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PERSPECTIVE

100% of employees are people. 100% of customers are people. 100% of investors are people. If you don't understand people, you don't understand business. — Simon Sinek

Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla Lauds 60 Years of Akashvani Imphal's Service to the State

IMPHAL

The Diamond Jubilee of Akashvani Imphal celebrated 60 years of broadcasting, emphasizing its impact on Manipur's public life and cultural identity. Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla praised Akashvani Imphal for fostering national integration and preserving cultural identity through diverse programming.

The event featured cultural performances, underscoring Akashvani Imphal's role in sustaining Manipur's artistic traditions.

The Diamond Jubilee Celebration of Akashvani Imphal was held with grandeur at the City Convention Centre in Imphal, marking sixty years of the station's unwavering service to the people of Manipur and the nation. The event was graced by the Governor of Manipur, Ajay Kumar Bhalla, as the chief guest.

The celebration began with the Governor releasing the Diamond Jubilee Souvenir and presenting citations to Akashvani officers and sponsors in recognition of their contributions. Dignitaries present at the event included Anurag Bajpai, Additional Chief Secretary; Rajiv Kumar Jain, Director General of Akashvani; Satyajit Dash, Additional Director General of Akashvani NEZ; and senior officials of the State Government.

In his address, Governor Bhalla congratulated the Akashvani Imphal family for completing six decades of distinguished service since its establishment on 15th August 1963. He praised the station's vital role in fostering national integration, preserving Manipur's cultural identity, and amplifying the voices of remote regions through programmes in multiple local dialects.

WHO SAID WHAT

The idea of us joining for the interest of our next generation is something which maybe is uncomfortable for some people. But we have to realise that in 76 years we have failed because we continued to speak on the same issues separately. We were divided and hence we failed. — Pradyot Bikram Manikya Deb Barma, Leader of Tipra Motha

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced on November 6 that Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will visit the state between November 7 and 9 to inaugurate and lay the foundation stones of major projects.

According to the Chief Minister, Sitharaman will arrive in Guwahati on November 7 for a two-day visit. She is scheduled to inspect the new semiconductor plant in Jagiroad and inaugurate several key infrastructure projects.

"Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will come tomorrow (November 7); she will inspect the new semiconductor plant at Jagiroad. She will inaugurate a new land water terminal built to world standards and a riverfront garden in Guwahati. On November 8, she will lay the foundation stone of Kanaklata Barua State University, a new greenfield university," Sarma said.

Defence Minister Rajnath



Singh will arrive in Guwahati on November 9 to attend the Indian Air Force's aero show at Lachit Ghat. "Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will come on November 9,

and he will witness the aero show conducted by the Indian Air Force," the Chief Minister told reporters.

Sarma also revealed that

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah are expected to visit Assam in the next one to two months. "In the next 45 days, Assam will see

the visit of a galaxy of national leaders," he said.

Outlining the plans for the Prime Minister's visit, Sarma said Modi will travel to both Guwahati and Dibrugarh. "In Guwahati, he will inaugurate the new terminal building of the Guwahati airport. In Dibrugarh, he will lay the foundation stone of a new fertiliser complex jointly developed by the Assam and Union governments. After that, he will return to Guwahati to inaugurate the bridge connecting Guwahati and North Guwahati over the Brahmaputra," he stated.

Detailing the Home Minister's itinerary, Sarma said Shah will attend a party meeting and inaugurate two major cultural projects — a 5,000-capacity auditorium dedicated to Jyoti Prasad Agarwala and Bishnu Prasad Rabha, and a project at the birthplace of Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardeva.

"So we will witness a lot of visits in December and January, which will usher in a new era of development for the state of Assam," Sarma added.

Traffic restrictions announced in Guwahati ahead of Air Force Day Flypast on November 9



GUWAHATI

The Guwahati Traffic Police has issued a comprehensive traffic advisory ahead of the Indian Air Force Day Flypast scheduled for November 9, with rehearsals to be held on November 5, 6, and 8 at Lachit Ghat, Panbazar.

In anticipation of large gatherings, including the presence of VIPs and dignitaries, the city is expected to witness heavy vehicular movement around Lachit Ghat and adjoining areas of MG Road. To ensure smooth traffic flow and public safety, specific restrictions and diversions will be in place on November 8 and 9 from 7 AM to 5 PM.

According to the order issued by the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Traffic, Guwahati, commercial goods vehicles and other heavy vehicles will not be allowed on H.B. Road, AT Road, DG Road, MG Road, B Baruah Road, and GNB Road during the restricted hours. Slow-moving vehicles, including handcarts, rickshaws, and e-rickshaws, will also be barred from

plying between Machkhowa Point and the Chief Justice's Bungalow Point on M.G. Road.

Only vehicles with valid car passes issued by the Indian Air Force will be permitted to operate on the stretch of MG Road between Machkhowa Point and the Chief Justice's Bungalow Point between 11 AM and 5 PM.

Traffic diversions include rerouting all vehicles from Bharalumukh towards Panbazar and Chandmari via H.B. Road or AT Road, and those from Chandmari towards Panbazar and Bharalumukh via AT Road through the Panbazar ROB. Light vehicles from Uzanbazar and Lata-sil heading towards Bharalumukh will be diverted via Lamb Road, F.C. Road, Tayebulla Point, and GNB Road.

Parking restrictions will also be strictly enforced. Vehicles with Red, Blue, and Yellow passes issued by the Indian Air Force will be allowed to park only in designated areas. No parking will be permitted on key roads, including MG Road, F.A. Road, BRP Road, MLN Road, ARB Road, HB Road, and TRP Road.

Additionally, no heavy vehicles or trucks will be allowed to park on TRP Road, Lakhi Gali, Chamber Road, SRCB Road, SS Road, Kedar Road, and MS Road during the restricted period.

The Guwahati Traffic Police has urged commuters to plan their travel accordingly and cooperate with enforcement personnel to ensure the success of the event and smooth traffic management.

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta resigned following multiple RTI applications related to his brother, Shyamkanu Mahanta, who organized the music festival where singer Zubeen Garg was scheduled to perform. Bhaskar Mahanta, a former Director-General of Police in the state, stepped down on the recommendation of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, citing a conflict of interest.

Zubeen Garg was found dead in the waters off Singapore on September 19, just a day before his scheduled performance. So far, authorities have arrested seven individuals in connection with the case, including Shyamkanu Mahanta. Other arrested individuals include Garg's cousin, Sandipan Garg, a Deputy Superintendent in Assam Police, his band manager Siddharth Sharma, and two members of his band. Two of Garg's private security personnel, Nandeswar Bora and Paresch Baishya, were also taken into custody following revelations of suspicious bank transactions totaling over Rs 1.1 crore, which investigators believe may be linked to the case.

Shyamkanu Mahanta faces multiple charges, including

Assam CIC Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta resigns amid Zubeen Garg death case RTI queries



murder, culpable homicide, causing death by rash or negligent act, and criminal conspiracy. He is also under investigation for alleged financial fraud, money laundering, and illegal real estate acquisitions.

All seven accused remain in judicial custody until November 11, facing the same charges. Chief Minister Sarma stated that authorities will file a chargesheet by December 17, reiterating that Garg's death is

being treated as murder, not an accident. A 10-member Special Investigation Team (SIT), led by Special Director-General Munna Gupta, is actively investigating the case. Last month, Singaporean authorities submitted Garg's autopsy report to Indian investigators, who are now reconstructing the final 48 hours of his life. The effort has gained urgency after the discovery of pharmaceutical drugs in Garg's belongings.

