam.

Neelam's final smuggled message confirming presence of the militants in their hideout and Chotu's precise navigation, worked like fire support for the final assault!

Kumar briefed his men at the last stage with minimal words, maximum faith.

By midnight, they had crawled into position. The monsoon raged, and the stars hid behind smoke.

At 0100 hours, Kumar raised his hand. A single flare went up and the jungle erupted.

The heavy exchange of fire lasted one and half hour. Despite IEDs around the perimeter and heavy opposition, Major Kumar used his company support weapons and moved fearlessly with his brave men and ruthlessly destroyed the camp without any loss.

When the dust settled, an equal number of militants lay silenced as many as the soldiers lost in the earlier ambush.

Retribution was complete. Balance restored. The result: five militants, including Plot Raja, were killed; three surrendered; the camp stood razed to the ground. Eleven kidnapped villagers were rescued without firing a single shot.

"Mission First, Men Always."
 The message was clear: honour restored. The operation revived morale within the formation and shattered the myth of militant invincibility. The jungle began to whisper:
 "Mad.Jat is in Cheddikulam. Even the trees warn each

other before he walks." Among militants, he became a legend Kumar Anna, The Ghost in the Trees.

By mid-November, no group dared venture within two kilometres of his camp an invisible Lakshman Rekha drawn by the discipline and will of his men.

Veeru: The Tiger Cub
 Near the old ambush site, a tiger cub was found orphaned. Kumar fed it once then again. Over a time, a bond formed between the soldier and the beast. The troops named him Veeru.

Some claimed Veeru followed patrols like a shadow, others swore he guarded the perimeter. Even militants began to believe the tiger watched over the Indian soldiers.

The jungle, it seemed, had chosen its side.
The Hanuman Temple
 On a quiet roadside near the camp stood a small Hanuman temple its roof of corrugated iron, a humble sanctum amid the jungle.

Each morning before dawn, Major Kumar would stop there, offer a single flower, and sit silently before stepping into battle.

But it was the dreams that stayed with him symbols that warned before danger: a torch, a leap, a heart aflame. Every time, the signs proved true.

His men whispered in awe:
 "Hanuman speaks to Kumar before the bullet moves."
 For him, it was not superstition it was 'raddih', faith deeper than logic.

Years later, when peace returned, he stood again before that shrine and whispered:
 "Jab kuchnahidikhtatha, aap hi dikhte the."
 (When nothing was visible, only You were.)

Recognition and Legacy
 For his exceptional leadership, indomitable courage, and gallantry in the face of overwhelming odds, Major Kumar was recommended for the Vir Chakra and awarded Mentioned-in-Despatches for his heroic action and distinguished service during Operation Pawan.

This story is not merely an account of a military operation it is a testament to the unyielding resolve of the Indian soldier, the sacred bond between commander and men, and the eternal truth that sacrifice never fades it becomes legend.

He had kept his promise.
 Soon, orders came from HQ, Major Kumar was reassigned to a classified mission with the General Staff.

The day he left, Veeru appeared at the jungle's edge, eyes glowing like embers. Neelam handed him a folded map and a dried jungle leaf. Chotu saluted him not as a subordinate, but as a younger brother.

Kumar simply nodded, climbed into his vehicle, and disappeared into the monsoon.

Neither Veeru nor Major Kumar was ever seen in Cheddikulam again.

Epilogue: The Legend That Walks
 Back in India, Major Kumar rarely spoke of Sri Lanka.

But the legend endured whispered from one generation of soldiers to the next:-
 Of a fearless Major,
 Of a boy who became a brother,
 Of a teacher who healed through silence,
 And of a tiger who guarded sleeping soldiers.

Some locals still say a tiger prowls the forest old now, but watchful guarding memories and sacred ground.

And sometimes, along lonely trails, footprints of a man appear beside those of a tiger.

Heroes are born heroes.
 Their stories are not spoken they are remembered.
 Their words are not words they are truths.
 And their legends?
 They walk, even when they are gone.
 Author's Note



This narrative is based on true events from Operation Pawan, 1988. It stands as a salute to the immortal spirit of Indian soldiers who fought selflessly on foreign soil and to every officer who led from the front, carrying faith as his only armour.

"Where nothing works, prayer works".

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

We are working on an IWE model to free up our lands. Identify | Warn | Evict Not stopping till we reclaim every inch of land which rightfully belongs to us. The relentless drive continues, this time in Garukhuti where we freed up 83 acres of land ~ Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Assam CM



GOLD RUSH, AI BUBBLE, ROACHES AND SCENT OF FEAR

SHANKKAR AIYAR

The swirl of events has brought a confluence of facts and perceptions centre-stage. Global growth is wading through uncertainty. Debt and deficit in G7 economies is at a peak. Trump has upended the global trade order. Yet, stock indices are hovering at their peak in what bulls call 'the everything rally', and gold and silver prices are spiralling to record highs.

Gordon Gekko immortalised the line "Greed is good, greed works, greed is right" in Wall Street. However, greed entails consequences and fear is primordial. John Maynard Keynes said, "The market can remain irrational longer than you can remain solvent." The trillion-dollar rise in valuations has triggered the 'what if' question. It does seem global savers are poised on the brink of hope and fear.

While the perfect crystal ball to divine the future is yet to be crafted, the factors driving emotions merit attention. Here are a few observations—on the signals and the noise—worth pondering over.

Like the catalyst for both the exuberance and the fear is the velocity of rise in valuation. The price of gold has spiralled 62 percent since January 1 to \$4,250; Goldman Sachs' September 30 estimate of gold at \$4,000 in 2026 was breached on October 8. Silver shot

up over 78 percent to \$51.90 an ounce in less than 10 months. In the stock markets, the US benchmark S&P500, which slid to 4,982 following Trump's 'Liberation Day', has since notched new highs to hit 6,664, and the Nasdaq Composite shot up from a low of 15,267 to 22,679. Stocks in Europe and Nikkei225 piggy-backed the global rally despite faltering growth in the UK, France and Germany, and political turmoil in Japan. In India, GDP growth and earnings boosted the Nifty50 to a 52-week high amid heavy selling by foreign investors. It is true that the rise in gold prices represents angst about economic uncertainty.

