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PERSPECTIVE

Grokopedia.com is fully open source, so anyone can use it for anything at no cost ~ Elon Musk, American Entrepreneur

Tripura Govt launches schemes for women, minorities, establishment of new college soon

AGARTALA

The Tripura Government has approved the Tripura Women Entrepreneurs Policy to boost entrepreneurship among women, offering loans up to Rs 1 crore with a 35% subsidy. The Mukhyamantri Balika Samridhi Yojana will provide Rs 50,000 for each of two baby girls born in government hospitals to AAY families, accessible when the child turns eighteen. A new women's college will be established in Nalchar, Sepahijala District, to enhance educational opportunities for women and increase tertiary education enrolment. The Tripura Government has taken a series of decisions, including two schemes for women and girls and establishment of a new women college.

Speaking at a press conference on Tuesday, October 28 Tripura Cabinet Spokesperson and Transport Minister Sushanta Chowdhury said that the cabinet, in its meeting yesterday, decided on the formation of the Tripura Women Entrepreneurs Policy.

"The Industry Department has been promoting entrepreneurship through a single-window system. For women empowerment, especially for women from rural areas engaged with SHGs or others, this policy has been formed to encourage them further. A maximum loan of Rs 1 crore can be provided to women for entrepreneurship, and a 35 per cent subsidy will be given. Lakhpati Didi can also avail this benefit," said the Minister.

WHO SAID WHAT



"Yes, the Government is paving the way to make IIS a more attractive and future-oriented service,"
Ashwini Vaishnaw
Information and Broadcasting Minister

Assam plans seven-year jail term for polygamy in new bill: Himanta Biswa Sarma

IMPHAL

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday announced that the state government's proposed law against polygamy will include a provision for a minimum of seven years of imprisonment.

The bill will be introduced in the Assam Legislative Assembly on November 25, the first day of the winter session.

Speaking at the launch of the second phase of the Mukhya Mantrir Nijut Moina scheme in Guwahati, Sarma said, "If a person marries another woman without legally divorcing his wife, there will be a provision of seven years or more imprisonment, irrespective of his religion. The accused may claim that his religion permits it, but the BJP government



will never allow polygamy in Assam."

The Chief Minister emphasised that the law aims to protect the dignity and

rights of women across the state. "We will protect the dignity of women in this state at any cost," he asserted.

Highlighting the success of the Nijut Moina scheme, Sarma noted that the initiative has significantly reduced dropout rates among girl students while boosting enrolment figures. Under the scheme, financial assistance is provided monthly for 10 months — ₹1,000 for Class 11 students, ₹1,250 for first-year undergraduates, and ₹2,500 for first-year postgraduate and B.Ed. students. "Because of this scheme, the enrolment rate rose and the dropout rate of girls declined substantially compared to last year. This year, around 3.5 lakh girls will benefit from the scheme," Sarma said.

Last week, the Chief Minister had stated that several historic bills — including those related to "love jihad" and polygamy — will be tabled in the upcoming Assembly session.

Tour operators urge Governor to obtain PAP for visit

IMPHAL

Foreign nationals entering the sensitive border state of Manipur have been facing challenges in obtaining Protected Area Permits (PAP), a policy imposed by the central government due to security concern.

In this connection, the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) Manipur submitted a memorandum to the Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla at the Raj Bhavan, Imphal, on Monday.

According to a Raj Bhavan communique, H. Radhakrishna Sharma, State-in-Charge, IATO, Manipur, along with four others, called on the Governor of Manipur on Monday. They submitted a representation regarding challenges faced by tour operators in obtaining Protected Area Permits (PAP) for foreign tourists visiting Manipur.

To facilitate smoother travel and strengthen tourism in the state, the association proposed allowing pre-arrival PAP applications at the

time of visa processing in the traveler's home country and authorizing approved tour operators and IATO members to apply for permits on behalf of their clients. The governor took note of the concerns and appreciated the association's effort towards promoting sustainable tourism in Manipur.

Foreign nationals need a Protected Area Permit (PAP) to enter Manipur due to security concerns, a policy reimposed by the central government in December 2024.

Officials stated that the movements of foreigners in Manipur are being closely monitored, and they are only allowed to visit the specific areas mentioned in their permit.

It may be noted that the PAP regime was previously lifted in 2011 to encourage tourism, but was reinstated because of the current security situation.

Foreigners need to register with the CID Office in Imphal, and hotels in Imphal can assist with registration formalities if they are willing to stay overnight.

'Amit Shah will bring a solution to Tiprasa issue': Pradyot Kishore Debbarma



AGARTALA

Tipra Motha Party (TMP) chief Pradyot Kishore Debbarma, on October 27, expressed confidence that Union Home Minister Amit Shah would soon provide a lasting solution to the long-pending Tiprasa issue.

Speaking at a party programme at Rabindra Bhavan, Debbarma said he has "immense respect" for Shah and believes the home minister will address the concerns of the indigenous Tiprasa community.

The TMP had earlier signed a tripartite agreement with the Centre and the Tripura government in March 2024, aimed at ensuring the overall development of the Tiprasa people. The agreement was signed in the presence of Shah in New Delhi.

Debbarma clarified that the party's alliance with the BJP was finalised in New Delhi, not at the state level. He cautioned

against spreading "baseless rumours" about the partnership, saying it would "serve no purpose."

Taking a dig at the BJP, Debbarma mocked the party's recent claims about indigenous voters joining its ranks. "They said 6,400 voters each joined the BJP at Mungiakmaki in Khowai and at Takarjala in West Tripura. Another 339 joined later. If this trend continues, the Tiprasa population will reach 1.5 crore in three to four months," he quipped.

Tripura's tribal population currently stands at around 14 lakh. Debbarma added, "I don't blame them for showing exaggerated figures. They need to present something to Delhi to prove their base in tribal areas has grown. So, they say there's no need to continue the alliance with Tipra Motha."

He also criticised the state government for delaying elections to the village committees under the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTA-ADC), pointing out that tribal areas "have not seen democratic polls for the past ten years."

Expressing displeasure over a separate issue, Debbarma said he was disappointed that Rajmata Bhibu Kumari Devi, wife of late Kirit Bikram Kishore Manikya, was not invited to the inauguration of the redeveloped Maa Tripureswari temple by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 22.

TEZPUR

As per the National Education Policy, teachers should not be engaged in any non-educational duties apart from population census and election duty. This has already been brought to the notice of Assam's Education Minister. However, teachers have been coerced into getting involved in certain non-educational activities/duties, which adversely affects their primary role as educators," said the general secretary of the Assam Madhyamik Sikshak Karmasari Santha, Brajen Chetia, while interacting with media persons on Sunday after a day-long State executive meeting of the frontline teachers' body held at the Collegiate High School. Chetia mentioned that there are many schools in the State that are functioning without a permanent headmaster, and these are functioning either under an in-charge headmaster or the inspector of schools concerned. He opined that if the teachers are saddled with non-teaching duties then the education sector can never develop in the desired manner. He further said that during the ancient period, gurus (teachers) managed the education system, but nowadays the gurus are instructed to perform various unnecessary works, thereby curtailing their liberty.

He cited the example of certain autocratic orders/notifications issued by the education department and observed that instead of

focusing on resolving a number of long-pending issues in the education sector, the government is concentrating on "certain useless activities that are wasting the valuable time of the students".

Chetia said: "No doubt, the government is doing good work by appointing new teachers, but if the teachers are not given liberty to work freely for the uplift of the educational environment then we cannot expect the required progress in the education sector. If experienced and talented teachers are virtually held hostage then change will never be witnessed in the education sector."

He, however, clarified that although they are not satisfied with some activities of the government, yet they remain optimistic about the future. Criticising third-party involvement in the teacher appointment process, Chetia also said that vocational teachers are appointed under the National Education Policy for developing the skills of the students. "But they are functioning under six companies and to speak honestly we are not satisfied with the appointment process of these teachers," he said. He added that several representations have been already submitted to the secretaries and ministers concerned for fulfilment of their demands, but these have remained unaddressed till date. He also alleged that due to

lack of uniformity in the guidelines of the six companies concerned, the vocational teachers are facing many problems. He said that those teachers are not granted leave even during unavoidable circumstances and they have to face drastic action like pay cuts. He said, "No one can promote the education system by maligning a teacher's dignity. Teachers and the heads of schools should be given space to freely work for the mental and physical development of the students and the overall welfare of the schools." He further said that though the remuneration of the fixed-pay teachers appointed during 2001 has been regularised, their grade pay has not been increased till date. At the same time, the contractual teachers appointed during 2010 have been regularised but their seniority has decreased by 15 years. Likewise, Chetia said, till date the salary of the ICT teachers has not been increased.

