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PERSPECTIVE

Don't kick a man when he's down, Don't sell stock when its down Don't take decision when your spirit is down
~ Motilal Oswal, Co- Founder, Motilal Oswal Group

Manipur: 60 students hospitalised in Ukhrul, Senapati after suspected food poisoning

IMPHAL

At least 60 students from different educational institutions in Ukhrul and Senapati districts of Manipur fell critically ill after consuming maize-based snacks sold near their school campuses on Thursday, officials reported on Friday.

Most of the affected students were hospitalised in suspected cases of food poisoning, they said. Around 30 students of Anthony's School in Taphou, Senapati district, began vomiting and complained of uneasiness shortly after consuming the snack.

The packaging showed a manufacturing date of October 30, 2025, and an expiry date of January 29, 2026, according to a police complaint. The school principal said the snack had been purchased from a nearby shop.

On the same day, a similar incident was reported at KTL Excel Higher Secondary School in Ukhrul, where about 30 students suffered from food poisoning symptoms. The Nagas predominantly inhabit these two districts.

According to a police report, the snacks were bought from a local shop, Variety Dukan, at Viewland Bazar. The product, bearing an FSSAI number, was manufactured by an Indian food company and imported into Manipur from other states.

Officials said that all students are now in stable condition, and further action will be taken based on the medical examination report. "As of now, it is suspected to be a case of food poisoning," they added.

WHO SAID WHAT

A proud moment for Guwahati
The majestic Brahmaputra now has a riverfront that truly matches its grandeur, blending nature, culture & modernity. Hon'ble FM Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman Ji inaugurates this landmark project today, reaffirming her steadfast support for Assam's growth & transformation. ~ Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, CM Assam

KRC TIMES

STAY-ENRICHED

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FM Nirmala Sitharaman visits Assam to inaugurate, inspect key development projects

GUWAHATI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman arrived in Assam on Friday for a two-day official visit and was received at the Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport in Guwahati.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma received her at the beginning of her two-day visit, which focuses on infrastructure and development initiatives in the state.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma wrote on X (formerly Twitter) that the Finance Minister was received at the airport in the presence of the Chief Minister as she arrived in Assam for a two-day



visit. According to the official itinerary, Sitharaman's visit includes programmes aimed at supporting Assam's industrial, infrastructural, and educational sectors.

She is scheduled to inspect the new semiconductor plant in Jagir road, part of India's plan to develop a semiconductor industry.

In Guwahati, she will inaugurate a water terminal and a riverfront garden aimed at enhancing

urban development and river-based connectivity. The Finance Minister, on November 8, will lay the foundation stone of Kanaklata Barua State University, a new institution planned to expand capacity for higher education and research in the region. Officials have stated that the visit reflects the central government's focus on economic growth and investment in Assam and the wider Northeast.

Sitharaman's previous visit to the Northeast before November 2025 was to Meghalaya from July 10 to 13. During that four-day trip, she inaugurated the Northeast Conclave at IIM Shillong, laid the foundation stone for the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs campus, interacted with self-help groups and entrepreneurs, visited Shillong Tech Park, and engaged with local communities in areas such as Sohra (Cherrapunji) and Laitkynsew village to review development projects.

There were no visits to Assam or other northeastern states between that trip and the current visit.

Fresh elections needed if govt not formed, says Manipur BJP MLA



IMPHAL

Manipur BJP MLA L. Rameshwar Meetei has urged the Central leadership to expedite the formation of a state government, stressing that delays could weaken the party's position in Manipur.

He also suggested that fresh elections might be necessary if the political deadlock persists. Speak-

ing to reporters on the sidelines of a programme, Meetei said several BJP legislators support Speaker Thokchom Satyabrata as the leader for government formation. "We are ready to convey our support to the Governor and stake our claim to form the government. We have been waiting for the right moment to do so," he added. Meetei emphasized that legislators from both hill and valley constituencies are prepared to back the move. Expressing concern over the prolonged uncertainty, he warned, "If the government is not formed by November, the party's position will be unfavourable. If no government can be established, fresh elections should be held."

Political analysts say Meetei's remarks highlight ongoing internal differences within the BJP's Manipur unit, as months of administrative limbo continue to fuel speculation about divisions among party legislators.

Army begins work on a new military station in Assam under Eastern Command



GUWAHATI

Amid the ongoing expansion and reorganisation of security infrastructure and military formations, the foundation stone for a new military station under the Eastern Command was laid on Thursday.

The Army said the establishment of this station marks a significant step in strengthening the operational capabilities and infrastructure of the Indian Army in the region.

Informing about the event, the Army stated, "Lieutenant General R. C. Tiwari, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Command, visited the Gajraj Corps in the border areas and laid the foundation stone of the Lachit Borphukan Military Station at Dhubri, Assam."

The station holds strategic importance due to its location along the banks of the River Brahmaputra and will serve as a logistics, training, and administrative base for the armed forces. Dhubri shares an international border with Bangladesh and lies close to the border with Bhutan.

Named after the legendary Ahom commander Lachit Borphukan, the new military station symbolises the indomitable spirit of courage, leadership, and resilience that defines the heritage of a resurgent Assam.

During his visit, the Army Commander reviewed the operational readiness and internal security situation in the bordering areas, as well as the progress of ongoing infrastructure development initiatives undertaken by the formation.

Lieutenant General Tiwari expressed gratitude to the Government of Assam and the civil administration for their unwavering support and proactive role in facilitating the establishment of the new military station. He also commended all ranks of the Gajraj Corps for their dedication, professionalism, and collective efforts in ensuring the early operationalisation of the project.

The Indian Army's Eastern Command oversees the 1,346 km Line of Actual Control (LAC) covering Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh, in addition to managing borders with Myanmar and Bangladesh.

The Lachit Borphukan Military Station stands as a testament to the synergy between the armed forces and the state administration, reflecting their shared vision of national security and regional development.

Meghalaya government clarifies position on truckers' strike, calls blockade illegal

SHILLONG

The strike by MCTODA on October 27, 2025, demands changes to inter-state freight rate policies, affecting cement and clinker transport on National Highway-6. District officials held a coordination meeting on October 30 with various associations, but MCTODA declined to participate, complicating resolution efforts. JHCMA clarified that government-notified freight rates for intra-state transport are fully implemented, but MCTODA demands these rates for inter-state transport.

The East Jaintia Hills District Administration has issued a detailed clarification regarding the ongoing strike by the Meghalaya Commercial Truck Owners and Drivers Association (MCTODA) against cement companies operating in the region. Authorities have termed the continued blockade along National Highway-6 as "illegal" and warned that no group will be allowed to take the law into its own hands.

Following the strike call on October 27, 2025, officials initiated a series of meetings to resolve the dispute through dialogue. The first coordination meeting, held on 30 October at the Deputy Commissioner's office in Khliehriat, included

representatives from the Jaintia Hills Cement Manufacturers Association (JHCMA), Jaintia Hills Truck Owners Association (JHTOA), and East Jaintia Hills Truck Owners and Transporters Association (EJHTOTA).

Despite being invited, MCTODA refused to attend the meeting. The other two associations confirmed they were operating normally with cement plants and had no involvement in the strike. Written submissions from these groups reaffirmed their commitment to continue transportation activities without disruption.

Further discussions between MCTODA and the JHCMA were chaired by the Deputy Commissioner on 31 October and 3 November to address the truckers' demands. MCTODA had sought enforcement of freight rates, prevention of overloading, priority loading for local trucks, parking facilities, timely payments, and adherence to labour regulations. The JHCMA clarified that government-notified freight rates for intra-state transportation were already being followed by all cement plants. However, MCTODA's insistence on applying the same rates to interstate transport was deemed unlawful. The administration stated that the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, does not authorise any state government to fix rates for inter-state transport, as these are determined by market factors and mutual agreements.

rise any state government to fix rates for inter-state transport, as these are determined by market factors and mutual agreements.

