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PERSPECTIVE

“The question isn’t who is going to let me, it’s who is going to stop me. - Unknown

ASSEMBLY unveils 2026 HS exam schedule; students to begin online form fill-up on Oct 22

GUWAHATI
The Assam State School Education Board will conduct the Higher Secondary Final Examination in February-March 2026, with online applications open from October 22 to November 25, 2025. All applications for the HS Final Examination 2026 must be submitted online through the official portal, with no offline submissions accepted, ensuring a fully digital process. Students' registration numbers will be valid for five years, but those missing the application deadline will be barred from the 2026 exams. The Assam State School Education Board (ASSEMB) formerly known as AHSEC has officially announced that the Higher Secondary (HS) Final Examination 2026 will be held in February-March 2026. The online form fill-up process for eligible candidates will commence on October 22 and continue until November 25, 2025, the Board informed. According to an official notification issued on October 13, all junior colleges and higher secondary schools under Division-II of the Board have been directed to ensure that no eligible student is excluded from the online application process. The Board clarified that applications will only be accepted through the official online portal, and no offline submission will be entertained under any circumstance. The Board has further stated that a student's registration number will remain valid for five years from the year of registration. However, students who fail to complete the online form fill-up within the stipulated deadline will be barred from appearing in the HS Final Examination 2026.

WHO SAID WHAT

Over the last two days, the people of Assam were immersed in the bhakti of Maa Kali as they celebrated Kali Puja and #Diwali with great fervour. Festivals are our annual reminder to stay connected to our Sanatani roots and take forward its glorious history

~ Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Assam CM

IIM Guwahati to drive Northeast's rise as knowledge and entrepreneurship hub

GUWAHATI
The Rajya Sabha passed the Indian Institutes of Management (Amendment) Bill, 2025, paving the way for the establishment of the 22nd Indian Institute of Management (IIM). With an investment of Rs 555 crore, IIM Guwahati is the second in the Northeast after Shillong. Also Read - Congress making misleading remarks, Zubeen was beyond politics: Pabitra Margherita Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan introduced the Bill, with the vision to add IIM Guwahati to the list of institutes of national importance. The upcoming institute has sparked varied responses from political leaders.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma described it as a historic decision that will help turn Assam into an educational hub. The opposition, primarily, supported the initiative, calling it a win for Assam and the region. Also Read - Seismologist calls for more monitoring stations to track quake risks in NE India

However, the Congress has raised concerns about the way the Bill was passed. Congress MP Pradyut Bordoloi said that while the party supports the creation of IIM Guwahati, they want more details



about its budget and timeline. The opposition also criticized the BJP for pushing the Bill through Parliament without sufficient consultation with local stakeholders.

Setting up a new IIM involves a well-defined procedure. The Ministry of Education first identifies areas where there is a strong demand for management education. A proposal is then presented in the Parliament for approval. Once approved, the State government allocates land and resources for the new institute. In the case of IIM Guwahati, IIM Ahmedabad will act as the mentor to ensure that it maintains high academic standards.

IIM Guwahati is expected to offer var-

ious programmes designed to meet the changing needs of the business world. Given the unique economic characteristics of the Northeast, the curriculum is likely to focus on sectors such as agribusiness, tourism management and sustainable development. Additionally, the institution may offer specialized courses to address global business trends, including digital transformation, entrepreneurship and leadership. As part of its global outreach initiative, the institute is likely to build partnerships with leading management schools worldwide, offering exchange programmes and joint research opportunities.

This international exposure will help students develop the skills needed to tackle global challenges. The focus on sustainable development and agribusiness is significant for the Northeast, with its rich natural resources and agriculture. The institute should aim to produce business leaders who can balance economic growth with environmental responsibility, helping Assam and neighbouring States achieve sustainable development. Looking at the placement history, IIMs are known for their strong placement records, and IIM Guwahati is expected to follow the trend. Leading IIMs like

Ahmedabad, Bangalore and Calcutta report high median salaries for their graduates. Although newer IIMs may experience varying placement outcomes, they are quickly building their reputations and attracting top recruiters. IIM Indore and IIM Udaipur have shown strong placement results in recent years. IIM Guwahati is also expected to follow similar trends. Its location, close to Southeast Asia, also opens up opportunities for international placements and collaborations with global companies. Further, the increasing focus on technology, innovation and sustainability in business will make IIM Guwahati an attractive option for companies looking for leaders in these areas. The institute is expected to boost the Northeast region as an intellectual capital and encourage local entrepreneurship by equipping students with the skills to start and grow businesses. By offering high-quality management education with a focus on regional development, IIM Guwahati will play a key role in shaping the future of Assam and the Northeast. It will not only provide world-class education but also create the next generation of leaders, entrepreneurs, and professionals who will drive the region's growth in the coming years.

Meghalaya scientists turn tea waste into renewable bioethanol fuel

GUWAHATI
What if your morning cup of tea could one day power your car or light up your home? A study by researchers at the University of Science and Technology Meghalaya (USTM) has shown that discarded tea leaves can be transformed into a clean and renewable source of energy.

Published in the journal of Biomass Conversion and Biorefinery, the study by Dr Shruti Sarma and Dr Rajib Saha demonstrates how spent Camellia sinensis leaves, commonly known as used tea waste, can be converted into bioethanol, a sustainable fuel that offers a promising alternative to fossil fuels.

As the world grapples with rising greenhouse gas emissions and depleting energy reserves, the need for eco-friendly fuels has become crucial. Unlike conventional biofuel production, which often relies on food crops, the USTM researchers focuses on an abundant and underutilized waste resource - tea leaves.

India, being one of the largest tea producers globally, generates vast amounts of tea waste daily, much of

which ends up in landfills. The lead author of the study Dr Shruti Sarma said, "Tea waste contains rich organic compounds, and by using advanced nanotechnology we've been able to tap into its potential as a renewable energy source." Also Read - Kangpokpi PS crowned Manipur's best at 13th Police Raising Day

The innovation hinges on an iron-zinc oxide (Fe-ZnO) nanocatalyst, which accelerates the conversion of tea leaf oil into bioethanol with high efficiency. These nanoparticles, measuring just 30-50 nanometers, enabled faster reactions with minimal energy loss. Combined with a microwave-assisted process, the method drastically reduced reaction times from hours to minutes, with an impressive 75 per cent yield of bioethanol. "This approach not only enhances efficiency but also makes the process more sustainable," said Dr Saha. "It's a small step toward reducing waste and building circular, low-carbon systems." The findings also suggest that even a small-scale conversion of tea waste could contribute significantly to India's renewable energy goals.

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NSCN(IM) leader Th Muivah's historic return after 50 years

GUWAHATI
NSCN (IM) chief Th Muivah reached Manipur's Ukhrul district on Wednesday to visit his native village of Somdal, marking his first return in more than 50 years, officials said.

The 91-year-old Naga leader arrived at Bakshi ground in the district headquarters by helicopter.

Thousands were eagerly waiting for the return of Muivah to his birthplace after more than half a century. Students also thronged streets of Ukhrul Town, joining in the warm welcome for the esteemed visitor.

The Naga leader of the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN-IM) left Somdal village decades ago to be part of the insurgency. His homecoming ushers



in a "watershed moment in the region's political history, drawing people eager to witness the return of one of the most influential figures in the Naga movement."

The trip comes in the wake of ongoing ethnic violence in Manipur between Meitei and Kuki-Zo groups that has left over 260 dead and thousands displaced

since May 2023.

Medical teams are deployed at the venue to ensure the elderly leader's well-being.

Lucy Duidang, leading the medical contingent, said specialists and ambulances were ready.

"I am here from the medical team, with ambulances and specialists to take care of his health. We look forward to his coming here. We wish God's abundant blessings for him so he will be our great leader for a long time," she said.

Many senior NSCN (IM) leaders are also in Ukhrul. Before Muivah's visit, "locals carried out a cleanliness drive across the district headquarters, where hoardings and wall paintings of Naga leaders were displayed."

Tiprasa Accord delay, rising infiltration trigger 24-hour bandh call by Tripura Civil Society

AGARTALA
Tripura Civil Society has announced a 24-hour bandh on October 23, citing demands including action against illegal infiltration, implementation of the Inner Line Permit, and enforcement of the Tiprasa Accord. Picketing will take place at around 25 locations across the state, including three key points in Agartala.

Speaking on the matter, Tripura Civil Society leader and Tipra Motha Party MLA Ranjit Debbarma said, "In Agartala, there will be three locations — Circuit House, in front of the Tripura Assembly, and North Gate. However, the final decision will be taken by evening. From Kanchanpur, Panisagar, Hatai Kotor, and across the state in 25 locations, this picketing will be held in every district. The number of picketing sites may increase. We are receiving many phone calls from people as they are enthusiastic and ready to support the bandh."

