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PERSPECTIVE

"The capacity to learn is a gift. The ability to learn is a skill. The willingness to learn is a choice."
— Brian Herbert

Kolkata-bound IndiGo flight returns to Agartala after bird hit

AGARTALA

A Kolkata-bound IndiGo flight made an emergency return to Maharaja Bir Bikram (MBB) Airport in Tripura on Tuesday afternoon after a bird reportedly hit the aircraft shortly after take-off, airport officials said. The flight, which took off at around 12:40 pm, returned to Agartala nearly 20 minutes later after the pilot detected a possible bird strike. The bird strike reportedly caused a technical snag in the aircraft's engine. "The flight is currently grounded at the airport. A team of engineers has arrived, and repair work is underway. Once they complete the inspection and necessary repairs, they will conduct a test run to confirm the aircraft's airworthiness," an airport official said. The incident caused panic among passengers, but all of them remained safe. The airline rescheduled the travel plans of the affected passengers, according to officials. "Some passengers took subsequent flights today, while others have been rebooked for tomorrow," the official added. Bird strikes continue to pose a recurring challenge for flight operations across the country.

WHO SAID WHAT

People of Assam face an existential crisis with the mass scale demographic shift happening in the State since the last few decades. We need to stand together, fight this and be vigilant because **DEMOGRAPHY IS DESTINY AND WE WILL FIGHT FOR OUR IDENTITY, come what may.**
— Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Assam CM

Aizawl-Silchar road worsens, over 700 vehicles stranded for past 24 hrs

SILCHAR

The condition of the Aizawl-Silchar Road has further worsened in the wake of the recent burst of rainfall. Officials on Tuesday stated that 717 vehicles had been stranded on the highway over the last 24 hours. Vehicles carrying essential commodities have not been able to move towards the State capital. Additionally, empty trucks bound for Assam are also stuck on the road. "Altogether 316 empty trucks heading for Assam and 401 goods-laden trucks bound for Aizawl have been stranded in the last 24 hours," a Kolasib district official stated. The Sairang-Kawnpui stretch of the national highway connecting Mizoram and Assam, is again in a dilapidated state. The National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) began repair works today, with the Mizoram Public Works Department supplying boulders for the project. Meanwhile, roads leading to Ma-



mit town are also in poor shape. Two organisations, All NGOs Mami and Commercial Vehicles Association, have threatened an indefinite strike from October 16 if repair works are not carried out by the State Government. A joint meeting of the two bodies held on Monday highlighted the sever-

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Zubeen Garg Case: Shyamkanu, Siddharth, PSOs and Sandipan Garg in judicial custody at Baksa jail



GUWAHATI

Advocate Pradip Konwar, appearing on behalf of the Assam government in the Zubeen Garg case, said on October 15 that all five accused were produced before the court after completing 14 days of judicial custody and were again remanded to judicial custody. The five accused, NorthEast India Festival organiser Shyamkanu Mahanta, Zubeen's manager Siddharth Sharma, Zubeen's cousin Sandipan Garg and bodyguards (PSOs) of the late singer, Nandeshwar Bora and Paresh Baishya have been sent to 14-day judicial custody. Speaking to reporters after the

hearing, Konwar said, "After completion of 14 days of judicial custody, they were produced before the Court, and the court passed an order to send them to judicial custody—meaning jail." He confirmed that all five accused were produced and none had filed bail petitions. Meanwhile, Shyamkanu Mahanta, Siddharth Sharma and three other accused have been transferred to Baksa District Jail in Muzalpur. Konwar added that the investigating agency has not sought further custody since the law does not permit extension beyond 14 days. "There is no provision to extend custody beyond 14 days. That is the bar," he stated.

SIT Chief claims leaked GMCH post mortem report of Zubeen Garg 'not genuine'



GUWAHATI

SIT Chief and Special DGP of CID, Munna Prasad Gupta, briefed the media today, October 15 on the ongoing investigation into the Zubeen Garg death case, while claiming that the viral circulation of a GMCH post-mortem report of Zubeen Garg on social media and messaging platforms is 'not genuine'. Gupta addressing the media clarified, "That report is not genuine. It lacks any doctor's signature and is therefore not authentic." The SIT chief further stated that the police remand of five accused ends today, and all will be produced before the Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM) Court as per the scheduled proceedings. Of the 11 Assamese expatriates from Singapore, nine have already

arrived and recorded their statements. Gupta added that if the remaining expatriate arrives today, his statement will also be recorded, bringing the total to 10 recorded statements. He further informed that Shekharjyoti Goswami and Amritprabha Mahanta are scheduled to be produced before the court on October 17. Meanwhile, a team of medical experts visited the CID office in Guwahati to conduct health examinations of the five accused, including Shyamkanu Mahanta and Siddharth Sharma. These evaluations are being carried out under strict supervision within CID premises. Two expatriate Assamese individuals, Sushmita Goswami and Debojit Hazarika, also reached the CID office today for official proceedings. According to sources, all five accused are expected to be produced before the CJM Court around 9 AM, after which they are likely to be sent to judicial custody. The investigation remains under tight scrutiny as authorities continue to coordinate witness statements, medical examinations, and judicial proceedings.

Manipur More Stable Under President's Rule, Asserts N. Biren Singh



IMPHAL

Former Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh stated that the state's law and order situation has shown marked improvement following the imposition of President's Rule. Singh made the remarks while addressing the media at Imphal airport on Tuesday after returning from New Delhi, where he had been camping for over a week along with 25 BJP MLAs. Responding to questions about the formation of a new government, Singh clarified that any decision would come from the BJP's national leadership. "The BJP functions as a national party, not a regional one. The central leadership makes decisions like government formation in Manipur, not local leaders," he said, stressing the importance of consulting central leaders. Singh reiterated that their Delhi visit aimed to seek meetings with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah. The delegation planned to present the concerns of the people of Manipur, including the issue of internally dis-

placed persons (IDPs), road connectivity, and the demand for a popular government. "We are simply conveying the people's concerns to the Centre. Whether it's about IDPs, highways, or restoring a popular government, our message is clear: the voice of Manipur must be heard at the national level," Singh added. He criticized political opponents for attempting to politicize the situation. "While some parties demand the dissolution of the assembly, we represent the will of the people and refuse to follow any one party's agenda," Singh said, indirectly referring to the Congress. The Centre imposed President's Rule in Manipur in February 2025 after Singh resigned, facing mounting criticism over how his administration handled the ethnic violence between the Meitei and Kuki communities. The conflict, which erupted in May 2023, has claimed over 260 lives and displaced thousands. Singh noted that this is not the first time the state has come under President's Rule. "Manipur has experienced it 11 times, even when elected governments held a majority. Such a step becomes necessary when law and order collapses," he explained. He affirmed that the Centre continues to hold discussions. "All communities are engaging with the Union Home Ministry, and the Centre will inevitably form a popular government," Singh said.

Tripura government signs MoU with AIIMS to develop centres of excellence in healthcare: CM Manik Saha

AGARTALA

The Tripura Government has partnered with AIIMS, New Delhi, to establish Centres of Excellence in medical education and healthcare services across the state. The MoU aims to upgrade medical colleges and hospitals, focusing on Agartala Government Medical College and GB Pant Hospital, to meet international standards. The collaboration with AIIMS is expected to enhance Tripura's healthcare ecosystem, improving clinical outcomes and educational opportunities for local professionals. In a landmark move aimed at revolutionizing healthcare in Tripura, the Government of Tripura today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi to develop Centres of Excellence in medical education and advanced healthcare services across the state. The MoU was signed in the presence of Chief Minister Prof. (Dr.) Manik Saha at Tripura Bhawan, New Delhi, marking a major milestone in the state's journey toward modern, patient-centric healthcare delivery. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Saha, who also holds the Health & Family Welfare portfolio, described the partnership as a "moment of great pride" for Tripura.