No national party will solve Northeast issues, be self-reliant, says Pradyot



AGARTALA

Tipra Motha founder and royal scion Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarman on Tuesday asserted that instead of relying on national parties and central leaders, the people of the Northeast should strive to empower themselves so that local issues could be addressed and solved locally.

Speaking to his followers through a social media livestream, a day after the announcement of One Northeast, Pradyot said the people of the Northeast have long been made to feel inferior and dependent on Delhi for solutions. "We have accepted somewhere in our minds that we are servants. The senior generation thinks we are inferior. Every national party leader attacks us, and we remain divided," he said.

He questioned why issues like the Inner Line Permit and the proper inclusion of Northeast history and culture in national educational curricula were never seriously discussed. "For every issue, our leaders look to Delhi for direction. Illegal immigration is a real problem, and yet we

keep fighting among ourselves while outsiders laugh," he said.

Urging the tribal and Bengali communities of Tripura to end mutual hostility, Pradyot said, "The tribals call Bengalis Bangladeshi, and Bengalis call tribals Mongolian. We must unite and fight as one. Because of our internal division, we have fallen behind."

The Tipra Motha leader asserted that the political model followed in the region had failed and that a new kind of politics was needed for the future generation. "The health of our democracy depends on new thinking. The future of our children lies in a new model of politics, not the same old divisive one," he said.

Pradyot also announced that leaders from several Northeast states have contacted him to join the movement for a united regional front.

"In the next 45 days, the committee we have constituted will begin consultations to define our guiding principles and ideology. We are starting a democratic and consultative process. This is a fight for survival," he said, adding that

the new entity would work for the people and not serve personal ambitions.

Lashing out at national parties, Pradyot said he was being attacked by leaders of the BJP, Congress, and CPI(M). "A person matters in a party only if he can win elections. I was part of a national party too, but I left because they do not care about our issues. Whenever there is racial discrimination against our students, the national parties remain silent because those responsible are their voters," he remarked.

He criticised the Centre's neglect of the region despite decades of loyalty to national parties. "It's been 76 years since Tripura and Manipur merged with India, and 75 years of our people voting faithfully. Why are Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Odisha, or Haryana more important than the Northeast?" he asked.

Reiterating his stand for regional self-determination, Pradyot said, "If you want change, it must begin here. No leader from Delhi will come and solve the Northeast's problems. I will stand for every Northeasterner — in Tripura, in the Northeast, and in Delhi."

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Dev Datta
Founder and Chief Creative Officer, DEVDATTA.DESIGN

Member, Organising Committee

www.northeastintegrationrally.in



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US AND THE US

"Us and the US"-the phrase may sound confrontational. But that's how it is these days between India and America. Donald Trump has blatantly declared that he imposes a 50% tariff on the Indian imports to 'punish' us for buying oil from Russia. It is as if a grumpy housemaster were chastising a boarder for some serious misconduct. The American president goes on to say that India has a dead economy. Not content with hurling such vituperations against us, he withdraws the sanctions waiver he had granted in his earlier term to Iran's Chabahar port. That port, being developed by India, provides India an alternative route for trade with Afghanistan and Central Asia, bypassing a hostile Pakistan. And then there is this bombshell for technocrats (mainly Indian) who aspire to land in America on the wings of their employment by the American companies. The fee for an H-1B visa having been raised to 1 lakh dollars (Rs 88 lakhs), those companies will be most reluctant to recruit our IITians and the lot. Recently, the US has imposed a 100% tariff on branded and patented pharmaceuticals.

It hurts since the US is our biggest trade partner. During 2024-25, we exported textiles, gems and jewelry, auto parts, and certain food items worth \$86.5 billion to it, while imports from that country were worth little over half as much, at \$45.3 billion. But then America has been content with such a trade deficit over the years. In the year 2000, for instance, its imports from India were worth \$10.7 billion against exports of just \$3.7 billion. The US also accuses India of imposing high tariff imposed on its goods. Howard Lutnick said that there is a "need to fix India, stop harming actions that harm US interests."

Kid gloves are off in Indo-American dealings; it is clear. On 23 September, Foreign Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar met with the US Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, on the sidelines of UNGA. Later, Rubio posted on X, "Met with Indian external affairs minister Dr. S. Jaishankar at UNGA. We discussed key areas of our bilateral relationship, including trade, energy, pharmaceuticals and critical minerals and more to generate prosperity for India and the United States." In comparison, Dr. Jaishankar's tone was more businesslike and devoid of diplomatise. "Agreed," he posted on X, "on the importance of sustained engagement to progress on priority areas. We will remain in touch."

A sure sign of America's distancing from us is its rejuvenated love for our adversary, Pakistan. On 27 September, President Donald Trump met with Pakistan's Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and Pakistan's Army Chief Asim Munir in the Oval Office, even though he made them wait for half an hour for the privilege. In the meeting, Trump wore a fighter-jet pin on the lapel of his coat. That show-off could have been made to be seen endorsing Pakistan's unfounded claim of having downed our fighter planes during Operation Sindoor.

There is nothing new to cooling off the warmth between the two nation-states. India has seen 15 POTUSs (President Of The United States) since the independence from Harry Truman (1945-1953) to Donald Trump. Barring the terms of George Bush (2001-2009) and Barack Obama (2009-2017), the Indo-American relations have been less than warm. During the Cold War, the Americans were not quite comfortable with Pundit Nehru's policy of nonalignment. Dean Acheson, American Secretary of State during 1949-1953, said that Nehru was "one of the most difficult men (he had) ever to deal (with)." President John F. Kennedy, widely considered as India's friend, expressed his gross displeasure on the liberation of Goa in 1961, cutting off the foreign aid to India by 25 percent. During the Chinese aggression the following year, however, his administration did provide us "arms, ammunition and clothing supplies" for the Army, not to mention a belated move to send the USS aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk to the Indian Ocean to deter the Chinese, though the war had ended by that time. "We should defend India, and therefore we will defend India," Kennedy had declared. Kennedy's successor, Lyndon B. Johnson (1963-1969), while trying to maintain relations with India, showed affinity with Pakistan as well. Richard Nixon (1969-1974) drew yet closer to Pakistan, at the cost of the decades-long American policy of maintaining neutrality in Indo-Pak hostilities. During the 1971 War, he sided openly with Pakistan. Our relations improved somewhat with the US during Indira Gandhi's leadership. And so on. Coming to the present time, President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Modi demonstrated close friendship during the former's first tenure (2017-2021). Even so, the realities of geopolitics and Trump's temperament during his second term (commencing Jan 20, 2025) have soured that sweetness. India has rejected Trump's offer to mediate in its border concerns with China. Again, offers of mediation from both Trump and his vice-president, Vance, were turned down by India following the Pahalgam attack. We have also rejected Trump's unilateral claim that hostilities under Operation Sindoor ceased because of his intervention. POTUS, not having been able to stomach rejections, has gone out of his way to show his fondness for the Pakistan rulers. Naturally enough, the latter are in the seventh heaven. Uzair Younus, a principal at the Asia Group and host of the podcast 'Pakistanism,' writes in The Diplomat, "For years, New Delhi grew comfortable with a US posture that deferred to Indian preferences. That era is over."

Younus is welcome to his jaundiced view. Even if, for argument's sake, we see through his eyes, the question is, "Then what?" We have weathered America's blow-hot-and-blow-cold for the better part of a century. We know how to, and we will, stand on our two feet. Trump has given his country the slogan of Make America Great Again (MAGA). Prime Minister Modi too has launched the 'Make in India Schemeto establish India as a global manufacturing and investment hub, create jobs and enhance the country's competitiveness.' All through its existence as a nation-state, we have asserted our autonomy rather than pandering to the dictates of the US or any foreign power.