Debbarma added that Tipra Motha Party founder Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma has repeatedly engaged both the Tripura and Central governments over their demands.

"The central government has signed an agreement, which is the Tiprasa Accord, but they have not implemented it, and they should give an answer. We had to go to the Supreme Court to hold village committee elections. Around 38 bills were sent to the government after being passed by the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council, but not a single one has been cleared. The Central government had agreed to our demands, but it has been 18 months, and nothing has been implemented. Why is the government silent on this issue? That is why we are protesting, and the government has forced us to call the bandh."

Debbarma also highlighted concerns over illegal immigration, noting that "a few days back, around 24 Bangladeshis were detained. Almost every day, such incidents happen. The government must take steps against illegal Bangladeshis who are living here illegally."

Biren Singh credits Amit Shah for bringing peace during state's 'testing times'



IMPHAL
N Biren Singh, on October 22, acknowledged Union Home Minister Amit Shah's role in establishing peace within Manipur, particularly during what the former chief minister described as the state's most challenging period.

Speaking on Shah's 61st birthday, Singh highlighted the home minister's intervention in fostering unity amongst Manipur's divided communities.

"Manipur remains deeply grateful for your steadfast support, especially during our most testing times, and for your efforts in fostering peace and unity amongst communities," Singh wrote on social media platform X, formerly Twitter.

The remarks come as Manipur continues to grapple with ethnic tensions

between the Meitei and Kuki communities, violence that has displaced thousands and claimed numerous lives since May 2023.

Beyond Singh's message, the birthday greetings revealed a pattern of regional leaders from India's northeast acknowledging Shah's influence. Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma praised Shah's "visionary leadership" and credited him with contributing to his state's progress, whilst Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma went further, calling Shah his "mentor and guide" who has "always led from the front".

Singh also commended Shah's "unwavering dedication to the nation" and wished him good health and continued strength to lead with "wisdom and courage".

ULFA(I) cadre shot dead in Arunachal's Namsai during joint forces operation

ITANAGAR
In a major counter-insurgency success, security forces neutralised a militant belonging to the proscribed United Liberation Front of Asom (Independent) — ULFA (I) — during a joint operation in Namsai district of Arunachal Pradesh on the intervening night of October 21-22, officials confirmed on Tuesday.

According to Defence PRO, Guwahati Lt Col Mahendra Rawat, the operation was launched based on specific intelligence inputs indicating the presence of ULFA (I) cadres in the MS-6 area of Namsai district. The operation was carried out jointly by units of the Indian Army and Assam Rifles, with coordination support from the Arunachal Pradesh Police.

"During the night, security personnel established contact with suspected insurgents in the forested area of MS-6 in Namsai district. An exchange of fire ensued, following which a thorough search was carried out at first light," the Defence PRO said. Also Read - Firecrackers spark blaze in Khonsa Market, 21 shops damaged, no casualties

During the search, the body of one slain ULFA (I) cadre was recovered from the encounter site. He has been identified as Self-



Styler (SS) Sergeant Major Iwon Axom, a member of the banned outfit's armed wing.

Security forces also recovered a rifle, one RPG (rocket-propelled grenade) round, and three rucksacks containing essential items, suggesting that the group might have been operating or transiting through the area with potential plans to carry out subversive activities. Lt Col Rawat further informed that the operation is still underway, with additional columns of the Army, Assam Rifles, CRPF, and local police being deployed to intensify the search and sanitisation efforts in and around the encounter zone. "The operation reflects the high level of coordination and readiness among security forces to count-

er insurgent movements in the region. Further details are being ascertained," the Defence PRO added. Namsai district, located along the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border, has in recent months seen intermittent movement of insurgents attempting to cross over from Assam's eastern districts. Security agencies believe that ULFA (I) operatives have been using the dense forest cover and riverine terrain along the inter-state boundary as temporary hideouts. The latest encounter is part of ongoing counter-insurgency operations aimed at tightening the security grid in eastern Arunachal Pradesh and adjoining Assam districts, where ULFA (I) has been attempting to regroup amid sustained pressure from security forces. Officials said the recovery of the RPG round indicates the possibility of a planned attack or sabotage attempt that was thwarted through timely intervention. Search teams are continuing to comb the nearby areas for other insurgents who may have escaped during the encounter. The incident marks another setback for the outfit, which has seen several of its members neutralised or apprehended in recent months as part of intensified counter-insurgency drives in the Northeast.



VOLUME:1, ISSUE 600

WASTE LAND: A NATION OF LANDFILLS

Some years ago, I was editing a newspaper in Mumbai and we ran a report on the city's eternal garbage problem. The report mentioned a prime spot in the suburbs where a mountainous garbage landfill was posing a danger because vultures were wheeling over it, getting in the way of air traffic. The report did not go down well, as the proprietor of the newspaper happened to own the landfill. This column is not about my adventures as a journalist, but about India's garbage problem.

Unlike the West, where the age of chips has followed a certain social and cultural stage that necessitated garbage collection in the cause of health and aesthetics, India seems to have skipped that stage. As a result, we might have to drive through rotting waste while heading to a robotics factory.

Mumbai, Bengaluru, Delhi, Chennai—the waste piles high everywhere. In the capital, the waste is dumped 65 metres high at one landfill. It's not taller only because the Municipal Corporation of Delhi is not great at collecting waste. This mountain, like many in other Indian cities, symbolises the country's struggle with solid waste and will soon ascend new heights.

Garbage output is expected to reach 62 million tonnes this year and could soar to 436 million tonnes by 2050. A developing India means more waste, but we have no idea what to do with it except, at best, transfer it from one spot to another and hope the dogs and vultures will do a good job.

We have some 2,500 official landfills. And millions of unofficial dumpsites in our backyards, gutters, footpaths, and rivers. All of India is potentially a landfill. Nearly 80 percent of the waste that finds its way to these is unprocessed. Organic waste mostly rots, but plastic is more or less eternal. Organic waste emits methane. But it is more fashionable—and profitable—to focus on carbon emission, possibly because there are more fellowships, seminars, and grants available to study it.

Western nations have adopted more effective waste management strategies. In the US, 51 percent of waste goes to landfills, a practice supported by recycling efforts like composting. A couple of months ago, I was in Minnesota and Washington, and could not find a scrap of waste on footpaths. The waste is well collected and recycled. We don't collect too good and we litter. But how much do we recycle? There is no clear data on this.

In Europe, there is a hierarchy of waste management that prioritises prevention, reuse, recycling, and recovery, achieving a municipal recycling rate of 49 percent. The Nordic countries exemplify the best practices. In Sweden, 65 percent of municipal solid waste is incinerated, generating energy for a significant portion of Stockholm's homes, while recycling rates remain high at 49 percent. Finland mirrors this success, with landfilling dropping below 1 percent since 2020.

In these countries, waste is almost lovingly sorted and managed, transforming what was once discarded material into energy or reusable resources. We are an energy-deficient country. When was the last time you heard someone raise a question in parliament or a state assembly on recycling waste into power? Or indeed, waste into anything?

Kerala, where I come from, wastes no opportunity to pat its back while dumping trash into fields and canals. Kochi, Kozhikode, and Thrissur are mosquito breeding centres. Waste mismanagement in the state is probably one reason it holds records in disease outbreaks.

The Swachh Bharat Mission, initiated in 2014, aimed to tackle the waste crisis with significant funding—with over ₹1.5 lakh crore allocated since its inception. The budget for 2025 remains robust at ₹12,192 crore, encompassing urban and rural initiatives. Why is it then that many areas in cities like Gurgaon and Bengaluru are facing a trash crisis? The mission's problems include the fact that it is not audited.

Our 'model villages', a typical Indianism, are often models because bureaucrats are more into meeting numbers—a newfound Stalinist passion for statistics, to be precise. Add to it the all-too-human need to protect one's career, felt by everyone from judges to sweepers. I suppose a poor country will instinctively get its individual priorities right.

To be fair, environmentalists often focus on carbon emissions because they recognise that addressing climate change can have far-reaching impacts on public health, ecosystems, and future generations. While solid waste management is essential, the urgency surrounding carbon emissions stems from their immediate and long-term effects on global warming and environmental degradation.

