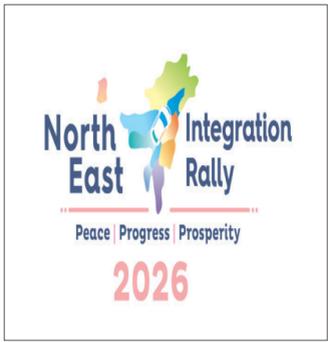




KRC TIMES

STAY-ENRICHED



VOLUME:1, ISSUE 588 | SILCHAR WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 08, 2025. EAST AND NE INDIA EDITION | e-mail: krctimes@gmail.com ,www.krctimes.com

Get all the latest and updated news of today in the evening. For subscribing to this e-paper contact at -8721838313

SUBSCRIBE

₹300 / year

WhatsApp payment details : 8721838313
info@krcfoundation.org

PERSPECTIVE

Hello everyone, I have switched to Zoho Mail. Kindly note the change in my email address. My new email address is amitshah.bjp@http://zohomail.in. For future correspondence via mail, kindly use this address. Thank you for your kind attention to this matter.

- Amit Shah, Indian Union Home Minister

Manipur: 9-ft country-made rocket recovered in Churachandpur

IMPHAL
In a major recovery, security forces in Manipur have found a country-made rocket loaded with explosives in Churachandpur district, officials said on Tuesday, October 8. The rocket, measuring nine feet in length and weighing around 200 kilograms, was discovered on Sunday near S Lonphai and Tuikong villages.

Police sources said the discovery has heightened security concerns, as it comes months after an elderly man was killed in a rocket attack in Moirang, Bishnupur district, in September 2024. Authorities are probing possible links between the recovered weapon and militant outfits active in the region. In separate counter-insurgency operations this week, Manipur Police arrested two active insurgent cadres belonging to different banned groups. On October 7, an operative of the Revolutionary People's Front/People's Liberation Army (RPF/PLA), identified as Khongbantabam Priyobarta Meitei alias Boicha alias Tomba alias Abung (37), was arrested from his residence at Kwakeithel Kongjeng Leikai under Singjamei Police Station in Imphal West district. Police seized a mobile phone and an Aadhaar card from his possession. Earlier, on October 6, security personnel apprehended Thokchom Maikel Singh alias Munan (25), an active cadre of the Kangleipak Communist Party (Progressive War Group), from Kongpal Khaidem Leikai under Porompat Police Station in Imphal East district.



Police sources said the discovery has heightened security concerns, as it comes months after an elderly man was killed in a rocket attack in Moirang, Bishnupur district, in September 2024. Authorities are probing possible links between the recovered weapon and militant outfits active in the region. In separate counter-insurgency operations this week, Manipur Police arrested two active insurgent cadres belonging to different banned groups. On October 7, an operative of the Revolutionary People's Front/People's Liberation Army (RPF/PLA), identified as Khongbantabam Priyobarta Meitei alias Boicha alias Tomba alias Abung (37), was arrested from his residence at Kwakeithel Kongjeng Leikai under Singjamei Police Station in Imphal West district. Police seized a mobile phone and an Aadhaar card from his possession. Earlier, on October 6, security personnel apprehended Thokchom Maikel Singh alias Munan (25), an active cadre of the Kangleipak Communist Party (Progressive War Group), from Kongpal Khaidem Leikai under Porompat Police Station in Imphal East district.

WHO SAID WHAT

Upload any photos from your phone or take a picture of an old photo and turn it into a video in 20 seconds with the Grok app! ~ Elon Musk, American Entrepreneur

Assam police DSP arrested in connection with Zubeen Garg's death case

Fresh summons to Assam Association Singapore members in Zubeen Garg death probe: CID

GUWAHATI

Sandipan Garg, an Assam Police Service officer and cousin of the late singer Zubeen Garg, was arrested by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Assam Police in connection with the music icon's death.

Sandipan had been appearing before investigators at the office of the Crime Investigation Department (CID), Assam, every day for the last five days. He was arrested shortly after he arrived at the CID office on Wednesday at around 10:30 a.m.

CID sources said the agency would produce him before a court and seek 14 days' custody.

Sandipan, who serves as a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), was allegedly on the yacht when Zubeen died under mysterious circumstances while swimming in the sea in Singapore on 19 September. This was reportedly Sandipan's first trip abroad.

So far, five persons have been arrested in connection with the case. The four others taken into



custody are the organiser of the 4th North East India Festival in Singapore, Shyamkanu Mahanta; Zubeen's manager, Siddharth Sharma; his bandmate, Shekhar Jyoti Goswami; and singer Amrit Prabha Mahanta. Zubeen had travelled to Singapore to attend the festival.

Meanwhile, Rupkamal Kalita, an NRI and member of the Assam Association Singapore, deposed before the CID for the second consecutive day on Wednesday. He was grilled for six hours on Tuesday.

Kalita was allegedly on the yacht in Singapore on that fateful

day when Zubeen died. Seven other Singapore-based Assamese witnesses have not yet responded to the CID's summons.

The Assam Police will issue fresh summons to seven members of the Assam Association Singapore in connection with the mysterious death of singer-actor Zubeen Garg, as they failed to appear before the investigating agency within the stipulated deadline, a senior officer said on Wednesday. CID Special DGP Munna Prasad Gupta said that out of the eight Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) who were issued notices earlier, only one — Rupkamal Kalita — has appeared before the Special Investigation Team (SIT) for questioning. The others did not respond by the October 6 deadline.

"We are going to issue fresh summons to all of them who have not come yet. We will move ahead as per the legal processes," Gupta told reporters in Guwahati.

Gupta confirmed that Kalita, who appeared at the CID headquarters on Tuesday, has been under interrogation for over 24 hours. "We are in touch with the NRIs in

question. Since they are stationed abroad, certain legal frameworks are involved, and we are communicating through the proper channels. We hope they will cooperate and join the investigation soon," he added.

Commenting on the arrest of DSP Sandipan Garg earlier on Wednesday, Gupta said, "I will only say that he has been arrested, and the investigation is going on. Beyond that, I cannot disclose anything much on the nature of his arrest."

Zubeen Garg died in Singapore on September 19 while swimming in the sea. He had travelled to the Southeast Asian nation to attend the 4th edition of the North East India Festival. A yacht was reportedly booked by a few office bearers of the Assam Association Singapore, who were present when Garg allegedly drowned.

The SIT, probing the circumstances surrounding the singer's death, has intensified its investigation and is expected to question more individuals linked to the association in the coming days.

Tipra Motha Warns of Quitting Tripura Cabinet Over Delay in 'Tiprasa Accord'



AGARTALA

The Tipra Motha Party (TMP) has signalled a possible exit from the BJP-led coalition government in Tripura if the Manik Saha administration does not expedite the implementation of the 'Tiprasa Accord'.

A three-member TMP delegation, led by party supremo Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma, met AK Mishra, the interlocutor for the accord, in New Delhi on Tuesday to

press for immediate action.

TMP MLA Ranjit Debbarma said the party highlighted the state government's "dilly-dallying" over fulfilling the agreement, which was signed in March last year between the TMP, the state government, and the Centre for the overall development of the tribal community in Tripura.

"The TMP does not want to be a victim like Assam's United People's Party Liberal (UPPL), which suffered electorally in the recent Bodoland Territorial Council polls despite being an ally of the BJP," Debbarma said. The MLA also pointed out that the promised 125th Constitutional Amendment Bill, which aims to safeguard the administration of tribal areas in some northeastern states, has not yet been passed in Parliament. Additionally, the TMP raised the issue of 37 bills passed by the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) that are still pending with the state government.

"Mishra sought the lists of the pending bills, which we will submit to him today," Debbarma added, underscoring the party's demand for swift action on the historic accord.

Currently, the TMP holds one ministerial position in the Manik Saha-led cabinet.

"I doubt Congress leaders are born from mothers' wombs": Himanta Biswa Sarma

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma sparked a political stir on Wednesday with a sharp jibe at the Congress, saying he "doubted if the members of the Congress party are born from their respective mothers' wombs."

The remark came while he was addressing a public gathering during the distribution of Rs 10,000 seed funds to over 14,000 women beneficiaries under a state initiative aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and financial independence.

