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PERSPECTIVE

To succeed, Even if you have- 0% Luck 0% Talent and 0% Motivation, You must have- 100% Discipline 100% Obsession 100% Focus.

- Motilal Oswal, Co- Founder, Motilal Oswal group

4-day National Tribal Film Festival begins in Imphal

IMPHAL

The National Tribal Film Festival 2025 got under way at the City Convention Centre and the Manipur State Film Development Society Auditorium here today. A State-level tribal carnival also began at the venues.

Inaugurating the film festival and tribal carnival, Manipur Chief Secretary Dr Puneet Kumar Goel said, "The State tribal carnival will showcase the rich tradition of tribal art, music, dance and craft, encouraging inter-tribal exchange, promoting creative livelihood and strengthening the spirit of national integration." Additional Chief Secretary Anurag Bajpai and other officials were also present on the occasion.

Stating that the 'Tribal Frames Manipur' is more than a film festival, he said it is a "celebration of voices, vision and values." The celebration provides a powerful platform for tribal filmmakers to share their stories, showcase their creativity, and engage in meaningful dialogues on the preservation of indigenous culture and identity, Dr Goel added.

Including six feature films, two documentaries, 14 short films, and one animation film from nine States - Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, and West Bengal will be screened in the festival. As many as 16 directors, film-makers, and actors from Manipur are participating in the cultural rendezvous.

WHO SAID WHAT

Africa is the continent of the future. With its youthful demographics and vast natural resources, the continent can fuel the growth of global economy ~ Smt Droupadi Murmu, President of India.

Centre approves Rs 12,000 cr for 51 road projects in Manipur

IMPHAL

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), Government of India, has committed to improving road infrastructure and regional connectivity to catalyze economic growth and enhance accessibility across the Northeast region, including Manipur, with an expenditure of Rs 12,000 crore for 51 project packages.

Ajay Tamta, Union Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways, announced this during a press briefing in Imphal on Wednesday night.

He said MoRTH is undertaking extensive works to strengthen road connectivity across Manipur, covering 11 National Highways with a total length of 1,774 km.

These projects are being implemented through the NHIDCL and the State PWD, Manipur.

The minister informed that 747 km of the total highway length has already been upgraded and blacktopped, with several single-lane stretches converted to two-lane standards.

The remaining 332 km will be completed by the financial year 2026-27. In total, 51 project packages are underway, involving an expenditure of Rs 12,000 crore over the past five years.



Tamta noted that land acquisition and forest clearance issues had caused delays in 35 project packages, but said the NHIDCL has renewed its focus to ensure timely completion.

He further mentioned that the DPR for the Imphal-Moirang four-laning project is in its final stage of alignment finalization with the State Government.

These initiatives, the minister emphasized, reflect the government's steadfast commitment to improving road infrastructure and regional connectivity, thereby catalyzing economic

growth and enhancing accessibility across Manipur and the Northeast.

During his visit, Ajay Tamta inspected the Community Health Centre (CHC) at Parbung and later chaired a review meeting at the Pherzawl District Headquarters.

The meeting focused on the implementation status of key development schemes such as PMGSY, PM-FME, and other local projects.

Detailed discussions were also held on future action plans and priority areas for the district's holistic development.

Centre committed to showcasing Tripura's cultural and spiritual heritage globally: Jyotiraditya Scindia

NEW DELHI

The Centre is committed to unlocking Tripura's immense potential and projecting its rich cultural and spiritual heritage to the world, Union Minister for Development of North Eastern Region Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Wednesday, November 12.

Chairing a review meeting on the development of the Matabari Tourism Circuit in Tripura, Scindia urged officials to adopt global best practices and draw lessons from successful tourism models such as Lakshadweep, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and Kevadia in Gujarat. Guided by the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to transform every state into a global tourism destination, the Union Minister said the government aims to position Tripura as a vibrant centre for cultural, spiritual, and eco-tourism.

During the meeting, detailed presentations were made on initiatives to transform the state's tourism landscape. The discussions focused on enhancing international connectivity through Agartala airport, redesigning major tourist attractions such as Neer Mahal,



Tepania, Jampui Pura, and Udaipur, and developing the Dumbur islands under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model to attract private investment and promote sustainable growth.

Scindia also underscored the need to integrate civic conservation, architectural development, and capacity-building initiatives across seven key verticals—including the training of local tourist guides and allied services—to strengthen employment and skill development within the state's tourism ecosystem.

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha also attended the review meeting, along with senior officials from the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region and the state government.

Gaurav Gogoi waits for Pakistan's permission before speaking on terror attacks: Himanta



GUWAHATI

In one of his sharpest political attacks yet, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on November 12 accused Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi and his family of "working like agents of Pakistan's ISI," alleging that their silence on terrorism and Pakistan-related issues was deliberate and motivated.

Speaking to reporters, the Chief Minister said, "Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi is a Pakistani ISI agent. His wife is a complete agent, and he is a lesser one — and we have evidence to prove the same. As the Chief Minister of Assam, I want to say that Gaurav Gogoi is with Pakistan, and

his entire family is working like Pakistani ISI agents. Hence, he cannot criticise the Pakistani government."

Sarma further alleged that Gogoi refrains from condemning terror incidents promptly. "Whenever any incident happens in India, Gaurav does not condemn it immediately. Toward the end of the day, he issues a mild statement — which means that in the meantime, he takes permission from Pakistan," Sarma claimed.

Referring to Gogoi's social media activity, the Chief Minister added, "If you look at his first Facebook post on

the Delhi blast, there is no condemnation — only sympathy. He doesn't even have the courage to speak against terrorism."

The remarks are expected to trigger strong political reactions, deepening the ongoing war of words between the ruling BJP and the Congress in Assam. While Sarma's comments drew sharp attention for their tone, the Congress camp is yet to issue an official response.