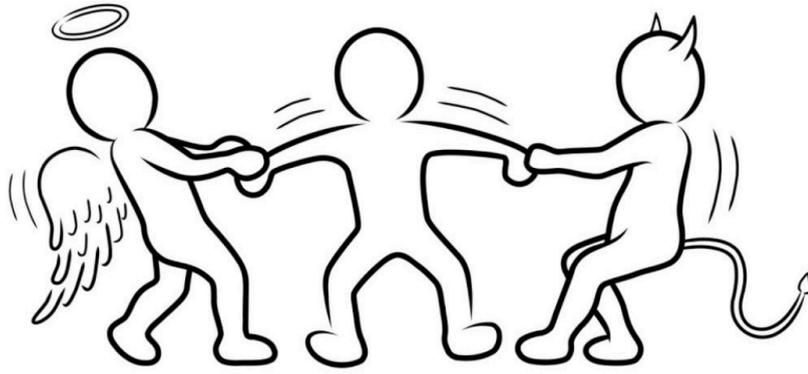
However, there are some signs of change. Small signs, though. Involvement of corporate giants like Reliance indicates a shift in how waste is being viewed in India. Mukesh Ambani's company is investing heavily in biogas facilities and chemical recycling initiatives that convert single-use plastics into reusable materials. Companies like Attero Recycling are using AI to streamline processes, while others are transforming agricultural waste into marketable products.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Thinking is the hardest work, which is probably the reason why so few engage in it"

-Henry Ford

BLACK: COLOUR OF POLLS WHAT HAS MORALITY GOT TO DO WITH IT? MORALITY



A

POONAM I KAUSHISH

Circa 2014: Mayawati accuses ex-Rajya Sabha MP Akhilesh Das of offering her Rs 100 crore for a nomination. Das counters: BSP's "culture" is to extort money from candidates.

Circa 2018: Former BSP leader Mukul Upadhyaya accuses Mayawati of asking for Rs 5 crore for Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha tickets.

Circa 2025: In high drama at RJD Chief and ex-Bihar Chief Minister Lalu Yadav residence a Party leader tore his clothes and broke down saying Lalu had promised him a ticket from Madhuban, but the same has been "sold" for Rs 2.7 crores!

In Congress too Bihar PCC's spokesperson along with a disgruntled MLA and ex-legislator who were denied tickets accuse State Congress in-charge, BPCP President and CLP leader of selling tickets. "The influence of corporate interests like Adani and Ambani take precedence over performance wherein 'Mera Admi, Tera Admi' dominate Party decisions."

If this is bad, worse follows: RJD Sasaram candidate is arrested moments after filing his nomination papers by Jharkhand police for a 21-year-old criminal case relating to dacoity and armed robbery Monday. Hours later, AIMIM's Jehanabad nominee is taken into custody for attempted murder Tuesday. Alongside two CPI-ML Bhore and Darauli candidates.

Writing your hands all you want, but these incidents highlight deep malaise, corruption and crime that affects our political system and absence of probity at all levels of public life alongside dishonesty and immorality. In fact, the under-belly of power politics is shameless, rotten, ugly and raw down to gutter level. Poll tickets at any cost no matter what it takes.

Paisa phenko tamasha dekho! Where gold speaks, tongues are silent. Politics is a highly lucrative business which needs no personal capital: only ability to con the public that you're their ultimate messiah. A one-man company whose cash counters keep ringing. And, which pays rich dividends to its owner depending on the fluctuating value of his stock!

Thereby, trashing last year's landmark unanimous judgment by a seven-Judge Constitution Bench which brutally torn asunder the political facade. Exposing our netas in all their ugliness by overruling its 1998 five Bench ruling

that gave legislators immunity from prosecution. "Corruption and bribery is destructive of the aspirations and deliberative ideals of the Constitution and creates a polity which deprives citizens of a responsible, responsive, and representative democracy."

It's all very well for our 'righteous' Parties to rave and rant, appear horrified, adopt a holier-than-thou attitude and profess to uphold the best tenets of democracy. Sic. Bluntly, politics continues to be all about money, honey. Whereby, buying-selling of tickets is on auto-mode all the time. Wads of notes are exchanged at a drop of a hat. And going to jail is fast becoming a badge of honour!

What is it about crime that has our netas scurrying for cover? Especially when they go blue in the face about being Surf ki chamkaan wale neta. Go to any extent to prove (sic) their sincerity? Yet when it comes to acting on their words, they feign ignorance and play dumb, blind and deaf.

One 'clean' Chief Minister trumped me by arguing, "Kaunsi naitikta aur apradh ki baat kar rahe hain. What has morality to do with politics?" Just because a candidate has criminal antecedents doesn't mean he is not doing social work. I have 22 Ministers with criminal backgrounds I don't bother about a Ministers' past. After joining my Government, they are not indulging in crimes and are ready to help suppress criminal activities. Ask the people why they have elected them." How does one rebut his logic?

Alas, today we live in a chor-chor-mauser-bhai political milieu, where public morality and practical politics has acquired a particularly grotesque dimension whereby 9 out of 10 cases go unreported. Confessed a politician: Hum sab ek hi thaali ke chate-bate hain aur is apradhikaran ke hamam mein naganai hai! Na BJP mein hain danav, na Congress mein devta."

Undeniably, it's too politically delicious to ignore that 4,896 MLAs are facing criminal trial in 3,045 cases and are perceived to be self-serving and unscrupulous lawmakers. Primarily, as bahubalis are more likely to win than those clean. Underscoring, there is no morals in politics only expedience. A scoundrel is useful just because he is a scoundrel.

In a-you-scratch-my-back-I-yours market model of democracy it is a misnomer to believe that netas are governed by

ideology. Instead, there is a tendency to capture people's imagination by creating a spectacle of crime along with money which makes the clogged, polluted and corrupt political mare go around.

Today, politics has everything to do with acceptability, little with credibility and public life is all compromises, not principles dripping morality sermons but not practicing it. Morality, honesty and integrity are words non-existent in the political vocabulary.

With money-muscle power continuing to bedevil democracy Courts too are helpless. Recently, a rueful Court accentuated crime continues regardless of it ordering Parties to not field candidates with criminal antecedents in Assembly polls. "We have been telling the legislature to take action against candidates against whom charges have been framed but nothing has been done. Nothing is done and nothing will ever be done by any Party to prevent criminals from entering politics and standing for elections. Unfortunately, we can't legislate."

Arguably, in a milieu wherein large suitcases are proving too small to stuff political skeletons and in the business of democracy where everything comes for a price including politicians, it raises a moot point: How can candidates who aspire to be jan sewaks 'sell' their dignity and honour for money? Worse, there is no remorse on an issue which impinges on the essence, dignity and credibility of our legislatures. When will our netagan stop their immoral dhanda? Who is the culprit in whose eyes?

Instead of rooting for criminals our polity must compete to enhance sensibility. How many murder charges are required before one is considered unfit to represent people? Are there no honest and capable netas? When will we stop hanging petty thieves and electing criminals to public office? Who will bell the immoral criminal cat? Can a nation continue to be bereft of all sense of shame and morality -- and for how long?

In this immoral political desert voters have to make tough calls. No longer can we merely shrug our shoulders and dismiss it as political kalyug. The coming days are crucial. Time our politicians realize they are expected to be a notch above ordinary mortals. Our netas need to desist from Greed for Power and Power of Greed. Given that when an undataa becomes a saudagar

, the aam aadmi is bound to become garib!

It is in the interest of healthy democracy that unhealthy precedents are not set. Democracy can succeed only when rules of the game are followed honestly. Our politicians need to remember a home-truth: Public accountability is indispensable in a democratic set-up. With power comes responsibility.

On hopes our leaders will now chart a new dimension in upholding the best tenets of morality and probity as elections draw near. Time for our leaders to wake up from their deep slumber of self conceit and deception of money hai to power hai! --- INFA

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

No society—religious or secular—has ever progressed without criticism. Every major reform, from abolishing slavery to gaining women's rights, began with people who dared to question tradition, expose injustice, and demand change. Criticism is not hatred; it is a tool for enlightenment. And yes — human beings can be cruel, ignorant, and resistant to change, especially when they are bound by dogma. But it's also true that humans can evolve, once truth and reason are allowed to challenge falsehood and oppression. I am trying to push the Islamic world toward modernity, reason, and equality, and that takes courage — the same kind of courage that drove Enlightenment thinkers to challenge the Church centuries ago. Criticism is love for humanity, not hatred, and that only fearless questioning can modernize Islamic society ~ Taslima Nasreen, Author



CHINA'S MARITIME PRESENCE IN INDIAN OCEAN REGION AND INDIA'S OPTIONS

VIKAS KAPOOR

Well written by former statesman, historian and diplomat — Sardar K M Panikkar, 80 years ago that "Without well-considered and effective naval policy, India's position in the world will be weak, dependent on others and her freedom at the mercy of any country capable of controlling the India Ocean".

'Admiral Zheng He's'—voyage to the India Ocean Region (IOR) in the early 15th century under Ming dynasty, came to a halt and so called treasure Ships dismantled. In the centuries that followed, China had no maritime presence worth the name in India Ocean but in 2008 that PLAN (People's Liberation Army Navy) began to use its Anti-Piracy operations in Gulf of Aden to develop quasi-permanent presence. Over time PLAN began to maintain five warships in the IOR for patrolling and conducting escort missions.