It is equally true that gold has emerged as an asset class. Gold exchange traded funds have added 634 tonnes just this year. Pension funds and sovereign wealth funds are also big tag buyers. Add the geopolitical feature—central banks have accumulated 1,000 tonnes each year for three years to add to their reserves as an alternative following the freezing of Russia's reserves. The scent of fear has spiralled with demand outstripping supply.

Like, it is noteworthy that the rise in US indices is fuelled by foreign ownership of US stocks, which has touched \$18 trillion, or roughly a third of the market—the highest in the post-war era even though the dollar has slid over 10 percent. US stocks have emerged as a proxy to the dollar and US Treasuries following sanctions and the geopolitical ques-

tions enveloping the role of the dollar as a safe haven. As global savers upped stakes in stocks, systemic risk has gone up. Gita Gopinath, formerly deputy managing director at IMF, believes a shock emanating from the US could impact global demand and growth.

The rise of the 'Magnificent 7' stocks since Liberation Day is striking—the CNBC Mag 7 Index, which slid to 250, is now at 405. Between them, the Mag 7 stocks—Nvidia, Microsoft, Apple, Alphabet, Amazon, Meta and Tesla—are worth over \$20 trillion, or more than the GDP of China. Nvidia, which dominates the chips market and hence the AI story, is up 32 percent; Microsoft, a major investor in OpenAI, is up 22 percent. It is being argued that the rise in AI stocks is debatable. The question ricocheting off Wall Street is where are the revenues? Critics flag the prevalence of 'vibe revenues' in the ecosystem and see parallels with the 1999 dotcom bubble. Interestingly, the biggest gainer in the S&P500 is Robinhood Markets—up over 200 percent to \$129 this calendar year. Like the scepticism about the quality and speed of the rise of stock indices is focused on AI stocks—particularly after the trillion-dollar declarations of consanguineous nature by chip-makers, buyers and infra developers. Indeed, OpenAI chief Sam Altman believes, "AI could be in a bubble." Bridgewater founder Ray Dalio says the AI bubble echoes dotcom excesses. Torsten

Slok of Apollo Global avers that the AI bubble is bigger than the 1990s' dotcom bubble. Sceptics point out that several metrics such as the Buffet Indicator on US market cap as a ratio of GDP and concentration of market leadership signal trouble ahead.

What is troubling investors is that the indices seem to shrug off every live issue that must impact valuations. Mind you, the promise of 'liberation' is yet to be realised and the issue of trade deficits is far from settled. Tariff trackers illustrate the state of negotiations rather eloquently. For instance, the largest deficit is with China and the trade talks there are following a pretend-and-extend or rinse-and-repeat pattern. Last week, Trump threatened to impose additional 100 percent tariffs on China, only to end this week arguing it is not sustainable.

Like the award for the perfect diagnostic analogy for detecting rot must go to Jamie Dimon. The JP Morgan CEO said, "When you see one cockroach, there are probably many more." Dimon deployed the analogy to highlight risks and frauds in regional banks and private credit markets that have been haunted by 'mark-to-myth' valuation questions.

Finally, the contest between hope and fear is best explained in the 'yaksha prashna' in the Mahabharata. The reality of mortality is visible on a daily basis, and yet, people seek to live longer, even immortality.

JD(U) Nagaland lauds historic merger of NPF-NDPP, calls for unified drive for peace and progress

KOHIMA

The Janata Dal (United) (JD(U)) Nagaland unit has welcomed the landmark merger of the Naga People's Front (NPF) with the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP), calling it a transformative moment for Nagaland's political landscape.

The unification is being hailed as a significant step toward lasting peace, development, and collaborative governance in the state.

Ar. Jwenga Seb, Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) and President of JD(U) Nagaland, described the merger as more than just a political alignment, emphasizing that it "embodies the shared vision of unity our region urgently needs." He highlighted the historical context, noting



that the step honors pioneers like Jayaprakash Narayan, whose dedication to peace laid the foundation for the ceasefire between the Naga people and the Indian government.

The JD(U) currently holds a single MLA seat but functions within Na-

galand's opposition-less government, led by Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio of the NDPP-BJP alliance.

This governance model, designed to expedite resolution of the long-standing Indo-Naga political issue, is expected to gain fresh momentum following the merger of the state's two major regional parties.

Seb emphasized that the unification strengthens the state's collaborative politics, stating, "With NDPP and NPF merging their strengths alongside the BJP, we now possess an unparalleled regional coalition poised to accelerate the process of addressing Naga political aspirations. The JD(U) pledges full support to this unified front."

The JD(U) President also called on civil society organisations—includ-

ing the Tuensang United Naga (TUN), Changlang Town Council (CTC), Eastern Naga Peoples Organisation (ENPO), and others—to unite under a single apex body to bolster negotiations and ensure inclusive dialogue.

Highlighting his party's commitment to people-centric governance, Seb said, "Unity is our strength. Together, NDPP, NPF, BJP, JD(U), and supporting parties can transform Nagaland's aspirations into reality, ushering in an era of prosperity, reconciliation, and enduring peace."

The JD(U) Nagaland unit reaffirmed its commitment to collaborative work within the alliance, aiming to ensure that the opposition-less government fulfils its historic mandate: a final, honourable, and inclusive resolution to the Naga political issue.

Tripura's Palatana Plant: NTPC moves to renew Bangladesh power deal



AGARTALA

Vidyut Vyapar Nigam Ltd (NVVN) has begun the process to renew its power supply agreement with Bangladesh from Tripura's Palatana plant, officials confirmed on October 18.