The teachers of the schools that were provincialised in 2013 will face a heavy loss as they will retire within 3/4 years under the New Pension System, he said. He demanded that the government should restore the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) after discussing the matter in detail with the Central government. The organisation's central executive meeting was attended by over one hundred executive members from across the State.

3rd Arunachal Fashion Week 2025 All Set to Drive Creative Economy, Empower Weavers and Designers Across the Region

The Artisans' Movement 2025 aims to promote sustainable fashion, youth engagement, and local entrepreneurship under the banner of 'Vocal for Local' and 'Viksit Arunachal'.

ITANAGAR

The One Arunachal NGO has officially announced the 3rd Arunachal Fashion Week - The Artisans' Movement, scheduled for December 2025, as a tribute to the state's weavers, artisans, and designers. The ten-day event, to be held at Interior Park, Lekhi, Naharlagun, will spotlight Arunachal Pradesh's cultural pride through fashion, art, and craftsmanship.

"The Artisans' Movement is our effort to shift the focus from glamour to grassroots, from runways to the real hands that weave our identity," said Shri Joram Tat, Chairperson, One Arunachal, and Chief Organizer of the event. "Every thread spun in our villages carries a story of tradition, skill, and self-reliance. Through Arunachal Fashion Week, we want to give those stories a national stage and show that fashion can be a force for livelihood, culture, and pride."

He expressed gratitude to Chief



Patron of the event Shri Nyato Dukam, Hon'ble Cabinet Minister, Government of Arunachal Pradesh (Commerce & Industries, Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Textile & Handicrafts, Trade & Commerce, and Sericulture), and Patron Dr. Mohesh Chai, Hon'ble MLA-cum-Advisor to the Hon'ble Minister of Commerce & Industry and Health, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, for their guidance and support in empowering youth, artisans, and entrepreneurs through creative

industry initiatives.

This year's lineup features six major designers representing diverse districts and tribes — Pura Aniya from Ziro (Lower Subansiri) of A Dressmaker; Osum Jerang from Kaying (Siang) of Sum's Tribal Fusion; Jyoti Dada from Tirap of JD Collections; Gimi Yamang from Kra-Dadi of Gimi's Design; Opet Litin from Yingkiang (Upper Siang) of Litin's Creation; and Joram Nampi from Joram (Keyi Panoy) of One Arunachal. Joining them are designers Leeza Bagra,

Siang Yangada Jumer Angu, Liya Elapra, and Metam Veo, along with weave designers from across Arunachal's tribes, including specially-abled artisans, symbolizing inclusivity and innovation.

The ten-day calendar of the event is designed to blend fashion, culture, and entrepreneurship:

Day 1 - AFW Night of Opulence: MET Gala-inspired evening celebrating luxury, glamour, and cultural appreciation (Theme: Tribal Fusion)

Day 2 - AFW Fashion Extravaganza: High-energy fashion show featuring traditional to contemporary designs (Theme: Arunachal's Fashion Future)

Day 3 - AFW Cultural Heritage Day: A day dedicated to music, art, and indigenous textiles under the theme Weaving Traditions

Day 4 to Day 9 - Exhibition: Display of furniture, home décor, handicrafts, handloom products, and fabrics at Interior Park

Day 10 - AFW Awards Night

and After-Party: A grand celebration at Mayam's 359 Hotels & Resorts, Holangi, Itanagar, honouring creativity and excellence in the fashion industry.

The AFW Awards Night will recognise outstanding contributions by models, designers, and artisans in promoting Arunachal Pradesh's rich cultural heritage. Award categories include AFW Model of the Year 2025, Best Fashion Designer, Best Weave Designer, Emerging Talent Award, Best Contributor Award, Best Showstopper Award, Most Fashionable Guest Award, and Buyer's Award, among others.

At its core, the 3rd Arunachal Fashion Week - The Artisans' Movement is not merely a fashion event but a cultural and developmental movement; one that weaves together empowerment, sustainability, and creativity, positioning Arunachal Pradesh as a growing hub of craftsmanship, culture, and innovation.



Welcome Prof. Amit Kumar Aditya, Pro Vice Chancellor, The ICAI University, Nagaland



Adviser, NEIR 2026



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HEALTHCARE INVESTMENT POLICY



The Healthcare Investment Policy of Jammu and Kashmir, announced with much enthusiasm in 2019, was meant to usher in a new era of private healthcare development. Backed by lucrative incentives and a declared intent to establish a Medicity in Jammu, it promised to bridge the glaring gap in medical infrastructure across the Union Territory. Yet, over six years later, the policy remains buried under layers of bureaucratic inertia. No private hospital project has taken off, and Medicity remains a mirage. What was once touted as a visionary step has turned into another example of the Government's apathy towards a critical public need.

The crisis is especially acute in Jammu. The district not only caters to its growing urban population but also serves as the primary healthcare hub for all nine other districts of the Jammu division. The burden multiplies during winter when a sizeable population from Kashmir and Ladakh migrates to Jammu for months, seeking relief from harsh weather and better healthcare. This annual demographic shift puts an enormous and predictable strain on the city's already overstretched medical facilities. GMC Jammu—once envisioned as a premier tertiary care hospital—is now bearing the brunt of this imbalance. Its wards overflow with patients, outpatient departments are packed from dawn until dusk, and surgeries are often scheduled months in advance. The hospital's infrastructure and human resources are stretched far beyond capacity. While newly established GMCs in districts like Doda, Rajouri and Kathua may eventually help share the load, it will take years before they reach a level of readiness to handle complex and specialised cases.

In this grim scenario, developing a robust private healthcare ecosystem in Jammu is not a luxury—it is a necessity. The absence of quality private hospitals leaves citizens with only two options: rely on the overburdened public system or travel to Punjab, Chandigarh, or Delhi for treatment. Every year, thousands of patients from Jammu and surrounding districts spend enormous sums for medical care outside the UT, a drain not only on personal finances but also on the local economy.

The 2019 Healthcare Investment Policy had generated tremendous interest among reputed private players like Fortis, Medanta, Yashoda, Park and Capitol Group, who collectively proposed investments worth over Rs3,300 crore. Yet, all these plans have stagnated because the Government has failed to perform the most basic task—identifying and allotting suitable land. The offer of land at the old Resin Factory in Miran Sahib serves as a prime example. Investors found the site unsuitable—far from the main city, poorly connected, and lacking supporting infrastructure. Predictably, the proposals were rejected. However, instead of identifying an alternative, feasible site, the administration allowed the matter to drift. The failure to resolve such a simple yet crucial issue exposes the lack of seriousness and coordination between departments.

For a medical facility—particularly a super-specialty hospital—to thrive, location is everything. Accessibility, connectivity, and availability of civic infrastructure determine both operational viability and patient trust. The Government must therefore prioritise identifying a suitable land pool in an area that meets these criteria.

A well-planned Medicity in Jammu would not only provide healthcare facilities but also emerge as a major investment and employment generator. The economic ripple effect would be substantial. The examples are all around. In neighbouring Punjab, cities like Pathankot, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, and Amritsar have transformed into healthcare hubs with world-class multi-specialty hospitals offering affordable care.

The way forward is clear. The UT administration must revisit its industrial and healthcare investment policies with a singular focus—establishing a mega Medicity in Jammu. The process should be transparent, time-bound, and investor-friendly. The Government must move beyond policy paperwork to concrete execution, ensuring coordination among departments and accountability for delays. Healthcare is not merely a welfare sector—it is a cornerstone of development and human security. Jammu's citizens deserve more than promises on paper.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

A civilized man is one who will give a serious answer to a serious question. Civilization itself is a certain sane balance of values. - Ezra Pound

Europe's Strategy Between Dome & Drone Wall



BRUNO SURDEL

The first days of October 2025 marked a new tone in Europe's security debate. Copenhagen, usually a calm Nordic capital, transformed into a fortress as European Union leaders gathered for an informal European Council summit under the Danish presidency. The airspace above the city was secured by allied aircraft, while a German frigate docked in its port—a symbolic reminder that Europe's security is no longer abstract.