Sarma, known for his fiery rhetoric, accused the Congress of habitually criticising every welfare measure introduced by the BJP government. "I think they are born from a machine because whenever the BJP government provides schemes for women, they start criticising it. Who will criticise their own mother if she receives help? We are all born from our mother's womb," he told the reporters.

The Chief Minister said the women-led self-employment initiative reflects his government's goal of empowering families at the grassroots level and expanding opportunities for rural women.



Sarma also commented on the Adivasi protest in Tinsukia, where thousands of tea-garden and Adivasi community members marched to demand long-overdue welfare measures, land rights, and Scheduled Tribe (ST) status.

"The protest is correct as their demands are genuine and for the welfare of the community. Even our party leaders will participate — the BJP supports their cause," Sarma said.

The protest, charged with chants, slogans, and placards, highlighted decades of unfulfilled promises and the communities'

struggle for recognition. Demonstrators demanded ST recognition, land ownership rights for landless families, and higher wages for tea-garden workers. Protest leaders said these issues were not only legal but tied to the survival and dignity of their people.

Sarma reiterated that his government was open to dialogue and committed to finding long-term solutions to the Adivasi community's concerns, asserting, "We will ensure every deserving group in Assam gets their due rights and recognition."

Manipur fashion designer earns laurels at Paris Fashion Week



IMPHAL

Robert Naorem, an Indian fashion entrepreneur, designer, and makeup artist from Manipur, India, has presented his latest collection, "Art of East India", at an exclusive international fashion show during Paris Fashion Week. Organised by PP Production House, the show was held at Melia La Defense, Paris, recently. The event featured 25 designers from different countries, providing a global platform for Robert's work.

Known for his contribution towards the handloom and textile of the north east India, especially for Manipur state, Robert's collection highlights Manipur's woven silks with intricate hand embroidery, blending traditional craftsmanship with contemporary aesthetics. His showcase features original traditional attire alongside Western silhouettes, in a refined palette of red, cream, and ivory, designed for the international market. Robert aims to revive handloom traditions and promote sustainable fashion, bringing global recognition to Manipur's textile and craft sector. Robert underscored the

artistic brilliance of the region and inspired designers from Northeast India to innovate while preserving their cultural roots, and his presence at Paris Fashion Week marked a milestone for Indian handloom fashion, bridging local tradition with global trends.

Born on 15 May 1986 to Naorem Dijamani Singh and Th. Rekha Devi at Wangjing Awang Leikai Thoubal District, Manipur, and Robert Naorem, after completing his schooling at Don Bosco School, Chingmeirong, left for Bangalore to join Surana College.

In Bangalore, he met people from the fashion industry, and he had his first exposure to the world of fashion. Although Robert pursued further studies, gaining an MPhil degree in Clinical Psychology later, he opted for the career line of makeup artist cum fashion designer.

He earned "the most inspirational designer of 2017" award for showcasing his collections at India Fashion Week London and was selected as the Best international designer in India, at International Fashion Week Milan, Italy, 2019.

Gift Partner, NEIR 2026

Wakhal arts & crafts

www.northeastintegrationrally.in



VOLUME:1, ISSUE 588

INDO-CHINA RELATIONS TAKE OFF

The resumption of India and China direct flights from October 26 after a hiatus of five long years is far more than a logistical development. It represents another significant step in rebuilding confidence between two of the world's most consequential nations. The reopening of air routes between these Asian neighbours sends an unmistakable signal – that both sides are now willing to look ahead, not back. Practically, India and China occupy a unique position in the world. They are not just geographical neighbours but civilisational powers, home to over 3 billion people – more than one-third of humanity. Both nations have rich histories, immense human potential, and growing economic capabilities. Their shared border, stretching over 3,400 kilometres, has been a source of both connection and contention through the decades. Yet, despite the differences, the sheer weight of their population, markets, and influence makes their relationship central to the stability and prosperity of Asia and, by extension, the world.

PM Modi's meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the SCO Summit in Tianjin appears to have provided the much-needed impetus for thawing relations. The decision to resume direct air services is a product of several months of back-channel discussions and technical-level deliberations between the civil aviation authorities of both countries. The move is a part of the gradual normalisation of relations between the two countries – an expression that carries both diplomatic restraint and quiet optimism. Earlier, both sides had shown a willingness to rebuild engagement through smaller but meaningful steps. The decision to restart the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra – a pilgrimage of immense spiritual significance to Indian devotees – was one such gesture that demonstrated an effort to separate cultural and humanitarian ties from political tensions. On the military front, progress has also been achieved in the disengagement process in Eastern Ladakh, where the two armies were locked in a tense face-off for more than four years.

India and China must both recognise that no conceivable conflict between them can ever result in a real victory for either side. Both are nuclear-armed powers with global ambitions, deeply integrated into the world economy. A confrontation would only drain resources, destabilise the region, and derail the aspirations of nearly a third of the global population. Peace and dialogue are, therefore, not just desirable – they are imperative. As the world grapples with shifting alliances, tariff wars, and economic decoupling, the ability of these two nations to work together could bring much-needed equilibrium to the global system. Both are major players in manufacturing, trade, technology, and infrastructure, and both are striving for leadership in renewable energy, artificial intelligence, and space exploration. Instead of viewing each other solely through the lens of rivalry, India and China can choose to complement their strengths – India's innovation, democratic dynamism, and service-sector leadership blending with China's efficiency, scale, and industrial expertise.

The resumption of direct flights, therefore, goes beyond convenience. It represents a symbolic restoration of normal people-to-people contact. Businesspersons who earlier had to rely on indirect routes to visit the other country can now travel directly, saving both time and cost. Even during the most strained years, bilateral trade between India and China remained surprisingly strong, exceeding \$100 billion annually. This resilience reflects the economic pragmatism on both sides. Indian businesses continue to import machinery, electronic components, and raw materials from China, while Chinese firms view India as one of the largest potential consumer markets. The new air links will make these commercial exchanges smoother and faster, encouraging greater interdependence and cooperation.

More confidence-building measures are likely to follow in the days ahead. Across-the-table dialogue remains the most effective way to resolve outstanding issues, from boundary disputes to trade imbalances. Peaceful coexistence between India and China is not just a regional necessity but a global responsibility. If both nations continue to nurture this spirit of engagement, the skies opening between them today could well become a metaphor for a brighter, more interconnected tomorrow – one in which India and China, together, lead Asia toward a century of cooperation rather than confrontation.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

One is wise to cultivate the tree that bears fruit in our soul.

- Henry David Thoreau

Omar Abdullah's Broken Promises and Regional Vendetta

THE BETRAYAL OF JAMMU & KASHMIR



DR ABHIJEET JASROTHIA

In October 2024, Omar Abdullah, the scion of the National Conference (NC) dynasty, assumed the mantle of Chief Minister of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, riding a wave of lofty promises and renewed hope. His election as an MLA in the 2024 Assembly elections, followed by his swearing-in on October 16, 2024, by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, was celebrated by many as a new dawn for a region long plagued by unrest and unfulfilled aspirations. Yet, nearly a year into his tenure, the Omar Abdullah-led government stands accused of betraying the very people it swore to serve. From unfulfilled campaign promises to allegations of blatant regional discrimination, the NC government has left a trail of disillusionment, anger, and broken trust. This is not just a failure of governance—it is a deliberate betrayal of Jammu & Kashmir's aspirations.

A Campaign Built on Grand Promises
Omar Abdullah's 2024 election campaign was a masterclass in populist rhetoric. He positioned himself as a leader who understood the pulse of J&K's diverse populace, promising transformative change across sectors. His commitments were ambitious, touching on every pain point of the region's citizens. He pledged to resolve chronic electricity and drinking water shortages, offering 200 units of free electricity to households. Social welfare measures included Rs 5,000 monthly stipends for poor women and 12 free LPG cylinders annually per family. He vowed a robust crackdown on the drug menace, a comprehensive program to uplift agriculture and horticulture, and a medical trust providing Rs 5,00,000 in free insurance for terminal illnesses like cancer and heart disease.

Urban decongestion in Srinagar and Jammu, free education for females up to university level and males up to college level, and the passage of a J&K Youth Employment Generation Act within three months were among his other headline promises. Tourism and industry were to receive a boost through new destinations in Pir Panjal and Chenab, alongside industrial parks and Special Economic Zones. Even the responsible mining of J&K's newly discovered lithium reserves was on the agenda, with assurances of enforcing royalties as per Supreme Court directives.