Despite progress on several of their other demands, MCTODA continued the strike, allegedly obstructing the movement of trucks carrying cement and clinker. The blockade has disrupted both transport and public movement along NH-6, with reports of vehicle damage and harassment of non-participating drivers. Police have since taken steps to clear the blockades and restore traffic.

Representatives from JHTOA and EJHTOTA expressed concern that their members' livelihoods were being affected by the strike, urging the administration to ensure safe passage for their vehicles and inclusion in future consultations on freight matters.

The Deputy Commissioner reiterated the government's stance that while associations may voice genuine concerns, no one will be permitted to block highways or disrupt essential services. The administration reaffirmed its commitment to continue dialogue with all stakeholders to ensure lawful resolution, maintain order, and protect the livelihoods of transport workers across East Jaintia Hills.

Bangladeshi Terror Outfits Backed by ISI Eye India Through Bengal Border

NEW DELHI

Indian agencies are keeping a close watch as terror groups from Bangladesh are planning a major infiltration drive into the country. In the aftermath of Sheikh Hasina's ouster and the Jamaat-e-Islami gaining extensive control, terror groups have thrived. Many militants were released from jail and they were given a free hand to operate.

They are so audacious that many hold meetings in the open and the security agencies turn a blind eye to the same. Intelligence agencies are picking up chatter between terrorists in Bangladesh and their logistic providers and financiers in India. These groups are also in touch with their sympathisers in India and this is a clear sign that a major infiltration drive of terrorists is being planned.

While there is a close watch on the borders along the northeastern states, a sharp eye is being kept on West Bengal. The intelligence agencies say that these groups have a large number of people working for them in South 24 Parganas, Murshidabad, Birbhum and Malda. These places have been on the radar



for long as they are used by terror groups from Bangladesh to further their activities. The agencies have been noticing a rise in activities at places in West Bengal. There is a clear sign that terror groups from Bangladesh backed by the ISI are trying some misadventure in India.

The security agencies are also keeping tabs on some of the fugitive naxalites who may be contacted by these terror groups. There are quite a few of them in West Bengal, as naxalism originated from the state in 1967. Many who did not want to surren-

der or feared being killed went missing. They are off the radar today, but there is every chance that they could be contacted by these elements operating from Bangladesh, an official added. While at first these terror groups had plans of infiltrating through the northeastern states, they changed their mind and decided to move operations towards the border with West Bengal. Over the years, these terror groups have set up modules in the state.

They have scores of touts whose job is to aid infiltration. These are the same networks in West Bengal which have aided these terror groups not just in infiltration, but also in circulating fake Indian currency and promoting drugs. Over the years, these persons who have been indulging in such trade have earned a lot of money, thanks to which they have made high connections. These links that they have developed over the years has helped them carry out their trade without fear. West Bengal has been vulnerable to infiltration and other illegal activities for many years now. If one looks at the data for the past three years, a total of 2,688 Bangladeshi nationals were apprehended and repelled.

Out of this South Bengal alone accounted for 2,410 and in north Bengal it was 278, according to data provided by the Border Security Force (BSF). After Muhammad Yunus was made the caretaker of the interim government, radical groups have had a free ride.

The ISI has made Bangladesh its playground and in the last many months sent retired army officials to train terrorists. It also advised these groups to act as one. This would mean that major terror groups such as the Harkat-ul-Jihadi Islami (HuJI), Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT), Jamaat-e-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HUT) would work in unison. The ISI feels that this would ensure that these groups are stronger and the chances of a rift over ideology or turf war will not arise. According to the intelligence agencies all these terror groups have a network in West Bengal and have now been instructed by the ISI to activate them. Even those networks which are on the Bangladesh side of the border with West Bengal have become very active, thus signalling a possible wave of infiltration of terrorists into India.

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North East Integration Rally 2026
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www.northeastintegrationrally.in



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OIL'S QUIET FLOW TO THE MARKET

In a continued attempt to re-assert its relevance in global energy markets, the US once more expended ammunition at Russian oil majors Rosneft and Lukoil. The sanctioned companies are being dislodged from the US banking system starting November 21. Markets are being cautiously apprehensive as prices are firming up. However, informal estimates predict a movement in narrow band despite the imminent initial decrease in Russian oil flow.

Sanctions, a contentious issue, facilitate the resurrection of alternatives like the Russian 'shadow fleet'. Moscow-based Transneft, the largest oil pipeline company with more than 70,000 km of network, handles 80 percent of pipeline supplies of Russian crude; it remains a major facilitator of oil exports to China, Finland, Germany and a few east European consumers. Embargoes often act as catalysts for surrogate corporate entities that circumvent restrictions and facilitate covert trade.

Meanwhile, fears of supply constraints are allayed with considerable OPEC capacity in abeyance. The Latin American flows are expected to surge in 2026. Stabroek Block, a massive field off Guyana's shore operated by ExxonMobil and partners, is expected to report substantially higher production. Petrobras resumed production at the Tupi field while clocking record levels at Búzios, two of the most prolific pre-salt offshore assets in Brazil that are slated to place the country among the top five oil producers. With rising oil sands production in Canada and sustained shale activity in the Permian Basin, production will significantly increase in the next two years.

Prior to 2022, Russian crude constituted barely 2 percent of India's import basket, but touched 37 percent later on the back of discounts and favourable trade terms. China remained the largest buyer of Urals. However, energised Saudi ties with India and China helped Riyadh's share in India's imports to remain robust, and its exports to China hit a two-year high this August at 1.65 million barrels per day, a figure that could be re-visited soon.

Aramco's recent offer of price cuts for Asia is evident of the kingdom's intent to corner a larger share of the regional demand. Mindful of the trade initiatives with US and burgeoning supply sources over the last couple of years, the dependency on Moscow is easier to taper. This column had earlier mentioned America's keenness to raise its share in the Asian markets, pre-dominantly India. The latest import figures corroborate it.

Buyers often consider energy security synonymous with economic security, a euphemism for bargain pricing. Though this time, it may be tough to ensure both; a steep rise seems a distinct improbability.

While the markets decipher the financial implications of latest moves, a different scenario is unfolding in the background. As American efforts remain focused on strangling Moscow's financial resources in a bid to end the Ukraine war, a flashback to 2022 reveals a different narrative.

Russia, the third largest producer of oil, holds a vast incentive for exploration and production. The ageing infrastructure and obsolete technology needs fresh infusion. Downstream capacity and product mix warrant substantial upgrading. Donald Trump is reluctant to "fully arm" Kyiv with Tomahawk missiles, capable of inflicting damage on Russia's depleting refinery capacity. Their use could invoke retaliation that would derail hopes of any 'collaboration and economic alignment' between Russia and America.

Exxon quit Russia abruptly in 2022 in the wake of Ukraine war, leaving behind massive stranded assets including at Sakhalin-1, the large, foreign-funded oil-and-gas project with Chinese and Indian equity participation. The American oil major is currently engaged in a protracted litigation seeking compensation of \$4.6 billion from the Russian authorities. Vladimir Putin recently signed a decree allowing Exxon to return to the project. At the Alaska Summit, he had suggested US cooperation for energy exploration in the Arctic. Oil majors seek cost-effective and guaranteed high-return opportunities as the conventional sources begin to exhaust. The geopolitics of the region could dramatically alter the US's oil dynamics. Given the sensitivity of oil economics for Beijing, despite its close energy ties with Moscow and Tehran, oil was not on the agenda as Trump and Xi Jinping met recently at Busan in South Korea. Was it selective laissez-faire or a long shot at veiled diplomacy? The Trump-Putin détente at Budapest—a venue symbolising Hungary and Slovakia's continued dependence on Russian oil via the Druzhba pipeline—failed to materialise due to a political and strategic impasse. Berlin was accorded an exemption from the latest US sanctions for Rosneft's three Germany-based refineries. The relief comes in an aptly denoted 'Letter of Comfort' from the US government. In the present atmosphere of contradictions and vested interests, it is futile to focus on the price and availability.