The meeting unfolded amid fresh Russian provocations: airspace violations over Poland and Estonia, and drone incursions in Denmark. For Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen, who chaired the summit, these incidents confirmed that Europe is already fighting a hybrid war. The summit participants expressed their support for Ukraine, emphasizing its crucial role in Europe's collective defence against Russian aggression. The atmosphere was marked by tension and concern. As Antonio Costa, President of the European Council, later put it: We are committed to face common threats, on all fronts, whether conventional, hybrid or cyber, with a common purpose.

The Drone Wall Debate Formally, leaders framed the conversation around defence readiness by 2030—a practical translation of the "Europe of Defence" idea. In official briefings, the European Council underlined capability gaps and the need to accelerate common efforts in air and missile defence, cyber resilience and counter-UAS (counter-drone) tools, complementing Alliance efforts.

Two flagship strands crystallised. First, the European Drone Wall: an effort to interlink national detection, jamming and interception layers into a coherent continental response to unmanned threats. Second, the Eastern Flank Watch: a coordination framework focused on surveillance, early warning and the

integration of ground, air, maritime and border-management capabilities along the EU's exposed frontier. Both concepts were referenced by the European Council President in Copenhagen.

The strategic context is unmistakable. In the days surrounding the summit, NATO underlined that Allied airspace was increasingly targeted by drones and aircraft, calling the European drone-wall concept timely and necessary within the Alliance's broader effort to protect its skies.

Institutionally, Copenhagen reaffirmed a well-worn balance: the Union can steer joint programmes, pool demand and finance industrial scaling; Member States retain primacy over defence policy and force structure, while NATO remains the cornerstone of collective defence. That logic—visible in the Council's agenda-setting letters before and after the meeting—keeps the EU's role focused on defensive preparedness, interoperability and procurement acceleration rather than command-and-control.

The operational ambition, however, is concrete. EU officials link the drone and flank initiatives to a layered approach: sensors and data fusion; electronic warfare and point defence; and cross-border procedures to act fast. In the High Representative's description, Eastern Flank Watch spans counter-drone, ground, air, maritime and border components, underscoring that Europe's next-generation protection will be as much a system-of-systems as a hardware list.

New Strategic Mindset Copenhagen also served as a stock-take of support to Ukraine, where the EU has combined budgetary, humanitarian, military and reconstruction instruments. On the coercive side, leaders signalled continuity on restrictive measures targeting Russia and enablers of sanctions circumvention. While the Copenhagen meeting was informal and not a legislative venue,

the institutional trail shows that sanctions policy has become a standing strand of the EU's security response.

Crucially, the debate in and around the summit recast technology as deterrence. Counter-UAS suites, integrated air defence, cyber resilience and shared situational awareness now sit at the core of Europe's security grammar—not as add-ons, but as first-order requirements. NATO's ministerial messages in mid-October mirrored the shift, highlighting counter-drone initiatives and defence-investment follow-through as immediate priorities for Allies and partners alike.

For European Union's eastern and northern members, including Poland, that evolution translates into practical demands: common threat pictures, compatible rules-of-engagement at borders, and procurement pathways that scale proven solutions rather than proliferate bespoke projects. For southern members, resilience also means watchfulness in the Mediterranean and Atlantic—domains where maritime surveillance, cyber-physical infrastructure protection and space-based services intersect.

These regional emphases were not erased but reframed within a shared architecture that treats the Union's borders as a single security perimeter while respecting national command. The Council's language—safeguarding the security of Europe and strengthening deterrence capacity—points to precisely that synthesis.

Lessons for India For India, the Copenhagen discussions offer a clear takeaway: contemporary deterrence is networked. Europe's planned drone-defence layers promise not only hardware, but interoperability, predictability and faster decision-making. India's own experience suggests that scalable, standards-driven architectures are where strategy meets affordability.

In the end, Copenhagen did not hinge on a communique or a single headline number. Its significance lies in normalising a conversation: that Europe's security has become a technology project—its borders now protected by data as well as by troops; and that unity is measured less in words than in the speed with which systems are specified, funded and fielded. The official record—Council direction, Commission and EAS programme design, NATO's operational posture—already sketches that new normal. If Europe can keep that loop tight, the much-invoked "Europe of Defence" will be less a slogan and more a working interface between institutions, industries and armed forces. That, as India knows from its own neighbourhood, is where strategy becomes credible.

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

India's Economic Momentum: Consumption Revival: GST 2.0 has triggered record festive sales - the strongest Navratri in 10 years. Investor Confidence: Domestic institutions absorbed \$69B of equities even as FPIs exited- a sign of deepening market maturity. Tech & AI Expansion: Google to invest \$15B and TCS \$7B in data centers building India's digital backbone. Powering Growth: Surging energy demand across generation, transmission, and distribution. Global Reallocation: As China & Japan cool, global investors are rediscovering India's long-term potential. The world's most vibrant democracy is transforming.

~ Harsh Goenka, Chairman, RPG Enterprises



RASHTRIYA EKTA DIWAS: CELEBRATING THE SPIRIT OF A UNITED INDIA

GAURAV GUPTA

The 31st of October holds a special place in the heart of every Indian. It marks the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Iron Man of India—a visionary leader whose determination, courage, and foresight laid the foundation of a united, stable, and sovereign nation. Known as the Architect of National Integration, Patel's legacy is far more than history; it continues to inspire India's moral and political compass even today.

The Architect of a United Nation When India achieved independence in 1947, it was not the cohesive nation we know today. The British left behind a subcontinent fragmented into over 560 princely states, each with its own ambitions and governance structures. Uniting this complex mosaic into a single nation was an immense challenge, one that required extraordinary leadership, patience, and vision.

It was Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, India's first Home Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, who rose to this historic challenge. With exceptional administrative skill, firm resolve, and strategic foresight, he persuaded the princely states to join the Indian Union. Where dialogue and diplomacy could succeed, he employed patience; where resistance persisted, he acted decisively. The successful integration of Hyderabad, Junagadh, and other regions stands as a testimony to his unwavering commitment to India's sovereignty and unity. This monumental achievement earned him the immortal title—The Iron Man of India.

Patel's Vision: Unity Beyond Borders

For Sardar Patel, unity was not merely about redrawing political boundaries; it was about nurturing a shared sense of nationhood. He believed that real strength comes not from numbers alone but from harmony, discipline, and a collective sense of purpose. As he once said, "Manpower without unity is not a strength unless it is harmonized and united properly; then it becomes a spiritual power."

He envisioned India as a civilization that draws strength from its diversity rather than division from it. His belief that "unity and cooperation are essential requisites" continues to resonate strongly today, as India navigates political, social, and global challenges while remaining anchored to its founding principles.

Rashtriya Ekta Diwas—A Day to Reaffirm National Unity

In 2014, the Government of India declared 31st October as Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (National Unity Day) to honour Sardar Patel's monumental contribution. Across India, citizens, schools, colleges, and government offices engage in pledge ceremonies, Unity Runs, and cultural programs that celebrate his vision.

The Statue of Unity, unveiled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2018 at Ekta Nagar, Gujarat, rises 182 metres high and stands as the tallest statue in the world. It is more than a marvel of engineering—it is a symbol of India's unity, strength, and self-belief, draw-

ing millions of visitors who come not only to witness its grandeur but to imbibe the spirit of India that Sardar Patel personified.

Relevance in Today's India

Rashtriya Ekta Diwas is even more relevant today. In a world facing rising division and polarization, India continues to shine as a beacon of unity amidst diversity. Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the able guidance of Home Minister Amit Shah Ji, India is moving forward with inclusiveness, empowerment, and equitable growth. Major initiatives such as Digital India, Make in India, Startup India, and the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 rest on the foundation of collective participation, unity of purpose, and shared responsibility. Patel's principles remind us that a nation's real strength lies not only in its resources or institutions, but in the oneness, integrity, and harmony of its people.

Jammu & Kashmir—Realizing a Historic Vision

Nowhere is Sardar Patel's dream of national unity more profoundly reflected than in Jammu & Kashmir—a region long symbolizing both India's diversity and its challenges. The historic steps taken in August 2019, with the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A, fulfilled Patel's vision by ensuring that Jammu & Kashmir became an inseparable and integral part of India.

Today, the Union Territory is witnessing

unprecedented growth in infrastructure, tourism, governance, and youth empowerment. Under the dynamic leadership of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and the steadfast support of the Central Government, led by Home Minister Amit Shah Ji, the region is seeing new expressways, tunnels, rail connectivity, cultural revival, and economic development. This progress embodies the spirit of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas" and stands as a living tribute to Sardar Patel's vision—proving that unity is not enforced by power, but achieved through fairness, inclusion, and equal opportunity.