These promises resonated deeply with a population weary of broken pledges and systemic neglect. Yet, as October 2025 dawns, the people of J&K find themselves grappling with the harsh reality: not a single major promise has been fulfilled. The NC-led government, far from delivering progress, is being described by critics and disillusioned supporters alike as a "failure on every front" – a regime that exists only on paper.

EMBLAZONING THE SKIES: FROM 'DRIG ROAD' TO 'OP SINDOOR'

COL SATISH SINGH LALOTRA

Of all the three services of the armed forces, the air power, aka the air force of any nation, has the quickest reach, lethality, shock effect, and charisma within itself to take a battle to its logical end and that too on its own terms, provided this arm of the nation has been nurtured well both during its peacetime and wartime requirements. What air power can do in a short air/land engagement was very amply demonstrated during the not-too-recent 'OP Sindoor' when the IAF, staying well within national boundaries, was able to impose such a stranglehold on its archrival PAF (Pakistan Air Force) that most of their fighter aircraft were not able to come even to their weapon release ranges. And the few that did attempt to do so went back with damage that was irreparable.

The icing on the cake was the recent assertion from none other than the Vice Chief of Air Staff of IAF that it took less than even 50 (fifty) weapons fired from the Air Force to compel Pakistan to the negotiating table and a magnificent 'conflict elimination' during OP Sindoor. The superlative power of the Air Force was unleashed for the first time in the 'Great War' (1st WW) when typical biplanes in human history, with rudimentary technical prowess, could still turn the tide of many a battle effortlessly. The German Air Force, still reeling under the punishing dictates of the 'Treaty of Versailles' as well as a watchful eye of the 'League of Nations,' in 1937 intervened in the Spanish Civil War, thus cutting its teeth for future operational engagements.

The blitzkrieg from the skies unleashed by the Luftwaffe on Poland is a benchmark in aerial warfare

The Reality: A Litany of Failures

The electricity crisis in J&K remains as dire as ever. Power outages are routine, with rural areas and even parts of Srinagar and Jammu facing hours-long blackouts daily. A post on X from a Srinagar resident captures the frustration: "@OmarAbdullah promised 200 units of free electricity, but we're lucky to get 200 minutes of power a day! #JKBetrayed" (@JKVoice2025, September 15, 2025). The promised drinking water reforms have similarly stalled, with many villages still dependent on contaminated sources or irregular tanker supplies.

Social welfare schemes have fared no better. The Rs 5,000 monthly stipend for poor women remains a distant dream, with no budgetary allocation or implementation framework in sight. The pledge for 12 free LPG cylinders has been quietly shelved, leaving families struggling with rising fuel costs. The war on drugs, a critical issue in a region grappling with rising addiction rates, has seen no meaningful action. A recent X post by a youth activist in Kashmir reads: "Drug menace is destroying our youth, but where is the 'strong crackdown' @OmarAbdullah promised? Empty words, empty promises. #SaveKashmir" (@Youth4JK, August 22, 2025).

Healthcare, another cornerstone of Abdullah's campaign, is in shambles. The promised medical trust for terminal diseases has not materialized, leaving patients to fend for themselves in underfunded hospitals. Agriculture and horticulture, vital to J&K's economy, have seen no comprehensive support programs, with farmers still battling outdated infrastructure and lack of market access. The urban decongestion plan for Srinagar and Jammu has been reduced to mere rhetoric, with traffic snarls and unplanned urban sprawl worsening by the day.

Perhaps most galling is the failure to deliver on youth employment. The promised J&K Youth Employment Generation Act, slated for passage within three months of the government's formation, remains a non-starter. Unemployment rates in J&K, particularly among educated youth, continue to soar. A frustrated graduate from Jammu posted on X: "No jobs, no opportunities, no Youth Employment Act. Omar Abdullah's promises were just election drama. #JKBetrayed" (@JammuYouth, September 10, 2025).

Regional Discrimination: Jammu's Punishment

If the failure to deliver on promises has angered the entire Union Territory, the NC-led government's alleged regional bias has deepened the divide between Jammu and Kashmir. Critics argue that the Abdullah government has deliberately stalled development projects in the Jammu division as an act of political vendetta

against voters who overwhelmingly rejected the NC-Congress alliance in the 2024 elections. This perception was fueled by inflammatory statements from NC leaders post-election, with some openly declaring that "Jammu will be punished" for its electoral choices.

The appointment of Surinder Kumar Choudhary, a Jammu native, as Deputy Chief Minister was initially seen as a gesture of inclusivity. However, it has since been criticized as a token move designed to mask the government's neglect of Jammu. Development projects in the region, including road infrastructure, healthcare facilities, and industrial initiatives, have either been delayed or scrapped entirely. For instance, the much-touted Jammu-Akhnoor road widening project, critical for easing traffic and boosting connectivity, remains mired in bureaucratic delays. Similarly, plans for industrial parks in Jammu have seen no progress, stifling economic growth in a region desperate for investment.

A Jammu-based activist vented on X: "Omar Abdullah's government is starving Jammu of funds and projects. This is not governance—it's revenge for our votes. #JusticeForJammu" (@JammuRising, September 5, 2025). The sentiment is echoed across the region, where residents feel marginalized and betrayed by a government they accuse of favoring Kashmir-centric policies.

A Government of Arrogance and Apathy
The Omar Abdullah-led government's failure is not merely one of incompetence but of intent. The NC's political arrogance, critics argue, is evident in its refusal to acknowledge or address these failures. Instead of engaging with disillusioned citizens, the government has doubled down on its narrative, dismissing critics as "anti-J&K" or "politically motivated." This has only deepened the sense of betrayal among even former NC supporters, many of whom celebrated Abdullah's victory but now feel cheated.

The contrast between Abdullah's campaign rhetoric and his government's performance could not be starker. His promises of progress, equality, and good governance have given way to stagnation, discrimination, and apathy. The exploration of new tourist destinations, the responsible mining of lithium reserves, and the establishment of a Minority Commission—all flagship promises—have seen no tangible progress. Even the strengthening of the Public Distribution System (PDS), a basic governance deliverable, remains a work in progress, with ration cardholders facing delays and shortages.

A Call for Accountability
The people of Jammu & Kashmir deserved better. They placed their trust in Omar Abdullah, hoping for a government that

would bridge divides, deliver on promises, and usher in an era of prosperity. Instead, they have been handed a regime of broken commitments and political vendetta. The NC-led government's failure to deliver on its promises is not just a betrayal of trust—it is a betrayal of J&K's future.

As the Union Territory approaches the first anniversary of Abdullah's tenure, the chorus of discontent grows louder. From the streets of Srinagar to the towns of Jammu, citizens are demanding accountability. The government must move beyond empty rhetoric and take concrete steps to address the region's pressing needs—be it power, water, jobs, or equitable development. Until then, the Omar Abdullah-led government will remain a symbol of broken promises and lost hope, a cautionary tale of what happens when leaders prioritize power over people.

(The author is Spokesperson BJP)

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

For allegedly insulting the Quran, North South University student Apurba Pal has been expelled from the university. The police have arrested him. While being taken to the police station, he was attacked by barbaric Muslims. A group of fanatical Muslims has destroyed his life. Yet the Quran, like all other religious scriptures, is a book written by humans. Like all other scriptures, everyone has the right to subject it to critical scrutiny. The Quran contains countless elements that can be critically examined. To arrest someone or expel them from university for criticizing it is uncivilized, barbaric, violent, and ignorant. Apurba Pal must be freed. He must be allowed to continue his education. Those who attacked him must be brought to justice. Society must be freed from religious fanaticism. People must be encouraged to develop a scientific mindset. It must be accepted as normal that religious feelings can be hurt. Violating freedom of speech and expression must be declared unjust. And all laws that suppress free speech must be abolished.

~ Taslima Nasreen, Author



Playing a decisive role in the Indo-Pak wars of 1947, 1965, and 1971, the air power of India was at its finest when, on 14 December 1971, the combined air strike led by a package of MiG-21s and Hunter fighter bombers on the Government House in Dhaka, where a closed-door meeting of Pakistan's top functionaries was in progress, capitulated Pakistan's will to fight on. Not only this, maybe the IAF is the sole air power in the world that has been supporting one of the longest and most brutal operations still in continuation at the highest battlefield of the world—'OP Meghdoot' at Siachen Glacier.