"This MoU signifies a transformative step toward upgrading our medical colleges and hospitals, particularly the Agartala Government Medical College (AGMC) and GB Pant Hospital, into state-of-the-art Centres of Excellence aligned with international standards," said the Chief Minister. He added that the state government envisions developing AGMC and GB Pant Hospital into a "comprehensive medical hub equipped with modern infrastructure, advanced diagnostic facilities, and super-specialty care—modeled on the excellence of AIIMS, New Delhi. Highlighting AIIMS' global reputation, Dr. Saha noted, "AIIMS is a globally acclaimed

institution known for its pioneering contributions to medical education, research, and advanced patient care. This collaboration will play a pivotal role in strengthening Tripura's healthcare ecosystem and expanding the reach of quality medical services across the state." He said the MoU underscores the government's commitment to ensuring that people of Tripura have access to world-class healthcare facilities, reducing the need for patients to travel outside the state for advanced treatment. Dr. M. Srinivas, Director of AIIMS, New Delhi, along with senior officials from both AIIMS and the Health Department, Government of Tripura, were present during the signing ceremony.

Manipur imposes ban on hunting of Amur Falcons in Tamenglong

IMPHAL

In view of the arrival of Amur falcons, the Tamenglong district administration in Manipur has imposed a ban on the killing and sale of these migratory birds during their roosting period there. District Magistrate Dr L. Angshim Dangshawa on Tuesday ordered a ban on hunting and catching of Amur falcons by invoking relevant provisions of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. The District Magistrate also ordered a ban on the use of air guns in the district, asking all in possession of these weapons to deposit them to the village authorities concerned till the departure of the last flock of the roosting Amur falcons or till November 30. "Any person found wilfully violating these prohibitory orders shall face action under the provisions of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and other relevant laws in force," the DC said. The Tamenglong district administration has clamped the ban on the request of the Tamenglong Divisional Forest Division.

The Amur falcons (Falco amurensis), known as 'Akhuaipuna' in Rongmei dialect, have already arrived at Guangram village in the district. "This year too, the Forest Department, Manipur, in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India, is going to tag three more Amur falcons with satellite transmitters to continue the ongoing research works," stated Divisional Forest Officer Kh. Hitar Singh of Tamenglong Forest Division. The radio-tagging programme of Amur falcons started in the State in 2018 as part of an initiative to conserve wildlife and study the route of these longest-travelling raptors. These pigeon-sized birds usually arrive in Manipur, mostly in Tamenglong and neighbouring Nagaland's Wokha area, mostly in October from their breeding grounds in south-eastern Siberia and northern China, to undertake a yearly journey covering up to 22,000 km. They leave the North East region of India in November after having enough food for their non-stop flight to Africa, where they spend their winters.



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COMMERCIALISATION OF DIWALI

Diwali, traditionally revered as the Festival of Lights, has long symbolized the triumph of righteousness over immorality, humility over ego, and gratitude over greed. Rooted in rituals like Lakshmi Pujan, diya lighting, and Ramayana storytelling, it celebrates the return of Lord Rama, Sita, and Lakshman to Ayodhya, emphasizing values of dharma, sacrifice, loyalty, and collective joy. It is also associated with Lord Ganesha's wisdom and Goddess Lakshmi's blessings—not merely of wealth, but of purity, balance, and prosperity earned through righteousness.

Yet today, the spirit of Diwali is steadily being overpowered by commercial capitalism and Global Market Forces, which have rebranded it into one of the world's biggest shopping seasons. What was once a sacred celebration is increasingly packaged as a festival of electronics, fashion, and luxury gifting.

Multinational corporations and e-commerce giants have strategically identified Diwali not as a sacred festival, but as a high-profit economic opportunity. Their campaigns are not neutral—they are designed to reshape social behaviour, encouraging people to associate happiness with purchases rather than prayers, discount coupons rather than family gatherings, and brand logos rather than cultural symbols.

This is not accidental—it is a global economic strategy that thrives on breaking traditional value systems so that identity shifts from 'rootedness' to 'consumerism'. Cultural ethos becomes obsolete in this model, because a person who is content with tradition is a poor consumer. Therefore, global market forces actively dilute festivals into seasonal marketing events, disconnecting people from their heritage in the name of modern celebration.

Major online retailers like Amazon and Flipkart have strategically timed their flagship sales—Great Indian Festival and Big Billion Days—to coincide with Diwali. Their campaigns aggressively promote electronics, smartphones, appliances, and fashion as Diwali "essentials."

This marketing subtly redefines celebration as consumption. Instead of cleaning the home for the arrival of Goddess Lakshmi, the act of "upgrading your lifestyle" becomes the new ritual. Spiritual preparation is replaced with wishlist tracking and cart checkouts.

Earlier, Diwali gifting was rooted in affection and symbolism—handmade sweets, diya sets, or local handlooms. Today, multinational confectionery and lifestyle brands dominate gifting culture, selling Ferrero Rocher hampers, Cadbury Celebration packs, Haldi-ram gift boxes, and even Nykaa self-care combos as must-have Diwali tokens. What was once an act of emotional exchange has been restructured into corporate choice and consumer prestige.

Brands increasingly use diyas, rangoli, or Ravan silhouettes merely as graphic backdrops to advertise products. Gold and jewellery brands promote Diwali as "Festival of Fashion", with slogans like "Dil wali Diwali," yet their ads focus more on outfits and ornaments than rituals or gods. The spiritual core is sidelined, and Diwali becomes a photo-op for Instagram aesthetics—complete with luxury décor and designer outfits.

While bans on firecrackers were meant to reduce pollution, the market capitalized on this shift. LED lighting, imported fairy lights from China, laser shows, and "eco-friendly crackers" are now sold aggressively—not as sustainable alternatives, but as trendy upgrades. Even the sacred act of lighting a diya is now often replaced by battery-operated LED diyas, stripping away the symbolic connection with Agni (fire) and purity.

Malls, multiplexes, and restaurants host "Diwali carnivals, DJ nights, and festive food fests." Instead of gathering at home for bhajans or puran poli meals, people spend Diwali in commercial spaces designed to maximize expenditure rather than connection. Commercialization has expanded economic opportunity for many sectors—artisans selling diyas online, sweet shops gaining business through packaging innovations, and tourism benefiting from festive travel. However, the danger lies in total replacement rather than healthy coexistence. If Diwali becomes only about luxury spending and social media aesthetics, the values of community bonding, gratitude, prayer, and charity will fade. If India aspires to protect its civilizational identity, then cultural sustainability must be treated as seriously as environmental sustainability or economic growth. Just as we protect rivers, forests, and heritage sites, we must protect festivals from cultural dilution. Diwali is not just an occasion—it is a declaration of Indian civilization, rooted in characters like Rama's righteousness, Sita's strength, Lakshman's loyalty, Ganesha's intellect, and Lakshmi's grace, which symbolize values far beyond monetary wealth. Lakshmi is not the goddess of shopping—she is the goddess of earned prosperity, inner illumination, and mutual goodwill. To celebrate Diwali truly, we must remind ourselves: Diwali is not about what we buy—it is about what we become. Modern conveniences, gifting innovations, and digital platforms may coexist with tradition—but they must not overpower it. Let Diwali be a celebration of values before it becomes a celebration of valuables. Let us light diyas not just on shelves, but in our conduct. The challenge is not to reject modern celebration—but to balance festivity with authenticity. A Diwali where gadget discounts coexist with gratitude, where fashion blends with faith, and where LEDs shine alongside clay diyas, is still possible. A culturally conscious nation is not built by shopping carts, but by shared stories, rituals, and inherited virtues. This Diwali, may India choose Rama over retail, wisdom over excess, and light over glitter.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Relativism, positivism, and nihilism — modern doctrines which mock wisdom and scorn virtue — have at the dawn of the twenty-first century come to dominate. - Harry V. Jaffa