In The Apprentice's first season that aired in January 2004, the opening lines by a younger Trump, comfortably seated in a limo, speaks of his accomplishments but draws on his brush with heavy debt: "I fought back and I won... I used my negotiating skills... I worked it all out and I am having more fun than I ever had." These words, despite the present maze of confusion that prevails with his directives and rhetoric, kindle hopes for a finer realpolitik that's a global requisite. The world is eagerly waiting to see how much of reel life merges with the real.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Courage isn't having the strength to go on - it is going on when you don't have strength." - Napoleon Bonaparte

OUR CRAFTS BE RENAMED CREATIVE ECONOMY SECTOR, CAN NOT ACCEPT TO LANGUISH

PROF (DR) SUKAMAL DEB, ADVISER, NEIR, 2026



Let us start with the UK, where cities have impeccable crafts. People are talking about craft clusters, but it has been in existence in the UK for the last two to three

centuries. The crafts were part of the industrial revolution, and a part mainstream industry sector, unlike India, where it is still a cottage industry, despite second largest employment provider.

In the UK, they call it the creative economy sector; the approach is completely different, bringing the voice and recognition of the craft sector under an ambit, whereas the voice of the Indian artisans is yet to be heard by the government, and the reason is that they don't see them as revenue generators or earners for the country.

The British Council, Report October 2023, Crafts in the age of climate crisis, brings to light that an overwhelming number of craft workers in India, estimated at around 200 million, with women comprising 56.13 per cent of this demographic, face varying degrees of risk from climate change, directly or indirectly. On the one hand, climate change is impacting the traditional craft sector in unimaginable ways, and on the other hand, crafts-based employment is becoming unappealing to the next generation. India's Craft-led future must be re-oriented to face the looming threats of



Government record says a total of exports around USD 10 billion and the total domestic around USD 15 billion, with average wages of just Rs. 5,000 to 10,000 monthly. Let's compare it with the UK. In the UK, the creative sector employs approximately 1.9 million people. They generate revenue of more than £124.6 billion (Rs. 1445.5 Lakh cr.) with monthly earnings of Rs 2.50 Lakh on average. The inclusion of the craft sector in industry and commerce is important. The dichotomy is ironic.

Our crafts have to move upwards, bringing decent earnings and the dignity of life. We have a long way to go in this direction. India yet has to create a dedicated craft infrastructure that brings Indian artisans under

the resources available. The knowledge of this sector is unmissable; if lost once, we lose our pride, our culture and our identity. The culture sector has regional sensibility and sensitivity; the North East Region, in particular, deserves special mention. The North East is a confluence of several tribes and cultures, and this is reflected in the traditional crafts. We must ensure that the originality of a craft is not lost in trade and translation. We need to find ways and means for our young minds to work towards elevating the status of these indigenous and heritage crafts. It is an important perspective. Until Indian crafts are positioned as part of our creative economy rather than a cottage sector, artisans will remain under-recognised. It is the peak time to turn heritage into innovation.

Paksang, a languishing weaving craft of the Mising Tribe, Assam, at Kartik Chapori (low river bank), a lesser-known village on the other side of the Brahmaputra from Jorhat. The author took a photo of the traditional loom (right side) on 24.02.2024 in the village.

Indian market remains largely price-sensitive, but with growing awareness and consumer education, there is an emerging audience that truly appreciates niche, high-quality crafts. The younger generation should begin to see these crafts as generational treasures, a living heritage to be preserved and carried forward. This is something Montek Singh Ahluwalia, then deputy chairman Planning Commission of India, highlighted in 2006. Every handmade item carries hours of labour, years of learning, and generations of traditions. Craft is more a history than a product, an ingenuity, and the soul of an artisan. When we bargain, we unknowingly undervalue that heritage and make artisans feel their craft is not worth it. Let's shift our mindset. We are not just customers; we are custodians of culture and patrons of tradition. So next time you buy, support with pride. Pay them fairly. Because when artisans are valued, their children see a future in their craft. We can do our bit in a couple of ways, one of which may be not to bargain with artisans when buying. Today the fast fashion



languished. The report endorsed that climate resilience through craft is a path to sustainable fashion in India.

We know the handicrafts are the artefacts made by hand with hand tools that encompass culture, local narratives, and tradition. However, as per the Government data, India has seven million artisans, around 50 million employed in the sector, which is many times less than the report of the British Council. The

one roof, offering them complete infrastructural support and financial assistance through a non-profit initiative. The goal is to provide these talented individuals with a platform to showcase their art and achieve true financial independence and due recognition, too.

With our genuine will, this concept can be scaled up significantly. The government's involvement has to ensure that it avoids wasting time and

Vande Mataram - The First Proclamation of Cultural Nationalism

AMIT SHAH

In the long and inspiring journey of our nation's history, there have been many defining moments when songs and art became the soul of movements, shaping collective emotion into action. Be it the war songs of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's army, the patriotic anthems sung during the freedom struggle, or the songs of resistance sung by the youth during the Emergency, songs have always awakened collective consciousness and unity in Bharatiya society.

Among them stands 'Vande Mataram', Bharat's national song, whose story did not begin on a battlefield but in the calm yet resolute mind of a scholar, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay. In 1875, on the auspicious day of Jagadhnatri Puja (Kartik Shukla Navami or Akshaya Navami), he composed a hymn that would become the eternal anthem of the nation's freedom. In those sacred lines, he drew inspiration from Bharat's deepest civilisational roots, from the Atharva Veda's declaration "Mata bhumi purah prithivyah" ("The earth is my mother, and I am her son") to the Devi Mahatmya's invocation of the Divine Mother.

Bankim babu's words were both a prayer and a prophecy. 'Vande Mataram' was not merely a national song or the lifeblood of the freedom movement. It was Bankim

Chandra's first proclamation of Cultural Nationalism. It reminded us that Bharat is not just a geographical territory, but a geo-cultural civilisation, united not by boundaries drawn on a map but by shared culture, memory, sacrifice, valour and motherhood. This is not merely land; it is a tirtha, a sacred soil sanctified by devotion and duty.

As Maharshi Aurobindo described, Bankim was a sage of modern Bharat who reawakened the soul of the nation through his words. His Anandamath was not just a novel; it was a mantra in prose that stirred a sleeping nation to rediscover its divine strength. In one of his letters, Bankim babu wrote, "I shall have no objection if all my works are lost in the Ganga; this one hymn alone will live through eternity. It will be a great song and will win the hearts of the people." These words were prophetic. Written during one of the darkest hours of colonial rule, 'Vande Mataram' became the dawn-song of awakening, a hymn that fused cultural pride with civilisational nationalism. Only an individual brimming with devotion to the motherland could have written such lines.

In 1896, Rabindranath Tagore set 'Vande Mataram' to melody and sang it at the Calcutta Congress session, giving the hymn its voice and immortality. It transcended barriers of language and region, echoing across Bharat. In Tamil Nadu, Subramania

Bharati rendered it in Tamil and in Punjab, revolutionaries sang it in defiance of British rule.