The current agreement between Tripura State Electricity Corporation Ltd (TSECL) and the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) to supply 100 MW of power is set to expire in March 2026.

Officials from NVVN met with TSECL Managing Director Deba-

sh Bose in New Delhi on Thursday to discuss the renewal. "We are ready to renew the agreement with BPDB," Bose told PTI, adding that TSECL currently supplies an average of 85 MW to Bangladesh daily, which is expected to increase to 100 MW from November.

Bose said that the next step involves NVVN holding discussions with Bangladesh authorities. "If they agree, we will continue to supply power to the neighbouring country," he added.

When asked about potential power exports to Nepal, Bose noted that supplying power to Bangladesh is currently more viable and that the focus remains on extending the existing agreement.

The Palatana plant, Tripura's key power station, continues to play a crucial role in regional energy cooperation, strengthening India's electricity exports to neighbouring countries.

'Maya' lives on: The loyal dog at Zubeen's memorial site is safe and looked after by locals

GUWAHATI

As the calendar marks one month since Assam's voice of love and rebellion, Zubeen Garg, departed, an unsettling piece of news briefly rippled through social media, claims that 'Maya', the faithful dog known for keeping vigil at Zubeen Kshetra, had passed away. Fortunately, the reports were false.

Maya, lovingly named by Zubeen's wife, Garima Saikia Garg, remains very much alive and continues to be cared for by a devoted local resident. For those who have visited Zubeen Kshetra in Sonapur over the past month, Maya has become more than just a pet, she is a living symbol of loyalty, grief, and remembrance, quietly embodying the spirit of those who loved the late singer.

Videos recently shared by Maya's caretakers confirm that she is safe, healthy, and well looked after, providing relief to countless fans who feared the loss of the dog who had silently stood guard over Zubeen's resting place. Throughout the month-long memorial period, Maya's presence has comforted visitors, her calm demeanor a quiet companion to their grief. Garima Saikia Garg herself has often spoken fondly of Maya, reflecting the deep bond between the singer's family, his admirers, and this devoted animal. Local authorities and residents have appealed to the media and the public to verify facts before reporting on sensitive matters like this, underscoring the need for care and responsibility when news has the potential to stir emotions or distress among fans. In an age of instant updates and viral posts, Maya's story is a gentle reminder that some bonds, between humans and their loyal companions, endure, offering solace even in moments of sorrow.

Arunachal's Kaimoi village in Longding emerges as hidden tourism gem amid insurgent-era challenges

ITANAGAR

Nestled amidst the lush green hills of eastern Arunachal Pradesh, Kaimoi village in Longding district is gradually transforming from an obscure settlement into a rising tourist destination. Longding, part of the Tirap-Changlang-Longding (TCL) corridor and historically affected by insurgent activity, has long been under the purview of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA). Yet, Kaimoi's serene natural beauty and vibrant local culture are now bringing it into the limelight.

On September 27, coinciding with World Tourism Day, the village was awarded the prestigious Best Tourism Village-2025 Award by the state tourism department. The accolade has energized local residents and leadership, led by the young and dynamic Zila Parishad Member Rajiv Wangsa, who

envision taking Kaimoi to national and international prominence as a model of eco-cultural tourism.

A Gram Sabha convened under the chairmanship of Gangan Pansa, GPC of Kaimoi village, discussed actionable plans for preparing the village to welcome tourists. Key topics included the formation of village-level tourism development committees, women's cultural groups, construction of a welcome gate, installation of signages at Kanubari Checkpoint, Dibrugarh Airport, and Longding Town, development of homestays, trekking routes for bird-watching, and promotion of eco-friendly materials like bamboo cups and mugs.

Tanyup Kopak, District Tourism Officer of Longding, highlighted the importance of preserving the Wancho tribe's heritage and ensuring cultural sustainability alongside tourism development.

Assam Congress demands public release of Zubeen's autopsy, Coroner's report; writes to S'pore PM

GUWAHATI

Leader of the Opposition in the Assam Legislative Assembly, Debabrata Saikia, has written an official letter to Singapore Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, urging a transparent and independent coroner's inquiry into the death of renowned Assamese singer and cultural icon Zubeen Garg, who passed away in Singapore on September 19, 2025.

In the letter dated October 18, 2025, Saikia described the circumstances surrounding Garg's death as "deeply concerning" and called for urgent clarification from the Singapore government. He highlighted that Garg had travelled to Singapore as the Cultural Brand Ambassador for the North East India Festival — an event co-hosted by the Indian High Commission in Singapore to mark 60 years of India-Singapore diplomatic relations.

Saikia pointed out that Garg's physician had earlier advised him to avoid water-related activities due



to a diagnosed seizure condition, information that was reportedly known to his manager, accompanist, and the event organisers. Despite this, he alleged, the singer's companions arranged a private yacht party where water activities were conducted "without medical supervision and with inadequate flotation support."

Citing witness accounts and video evidence suggesting Garg removed his life vest after complaining of discomfort, Saikia alleged gross negligence and a breach of duty of care, claiming that critical medical information was concealed from the yacht company, crew, and emergency responders.

The Opposition leader further stated that the same individuals may have misled the Singapore Police Force by omitting key facts about Garg's health condition, which could have prematurely led to the incident being treated as an accident.

In his appeal, Saikia requested the Singapore government to ensure: A full and independent coroner's inquiry under the Coroners Act, 2010, covering all medical, forensic, and eyewitness evidence.

Evidence-sharing and cooperation between the Singapore Police, the Indian High Commission in Singapore, and Assam Police's Special Investigation Team (SIT).

Public release of the coroner's findings and autopsy reports to uphold transparency and public confidence.