DR MUHAMMAD AMIN MALIK

We are living in extraordinary times. Rapid technological advancements, the surge of artificial intelligence, digitalization and automation are reshaping the global job landscape. Conventional forms of employment are steadily shrinking, leaving even the most qualified individuals like postgraduates, PhDs etc struggling to find a meaningful employment. Today, the true wealth of nations is not only measured by the abundance of natural resources but also by their ability to generate new ideas, foster innovation and encourage entrepreneurship. In this respect, success depends less on formal degrees and more on creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In this evolving environment, when the boundaries of science, technology and business are rapidly converging, it is imperative to embrace a new mindset and appreciate the value of knowledge creation, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

The higher education institutions under NEP-2020 have to come up with practical solutions to equip learners with skills that go beyond traditional academic boundaries. The institutions have to foster not only academic knowledge but train students to innovate and translate ideas into action that prepares them for a dynamic, technology-driven world. At the same time, it is important to understand the fundamental business concepts. Understanding the language of innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise has become a necessity for one and all to cultivate the ability to translate ideas into practical solutions that address real-world problems. For individuals in the sciences, understanding the business concepts can be challenging with many even stumble to correctly pronounce 'entrepreneurship' let alone grasp their full meaning. If professionals face such difficulties, one can imagine the challenge for students from traditional academic subjects who are part of the audience listening to such lectures from experts. These concepts are not just fashionable words, but powerful tools for survival and success in the increasingly competitive world of the 21st century.

A vast body of knowledge, principles, and phenomena has already been discovered by scientists through research, experimentation and observation which sheds light on natural world and human affairs. Innovators imagine what is possible; the engineers make it practical by turning ideas into new products, services and solutions. Together, they solve problems that improve our quality of life and this process also generates employment opportunities. Einstein would never have thought that one day his General Theory of Relativity would be crucial for a pinpoint accuracy of the GPS system. It was the job of engineers and innovators who applied their ideas in technologies like GPS. Entrepreneurship is a broad concept centered on transforming ideas and innovations into business ventures that disrupts markets. Its main focus is on creating something new and meaningful that solves problems and improves our lives. The Entrepreneurs identify gaps and opportunities in the market by taking risks; the

ANIL ANAND

Rahul Gandhi's recent foreign visit has once again set off a familiar debate—one that questions his priorities, political seriousness, and timing. As the country heads towards a crucial electoral phase, critics argue that a responsible leader should be investing his energy in preparing strategies, strengthening his party, and connecting with people at the grassroots. Instead, Gandhi's decision to travel abroad has invited sharp criticism from the ruling dispensation, which claims he treats politics as a "part-time venture" rather than a lifelong commitment. The controversy gained traction when the RSS mouthpiece Organiser published an article raising a series of probing questions from the Sangh's perspective.

It asked whether Gandhi's trip represents genuine foreign engagement or political absenteeism. The article further questioned in what capacity Gandhi, who currently holds no formal government position, is representing India during his overseas interactions. The publication also raised doubts about whether the Congress leader—who lacks specialised expertise in trade, economics, or international relations—can meaningfully influence bilateral relations, or whether these meetings are largely ceremonial in nature.

Finally, it posed the most critical question: do these visits serve to enhance Rahul Gandhi's personal image abroad while diverting attention from pressing domestic issues? These concerns, though sharply worded, are not entirely new. Over the years, the BJP and its ideological



profit follows naturally as a result. Fundamentally, our work should not only earn money for survival, but also contribute to society and add value to the lives of others. The great Edison lit up the world with his inventions, inspired humanity with his innovations and as an entrepreneur built successful businesses to make these innovations accessible worldwide.

A startup is a form of entrepreneurship. In fact, every startup is entrepreneurship, but not vice versa. Startup is typically new, innovative, tech-driven, fast-growing, and aimed at reaching a wider community.

If I identify a gap and open a medical shop offering 20% discount at a place where we don't have any such shop, it is an Entrepreneurship. If you add your shop for online delivery, telemedicine tie-ups, subscriptions-based medicine, then it becomes a startup. Ola Cabs—an app-based taxi booking system, replaced the old way of hailing taxis. It is a startup because it leverages innovation, technology and scalability that disrupted the traditional transport method. A traditional tailoring shop now offers doorstep pickup/delivery; along with customized designs, is an entrepreneurship. If he adds an app/website where customers can customize clothes virtually, place online orders and if you expand this service beyond the local town to many cities, it becomes a startup. If an innovative idea scales globally, attracts investors/designers/delivery agents and generates large employment, it evolves into a big business. Flipkart started in 2007 as an online bookstore with cash on delivery and grew from a startup into a multinational business.

Through the Institution's Innovation Council (IIC) at Sheikh-ul-Alam Govt Degree College, Budgam, over the past few months, we conducted many programs on entrepreneurship, innovation, Mission Yuva, and other employment-generating initiatives with agencies like J&K Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI), National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT), National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), polytechnics, ITIs and other Government/private agencies. We also organized two successful recruitment drives in the campus. Recently, we conducted a bootcamp with JKEDI to evaluate and shape up the ideas of students and ignite their entrepreneurial spirits. Experts from diverse fields engaged with students on the feasibility of innovative ideas in the local context, shared insights on entrepreneurship initiatives, real-world challenges, and discussed J&K Startup Policy and

various other schemes. Students were introduced to the concepts on resource mobilization, financial planning, customer-centric thinking, and various 'dos and don'ts.'

They were inspired by success stories—one of an entrepreneur who grew a small mobile sales and service shop into a leading outlet with an annual turnover of ₹50 lakh, and another who built eco-friendly wooden pellets, creating jobs while addressing environmental challenges.

The bootcamps on entrepreneurship, innovation, and start-up support systems play a crucial role in nurturing creativity and problem-solving skills among students. While the entrepreneurs share their journey, the students are encouraged to think beyond conventional boundaries with experts guiding them to refine and expand ideas into actionable ventures. With students in our institutions now having access to quality lectures and abundant resources from countless online platforms, the role of the teacher is shifting from a transmitter of knowledge to a facilitator of learning. The education now extends far beyond the routine classroom lectures.

The on-site programs like bootcamp provides hands-on, face-to-face engagement, giving students practical knowledge and helping them prepare for real-world challenges that neither online resources nor regular lectures can offer. While these initiatives generate considerable enthusiasm among students, much work needs to be done to refine their thoughts who usually come up with immature, impractical, or already implemented ideas. The students need to be told that entrepreneurship, startups and innovation are not just popular expressions, but powerful tools to connect knowledge creation with its real-world application.

Jammu & Kashmir has immense potential for entrepreneurship because of its unique geography, culture, and resources. The sectors like agriculture, horticulture, tourism, handicrafts, IT & Commerce, health services, renewable energy, waste management, handicrafts, and floriculture provide a rich canvas for innovative ventures. With the growing impact of climate change and the global focus shifting on sustainable practices and green technologies, there are vast opportunities to innovate eco-friendly products and other environment-centric solutions to generate employment. To tap these opportunities, the young minds are to be trained to think creatively, nurture feasible ideas and explore new avenues for sustainable livelihood. The Higher educational

intuitions have to provide platforms where the students can interact with Innovators and Entrepreneurs. A culture of entrepreneurship, innovation and self-reliance, supported by Government schemes and private investment is the only ray of hope to reduce unemployment and dependence on Government jobs.

The future belongs not just to those who move in search of jobs, but to those who are prepared to create them.