We value the US for all that it can do with its \$30.5 trillion economy and a matching power over world affairs. But at the end of the day, it is our call to withstand all that bullying and find ourselves a place in the sun. China became a republic barely three months before we did, on 1 Oct, 1949. At that time, we two nations faced almost similar problems of poverty, overpopulation, and the like. In fact, China perhaps had to face a little more. That neighbour of ours today can match the US in its power and pelf. We too seem to be on the right track. In the year 2000, India's GDP was 476.6 million in US dollars. It has grown nearly ten-fold to 4281.9 million in 2025. We are now the 4th largest economy in the world. There is no doubt that, sooner than later, synergizing the will of 142 plus crores, we too would be in a position to look the US in the eye.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"A disciplined mind brings happiness." ~ Buddha

IN BIHAR, THE ELECTION MANIFESTOS TELL TWO STORIES



TUSHAR GUPTA

The campaign for the Bihar Assembly Elections is underway. Both the NDA and the RJD-led opposition have released their manifestos. Beyond the intricate comparison, narrowed down to every single promise, the manifestos are starkly different. The NDA manifesto focuses on enablement through welfare, infrastructure, skilling, education, and ease of credit. Meanwhile, the anti-incumbents have made it about a single agenda-government employment.

Over the last ten years, the Modi Government has introduced unprecedented welfare programs at scale in the state. Citizens, especially women, have been compassed by several welfare schemes. From toilets to tap water, from houses to gas cylinders, from bank accounts to access to credit, and from self-help groups to Lakhpati Didis, the focus of the government has been to enable women, and thus the entire family.

The welfare push has been coupled with an infrastructure push in Bihar by the Centre. From new Vande Bharat routes to highways, and from upgraded airports to new flight routes, the infrastructure push is further enabling economic avenues for the people of Bihar.

The NDA manifesto aims to capitalise on the work done in the last ten years. Central to the promises is youth empowerment, with a pledge to create 1 crore government jobs and employment opportunities, supported by a skill census to position Bihar as a global skilling hub. Mega Skill Centres in every district and Centres of Excellence for sports will further bolster this initiative. While the vacancies in the government will be filled, additional avenues of employment will be created in the private sector. This is where skill development becomes critical. Economic growth features prominently, with plans for 10 new industrial parks per district, 100 MSME parks, and over 50,000 cottage industries. The manifesto also envisions a defence corridor and semiconductor manufacturing parks to attract global investments.

Women's empowerment is a key focus, aiming to enable 1 crore women to become 'Lakhpati Didi', earning at least Rs. One Lakh annually, alongside 'Mission Corepati' for turning entrepreneurs into crorepatis. Financial aid of up to Rs. Two Lakh under the Chief Minister's Women's Employment Scheme will support this. Thus, the focus is on ensuring financial aid for businesses to take off, not helicopter cash.

Agriculture receives significant attention, with Kisan Samman Nidhi assistance rising from Rs. 6,000 to Rs. 9,000 annually, doubled support for fishermen to Rs. 9,000, and MSP guarantees for all crops. A Rs. One Lakh Crore investment in farm infrastructure and the Bihar Milk Mission aims to boost rural economies.

Infrastructure development is earmarked for Rs. 9 Lakh Crore, including seven new expressways, 3,600 km of modernised railways, metro services in Patna, Gaya, Purnia, and Bhagalpur, and international airports in key cities. Education promises free KG-to-PG schooling for poor families, residential schools for SC/ST students, and an Education City with global university campuses. Healthcare will see medical colleges in every district and a world-class medical city.

The overall focus of the NDA manifesto is on enablement. From education to skilling, from creating job creators to self-reliant communities through ease of credit. For Bihar, a majority of the legacy issues have already been addressed through the welfare and infrastructure push of the last ten years. With the new promised programmes, the government now wants to ensure double-digit sustainable growth for the state, aligning with fiscal feasibility.

Unlike in 2015, the primary opposition party in Bihar is relying on the Grand Old Party of India to upstage the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) Government in the state. At the beginning of their manifesto, the alliance has promised to usher in a law, within the first twenty days of the government formation, that will guarantee a government job for every household. The manifesto does not leave any room for ambiguity. A government job for every household is what is being promised. Clear as crystal.

The opposition in Bihar is playing to the gallery of conventional aspirations. The prospect of a government job entices many in the state, and therefore, a promise in the election manifesto may drive conversation, but the feasibility remains a problem. A majority government has the right to formulate a law guaranteeing the citizens anything, even a house in space, but that does not make it feasible. Rhetoric, at some point, has to meet reality. In the opposition's manifesto, the bridge between rhetoric and reality does not exist, cannot exist, will not exist.

The numbers confirm the ridiculousness of the rhetoric. A conservative figure suggests that Bihar has 2.5 Crore households without a government job. Assuming

a government job that pays Rs. 20,000 (conservative) as a monthly salary (without factoring in the other social security benefits and monetary perks), this results in an expenditure of Rs. 240,000 for 2.8 Crore employees.

Each year, this will cost the Bihar state government Rs. 6 Lakh Crore each year, more than Rs. 30 Lakh Crore across five years. The only problem; Bihar's annual budget for 2025-26 put the expenditure at Rs. 3 Lakh Crore (rounded off). Unless the money grows on the trees, this cannot happen.

The sectoral expenditure tells another story. In 2025-26, Bihar's budget estimates put the salary expenditure at Rs. 51,000 Crore, pension expenditure at Rs. 34,000 Crore, and the interest payments at Rs. 23,000 Crore. The salary expenditure, if the government job promise is fulfilled, with alone be 12 times the current salary expenditure.

The quantification with respect to the sectoral expenditure of the state budget further exposes the fallacy of the promise. The figure of Rs. 6 Lakh Crore calculated is 75 times the budget for agriculture and allied activities, 68 times the budget for roads and bridges, 65 times the budget for irrigation and flood control, 55 times the budget for urban development, 45 times the energy budget, 41 times the police budget, and 39 times the budget for social welfare and nutrition.

Rs. 6 Lakh Crore, the calculated cost of the government job promise, is 31 times what the state government spends on health and family welfare, 20 times the rural development expenditure, and almost 10 times the budget for education, sports, arts, and culture. Hypothetically, even if the government were to stop all its sectoral expenditure for one year, the promise cannot be fulfilled. The math is off the charts.

A discussion on the size of the government is also warranted. If the anti-incumbents walk the talk, the size of the government will be more than 2.5 Crore employees. Compare this to Uttar Pradesh with 17.8 Lakh employees, Tamil Nadu with 9 Lakh, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and West Bengal with 8 Lakh each. Since 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has advocated the idea of 'Minimum Government, Maximum Governance'. The opposition, meanwhile, is advocating for 'Maxed out Government'.

A comparison with key ministries further exposes the farce. The Indian Railways, one of the largest employers in the world, has 12.5 Lakh employees on its rolls. In Bihar, a government 20 times bigger is being proposed through this promise. Collectively, India's Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and Public Sector Banks (PSBs) have around 25 Lakh employees, one-tenth of the proposed number in Bihar.

The other way to look at this promise is the License Raj. What if the new state government decides to bring back the pre-liberalisation days and becomes a stakeholder in the private enterprises, and thus, terms every job created by the private sector as a government job? Will the state government then dictate hiring practices and wages? Is this the beginning of a new economic trajectory that certain political parties wish to pursue?

While the NDA is promising to further enable the people of Bihar, putting them on the track of double-digit growth, capitalising on the work done in the last ten years, the opposition wants to go back to the conventional method of employment. For the people of Bihar, the choice could not be starker. Do they wish to learn how to catch a fish, or want a fish to be doled out to them every single day, is what they have to choose between.