Quoting the Coroners Act, Saikia noted that Garg's death clearly qualifies as a "reportable death," given the "violent or unnatural" circumstances. He also urged that Garg's wife, Garima Saikia

Garg, be allowed to participate as a "properly interested person" in the inquiry proceedings.

Emphasising the emotional gravity of the loss, Saikia wrote, "Zubeen Garg was not merely a celebrated artist but a socio-cultural leader and a cultural envoy of Assam and Northeast India. His tragic passing during an event celebrating India-Singapore friendship brings a vital diplomatic dimension that demands full accountability and transparency."

He concluded by expressing confidence that Prime Minister Lawrence Wong's leadership would ensure a fair and thorough probe, reaffirming Singapore's reputation for integrity and the rule of law.

The letter also enclosed three annexures, including medical details, a previous letter to the Indian High Commissioner in Singapore dated September 22, and news reports highlighting public reactions and protests in Assam following the singer's death.

"Education must spark creativity, not just confined to learning": Assam Governor on the future of learning

GUWAHATI

In an era where knowledge alone is no longer enough, Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya delivered a message on the future of education, urging a shift from rote learning to a system that nurtures creativity, critical thinking, and real-world problem-solving skills.

Speaking at the valedictory session of the North East Education Conclave 2025 on Saturday, Acharya emphasized that education should be a gateway to innovation, curiosity, and holistic development, rather than merely a theoretical exercise. "Education must awaken the mind, challenge assumptions, and inspire creativity," he said, underlining the vision behind India's National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 as a timely framework to prepare students for the dynamic challenges



of today's world.

The conclave, organised by Pragjyotspur University on the occasion of its foundation day,

served as a vibrant platform for educationists, policy thinkers, and academic stakeholders from across the northeast to deliberate on trans-

formative educational strategies. The discussions revolved around integrating creative pedagogies, fostering interdisciplinary learning, and empowering students to become critical thinkers and responsible citizens.

Governor Acharya's address resonated deeply with attendees, highlighting that education is not just about textbooks and examinations, but about nurturing minds capable of imagination, empathy, and innovation. In his words, "A nation that invests in creative education invests in its own future."

As the conclave concluded, a shared commitment emerged among educators and policymakers to implement the NEP's vision in ways that will transform classrooms into incubators of ideas, and students into the innovators and leaders of tomorrow.

121 people die of TB in Mizoram since January, health department reports



AIZAWL

At least 121 people have died of tuberculosis (TB) in Mizoram since January this year, while 1,870 others have been diagnosed with the disease between January 1 and October 10, according to the state health department.

Data from the Public Health and Family Welfare Department revealed that 97,647 blood samples were tested during this period. Among the 1,870 diagnosed cases, 744 were reported to be suffering from tuberculosis, and a total of 121 patients were diagnosed with multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB). Additionally, 211 patients were found to be suffering from both TB and HIV.

The data showed that 82%

of the patients had been successfully treated, while most of the affected were children and adolescents, with 1,761 cases aged 14 years and younger and 104 below 14 years.

Health officials noted a gradual increase in both the fatality rate and the number of TB patients compared to previous years. In 2020, 31 people died of TB, and the number rose to 46 in 2021, 87 in 2022, and 119 in 2023. Over the past five years, at least 540 people have lost their lives due to TB in Mizoram.

More than 11,000 people have been diagnosed with TB in the state over the last five years, with the highest number of cases recorded in 2020 (2,307), followed by 2,115 in 2023. Health officials also stated that more than 100 people have registered to either donate TB patients or contribute through the online platform "Nikshay" under the Pradhan Mantri TB Mukta Bharat Abhiyan.

Launched by President Droupadi Murmu in September 2022, the Pradhan Mantri TB Mukta Bharat Abhiyan aims to increase community involvement in achieving India's commitment to eliminate TB by 2025, ahead of the global target of 2030.

Assam sees surge in Hand, Foot and Mouth diseases: Health experts

GUWAHATI

A spurt in cases of Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (HFMD) — a childhood viral infection — has been reported in the state, triggering an alarm among parents. The actual number of cases is yet to be ascertained due to lack of laboratory tests, but doctors, particularly in Guwahati, have confirmed a spike in HFMD cases following clinical diagnosis of affected children. Paediatricians in Dibrugarh have also reported multiple cases of late.

Dr Yasin Ali of Health City Hospital in Guwahati said he has been getting cases for more than a month now. "This week, there is a slight drop. HFMD, caused by Coxsackie virus, is highly contagious and spreads through direct contact with an infected person's bodily fluids like saliva, mucus, blister fluid, and stool, as well as airborne droplets from coughing or sneezing. The affected child needs to be isolated for some days, and medication is required in some cases," Dr Ali said.

Dr Rahul Verma of Guwahati, who has been getting patients almost every



day, said affected children have fever, sometimes accompanied by headache, body ache, and there are blisters in the mouth, hand and foot. Also Read - Displaced Laika Bangoon families seek CM's action on resettlement before 2026 polls "Sometimes, blisters may be seen on the back, the scapula, knee joint, and elbow. It's commonly seen in preschool and school going children and it spreads through close contacts. Parents should not send their children to school in case they see such symptoms. This will help in preventing the spread," he said.

"But it is a very mild illness and nothing to be afraid of. Many parents, however, assume it to be chicken pox or measles and they keep the children at home and do not seek medical advice, which they should not do," Dr Verma said. Pratiksha Hospital too has been getting lots of cases and

some parents also reported second infection in their children, which is more painful. According to an earlier study by the Regional Virus Research Diagnostic Laboratory of ICMR-Regional Medical Research Centre and Paediatrics Department of Assam Medical College and Hospital, the first outbreak of hand, foot and mouth disease in India was reported from Calicut in 2004. After 3 years, the first large-scale outbreak occurred in 2007 in Kolkata and the surrounding areas of West Bengal. Since then, many small-scale outbreaks have been repeatedly reported from different places based on clinical description. The first laboratory-confirmed hand, foot and mouth disease outbreak was reported in Assam in 2014. Although no cases of neurological or pulmonary manifestations were detected in the initial years and all the cases

improved spontaneously without any requirement for hospitalization, the spread of the disease over larger parts of the country reminds the pre-epidemic periods of China and Taiwan. "This necessitates awareness as all previous cases of severe outbreaks worldwide followed many years of milder attacks, intermittent periods of quiescence and progressively larger areas of involvement.