China's presence in IOR (Indian Ocean region) has manifested itself through dual — use BRI (Belt & roads initiatives) projects such as the "Kyaukphyu deep sea port in Rakhine state in Myanmar, Hambantota in Sri Lanka, and Gwadar in Pakistan as well as REAM in Cambodia and Djibouti in Africa". It's a matter of great irony that Hambantota port had initially been offered to India and only after India failed to respond that it was offered to China. Several media reports have inferred that China has built a surveillance post in COCO Islands of Myanmar, just North of Andaman & Nicobar islands of India. Myanmar Army infact had requested India to provide a radar to be positioned on these islands. However, nothing

came out of it. However, in recent years, India has gifted Myanmar a Kilo class Submarine.

India must carefully examine the facts of the Chinese presence, and take necessary steps. If keeping China out of IOR is not an Option. Obviously the steps considered by India have to bank more on gathering timely and accurate intelligence about PLAN's (People Liberation Army — Navy of China) presence and activities. This implies the development of effective surveillance capabilities, both surface and subsurface, as well as a degree of deterrence capability. Specifically India should develop enhanced Air and Maritime surveillance platforms for regular monitoring of the Bay of Bengal as well as Western Indian Ocean.

To achieve this, the Indian Navy' fleet of P-81 aircraft, Unmanned aerial vehicles, Maritime patrol aircraft, and space based intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets should be augmented, alongside expansion of underwater domain awareness with sensors, sonars, and integrated networks for real-time tracking of submarines and surface vessels.

India must strengthen its coastal and island defences by investing in rapid response and expeditionary capabilities in Andaman-Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands. Priorities should include advanced amphibious warships, missile systems and antisubmarine warfare capabilities. Enhancing Air defence and fighter aircraft presence on its island territories that reach out far into the IOR is integral to the task. This should be accompanied by the upgradation of runways, naval air stations, Jetties and storage facilities in Andaman — Nicobar command, which is India's

first Tri — Service command.

Simultaneously, must enhance defence diplomacy with IOR states through joint exercises, information sharing, and gratis (with out charge) transfer of certain military assets. Such proactive engagement can help ensure that their ties with China, do not undermine India's security and Strategic interests.

India should also step up its island development programme to ensure sustainable development of its island territories. In particular, it should expedite the great Nicobar island project, which involves major transshipment port, an International airport, and a township to leverage the islands' strategic location. Trade and Tourism should receive a boost as a result of these actions, so that remote island territories are not exploited by others.

Chinese stationing of troops on these countries territory or hosting its surveillance equipment on these ports should be unacceptable to India in documented form.

India's ties with key maritime neighbours such as Sri Lanka and Maldives have improved as a result of visits exchanged between PM Narendra Modi and his counterparts. With Sri Lanka, the issue of continental shelf demarcation could crop up as there is conflict of claims over Afanasy Nikitin Sea Mount, which is rich in deep seabed minerals. Modi has recently announced a deep water exploration mission for critical minerals. India should involve these IOR nations to build further to enhance mutual trust. Failure to do so could potentially lead these IOR states to envisage a greater role for China in exploration activity in their EEZs.

Moreover, there is a considerable potential for India to promote its outreach to Global South nations in the IOR through initiatives such as Mahasagar (Mutual and holistic advancement for security and growth across regions). This initiative needs to be showcased like China's BRI project. India should rebrand its Lines of Credit and Indian Technical and economic cooperation programmes as well as existing cultural and economic schemes under the rubric of Mahasagar. These all objectives should be clearly documented and with clear execution of timelines.

As stated by Modi during the recent visit of his Mauritius counterpart, India remains fully committed to strengthening the security of Mauritius' EEZ and enhancing its maritime capacity. India should similarly work with other IOR states on joint surveys, navigation charts and hydrographic data of their EEZs. Above all, India should develop both defensive and offensive capabilities, so as to dominate choke points during conflict.

China's presence in IOR is a fact that can neither be wished away nor ignored. India's efforts should be centred around IOR states so that we seize opportunities and complete projects on time. India's credibility in his immediate neighbourhood must grow organically in the wake of successful high-level visits. Apart from proactive execution of strategic projects driven by the host Nation's priorities, efforts should be made to enhance Intra- South Asian trade and investment flows. Failure to Grasp opportunities to emerge as the preferred choice as development partner in the IOR is Hardly an OPTION for India.

Akhil Gogoi hits back at Pijush Hazarika, lists govt's failures in Zubeen Garg probe

GUWAHATI

A In a sharp rebuttal to Assam Minister Pijush Hazarika, Independent MLA Akhil Gogoi has accused the BJP-led State Government of misleading the public over its handling of the Zubeen Garg death investigation.

Responding to Hazarika's recent statement outlining what the government claimed to have done in pursuit of justice for the late cultural icon, Gogoi said the minister's list was "completely false and fabricated."

"Pijush Hazarika daangoriya, a few days ago you presented a list claiming what the State Government has done after Zubeen Garg's death, showcasing it as the BJP Government's achievement. That list is entirely false. Here, we present what the Assam Government actually failed to do or deliberately avoided doing in the pursuit of justice for Zubeen

da. Please respond," Gogoi wrote in his detailed note.

The MLA's statement, running several pages long, enumerated a series of alleged failures by the government both before and after Zubeen Garg's death in Singapore on September 19, 2025.

According to Gogoi, the government failed to provide adequate security to Zubeen despite him being a "national asset." He pointed out that the Ministry of External Affairs invited Zubeen Garg to Singapore for the North East Festival, yet the State Government did not grant him state guest status, resulting in the absence of official security during his visit.

He further alleged that Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma did not keep his word about bringing Zubeen's body back from Singapore on a chartered flight, as the remains were transported along with regular passenger luggage.

The MLA's document lists several other points of criticism: the government's failure to arrest suspects like Siddharth Sharma and Sandeepan Garg at Delhi Airport, the delay in arresting festival organiser Shyamkanu Mahanta, and the continuation of the North East Festival immediately after Zubeen's death.

Gogoi also accused the government of mishandling Zubeen's funeral arrangements — citing lack of proper facilities at Sarusajai Stadium, failure to provide land for a memorial on the banks of the Brahmaputra, and absence of national honours during the cremation at Sonapur.

He alleged that despite public demand, the government initially refused to conduct a post-mortem in Assam, and a second autopsy was performed only after pressure from citizens. Even then, he said, those who demanded it were verbally attacked and insulted.

Gogoi criticised the government for not ordering a CBI probe under judicial supervision, and for delaying the Special Investigation Team's visit to Singapore for over a month after the incident.

He further said that the Judicial Inquiry Commission formed by the government was "weak," comprising "government-friendly lawyers instead of sitting judges," and thus incapable of conducting a strong judicial investigation.

Citing the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, Gogoi alleged that the State Government failed to follow key legal procedures — including obtaining the Union Government's prior sanction for investigation abroad, issuing a Letter of Request to Singapore authorities, and seeking extradition of foreign nationals linked to the case.

He also raised doubts over the government's decision to transfer the case to the Enforcement Directorate (ED), alleg-

ing that confidential police investigation materials had been leaked even before the handover.

Gogoi's note questioned the government's claims of sealing the accused's properties, alleging that "lights were still on and family members were moving freely," indicating no real enforcement action.

He also pointed out that while accused individuals in Assam were arrested, members of the Singapore-Assam Association with alleged involvement were not touched. The promised 10 bigas of land for Zubeen's memorial, he said, "remains undelivered."

The MLA accused the government of failing to ensure transparent communication about the progress of the investigation, forcing even Zubeen's wife to post online with the hashtag #JusticeForZubeenGarg.

He charged that Chief Minister Him-

anta Biswa Sarma had "taken a stance against justice" by discouraging citizens from writing to the Singapore Prime Minister seeking cooperation in the investigation.

Akhil Gogoi's note concluded that the government's inefficiency has sparked widespread public dissatisfaction, leading to state-wide protests and unrest. He alleged that several activists were harassed and jailed for demanding justice and that even the accused persons were not adequately protected during public agitation.

"The failure to properly investigate Zubeen Garg's death has pushed Assam into a volatile situation reminiscent of a mass people's uprising," Gogoi warned. "Even after 32 days, Zubeen da has not received justice, and people now deeply believe that justice will never come under the BJP government."

Ex-Tripura CM calls Mamata Banerjee a 'demon'

AGARTALA

Former Tripura Chief Minister and Member of Parliament Biplob Kumar Deb on Tuesday, October 21 termed West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee a 'demon' and claimed that the people of the state are ready to overthrow her for the survival of human values.

Deb, who is BJP's Election Co-incharge in West Bengal, said this at Agartala today after performing puja at Indranagar Kali Bari.

He said that the Chief Minister of West Bengal has changed her behaviour into that of a demon.