In the larger scheme of things, political entities must be responsible when it comes to making promises to the voters. To sway innocent and gullible voters with promises

that do not meet the fiscal and feasibility litmus test is unfair to the institution of elections. Every five years, a state celebrates its democratic framework through a festival called elections. Therefore, one hopes that this festive mood is not dampened by promises that borderline on insulting the electorate. No castles in the air, please.

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

Imphal Guwahati, a 40 minute flight, a flight distance of barely 274 km, is around Rs 17k-18k while Guwahati Delhi, a flight distance of 1450 km, flight time of 2.30 to 3 hrs is around Rs 7k-8k! This is nothing but daylight robbery committed upon the tragedy stricken people of Manipur! I had raised this issue way back in February. Just as it refuses to carry out its duty to ensure people's access to the highways, the Govt of India remains a mute spectator to this loot. ~ Dr. A. Bimol Akoijam, MP Manipur



6th November is the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict

ENVIRONMENT HAS BEEN UNPUBLICIZED VICTIM OF CONFLICTS AND WARS

RANJAN K BARUAH

We see destruction of lives and properties when there are any conflicts or wars. Mostly soldiers fight in the wars but casualties are faced by all including civilians. We have seen how the world wars have been cruel to many. Though humanity has always counted its war casualties in terms of dead and wounded soldiers and civilians, destroyed cities and livelihoods, the environment has often remained the unpublicized victim of war.

Our environment has become the innocent bystander of wars and conflicts. We have seen how water wells have been polluted, crops torched, forests cut down, soils poisoned, and animals killed to gain military advantage. Not to talk about big wars but any conflict anywhere on earth has negatively impacted our environment.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has found that over the last 60 years, at least 40 percent of all internal conflicts have been linked to the exploitation of natural resources, whether high-value resources such as timber, diamonds, gold and oil, or scarce resources such as fertile land and water.



INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR PREVENTING THE EXPLOITATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN WAR AND ARMED CONFLICT

Conflicts involving natural resources have also been found to be twice as likely to relapse.

The United Nations attaches great impor-

tance to ensuring that action on the environment is part of conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding strategies, because there can be no

lasting peace if the natural resources that sustain livelihoods and ecosystems are destroyed.

On 5 November 2001, the UN General Assembly declared 6 November of each year as the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict (A/RES/56/4). On 27 May 2016, the United Nations Environment Assembly adopted resolution UNEP/EA.2/Res.15, which recognized the role of healthy ecosystems and sustainably managed resources in reducing the risk of armed conflict, and reaffirmed its strong commitment to the full implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals listed in General Assembly resolution 70/1, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".

We are already worried about climate change and the way it is bringing more questions than answers in front of us. It is important for all of us to contribute positively for the environment and also rebuild the eco systems which have seen negative impacts due to conflicts. Let us take action to positively transform affected areas and together we can contribute to a sustainable future.

Welfare of indigenous community stands above politics: Pradyot Manikya

AGARTALA

Pradyot Kishore Debarma criticized the Tripura government for delays in implementing the Tiprasa Accord and holding Village Committee elections, emphasizing indigenous welfare over political interests. Debarma highlighted a lack of urgency from the BJP-led government in fulfilling commitments to the Tiprasa people, stressing that community interests surpass party gains. He called for increased unity among North East indigenous groups, noting a historical lack of collective advocacy at the national level.

Tipra Motha supreme Pradyot Kishore Debarma on Wednesday, November 5 reaffirmed that the welfare and future of the indigenous community stand above political affiliations or personal ambitions.

He sharply criticised the BJP-led Tripura government for its delay in implementing the Tiprasa Accord and conducting the long-overdue Village Committee (VC) elections.



After arriving in Tripura, Pradyot said that everyone has been raising the same issues from different platforms as Tiprasa, Nagas, and Mizos, but have nev-

er raised their voice collectively as indigenous people in Delhi.

"Now the Tiprasa are not alone, as the Nagas, Mizos, Arunachalis, Mani-

puris, and Dimasas are with the Tiprasa. Now it will be North East thansa (unity). My only brand is the people, and there is no brand bigger than the future of the people. For me, the interest of my country, my people, and the North East is my brand. I don't fall in love with brands, but I have fallen in love with my community, which is most important to me," he said.

Pradyot said that the future of the Tiprasa people is more important than the future of the BJP, Tipra Motha, CPIM, or Congress. "I am not thinking about the party but about our people," he added.

"On Monday, the hearing for the Village Council will take place. Tripura has sought more time, but the Chief Justice denied giving it. If the state government is ready to conduct the election, then why do we have to move to the Supreme Court? The last election was held in 2016, and now 2026 is approaching. Is this democracy? If they wanted to do it, they could have done it. On the Tiprasa Accord, the Chief Minister and I will have a discussion," he added.

GUWAHATI

Senior BJP leader and Assam minister Ashok Singhal has issued a strong rebuttal to allegations made by Leader of the Opposition Debabrata Saikia regarding alleged encroachment of land within the reserved tribal belt of Sonapur.

Reacting sharply to the accusation, Singhal dared Saikia to substantiate his claims with evidence. "If he can prove that even an inch of land belonging to me or my family has been illegally occupied, I will quit politics, leave Assam, and take sanyas in the Himalayas," he declared. Issuing a 24-hour ultimatum, Singhal further demanded that Saikia tender a public apology to the people of Assam if he fails to provide concrete proof. Defending his integrity, the BJP leader said his political journey has been driven by service, not self-interest. "I have never taken government contracts or subsidies. I entered politics to serve the people, not for corruption or personal gain. Unlike Congress, we do



not share the same character," Singhal asserted. He also questioned the foundation of the opposition's claims, calling for transparency and factual clarity in the matter.

Gas pipeline from Tripura to Mizoram progresses, 23.5 per cent completed



AGARTALA

The installation of a gas pipeline from Tripura to Mizoram is underway and progressing steadily, officials said, November 6.

Once completed, the project will provide piped gas connections to households in Mizoram, particularly in Aizawl. Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Minister B. Lalchhanzova chaired a review meeting on Tuesday to assess the ongoing project, which falls under the North East Gas Grid (NEGG). The pipeline, stretching from Tripura's Parisagar to Sihhmui near Aizawl, spans a total of 119 km — 104 km within Mizoram and the rest in Tripura.

Officials informed that 23.5 per cent, or about 28 km, of the work has already been completed. The Mizoram government, along with Indradhanush Gas Grid Limited, which is executing the project, is taking measures to accelerate progress on the remaining stretch to ensure early completion.

Gaurav Gogoi backs Rahul Gandhi, calls for national movement to reform Election Commission



GUWAHATI

Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi has come out in strong support of Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi's allegations of large-scale voter list fraud in Haryana.

In a post on X, Gogoi said Gandhi was fighting for a "free and fair election in India" and exposing what he called "a cover-up by people heading the Election Commission."

"The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi ji is fighting for a free and fair elec-

tion in India. He has continued to show the scale of the fraud in the voter lists and the cover-up by the people heading the Election Commission," Gogoi wrote.

Taking aim at the central government, Gogoi added that those responsible for ensuring fair polls were "appointed by the Prime Minister of India." He urged citizens across the country to unite for electoral reforms, saying, "There has to be a national movement for reform of the Election Commission. This has to be a clarion call by all the people."

Gogoi's remarks come after Rahul Gandhi alleged that around 25 lakh fake voters existed in Haryana's electoral rolls, claiming that "one in every eight voters" was bogus and that a centralised operation was being run to manipulate elections.