The Eternal Message of Sardar Patel Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel reminds us that unity is both a duty and a destiny. His principles of integrity, discipline, and national service remain timeless lessons for every generation. As India marches towards Viksit Bharat 2047, it is imperative that we build upon the ideals of unity, cooperation, and national integration that Patel championed.

Rashtriya Ekta Diwas is not just a day of remembrance; it is a call to every Indian to rise above differences, work together, and uphold the social, cultural, and territorial cohesion of the nation. Let us draw inspiration from Sardar Patel's unwavering faith in India's destiny and pledge to protect the unity he built—honoring not only the Iron Man of India but also the eternal spirit of Bharat Mata: undivided, strong, and invincible.

SIR in 12 states from Nov 4; Assam to follow separate schedule, says EC

NEW DELHI

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Monday announced that phase two of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls will be conducted in 12 states and Union Territories, but Assam, where Assembly elections are also due in 2026, will follow a separate schedule.

BTC chief in first EC meet Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar said the SIR exercise will cover the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Puducherry, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Kerala and Puducherry go to the polls in 2026, alongside Assam.

As part of the second phase, voter enumeration will begin on November 4, the draft rolls will be published on December 9, and the final rolls will be out on February 7. This phase will cover approximately 51



crore voters. Also Read - Gas pipeline burst triggers panic in Golaghat, residents rush out of homes The Election Commission has already held two rounds of consultations

with state Chief Electoral Officers to finalise the roadmap. However, Kumar clarified that Assam's voter list revision will be announced separately in due course.

"The ongoing revision is the ninth such special exercise since Independence. We want to ensure no eligible voter is left out and no ineligible name remains on the rolls," he said.

The first phase of SIR was completed in Bihar, where the final electoral roll of nearly 7.42 crore voters was published on September 30 without any appeals. Ahead of the ECI's announcement, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said his government would support the Election Commission's decision if the SIR is extended to the state. "I don't know the topic of the press meet. However, whatever instruction we receive from the EC, we will work accordingly," Sarma told reporters in Guwahati. "If SIR is announced nationwide, definitely we will welcome it. We have already conveyed

our view to the central government in this regard," he added. Assam, which has seen long-standing concerns over illegal migration and citizenship verification, is expected to have a keen focus on the SIR once announced.

The state last went through a major voter-related scrutiny during the National Register of Citizens (NRC) update process. With Assam Assembly elections just months away, the final electoral roll revision in Assam is likely to draw close political and public attention. Notably, the last SIR in most states took place between 2002 and 2004 and the current electorate is being mapped against those records.

The primary objective of the exercise is also to identify and weed out illegal foreign migrants by verifying place of birth documents, a move that gains significance amid crackdowns on undocumented immigrants from Bangladesh and Myanmar in several states.

SDG BSF Eastern Command on three-day Tripura visit; to assess border security

AGARTALA

Mahesh Kumar Aggarwal, IPS, Special Director General (SDG) of the BSF Eastern Command, arrived in Tripura on Monday for a three-day visit to review the security situation along the Indo-Bangladesh border.

The SDG was received at the Agartala airport by the Inspector General of BSF Tripura Frontier and later accorded a Guard of Honour at the BSF Headquarters.

He was briefed on the operational preparedness and key strategic matters concerning border management in the state.

During his visit, Aggarwal met Tripura Governor Indrasena Reddy Nallu, Chief Minister Dr. Manik Saha, Director General of Police Anurag (IPS), and Chief Secretary J. K. Sinha (IAS).

The discussions centered on the prevailing security scenario, inter-agency coordination, and challenges related to border management.

As part of his itinerary, the SDG will tour several forward areas along the international border to assess the ground situation and interact with field commanders and troops.

His visit aims to strengthen operational efficiency, review anti-smuggling measures, and boost the morale of BSF personnel deployed in the sensitive border zones.

I don't need anyone's support, my people are with me: Pradyot Debbarma

AGARTALA

Tipra Motha founder and royal scientist Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma on October 27 declared that he neither fears anyone nor needs support from any political alliance to win elections, asserting that the people of Tripura's villages stand firmly with him.

Addressing a joining programme in Agartala, Debbarma said his fight was not for power but for the future generations of Tripura. "Everyone is engaged in politics — BJP, CPIM, Congress, or Tipra Motha — but no one truly thinks about the next generation. My politics has never been based on religion or caste. It's about unity among tribals, non-tribals, Bengalis, Christians, and Buddhists," he said.

Taking a dig at his critics, the Tipra Motha chief said, "If I say Thansa, it becomes communal, but if someone else says Ekta, it becomes Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas. I have never spoken against Bengalis. If tribals develop, Tripura will develop."

Debbarma emphasised that while others may rely on money or influence, his strength lies in his people. "I don't have huge money, but I have heart, strength, and passion," he said.

Indirectly referring to the BJP's recent joining programme, where the party claimed around 3,000 new entrants, Pradyot alleged that the numbers were inflated. "I'm not blaming them. They have to show Delhi that they are strong and that BJP doesn't need Tipra Motha. But Tipra Motha alone won 13 seats — no other regional party has achieved that. If elections are held now, we will show who will win," he said.

Accusing the government of delaying Village Council elections, Debbarma said it reflects their fear of Tipra Motha's growing influence. "This alliance didn't happen under local leadership but in Delhi, where the agreement was signed. I speak directly with Delhi. Tipra Motha will fight, win, and no one can stop us," he asserted.

KOKRAJHAR

Immediately after forming the government, BTC Chief Executive Member (CEM) Hagrama Mohilary has initiated his traditional 'Give and Take' policy. The first executive meeting of the new BTC government was organized at the BTC secretariat on Monday under the chairmanship of Mohilary, where several important decisions were taken.

Talking to the media after the meeting, Mohilary stated that one of the key decisions was to begin the process of distributing land pattas in BTC before the upcoming Assembly elections. He added that since there is a shortage of staff in the land and revenue department for the distribution of land pattas, retired employees from these departments will be temporarily appointed.

There are 29 retired Mandals and Kanungoes in the BTC and



they will be temporarily employed for this purpose. In addition, about 200 trained youths who have completed Mandal training but remained unemployed will also be temporarily appointed, Mohilary mentioned. Also Read - Gas pipe-

line burst triggers panic in Golaghat, residents rush out of homes The CEM further said that the meeting discussed the utilization of Rs 100 crore and decided where and how the money will be spent. Priority will be given to departments

such as piggery, fishery, ration distribution, handloom and textile industries.

Mohilary also informed that he is scheduled to meet Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday where several issues will be discussed including financial liabilities, shortage of manpower and the interim budget of BTC. Since the Assam government is expected to present an interim budget in November BTC also plans to introduce its own interim budget, he said. Responding to media about composition in the formation of government, Mohilary stated that there will be two members from the BJP in the BTC government and the deputy speaker will also be from the BJP. CEM stated that to run BTC effectively, a "Give and Take" policy is essential. He remarked that only thinking about taking without giving does not yield good results, hence "one must also know how to give."

Bir Lachit Sena leader threatens stir if arrested; members not released; expels Bikash Asom

GUWAHATI

Bir Lachit Sena's leader, Shrinkhal Chaliha, held a press conference at his residence in Sivasagar on October 27, a day after the arrest of the organisation's Central Chief Secretary, Rantu Paniphukan, by Guwahati Police during a media briefing in the city.

Chaliha strongly criticised the police action and questioned the rationale behind the arrests of Rantu Paniphukan, Utpal Asom, and Tanmoy Phukan.

He warned that if the arrested members were not released immediately, the organisation would launch an intense, state-wide agitation from tomorrow.

Referring to the controversy surrounding Bikash Asom, Chaliha announced that all allegations against him were being taken seriously.

"Bikash Asom has been relieved



from all responsibilities and primary membership of Bir Lachit Sena until further notice," he declared.

Chaliha also questioned the police for implicating some members of the organisation in a robbery case, stating, "The authorities must prove whether those arrested are indeed members of Bir Lachit Sena. If any are found guilty, we will not oppose lawful action—but false charges will not be tolerated."

Accusing the government of attempting to weaken the organisa-

tion, Chaliha alleged that the move to suppress Bir Lachit Sena was politically motivated. "If the government continues to target our organisation, it will only embolden illegal migrants and anti-Assamese forces. Many fear Bir Lachit Sena because we stand firmly for the rights of Assam and the Assamese people," he said.