The reported hand, foot and mouth disease outbreak in Northeast India, which is in close geographical proximity to China and other Southeast Asian countries with previous incidence of fatal outbreaks, sends an alert that the disease has now acquired the potentiality to affect larger parts of the country," the study had noted. The study had also observed that CV-A6 serotype identified in Tezpur district shares 98-99 per cent nucleotide homology with CV-A6 strain of China, which caused a large outbreak of hand, foot and mouth disease in 2012 and CV-A6 in Finland in 2008. Unfortunately, awareness among the primary level doctors or medical staff regarding the disease is limited. Health awareness among school teachers, school authorities, daycare centers about the contagious nature of hand, foot and mouth disease would help in limiting the outbreak of the disease, the researchers had said.

Quest!

A tortoise named Adwaita lived from 1750-2006.

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SC raps High Courts over 8 lakh pending execution pleas



NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has recently directed the High Courts to work out an effective mechanism for prompt disposal of over 8 lakh execution petitions pending in various lower courts across the country.

Expressing its disappointment, a bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and Pankaj Mithal, in its October 16 order, said, "The statistics which we have received are highly disappointing. The figures of the pendency of the execution petitions across the country are alarming. As on date, 8,82,578 execution petitions are pending nationwide."

While the court acknowledged that in the last six months, 3,38,685 execution petitions have been disposed of, it emphasised that over 8 lakh remain to be disposed of quickly. The court made these observations after going through a consolidated data from various High Courts and District Courts over the status of execution plea

pendency and disposal. In its 10-page order, the court requested all the HCs to evolve some procedure and guide their respective district judiciaries in effective and expeditious disposal of the execution petitions that are pending. The court scheduled the matter for further hearing to April 10, 2026, and has sought a comprehensive data from all the HCs regarding the status of execution petitions by that date.

The SC further noted that unfortunately, the Karnataka HC has failed to furnish it with the necessary data. "The Registry shall once again give a reminder to the High Court of Karnataka to furnish the necessary data as regards the disposal of the execution petitions in last six months and the pendency of it as on date."

In its order, the top court criticised the HCs for extensive number of pending execution petitions, extending the time for compliance by another six months and asked all HCs to not only

monitor their district judiciary but also evolve procedures for effective enforcement of decrees.

According to the data furnished by various HCs before the top court, Maharashtra has the highest number of cases, exceeding more than 3.4 lakh, while Sikkim has the least — only 61. The data further revealed that Tamil Nadu followed closely with over 86,000 pending cases, while Kerala has nearly 83,000. In addition, Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh each have more than 68,000 and over 27,000 pending cases, respectively.

The SC, in its order, further observed that if it takes years to execute a decree, after it has been passed, then it makes no sense and would be nothing short of travesty of justice.

Earlier this year, while deciding a 40-year-old property dispute case, the SC had directed all the HCs to collect data from their district judiciaries and ensure that pending execution petitions are decided within six months.

The apex court said that by its Judgment and order of March 6, 2025 rendered in the case of Periyammal (Dead) versus Rajamani, it had issued directions and ordered all the HCs to call for the necessary information with regard to pendency of the execution petitions.

Rajnath Singh says 'every inch of Pakistan' in BrahMos range, calls Operation Sindoor 'just a trailer'

LUCKNOW

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday asserted that "every inch of Pakistan's territory" lies within the range of the BrahMos missile, adding that what transpired during Operation Sindoor was "just a trailer."

Speaking after flagging off the first batch of BrahMos missiles manufactured at the new BrahMos Aerospace facility in Lucknow, Singh said the missile system had moved far beyond the trial stage and now stands as the strongest practical proof of India's national security.

"BrahMos proved its effectiveness during Operation Sindoor. Victory has become our habit. What happened during that operation was just a trailer, and even that made Pakistan realise what India is capable of. If India could give birth to Pakistan, I need not say what else it can do," the Defence Minister stated.

He described BrahMos as a key pillar of the armed forces and a symbol of India's capability to turn its strategic ambitions into reality.

Singh also addressed challenges arising from disruptions in the global supply chain, especially spare parts, which he said were increasingly being used as "weapons" by supplier countries. "We are overcoming these challenges," he affirmed.

The BrahMos Aerospace facility in Sarojini Nagar, Lucknow, which was inaugurated on May 11, is equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure for missile integration, testing, and quality assurance. The first batch of missiles from this facility marks a significant milestone for the Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor (UPDIC) and India's push for self-reliance in defence manufacturing.

"This facility will manufacture around 100 missiles every year, supplying them to the Army, Navy, and Air Force," Singh said. "Built on



approximately 200 acres at a cost of about Rs 380 crore, it will also generate employment for hundreds of people."

Rajnath Singh revealed that the BrahMos team had signed contracts worth approximately Rs 4,000 crore with two countries in the past month. He noted that, in the coming years, experts from around the world would visit Lucknow, transforming the city into a hub of knowledge and leadership in defence technology.

"The turnover of the Lucknow unit is expected to reach Rs 3,000 crore from the next financial year, with GST collections around Rs 500 crore," he added.

Rajnath Singh emphasised that India is now at a stage where it is not only strengthening its national security but also proving to the world that it is a credible partner in defence and technology.

He highlighted that achievements like the BrahMos missile

system have shown that "Made in India" is no longer just a slogan but a globally recognised brand. "Whether it's the export of BrahMos to the Philippines or future cooperation with other countries, India is now playing the role of a giver, not just a taker. This is the true essence of Aatmanirbhar Bharat—the vision with which the Modi government began its journey in 2014," Singh said.