BPF Chief Hagrama Mohilary welcomes 'One North East' initiative, says party yet to decide on inclusion

GUWAHATI

Bodoland People's Front (BPF) President and Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) Chief Executive Member (CEM) Hagrama Mohilary has extended a warm welcome to the recently announced 'One North East' initiative, while clarifying that his party has not yet taken a decision on joining the new political platform.

Mohilary's statement comes in response to the joint declaration of 'One North East: Regional Leaders Unite for a Common Political Platform' made in New Delhi by a coalition of prominent regional leaders Meghalaya Chief Minister and NPP President Conrad K. Sangma, TIPRA Motha Founder Pradyot Bikram



Manikya Debarma, Nagaland Minister and former BJP National Spokesperson Mmholnu Kikon, and People's Party Assam (PPA) Founder Daniel Langthasa. Speaking to reporters, Mohilary remarked, "It's a good initiative, and we welcome it. However, the BPF has not yet discussed inclusion in this alliance. A thorough discussion at the party level is essential. When the election approaches, we will move forward with our own agendas."

The 'One North East' initiative is envisioned as a collaborative front that seeks to unify regional parties across the northeastern states under a shared vision, promoting the region's distinct political, social, and economic interests.

African Swine Fever outbreak 'out of control' in Assam, central team begins review

GUWAHATI

A three-member team of the Union Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying reached the State to review the present state of African Swine Fever (ASF) prevalence in Assam. A senior official of the Animal Husbandry department informed that the outbreak of ASF has gone 'out of control' in the State, largely affecting the piggy sector. The disease has turned into endemic in Assam, but the department is yet to officially declare it due to different technical reasons.

The Central team will visit the ASF affected areas of the State and will assess the impact of the outbreak, in order to make the necessary changes in the National Action Plan for control, containment and eradication of ASF.

African Swine Fever (ASF) was



first detected in Assam in 2020. Since then over 45,000 pigs had died, affecting more than 12,500 pig rearers across the State. More than 200 pig rearers have been affected due to outbreak of ASF during this year. Once a booming sector in Assam, most of the pig rearers now quit the business after facing continuous loss.

Meanwhile, sources said that the actual loss caused by the ASF in Assam is much higher than the official data, as most of the cases goes unreported due to the negligence of the officials concerned. "There is no vaccine available for the disease. So, containing the disease is a challenge for us. The only way to

contain the disease is to follow the biosecurity measures in every farm, cull the affected animals immediately after the outbreak and strictly prohibit the sale of ASF affected pig's meat in the market. But due to lack of proper mass awareness the department could not execute the preventive measures in a proper way in the State," an official of the department said.

At the same time, sources said that unregulated selling of the meat of ASF affected pigs in the market and illegal import of ASF-affected pigs from outside the State are two main reasons behind the outbreak of the disease. In a bid to control the situation, earlier, the State government had imposed a ban on transportation pig to Assam. But the department has failed to execute the ban order in the ground level in the desired manner.

Meghalaya: East Khasi Hills district District magistrate bans truck owners' protests in Mawryngkneng



SHILLONG

The East Khasi Hills district administration has imposed an immediate ban on demonstrations and rallies in the Mawryngkneng area following organised gatherings and blockades by the Meghalaya Commercial Truck Owners and Drivers Association. District Magistrate Rosetta Mary Kurbah issued the prohibition order on November 5, 2025 under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), citing concerns that such demonstrations would obstruct traffic movement, cause public crowding and potentially disturb peace in the region.

The order, which came into effect immediately, specifically prohibits any individual or group from holding demonstra-

tions or rallies within the Mawryngkneng Community and Rural Development Block.

The directive also bans the carrying of arms, lethal weapons, and any materials that could potentially be used to cause grievous injury. Authorities have warned that violations of the order will attract penal action under Section 223 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and other applicable provisions. The district magistrate cited the urgency of the situation in passing the ex parte order, which will remain in force until further notice. The ban affects activities by the MCTO&DA, which had been organising protests in the area. District officials stated the restrictions were necessary to prevent traffic congestion and maintain public order in East Khasi Hills district.

Silchar resonates in harmony as 5,000 voices pay soulful tribute to Bharat Ratna Dr. Bhupen Hazarika;

SILCHAR

The Police Parade Ground in Silchar came alive this afternoon as 5,000 voices blended in perfect harmony, singing "Manush Manusher Jonno" in a magnificent tribute to Bharat Ratna Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, the Bard of the Brahmaputra, on his 14th death anniversary. The grand event, organised by the Cachar District Administration in association with the District Cultural Affairs Department, turned into a moving celebration of unity, compassion, and humanism, the values that Dr. Hazarika so passionately carried through his immortal songs.

The programme was graced by Assam's Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Mines and Minerals, and Barak Valley Development, Shri Kaushik Rai, as the Chief Guest, along with Lok Sabha MP Shri Parimal Suklabaidya, Rajya Sabha MP Shri Kanad Purkayastha, Silchar MLA Shri Dipayan Chakraborty, Udharbond MLA Shri Mihir Kanti Shome, District Commissioner of Cachar Shri Mridul Yadav, IAS, and several eminent cultural personalities and dignitaries.

As the clock struck three, the vast field reverberated with devotion and nostalgia. From school and college students to tea garden workers, NCC and NSS cadets, ASRLM groups, NGOs, cultural organisations, and



government officials, people from every walk of life joined hands and voices to celebrate the life and message of the man who gave music a soul and humanity a song. The emotional chorus of "Manush Manusher Jonno, Jibon Jiboner Jonno" echoed across the grounds, reminding everyone that humanity's true strength lies in love, compassion, and solidarity.

Addressing the gathering, Minister Kaushik Rai described the day as a "moment of pride and reflection for every Assamese." He lauded the far-sighted vision of Hon'ble Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, under whose inspiration every district of Assam has been observing Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's death anniversary as a festival of cultural unity. "This initiative is not merely a tribute, it is a reflection of our Chief Minister's belief that Bhupen Hazarika's songs are not just melodies; they are the language of Assam's soul," the Minister said.

The Minister also praised the Cachar District Administration and its Cultural Affairs team, led by District Commissioner Shri Mridul Yadav, for translating the Chief Min-

ister's vision into a people's movement. "By bringing together over five thousand participants from every section of society, Cachar has shown that the spirit of Bhupen Da still flows through our collective consciousness," he added.

In his address, Rajya Sabha MP Shri Kanad Purkayastha reflected on Dr. Hazarika's vast legacy, calling him "not merely a musician, but the conscience of a generation." "Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's songs captured the pulse of humanity, from the cries of the oppressed to the dreams of the common man. His music spoke of rivers, mountains, and love that transcends all barriers," he said.

Lok Sabha MP Shri Parimal Suklabaidya paid heartfelt homage to the maestro, describing his compositions as "living embodiments of Assam's cultural soul." He lauded the government's commitment to fostering harmony through such inclusive cultural initiatives and urged the youth to carry forward Dr. Hazarika's message of peace and unity. Earlier, District Commissioner Shri Mridul Yadav, IAS, in his welcome address, extended a warm greeting to all guests and participants, describing the programme as a "living expression of unity in diversity." He elaborated on the meticulous planning that went into making the event a success from departmental coordination and digital governance to security and logistics. "Today, the Cachar District Administration stands united with the people of Barak Valley to honour the legacy of a visionary whose music transcends time, language, and geography," DC Yadav stated.

The District Commissioner also announced an innovative step toward digital inclusion, under which every participating student and performer would receive a digitally signed participation certificate, downloadable through the district's official online portal.

Adding to the cultural splendour, sixteen invited artistes who earlier represented Cachar District in the 1,000-voice Grand Chorus during Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's centenary celebrations at Khanapara, Guwahati, performed a stirring medley of his timeless songs, captivating the audience. The evening reached its emotional peak as participants formed a human chain, singing "Manush Manusher Jonno" together, a symbolic gesture of fraternity and hope.