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

I've heard that people who supported the Liberation War are being removed from the Bangladesh Army. In the law enforcement agencies, in schools and colleges, in offices, in the courts — everywhere in the country — in the name of "reform" those who stood for the Liberation War are being pushed out and opponents' people installed. This is being done so that if the Islamist forces who opposed the Liberation War come to power, no one from any quarter will be able to cause them trouble. The religious profiteers have tightened their grip everywhere.

No one will now be able to save this country from the hands of Islamic fundamentalists. I blame every political party. While enjoying the comforts of power they did not think about the good of the country. For the last fifty years the rulers have used religion for their own ends. Out of religion a monster was born — and that monster will come to power; anyone with foresight would have understood that. There was absolutely no foresight — what can I say! Perhaps some foresight existed, but it counted for nothing for them.

So be it. Let those who want a caliphate come. Let Sharia law be enacted. Let the country be run by God's law. People will feel in their bones what Islam really means. Haven't the women of Iran and Afghanistan felt it? People will have to live in dark caves of barbarism, incivility, brutality, and dishonesty.

If people want to see the light of civilization, they will rise up and fight against Islam. That struggle will be the true Liberation War.

~ Taslima Nasreen, Author

RAHUL GANDHI'S FOREIGN VISIT SPARKS DEBATE OVER PRIORITIES, PURPOSE, AND POLITICAL OPTICS

affiliates have built a narrative portraying him as inconsistent, detached, and politically uncommitted. Each foreign visit is presented as proof of his lack of seriousness—an argument that has persisted despite Gandhi's recent efforts to reconnect with the public through initiatives like the Bharat Jodo Yatra. However, the debate cannot be reduced merely to partisan attacks.

It also raises an important question about how Indian political leaders, particularly those in opposition, should engage with the wider world. In a globalised era where issues such as climate change, migration, technology, and economic policy transcend borders, it is not unusual for senior political figures to travel abroad, build networks, and exchange ideas. As Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, Gandhi occupies a legitimate constitutional position that allows him to undertake such visits to strengthen dialogue, explore partnerships, and present an alternative political vision for India.

Supporters of Gandhi argue that his trips reflect an attempt to expand India's democratic conversation beyond national boundaries. By engaging with global thinkers, political leaders, and civil society institutions, he seeks to share perspectives on India's social and political evolution while listening to how other democracies are grappling with similar challenges. In this view, his foreign visits are an expression of curiosity, openness, and democratic dialogue—qualities essential for a modern political leader.

Yet, even among his well-wishers, there is unease

about timing. The Congress Party is at a crucial juncture: rebuilding state-level organisations, refining its electoral message, and managing internal rivalries. With key elections approaching, Gandhi's absence from the domestic political scene—even temporarily—creates leadership vacuum that can be exploited by opponents. At a time when his party needs visible, day-to-day direction, international trips, however meaningful, risk being perceived as detachment from immediate political realities. Optics matter deeply in politics. Even if Gandhi's visit is rooted in legitimate dialogue and global outreach, perception often overrides intention. The ruling establishment and its media allies have perfected the art of turning optics into narratives. The visual contrast between a prime minister constantly engaging with citizens across India and an opposition leader addressing international audiences abroad is powerful and easily weaponised. Without clear communication from the Congress about the goals and outcomes of such trips, the perception of misplaced priorities becomes difficult to counter.

At the same time, the Organiser's framing of Gandhi's travel reflects a deeper ideological contest. By questioning his authority to "represent India," it implies that only those in power have the legitimacy to speak internationally about the nation. This is a narrow interpretation of democracy. In truth, every elected representative—whether in government or opposition—has a stake in shaping India's image abroad. In many mature democracies, opposition leaders routinely meet

foreign dignitaries, participate in policy dialogues, and articulate alternative viewpoints without being accused of undermining national interests.

The criticism also raises a larger philosophical question: should leadership be judged solely by physical presence or by the quality of engagement and ideas? A modern leader's responsibility extends beyond managing electoral machinery; it also involves broadening perspectives and preparing for a rapidly changing world. Gandhi's international outreach could serve that purpose if it is strategically aligned with domestic objectives and accompanied by transparency about its agenda. Nevertheless, Gandhi's challenge lies precisely in bridging this gap between action and perception. His past absences from key domestic moments have left a lasting imprint on public opinion. Even when his intentions are legitimate, they are viewed through the prism of an established stereotype. This underscores the need for a more robust communication strategy from the Congress—to proactively frame his visits not as leisure trips, but as efforts to represent an inclusive, democratic, and forward-looking vision of India. Another aspect worth considering is the potential outcome of these visits. If Gandhi's meetings abroad lead to meaningful dialogues on trade, technology, education, or environmental collaboration, they could strengthen his image as a serious statesman. But if they are seen as mere photo opportunities, the criticism of "self-aggrandisement" will grow louder.

Assam delegation meets SIT: No details on Zubeen Garg case shared, seeks nodal officer



GUWAHATI

Representatives from Assam, including Sanjeev Phukan of Dainik Janambhumi and Dr Hitesh Baruah, met with the State Investigation Department (SID) to discuss the ongoing probe into the death of singer-actor Zubeen Garg, providing updates and voicing public concerns.

When asked about the purpose of the meeting, Sanjeev Phukan said, "Basically,

we just represented the people of Assam. We represented ourselves as well."

The delegation was informed about the current progress of the investigation, and Phukan expressed satisfaction at the updates provided.

"Out of 11 witnesses from Singapore, seven have already appeared, and the remaining three will come tomorrow. They will be interrogated, and their statements will corroborate the evidence," he said.

The representatives stressed the importance of a strong search sheet to ensure that those responsible are punished. They also made several suggestions to the SIT, including the appointment of a nodal officer who could provide updates to the media periodically. Phukan noted that this was necessary to curb rumors and misinformation about the investigative procedures, some of which had been circulating without authenticity.

Regarding cooperation with international authorities, Phukan revealed that the Assam Police received an email from Singapore authorities requesting permission to investigate the site of occurrence in Assam. "This is a positive move," he said, emphasizing the importance of cross-border cooperation in gathering evidence.

When asked about information shared by the SIT during the meeting, Phukan clarified that no specific investigative details were disclosed. However, he confirmed that the SIT informed the delegation about receiving the Singapore authorities' request and that the names of the investigating officers will soon be submitted for the international process.

Hitesh Baruah added, "We pressed for justice for Zubeen. We have full confidence and faith that the SIT will deliver justice. Nothing else was discussed beyond that."

Regarding the timeline for the investigation, Phukan confirmed that the SIT assured submission of the search sheet within the stipulated 90-day period.

"Within 90 days, they will provide everything," he said, underlining the department's commitment to a timely and thorough investigation.

The meeting highlights Assam's proactive engagement with the SIT to ensure transparency and accountability in this high-profile case. The delegation's focus remained on justice for Zubeen Garg, safeguarding the integrity of the investigation, and ensuring that accurate information reaches the public, addressing concerns about rumors and misinformation circulating in the media.

The assurances from the SIT and cooperation from Singapore authorities signal a significant step toward resolving the case, which has captured national attention due to its sensitivity and the public demand for justice.

Bru organisation seeks corrigendum from Tripura CM over remark on community's origin

AGARTALA

An organisation representing Tripura's Bru community on Tuesday said Chief Minister Manik Saha had "inadvertently" made an error regarding the community's origin in a recent speech, and urged him to issue a clarification.

According to the Bru People Organisation (BPO), the remark was made during a programme in South Tripura's Bagafa on October 8.

"In the event, the Bru (Reang) community was referred to as originating from the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh and as second settlers in Tripura. In reality, they are the aboriginal sons of the soil of Tripura," BPO president S.K. Msha said in a statement.