'OP Safed Sagar,' launched during the Kargil War of 1999, with the IAF brilliantly targeting one of the biggest supply nodes of Pakistan, 'Munto Dhalo,' with precision and laser-guided munitions, will go down in the history of the IAF as the final coup de grace dealt to Pakistan's effort to shore up its supply lines. Not to forget targeting Tiger Hill and numerous other Pakistani posts, the IAF had complete sway over the area of operations in an undeniable manner, thereby consistently demonstrating its intrinsic capability to defend its national frontiers at all costs.

As mentioned above, this year's IAF Day is being rung loudly in the backdrop of 'OP Sindoor.' The country has witnessed a strategic cum tactical metamorphosis of its air power, benchmarked against some of the most stringent tenets of aerial warfare. Nowhere in the world would one find an example of its armed forces steadfastly following national dictates mandated by its top leadership, very often at the cost of incurring some losses in skirmishes.

The fact that the IAF accepted the top national leadership's goal not to escalate the skirmishes by not undertaking SEAD (Suppression of Enemy Air Defences) and going deep into Pakistan's hinterland by striking its very heart of strategic assets like Nur Khan, Sargodha, Bholari, Rahim Yar Khan, and Jacobabad air bases, etc., often at the peril of losses of its own air assets, shows the perfect sync of politico-military understanding. The most dangerous moment in OP Sindoor, in which the Pakistani hypersonic missile 'Fatah-2,' heading for New Delhi, was intercepted near Sirsa in Haryana by the IACCS (Integrated Air Command and Control System), shows the IAF in its real elements and remains the abiding theme of this force—'TOUCH THE SKY WITH GLORY.'

It also showed the world the 'Atmanirbhar' concept, blowing to smithereens the combined military support afforded by India's detractors, i.e., China and Turkey, to Pakistan during this operation. This Air Force Day, it will be the endeavour of the IAF to remind Indians with a resounding degree of authenticity that it has changed the doctrine of Indian air power in the subcontinent from just bombing and dogfights to multidomain warfare, as was seen and heard a few months back. While we often admire the past heroes of the IAF resoundingly, juxtaposing them against this year's performance of 2025 in the backdrop of OP Sindoor, 'Air Force Day' carries greater resonance. The fly-pasts, combat manoeuvres, and displays of Rafales, SU-30 MKIs, Tejas, and C-130s are not just ceremonial—they are a reassurance to the nation that its skies remain secure.

Protest intensified at Tezpur University over financial irregularities and VC misconduct



GUWAHATI

Protests demanding the immediate resignation of Tezpur University Vice-Chancellor, Sambhu Nath Singh, have intensified following serious allegations of significant financial irregularities and corruption.

Students, faculty, and staff have united in their call for accountability, primarily targeting the controversial appointment and continued tenure of the Director of the Computer Centre, Ramakrishna Mathe.

The agitation escalated on Tuesday when a delegation of protestors met Acting Registrar Pritam Dey to question Mathe's presence in the office, given that his contract had officially expired on September 7.

The core of the dispute lies with the Computer Centre's leadership. The director's post, previously an

unpaid, additional responsibility held by a Computer Engineering professor, was allegedly filled illegally a year ago by VC Sambhu Nath Singh. Singh appointed Mathe Ramakrishna as a contract employee with a hefty monthly salary of Rs 2 lakh. Both the teachers' union and students have questioned the necessity and benefit of this costly appointment. Furthermore, Mathe is accused of replacing the centre's previously free anti-virus software with a questionable, paid version—a decision reportedly made on the advice of VC Singh. Student representatives lamented that these actions by the Vice-Chancellor have deprived students, the university's main stakeholders, of essential benefits.

The situation grew more alarming when Ramakrishna Mathe al-

legedly continued to act as Director after his contract expired, without valid extension documents. Armed with the Vice-Chancellor's perceived support, Mathe reportedly seized all keys to the computer centre and blocked student email IDs, preventing them from receiving mail. This move has raised serious privacy and security concerns, particularly among Science and Technology faculties worried about the security of critical research data.

When questioned about Mathe's term, the Acting Registrar claimed ignorance. The delegation's request to summon Mathe led to them being detained for four hours, during which Mathe allegedly abused them. He then produced a vague WhatsApp screenshot, reportedly showing a thumbnail approval from Vice-Chancellor Singh, as "proof"

of his job extension. Shocked by the "document," the students and teachers ordered Mathe to immediately vacate the centre and university premises. The Computer Centre Director's room was subsequently locked, and a complaint was filed against Mathe under several sections of the BNS (Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita), including sections 319, 318, 329, 65, 66, and 66D.

Further fueling the faculty's demand for Singh's dismissal is his alleged installation of audio-visual CCTV cameras in areas, including those where employees take their lunch breaks.

The protestors have formed a Joint Coordination Committee of students, faculty, and staff, and have vowed to continue their agitation until Vice-Chancellor Sambhu Nath Singh is dismissed.

Manipur Congress chief condemns attack on CJI, demands action

IMPHAL

Manipur Congress president Keisham Meghachandra, on October 7, strongly condemned Monday's attempted attack on Chief Justice of India B R Gavai, calling for a full investigation and swift action against those responsible.

A 71-year-old lawyer allegedly tried to hurl a shoe at the CJI during court proceedings but was stopped by alert security personnel, raising concerns over security protocols in the judiciary.

Keisham described the incident as "shocking" and said it reflects a "complete breakdown of law and order under the BJP government." He added, "When even the head of the judiciary is not safe, it exposes the deep crisis of governance and growing intolerance in the country."

The Wangkhem MLA emphasised the judiciary's role as the "conscience of the democracy," warning that "any attack on it is an attack on the very soul of our republic." He reiterated the demand for a thorough investigation and immediate action, stating, "Congress stands firmly with the judiciary and the people of India in defending the rule of law and constitutional values."

Authorities have yet to release details on the steps being taken to address the breach, but the incident has sparked widespread concern over judicial security.

Meghalaya's voter base grows by nearly 10 lakh in two decades: CEO Dr BDR Tiwari

SHILLONG

Meghalaya has witnessed a significant rise in the number of registered voters over the past two decades, with the total electorate growing from 13,35,816 in 2005 to 23,06,384 as of September 2025, Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Dr BDR Tiwari said on Tuesday, October 7. The data was shared ahead of the Election Commission of India's (ECI) upcoming Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls to be conducted nationwide. The 2005 electoral roll in Meghalaya had been published on April 15 that year, with January 1, 2005, as the qualifying date. Dr Tiwari said the number of male voters rose from 6,64,306 to 11,37,316, while female voters increased from 6,71,510 to 11,69,062. Six electors have registered under the third gender category in the latest roll. He said Meghalaya has already begun preparatory work for the SIR, which follows a one-day conference of Chief Electoral Officers convened by the ECI last month to review the process across states. All states were directed to conduct preliminary mapping of

current electoral rolls against the 2005 intensive revision list.

The CEO added that the 2005 electoral roll and a search facility for individual electors are available on the official website of CEO Meghalaya. During the SIR, voters will be required to furnish documents such as identity proof, birth or educational certificates, and residence or caste certificates. The Aadhaar card, he clarified, can be used as a supporting document for identity verification but not as proof of citizenship, in accordance with a Supreme Court order.

To improve accessibility and ensure smooth polling, the Election Commission has rationalised polling stations with more than 1,200 electors. A total of 49 new polling stations have been approved, while 12 have been merged, bringing the total number in Meghalaya to 3,615—a net increase of 64. Among districts, East Khasi Hills has the highest number of polling stations at 1,030, followed by West Garo Hills with 570 and Ri-Bhoi with 338, Dr Tiwari informed.

GUWAHATI

The Assam government's Group of Ministers (GoM) examining the long-standing demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status by six communities is expected to submit its report on November 25, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on October 7.

The report will be placed before the state Assembly, and further action will be decided based on discussions in the House, Sarma added.

The six communities—Moran, Matak, Ahom, Chutia, Koch-Rajbongshi, and Tea Tribes—have been seeking ST recognition for years. Political parties have expressed support at various times, but no government



has granted the status so far.