During the partition of Bengal in 1905, when rebellion swept across the province, the British banned public recitations of 'Vande Mataram'. Yet on 14 April 1906, in Barisal, thousands defied the order. When the police charged upon the peaceful crowd, men and women alike stood bleeding on the streets, shouting 'Vande Mataram' in unison.

From there, this sacred chant travelled with the revolutionaries of the Ghadar Party to California. It echoed in the ranks of the Azad Hind Fauj as Netaji's soldiers marched from Singapore. It rang through the Royal Indian Navy mutiny of 1946, when Indian sailors hoisted the tricolour on British warships. From Khudiram Bose to Ashfaqulla Khan, from Chandrashekhar Azad to Tiruppur Kumaran, the slogan echoed as one. It was no longer just a song; it had become the collective voice of Bharat's soul. Mahatma Gandhi himself admitted that 'Vande Mataram' had "the magical power to stir even the most dormant blood." It united liberals and revolutionaries, scholars and soldiers alike. As Maharshi Aurobindo declared, it was "the mantra of Bharat's rebirth."

On October 26, during his Mann Ki Baat address, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi reminded the nation of Vande Mataram's

and cheap imports dominate, pushing handmade, local, and slow crafts out of the mainstream market. This is a dominating challenge of our time. Our accomplishments should be to document, support, nurture and disseminate knowledge of craft and traditional systems. The North East Integration Rally, 2026, opts for this task. In the days to come, this pioneering initiative will be proven to be visionary.

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

Riya Sardar and Rakhi Naskar got married. Both are dancers. They were in love and wanted to live together. So, their wedding took place with much celebration at the Shanti Sangha Temple in the Sundarbans. The local people organized the ceremony. Society can hardly accept same-sex relationships—yet here, two women even got married! There is a certain openness in Hinduism; perhaps that is what made this marriage ceremony possible. The law may not recognize it, but the temple did. Till today, no synagogue, church, mosque, or pagoda has ever accepted or performed a marriage between same-sex couples. I'm not saying that everyone within Hinduism will accept such a marriage—but many people in the Sundarbans did. That's how social evolution happens. ~ Taslima Nasreen, Author



glorious legacy. To mark 150 years of this immortal hymn, the Government of India has decided to organise nationwide programs for a year starting November 7. Through these celebrations, the full version of 'Vande Mataram' will resonate across the nation once again, inspiring the youth to internalise the idea of 'Cultural Nationalism'.

As we celebrate Bharat Parv and pay homage to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on his birth anniversary, we are reminded of how Sardar's unification of Bharat was the living embodiment of the spirit of 'Vande Mataram'. This song is not merely a remembrance of the past but also a call to the future. Even today, Vande Mataram inspires our vision of a Viksit Bharat 2047, a confident, self-reliant and resurgent Bharat. It is the anthem of our civilisational self-belief and it is now our responsibility to transform that spirit into action.

'Vande Mataram' is the song of freedom, the spirit of unyielding resolve and the first mantra of Bharat's awakening. Words born from the soul of a nation never die; they live on, resonating through ages and generations. This sacred chant will continue to echo through eternity, reminding us to view our history, our culture, our values and our traditions through the vision of Bharatiyata (Indianness).

Vande Mataram!

Meitei Alliance Slams 'One-Sided' Media Narratives, Defends Manipur's Pluralism

KRC TIMES NEWS DESK

IMPHAL: The Meitei Alliance has issued a strong statement condemning what it calls "biased and selective" media coverage that, according to the group, unfairly portrays the Meitei community as aggressors in the ongoing Manipur crisis.

In a detailed release, the alliance accused several national and international media organizations—including the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL), Al Jazeera, The Wire, The Print, The Caravan, The Hindu, and the Editors Guild of India—of promoting what it termed "a one-sided narrative" that normalizes Kuki militant activities under the guise of "volunteer" defense forces.

The statement emphasized that Meiteis remain committed to preserving Manipur's pluralistic and multicultural identity. "For centuries, Manipur has been home to multiple ethnic communities that coexisted harmoniously. It is deeply unfortunate



that certain outlets have distorted this reality to fit divisive agendas," the alliance said.

Citing the violence that erupted in May 2023 and claimed over 250 lives, the group accused sections of the me-

dia of deepening mistrust instead of fostering understanding. The statement alleged that many reports ignored the role of Kuki armed groups in narco-trafficking, poppy cultivation, and illegal immigration. "Such selective reporting undermines both social harmony and India's sovereignty in the Northeast," the alliance claimed.

Referring to a recent Al Jazeera documentary, the Meitei Alliance said the coverage appeared "sympathetic" to armed Kuki groups while avoiding hard questions about their defiance of Indian law. The alliance said the documentary misrepresented the origins of the conflict by linking it to a Manipur High Court order on Scheduled Tribe status for Meiteis, while overlooking the "initial attacks and arson in Meitei villages" at Torbung.

The alliance also criticized PUCL and other human rights organizations for allegedly "fueling separatist agendas" and ignoring evidence of drug-related crimes involving Kuki-Zo militants. "Their calls for separate ad-

ministration echo xenophobic worldviews that threaten Manipur's multicultural ethos," it added.

Calling for "ethical and responsible journalism," the Meitei Alliance urged Indian citizens, policymakers, and the international community to look beyond "selective narratives" and recognize two main threats to Manipur's peace—xenophobic militancy disguised as tribal victimhood, and biased media coverage that distorts democratic discourse. Reaffirming its commitment to a "pluralistic and democratic Manipur," the alliance appealed for collective efforts to restore peace and uphold constitutional integrity in the border state. Founded in November 2023, the Meitei Alliance represents diaspora organizations from across India and abroad, including associations in Pune, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Assam, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Kolkata, Sikkim, Tripura, as well as Meitei communities in Australia, the UK, Europe, Canada, the USA, and Nicaragua.

Assam govt to launch mega eviction drive to clear 1143 bighas of encroached land in Goalpara's Dahikata Reserve Forest

GUWAHATI

The Assam Government is gearing up for one of its largest eviction operations yet, targeting 1143 bighas of encroached land in the Dahikata Reserve Forest area of Goalpara district.

The mega drive, scheduled for November 9 and 10, aims to reclaim government forest land illegally occupied for years. According to officials, all necessary preparations have been completed, and notices have been served to illegal occupants well ahead of the operation. The administration has assured that the eviction will be carried out in coordination with the police and forest departments to ensure a smooth and peaceful process. This comes months after the Goalpara district administration conducted a massive eviction in June 2025 at Hasila Beel, where around 1,500 bighas of government land were freed from encroachment.

That operation targeted 667 illegally occupied households and unauthorised



structures, including five schools. Authorities had then issued public notices, banners, and loudspeaker announcements urging residents to vacate by June 15, but many structures—including homes, shops, and even private water pipelines—remained standing until they were demolished.

Officials said the upcoming eviction in Dahikata Reserve Forest is part of the government's broader campaign to restore encroached public land and protect forest areas from illegal settlements, in line with Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's emphasis on "zero tolerance" toward land encroachment across Assam.

Bengali Pride on Display: Silchar Rises in Song to Protest Assam CM's 'Sedition' Remark



SILCHAR

The heart of Silchar echoed with the immortal patriotic song "Amar Sonar Bangla, Ami Tomay Bhalobashi" on November 6, as citizens gathered to protest the BJP government's alleged remark branding the rendition of the song as "seditious."

The protest, held at the foot of the Shaheed Khudiram statue, turned into a powerful display of unity and cultural pride. Representatives of various political parties, social and cultural organisations, artists, writers, and ordinary citizens came together to sing Rabindranath Tagore's timeless composition in one voice.

The participants said their collective rendition of the song was not only a tribute to the Nobel laureate poet but also a statement against communal division and cultural humiliation.