Bru are also known as Reangs. The BPO, which submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister's Office in this regard, said that before

the partition of India, the ancient Kingdom of Tripura was spread over regions now in Bangladesh, Mizoram, Assam and Manipur.

"Hence, while some Tripura people (indigenous residents of Tripura) may today reside beyond India's borders, the Bru (Reang) community has always remained firmly rooted within Indian soil, sharing in the same heritage, culture, and bloodline that define the great Kingdom of Tripura," Msha said in the statement.

The BPO maintained that the chief minister's remark was made without any deliberate intention to misrepresent the community. However, the statement "has nonetheless caused deep emotional distress and misunderstanding among members of the Bru (Reang) community after its widespread circulation on social and digital media," the BPO president said.

Nagaland launches Command and Control Center to boost soil health management

NEW DELHI

A new Command and Control Center (CCC) designed to enhance data-driven agricultural management and farmer outreach was commissioned at the Directorate of Soil & Water Conservation, Kohima, by Advisor for IPR and Soil & Water Conservation, Imkong L. Imchen, on October 13.

The tech-based centre, funded jointly by the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Government of India, and the Government of Nagaland under the Soil Health and Fertility component of Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), aims to provide real-time insights on soil conditions and crop health. It will also serve as a direct communication hub between farmers and officials through a toll-free number (+91 7965192504) for soil and fertility-related queries.

Speaking at the launch, Imchen said the centre would ease the workload of field staff while improving decision-making and problem-solving for farmers. He emphasised the importance of bridging the gap between experts and cultivators through transparent and accessible communication. "Trust between officers and farmers is vital for the department's progress and for adopting innovative technologies in sustainable soil and water management," he stated.

The advisor also pointed out the limited budget allocation to the department, noting that despite having skilled officers and the capacity to execute projects effectively, financial constraints had hindered its growth.

Director of Soil & Water Conservation, L. Chubaonen, provided a technical overview of the new centre.

Assam Rifles nab six drug peddlers in anti-narcotics operations with Manipur Police

IMPHAL

The Assam Rifles, in coordination with the Manipur Police, conducted anti-narcotics operations in the Senapati and Kangpokpi districts of Manipur. The joint operations led to the apprehension of six drug peddlers and the recovery of a large quantity of narcotics, officials said.

According to a release, during the operation carried out in Martyrs Park, Assam Rifles recovered 270 soap cases of Brown Sugar, weighing approximately 3636 kg, valued at around Rs 726 crore as per international market rates.

The apprehended individuals and the seized contraband were handed over to the Police for further investigation and legal action, the release stated.

On Monday, Assam Rifles, in a joint operation with Assam Rifles, recovered and seized 10,000 Yaba tablets and 1.25 lakh packets of cigarettes worth Rs eight crore in Assam's Cachar district, officials said.

Numal Mahatta, Senior Super-

intendent of Police of Cachar district, said that, based on reliable intelligence, Cachar Police on October 11 conducted a riverine operation against the transportation of narcotic substances along the Assam-Manipur border under the jurisdiction of Lakhimpur Police Station.

"During the joint operation with Assam Rifles in the Barak river, a country-made boat was intercepted with suspected articles, which were kept hidden in the remote area of Jakuradhar of the Assam-Manipur border. While conducting a search of the suspected boat in the presence of Independent witnesses, 10,000 Yaba tablets and 1.25 lakh packets of Esse light cigarettes were recovered," Numal Mahatta said.

"During the preliminary investigation, it has come to light that the suspected narcotic substances were illegally transported from Churachandpur, Manipur," Mahatta added.

The senior police official further said that the black market value of the seized articles is worth Rs eight crore.

Riniki Bhuyan hits back at AJP chief Lurinjyoti Gogoi with defamation suit



GUWAHATI

Riniki Bhuyan, Managing Director of Pride East Entertainment Private Limited and wife of Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, has filed defamation proceedings against Assam Jatiya Parishad leader Lurinjyoti Gogoi over false assertions regarding the nature of the 'Golden Threads of Assam' organisation.

Bhuyan contends that the organisation is "a society registered under

the Society Act, comprising over 3,000 individuals at the grassroots level," contrary to Gogoi's alleged claims that it operates as a commercial company.

The dispute extends beyond organisational classification. Bhuyan argues that conducting a fashion show following recent events "damages the credibility" of ongoing justice campaigns while "falsely using the name for political benefits, thereby creating a misnomer within society."

Bhuyan emphasises that the legal proceedings represent more than personal vindication. "I am responsible to the people of Assam, especially the youths, who deserve to know the truth rather than be misled," she stated. "It is an emotion strongly connected to every heart."

The activist stressed that the push for legal clarity concerns not just her reputation but the livelihoods of 3,000 women who rely on the organisation for their daily sustenance. Four separate legal proceedings are currently pending, each addressing different aspects of the allegations. Case 1 - Against Ms Mira Borthakur (C.R./26488/2025): The complainant faces allegations of claiming that funds collected from donations at Kamakhya Temple and Mrityunjay Mandir were being misappropriated. On the first hearing date, there was no appearance. Subsequently, the accused submitted a health certification and posted bail under Section 356(1), (2), (3), (4)

of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. A pre-cognisance hearing is scheduled for October 31.

Case 2 - Against Upamanyu, Asomiya Pratidin, Jayanta Baruah, Jatin Chodhury, Staff Reporter, and others (CR Case No 68 of 25): All accused appeared before the court, with the matter scheduled for a pre-cognisance hearing on October 16, 2025. Cases 3 & 4 - Against Mr Akhil Gogoi and Mr Lurin Jyoti Gogoi: Both cases have been fixed for necessary orders on October 30, 2025. Bhuyan reiterated her commitment to transparency. "I am not providing this post-ego clarification to satisfy the ego of so-called pseudo-politicians," she said.

"These updates and proceedings are for everyone's awareness. I will be fighting for justice, which involves not only me but also the people of Assam, including my 3,000 women who are part of my society and rely on it for their daily livelihood."

COCOMI demands preservation and replica of demolished Manipur Rajbari

IMPHAL

The Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI) has strongly condemned the complete demolition of the historic Manipur Rajbari (Redlands Building) at Laitumkhrah, Shillong, calling it "an act of historical insensitivity" that has deeply wounded the collective sentiment of the Manipuri people. The Rajbari, the former residence of Maharaja Bodhachandra Singh and the site where the 1949 Merger Agreement of Manipur with India was signed, was dismantled under the "Infrastructure Development of Heritage Complex, Rajbari, Shillong" project by the Planning and Development Authority (PDA), Government of Manipur. COCOMI dismissed the official claim that the building was

structurally unsafe and termite-infested, stating, "The Rajbari is not merely a structure; it is a living testament to Manipur's sovereign past and its unholy journey into modern India." The committee expressed anger that assurances since 2022 promising renovation while preserving the building's original architecture were ignored, and the demolition proceeded without public consultation, expert oversight, or transparency. Concerns were also raised that the "heritage development" project may be a pretext for constructing a new Manipur Bhavan, potentially erasing a landmark tied to the state's modern history. COCOMI has demanded several measures to safeguard the site and Manipur's heritage: Reconstruction of a full-scale

replica of the original Rajbari at a separate location, while preserving the demolished remains as a historical testament. Observance of 8 October 2025 as a day of mourning and remembrance, marking the destruction of the site.

Investigation by the Monitoring and Supervision Committee into the circumstances of the demolition, including the roles of the PDA and Department of Art and Culture.

Immediate halt to all ongoing works until transparent consultation with civil society, heritage experts, historians, and royal family representatives is conducted.