"Our government had formed a GoM to look into the matter. It will submit the report on November 25. After that, it will be placed in the Assembly and taken up for discussion. Based on the decision in the Assembly, the matter will

be taken forward," Sarma told reporters. He noted that a similar proposal was adopted during the Congress regime, stating that conferring ST status on these six communities should not affect the benefits already enjoyed by existing ST groups. However,

the chief minister acknowledged complications: "But after examining the matter, we have found that in some way or the other, there will be some benefits and some disturbances. The proposal adopted in the Assembly may need some amendments. That's why we have to wait till the report comes," he said. The GoM was initially formed under the previous BJP-led government led by Sarbananda Sonowal and was later reconstituted after Sarma took office. With state elections approaching early next year, the six communities have intensified their protests. Last month, Moran, Matak, and Koch-Rajbongshi groups staged road blockades and demonstrations to press for their demand.

Mira Borthakur objects to sudden reconstitution of Assam Pradesh Mahila Congress Committee, terms move "demoralising"

GUWAHATI

Assam Pradesh Mahila Congress President Mira Borthakur Goswami has strongly objected to the sudden reconstitution of the Assam Pradesh Mahila Congress Committee, describing it as a unilateral and demoralising move carried out without consultation with her or the state leadership.

In a letter addressed to Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) President Gaurav Gogoi, Borthakur Goswami expressed "deep sorrow and serious concern" over the development, calling it "strategically damaging" at a time when the state is preparing for crucial elections just five months away. "The recent change in the



committee of the Assam Pradesh Mahila Congress was carried out without any prior discussion with

me or local leadership," she wrote, warning that abrupt organisational decisions could harm party unity and morale at this critical juncture.

Questioning the reported reasoning behind the reconstitution, she asserted that membership strength alone cannot define leadership capability. "Ours is a political organisation built on ideology and commitment, not a network driven by membership targets," she wrote.

Borthakur Goswami urged Gogoi to reconsider the decision and reinstate the previous committee, which, she noted, had "worked tirelessly at the grassroots" to strengthen the party's reach among women. She warned that ignoring the concerns of dedicated leaders

could trigger serious discontent among the organisation's backbone—its women workers.

She further cautioned that internal friction within the Mahila Congress could send a wrong political message, especially when the BJP is actively reaching out to women voters through welfare schemes. "We cannot afford to lose ground when unity and coordination are needed the most," she emphasised.

Calling for immediate intervention in the interest of the party's credibility and strength in Assam, the Mahila Congress chief also marked copies of her letter to senior AICC leaders Alka Lamba, K.C. Venugopal, Jitendra Singh, and Debabrata Saikia.

TMC team heads to Tripura after alleged attack on party office

AGARTALA

A five-member Trinamool Congress (TMC) delegation left for Tripura on October 8 to stand with party workers after the alleged vandalism of its state headquarters in Agartala by members of the BJP's youth wing.

The delegation included TMC West Bengal general secretary Kunal Ghosh, MP Sayani Ghosh, Rajya Sabha MP Sushmita Dev, and youth leader Sudip Raha. The party claimed that its Tripura office was attacked on October 7, just a day after BJP MP Khagen Murmu and MLA Sankar Ghosh were assaulted in a flood-hit area of north Bengal.

Before departing from Kolkata, Kunal Ghosh said the visit was necessary to protest what he described as an assault on democratic values.

"We are ready to face any consequence there. But we have to go, as in a democracy, such attacks on the opponent party in the presence of the police should be protested and resisted peacefully," Ghosh told reporters.

Sayani Ghosh sought to distance the TMC from the attack on BJP leaders in West Bengal, claiming it was the reaction of angry locals and not party workers.

"The attack was not initiated by the TMC workers but by aggrieved

common men who were incensed over BJP leaders' public statements that central funds would be blocked for the rural poor under the 100-day work scheme," she said.

The MP added that the party condemned any attack on elected representatives and noted that Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had personally met Khagen Murmu at the hospital.

However, Sayani Ghosh accused the BJP of orchestrating the attack on the TMC office in Tripura.

"The way BJP goons in Tripura carried out an unprovoked attack on the TMC party office and intimidated our workers in the presence of the Tripura Police spells great danger for democracy," she said at the Kolkata airport.

She recalled previous incidents during former Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Deb's tenure when TMC leaders allegedly faced hostility.

"Even TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee's convoy was attacked at that time. We don't know what fate awaits us. But we are not scared," she added.

The TMC delegation's visit comes amid growing tensions between the two parties in both West Bengal and Tripura, as the political blame game over recent violence continues to intensify.

Nagaland unveils plan for climate-resilient, accountable healthcare system

KOHIMA

Nagaland Deputy Chief Minister TR Zeliang, on October 7, reaffirmed the state government's commitment to building a robust and resilient healthcare system capable of addressing emerging challenges such as demographic shifts, disease transitions, and the impacts of climate change.

Speaking at the inaugural session of the Health Financing Forum for Cross-State Learning in the Northeast Region, jointly organised by the Nagaland government and the World Bank, Zeliang said the state was focusing on preventive and primary healthcare, strengthening referral systems, and improving hospital management.

He stressed that effective health financing was not only about raising resources but also about their efficient utilisation. "Health, being one of the most crucial components of human development, requires a holistic approach that connects infrastructure, manpower, financing, and governance," Zeliang said.

Lauding the World Bank's Re-



sult-Based Financing (RBF) model, he noted that it had brought measurable improvements in accountability and performance in healthcare delivery. "Through

RBF, healthcare facilities are now being incentivised for achieving measurable outcomes, thereby enhancing transparency and efficiency in financial management," he added.

Zeliang called on all Northeastern states to embrace innovation and collaborative strategies tailored to the region's unique socio-geographical realities. He urged stakeholders to work collectively to reduce out-of-pocket expenditure and ensure financial protection for vulnerable populations.

The two-day forum aims to promote cross-state learning among policymakers, health professionals, and experts to strengthen health financing mechanisms in the region.

During the event, Zeliang also released the FinHealth Assessment Report, which offers a detailed analysis of the region's health financing landscape and suggests reforms for greater efficiency and equity.

Marion Cros, Senior Health Specialist at the World Bank, commended the Northeastern states for their innovative approaches to overcoming healthcare challenges. She highlighted that states like Nagaland and Mizoram have introduced universal health insurance schemes to reduce financial burdens, while Assam and Meghalaya are piloting results-based payment systems to strengthen primary healthcare.

Quest!

Airplane food isn't very tasty because our sense of smell and taste decrease by 20% to 50% while flying.

STUDENT INTERNSHIP

Join as an Intern@
North East Integration Rally 2026

WHO CAN JOIN

- HS to PG Students

WHAT YOU GET

- Certificates + Paid Internship*
- KRC Placement Membership

APPLY NOW <https://bit.ly/neirinternshipform>
E: Seforsuccess@gmail.com

9330830083 www.northeastintegrationrally.in

Best time to invest in India, says PM Modi



NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday renewed his pitch for Make in India across sectors, from mobiles to semiconductors and electronics, saying the government is accelerating the pace of reforms, offering the best investment opportunities.

Speaking at the inauguration of India Mobile Congress here, he said India's democratic setup, the government's welcoming approach and ease of doing business policies have helped the country attain an image of an investor-friendly destination.

"This is the best time to invest, innovate and make in India," he said. Modi said he had announced on August

15 that this year would be a year of big changes and big reforms. "We are increasing the pace of reforms," he said without elaborating.

Just last month, goods and services tax (GST) rates were rationalised, making common-use items from shampoo to television sets cheaper.

India, he said, offers immense opportunities in the manufacturing of semiconductors, mobiles, and electronics. Industry, innovators and startups need to step up now, he said.

Listing tremendous progress made by India in the digital space in the last decade, he said 1 GB of wireless data in India is cheaper than the cost of one cup of tea. "Digital connectivity in

India is no longer a privilege or a luxury.

It is now an integral part of every Indian's life," he said, adding India today has the world's fastest-growing developer population.

India has the world's second-largest telecom market, the second-largest 5G market, the manpower, mobility and mindset to lead, he said.

India has launched its Made in India 4G Stack. This is a major indigenous achievement for the country.

With this, India has joined the list of just five countries in the world that possess this capability, he said.

"The country that once struggled with 2G, today has 5G reaching almost every district," he said.