They asserted that "Amar Sonar Bangla," composed in 1905 in protest against the Partition of Bengal, remains a symbol of unity and resistance to divisive politics.

Through their chorus, the people of Silchar sent a clear message — that Bengal's song of love and freedom cannot be branded anti-national.

Preserving Tradition: CM Sangma Reiterates Commitment to Meghalaya's Heritage at Wangala Festival

SHILLONG

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma reiterated his government's commitment to preserving and promoting the rich cultural heritage of the state while joining the 49th Wangala Festival, the annual post-harvest thanksgiving celebration of the Garo community.

Speaking at the festival, popularly known as the "100 Drums Festival," Sangma said, "We take great pride in our rich heritage and remain committed to preserving and promoting it." He highlighted that the state government has undertaken several initiatives to support research on indigenous culture and heritage, including efforts to document and promote traditional practices of various communities.

The Wangala Festival, held af-

ter the harvest season, is a vibrant expression of gratitude to Misi Saljong, the Sun God, for a bountiful harvest. The celebration is marked by rhythmic drum beats, traditional dances, and colourful attire, showcasing the Garo community's deep connection with nature and agricultural life. Sangma also announced the formation of a committee to study the historical journey of the Garos from Tibet to the Northeast, with the aim of tracing their lineage and migratory roots. Appreciating the organising committee and participating troupes, the Chief Minister lauded their efforts in keeping the age-old tradition alive for nearly five decades.

To improve connectivity to the festival venue, Sangma announced a sanctioned amount of ₹20 crore for the approach road to Wangala A' dam.

Akhil Gogoi criticises BJP-RSS following Rajen Gohain's resignation

GUWAHATI

Rajior Dal chief and Assam's Sivasagar legislator Akhil Gogoi on Thursday issued a statement criticising the BJP and RSS, alleging that the party is moving away from its ideological roots and becoming a platform for "corrupt Congress leaders."

Gogoi made the remarks on Thursday via social media in Assamese, following former Union Minister Rajen Gohain's recent resignation from the BJP.

He stated that the party has "lost its moral core" and has become a platform for "power-hungry and corrupt politicians."

"The RSS-BJP's job now is to rehabilitate corrupt Congressmen who built mountains of money through corruption," Gogoi remarked. He further asserted that the "old BJP, which was built with the blood and sweat of dedicated workers, has



been pushed aside." Gogoi claimed that senior and long-serving BJP leaders, including Ashok Sharma, Ra-

jen Gohain, Yudhishtir Gogoi, Bhaban Mohan, R. P. Sharma, Meera Barthakur, and Pradyut Bora, have been sidelined or forced to leave the party under pressure from new entrants, many of whom were formerly Congress leaders.

He used a metaphor comparing the current BJP to a kitchen where "those who only know how to sprinkle salt are made cooks, while the real chefs are thrown out." Gogoi also accused the ruling BJP-RSS establishment of betraying the values of true nationalism and using religion for political gains.

He said their version of nationalism prioritises political interests and that their Hindutva policies promote communalism and casteism.

Gogoi further claimed that the BJP-RSS combine seeks only to maintain power by allowing large corporations access to re-

sources while increasing costs for ordinary citizens. He concluded that Assam has "gained nothing" from the BJP's rule except the rise of divisive politics and "shameless corruption."

The BJP was contacted for comment regarding these allegations but did not issue an official statement by the time of publication.

Rajen Gohain's resignation earlier has triggered fresh debate within the Assam BJP, highlighting internal differences.

Political analysts note that Akhil Gogoi's statements reflect a broader attempt by the opposition to highlight ideological dilution within the saffron party.

This critique is the latest in a series targeting both the state and central leadership of the BJP, as Rajior Dal positions itself as a regional, anti-establishment voice ahead of the 2026 Assam Assembly elections.

Anger Boils Over as Manipur IDPs Reject Meagre Relief Cash, Call It 'Rs 4-a-Day Insult'

IMPHAL

Venting anger and disappointment over discrepancies in the disbursal of ration allowances, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from two relief camps staged a protest at the Sawmbung SDO Office in Imphal East, on Wednesday.

As a part of the protest, the IDPs of Sawmbung and Sajiwa camps returned their one-month ration allowance, which is credited via Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), to the SDO office through an Executive Magistrate.

The displaced persons expressed resentment over receiving Rs 84 per person, which they said, contradicted the government's earlier announcement of Rs 80 per person and Rs 20 for



ration.

Reports suggested that Rs 16, allegedly meant for rice distribution charges, was deducted, leaving the families feeling deceived.

Speaking to the press, Koijam Sharat, Convenor of the Apex Committee of Victim Villagers (comprising Ekou, Sadu Yengkhuman, Dolaithabi, Leitalkopi Mairapat, and Sadu

Lampak), blamed the confusion on poor coordination and lack of clear communication between departments. He urged authorities to clarify the calculation process and ensure that IDPs receive their full entitled benefits.

One IDP at the site explained that earlier, when rice was distributed directly, each beneficiary was charged Rs 20 for 400 grams

per day (200 grams per person).

Under the new cash transfer system, however, they now receive only Rs 4 per day for the same amount, prompting many to question, "From where can we buy 400 grams of rice for Rs 4?"

Tension prevailed briefly before local authorities and an Executive Magistrate intervened to calm the situation.

Meanwhile, IDPs from other relief camps have also voiced dissatisfaction with the government's decision to replace direct ration supply with cash transfers, demanding transparency and fairness in the relief assistance process.

They have warned that if their grievances are not addressed within ten days, they may intensify their agitation.

Tripura to support 6,000 farmers with Rs 1.8 crore under ARC potato cultivation scheme: Agriculture Minister



Quest!

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AGARTALA

The Tripura government has launched a scheme to boost potato production using the Aeroponic Rooted Cutting (ARC) method, benefiting

6,000 farmers with financial and material support. The ARC method significantly increases potato yields from 2,500-3,000 kg to 9,000-10,000 kg per kani, reducing reliance on imports and enhancing farmer incomes. The initiative aims for Tripura to achieve self-sufficiency in seed potato production by 2028-29 and full self-reliance in table potato production by 2029-30.

In a major move to boost potato production in Tripura, the state government has announced significant financial and material support for farmers adopting the ARC (Aeroponic Rooted Cutting) method of cultivation.

Addressing the media at the Secretariat today, November 6, Agriculture Minister Ratan Lal Nath said that a total of 6,000 farmers across the state will receive assistance this year under the scheme. Each farmer will get Rs 2,000 in direct financial support deposited into their bank accounts, along with agricultural materials worth Rs 1,000. The government's total expenditure for this initiative will be around Rs 1.8 crore.

He said currently, around 23,700 farmers cultivate potatoes across

47,341 kanis of land in Tripura.

"Traditionally, farmers have produced 2,500-3,000 kg of potatoes per kani. However, under the ARC method, yields have increased dramatically to between 9,000 and 10,000 kg per kani, the minister noted.

Minister Nath further stated that by the 2028-29 financial year, the state aims to become self-sufficient in seed potato production, and by 2029-30, Tripura is expected to achieve full self-reliance in table potato production.

The ARC method was first introduced on a pilot basis in 2023 with 100 farmers, producing promising results. Encouraged by its success, the number was increased to 400 farmers in 2024. Following these positive outcomes, this year the government will extend support to 4,000 farmers under the RKBY project and another 2,000 farmers through the Watershed Management Project.

Minister Nath expressed optimism that this initiative will open a new chapter in Tripura's agricultural development and lead the state toward self-sufficiency in potato production.

Manipur govt launches PM-NAPS awareness campaign in Imphal

IMPHAL

The Manipur government on Thursday launched an awareness campaign on the Pradhan Mantri-National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (PM-NAPS) for the North East Region at Imphal.