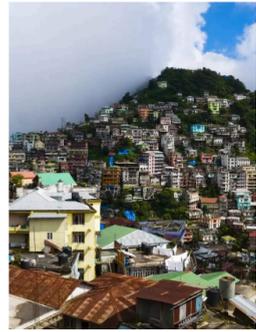
Public release of all project documents, including the Detailed Project Report, approvals from the North Eastern Council, and structural or safety audit reports used to

justify the demolition. Authentic reconstruction strictly following original architectural design and materials.

Laikhuram Jayenta, convenor of COCOMI's IPR Sub-Committee, said, "Heritage cannot be rebuilt with blueprints alone; it lives through authenticity, memory, and respect." He added that the destruction is "a matter of identity, dignity, and justice for the people of Manipur."

COCOMI has called on Manipuri civil society, scholars, and cultural institutions to unite in defending the state's history and holding authorities accountable. "The Rajbari of Shillong is a sacred chapter of Manipur's history; it can neither be restored, nor replaced," the statement said.

Mizoram emerges as top tourist destination in Northeast, records 139.5% rise in visitors



AIZAWL

Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma said that the state ranked among the top tourist destinations in the Northeast last year, registering a remarkable surge in visitor arrivals.

Addressing the Hnahsin (cosmos flower) festival in Champhai district, Lalduhoma revealed that over 5.2 lakh tourists visited Mizoram in 2024, marking a 139.5 per cent increase from the previous year. He expressed optimism that the numbers would continue to grow with the improved connectivity brought by the newly inaugurated Bairabi-Sairang railway line.

The railway line, inaugu-

rated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 13, links Mizoram's capital Aizawl to the rest of India through Assam's Silchar, placing the hill state firmly on the national railway map for the first time. Lalduhoma described the project as one of the most challenging undertakings in Indian Railway history.

"With the improvement of connectivity and our efforts to strengthen the tourism sector, Mizoram is becoming a preferred destination in the Northeast," the Chief Minister said.

Highlighting the economic potential of tourism, Lalduhoma urged citizens to preserve the state's natural beauty and showcase the Mizo way of life marked by honesty, hospitality, and respect for elders. "Tourists should be shown the Mizo ethics of selfless service and friendliness to outsiders when they visit our state," he added.

Emphasising Mizoram's rich heritage and historical appeal, Lalduhoma said that tourism could play a vital role in reclaiming the wealth that has been flowing out of the state. "A large amount of Mizoram's money has been drained outside the state — we must find ways to bring it back through tourism," he said.

Eastern Naga Students' Federation orders schools to ignore strike call

KOHIAMA

The Eastern Naga Students' Federation (ENSF), the apex students' organisation representing the eight tribes of Eastern Nagaland — Chang, Konyak, Eastern Sumi, Phom, Khiamniungan, Tikhir, Yimkhiong and Sangtam — has issued a stinging rebuke of the All Nagaland School Teachers' Association (ANSTA), calling the teachers' body's intervention in Eastern-area affairs "audacious and unwarranted" and declaring that ENSF will neither recognise nor accept any directives from ANSTA within its jurisdiction.

In a strongly worded statement from its Tuensang headquarters, the ENSF accused ANSTA — which it described as "a mere welfare grouping of government employees belonging to a single department" — of lacking recognition, legitimacy and jurisdiction in the Eastern region, and said ANSTA had no moral or operational standing to question or challenge the mandate of a tribally constituted apex body.

Quest!
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The federation said ANSTA's actions amounted to a "direct affront to the sovereignty, dignity and tribal authority of the ENSF" and alleged that the teachers' association's posture was a calculated attempt to "provoke, discredit and destabilise the tribal educational structure" the ENSF claims to have safeguarded for decades.

ENSF emphasised its legacy and authority as the representative voice of the Eastern people and asked pointedly what mandate ANSTA possessed to interfere in tribal matters, asserting that any statements or directives from ANSTA in the Eastern jurisdiction were "null, void and inconsequential." The federation also

reiterated its role as a protector and reformer of the regional education system, saying it had historically defended teachers and the sanctity of education even amid coercive practices by third parties.

Warning of decisive measures, ENSF said it would take "stringent and uncompromising actions" to protect its members, institutions and student community from external interference. The federation declared that it would not entertain, respond to, or recognise any communication from ANSTA or its functionaries within the Eastern jurisdiction, and cautioned Eastern citizens against engaging with organisations it described as having manipulative or vested interests.

As a concrete directive, ENSF has instructed all its federating units to ensure that no school or teacher under their jurisdiction participates in ANSTA's proposed pen-down strike, and has warned that any instances of disobedience will be documented and referred for disciplinary action, including permanent disassociation from ENSF privileges. The statement concluded by reaffirming ENSF's determination to defend the rights of students, uphold the dignity of education, and maintain its position as the legitimate voice of the eight tribes of Eastern Nagaland.

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Will not contest Bihar polls, decision based on larger interest of party: Prashant Kishor

PATNA

Jan Suraj Party (JSP) founder Prashant Kishor has disclosed that he would not contest the Bihar assembly elections scheduled to be held in two phases on November 6 and 11.

Speculations were rife over him contesting from the Raghapur assembly seat against Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) two-term MLA and former deputy chief minister Tejashwi Prasad Yadav.

On Tuesday, JSP fielded Chanchal Singh as its candidate from the Raghapur seat. JSP has so far announced 117 candidates for the upcoming election.

Kishor said, "The party has decided that I should not contest the election. So, the party has fielded another candidate from Raghapur. I will focus on the election strategy and strengthening the party's support base."

He clarified that if he had contested elections, his attention would have been diverted from the essential work of the organisation and added that this decision has been taken in the larger interest of the party.

About his party's poll prospects, Kishor said that the party would either win a landslide victory or suffer a crushing defeat.

"I expect fewer than 10 seats or more than 150 seats. There is no possibility of anything in between," he said.

It was also expected that Kishor would fight from Kargahar. However,



the party decided to field Ritesh Pandey, a Bhojpur actor, from Kargahar.

On Wednesday, Tejashwi will file his nomination paper from Raghapur seeking his re-election for the third term.

Kishor had earlier predicted that Tejashwi would meet the same fate as Congress leader Rahul Gandhi faced in the 2019 Lok Sabha election from Amethi in Uttar Pradesh. JSP founder had also claimed that Tejashwi would contest from two seats if he was fielded as a candidate from Raghapur.

Opposition RJD took a dig at Kishor over his decision, saying "he had accepted defeat for his Jan Suraj Party even before going to the battlefield."

"Earlier in the day, Jan Suraj Party founder

Kishor announced that he would not contest the polls, a decision, he claimed, was taken by the party in the larger interest. In an exclusive interview with PTI, Kishor had also said that a "tally of less than 150 seats" for his party would be considered a defeat.

Reacting to his remarks, RJD spokesperson Mrityunjay Tiwary told, "Kishor has realised that he and his party will face a humiliating defeat in the upcoming assembly polls. That is why he has announced that he will not contest. He has accepted defeat for the Jan Suraj Party even before going to the battlefield."

Kishor must realise that politics is not as easy as providing consultancy to political parties, said Tiwary, adding, "Kishor's tyre has been flattened."

Echoing a similar view, Bihar BJP spokesperson Niraj Kumar told, "Kishor's bubble burst even before the elections. By announcing that he won't contest, he has admitted defeat for himself and his party. They will face a humiliating defeat in the polls."

JD(U) spokesperson Neeraj Kumar said Kishor's decision was a "humiliation" for his party workers.

"He has run away before the electoral battle. Earlier, he claimed to have undertaken pad-yatras to understand the people's issues. What happened to that? His decision is sheer embarrassment for his workers," he told.