Later, Minister Kaushik Rai presented a commemorative coin of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika to eminent scholars Dr. Amalendu Bhattacharjee and Dr. Pradosh Kiran Nath of Assam University, on behalf of Vice-Chancellor Dr. Rajib Mohan Pant.

The event was also attended by Additional District Commissioner (In-charge Cultural Affairs) Smt. Phyllis Hrangchal, ACS, CO-District Commissioner, Dholai, Shri Raktim Baruah, ACS, Additional District Commissioner Shri Hemanga Nobis, ACS, and Assistant Commissioners Smt. Bonnykha Chetia, ACS, Smt. Jonali Devi, ACS, Smt. Anjali Kumari, ACS, Shri Masi Topno, and Smt. Deepa Das, ACS Branch Officer, Cultural Affairs and In-Charge Deputy Director, Information & Public Relations, Barak Valley Zone, Silchar, among other administrative officials.

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EAM Jaishankar to visit Canada as New Delhi and Ottawa seek to rebuild ties



NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar is set to visit Canada next week, less than a month after Canadian Foreign Minister Anita Anand's two-day trip to New Delhi. The visit comes at a critical time, as both countries rebuild ties after a low point during 2023-24 under former Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Jaishankar will attend the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Ontario's Niagara Region on November 11-12, where discussions will focus on global security, economic resilience, and international cooperation. Canada, which currently holds the G7 presidency, is hosting the gathering for the second time this year. "The meeting will bring together G7 ministers to discuss global challenges and strengthen international collaboration," Canada's foreign

ministry said in a statement. Though India is not a member of the G-7, the country has become a regular invitee at the gathering. The renewed diplomatic engagement follows a series of high-level exchanges since Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in June laid the groundwork for a gradual rapprochement in the strained ties. Both leaders had directed their governments to "take calibrated measures to restore stability in the relationship" and to pursue a partnership "grounded in mutual respect and shared interests," an External Affairs Ministry readout had said. Since then, diplomatic activity has accelerated. Canadian Foreign Minister Anita Anand's visit to India in October included meet-

ings with both Modi and Jaishankar, while national security advisers from both nations have also been in dialogue. New Delhi and Ottawa reinstated their high commissioners in August, restoring full diplomatic representation after a year of turbulence. Under Trudeau, bilateral relations were strained due to Ottawa's perceived tolerance of pro-Khalistan activities on Canadian soil— an issue that New Delhi repeatedly flagged as interference in its internal affairs. Carney's leadership, however, has ushered in a more pragmatic tone, prioritising economic collaboration and strategic engagement. The potential areas of cooperation include clean energy, critical minerals, artificial intelligence, LNG, food security, higher education, mobility, and supply chain resilience.

Each vote will prevent the return of 'jungle raj' in Bihar: HM Amit Shah



NEW DELHI

As the first phase of the Bihar Assembly elections began, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday urged the people to vote in record numbers, emphasising that every vote would help prevent the return of "jungle raj" in the state. Taking to the social media platform 'X', Union Home Minister Amit Shah wrote in Hindi (loosely translated), "I urge my voting brothers and sisters

of Bihar, especially the youth, to turn out in large numbers and cast their votes in the first phase of polling today." He added, "Each of your votes will help stop the return of Jungle Raj in Bihar, uphold good governance, and pave the way for building a developed and self-reliant state. In this election, teach a lesson to those who compromise the nation's security by protecting infiltrators and Naxalites." Highlighting the importance of participation, HM Shah said,

"Your vote will play a crucial role in ensuring modern education for every citizen, the welfare of the poor, better employment opportunities for the youth, and in restoring Bihar's pride." Meanwhile, polling for the first phase of the Bihar Assembly elections began at 7 a.m. on Thursday across 18 districts of the state. Voting is being conducted in 121 Assembly constituencies, and 1,314 candidates, including 1,192 male and 122 female candidates,

are in the fray of this election. According to the Election Commission, a total of 3,75,13,302 electors, including 1,98,35,325 males, 1,76,77,219 females, and 758 third gender voters, will decide the fate of 1314 candidates in this election. The total number of polling stations is 45,341, including 36,733 in the rural areas and 8,608 in the urban areas. The Election Commission of India (ECI) has declared 320 model stations, 926 women-managed and 107 PwD-managed in these districts. The webcasting will be available in all 45,341 polling stations. Polling will continue till 6 p.m. in the general booths. However, in six Assembly constituencies located in Naxal-affected areas, voting will conclude at 5 p.m. Voting is underway in Khagaria, Munger, Lakhisarai, Sheikhpura, Nalanda, Patna, Bhojpur, Madhepura, Saharsa, Darbhanga, Muzaffarpur, Gopalganj, Siwan, Saran, Vaishali, Samastipur, Begusarai, and Buxar. Unprecedented security arrangements are in place for the first phase. Police and paramilitary forces have been deployed across all 18 districts, with special patrols positioned at sensitive and hyper-sensitive booths. Over 15 battalions of forces have been deployed across the state. The Patna district administration said security personnel have been stationed at every booth to prevent any disturbance or spread of rumours. Patna alone has 5,677 polling stations, including 541 women-only stations, 49 model polling stations, 14 PwD-friendly polling stations and three youth-themed booths.

INTERNATIONAL

Mamdani announces all-woman transition team, vows to deliver on ambitious agenda

NEW YORK

Fresh off winning New York City's mayoral election, Zohran Mamdani announced Wednesday that a team including former city and federal officials—all women— would steer his transition to City Hall, and that he would "work every day to honour the trust that I now hold." "I and my team will build a City Hall capable of delivering on the promises of this campaign," the mayor-elect said at a news conference, vowing that his administration would be both compassionate and capable. He named political strategist Elana Leopold as executive director of the transition team. She will work with United Way of New York City President Grace Bonilla; former Deputy Mayor Melanie Hartzog, who was also a city budget official; former Federal Trade Commission chair Lina Khan; and former First Deputy Mayor Maria Torres-Springer. With his win over former Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Republican Curtis Sliwa, the 34-year-old democratic socialist will soon become the city's first Muslim mayor, the first of South Asian heritage, the first born in Africa and the youngest mayor in more than a century. He now faces the task of following through on his ambitious affordability agenda while navigating the bureaucratic challenges of City Hall and a hostile Trump administration. "I'm confident in delivering these same policies that we ran on for the last year," he said in an interview earlier Wednesday on cable news channel NY1. More than 2 million New Yorkers cast ballots in the contest,



the largest turnout in a mayoral race in more than 50 years, according to the city's Board of Elections. With roughly 90% of the votes counted, Mamdani held an approximately 9 percentage point lead over Cuomo. Mamdani, who was criticized throughout the campaign for his thin resume, will now have to begin staffing his incoming administration and planning how to accomplish the ambitious but polarizing agenda that drove him to victory. Among the campaign's promises are free child care, free city bus service, city-run grocery stores and a new Department of Community Safety that would expand on an existing city initiative that sends mental health care workers, rather than police, to handle certain emergency calls. It is unclear how Mamdani will pay for such initiatives, given Democratic Gov. Kathy Hochul's steadfast opposition to his calls to raise taxes on wealthy people. On Wednesday, he touted his support from Hochul and other state leaders as "endorsements of