He added that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has envisioned an India that is fully developed, self-reliant, and ready to lead the world by 2047, with the defence sector playing a decisive role in achieving that goal.

Further, Rajnath Singh called for a clear project roadmap to integrate small entrepreneurs into the defence ecosystem.

"The Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor will only achieve full success when small industries grow alongside large

companies," he said. "I am confident that UP will not only become a manufacturing hub in the future but also emerge as a new epicentre of innovation and employment for entrepreneurs—both small and large." Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, in his address, described BrahMos as a missile of Aatmanirbharta (self-reliance), fulfilling the nation's defence needs. He expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh for enabling Lucknow to play a central role in India's journey towards self-reliance in defence manufacturing.

Yogi Adityanath said the missiles produced in Lucknow represent an assurance of safety and prosperity for the people of India. He also highlighted progress across all six nodes of the UP Defence Industrial Corridor, noting that over 15,000 youth had gained employment through the initiative.

INTERNATIONAL

China's ruling Communist Party meets to map out plans for the next five years

HONG KONG

One of China's most important meetings begins Monday, as leader Xi Jinping and other ruling Communist Party elites gather in Beijing to map out the goals for the next five years.

The closed-door gathering—known as the fourth plenum—is expected to last four days and will discuss and put the final touches on China's next five-year plan, a blueprint for 2026-2030.

The leaders are meeting at a time of heightened trade tensions between Washington and Beijing and just ahead of a possible meeting between Xi and US President Donald Trump during a regional summit later this month.

The fourth plenum refers to the fourth plenary session, out of typically a total of seven sessions during the five-year term of the Chinese Communist Party's central committee. Xi and about 370 members of the central committee are expected to attend.

The gathering also may coincide with personnel changes. Since it's held behind closed doors, details may come days or weeks later.

Such gatherings are meant to help unite officials and the public behind the party's agenda.

The full five-year plan for 2026-2030 and specifics will likely not be released until the annual session of the National People's Congress is held in March.

But there is little reason to expect a radical shift away from the format and messaging style of previous five-year plans, Lynn Song, chief economist for Greater China at ING Bank, said in an interview.

The world's second-largest economy is forecast to expand by 4.8% this year, according to the World Bank, a figure close to China's official target of about 5% growth. China faces challenges from



the trade war that has intensified since Trump took office, but also from chronic domestic problems that are dragging on growth.

Longstanding efforts to boost consumer spending and investment by businesses and to curb excess capacity in many industries top the list of economic priorities. But Xi also will likely highlight China's push to become the global leader in many technologies, such as artificial intelligence.

China's pursuit of technological "self-sufficiency," weaning its industries of their reliance on advanced computer chips from the US, has sped up as Trump tightens American export control measures and raises tariffs. That could result in more spending on advanced technology, said Ning Zhang, a senior China economist at UBS.

One key question is whether there will be any meaningful shift in the leadership's approach to boosting consumption, said Leah Fahy, a China economist at

Capital Economics. The government has adopted incremental policy moves—such as increased government subsidies for childcare, consumer loans, and trade-in programs for appliances and electric vehicles.

Boosting consumption, which would drive borrowing and demand, is "much more important than before" but consumer confidence has been undermined by the bursting of China's property bubble several years ago, Zhang explained.

Economists say bolder moves are needed to make a significant difference.

Price wars in the auto industry are an example of the risks of the ferocious competition that results from overcapacity that afflicts many Chinese industries. China's exports—including to Southeast Asia and Africa—have surged as companies seek markets beyond its borders, adding to friction with the United States and other trading partners.

Since the massive disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic, China has struggled

to reignite faster economic growth. Its property sector downturn has complicated that effort, causing massive layoffs and leading families to cut back on spending as house prices have fallen.

Wendy Leuterer, a professor of economics and trade at Indiana University, noted in a recent report that China is still stinting on spending on areas that might help to balance the economy and encourage more consumer spending, such as health care, education and child and elder care.

"Overall, China's leaders still appear willing to accept economic costs, including resource misallocation and failures, in order to pursue self-sufficiency and technological leadership in strategically important industries and strengthen overall national power," she wrote.

While it faces increasing friction with the US and other trading partners, China is also running up against demographic pressures, as its population of 1.4 billion begins to shrink and age more rapidly. The unemployment rate for young workers aged 16-24 is nearly 19%, according to official data, impinging on their potential contributions to the economy.

The Chinese leadership has set a goal of doubling the size of China's economy in 2020 by 2035, and like any other government, "still cares (about) growth and is still trying to get richer," said Zhang of UBS.

He estimates that keeping the economy growing at a robust 4% to 5% pace in the next decade will likely be "challenging."

But it's imperative to show it is striving for such ambitious goals, to demonstrate the ruling party's capacity to keep delivering a better quality of life—its chief claim to its legitimacy. "For China's leadership, what do they care about? Stability, legitimacy, and also ongoing support," he said.

'No Kings' protests against Trump bring a street party vibe to American cities

WASHINGTON

Large crowds of protesters marched and rallied in cities across the US Saturday for "No Kings" demonstrations decrying what participants see as the government's swift drift into authoritarianism under US President Donald Trump. People carrying signs with slogans such as "Nothing is more patriotic than protesting" or "Resist Fascism" packed into New York City's Times Square and rallied by the thousands in parks in Boston, Atlanta and Chicago. Demonstrators marched through Washington and downtown Los Angeles and picketed outside capitols in several Republican-led states, a courthouse in Billings, Montana, and at hundreds of smaller public spaces.