NEW DELHI

In a visit to mark 70 years of diplomatic relations and a decade of strategic partnership, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Mongolian President Khurelsukh Ukhnaa held extensive delegation-level talks in New Delhi on Tuesday, signalling a renewed push to deepen bilateral ties across sectors—from defence and digital innovation to heritage and humanitarian aid.

The talks culminated in the exchange of multiple memorandums of understanding (MoUs), including cooperation in immigration, geology and mineral resources, humanitarian assistance, digital public infrastructure, and the restoration of heritage sites in Mongolia.

To mark the occasion, Modi and President Ukhnaa jointly released commemorative stamps celebrating the diplomatic milestone.

"Our borders may not touch, but our hearts and heritage do," said Prime Minister Modi, announcing free e-visas for Mongolian citizens and new people-to-people initiatives. "India will also sponsor youth cultural ambassadors from Mongolia to India. We are expanding our partnership at every level," he said at a joint press conference.

Among the key highlights was the signing of a local-level cooperation agreement between the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council and Mongolia's Arkhangai province, underlining both countries' focus on cultural and civilisational linkages.

Education and spiritual ties were front and centre, with Modi announcing a historic partnership between Nalanda University and Mongolia's Gandan Monastery—two institutions with deep Buddhist roots. "Nalanda has made a huge contribution to Buddhism. This new partnership will emerge our centuries-old civilisational ties," he said.

A major focus of the talks was India's flagship infrastructure project in Mongolia—a \$1.7 billion oil refinery, being developed with Indian assistance under a line of credit. This is India's largest infrastructure initiative on foreign



soil, and is expected to be completed by 2028, according to Secretary (East) P. Kumaran.

President Ukhnaa called the refinery project "strategically crucial" for Mongolia's energy security and a "flagship symbol" of bilateral ties. "This project will directly contribute to Mongolia's economic prosperity," he said.

On the defence and security front, PM Modi noted the "huge leap" in cooperation over the past decade. "From

training to the appointment of Defence Attaches, our defence ties are expanding. We will also launch new capacity-building programmes for Mongolia's border security forces," he said. Secretary P Kumaran in the MEA later told the media that India and Mongolia are now looking to firm up cooperation in drones and emerging technologies, reflecting their shared security and strategic priorities.

The leaders also reaffirmed shared positions on global issues,

reiterating their commitment to a free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific and strong collaboration at multilateral forums. "We are united in raising the voice of the Global South," Modi said.

With renewed momentum, historic cultural ties, and a growing strategic agenda, the India-Mongolia partnership is poised for a new era of cooperation—one rooted in shared values and a common vision for regional stability and development.

INTERNATIONAL

Trump threatens to yank World Cup games from Boston though it's up to FIFA to choose sites

WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump on Tuesday threatened to relocate World Cup matches set to be played next year in suburban Boston, after suggesting that parts of the city had been "taken over" by unrest.

Foxborough, Massachusetts, home to the NFL's New England Patriots and about 30 miles from Boston, is set to stage matches as the US cohosts the 2026 World Cup with Mexico and Canada. Trump was asked about Boston's mayor, Michelle Wu, a Democrat whom he called "intelligent" but "radical left."

"We could take them away," Trump said of the World Cup games. "I love the people of Boston and I know the games are sold out. But your mayor is not good."

He suggested "they're taking over parts of Boston" without offering details, but added "we could get them back in about two seconds."

The Trump administration has already deployed National Guard troops to Washington and Memphis, and efforts to do so in Chicago and Portland, Oregon, have sparked legal fights.

Wu's office did not react directly to Trump's threat, issuing a statement that read, "Boston is honored and excited to host World Cup matches, and we look forward to welcoming fans from around the world to our beautiful city, the cradle of liberty and city of champions."

Trump's comments came during his meeting with Argentina President Javier Milei and it wasn't immediately clear what he was referring to by parts of Boston having been seized. Earlier this month, however, there were mul-



tiples arrests in connection with a pro-Palestinian protest that turned violent on Boston Common. Four police officers were injured.

Trump has previously suggested he could declare cities "not safe" for the 104-game soccer tournament and alter a detailed hosting plan that FIFA confirmed in 2022. It includes games at NFL stadiums near New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

World Cup host sites aren't up to Trump. The 11 US cities—plus three in Mexico and two in Canada—are contracted with FIFA, which would face significant logistical and legal issues to make changes in the eight months before the June 11 kickoff.

"It's FIFA's tournament, FIFA's jurisdiction, FIFA makes those decisions," the soccer body's vice president Victor Montagliani said earlier this month at a sports busi-

ness conference in London.

Trump nonetheless said, "If somebody is doing a bad job, and if I feel there's unsafe conditions, I would call Gianni—the head of FIFA who's phenomenal—and I would say, 'Let's move into another location' and they would do that."

The president meant FIFA head Gianni Infantino, a close ally. Trump said Infantino "wouldn't love to do it, but he'd do it very easily."

Pakistan reports new clash with Afghan forces along northwestern border



PESHAWAR

Clashes erupted Tuesday between Pakistani and Afghan forces in a remote northwestern border region, with state-run media in Pakistan accusing Afghan troops of opening "unprovoked fire" that was repulsed.

Pakistani forces responded, damaging Afghan tanks and military posts, according to Pakistan TV and two security officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

Tahir Ahrar, a deputy police spokesperson in Afghanistan's Khost province, confirmed the clashes but provided no further details. This is the second time this week that the two sides have traded fire along their long border.

According to Pakistan's state-run media, Afghan forces and Pakistani Taliban jointly opened fire at a Pakistani post "without

provocation," prompting what the media described as a "strong response" from Pakistani troops in Kurram, a district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

Security officials said Pakistan's military also destroyed a sprawling training facility of the Pakistani Taliban.

There was no immediate comment from Pakistan's military, which has been on high alert since Saturday, when both sides traded fire across multiple border regions, resulting in dozens of casualties on each side.

Although the clashes halted on Sunday after appeals from Saudi Arabia and Qatar, all border crossings between Pakistan and Afghanistan have remained closed.

Over the weekend, Kabul said that it targeted several Pakistani military posts and killed 58 Pakistani soldiers in retaliation for what it called repeated violations

of Afghan territory and airspace. Pakistan's military reported lower figures, saying it lost 23 soldiers and killed more than 200 "Taliban and affiliated terrorists" in retaliatory fire along the frontier.

Tensions have remained high since last week, when the Taliban government accused Pakistan of carrying out airstrikes in Kabul and an eastern market. Pakistan has not acknowledged those allegations.

But Pakistan has previously launched strikes inside Afghanistan, saying it targets hideouts of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, or TTP, which is separate from but allied to the Afghan Taliban.

Pakistan accuses Kabul of harboring the group, which has carried out numerous deadly attacks inside Pakistan. Kabul denies the charge, saying it does not allow its territory to be used against other countries.

PM Modi's recent visit to Manipur - A constructive analysis



K.BORA

North-East Bharat was generally being neglected, exploited and received unfairness by the British during colonial period. Unfortunately, this continued even after Independence. Consequently, it was once looked upon as an underdeveloped tribal area, but not anymore now! The region has witnessed unprecedented progress and development during last 11 years, be it in the field of multidimensional infrastructure and human resource development, improvement in quality of life or bridging the cultural, physical and emotional gaps with other parts of Bharat. It has proved to be a growth engine of Bharat. Being the gateway to south-east Asia, the region has experienced privileged attention of the Central Government, as a part of Act East Policy. Because unless development reaches each and every corner of the country, we cannot succeed in achieving our aim of "Viksit Bharat".