"What I think is that she does not have feelings or a heart. No one could ever think that a woman can behave in this way. Women are soft; they can love others more than men and can even serve better. Her name, Mamata, has made her infamous. The main issue is that there is no human value. Murder, rape, and attacks on someone's home are daily incidents. That is why we do not pronounce such a name and leave it like Mir Jafar — a name which nobody likes, and even Muslims never use such a name for their children," said Deb. He said that the people of West Bengal are ready to be free from such misrule.

"I have held five meetings there and am trying to understand the pulse of the people. I am confident that people are ready to overthrow the Trinamool Congress. I have no words for the West Bengal Chief Minister. They are deep-neck in corruption. Her relatives are engaged with land mafias, etc. From this temple, I don't want to say such things. BJP will fight for the survival of human values there, and victory will be of the public, who will be free from such a demon," said Deb.

Meghalaya DGP highlights role of dysfunctional families in crime; calls for collective action

SHILLONG

Meghalaya Director General of Police Idashisha Nongrang emphasized that a majority of both crime victims and perpetrators in the state come from dysfunctional families, stressing that addressing criminal and social challenges requires coordinated efforts from society as a whole.

Speaking on the sidelines of Police Commemoration Day at the state police headquarters, Nongrang cited findings from a recent independent study indicating that Meghalaya has transitioned from being a transit route for drugs to facing significant challenges as a user state.

"There are multiple reasons for these issues, but unless we take a holistic view and work together, it's not possible for the police department alone to solve them," Nongrang said, urging collective

action from the public, communities, and institutions.

The DGP expressed concern over the frequent occurrence of crimes against children, noting that while most perpetrators have been identified and arrested, the underlying societal factors, including dysfunctional family backgrounds, play a major role. "Whether victim or perpetrator, many come from dysfunctional families, so it's not just a law-and-order issue but also a societal problem," she said.

Highlighting the study further, Nongrang pointed out links between petty crimes, burglary, and rising drug use, adding that the police are reviewing strategies such as strengthening beat patrols and adopting preventive measures. She also stressed the enhanced use of technology, including CCTV surveillance, to strengthen policing and ensure public safety.

Zubeen Garg death: Probe not transparent, says Assam LoP

GUWAHATI

Assam Congress Legislature Party leader Debabrata Saikia launched a vitriolic attack on Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, alleging "that the state government is not conducting a transparent investigation into the death of singer Zubeen Garg."

Saikia said the Chief Minister's remarks on the case had "created confusion" among the public and raised doubts about the authenticity of the probe.

"From his statements, it appears that the ongoing investigation may not be entirely transparent," he said, accusing the Chief Minister of receiving "inside information" from the Special Investigation Team (SIT).

Saikia said that Sarma had initially called it a case

of "murder" but later said the facts, once made public, would be "hard for the people of Assam to digest."

He questioned, "What exactly has the Chief Minister learnt from the SIT that he is revealing through the media?"

The opposition leader also said Sarma had earlier spoken about "concerns over Zubeen Garg's safety." "If he already knew that, why was there no proper security arrangement before the artist travelled to Singapore?" he asked.

Saikia sought accountability from Union Minister of State for External Affairs Pabitra Margherita and expressed disappointment that External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar had not reached out to Garg's family. He further questioned whether the Chief Minister was directly controlling the in-

vestigation.

"The Assam CID was formed in 1922 and has capable officers. Then why was the Superintendent of CM Vigilance—under the Chief Minister's direct control—assigned to the CID?" Saikia asked. "If CM Vigilance officers are so competent, why not transfer them permanently to CID?"

He also pointed questions "about the search operation at the residence of event organiser Shyamkanu Mahanta, asking whether any magistrate or official witness was present and how Mahanta's family re-entered the house after it was sealed."

"The Chief Minister had promised to reveal shocking information on September 10, even saying journalists from Delhi would be invited to hear it. Why hasn't he made it pub-

lic yet?" Saikia said.

"The event in Singapore was organised to mark 60 years of India-Singapore ties, yet Zubeen Garg wasn't given proper hospitality, medical help, or security. Authorities knew he suffered from seizures—why was he allowed into the sea without a life jacket?" Saikia asked.

Meanwhile, the SIT and CID have arrested seven persons in connection with Garg's death, including event organiser Shyamkanu Mahanta, Garg's manager Siddharth Sharma, his cousin Sandipan Garg (a suspended APS officer), bandmate Shekhar Jyoti Goswami, co-singer Amritprava Mahanta, and two PSOs, Nandeswar Bora and Paresh Baishya. All seven have been remanded to judicial custody by the CJM court in Guwahati.

Quiet and green Diwali: Silchar witnesses sharp drop in noise pollution this year

SILCHAR

Silchar witnessed one of its calmest and most eco-friendly Diwalis in recent memory on Monday. Residents embraced the true spirit of the festival with light, harmony and community well-being.

According to preliminary data from the Assam Pollution Control Board (APCB) Regional Office in Barak Valley, noise pollution levels during this year's Diwali dropped noticeably compared to last year.

The change, officials said, was driven by public awareness, administrative vigilance and growing environmental responsibility among citizens. Arabinda Das, Regional Head of APCB, Silchar, credited the improvement to "sustained awareness drives and strong enforcement efforts" by the Cachar District Administration.



"We conducted extensive campaigns highlighting the harmful effects of noise pollution. Alongside this, targeted raids on shops selling high-decibel crackers and the seizure of banned products played a crucial role," Das said.

The figures tell the story of this positive shift. In Janiganj, a busy commercial hub, average sound levels fell from 84 dB in 2024 to 70 dB this year. In Ambikapatty, a residential area, readings dropped from 70-74 dB to 60-65 dB, while even the zone

near the District Commissioner's office saw levels decline from 65-70 dB to around 50-60 dB. "People are gradually realising the need to move away from loud, harmful crackers," Das added. District administration officials confirmed that inspections and seizures were carried out in accordance with Supreme Court guidelines.

Multiple teams from the APCB, police, and administration monitored vendors' licenses and cracked down on the illegal sale of banned items such as hydrogen-based explosives and laris (series crackers), known for their excessive noise and pollution. "Many vendors were unaware of the environmental hazards or legal restrictions. The goal was not just enforcement, but education," an official said, adding that strict vigilance will continue through

Chhat Puja. Along traditional hotspots like Rangirkhari, Hospital Road, and Fatak Bazaar, vendors reported lower sales of sound-emitting crackers like bombs and laris. Instead, phooljharis, anars, and green crackers gained popularity, reflecting a shift toward cleaner, quieter celebrations. For residents, the difference was palpable. "My elderly mother could finally sleep without medication on Diwali night," said Anjana Paul of Tarapur, echoing the relief felt by many households across the city. Adding a cultural and emotional touch to this year's festivities, Diwali and Kali Puja celebrations across Silchar also became a platform for remembrance. Several pandals and musical stages paid heartfelt tribute to Zubeen Garg, the late artist whose songs remain deeply loved in the Barak Valley.

87 cases filed, 112 arrested between January and September in drug trafficking crackdown in Mizoram's Champhai



AIZAWL

Mizoram's Excise and Narcotics Department has registered 87 cases and arrested 112 people in connection with drug trafficking in Champhai district between January and September 2025.

The district, which shares a border with Myanmar, continues to be a major entry point for illicit drugs entering India.

According to officials, the figures show a significant increase compared to the previous year. In 2024, only 74 cases were filed under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, with 95 arrests.

In addition, 304 cases were registered under the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition) Act last year, while this year saw 174 such cases during the same nine-month period. A total of 220 people were arrested for alcohol-related offences in 2024, compared to 129 this year.

Officials said that a major haul of drugs was seized during the operations, including 12.616 kg of heroin and 87.639 kg of methamphetamine tablets—commonly known as "crazy drugs"—which are banned in India. Over 8.7 kg of heroin and 86 kg of methamphetamine were recovered in Champhai alone in 2024.

The Excise and Narcotics Department, in collaboration with the Young Mizo Association (YMA), has intensified its campaign under "Operation Jericho" to combat cross-border drug trafficking and smuggling. The coordinated drive aims to dismantle trafficking networks and restrict the inflow of drugs from across the Myanmar border.

Authorities have confirmed that the ongoing operation will continue until December, as part of the state government's broader mission to curb drug abuse and illegal trafficking in Mizoram.

CEPRD slams 'scientific mining' in South Garo Hills, calls it ecological devastation

SHILLONG

CEPRD condemns mining in Paromgre, calling it environmentally disastrous and a betrayal of constitutional duties by the Meghalaya government. Mining near the Nokrek Biosphere Reserve threatens endangered species and violates the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. CEPRD alleges mining operations violate environmental laws, lack public consultation, and undermine procedural justice.

The Centre for Environment Protection and Rural Development (CEPRD) has condemned the ongoing "scientific mining" operations in Paromgre under Chokpot in South Garo Hills, terming them environmentally disastrous, legally untenable, and morally indefensible.