Expressing anger toward certain sections of the media, Chaliha remarked, "Some media houses have declared us guilty without trial, but when we are proven innocent, they

remain silent."

He further claimed that both ruling and opposition political forces fear Bir Lachit Sena because it is not beholden to any community or political interest. "Some parties are committed to Bengalis, some to Miyas, and some to businessmen—but Bir Lachit Sena is committed only to Assam and the Assamese," he asserted.

Chaliha described the current situation as part of a larger "political conspiracy" against the organisation. "A Mahabharata has begun in Assam, but the 'Shakuni' is yet to be identified," he said, adding that Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's recent statements were contradictory. "Just days ago, the Chief Minister said every soldier of Bir Lachit Sena carries the blood of Lachit Borphukan, and now he talks about banning us. He must answer for this double standard."

Mizoram: Govt set to host maiden recruitment rally

AIZAWL:

The Mizoram government will hold the first recruitment rally for the Territorial Army in Aizawl during 15-25 November to address drug trafficking and other law and order issues, a concerned legislator said on Monday.

Ruling Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) legislator Lt. Col. Clement Lalhmingthanga told a news conference here that the recruitment rally for Territorial Army (Home & Hearth) will be jointly organised by the Mizoram government and 166 Assam Infantry Battalion (Territorial Army) at Rajiv Gandhi stadium in Aizawl.

The recruitment will open historic opportunities for the Mizo youths, including girls, to be in the armed forces and to serve the nation, he said.

Lalhmingthanga, who headed the empowered state level committee on Territorial Army coordination and establishment, said that 144 posts (General Duty) will be recruited this

time, out of which nine seats are reserved for girls in an effort to recruit female personnel in the armed forces.

He said that the TA will draw handsome pay like the Indian army and enjoy certain benefits, including medical assistance.

The personnel will be employed for a longer period depending on their performance and demand, he said. They will be given pensions and certain benefits on completion of their employment period, besides receiving the credit of security personnel in their entire lives, he said.

Lalhmingthanga said that the TA will play a crucial role in protecting the country and Mizoram, and building good relations between security personnel and the locals.

He said that awareness campaigns will be carried out on social and digital platforms by the state information and public relations department, Doordarshan and All India Radio to encourage the youths to join TA.

Left Front slams Tripura govt over law and order collapse, job crisis; announces statewide movement

AGARTALA

The Tripura Left Front State Committee on October 27 launched a sharp attack on the BJP-led state government, accusing it of presiding over a "complete breakdown of law and order" and failing to curb rising unemployment.

The committee announced a state-wide movement to protest what it described as the government's "total failure on all fronts."

In a statement issued after its meeting, the Left Front alleged that incidents of violence against women, murders, and rapes have become almost daily occurrences, reflecting the administration's inability to protect citizens. "The state has turned into a drug empire," the statement said, pointing to the recent seizure of a railway wagon full of narcotics at Jirania railway station.

The committee claimed that local residents suspect ruling party leaders of being involved in the illegal drug trade "from top to bottom" in collusion with officials. "No real criminals are being caught. Only show-piece investigations are conducted



to suppress the incidents," it added, demanding an independent probe by skilled officers.

Warning of grave social consequences, the Left Front said the ongoing drug menace, corruption, and unemployment could destroy the state's youth and future generations. It alleged that corruption has reached

an "all-out form" under the present regime.

Highlighting the worsening job scenario, the committee said large numbers of unemployed youths are being forced to migrate to other states in search of work. Citing a tragic case from Gandachara, it said that a poverty-stricken couple recently sold their

seven-day-old baby for ₹10,000, underscoring the depth of the crisis. The party demanded immediate employment generation, timely payment of wages, and the safe reunion of such children with their mothers.

The Left Front also condemned the violent incidents in Shantir Bazar under Kamalpur subdivision on October 23, where several vehicles, shops, and houses were reportedly torched and looted during a bandh allegedly organized by the "Citizen Forum" with the backing of Tipra Motha. Calling the bandh "provocative" and "aimed at disturbing peace and unity among communities," it said several people, including a police officer and an engineer, were injured and are undergoing treatment at GB Hospital.

The committee accused both Tipra Motha and the BJP of engaging in communal politics to divert attention from the state's real problems of unemployment, corruption, and rising crime. Concluding the meeting, the committee announced that the Left Front would soon launch a statewide agitation to protest the government's failures. The meeting was attended by Left Front Convener Manik Dey, CPI(M) Central Committee member Naresh Jamatia, CPI State Council Secretary Milan Baidya, RSP's Deepak Deb, Forward Bloc Secretary Paresh Sarkar, and Ashish Bhat-tacharya.

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Prashant Kishor enrolled as voter in both Bihar and West Bengal, triggers row ahead of State polls



PATNA

Prashant Kishor, poll strategist turned politician whose Jan Suraj Party is contesting the Bihar Assembly polls, has his name enrolled in the voter lists of two states – West Bengal and Bihar.

According to reports, in Bihar, Kishor is registered as a voter in the Kargahar assembly constituency under the Sasaram parliamentary constituency in Rohtas district. His polling station is Madhya Vidyalay in his ancestral village Konar.

In Bengal, Kishor's address is listed as 121 Kalighat Road, which houses the Trinamool Congress office in Bhabanipur,

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's assembly constituency. His polling station is listed as St Helen School on B Ranishankari Lane. Kishor had worked with the Trinamool Congress (TMC) as a political consultant during the 2021 West Bengal Assembly elections.

Attempt to contact Kishor to get his reaction over duplicity of voter proved futile. However, a senior leader of the Jan Suraj Party on the condition of anonymity said that Kishor enrolled as voter in the Kargahar assembly constituency after the West Bengal elections. "He is learnt to have applied for deletion of his name from electoral rolls in West Bengal after he enrolled in

Bihar's Kargahar assembly constituency. The status of the application for cancellation of name from West Bengal is not known to us," the JSP leader said.

Kishor's Jan Suraj Party (JSP) is contesting all the 243 seats in the Bihar assembly election. Initially, it was expected that Kishor would contest from the Kargahar assembly seat. But later he expressed his wish to contest from Raghapur against Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Prasad Yadav. Later he suddenly dropped the idea of contesting election.

When asked about his decision not to contest election, Kishor clarified that it was the unanimous decision of the party not to contest election in the larger interest of the candidates. "Now I will focus more on strengthening the party's support base and ensure victory of candidates in the election," he added.

Duplicity of voter is not an isolated case. Earlier, Bihar former deputy chief minister and Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejashwi Prasad Yadav and deputy chief minister Vijay Kumar Sinha were enrolled in Patna as well as their respective assembly constituencies. Tejashwi is contesting from Raghapur, Sinha is seeking his reelection from Lakhisarai.

PATNA

Rashtriya Janata Dal leader and Mahagathbandhan's Chief Minister nominee Tejashwi Yadav on Tuesday demanded that the National Democratic Alliance reveal their CM face for the Bihar elections, while highlighting the release of their manifesto named "Tejashwi Pran Patra" today.

Tejashwi said that he would like to know the NDA's agenda and vision, and accused them of speaking negatively and making allegations against Mahagathbandhan leaders.

"We have announced the CM's face as well. Today, we are going to release the 'Tejashwi Pran Patra' on how we are going to work for the next 5 years. We want NDA to announce the name of their CM. What schemes do they have? What is their vision, and how are they going to take Bihar forward? We have given a roadmap, a vision, and we are clear that we will make Bihar number one.

They only speak negative things and make allegations about our leaders," Tejashwi Yadav told reporters.

Earlier, on October 19, Union Minister and Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) chief Chirag Paswan had reiterated his support for Nitish Kumar as the leader of the NDA alliance in the Bihar assembly polls and said that after the results, elected MLAs will once again choose the JD(U) leader as the Chief Minister.

Yadav also hit out at the Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav, citing the difficulties faced by the passengers during the Chhath Puja. He mentioned that the people of Bihar have made up their mind for a change in the government in the assembly elections.

"Look, today we are campaigning – we have to go all across Bihar.

We want NDA to announce the name of their CM: Tejashwi Yadav



The people of Bihar are in the mood for change; we have said this before. Those people of Bihar who had migrated outside and returned home during Chhath – seeing the condition in which they came back was painful. The Railway Minister had announced that 12,000 special trains would be run, but just look at the state of our brothers and sisters being packed tightly into the trains – what happened to those "special" trains?," he told reporters.