Centre responds to Mamata, says coordinating with Bhutan on trans-border river management, flash floods

KOLKATA

The Union Government has refuted the allegations made by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee regarding the floods in North Bengal caused by rivers originating from Bhutan, stating that India is actively engaged with the Bhutanese government to manage trans-border river issues.

In a statement issued by the Ministry of Jal Shakti in response to Banerjee's accusations, the Centre said it is working closely with the Government of Bhutan to address matters concerning river erosion, silt and debris deposition on riverbeds, and flash floods in West Bengal.

The ministry stated that India and Bhutan have already formed a joint expert and technical committee to tackle these challenges. It also highlighted the role of existing bilateral mechanisms such as the India-Bhutan Joint Group of Experts (JGE), Joint Technical Team (JTT), and Joint Experts Team (JET), of which officials from the West Bengal government are active members. These joint groups aim to ensure transparency and keep all stakeholders informed about ongoing efforts.

Previously, Banerjee had written to the Prime Minister, urging the formation of an Indo-Bhutan River Commission to manage and regulate floods in Bengal. "I had written to the Prime Minister advocating for this commission, warning that without it, North Bengal would continue to face consequences. Yet, I have not received any response," stated Banerjee.

She also accused the Central Government of failing to provide funds for flood management. "The Centre provides no funds for flood management and has even halted the Ganga Action Plan for cleaning the river. This is the level of discrimination being meted out



to Bengal," said the Chief Minister.

According to the Union Government's statement, the 11th JGE meeting was recently held in Paro, Bhutan, where discussions focused on eight additional rivers entering West Bengal from Bhutan — including Hashimara Jhora, Jogikhola, Rokia, Dhawla Jhora, Gabur Basra, Gabur Jyoti, Pana, and Raidak (I & II). A joint study on erosion and sedimentation problems in these rivers was initiated.

"The Government of West Bengal has been asked to carry out the detailed study on the aforesaid to be presented

during the next JTT meeting, scheduled later this year.

In addition, strengthening of the hydrological observation network in Bhutan for improvement in flood forecasting on trans-border rivers on the Indian side is also being worked out," the statement further read.

On the question of funding, the ministry clarified that there are no pending proposals related to flood management projects and noted that ₹1,290 crore has already been released to the Government of West Bengal under the Flood Management and Border Areas

Programme (FMBAP).

It further underlined that under the Ganga Action Plan and Namami Gange Project, a total of 62 projects and interventions worth ₹5,648.52 crore have been undertaken in West Bengal.

The statement concluded by noting that the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) has sanctioned 31 sewerage infrastructure projects and 30 ghats and crematoria projects in the state. Additionally, a major initiative for river rejuvenation has been approved, specifically for the rejuvenation of Tolly Nullah in Kolkata.

INTERNATIONAL

'We drank toilet water': Gaza flotilla activists allege torture in Israeli custody

TELAVIV

Activists from several countries detained by the Israeli military aboard the Global Sumud flotilla, which sought to break the illegal siege of Gaza, have alleged torture and mistreatment in Israeli custody.

A fleet of 44 vessels were headed for famine-struck Gaza with humanitarian assistance when the Israeli military violently intercepted the vessels and detained the activists. A total of nearly 450 activists were detained including Greta Thunberg and Nelson Mandela's grandson Mandla Mandela.

The activists, including lawyers, journalists and medical professionals from across the globe were deported after being detained for several days in Israeli prisons.

Malaysian sisters and singers-actors Heliza Helmi and Hazwani Helmi alleged that they were forced to drink toilet water while in Israeli custody.

"Can you imagine we drank from the toilet water? Some people were very, very sick, but they (the Israelis) said: 'Are they dead? If not, then that's not my problem,'" Hazwani told Anadolu news agency after landing in Istanbul on Saturday. "They are very, very cruel people," she charged.

Heliza also alleged that Israel denied the activists food for several days.

"I ate on October 1. Today is my first meal... So for three days, I did not eat — only drank from the toilet," she said.

Italian journalist Lorenzo D'Agostino alleged that the Israeli military used dogs and weapons to intimidate the activists.

Speaking to the Associated Press on his arrival at Turkey's Istanbul Airport, D'Agostino said the Israeli



soldiers pointed the laser sights of their guns at prisoners "to scare" the activists. He also alleged that his belongings and money had been "stolen by the Israelis."

Similar allegations were raised by Yassine Lafram, the president of the Union of Islamic Communities in Italy, who landed at Milan Malpensa Airport after being deported from Israel.

"They even treated us violently, pointing weapons at us, and this is absolutely unacceptable for us in a country that considers itself democratic," he told the Corriere della Sera newspaper.

Another activist, Paolo De Montis, said he experienced "constant stress and humiliation" at the hands of the guards, who kept him in a prison van for hours with his hands secured by zip ties.

"You weren't allowed to look them in the face, always had to keep your head down and when I did look up, a man ... came and shook me and slapped me on the back of the head... They forced us to stay on our knees for four hours," Montis told Associated

Press.

Speaking to ANSA news agency at Rome's Fiumicino Airport on his return on Sunday, Italian activist Cesare Tofani said, "We were treated terribly... From the army, we moved on to the police. There was harassment."

The activists had earlier alleged mistreatment of Thunberg in Israeli custody, stating that she was "dragged by the hair," assaulted, and "forced to kiss the Israeli flag" in a bid to intimidate others. Thunberg, one of the high-profile members of the mission, has been accused by the Israel of having links with Palestinian group Hamas.

Meanwhile, Israel's far-right National Security Minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, on Monday said he was "proud" of the harsh treatment of the activists in the Israeli prison.

"I was proud that we treat the 'flotilla activists' as supporters of terrorism. Anyone who supports terrorism is a terrorist and deserves the conditions of terrorists," the minister said in a statement.

The minister, who was filmed taunting and repeatedly calling the activists terrorists after their detention by the Israeli military said he intended to give them a "feel of the Ketzioz prison," so they don't come to Israel again.

"If any of them thought they would come here and receive a red carpet and trumpets — they were mistaken... They should get a good feel for the conditions in Ketzioz prison and think twice before they approach Israel again," he said.

In a separate post on X, Ben-Gvir criticised Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for deporting the activists, saying that they should have been kept in Israeli prisons "for a few months."

"The Prime Minister's decision to allow the terror supporters from the flotilla to return to their countries — its foundation is a mistake. I think they must be kept here in an Israeli prison for a few months, so they can smell the scent of the terrorists' wing," he said. "After all, it cannot be that the Prime Minister sends them back to their countries again and again and again — and this sending causes them to return again and again and again," he added.

By contrast, Israel's Foreign Ministry denied the allegations of mistreatment of the activists and claimed that their "legal rights" were fully upheld.

"Interestingly enough, Greta herself and other detainees refused to expedite their deportation and insisted on prolonging their stay in custody. Greta also did not complain to the Israeli authorities about any of these ludicrous and baseless allegations — because they never occurred," the ministry claimed.

Trump to impose 25% tariffs on medium, heavy-duty trucks starting November 1



WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump said Monday that a steep US tariff on imported heavy trucks would begin on November 1, postponing the date that he initially threatened to impose such duties.

"Beginning November 1st, 2025, all Medium and Heavy Duty Trucks coming into the United States from other Countries will be Tariffed at the Rate of 25%," Trump wrote in a post on his Truth Social site.

This is a monthlong delay from the October 1 start date he vowed in an earlier social media post unveiling the new duty.

The Trump administration launched a so-called Section 232 probe into imports of trucks earlier this year to determine their effects on national security, setting the stage for Trump's

announcement.

Trump has used such investigations, under the authority of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, to impose tariffs on various imported goods — in efforts to boost US manufacturing and punish countries that he says are taking advantage of his country.

Analysts, however, have noted that the impact of tariffs on heavy trucks depends on whether there are exemptions from such vehicles made in Mexico and Canada.

"The US sources 78 percent of heavy truck imports from Mexico and 15 percent from Canada," said Capital Economics economist Neil Shearing and Stephen Brown.

"A key question is whether there will be exemptions for USMCA-compliant products," they added in a note last month, referring to the

US-Mexico-Canada free trade agreement.

This is unclear for now, they said, flagging that product-specific tariffs — with the exemption of auto parts — do not necessarily contain exemptions for goods entering the United States under the North American trade pact.

"If there's no USMCA exemption, then Mexico will be most heavily affected by the large truck tariffs," they said.