In a strongly worded statement, the organization accused the Meghalaya government of betraying its constitutional and ecological responsibilities by permitting mining in one of the state's most environmentally sensitive zones. CEPRD asserted that the so-called "scientific mining" being conducted is anything but scientific, alleging that it threatens to devastate the delicate ecosystem, endanger local communities, and violate multiple environmental and constitutional safeguards.

The Paromgre region lies in close proximity to the Nokrek Biosphere Reserve, a UNESCO-recognized ecological heritage site known for its pristine forests and rare biodiversity. CEPRD warned that mining activities in such proximity could lead to irreversible ecological destruction.

"The forests here are home to endangered species like the Hoolock Gibbon and the Himalayan Black Bear. Disrupting their habitat without environmental clearance is a direct breach of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972," the organization stated. It further highlighted that the operations contravene the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, which prohibits diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes without approval from the Central Government.

According to CEPRD, the ongoing mining operations flout multiple environmental laws, including the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006, which mandate environmental impact assessments and public hearings before project approval.

"There is no evidence of any transparent, consultative, or lawful process being followed," CEPRD said. "The absence of public consultation points to a deliberate attempt to silence indigenous voices and bypass procedural justice."

The group stressed that such violations erode the principles of environmental governance and amount to a systemic failure of the regulatory framework.

Paromgre forms part of an intricate eco-

logical network supported by rivers such as Rompa, Rongdik, Khakiza, and Rongma—lifelines for the people of Chokpot and surrounding areas. CEPRD reported that these rivers are already suffering from contamination and siltation due to reckless excavation, warning that further mining could destroy the region's water systems and threaten livelihoods.

"The degradation of these rivers signifies the slow death of an entire ecosystem," the statement emphasized, adding that environmental degradation in Paromgre directly impacts the food security, health, and cultural identity of local communities.

CEPRD also expressed grave concern over reports suggesting possible illegal uranium exploration being conducted under the pretext of coal mining. Such activities, it warned, would not only pose catastrophic environmental damage but also expose local populations to severe radiological health risks.

"If true, this would constitute a direct violation of the Atomic Energy Act, 1962, and demand immediate investigation and criminal prosecution," the organization asserted.

Citing Article 21 of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to life—including the right to a clean and healthy environment—CEPRD accused the state of violating fundamental rights. It also invoked Article 48A, which obligates the State to protect forests and wildlife, and Article 51A(g), which entrusts citizens with the duty to protect nature.

"By allowing destructive mining in

Paromgre, the government has breached its constitutional duty and violated the public trust doctrine," CEPRD declared, referencing landmark Supreme Court judgments such as M.C. Mehta vs. Kamal Nath (1997) and Indian Council for Enviro-Legal Action vs. Union of India (1996).

The organization has called upon the Government of Meghalaya, the Forest and Environment Department, the State Pollution Control Board, and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) to immediately halt all ongoing mining and quarrying activities in Paromgre.

It has demanded a judicially monitored investigation into the legality and environmental impact of the operations, urging authorities to publish all permits, clearances, and agreements related to the project in accordance with the Right to Information Act, 2005.

"If the State continues to remain silent, CEPRD will approach the Hon'ble Supreme Court and National Green Tribunal (NGT) through Public Interest Litigation," the statement warned.

In conclusion, CEPRD reminded policymakers that real progress cannot be measured in mineral output but in the well-being of forests, rivers, and communities.

"True development is not about extraction but preservation. What is happening in Paromgre is not 'scientific mining', it is systematic destruction. The government must choose between short-term gain and long-term survival," the statement concluded.

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“Rahul Gandhi has nothing to do with Bihar, its development and problems”: Prashant Kishor



PATNA

Jan Suraj founder Prashant Kishor on Tuesday targeted Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi over his absence in the Bihar Assembly polls and said that the latter was active only to put pressure on the Rashtriya Janata Dal for more seats.

Speaking to media, Kishor claimed that Rahul Gandhi has no connection to Bihar or its development. He added that Rahul Gandhi will soon visit, hold a few rallies, and that will mark the end of Bihar's relevance for the Congress MP.

“Rahul Gandhi was active only so that by put-

ting pressure, he could get a few more seats from the RJD. He has nothing to do with Bihar, Bihar's development, or Bihar's problems. If he doesn't get a seat, he'll sit in Delhi. He'll come only at election time, hold three or four rallies, and for him, Bihar's story is finished,” he said.

The Jan Suraj founder said that the people of Bihar need to worry about people such as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi, who would come to the state at election time, mislead people, take their votes and leave.

“Bihar should worry about people like these

-- whether it's Modi or Rahul ji -- who come only at election time, put on a show, talk big, mislead the public, take the votes and leave. After that, Bihar and its people will suffer for five years, your children will have to do manual labour, you'll have floods, and these people won't say a single word,” Prashant Kishor said.

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.

The Mahagathbandhan led by Rashtriya Janata Dal includes the Congress party, the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (CPI-ML) led by Deepankar Bhattacharya, the Communist Party of India (CPI), 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.

Polling in the Bihar 2025 elections is scheduled to take place on November 6 and 11, respectively, while the results will be declared on November 14.

Trump hosts Diwali celebrations at White House, calls PM Modi ‘great person’

WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump hosted a special Diwali event at the White House, where he termed Prime Minister Narendra Modi “a great person” and said he loves “the people of India.”

The event was attended by the Indian Ambassador to the US Vinay Kwatra, the new US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor, FBI Director Kash Patel and Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard. Leading business leaders from the Indian diaspora were also part of the celebrations.

Trump lit the diya in the Oval Office, calling it “a symbol of faith in the victory of light over darkness” and extended his “warmest wishes to the people of India.”

“It's knowledge over ignorance and good over evil. During Diwali, revellers recall ancient stories of enemies defeated, obstacles removed and captives freed. The glow of the diya flame reminds us to seek the path of wisdom and to work with diligence and to always give thanks for our many blessings,” he added.

The Indian Ambassador thanked President Trump for opening up the White House to mark the festival of Diwali.

“Mr. President, let me start first of all by expressing a deep sense of gratitude for opening up White House, Oval Office, your home to mark Diwali's festival of lights, which is celebrated by one-fifth of humanity... You are showcasing the strength of diversity through this celebration. So it's truly a great honour. On behalf of my Prime Minister and my own behalf, wish you and your loved one, very, very happy Diwali greetings, particularly to over 5 million-strong Indian diaspora in the US and I close by making a wish, which is what we do for Diwali. We wish that the light of Diwali continues to shine on your success and on the strength of India,” he noted.

FBI Director Kash Patel, one of the most prominent Indian Americans



serving in the Trump administration, praised Trump for celebrating Diwali at the White House.

“It's an honour to be a first-generation Indian-American... Under your leadership, so many more millions of Americans are living that dream, and to celebrate here in the Oval Office on Diwali, which you said... is a triumph of good over evil. It's just an incredible honour. It's incredibly humbling. Indian Americans around the world, Indians around the world are thrilled that you are such a profound leader in sharing this diversity with the world,” he added.

While speaking to reporters, Trump claimed he spoke to Prime Minister Modi on Tuesday and the two sides are “working on some great

deals between our countries.”

“I just spoke to your Prime Minister today. We had a great conversation. We talked about trade. We talked about a lot of things, but mostly the world of trade. He's very interested in that,” he said.

Trump also reiterated that he had been assured that India is “not going to buy much oil from Russia.”

“We just have a very good relationship, and he's not going to buy much oil from Russia. He wants to see that war end as much as with Russia, Ukraine. And as you know, they're not going to be buying too much oil. So, they've got it way back, and they're continuing to cut it way back,” he emphasised.

While India has started buying

Russian oil in the last few years, China is Moscow's biggest energy buyer.

The Trump administration imposed an additional 25 per cent tariff on India in August for purchasing Russian oil while taking no action against China.

On whether he would impose additional tariffs on China for purchasing Russian energy, Trump said Beijing would likely be paying 155 per cent tariffs from November 1 in retaliation for export controls on rare earths.

“As of November 1, China will have about 155 per cent tariffs I don't think it's sustainable for them. So, I want to be nice to China, but China has been very rough with us,” he noted.

INTERNATIONAL

Trump says doesn't want ‘wasted’ meeting with Putin



WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump said Tuesday he had shelved plans for a summit in Budapest with Russia's Vladimir Putin on the Ukraine war because he did not want a “wasted” meeting.

Trump's reversal came just days after he announced that he would meet Putin in the Hungarian capital within two weeks, following what he called a productive phone call to end Russia's war.

The US leader pressured Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to give up the eastern Donbas region in exchange for peace during “tense” talks last Friday in Washington, a senior Ukrainian official told AFP.

But on Tuesday, a White House official said that there were now “no plans for President Trump to meet with President Putin in the immediate future” despite the

Budapest announcement.