Anurag Bajpai, Additional Chief Secretary (Textiles, Commerce and Industry and Transport), Government of Manipur, who graced the event as the chief guest, emphasised that the Promotion Scheme under the Skill India Mission is a crucial step toward bridging education, training, and industry on a common platform.

In Manipur, nearly 95-96% of industries are micro or small-scale, and the government's focus is on upgrading these units into small and medium enterprises by promoting local industries, utilising local resources, and enhancing their visibility in wider markets.

Describing it as one of the most important flagship programmes of the Government of India, Bajpai stated that the success of the scheme requires a two-pronged approach, cre-

ating awareness among eligible youth and encouraging establishments across Manipur to participate.

Under the Apprenticeship Act, establishments with more than 30 employees must engage apprentices, while those with 4 to 29 employees may do so voluntarily, he said, urging all stakeholders to ensure that every eligible candidate and establishment understands the value of apprenticeship.

The apprentices are entitled to Rs 6,000-Rs 12,000 per month based on qualifications.

The Directorate of Craftsmen Training, under the Skill, Labour, Employment and Entrepreneurship (SLEE) Department, Government of Manipur, organised the event.

N. Bandana Devi, IAS Secretary, Skill, Labour, Employment and Entrepreneurship (SLEE), Government of Manipur and Yaiphaba Longjam, MCS, Joint Director, Craftsmen Training, Manipur, attended the event as the Guest of Honour and President, respectively.

Several Government officials and students also actively participated in the awareness campaign.

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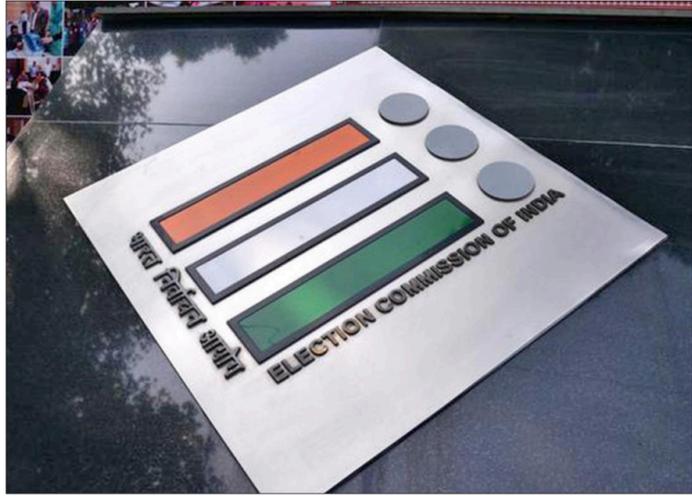
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ECI launches online voter enumeration facility for West Bengal residents ahead of assembly polls



NEW DELHI

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Thursday launched an online voter enumeration facility for West Bengal residents, allowing those absent during the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls to complete the process digitally through the Chief Electoral Officer's portal, (<https://ceowestbengal.wb.gov.in>).

Officials said the service, which went live on Thursday morning after a brief delay caused by technical glitches earlier this week, enables voters to download, fill out

and upload enumeration forms online. Comprehensive instructions are also provided on the website.

The facility aims to ensure that no eligible voter is left out of the SIR process, which began on November 4 with over 80,000 Block Level Officers (BLOs) distributing and collecting forms across the state's 294 assembly constituencies.

Originally, the ECI had planned a simultaneous online and offline rollout, but backend issues delayed the digital component. Officials confirmed that the system is now fully operational.

A senior ECI official said the new feature would help enhance participation, reduce manual errors, and streamline data collection ahead of the 2026 West Bengal Assembly elections.

"The online facility empowers citizens to update their voter details conveniently, ensuring inclusivity and accuracy in the electoral process," the official said.

The move marks another step toward digitising voter services and aligns with the Commission's broader efforts to modernise election management and boost voter engagement in West Bengal.

Bihar Elections: Record phase 1 turnout sets up 'sushasan vs jobs' showdown

PATNA

In Bihar's highest-ever voter turnout, nearly 65% of 3.75 crore electors cast their ballots on Thursday across 121 constituencies in the first phase of the assembly elections — a high-stakes contest seen as a litmus test of the ruling NDA's popularity.

In a statement, the Election Commission said the first phase of the assembly elections concluded peacefully "in a festive mood with the highest-ever voter turnout of 64.66 per cent in the history of Bihar."

Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Vinod Singh Gunjyal said women came out in large numbers to cast their votes, with "a lot of enthusiasm."

The NDA, in power for much of the past two decades, is leaning on its image of "sushasan" or good governance, contrasting it with what it calls the "jungle raj" of the RJD-Congress years. The opposition bloc, meanwhile, is banking on anti-incumbency and Tejashwi Yadav's ambitious "jobs-for-every-home" pledge to challenge the ruling alliance.

The polls for the 243-member assembly are being closely watched not only for their local implications but also as an early indicator of the political mood ahead of 2029, and follow the highly controversial Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral roll by the EC, which came under attack from opposition parties for alleged "rigging" and "manipulation" of voter lists.

Stakes are high for both the ruling NDA and the opposition INDIA bloc, with several key leaders, including RJD's Yadav, Deputy CMs Samrat Choudhary and Vijay Kumar Sinha, besides a slew of ministers, being among



the 1,314 candidates in fray in this phase.

Stray incidents of violence, including an alleged attack on Sinha's vehicle, were reported from some areas during the polling.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who addressed rallies in a couple of constituencies going to polls in the second and final phase, felt that the noticeably high number of women turning up to vote was a good sign for the NDA.

"Mothers, daughters, and sisters have been the worst sufferers of 'jungle raj'. Today, they seem to have put up a fortress around polling booths to prevent the return of 'jungle raj'," Modi remarked.

The NDA hopes that Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's record, along with recent welfare measures such as 125 units of free power, Rs 10,000 cash transfers to over 1 crore women, and an increase in social security pensions, will help counter anti-incumbency.

However, the opposition dismissed the boasts of the BJP-led coalition and hoped that people would vote for a change.

RJD president Lalu Prasad, who hopes that his younger son and heir apparent Yadav will form the next government, came out with an evocative social media post, drawing the analogy of a "roti."

"If a roti is not flipped on a tawa (pan), it gets burnt. Twenty years is a long time. A Tejashwi government is essential to build a new Bihar," Prasad wrote on X.

There have also been allegations and counter-allegations from both sides on the polling day. Deputy CM Sinha, who is seeking a fourth consecutive term from Lakhisarai, claimed that one of the cars in his convoy was attacked by RJD supporters trying to "intimidate" voters belonging to extremely backward classes.

On the other hand, the RJD alleged on X that voting had been "deliberately slowed down" in areas where the INDIA bloc was strongly placed, a charge promptly rejected by the EC.

A notable feature of this election has been the presence of Prashant Kishor's Jan Suraj Party, which the former political strategist believes could emerge as the proverbial dark horse.

Kishor has caught public imagination with his promise of making the state "among the top-ranking ones in the country", and to this end, he has not shied away from making a few bold statements, including his announcement that he intends to scrap the prohibition law, which has been bleeding the state dry.

Polling was held across 18 districts, with Muzaffarpur and Samastipur recording the highest turnouts, as per the latest available data.

Muzaffarpur recorded a turnout of 70.96 per cent, while the polling percentage in Samastipur stood at 70.63. Madhepura recorded 67.21 per cent turnout, followed by Vaishali at 67.37 per cent, Saharsa at 66.84 per cent, Khagaria at 66.36 per cent, Lakhisarai at 65.05 per cent, Munger at 60.40 per cent, Siwan at 60.31 per cent, Nalanda at 58.91 per cent, and Patna at 57.93 per cent.