Trump's sector-specific national security tariffs are seen as being on firmer legal ground than some of his other levies, which rely on emergency economic powers to target entire economies.

The latter tariffs have been challenged in court, with the Supreme Court set to hear arguments in the case next month.

How Rigged Tendering and Twisted Recruitment Rules Sabotaged PMGSY-III in Manipur

As India's ambitious Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana-Phase III (PMGSY-III) inches toward its revised March 2026 deadline, the scheme's promise of durable, high-quality rural roads is collapsing under the weight of policy manipulation and bureaucratic intrigue in Manipur. Designed to upgrade over 1.25 lakh kilometres of rural roads nationwide using advanced stabilization techniques, PMGSY-III was meant to consolidate rural connectivity and link villages to essential growth centres. Yet, in Manipur—a state where road access defines not just development but survival—the program has become a textbook case of how local governance failures and rigged recruitment can derail national initiatives.

A September 15, 2025, memorandum by the All Manipur Contractors Associations Forum (AMCAF), joined by the All Tribal Contractor Association, Imphal, exposes a tendering process that systematically excludes local contractors. It also spotlights a recruitment scandal in the Rural Engineering Department (RED) and the Manipur State Rural Roads Development Agency (MSRRDA)—two institutions crucial for implementing PMGSY-III. Together, these twin crises reveal a pattern of cronyism, administrative manipulation, and anti-local bias that has pushed Manipur's rural development to the brink.

A Scheme in Crisis
Approved in 2019, PMGSY-III marked a strategic shift from new road construction to upgradation and consolidation of existing networks, particularly those connecting villages to schools, hospitals, and markets. The mission's success hinges on timely tendering, transparent execution, and coordination between the National Rural Infrastructure Development Agency (NRIDA) and state governments.

But as of October 2025, Manipur stands out for the wrong reasons: none of its 97 sanctioned works covering 783.21 kilometres have been awarded. Worth approximately ₹629.87 crore, these projects are now at risk of cancellation under new central directives that call for dropping "un-started or un-tendered" works. The delays stem not from lack of funding or intent—but from deliberate distortion of the Standard Bidding Document (SBD), the rulebook for PMGSY tenders nationwide.

The Clause That Killed Competition
At the heart of Manipur's PMGSY-III paralysis lies a controversial amendment to the NRIDA's SBD. The standard SBD, updated in 2020, lays down uniform eligibility criteria to ensure fair competition. Under Clause 4.4.A(b), a bidder must have completed one similar work worth at least one-third of the estimated cost (one-fourth in left-wing extremism-affected regions like Manipur), with an incentive clause granting 120 percent credit for timely PMGSY completions.

This structure allowed small and mid-level local contractors—especially those with experience in challenging terrain—to participate effectively. However, the Manipur government upended this framework through two tender notices, dated April 10, 2024, and August 29, 2025, which introduced a new eligibility criterion: mandatory prior experience in road stabilization.

This technical-sounding tweak effectively disqualified most local firms, who had never been required to use or demonstrate soil stabilization techniques before. While stabilization-chemical or mechanical soil treatment is an important innovation for road longevity, it had never been imposed as a precondition in PMGSY tenders.

What makes the move particularly suspect is that NRIDA approval for this amendment was neither sought nor granted before implementation. The alteration violated PMGSY-III's Clause 11.2, which explicitly forbids deviations from the standardized SBD without prior sanction. When the NRIDA finally gave post-facto approval in March 2025, the damage had already been done: the restrictive clause had excluded nearly all Manipur-based contractors, especially those from tribal regions.

Bureaucratic Deflection, Political Complicity
Following AMCAF's protest memorandum, the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) responded on September 19, 2025, via Under Secretary Jacob Lalmaisawm. Rather than addressing the manipulation of the SBD, the Ministry reiterated an administrative directive: since PMGSY-III's deadline was extended to March 2026, all un-tendered or un-started works should be dropped to prioritize ongoing ones.

This bureaucratic sleight-of-hand ignored the cause of the non-tendering—the state's unlawful clause—and shifted blame to contractors. The Ministry's silence on the amended SBD amounts to tacit approval of a discriminatory system that benefits a handful of out-of-state firms with stabilization expertise, leaving local contractors economically

stranded.

Meanwhile, neighboring states such as Assam and Meghalaya continue to tender PMGSY-III projects under the original SBD, achieving steady progress. The inconsistency has raised eyebrows within Manipur's construction community, fueling suspicions of favoritism and collusion.

"Why must Manipur reinvent the rules when the Centre's guidelines are clear?" asks an AMCAF member from Ukhrul. "We built roads during monsoon floods and insurgency—yet we're being told we're not qualified."

The Fallout: 97 Roads, 97 Missed Opportunities
The consequences are devastating. If the Ministry enforces its directive to drop all 97 pending works, Manipur will lose nearly ₹630 crore in central assistance. Beyond numbers, this means that hundreds of remote villages—many in Churachandpur, Ukhrul, Senapati, and Tamenglong—will remain disconnected. Rural connectivity in Manipur already lags at 60 percent, compared to the national average of 82 percent. Roads that could have linked farmers to markets, children to schools, and patients to hospitals will remain unfinished, worsening migration, unemployment, and inequality.

The tragedy is compounded by the state's ongoing ethnic violence, which has destroyed infrastructure and displaced thousands. In such conditions, cutting rural road projects amounts to administrative cruelty.

A Parallel Scandal: Twisting Recruitment Rules

As the tendering mess deepened, another scandal emerged—this time within the leadership of the RED/MSRRDA, the very agencies tasked with implementing PMGSY-III.

In early 2024, Hirom Shantakumar Singh, a serving engineer, was appointed Chief Engineer (RED/MSRRDA) through an order dated January 6, 2024, and was later made Empowered Officer on January 15, 2024. He presided over the agency through one of its most turbulent periods, managing operations during the ethnic violence of 2023-2025.

Then, without warning, on April 30, 2025, the government issued a Gazette notification promulgating new Recruitment Rules (RRs) for the post-"Department of Rural Engineering, Manipur Chief Engineer (Civil) Recruitment Rules, 2025." Within 24 hours, the state appointed retired officer Khurajam Temba Singh as the new Chief Engineer.

The sequence was not coincidental; it was orchestrated. The new RRs included a previously non-existent clause explicitly permitting the engagement of a retired Chief Engineer—a tailor-made provision for Temba Singh. The rules were notified and enforced on the same day, leaving no window for public comment or administrative scrutiny.

The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) mandates a 30-day consultation period before implementing new recruitment rules under Article 309 of the Constitution. Yet Manipur's government bypassed this requirement, fast-tracking the notification and appointment within a single day.

This was not just a procedural lapse—it was a premeditated act of cronyism, violating both the Government of India's 2000 circular banning post-retirement re-employment and Manipur's own 2017 Cabinet resolution against such appointments.

Engineering Cronyism Under President's Rule

The appointment came during President's Rule, when normal political oversight was suspended and bureaucratic discretion reigned. For many observers, this timing was no accident. The episode is seen as an attempt by entrenched bureaucratic networks to install a pliant figure at the helm of a department controlling hundreds of crores in rural infrastructure funds.

"The rule was written for one man," says a senior official on condition of anonymity. "It wasn't recruitment—it was replacement by design."

The move effectively ousted a serving officer without explanation, demoralizing the department's technical cadre. It also paralyzed decision-making at a time when PMGSY-III needed continuity and leadership.

By weaponizing Article 309, the Manipur government turned a constitutional safeguard into an instrument of favoritism. The result: governance that privileges personal networks over institutional integrity.

Local Backlash and Economic Fallout
The All Tribal Contractor Association, a key member of AMCAF, has linked the recruitment and tendering controversies as part of a single pattern of exclusion. By locking out local contractors through the stabilization clause and replacing an active Chief Engineer with a politically convenient retiree, the state has ensured that tribal economies dependent on rural contracts collapse.

These associations represent thousands of contractors and labourers across the hills and valleys—communities already reeling under high unemployment, poor access, and ethnic fragmentation. With 15 percent youth unemployment and limited industrial alternatives, construction contracts are among the few viable income sources in tribal districts.

Now, with PMGSY-III at a standstill, livelihoods are evaporating. "When our tenders are blocked, our families suffer," says a tribal contractor from Chandel. "We have trucks,

workers, and equipment lying idle. The government talks about inclusion, but their rules exclude us."