an agenda of affordability." His decisions around the leadership of the New York Police Department will also be closely watched. Mamdani was a fierce critic of the department in 2020, calling for "this rogue agency" to be defunded and slammed it as "racist, anti-queer & a major threat to public safety." He has since apologized for those comments and has said he will ask the current NYPD commissioner to stay on the job. Mamdani has already faced scrutiny from national Republicans, including President Donald Trump, who have eagerly cast him as a threat and the face of a more radical Democratic Party that is out of step with mainstream America. Trump has repeatedly threatened to cut federal funding to the city—and even take it over—if Mamdani won. "...AND SO IT BEGINS!" the president posted late Tuesday to his Truth Social site. Mamdani, for his part, said at his news conference that "New Yorkers are facing twin crises in this moment: an authoritarian

administration and an affordability crisis," and that he would tackle both. While saying he was committed to "Trump-proofing" the city—to protect poor residents against "the man who has the most power in this country," as he explained—the mayor-elect also reiterated that he was interested in talking to the president about "ways that we can work together to serve New Yorkers." That could mean discussing the cost of living or the effect of cuts to the SNAP food aid program amid the federal government shutdown, Mamdani suggested. "I will not mince my words when it comes to President Trump... and I will also always do so while leaving a door open to have that conversation," Mamdani added. Mamdani also said during his news conference and interviews that he had not heard from Cuomo or the city's outgoing mayor, Eric Adams. He did speak with Republican candidate Curtis Sliwa. A spokesperson for Cuomo, Rich Azzopardi, said he would "let their respective speeches be the measuring stick for grace and leave it at that." In his victory speech to supporters, Mamdani wished Cuomo the best in private life, before adding: "Let tonight be the final time I utter his name, as we turn the page on a politics that abandons the many and answers only to the few." Asked about the comments on Wednesday on NY1, Mamdani said he was "quite disappointed in the nature of the bigotry and the racism we saw in the final weeks." He noted the millions of dollars in attack ads that were spent against him, some of which played into Islamophobic tropes.

'Whatever the hell his name is': Trump mocks NYC Mayor-elect Mamdani



NEW YORK

US President Donald Trump has mocked New York City's Mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani, referring to him as "whatever the hell his name is", while asserting that Americans now face a stark choice between "communism and common sense" following the November 4 elections. Addressing the America Business Forum Miami in Florida on Wednesday, a day after Mamdani, an Indian-origin Democratic socialist, was elected as New York City's first Muslim and South Asian mayor, Trump said when he was elected to his second term in office on November 5 last year, the American people had "restored" their sovereignty but "lost a little bit" of it with the mayoral election on Tuesday. "But we will take care of it. Don't worry about it," he said, warning, "you watch what happens in New York, terrible... I hope it doesn't happen, but you're going to see it." "...and Mamdani, whatever the hell his name is in New York... thinks it's wonderful to have men playing in women's sports," Trump said, drawing boos and jeers from the audience. Trump, who had earlier

warned that Mamdani's victory would bring a "complete and total economic and social disaster" to New York City, accused Democrats of installing a communist in the largest US city. "If you want to see what Congressional Democrats wish to do to America, just look at the result of yesterday's election in New York, where their party installed a communist as the mayor of the largest city in the nation," he said. The US president said after Tuesday's results, "the decision facing all Americans could not be more clear. We have a choice between communism and common sense. Does that make sense to you? Common sense? It's common sense or communism." He said communism hasn't worked in the past. "Our opponents are offering an economic nightmare. We're delivering an economic miracle," Trump said, adding that while he used to warn against electing socialists, "we skipped socialist and put in a communist instead." The Republican leader said his opponents are hell bent on turning America into a communist Cuba, socialist Venezuela, and "you see what happened to those places". Cautioning that Democrats

have become "so extreme", Trump quipped that Miami could soon become a "refuge" for those fleeing communism in New York City. Despite his attacks, the president expressed affection for his home city, saying, "I love New York... we had the telltale signs of trouble because we had a guy named de Blasio". Trump was referring to former New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, a member of the Democratic Party. He reiterated that under his leadership, the US is not going communist in any way, shape or form. "We'll stop it. We're going to stop it. Stop this nonsense," he said, adding that between a communist or a thug, the people "took the communist. It's pretty amazing. We could have done a little better in terms of candidates." "But the communists, Marxists, socialists and globalists had their chance, and they delivered nothing but disaster. And now let's see how a communist does in New York. We're going to see how that works out," Trump said. The president, however, added that he "will help them. We want New York to be successful. We'll help them a little bit, maybe". Meanwhile, in his fiery victory speech, Mamdani, who has been a vocal critic of Trump, said New York "will remain a city built by immigrants, powered by immigrants, and, as of tonight, led by an immigrant". "After all, if anyone can show a nation betrayed by Donald Trump how to defeat him, it is the city that gave rise to him. And if there is any way to terrify a despot, it is by dismantling the very conditions that allowed him to accumulate power," he said to thunderous applause. "Donald Trump, since I know you're watching, I have four words for you: turn the volume up," he said, adding, "To get to any of us, you will have to get through all of us."

Dhaka's UN Water Pact Move Raises Ripples Across Border with India



When Bangladesh became the first country in South Asia to join the UN's Water Convention earlier this year, it was presented as a win-win. Signing up to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes would help Bangladesh safeguard and manage waterways that represent a "lifeline to peace and prosperity," according to the United Nations. At the same time, it was hoped that the South Asian nation's addition might encourage better cross-border cooperation in a region where shared rivers are often fought over.

As a scholar who works on issues of water security and grew up in South Asia, I understand the drivers behind Bangladesh's decision to join the convention – recent hydro-political events have raised water security risks for the country of around 174 million.

But contrary to the intention of the convention, I believe Bangladesh joining could actually heighten tensions in South Asia, especially with India.

The need for water security Bangladesh's hydro challenges are multifaceted. Half of Bangladeshis live in areas that suffer severe drought. Around 60% of the population is vulnerable to high flood risks. And on average, floods inundate 20% to 25% of the country's land each year. Moreover, more than 65 million residents still lack access to safe and properly managed sanitation facilities. These overlapping vulnerabilities show why water governance is such a key issue for security, diplomacy and development.

Additionally, the country's rising population along with the effects of climate change add to this domestic water stress. At least 81 of the 1,415 rivers that flow through Bangladesh have either perished or are on the brink of extinction, according to a recent report. At the same time, Bangladesh relies almost exclusively on rivers that cross borders. With India and China, it shares one of the world's most complicated transboundary water systems: the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna Basin.

Joining the UN Water Convention A number of recent developments underscore the reasons Bangladesh sought greater legal and international protection.

In July 2025, China announced what is expected to be the world's largest hydropower dam, the Motuo Hydropower Station in the Tibet Autonomous Region in southwestern China.

The Chinese government is promoting the dam as a clean energy project that will help the area's economy grow, even though it will

cost 1.2 trillion yuan (about USD 167 billion) to build. But countries close by are worried about how the dam will affect the region's environment and politics.

Both Bangladesh and India have complained that the project could make the region less stable. The Yarlung Tsangpo River on which the dam is built runs into India's Arunachal Pradesh state, which has long been a flashpoint in China-India relations. China claims the region as its own and calls it Zangnan.

Because of where it is situated, the dam could allow China to control or limit the flow of water into India. Similarly, Bangladesh, a downstream country, is concerned that Chinese upstream intervention could hurt its agriculture and make it harder to get water.

Already, the government of Bangladesh has limited control over the country's water supply because only about 7% of the watershed area of the Brahmaputra, Meghna and Ganges – the three main rivers that flow into the country – are within Bangladesh. Moreover, the amount of water that ultimately reaches Bangladesh is significantly reduced because dam activities by China and India have limited the flow.

Climate change has made the situation worse by changing the way water flows across the Himalayas and the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna basin. For instance, the Bangladesh delta, one of the most fertile and densely populated areas in the world, is already experiencing problems, including salinity intrusion, rising sea levels and the loss of arable land.