“I don't want to have a wasted meeting,” Trump told reporters in the Oval Office when asked why the Putin encounter had been put on ice. “I don't want to have a waste of time, so I'll see what happens.”

Asked by an AFP journalist what had changed his mind, Trump said: “A lot of things are happening on the war front. And we'll be notifying you over the next two days as to what we're doing.”

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov also called off an expected meeting to arrange the Budapest summit after speaking by phone on Monday, the White House said.

Trump has counted on personal chemistry with Putin to reach a Ukraine peace deal, but has found himself frustrated time and again by the Russian leader.

Ukraine and its European allies, meanwhile, have been left scrambling to keep up with the mercurial US president.

Zelensky's talks with Trump at the White House last week were “not easy,” the senior Ukrainian official told AFP, adding that diplomatic efforts to end the Russia-Ukraine war felt like they were being “dragged out” and “going in circles.” Trump called last week for both Moscow and Kyiv to stop the war at their current battle lines, and publicly made no references to Ukraine giving up territory.

But when asked if Trump urged Zelensky to pull out of land that Ukraine still controlled -- one of Putin's key demands, the Ukrainian official said: “Yes, that's true.”

Zelensky left the meeting empty-handed after Trump, who spoke with Putin the day before, denied his request for long-range

Tomahawk missiles and pressured him into making a deal.

Ukraine considers the Donbas, a largely industrial area spanning its eastern Lugansk and Donetsk regions, an inseparable part of its territory and has rejected the idea of ceding it many times.

The Kremlin said Tuesday there was no “precise” date for any new meeting between Trump and Putin, who held talks in Alaska in August but failed to reach a breakthrough on Ukraine.

European leaders have rejected the idea of Ukraine giving up land -- instead backing the proposal that fighting should be frozen on the current front lines.

In a joint statement published Tuesday, leaders including France's Emmanuel Macron, Italy's Giorgia Meloni and Britain's Keir Starmer warned that Russia was not “serious about peace.” “We strongly support President Trump's position that the fighting should stop immediately, and that the current line of contact should be the starting point of negotiations,” the statement said.

NATO leader Mark Rutte was heading to Washington on Tuesday for a meeting with Trump, the military alliance said in a statement. EU leaders are then set to close ranks in support of Ukraine at a Brussels summit on Thursday -- followed a day later by a “coalition of the willing” meeting of European leaders in London to discuss the next steps to help Kyiv.

Putin ordered a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, describing it as a “special military operation” to demilitarize the country and prevent the expansion of NATO.

Russia now occupies around a fifth of Ukrainian territory -- much of it ravaged by fighting, while tens of thousands of civilians and soldiers have been killed.

Japan's new PM is preparing large economic stimulus to tackle inflation, sources say



TOKYO

Japan's new Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi is preparing an economic stimulus package that is likely to exceed last year's \$92 billion to help households tackle inflation, government sources familiar with the plan said on Wednesday.

The package of more than 13.9 trillion yen (\$92.19 billion) marks Takaichi's first major economic initiative since the advocate of big fiscal spending took office on Tuesday, reflecting her commitment to what she calls “responsible proactive fiscal policy.”

It will be built around three main pillars: measures to counter inflation, investment in growth industries,

and national security, the sources said, declining to be identified because the matter is still private.

Japan's Nikkei share gauge raised losses and turned higher on Wednesday afternoon, while the yen pared morning gains and was little changed.

As part of its core inflation relief measures, the Takaichi administration plans to swiftly abolish the provisional gasoline tax rate.

It also aims to expand local government grants, with a focus on supporting small and medium-sized companies that are unable to benefit from existing tax incentives for wage hikes.

The package will also include investments in growth

sectors such as artificial intelligence and semiconductors as the government focuses on strategic economic development.

The exact scale of the package is still being finalised, the sources said. It could be announced as early as next month. To fund the measures, the government is moving ahead with drafting a supplementary budget for the current financial year through March, with an eye toward passing it during the upcoming extraordinary parliament session.

If additional spending exceeds initial expectations, the government may need to issue deficit-covering bonds, raising questions about how to balance economic growth with fiscal discipline.

Nagaland University Study identifies natural compound with breakthrough potential for Diabetic Wound treatment

- The study, published in Nature Scientific Reports (Nature Portfolio), opens up new possibilities for affordable & natural diabetic therapies as it identifies Sinapic acid, a plant-based compound, that accelerates diabetic wound healing
- This could potentially pave the way for affordable, sustainable oral therapeutics and reduce amputation risks worldwide
- This is the first study globally to demonstrate that Sinapic acid, when administered orally, can accelerate diabetic wound healing in preclinical models

LUMAMI, NAGALAND

Nagaland University researchers have identified a naturally-occurring plant compound called 'Sinapic acid' as a powerful therapeutic agent capable of significantly accelerating wound healing in diabetic conditions. The discovery marks a major advancement that could result in safe, natural, and effective treatments for diabetic wound management.

This is the first study globally to demonstrate that Sinapic acid, when administered orally, can accelerate diabetic wound healing in preclinical models. The research established that the compound works by activating the SIRT1 pathway, which plays a crucial role in tissue repair, angiogenesis, and inflammation control.

The multidisciplinary study involved collaboration between experts from Nagaland University and Lovely Professional University (LPU), Punjab, combining expertise in biotechnology, pharmacology, biochemistry, and medical laboratory sciences.

The Research was led by Prof. Pranav Kumar Prabhakar, Department of Biotechnology, School of Engineering and Technology, Nagaland University, and included Rupal Dubey, Sourbh Suren Garg, Navneet Khurana and Jeena Gupta from Lovely Professional University.

The findings have been published in Nature Scientific Reports (DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-03890-z>), a peer-reviewed, open-access journal from Nature Portfolio (Springer Nature), lending strong international credibility to this work.

Highlighting the real-world impact of this Research, Prof. Jagadish K. Patnaik, Vice Chancellor, Nagaland University, said, "I am delighted to share that a study conducted by our researchers at Nagaland University has identified a natural compound with remarkable potential in the treatment of diabetic wounds. This discovery not only highlights the strength of our scientific community but also reflects our commitment to addressing pressing health challenges through innovation rooted in nature. I congratulate the research team for their dedication and contribution towards improving healthcare solutions."

Elaborating on how this research addresses a Critical Global Health Challenge, Prof. Pranav Kumar Prabhakar, Head, Department of Biotechnology, School of Engineering and Technology, Nagaland University, said, "Diabetes mellitus remains one of the world's most pressing chronic diseases, affecting hundreds of millions globally. Among its serious complications is delayed wound healing, often resulting in diabetic foot ulcers, infection, and, in severe cases, amputation. Existing synthetic drugs have shown limited efficacy and often cause undesirable side effects."



The quieter you become, the more you can hear.

Prof. Pranav Kumar Prabhakar added,



"We set out seeking a safe, plant-based alternative — exploring how Sinapic acid, a naturally occurring antioxidant found in various edible plants, could accelerate tissue repair, reduce inflammation, and promote new blood vessel formation in diabetic wounds. We found that a lower dose (20 mg/kg) was more effective than a higher one (40 mg/kg), a phenomenon known as 'Inverted Dose-Response.' This result not only optimises dosage strategy but also has significant clinical implications for future drug development."

Further, Dr. Jeena Gupta, Lovely Professional University, said, "Our findings suggest that Sinapic acid has remarkable potential to accelerate tissue repair by enhancing angiogenesis and modulating oxidative stress. Unlike topical applications or invasive treatments, oral delivery allows systemic bioavailability, enabling targeted action at the wound site. Building on these results, the team is also working on developing patentable formulation with Sinapic acid for easy administration, low cost, and scalability for future human trials."

KEY IMPLICATIONS & NEXT STEPS

The key implications of this discovery include reducing the risk of amputation and accelerating recovery in diabetic foot ulcers and providing an affordable, natural oral therapy, improving accessibility for patients in rural and resource-limited settings. This Research aligns with India's traditional medicine and nutraceutical innovation goals, offering a safe, sustainable, and culturally compatible treatment approach.

The research team has built robust preclinical evidence that Sinapic acid enhances wound healing, improves metabolic health, and mitigates oxidative stress in diabetic models. The next phase will focus on translating this success into real-world therapeutics through:

- Ø Detailed molecular pathway studies (PI3K/Akt, NF- κ B)
- Ø Toxicity and pharmacokinetic profiling to ensure safety
- Ø Formulation development for capsules or nutraceutical tablets
- Ø Pilot clinical trials in diabetic patients to test efficacy and safety

ABOUT NAGALAND UNIVERSITY: Nagaland University, the 13th Central University and the only Central University in Nagaland was established based on the Act of Parliament of India and received the assent of the President of India on 20th October 1989 as The Nagaland University Act 1989. The University came into being on Sep-

tember 6, 1994 having jurisdiction over the entire state of Nagaland.