The Policy Gap: From Vision to Violation
The NRIDA's 2020 guidelines and 2022 Vision Document were clear: PMGSY-III should build local capacity through standardization, transparency, and training. States were encouraged to allow post-award partnerships with technology specialists for new techniques like stabilization—ensuring that local firms could still bid, win, and learn.

Instead, Manipur inverted this vision. It turned a post-award partnership opportunity into a pre-qualification barrier, creating a monopoly for firms already possessing specialized stabilization experience, mostly from outside the state.

Such manipulation not only violates NRIDA's technical framework but also the spirit of Atmanirbhar Bharat, which emphasizes local empowerment in infrastructure delivery.

What AMCAF Wants
AMCAF's memorandum lays out a pragmatic roadmap for course correction:

1. Scrap the stabilization clause in Clause 4.4.A(b) and revert to the original SBD.
2. Invoke Clause 6.7 of the NRIDA Vision Document to enable post-award partnerships with stabilization experts.
3. Launch NRIDA-funded training programs for local and tribal contractors to acquire stabilization skills.
4. Extend the PMGSY-III deadline beyond March 2026, recognizing the disruptions caused by ethnic unrest and administrative irregularities.
5. Investigate and, if necessary, rescind the appointment of Khurajam Temba Singh, ensuring compliance with DoPT and Manipur's own anti-reemployment policies.
6. Order an independent probe into why NRIDA approval was bypassed and who benefited from the amended tenders.

These recommendations, if acted upon, could restore fairness and revive rural development in one of India's most fragile states.

The Larger Lesson: Governance or Gamesmanship?

At its core, Manipur's PMGSY-III debacle is not just about roads—it's about the erosion of public trust. When tender rules are twisted to favour a few, and recruitment norms rewritten overnight for convenience, development ceases to be a democratic process.

The deliberate misuse of Article 309 to craft tailor-made recruitment rules is particularly alarming. Laws designed to protect fairness have become tools for political engineering. Likewise, amendments to standardized national documents without authorization—signal a state drifting from accountability to arbitrariness.

These actions collectively cripple the very idea of equitable federalism. PMGSY-III, envisioned as a bridge between India's rural and urban divides, has in Manipur become a symbol of systemic sabotage.

The Road Ahead
The solution demands decisive intervention. The Ministry of Rural Development must direct Manipur to immediately abandon the amended SBD and resume tendering under NRIDA's original framework. Concurrently, the Governor of Manipur, Ajay Kumar Bhalla, should order an independent inquiry into the April 30, 2025, Recruitment Rules and the appointment that followed. If wrongdoing is established, both the clause and the appointment should be annulled. Only then can the PMGSY-III mission regain legitimacy in Manipur.

Moreover, given the ethnic conflict, economic slowdown, and administrative turmoil of 2024-25, extending the scheme's deadline and establishing community-based monitoring mechanisms would ensure that rural connectivity projects serve those most in need.

Conclusion: A Bridge Too Far
PMGSY-III was supposed to connect India's remotest villages to opportunity. In Manipur, however, it has exposed the state's fractured governance, where tenders become tools of exclusion and recruitment rules instruments of personal gain.

The 97 un-awarded projects, worth over ₹600 crore, are not just bureaucratic statistics—they represent 97 missed chances to change lives. If this pattern of manipulation continues, Manipur risks being left behind in the nation's march toward inclusive development.

Reforming the tendering process, restoring fairness, and holding those responsible to account is not just an administrative necessity—it's a moral imperative. Only by rebuilding integrity in governance can Manipur hope to rebuild the roads that connect its people, its villages, and its future.

SPACE FOR YOU ONLY

Rs. 150/- per day

NAME CHANGE

I. M. GunadhonSingha, 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 GunadhonSingha for all future purposes.

PLACEMENT SERVICES

Fresher, job seekers can register with KRC Placements. Send resume to - 5eforsuccess@gmail.com. To source candidates, organisation can contact KRC Placements at info@krcfoundation.org. For Details Visit: <https://bit.ly/krccplacements>. Apply here: <https://bit.ly/KRCPlacementForm>

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Business establishments, educational institutions, individual service providers etc. can enlist themselves or advertise their products or services at the most reasonable cost in InfoCom Diary. Send your details to InfoCom.Solutions@krccplacements.com. Submit Here: <https://bit.ly/InfoComDiaryForm>

STUDENTS' INTERNSHIP

Students can apply for a three-months internship with KRC Foundation. During the internship the student can get an opportunity to work on a live project. On successful completion the student is awarded a certificate. Apply to 5E for Success: 5eforsuccess@gmail.com. For Details Visit: <https://bit.ly/krccstudentinternship> or www.krccfoundation.org/products-services/training-development-5e-for-success/internship

NE INDIA WRITING STAR CONTEST

Participate in NE India Writing Star Contest and get your writings published. Eligibility: From Class VI onwards. Each participant receives a digital participation certificate. Send articles at: info@krccfoundation.org. For Details Visit: <https://bit.ly/NEIndiaWritingStarContest> www.krccfoundation.org/campaigns-csr/ne-india-writing-star-contest

CONNECT@ KRC TIMES



KRC TIMES

To engage with KRC TIMES, please use the following e-mails and WhatsApp Nos:
For News: krctimes@gmail.com / WP: 8721838313
For Advertisement: info@krccfoundation.org / WP: 9330830083
For Subscription: krctimes@gmail.com / WP: 8721838313
Editor: biswadeep.gupta@gmail.com / WP: 8721838313



BARAK FESTIVAL

JANUARY 10-12, 2025

ACTIVITY PROGRAM



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



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



11 JAN
Barak Valley Conclave
 Potential Issues and Challenges of Barak Valley by different stakeholders. Includes NGOs and Governmental institution for their participation. Awards to be given to the presenters & speakers. 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 practical 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.



Barak Festival
 Adventure Sports, Art & Culture Promotion

10 JAN
Media Conclave
 Media Conclave (Webinars, Seminars, Guest Panel, Talks and Conferences) are part of the Barak Festival 2025. Theme: "One for All, All for One".

10 JAN
Media Conclave
 Media Conclave (Webinars, Seminars, Guest Panel, Talks and Conferences) are part of the Barak Festival 2025. Theme: "One for All, All for One".



Barak Festival 2025
 PAINTING CARNIVAL
 NE CULTURAL FEST
 E-SPORTS
 FILM FESTIVAL | EXHIBITION
 BOOK CLUB | AWARDS & GUEST | MAIN EVENT | CONCLAVE

11 JAN
5E For Success Conclave
 The 4th 5E For Success Conclave is going to be held on the theme: "From School to Campus to Corporate". Schools, Educational Institutions and corporate houses can join the Conclave as sponsors.

10 JAN
Media Conclave
 Media Conclave (Webinars, Seminars, Guest Panel, Talks and Conferences) are part of the Barak Festival 2025. Theme: "One for All, All for One".



Barak Festival 2025
 PAINTING CARNIVAL
 NE CULTURAL FEST
 E-SPORTS
 FILM FESTIVAL | EXHIBITION
 BOOK CLUB | AWARDS & GUEST | MAIN EVENT | CONCLAVE

10-12 JAN
Science Studio
 Get a glimpse of Science to its new heights. Class VI-XI | Teachers | Seniors, Administrators | Parents. Raw science out of textbooks into real-life experiences of students.

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

Barak Festival
 Band Night | 10 JAN
 Musical Night | 11 JAN

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

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



Barak Festival 2025
 PAINTING CARNIVAL
 NE CULTURAL FEST
 E-SPORTS
 FILM FESTIVAL | EXHIBITION
 BOOK CLUB | AWARDS & GUEST | MAIN EVENT | CONCLAVE

10-12 JAN
Book Bank
 #NoLike Campaign | Book Bank | e-copies | e-books | e-news

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

Painting Carnival
 Water Colour and Oil and Saw Paper Campaign

10-12 JAN
Book Bank
 #NoLike Campaign | Book Bank | e-copies | e-books | e-news

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

Painting Carnival
 Water Colour and Oil and Saw Paper Campaign



5E SUCCESS
STUDENT INTERNSHIP
 Discover valuable experience and learn more about the industry.

- Outreach Executive
- Event Management
- Programme Coordinator

APPLY NOW | 0721300010 | www.indiaonline.org