The low turnout in Patna was largely attributed to urban constituencies such as Bankipur, Digha, and Kumhrar, where electors are known to be less enthusiastic.

According to the Election Commission, the assembly elections of 1951-52 saw the lowest voter turnout in the state at 42.6 per cent, while the one in 2000 saw the highest turnout before this, at 62.57 per cent.

In the last assembly polls in 2020, held under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, a voter turnout of 57.29 per cent was recorded.

The 2015 elections recorded a turnout of 56.91 per cent, while the one before that, in 2010, the polling percentage stood at 52.73.

Politics in Bihar is as much about numbers as it is about castes.

INTERNATIONAL

COP30: Leaders of world's biggest polluters skip UN climate summit as heads of state urge action

BELEM

World leaders who descended on the United Nations annual climate summit in Brazil on Thursday only needed to look out their airplane windows to sense the unfathomable stakes.

Surrounding the coastal city of Belem is an emerald green carpet festooned with winding rivers. But the view also reveals barren plains: Some 17% of the Amazon's forest cover has vanished in the past 50 years, swallowed up for farmland, logging and mining.

Known as the "lungs of the world" for its capacity to absorb vast quantities of carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas that warms the planet, the biodiverse Amazon rainforest has been choked by wildfires and cleared by cattle ranching.

Here on the edge of the world's largest remaining rainforest Brazil President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva hopes to convince world powers to mobilize enough funds to halt the ongoing destruction of climate-stabilizing tropical rainforests in danger around the world and advance the many unmet promises laid out at previous meetings.

But they'll have to overcome reduced participation from the planet's three biggest polluters. The leaders of China, the United States and India will be notably absent from a gathering of heads of state over the next two days. The formal UN climate talks begin next week at the Conference of Parties, known as COP30.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres opened Thursday's gathering with harsh words for world powers who he said "remain captive to the fossil fuel interests, rather than protecting the public interest."

Guterres said allowing global

warming to exceed the key benchmark of 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) — as laid out in the Paris Agreement — represented a "moral failure and deadly negligence."

"Even a temporary overshoot will have dramatic consequences," Guterres warned. "Every fraction of a degree higher means more hunger, displacement and loss."

US President Donald Trump, who calls climate change a hoax and withdrew the US from the Paris climate accords the same day he entered office, won't send any senior officials. China will send its deputy prime minister, Ding Xuexiang.

That leaves the rest of the summit's leaders — including UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz and French President Emmanuel Macron — to confront not only the consequences of an intensifying global climate crisis but a daunting set of political challenges.

Advocates and diplomats have raised concerns that the absence of the US — which has at times played a key role in convincing China to restrain carbon emissions and securing finance for poor countries — could signal a more global retreat from climate politics.

In a rousing speech, Lula warned that "window of opportunity we have to act is rapidly closing and said there was "no greater symbol of the environmental cause" than the Amazon rainforest.

"It is only right that it is the turn of the Amazonian people to ask what the rest of the world is doing to prevent the collapse of their home," he said.

Without mentioning Trump directly, Lula hinted at the US president's denial of climate science

and abandonment of promises to control greenhouse gas pollution.

"Extremist forces fabricate falsehoods to gain electoral advantage and trap future generations in an outdated model that perpetuates social and economic disparities and environmental degradation," he said.

President Gustavo Petro of Colombia, however, called out Trump directly for his absence, saying it was "100% wrong."

"Trump is against humankind," said Petro, whose feud with his US counterpart escalated in recent weeks as Trump accused him of being a drug kingpin and imposed financial sanctions on him and his family. "We can see the collapse that can happen if the US does not decarbonize its economy," he said.

Chile's left-wing President Gabriel Boric similarly singled out Trump, saying his recent speech denying climate change at the UN General Assembly was "a lie."

Indigenous groups also warned that Trump's inaction is emboldening other countries to ignore the crisis.

"It pushes governments further toward denial and deregulation," said Nadino Kalapucha, the spokesperson for the Amazonian Kichwa Indigenous group in Ecuador. "That trickles down to us, to Ecuador, Peru, Argentina, where environmental protection is already under pressure."

President Javier Milei of Argentina has already mimicked Trump's moves, threatening to quit the Paris Agreement and last year pulling Argentine negotiators out of the climate summit in Azerbaijan. He boycotted this week's meeting as well.

Some experts see a silver lining in the Trump administration's absence, saying it reduces the risk of one country foiling an ambitious

agreement that requires a full consensus.

"Even if the US plays an outsized role, it is one country and there are over 190 nations coming to COP, many of which are willing to stand up to the destructive tactics of the fossil fuel industry," said Rachel Cleetus, senior policy director with the Climate and Energy program at the Union of Concerned Scientists.

Lula, who has presented himself as a champion of climate diplomacy in the Global South and won widespread praise for reducing deforestation in the Amazon, seeks to leverage Brazil's moment on the world stage to push for action on curbing planet-warming emissions and helping poor nations adapt to extreme weather and other perils of climate change.

But Lula's commitment has run into economic pressures. He recently granted state oil firm Petrobras a license to explore oil near the mouth of the Amazon River, which environmental advocates say risks damaging oil spills. Lula has hit back at accusations of hypocrisy.

"I don't want to be an environmental leader," Lula said Tuesday.

"I never claimed to be." Those tensions are at the heart of the conference and Lula's centerpiece proposal — a new Tropical Forests Forever Facility that would pay 74 heavily forested, developing countries to keep their trees standing, using loans from wealthier nations and commercial investors.

The conference will test whether Brazil can drum up enough money to make its ambitions a reality. Existing UN funds for climate loss and damage have drawn only modest contributions.

Trump says he may visit India next year as talks with Modi 'going good'



WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump has said he could visit India next year and noted that talks with India are 'going good'.

Speaking to reporters in the Oval Office, Trump described his relationship with Prime Minister Narendra Modi as "great" and said the two leaders remain in regular contact.

"It's going good. He stopped buying oil from Russia, largely he stopped. He's a friend of mine, and we speak often. He wants me to go there, we'll figure that out. I had a great trip there with Prime Minister Modi; he's a great man. And I'll be going," Trump said.

When asked if the visit

could take place next year, Trump responded, "It could be, yeah."

India is scheduled to host the next Quad summit, bringing together leaders from the United States, Japan, Australia, and India in New Delhi following the 2024 meeting held in Wilmington, Delaware.

The exact dates for the 2025 summit have yet to be confirmed.

During his remarks, Trump once again claimed credit for helping defuse tensions between India and Pakistan during his presidency, asserting that trade tariffs played a key role.

"Of the eight wars I ended, I would say five or six were ended because

of tariffs. I'll give you an example.

If you take a look at India and Pakistan, they started to fight, they were shooting each other.

Eight planes were shot down. It was seven. Now it is eight, because the one that was sort of shot down is now abandoned.

Eight planes were shot down. And I said, 'Listen, if you guys are going to fight, I'm gonna put tariffs on you'. And they both went, you know, they were not happy about that.

And within 24 hours, I settled the war. If I didn't have tariffs, I wouldn't have been able to settle that war," Trump said, describing tariffs as a "great national defense."

'Let Them Talk': Sheikh Hasina Shrugs Off \$234-Billion Charge, Says She's Ready for Elections

For the first time, PM Hasina accepted "leadership responsibility" for the killing of "thousands of citizens" during the mass protest against her government.

Exactly 15 months after her stay in an undisclosed location in India, Sheikh Hasina has finally spoken her mind in an exclusive e-mail interview to this correspondent.