Honourable Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi Ji recently visited three states of North-East Bharat during September 13-14, 2025 - Mizoram, Manipur and Assam. Though the Prime Minister frequently travels across the country, his recent visit to Manipur carried a unique weight and profound significance, as it was his first visit to Manipur since the devastating Meiti-Kuki ethnic conflict erupted there over two years ago. People had been waiting for their Prime Minister to come to them, to listen to their stories of pain, to offer comfort, to reassure them that he cares for their plight. This violent conflict has robbed the people of Manipur of endless nights of sleep, has claimed more than 250 lives and forcibly displaced approximately 60,000 individuals from their homes, has been responsible for rapes of numerous Manipuri women, and has severely disrupted the education of countless students. Furthermore, it has crippled business and shattered the livelihoods of innumerable Manipuris including agriculture. This enduring agony has inflicted immense sufferings upon innocent citizens who, like all others in the country, deserve a decent life defined by peace, prosperity, progress, and development. The pain, even now continues to smoulder. These deep and lasting inflictions desperately needed a healing touch. People's hearts are truly wounded, and it is imperative for the government to reach into the very core of those hearts to facilitate healing. This must be done passionately, sensitively, devoting time and attention to people and their sufferings.

Despite heavy rains and water-logging in parts of the state capital Imphal, Prime Minister Modi's visit to Manipur proceeded with a significant commitment to engagement, on September 13, 2025. His first stop was the Kuki-Zo dominated district of Churachandpur, the epicentre of the conflict. Demonstrating his determination to connect with the people, the PM opted to travel to the rally venue by road - a journey of about 1.5 hours from Imphal, using the time to interact with citizens along the way. At Churachandpur's Peace Ground, he laid foundation stones for projects worth over ₹7,300 crore and emphasized that a strong bridge of 'trust' must be built between people of Hills and Valley. He also

met with IDPs at a relief camp, listening to their concerns, and shared a poignant moment with children who narrated their stories of aspirations and despair.

Following his engagement in Churachandpur, the PM travelled to Imphal, where thousands of people from the Imphal valley braved the inclement weather to attend his public address at the historical Kangla Fort. From Imphal, he inaugurated 17 projects worth approximately ₹1,200 crore and assured the public that his government was working relentlessly for reconciliation and development. In a separate interaction with displaced families in the capital, he listened to their concerns, assured them of the Centre's commitment to restoring peace and normalcy, adding that any kind of violence in Manipur is unfortunate.

Constructive Analysis
Manipur shares a large 398 kilometer long international border with Myanmar, and hence problem of illegal immigration poses a serious threat to Manipur. Earlier, Meiteis (dominantly Imphal valley, followers of Sanamahism and Vaishnavism) and Kukis (mainly hill-tribes, followers of Christianity) had been living in harmony, but external forces and Kuki-Zo illegal immigrants from Myanmar have been the root cause of current Meiti-Kuki conflict, which has proved to be the worst hit violence of the last decade in Manipur. Manipur has been afflicted by such violence since years and to solve these problems, the root cause has to be understood. For that, one has to understand the complex and rich socio-ethnic-political tapestry of Manipur. The progress and development in areas of Myanmar, that form border with Manipur hold key to tackling critical issue of illegal immigration to Churachandpur.

I had an opportunity to interact with some people from Manipur over phone, and they opined that - "People in general are happy that finally PM visited them, which shows that PM loves and cares for Manipur. They are happy with several development plans that he has laid foundation stones of. Meeting displaced people, visiting relief camps and acknowledging their sufferings etc. is seen as healing steps towards maintaining peace within the state. Despite all the good things looking forward to, still there are many questions in their hearts and minds - why the Hon'ble PM had taken such a long time to visit us, and the delay is seen as symbol of neglect and lack of urgency. Though thousands of people are displaced, hundreds of lives lost, but no significant development for their rehabilitation and upliftment programs is seen so far. In fact, people are of the view that instead of addressing two concerned communities (Meitei and Kuki) separately, PM should have done it together to let everyone unite once again - may be it could have acted as the first step towards building of trust and peace between the two communities! People were expecting PM to spend more time with them in Manipur, then he could have experienced and acknowledged the hard-ground-realities. The underlying grievances still remain unaddressed. PM didn't meet any civil body, didn't mention anything explicitly about ethnic violence or what concrete steps Govt. would be taking to handle it. People expect roadmap for peace, justice and rehabilitation at the earliest possible time, and are eagerly waiting for peace, better services, and real change in Manipur."

True - its not so easy to understand and solve the problems faced by enigmatic Manipur so soon. People of Manipur need to realise that the Prime Minister needs time to do so. At least

the ice has been broken, and let's be little more patient before the peace-initiatives start to bear desirable fruits. Though illegal immigration at international border with Myanmar has to be dealt with tactfully by Governments, some initiatives are desirable on the part of people as well. It is true that progress and development at the grass-root level can tackle the problem of illegal immigration, but Governments alone cannot do everything. People will have to raise voice against foreigners encroaching our lands

and ecosystems. Running a State or Nation is a participatory process in a democratic society. For example, policy making and necessary measure to implement them have to be done by the Governments, at the same time cooperation, awareness and alertness on the part of people is equally important ingredient for the same to become fruitful. People get the Government they deserve, as leaders get elected from the people itself. However, sometimes, some systems which are victims of corrosive activities, need special corrective measures, care and attention to bring them out of that dark-whirlpool. If components of the system themselves seem to lack genuine intentions to correct the disease, that has to be pinpointed and taken care of from the top-level in the system.

The Roadmap
Talking to people at the ground level, and looking at things from their perspective is must to understand and solve any problem. Dialogue in conducive environment of mutual trust with Meiti and Kuki-Zo communities, compassionately, and making them understand the threats posed to security, peace and progress of the State and Nation by illegal immigration, may help the situation. Serious and immediate actions need to be taken for rehabilitation of the IDPs. Quick aid-package to rebuild the businesses of small scale entrepreneurs and farmers must be disbursed to usher in trust of people upon Government. Additional security personnel will further bolster safety and stability, and strengthening the autonomous local bodies are need of hour. It appears that a section of people with sinister designs purposefully exploit the situation for their vested interest, that hamper trust-building and peace process - this needs to be identified and taken care of. Manipuris are talented, hard working, strong people. They deserve better life, and for that authorities need to reach out to them, with faith, rebuilding trust and bridging the gaps - for making Manipur a real growth engine of Bharat. For making it a real Gem of Bharat, as its name implies, Manipuris are waiting for the PM to visit again, and frequently, so that they can also show how much they love him.

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I. M. GunadonSingha, S/o. Purnachand B Singha, R/o. House No. 33, New Link Road, ADC Colony, Rongpur Part-IV, Silchar Pin Code - 788009, Cachar, Assam have changed my name to GunadonSingha for all future purposes.

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Prove yourself to yourself not others.



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 | Canyoneering | Sport Climbing | Disaster Management Technique | Water Sports
www.krcfoundation.org



11 JAN
Barak Valley Conclave
 Potential Issues and Challenges of Barak Valley by different stakeholders.
 Includes: KCCs, and D'governance can register for participation. (website: www.krcfoundation.org) and present the proposals. Participation through invitation only. Different awards 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 certification. 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.



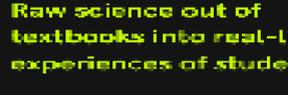
10 JAN
Media Conclave
 Media Conclave: Media Conclave, Workshops, and the Fund, Talks and Conferences are part of the 'Barak Festival 2025'. Theme: 'One for All, All for One'.
 Register your name, submit your proposals, poster & generate for sponsors, guides, speakers, members.

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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'



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

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10-12 JAN
Book Bank
 #NoLike Campaign | Book Bank | e-books | e-audio | e-video

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

Painting Carnival
 Water Colour painting and Saw-Pow Campaign

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



10-12 JAN
STUDENT INTERNSHIP
 Discover valuable experience and learn more about the Industry.

- Outreach Executive
- Event Management
- Programme Coordinator

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