Earlier, on October 23, the Mahagathbandhan announced the release of a joint manifesto for the Bihar Assembly elections. The development was followed by the

announcement of Tejashwi Yadav as the face of the opposition alliance for the polls.

Mukesh Sahani, who heads the Vikasheel Insaan Party, has been named as the Deputy CM nominee from the Mahagathbandhan.

The 2025 Bihar elections will have the main contest between the National Democratic Alliance and the Mahagathbandhan. NDA includes the Bharatiya Janata Party, Janata Dal (United), Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular), and Rashtriya Lok Morcha.

Mahagathbandhan, led by Rashtriya Janata Dal, includes Congress party, the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (CPI-ML) led by Deepankar Bhattacharya, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPM), and Mukesh Sahani's Vikasheel Insaan Party (VIP). Additionally, Prashant Kishor's Jan Suraj has also staked claims on all 243 seats of the state. The assembly elections will be held in two phases on November 6 and 11. The results will be declared on November 14.

INTERNATIONAL

South Korea's president faces high-stakes diplomacy at APEC summit

SEOUL

South Korea's new president will host leaders from 20 countries for the upcoming Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, where the American and Chinese leaders are set to hold a high-stakes meeting on the sidelines.

The two-day annual APEC summit, which opens in Gyeongju on Friday, is likely to test Lee Jae Myung's diplomatic abilities as he faces tough foreign policy challenges.

Lee, in office less than five months, seeks to get along with friends and rivals alike with his self-proclaimed "pragmatic diplomacy."

But prospects for greater cooperation with Washington and Tokyo are in doubt due to Trump's tariff war and the election of a new ultraconservative leader in Japan. Tensions with North Korea remain high after Pyongyang snubbed Lee's overture and bolstered ties with Russia and China instead.

In Gyeongju, Lee is expected to hold one-on-one meetings with US President Donald Trump, Chinese President Xi Jinping and new Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, while presiding over APEC events.

Experts say the summit may offer positive optics for Lee, but it doesn't guarantee long-term diplomatic success.

This year's APEC summit, the first in South Korea in 20 years, is overshadowed by Thursday's Trump-Xi meeting, whose results are expected to have a major impact on the global economy.

Trump will likely skip APEC's main conference, but experts say Lee could still align with other countries to promote free trade and multilateralism.

South Korean officials say they've been holding ministerial-level communications with other countries to prod all 21 to issue a joint declaration at the end of the summit in an effort not to repeat the failure to reach one in 2018 in Papua New Guinea due to US-China discord over trade.

"Of course, there are some lingering issues, but many have been resolved. We're making efforts toward the adoption of a 'Gyeongju Declaration' and



acting as a mediator between the US and China." South Korea's national security director Wi Sung-lac told local broadcaster KBS on Sunday.

Top South Korean officials have been recently flying in and out of Washington to finalize a trade agreement with the US, but it's unclear if the two countries can strike one in time for the APEC summit.

South Korea's trade minister, Kim Jung-Kwan, told lawmakers Friday that Washington and Seoul remain "sharply divided" over how much of South Korea's promised \$350 billion US investment package should be provided as direct cash payments under a July deal aimed at averting the Trump administration's highest tariffs.

There are also worries that South Korea's ties with Japan could turn sour because of the recent inauguration of Japan's Takaichi, who has right-wing views on her country's wartime aggressions.

Relations between the Asian neighbors and their trilateral military cooperation with the US have improved in recent years. But Seoul-Tokyo ties previously experienced on-again, off-again setbacks due to grievances stemming from Japan's past colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula. There are also questions about whether a trilateral Seoul-Tokyo-Washington partnership would continue to grow amid Trump's "America first" policy.

Kim Tae-hyung, a professor at Seoul's Soongsil University, said Seoul and Tokyo are more likely to continue to tighten cooperation as they both struggle to deal with Trump's unilateral push to reset the global trade order and American security commitments to them.

Oh Hyunjo, a deputy South Korean national security director, told reporters Monday that there likely wouldn't

be enough time to organize a trilateral meeting with Lee, Trump and Takaichi.

Restarting diplomacy between Trump and North Korea leader Kim Jong Un would potentially help Lee's push to reconcile with North Korea.

During campaigning, Lee said he would support Trump's efforts to restore diplomacy with Kim, saying that improved ties between Pyongyang and Washington could allow aid projects for the impoverished North that would likely need South Korean funding.

While en route to Asia, Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One on Friday that he's open to meeting with Kim, saying he had "a great relationship" with him. North Korea hasn't responded, but Kim suggested last month that he could meet Trump again if the US withdraws denuclearization of North Korea as a precondition for talks.

Oh said Seoul sees little chance of a Trump-Kim meeting on the occasion of the APEC. But she noted that South Korea would have contingency plans ready if the two leaders decide to meet in the future. Their third and last meeting in June 2019 was arranged at the inter-Korean border village of Panmunjom, a day after Trump posted a tweet message inviting Kim to the border.

Xi's visit will mark his first trip to South Korea in 11 years. Lee is expected to seek to boost economic and other ties with China, South Korea's biggest trading partner, observers say.

China, locked in rivalry with the US, likely sees the need to improve relations with South Korea and Japan. That possibly gives South Korea more diplomatic leverage and allows it to manage its relations with Washington, Beijing and Tokyo more effectively, said Jeonghun Min, a professor at Seoul's National Diplomatic Academy. "South Korea's approach) is to strengthen cooperation with the US on a robust alliance and, on that foundation, manage relations with China and other major countries," Min said. "The attendance of leaders from all major countries at this APEC summit provides a good opportunity to advance such pragmatic diplomacy."

Trump calls Japan 'ally at the strongest level' after meeting Prime Minister Takaichi



WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump reaffirmed America's close alliance with Japan during talks in Tokyo on Tuesday, describing the two nations as "allies at the strongest level." The meeting marked Trump's first encounter with Japan's newly appointed Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, the country's first female leader.

During the talks at the Akasaka Palace, both leaders signed what Trump called a "golden age" agreement to strengthen economic and security cooperation. The document, running less than a page, reaffirmed a US tax rate of 15% on Japanese imports and established a \$550 billion Japanese investment fund for projects in the United States.

A second agreement outlined a framework for securing the supply of critical minerals and rare earth elements, vital to both nations' high-tech industries. Portions of Japan's investment will be directed toward developing rare earth production capabilities.

White House Press

Secretary Karoline Leavitt said afterward that Prime Minister Takaichi intends to nominate President Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize, citing his diplomatic efforts and recent regional ceasefire initiatives.

Trump has repeatedly expressed interest in the prize, claiming credit for mediating international disputes since returning to office in January.

Takaichi, a close protégé of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, opened the meeting by recalling Abe's admiration for Trump's "dynamic diplomacy." She announced that Japan would gift 250 cherry trees to Washington, D.C., in honor of America's upcoming 250th anniversary, and fireworks from Akita Prefecture for next year's Independence Day celebrations.

Trump, known for his blunt exchanges with world leaders, offered only praise for Takaichi. "That's a very strong handshake," he remarked, adding, "Anything I can do to help Japan, we will be there."

President Donald Trump, left, and Japan's Prime

Minister Sanae Takaichi shake hands during a signing ceremony at Akasaka Palace in Tokyo, Japan, Tuesday, Oct. 28, 2025.

The visit also included discussions on trade and defense. Trump, who has long criticized Japan's low imports of US vehicles, promoted a deal for Japan to purchase Ford F-150 trucks, a symbol of his push to rebalance trade. Outside the venue, reporters noted a gold-hued F-150 parked alongside Japanese-made vehicles.

Later in the day, Trump was scheduled to address US troops aboard the USS George Washington, docked near Tokyo, and meet families of Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea.

Trump arrived in Japan after attending the ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur, where he helped broker a ceasefire between Thailand and Cambodia. He is set to travel next to South Korea for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit, where a meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping is expected to focus on trade and rare earth supply chains.

When Democracy Fell Silent: Inside Arunachal's Uncontested 2024 Verdict

In any democracy, elections are meant to be the great equaliser - a festival of participation, persuasion, and plurality. They give ordinary citizens the power to judge those who govern them, to reward or reject, to renew faith or demand change. In India, where democracy has often been described as noisy and unpredictable, elections embody the republic's living spirit. Ballot boxes, campaign trails, and debates - they are the rituals that keep democracy breathing.