Trump's Republican Party disparaged the demonstrations as "Hate America" rallies, but in many places the events looked more like a street party. There were marching bands, huge banners with the US Constitution's "We The People" preamble that people could sign, and demonstrators wearing inflatable costumes, particularly frogs, which have emerged as a sign of resistance in Portland, Oregon.

It was the third mass mobilization since Trump's return to the White House and came against the backdrop of a government shutdown that not only has closed federal programs and services but is testing the core balance of power, as an aggressive executive confronts Congress and the courts in ways that protest organizers warn are a slide toward authoritarianism.

In Washington, Iraq War Marine veteran Shawn Howard said he had never participated in a protest before but was motivated to show up because of what he sees as the Trump administration's "disregard for the law." He said immigration detentions without due process and deployments of troops in US cities are "un-Ameri-

can" and alarming signs of eroding democracy.

"I fought for freedom and against this kind of extremism abroad," said Howard, who added that he also worked at the CIA for 20 years on counter-extremism operations. "And now I see a moment in America where we have extremists everywhere who are, in my opinion, pushing us to some kind of civil conflict." Trump, meanwhile, was spending the weekend at his Mar-a-Lago home in Florida. "They say they're referring to me as a king. I'm not a king," the president said in a Fox News interview that aired early Friday, before he departed for a \$1 million-per-plate MAGA Inc. fundraiser at his club.

A Trump campaign social media account mocked the protests by posting a computer-generated video of the president clothed like a monarch, wearing a crown and waving from a balcony. In San Francisco hundreds of people spelled out "No King!" and other phrases with their bodies on Ocean Beach. Hayley Wingard, who was dressed as the Statue of Liberty, said she too had never been to a protest before.

Only recently she began to view Trump as a "dictator." "I was actually OK with everything until I found that the military invasion in Los Angeles and Chicago and Portland—Portland bothered me the most, because I'm from Portland, and I don't want the military in my city. That's scary," Wingard said.

Pulling a giant inflatable Donald Trump protesters march in the streets during a "No Kings" protest Saturday, Oct. 18, 2025, in Los Angeles.

Tens of thousands of people gathered in Portland for a peaceful demonstration downtown. Later in the day, tensions grew as a few hundred protesters and counterprotesters showed up at a US Immigration and Customs enforcement building, with federal

agents at times firing tear gas to disperse the crowd and city police threatening to make arrests if demonstrators blocked streets.

The building has been the site of mostly small nightly protests since June—the reason the Trump administration has cited for trying to deploy National Guard troops in Portland, which a federal judge has at least temporarily blocked. About 3,500 people gathered in Salt Lake City outside the Utah State Capitol to share messages of hope and healing after a protester was fatally shot during the city's first "No Kings" march in June.

And more than 1,500 people gathered in Birmingham, Alabama, evoking and the city's history of protests and the critical role it played in the Civil Rights Movement two generations ago.

"It just feels like we're living in an America that I don't recognize," said Jessica Yother, a mother of four. She and other protesters said they felt camaraderie by gathering in a state where Trump won nearly 65% of the vote last November.

"Big rallies like this give confidence to people who have been sitting on the sidelines but are ready to speak up," Democratic US Sen. Chris Murphy said in an interview with The Associated Press.

While protests earlier this year—against Elon Musk's cuts and Trump's military parade—drew crowds, organizers say this one is uniting the opposition. Top Democrats such as Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and Independent Sen. Bernie Sanders are joining what organizers view as an antidote to Trump's actions, from the administration's clampdown on free speech to its military-style immigration raids.

More than 2,600 rallies were planned Saturday, organizers said. The national march against Trump and Musk this spring had 1,300 registered locations, while the first "No Kings" day in June registered 2,100.

World Meetei Council Appeals to Prime Minister Modi Over Indian Army's Role in Manipur Crisis

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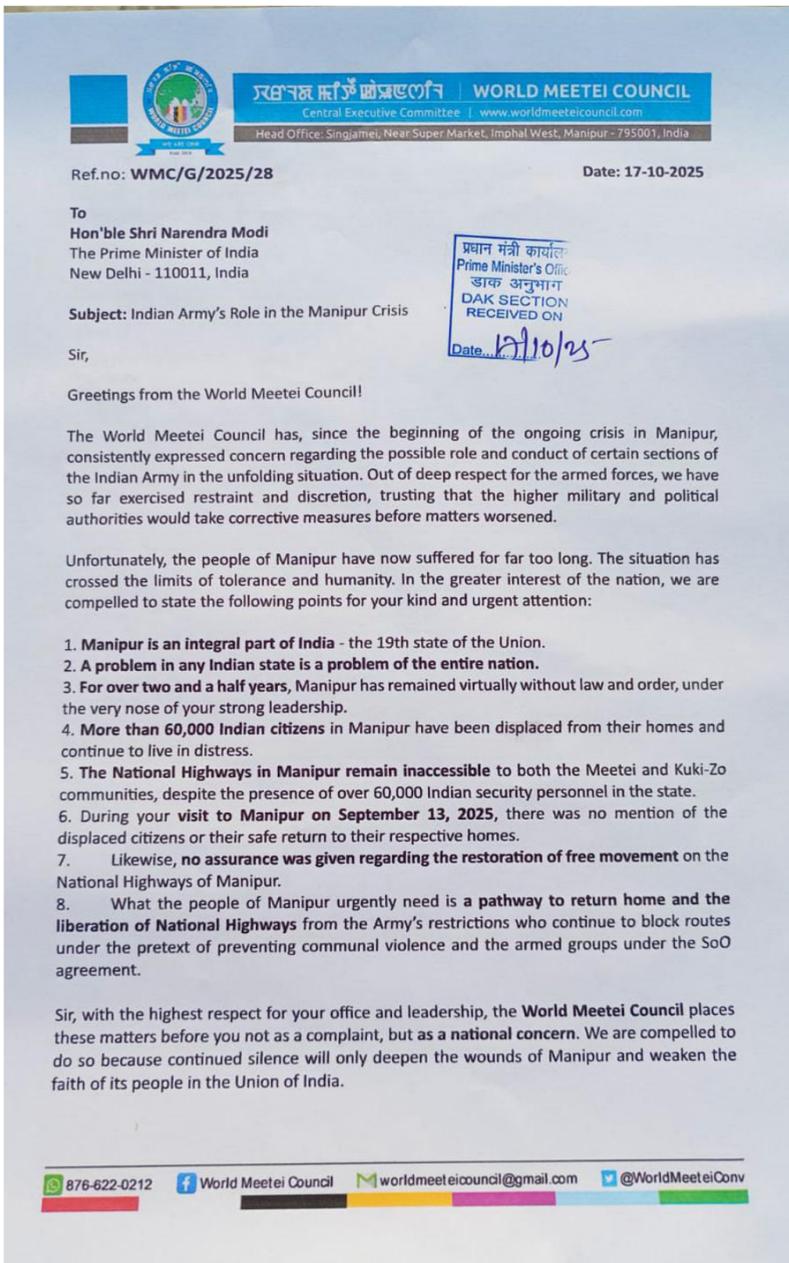
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its appeal is “not a complaint but a national concern,” warning that continued silence would “deepen the wounds of Manipur and weaken the faith of its people in the Union of India.” Calling for a “positive and decisive response” from the Prime Minister, the WMC urged immediate steps to restore peace and ensure dignity, justice, and security for all citizens of