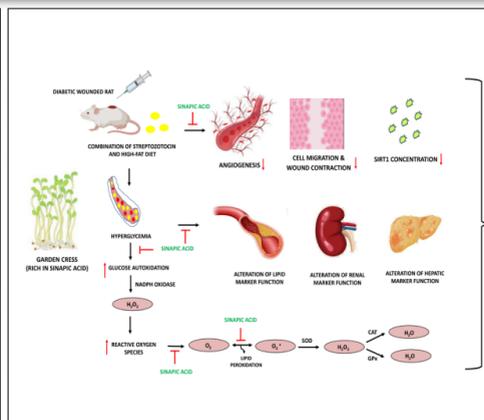
Nagaland University registered a significant improvement in National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2025, securing a place in the 151-200 rank band.

At present the University has three campuses, viz. (i) Headquarters at Lumami in Zunheboto district (ii) Kohima Campus at Meriema in Kohima district (iii) Medziphema Campus (School of Agricultural Sciences) at Medziphe-

ma in Dimapur district.

There are 43 departments offering Undergraduate and Postgraduate and Ph.D. programmes in different disciplines of Arts, Commerce, Sciences, Agricultural Sciences, Engineering & Technology and Management streams. There are 76 colleges from all over the state of Nagaland currently affiliated to Nagaland University.

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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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Khumbongmayum Gojendro Extends Best Wishes to NEIR 2026



IMPHAL

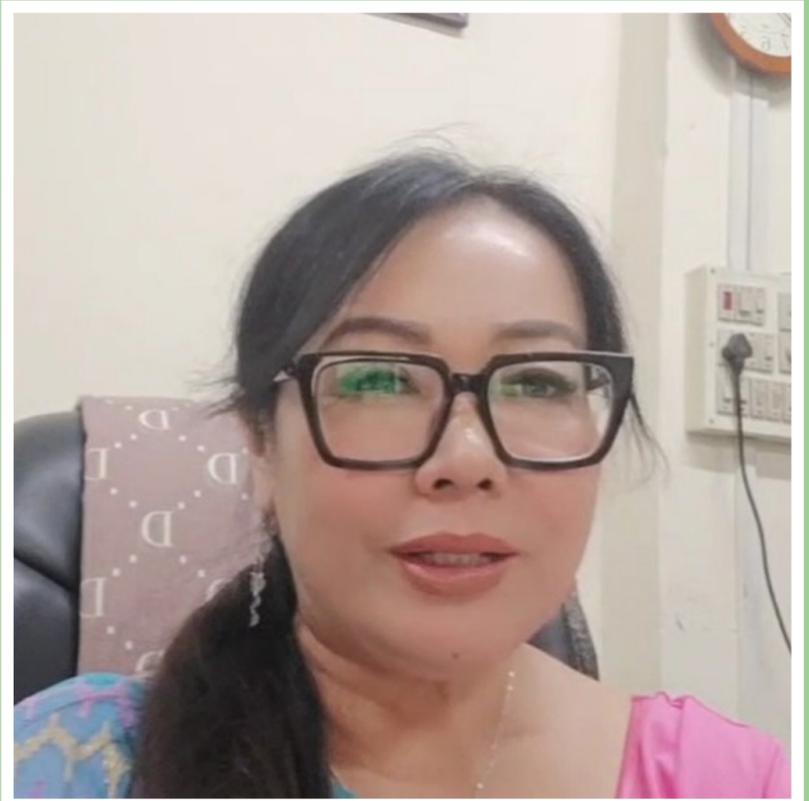
Khumbongmayum Gojendro, Member of the Organising Committee of the North East Integration Rally (NEIR) 2026, has extended his best wishes for the upcoming event, describing it as a milestone in fostering unity across the region.

Calling NEIR 2026 “more than a rally,” Gojendro said it represents a movement that celebrates identity, culture, and shared purpose. “It’s not just a gathering, but a celebration of unity and a historic moment in the making,” he said.

Scheduled to take place between January and February 2026, the North East Integration Rally aims to strengthen bonds among the eight northeastern states through cultural exchange, sports, and community engagement — showcasing the spirit of togetherness that defines the region.

Khumbongmayum Gojendro, a noted human rights activist, also serves as the Joint Secretary of the Manipur Judo Association and President of the Manipur Pranth, Sharada Sarvagya Peetham, Jammu and Kashmir.

Dr. Konika Khuraijam Hails Spirit of Unity Ahead of North East Integration Rally 2026



IMPHAL

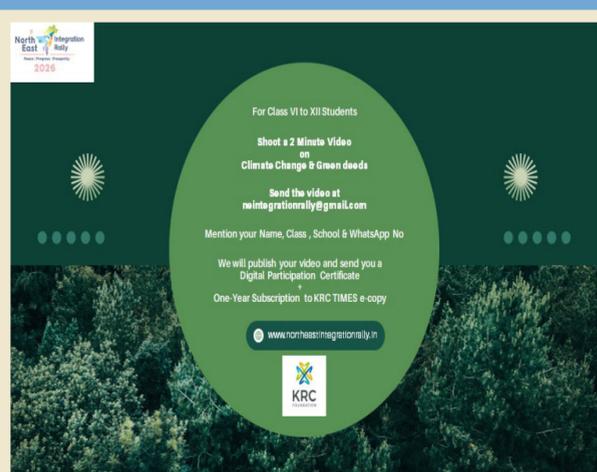
Dr. Konika Khuraijam has extended her best wishes to the organisers and participants of the upcoming North East Integration Rally (NEIR) 2026, an initiative aimed at promoting unity, cultural exchange, and regional harmony across the Northeastern states. She lauded the vision behind the rally, calling it a meaningful step toward strengthening the bonds among the diverse communities of the region. Dr. Khuraijam expressed confidence that the event would inspire the youth to take pride in the shared heritage and collective identity of Northeast India.

Dr. Konika Khuraijam is a prominent educationist, academic, philanthropist, and women’s rights advocate from Imphal, Manipur, India. She is recognised for her significant contributions to teacher education, social welfare, and research on gender-related issues. Her work spans academia, community service, and public recognition through various national and international awards. As of recent publications in 2024, she remains active in her professional roles.

Dr. Khuraijam has received numerous accolades for her leadership in education and women’s empowerment.



Students Invited to Join ‘Climate Change and Green Deeds’ Campaign



Schools across the Northeast are being encouraged to get their students involved in an inspiring initiative — the Climate Change and Green Deeds campaign. The call is open to students from Class 6 to 12 who want to raise their voice for the planet and share ideas for a greener future.

To participate, each student needs to make a short video — up to two minutes — on the theme Climate Change and Green Deeds. The video should then be emailed to neintegrationrally@gmail.com.

If sending through email

isn’t possible, the campaign team will help by collecting videos via WhatsApp and forwarding them to the official address.

Each submission should include the student’s Name, Class, School with Location (for example, DPS Guwahati or DPS Silchar), and a WhatsApp number (either their own or their parents’).

Selected videos will be featured on KRC Times and NEIR social media platforms, giving young environmentalists a platform to be seen and heard.

All participants will receive a Digital Participation Certificate along with a one-year KRC Times e-copy sub-



scription on WhatsApp.

Teachers, parents, and school administrators are urged to encourage students to take part and make their

voices count for the planet.

For more information or to submit entries, contact neintegrationrally@gmail.com.



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, College, University Department, Individual & Group Competition.





11 JAN
Barak Valley Conclave
 Potential Issues and Challenges of Barak Valley by different stakeholders. Includes NGOs, and Government can register for free. Registration: 5000/-, seats are limited, and reservation is required. Participation through invitation only. Different rewards are provided.

11 JAN
Adventure Sports
 Trekking & Canoe, Obstacle Navigations, Sport Climbing, Disaster Management, Techniques, Water Sports and more. Participants will face the challenges in life, increase confidence and sense of purpose, enrich life and also connected with nature.



10 Jan
Barak Festival: Peace Progress & Prosperity



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.



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.





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CONTACT: info@krcnews.com
 WP: 0721300019

10 JAN
Media Conclave
 Media Conclave: Media Conclave, Workshops, and the Fund, Talks and Conferences are part of the 'Barak Festival 2025'. Theme: 'One for All, All for One'. Media Conclave: Workshops, Journalism, media & corporate relations, seminars, panel discussions, webinars.





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RAV BARRAK | RECORD STORE

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10-12 JAN
Science Studio
 Real 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'.





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10-12 JAN
E-Sports
 Full featured tournaments | CASH PRIZES | Trophy



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





Band Night 10 JAN
Musical Night 11 JAN

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10-12 JAN
Book Bank
 #NoOneLeftBehind Campaign | Book Bank | Donate | Reuse | Recycle

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

Painting Carnival
 Water Colour painting and Draw Race Campaign



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