In 2019, the Bangladesh High Court ruled that the country's rivers had the same status as a "legal person" in a bid to award them further protection. This was then followed by a decision by Bangladesh to join the UN Water Convention.

Created in 1996, the convention seeks to promote cooperation and sustainable management of shared water resources. At first, it was intended only for European and Central Asian countries. But in 2016, it became available to all UN member countries.

Bangladesh had initially delayed signing due to a mix of diplomatic, regional and institutional reasons and out of a concern over how it would affect relations with its powerful neighbor, India.

Implications for India India has traditionally preferred bilateral agreements to resolve cross-border water issues, such as the Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan and the 1996 Ganges water-sharing treaty with Bangladesh. However, India's bilateral strategy is fraying. The Indus Waters Treaty has been temporarily suspended following fighting between Pakistan and India.

Similarly, New Delhi's water cooperation with Bangladesh is being tested. The sharing of water from the Teesta, a major tributary of the Brahmaputra, has long been a source of conflict between the two countries, with Bangladesh pushing for what it sees as a fairer dis-

tribution. Bangladesh has also opposed Indian dams, such as the Tipaimukh on the Barak, over concerns about how they will affect the environment and people's lives. For similar reasons, Bangladesh has objected to India's plans to connect 30 rivers as part of a massive irrigation project.

The ripple effect While India's government has issued no

official comment on Bangladesh's joining the UN Water Convention, there are fears in New Delhi that it could undermine India's negotiating power in future water disputes and when the Ganges River Treaty is due for renewal in 2026.

The original 1996 agreement sets out that India and Bangladesh would each get a guaranteed share of 35,000 cubic feet per second of water. The concern in New Delhi is that Bangladesh may ask for more water than originally specified and that being part of the UN Water Convention gives the Bangladesh government a more powerful negotiation platform. As such, Bangladesh's proposition in September 2025 to create a new institutional framework to manage water-sharing agreements with India for 14 transboundary rivers was viewed with suspicion in India.

Renewing the Ganges River Treaty with a framework that gives Bangladesh more water may put more stress on eastern India, an area already experiencing water scarcity, and test India's water storage capacity, especially during dry seasons.

Shifting political currents A further concern for India is that Bangladesh signing onto the UN Waters Treaty may set a precedent for other countries in the region, such as Nepal and Bhutan.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh has mulled the idea of forming a trilateral hydro-cooperation with China and Pakistan – two of India's biggest rivals. A day before signing the UN convention, Bangladesh joined China and Pakistan in announcing a "trilateral cooperation" on the economy, climate and social development. For Bangladesh, the potential catastrophe of not tackling cascading environmental challenges justifies the risk of alienating its far more powerful neighbor.

But where does this leave India? Ultimately, New Delhi must make a strategic choice: Either stick with bilateralism or adopt new multilateral norms to safeguard its water security and regional power.

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Help Society Champions Unity Through North East Integration Rally 2026



DIMA HASAO:

In a region celebrated for its diversity yet often divided by geography and limited connectivity, a new movement is taking shape to bridge those divides. The North East Integration Rally 2026 (NEIR2026) is more than a cultural event — it's an effort to strengthen the social fabric of the Northeast through shared ideals of peace, development, and solidarity.

Standing firmly behind this mission is Help Society, a Dima Hasao-based non-profit known for its grassroots work in community development. Led by its President Surojeet Das, the organization has come forward as the official outreach partner for NEIR2026 in the district, lending both organizational support and moral encouragement to the rally's vision of unity.

For Das, the initiative goes beyond symbolism. "The North East Integration Rally represents brotherhood, understanding, and a collective commitment to move forward together," he said while extending his best wishes for its success. His endorsement reflects a broader sentiment among the people of Dima Hasao, where cultural and ethnic diversity often converge in both harmony and challenge.

The rally, conceptualized and founded by Biswadeep Gupta, aims to connect the northeastern states through a common platform of cultural exchange, youth engagement, and social dialogue. It envisions participants from across Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, and Sikkim joining hands in a show of shared identity and purpose. Through cultural performances, youth interactions, and social awareness campaigns, NEIR2026 seeks to inspire collaboration across borders — political, linguistic, and cultural alike.

Help Society's involvement is particularly fitting, given its long record of community-centered initiatives.

Under Surojeet Das's leadership, the organization has spent years working at the intersection of education, environment, and social empowerment. Its name — Helping Everyone Live and Prosper — captures the spirit that drives its projects.

Founded in Haflong, the headquarters town of Dima Hasao, Help Society has made its presence felt in remote corners of the district through awareness programmes, environmental workshops, livelihood training, and youth outreach. Its mission is rooted in the belief that sustainable change must begin at the community level, through participation and shared responsibility.

Among its flagship initiatives is Trivia Fest, an annual educational and cultural festival designed to spark curiosity and teamwork among students.

The event encourages young participants to think critically, engage with pressing social and environmental issues, and celebrate learning as a community experience. Trivia Fest has grown into one of the most anticipated youth gatherings in the district, blending competition with consciousness.

Beyond education, Help Society has also worked actively on campaigns promoting women's empowerment, mental health awareness, waste management, and entrepreneurship in rural and tribal communities. Collaborations with government departments and partner organizations have helped extend its reach, while training programmes in livelihood development have provided practical tools for economic self-reliance.

Das's personal philosophy blends social commitment with pragmatic optimism. An advocate for environmental stewardship and inclusive education, he believes that progress in the Northeast depends on a balance between tradition and innovation.

His approach — combining fieldwork, collaboration, and public awareness — has shaped Help So-

NEIR UPDATE

Help Society Champions Unity Through North East Integration Rally 2026

Promotional | North East Integration Rally

Outreach Partner, NEIR 2026

North East Integration Rally
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ciety into a credible local force for change.

Through its partnership with NEIR2026, Help Society hopes to amplify this message. "Integration isn't just about unity on paper," Das said. "It's about empathy, respect, and understanding that our future is shared." His words echo the underlying purpose of the rally — to build bridges across communities, dissolve stereotypes, and promote peace through participation.

The North East Integration Rally 2026, envisioned as a socio-cultural movement rather than a one-time event, will spotlight the region's shared heritage and collective aspi-

rations for progress. For organizations like Help Society, it offers an opportunity to align their ongoing work with a larger regional narrative — one that celebrates diversity while nurturing cooperation.

As the Northeast prepares for NEIR2026, the support from grassroots institutions like Help Society underscores a larger truth: real integration begins with communities that believe in it.

Through education, environmental awareness, and sustained social engagement, Surojeet Das and his team are helping turn that belief into action — one initiative, one partnership, and one young mind at a time.

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North East Integration Rally
Peace | Progress | Prosperity
2026

Outreach Partner, NEIR 2026

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BARAK FESTIVAL

JANUARY 10-12, 2025

ACTIVITY PROGRAM



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





11 JAN
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 to be discussed by stakeholders. Includes NGOs, and Government officials, industry representatives, local community and government employees. Participation through invitation only. Different rewards are provided.

10 Jan
Barak Festival: Peace Progress & Prosperity



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



BROADCAST PARTNER

Barak Festival

Adventure Sports, Art & Culture Promotion

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



11 JAN
Media Conclave
 An Online Event





REGISTER HERE

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'. Welcome your views, suggestions, proposals, queries & comments for any sponsors, guides, speakers, members.



10 JAN
5E For Success Conclave
 The 5E for Success Conclave is going to be held at the theme: 'From School to Campus to Corporate'. Schools, Educational Institutions and corporate houses can join the Conclave as sponsors.



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



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





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



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





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

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

Painting Carnival
 Water Colour painting and Draw-Paint Campaign

10-12 JAN
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