The former Bangladesh Prime Minister made it clear that given an opportunity her party Awami League will surely participate in the upcoming parliamentary elections in the country. For the first time, she accepts "leadership responsibility" for the killing of "thousands of citizens" during the mass protest against her government from July 15 to August 5, 2024.

Questions on the involvement of a 'foreign hand' in her removal from power were sent to her, but she preferred to remain silent at this moment.

The interview: The Bangladeshi authorities have banned the Awami League from contesting the general elections early next year. Are your party members considering running as independents?

PM Hasina: The decision to ban the Awami League is deeply undemocratic and a clear violation of Bangladesh's constitution and of the fundamental rights of the electorate. It short-changes millions of people. Historically, when parties have not participated in previous elections, Bangladeshi voters have simply not voted, rather than transfer their vote to other parties. So our priority is to continue fighting for the rights of our voters.

If the Awami League and its members refuse to contest elections in any form, what do you think the impact will be for Bangladesh?

PM Hasina: We are not refusing to contest elections. On the contrary, we ardently wish to participate. But we have been banned from doing so by an administration that is itself unelected and which clearly has no respect for democracy.

We have to break this cycle of parties either boycotting elections or being banned, because it undermines the legitimacy of the government. Bangladesh badly needs to hold a free, fair and inclusive election, so that the country can begin to heal and move towards reconciliation. You cannot achieve this by banning the Awami League. We are woven into the country's modern history and independence, and tens of millions support us.

A report by the Human Rights Watch estimates that around 1,400 people were killed and thousands were injured during the anti-government protests between July 15 and August 5 over a year ago. The report says the vast majority were shot by Bangladesh's security forces. As the Prime Minister at the time, do you take responsibility for the state-inflicted violence that led to your ouster?

PM Hasina: I mourn each and every life lost in the tragic violence of last summer's uprising. As the country's leader, I ultimately take leadership responsibility but the implication that I ordered or directed the actions of the security forces on the ground is fundamentally incorrect. All actions were taken in good faith and with the sole intention of minimising the loss of life or the further breakdown in law and order.

As for the UN's fatality estimate, we dispute that figure. It is significantly higher than the Ministry of Health's own calculations and is based on undocumented and closely controlled evidence supplied to the UN Human Rights Commissioner by the interim government.

It also appears to contain many members of the security forces and Awami League officials killed in the riots, but that hasn't been made clear. The government has had over 15 months to arrive at an accurate death count, yet has still not published a definitive list of the dead. I believe this is



a deliberate omission and that it is using the UN's back-of-the-envelope calculation for propaganda purposes.

There have been questions around the integrity of several general elections in Bangladesh, including the ones that resulted in Awami League's victories. Several opposition parties boycotted the 2024 general elections, after security forces arrested their members and supporters in thousands. The United States said it didn't believe the 2024 general elections were free and fair, while the opposition BNP accused your government of rigging its outcome. Did the Awami League distort the political process in Bangladesh?

PM Hasina: The 2024 elections were deemed to be free and fair by independent international observers. This is not in question. The Awami League has come to power nine times through the direct votes of the people. The party has never seized power by unconstitutional means, unlike the so-called interim government presently in power, for whom no Bangladeshi has cast a vote.

Furthermore, it was the Awami League government that introduced key reforms to ensure transparency—photo-based voter lists, transparent ballot boxes, and the establishment of an independent Election Commission through legislation. These reforms were made to guarantee the people's right to vote freely. Nobody doubts that the system had become much better since the undoubted electoral frauds of the 1970s through to 2001.

What I will freely say, however, is that some of our past elections were not truly participatory because major political parties chose to boycott democratic processes and deny the electorate their fundamental right to vote. I can see that, over time, this was damaging to our political process.

It is this cycle of non-participation that must now be broken. Whatever anybody's views of the Awami League, the fact is that it has been a major political force in our country since Independence, is committed to upholding the Constitution, and is supported by millions. Bangladesh's chances of forming a government that is legitimate and enjoys the genuine consent of the people are severely compromised if this ban on the Awami League is maintained.

That, by the way, is not just my opinion. An inclusive election for Bangladesh is the express recommendation of the UN and, I'm sure, is also the preferred outcome for the United States government.

A recent Financial Times report quotes chief advisor Muhammad Yunus saying that an estimated \$234 billion was plundered from Bangladesh during

or political ties to your family, and there is now a court trial against you, your son Sajeeb Wazed Joy, and daughter Saima Wazed Putul. How do you respond to corruption allegations against yourself, your family and political colleagues?

These allegations are all completely unproven, and formulated by prosecutors who are controlled by my political opponents. I'm not denying that corruption exists, but nobody has been able to show that my family and associates benefitted personally from state resources or were complicit in state-sanctioned corruption.

The \$234-billion claim is laughable as well as unproven. That sum far exceeds Bangladesh's entire state budget. In practical terms, such an enormous theft isn't even possible. If it had happened, our economy would have collapsed. What actually happened was that our economy grew by more than 450 per cent over my 15 years in office. And that, by the way, is a verified fact, endorsed by the IMF and other international organisations. My accusers seem to prefer wild allegations over facts.

Now, let me ask this: Muhammad Yunus has reportedly acquired around 4,080 kathas of land in Purbachal, where he established a resort under the name Nisorgo. He also purchased 300 kathas of land in Uttara, Dhaka.

Dr Yunus began his career at the Grameen Bank in 1990 with a salary of only 6,000 taka. How, then, did he amass such vast wealth? Today, he is said to hold fixed deposits worth approximately 5,000 crore taka across multiple accounts in different banks in Bangladesh. He hasn't explained how this wealth was acquired, yet he's the one in power now. The media needs to stop being naive and start scrutinising these matters, rather than giving Yunus a free pass just because he has got famous friends like the Clintons. (Former President Bill Clinton and Hillary Clinton.)

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PLACEMENT

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

VOLUNTEERS REGISTERS @ NEIR 2026

We are looking for volunteers across NE & West Bengal Interested candidates (College students, youths) can register at https://northeastintegrationrally.in/Volunteer_Registration.aspx, send an email: neintegrationrally@gmail.com

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 InfoComSolutions@krccfoundation.org 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

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2026
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www.northeastintegrationrally.in



Success lies in a masterful consistency around the fundamentals.



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 Navigations, Sport Climbing, Disaster Management, Techniques, Water Sports, etc.
www.krcfoundation.org



11 JAN
Barak Valley Conclave
 Potential Issues and Challenges of Barak Valley by different stakeholders.
 Includes: NGOs, and Government officials, experts for development, awareness, awareness, environment, and awareness, etc.
 Participation through invitation only. Different rewards are provided.



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



11 JAN
5E For Success Conclave
 The 4th 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.
 Quiz and Group Discussion for Barak valley Schools & Colleges, Extension, School, Public Speaking (College).
 In the online event, various students of NE India Schools and Colleges can participate.



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, Seminars, and Conferences for students, parents, teachers, members.



CONCLAVE
"From School to Campus to Corporate"
www.krcfoundation.org



PAINTING CARNIVAL
NE CULTURAL FEST
E-SPORTS
FILM FESTIVAL | EXHIBITION
 BOOK CLUB | AWARDS | GUEST | RARE BIRDS | RECORDS



Barak Festival 2025
 BAND NIGHT | 10 JAN
 MUSICAL NIGHT | 11 JAN

10-12 JAN
Science Studio
 Real 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-Featured Demos | CASH PRIZES | Trophy



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



CONCLAVE
"From School to Campus to Corporate"
www.krcfoundation.org

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

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

Painting Carnival
 Water Colour painting and Draw-Paint Campaign



Watch Out!
Film Festival
www.krcfoundation.org

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

- Outreach Executive
- Event Management
- Programme Coordinator

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