Yet, in Arunachal Pradesh's 2024 Assembly elections, that vital pulse seemed to weaken. The state - known for its high voter turnout and spirited participation - witnessed a quiet that was both eerie and unsettling. In ten constituencies, there was no contest at all. No rallies, no campaign debates, no door-to-door persuasion. The winners were declared without a single vote being cast.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the ruling force in the state, won unopposed in ten out of sixty assembly seats: Mukto, Bomdilla, Itanagar, Sagalee, Ziro-Hapoli, Tali, Taliha, Roing, Hayuliang, and Chowkham. These ten seats constitute nearly 21.74% of the Assembly, a figure that might appear, on the surface, as an overwhelming endorsement of the party's popularity. But beneath the arithmetic lies a deeper democratic discomfort. What does it mean when over one-fifth of a state's representation is decided not by the ballot, but by default?

To win an election uncontested is not illegal - India's electoral laws permit it. If no other candidate files nomination or all others withdraw, the sole candidate is declared elected. But legality does not always translate to legitimacy. The essence of democracy is not the result, but the process. When there is no contest, when choices vanish, the process collapses into a monologue - the people are reduced from participants to bystanders.

Each of the ten uncontested victories in Arunachal tells a similar story. In some constituencies, potential challengers quietly withdrew nominations. In others, rival parties reportedly chose not to field candidates at all. Behind these silences lie murmurs of political calculation, pressure, and persuasion - whispers that democracy's stage was cleared long before the curtains rose.

In Mukto, Chief Minister Pema Khandu - a powerful political figure and scion of the late Dorjee Khandu's legacy - was re-elected unopposed. His dominance in the constituency was a foregone conclusion, but it is the absence of a challenger that reveals the extent of his control over the state's political theatre. In Chowkham, Deputy Chief Minister Chowma Mein, one of Arunachal's most influential leaders, also retained his seat uncontested. Similarly, figures like Dongru Siogmu in Bomdilla, Mutchu Mithi in Roing, and others were declared victors without ever testing their popularity in the court of public opinion.

Such a pattern might be interpreted by some as a testament to the BJP's strength and organisational prowess. Yet, in a state where electoral contests were once fiercely fought between regional parties and independents, the silence now sounds more like submission than support.

The Vanishing Opposition

The quiet withdrawal of challengers across constituencies is not an isolated phenomenon. It mirrors a broader erosion of political opposition in Arunachal Pradesh. Regional parties that once offered alternative visions - such as the People's Party of Arunachal (PPA) - have faded into near irrelevance. The Congress, once dominant in the Northeast, has seen its organisational base crumble in the state over the past decade. Many of its leaders have defected to the BJP, often citing development and "double-engine government" narratives.

This consolidation of power has created an environment where the ruling party faces no credible counterweight. In the absence of strong opposition, elections risk becoming symbolic exercises. Democracy is healthiest when choices are real, when citizens can weigh competing visions. But when the field is cleared of alternatives, elections cease to be a reflection of people's will; they become endorsements of inevitability.

A democracy without dissent is like a body without breath - seemingly alive, but hollow within.

Supporters of the ruling party argue that uncontested victories are signs of popular approval that people in those constituencies have immense faith in their representatives. They frame it as an expression of stability and political maturity. After all, if a candidate enjoys broad acceptance, why waste time and money on an unnecessary contest?

But such reasoning oversimplifies a complex reality. In India's political landscape, uncontested seats are rarely the result of unanimous adoration. More often, they emerge from a mix of intimidation, patronage, and quiet deals. Opposition candidates are persuaded - or pressured - not to file nominations. In some cases, party tickets are mysteriously withheld. The line between consent and coercion blurs.

In Arunachal, a state marked by tight-knit communities and localised politics, subtle pressures can be decisive. Many aspiring candidates depend on government contracts or local patronage networks for their livelihoods. Challenging a powerful ruling party candidate can mean not just political defeat, but personal and economic



You are getting distracted again. Focus.

isolation. In such an atmosphere, silence becomes self-preservation.

Even if no overt threats are made, the perception of power imbalance is enough to stifle competition. Thus, uncontested victories



may reflect not the people's confidence in their leaders, but their quiet resignation.

Democracy is not just about voting; it is about having something - or someone - to vote for. The 2024 Arunachal elections raise an unsettling question: what happens when citizens are deprived of that choice?

For the people of Mukto, Roing, or Ziro-Hapoli, there was no ballot to cast, no debate to attend, no manifesto to weigh. The ritual of democracy - that moment when the voter enters the booth and exercises sovereign will - was simply taken away. When nearly a quarter of a state's electorate is denied the right to choose, the moral authority of the entire process stands diminished.

The Election Commission of India, the guardian of the democratic process, may have followed procedure by declaring the unopposed winners. But procedure alone cannot uphold the spirit of democracy. The absence of contest in so many constituencies should have prompted deeper reflection - if not alarm.

Arunachal Pradesh, nestled along India's sensitive border with China, holds a unique place in the nation's democratic fabric. Its elections are not just local exercises; they are also affirmations of India's sovereignty, showcasing how democracy extends to its farthest frontiers. When electoral participation in such a state dwindles, it carries both political and symbolic implications.

In past elections, Arunachal was often celebrated for its high voter turnout, with citizens proudly embracing democracy despite difficult terrain and logistical challenges. Villagers would trek for hours through forests and mountains to cast their votes. This year, that spirit seems muted - replaced by an unsettling quiet. Silence, in politics, is rarely neutral. It can signal satisfaction, but it can also signify fear, fatigue, or futility.

The fact that this silence has come at a time when national politics is witnessing growing centralisation makes it even more concerning. The dominance of one party across multiple states, coupled with the erosion of regional voices, risks turning India's federal democracy into a monolithic system. Arunachal's unopposed verdict, then, is not just a local anomaly; it is part of a wider pattern of shrinking pluralism.

Historically, Arunachal Pradesh has been known for its political resilience. From the early years of statehood, when independent candidates and small parties flourished, to the days of intense multi-cornered contests, the state's democracy was participatory if not always predictable. Local loyalties mattered, but so did ideas of representation and voice.

The decline of this diversity signals a worrying transition - from pluralism to political uniformity. Democracy does not require chaos, but it does require choice. The absence of opposition does not make governance efficient; it makes it unaccountable. Without scrutiny, even the most well-intentioned government risks slipping into complacency or corruption.

The Chief Minister's unopposed re-election may project political stability, but stability that comes without challenge can quickly harden into stagnation. Leadership in a democracy draws its legitimacy from being tested, not merely accepted.

In political theory, monopolies - whether economic or electoral - are inherently dangerous. They eliminate competition, discourage innovation, and breed arrogance. When one party becomes the only viable political force, democracy starts resembling a managed system, where outcomes are predetermined and participation ritualistic.

Arunachal's 2024 verdict is symptomatic of that danger. It reflects the consolidation of power not just through performance or ideology, but through the systematic weakening of alternatives. When opposition leaders switch sides, when rival candidates withdraw without explanation, when elections are won without votes - democracy begins to hollow out from within.

This slow erosion is more insidious than overt authoritarianism. Democracies rarely die in coups anymore; they fade through silence, through the gradual normalisation of unchallenged power. The line between consent and

conformity blurs until both look the same.

The story of Arunachal's uncontested elections holds lessons for the entire country. Across India, electoral politics is witnessing a centralisation of power and narrative. The dominance of one national party has left regional and local parties struggling for survival. While strong leadership can bring stability, it can also narrow the democratic imagination. If elections across states increasingly feature "walkover" victories, it will mark a profound shift - from competitive democracy to managed democracy.

In a federal structure like India's, every state is a pillar of the national democratic edifice. If one pillar weakens, the whole structure trembles. The silence of Arunachal's 2024 verdict, therefore,

should not be dismissed as a local peculiarity. It is a mirror reflecting what can happen when dissent is subdued and participation is replaced by passive acceptance.

What, then, can be done? Democracy cannot be restored by law alone; it must be revived through participation. The opposition parties must rebuild from the grassroots, reconnecting with people's concerns and aspirations. Civil society and media must question, not merely report. The Election Commission must treat unopposed results not as routine, but as red flags indicating democratic decay.

Most importantly, citizens themselves must reclaim their agency. Voting is not just a right; it is a responsibility. Where contests vanish, voters must ask why. Where leaders go unchallenged, people must demand alternatives. A democracy that stops debating stops evolving - and one that stops evolving begins to die.