return of displaced citizens or the reopening of highways. 6. The Army continues to restrict highway movement “under the pretext of preventing communal violence,” a situation the WMC says has worsened the humanitarian crisis. The Council stressed that

Manipur. The letter marks one of the strongest public appeals yet from a Meetei civil organization, reflecting growing frustration over the prolonged unrest and the perceived inaction of both the state and central authorities.

IMPHAL

The World Meetei Council (WMC) has written an open letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, expressing deep concern over what it described as the “possible role and conduct” of certain sections of the Indian Army in the ongoing Manipur crisis.

Addressed to the Prime Minister and tagged to the official handles of @PMOIndia and @HQ_IDS_India, the letter highlights what the organization calls the “prolonged suffering” of the people of Manipur and urges the Central Government to take immediate corrective action in the interest of national unity and justice.

In the letter, the WMC stated that while it has maintained restraint out of respect

Always be hungry for a better life.

for the armed forces, the situation has now “crossed the limits of tolerance and humanity.” The Council urged the Prime Minister to directly intervene to restore peace, law, and normalcy in the state.

The WMC outlined eight key points for the Prime Minister's attention, emphasizing that:

1. Manipur is an integral part of India and any unrest in the state must be treated as a national concern.
2. The state has remained “virtually without law and order” for over two and a half years despite strong central leadership.
3. Over 60,000 Indian citizens have been displaced and continue to live in distress.
4. National Highways remain inaccessible to both the Meetei and Kuki-Zo communities despite the deployment of around 60,000 security personnel.
5. During the Prime Minister's visit to Manipur on September 13, 2025, no assurances were made regarding the safe

DSEU VC Prof. Ashok Kumar Nagawat hails North East Integration Rally as a catalyst for regional growth



KRC FOUNDATION
North East Integration Rally
Peace | Progress | Prosperity
2026

Prof. Ashok Kumar Nagawat
Vice Chancellor
DELHI SKILL AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP UNIVERSITY



Extends Best Wishes to NEIR 2026

NEW DELHI

Professor Ashok Kumar Nagawat, Vice-Chancellor of Delhi Skill and Entrepreneurship University (DSEU), has praised the North East Integration Rally (NEIR) as a powerful initiative to strengthen unity, skill development, and entrepreneurship across the Northeastern region.

Congratulating the organisers, Prof. Nagawat extended his best wishes for the rally's success and highlighted the value of collective action in driving progress. "Events like this speak of unity and shared purpose. True progress comes from skilled youth and a united spirit," he said.

He added that DSEU is proud to associate with NEIR, describing it as "a dynamic platform to accelerate skill development and entrepreneurial growth in the Northeastern states." Prof.

Nagawat, a noted academic leader, theoretical physicist, and higher education reformer with over four decades of experience, stressed that collaborations like this can become catalysts for long-term regional transformation.

On October 13, a team from NEIR met Prof. Nagawat and senior officials of DSEU at the university's campus in New Delhi. During the meeting, Biswadeep Gupta, Founder and Managing Trustee of KRC Foundation, presented the vision and framework of NEIR, focusing on its flagship campaign "5E for Success" — Education, Employment, Employability, Entrepreneurship, and Emotional Intelligence.

Gupta explained that the KRC Foundation operates on the principle of "Connecting the unconnected", aiming to bridge social, economic, and developmental gaps through

collaborative action. Following the discussion, both organisations agreed to collaborate formally through a Memorandum

of Understanding (MoU). As part of the partnership, DSEU will expand its work and presence in the North-eastern region, while KRC Foundation will integrate DSEU's skill development and entrepreneurship initiatives into its projects once the MoU is executed.

entrepreneurial capacity, and fostering sustainable growth across the Northeast through education and skill-based initiatives.



Gupta, who led the delegation under the guidance of Prof. (Dr.) Sukamal Deb, Adviser, NEIR, and A.L. Hek, MLA Meghalaya and Patron of NEIR, described the association as a major milestone. "This collaboration aligns with the shared goals of both institutions and will play a crucial role in advancing





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

10 Jan
Barak Festival: Peace Progress & Prosperity



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.



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'.
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11 JAN
5E For Success Conclave
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 Schools, Educational Institutions and corporate houses can join the Conclave as sponsors.
 Quiz and Group Discussion for Barak valley Schools & Colleges, Extension, Seminar, Public Speaking, College.
 In the online event, various students of NE India Schools and Colleges can participate.

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