As the celebrations fade and the government settles into another term, the real meaning of Arunachal's 2024 verdict will depend on what follows. Will this silence deepen into apathy, or will it awaken reflection? Will the ruling party use its uncontested mandate to strengthen democratic institutions, or will it interpret it as a license for unchecked authority?

Arunachal has, over the decades, taught India lessons in endurance - from building roads through mountains to safeguarding borders under difficult conditions. It has shown that democracy can thrive even in remote and fragile geographies. But now, the state faces a different kind of test: can it revive the democratic spirit from within?

The 2024 Arunachal Pradesh Assembly election will be remembered not for its results, but for its silences. Ten seats decided without a contest may seem a statistical footnote, but in truth, they represent a democratic wound. A republic that prides itself on choice cannot afford such silences - not in its borderlands, not anywhere.

Democracy is not efficient by design; it is messy, argumentative, and unpredictable. That is its strength. The noise of competing voices is not a nuisance to be silenced - it is the sound of freedom itself. When that noise fades, democracy begins to suffocate.

Arunachal's quiet verdict, therefore, is not just an electoral outcome - it is a cautionary tale. It reminds us that democracy does not die with a bang, but with the slow, unsettling silence that follows when people stop contesting, questioning, and choosing.

Arunachal has long been a symbol of India's democratic frontier. It must now ensure that it does not become the frontier where democracy itself begins to fade.

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Driving the Spirit of Unity: Bikash Brahma Backs the North East Integration Rally



IMPHAL

When people talk about the North East, they often picture its green hills, winding roads, and vibrant cultures. But what binds these eight states together goes far deeper than geography — it's a shared story of resilience, diversity, and pride. The upcoming North East Integration Rally (NEIR) is an attempt to bring that story to life on the road. Sri Bikash Brahma, IFS (Retd.),

former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Assam, believes the rally captures something essential about the region. In his words, it's not just a journey for cars and motorcycles — it's a journey toward understanding and togetherness. "This rally will not only integrate the people of the North East," he said, "but also help participants and onlookers learn more about the diverse cultures, traditions, and natural land-

scapes of the region."

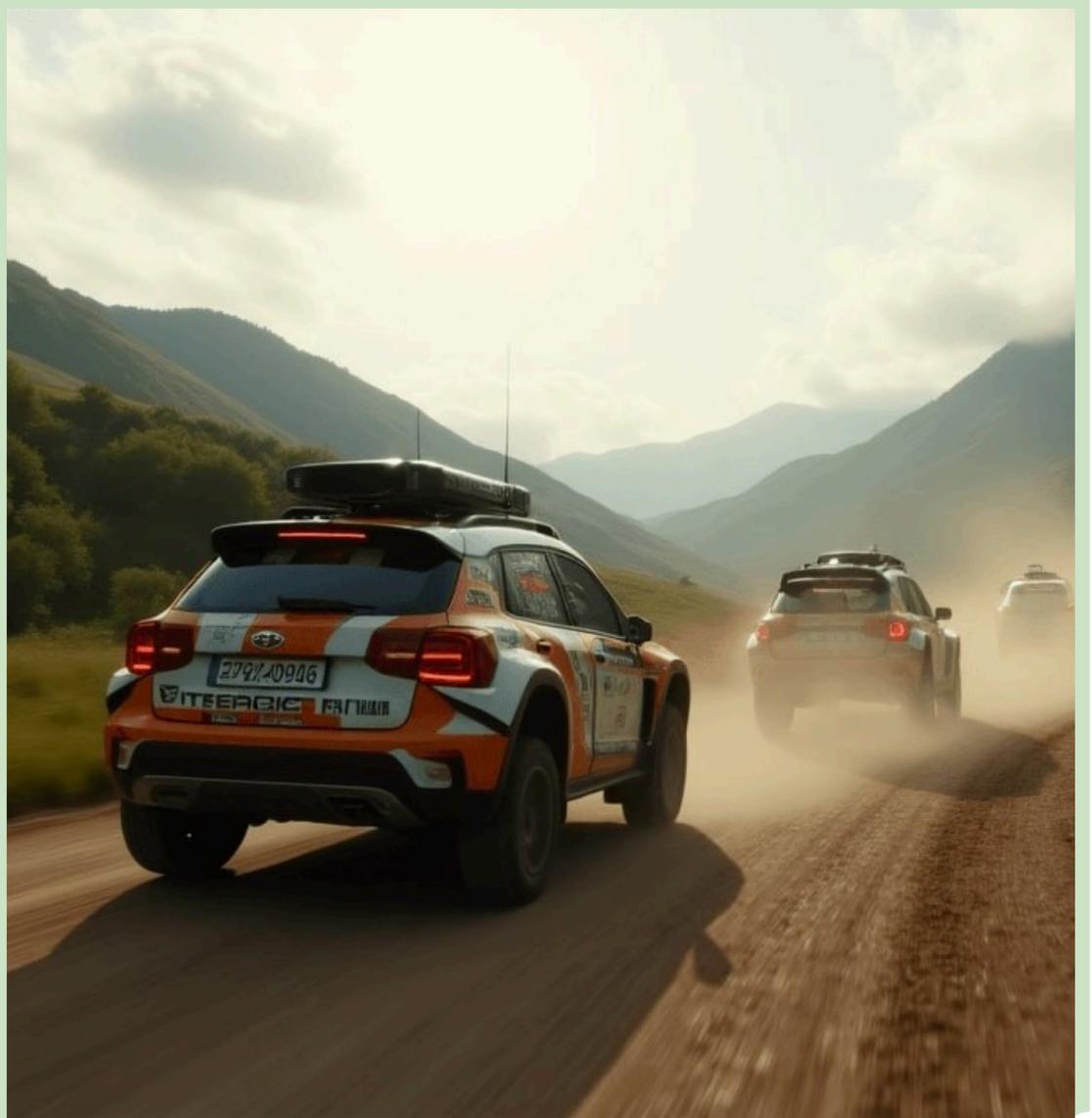
Organised by the KRC Foundation, the NEIR carries the theme "Drive the Difference" and the tagline "One Journey, Many Stories." It's designed as a non-competitive drive — more celebration than contest — moving across all eight North Eastern states. Along the way, it will spotlight local artisans, young entrepreneurs, and community-driven environmental efforts.

At its heart, the rally aims to promote unity, inclusion, and sustainable tourism. It's a reminder that the region's strength lies not in uniformity but in how its many differences come together to form a single, living identity.

Brahma, who has spent decades working to preserve the North East's forests and biodiversity, sees in the rally a reflection of the region's harmony between people and nature. "Such

initiatives are vital for strengthening bonds among communities and for showcasing the true spirit of the North East — a region rich in cultural and ecological harmony," he said.

As engines start and roads unwind, the NEIR is set to become more than an event. It's a moving symbol of what the North East stands for — connection, culture, and a shared journey toward a more united future.





BARAK FESTIVAL

JANUARY 10-12, 2025

ACTIVITY PROGRAM





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



11 JAN
Adventure Sports
 Trekking & Canoe, Obstacle Navigation, Sport Climbing, Disaster Management Technique, Water Sports.
www.krcfoundation.org



11 JAN
Barak Valley Conclave
 Potential, Issues and Challenges of Barak Valley by different youth organizations.
 Includes: MOCA, and D-governance and reform for rural, urban, and semi-urban areas, water, environment, and agriculture, etc. Participation through invitation only. Different rewards are provided.



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



JAN'25
Online Global Fest
 All can participate online and send a video clip on Poems, Songs, and Dance Performances, Bengali, English, Hindi & Manipuri. Last Date: 31st December 2024.



10 JAN
Media Conclave
 Media Conclave: Media Science, Development, and the Future. Talks and Conferences are part of the 'Barak Festival 2025'. Theme: 'One for All, All for One'.
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Barak Festival

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



10 JAN
Media Conclave
 Media Conclave: Media Science, Development, and the Future. Talks and Conferences are part of the 'Barak Festival 2025'. Theme: 'One for All, All for One'.
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10-12 JAN
Science Studio
 Get a glimpse of Science to its new heights. Class VI-XI | Teachers | Seniors, Administrators | Parents.
Raw science out of textbooks into real-life experiences of students.

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

Barak Festival

Band Night | 10 JAN
 Musical Night | 11 JAN



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



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



10-12 JAN
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 #NoOneLeftBehind Campaign | Book Bank | Donate | Buy | Sell

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

Painting Carnival
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