The verbal duel adds a new dimension to the intensifying political rivalry in Assam, where national security and patriotism have increasingly become contentious issues between the two parties.

Assam extends zero-cost insurance cover to staff



IMPHAL

The Borobekra Volleyball Tournament 2025, organized by the 20th Battalion of the CRPF, Jiribam, in collaboration with the Sports Authority of India (SAI) under the Khelo India initiative, kicked off on Wednesday, November 12 at Netaji High School, Borobekra.

The opening match witnessed an energetic face-off between Thangboipunjee Volleyball Team and Dholakhal Volleyball Team, where Thangboipunjee clinched victory with a straight-set win of 25-10, 25-15. A total of 20 teams are participating in the tournament, which will culminate with the final match on November 14.

Krishna Kumar, IAS, Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Jiribam, graced the inaugural ceremony as Chief Guest. Addressing the gathering, the DC commended the tournament as a vibrant platform to promote teamwork, discipline, and sportsmanship among youth. He emphasized that such events strengthen community ties while fostering a sense of leadership and collective responsibility.

Highlighting the district administration's vision, Krishna Kumar reiterated the commitment to ensuring inclusive development and citizen welfare, stating, "Nation-building is a continuous process that requires cooperation and active participation from every individual."

He extended appreciation to the CRPF, Police, and other security forces for maintaining peace and stability in the district, enabling events like these to thrive.

Following the event, the Deputy Commissioner, accompanied by the Superintendent of Police, Jiribam, Prakhar Pandey, IPS, and the Commandant of 20th Battalion CRPF, Karongw Haopu, conducted a field inspection of damaged houses in Jakuradhor Karong, Lamdai Khunou, and Modhupur, focusing on resettlement measures for displaced persons currently housed in relief camps. During the visit, the officials interacted with camp inmates, distributed toys and sweets, and provided sports materials to youth clubs in Jakuradhor and Lambhutangkhal, students of Netaji Government High School, and residents of the Borobekra Police Station Relief Camp.

The DC also reviewed the progress of the Jiribam-Tipaimukh Road project along with the concerned Executive Engineer and contractor to ensure timely completion.

The event saw participation from several dignitaries, including Major Dhananjay (38th Assam Rifles), ADC Jiribam Th. Manoranjan Singh, MCS, SDOs L. Tarajeet and Lalhangam, Rothangbhum Sungte (Joint Secretary, Hmar Inpui Supreme House), Vanlal (President, Hmar Inpui Jiribam Region), and BDO RK Sailash Singh, among others.

Opposition alliance of eight parties to fight Assam polls together: Gaurav Gogoi

GUWAHATI

Eight opposition parties in Assam have agreed to contest next year's assembly elections as a united front against the BJP-led coalition, Congress state president Gaurav Gogoi announced on November 12.

After nearly two hours of discussions at the Congress Legislature Party office in Dispur, Assam Congress chief Gaurav Gogoi and AICC General Secretary Jitendra Singh announced that all participating parties had agreed to form a common platform to fight the BJP. The alliance, formed ahead of polls expected in March or April 2026, brings together the Congress, CPI(M), Rajiv Dal, Assam Jatiya Parishad, CPI, CPI(ML), Jatiya Dal-Aom and the All Party Hill Leaders Conference, a Karbi Anglong-based outfit.

Gogoi said the parties had reached "a broad consensus" on working together to "liberate the people of Assam from corruption, injustice, and administrative failure." Singh described the alliance as a step toward creating a "people's government" rooted in ac-



countability and inclusion.

Key leaders at the meeting included Akhil Gogoi of Rajiv Dal, BJP's Lurinjyoti Gogoi, MP Ajit Kumar Bhuyan, and CPM MLA Manoranjan Talukdar. Leader of the Opposition Debabrata Saikia and senior Congress MP Rakibul Hussain were also present. The parties resolved to hold further discussions to finalise the structure of the alliance and its seat-sharing strategy.

Earlier in the day, the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC)

Political Affairs Committee met at Rajiv Bhawan under Gogoi's chairmanship and adopted several resolutions. Among them was the launch of a new statewide outreach initiative titled "Rajiv Padulit, Rajiv Congress" (Congress at People's Doorstep), designed to connect directly with citizens.

Gogoi said party workers would visit tea gardens, tribal areas, and villages, staying overnight in local households to "understand people's real issues." Public consultations will also be held with intellectuals, writers, and economists to shape the party's policy priorities.

The APCC President said that preparations for the next election were progressing swiftly, with nearly 90% of Booth Level Agents appointed across 29,000 polling stations. Booth committees, he added, would be completed by the end of the month to prevent electoral malpractice.

The Congress also announced a cultural initiative to honour late singer Zubeen Garg. On November 18, the party will host a special musical event titled "Kanchanjungha - Sanskriti Houk Matriyori Mantra" (Culture as the Mantra

of Harmony) in Guwahati, alongside a statewide Nahor tree plantation drive in Garg's memory.

Gogoi said additional decisions from the day's meetings would be revealed in the coming weeks as the opposition bloc prepares its joint roadmap for 2026.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Gogoi said the parties had held detailed discussions on forming a cohesive strategy. "To free the people of Assam from the BJP's torture and CM Himanta Biswa Sarma's injustice, we are all united. We will contest the 2026 assembly elections together. This was the main decision of today's meeting," he stated.

The announcement marks a significant development in Assam's political landscape, as regional and Left parties join hands with the Congress to challenge Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's government. The opposition bloc will now need to work out seat-sharing arrangements and campaign strategies ahead of the crucial state polls.

The BJP has governed Assam since 2016, first under Sarbananda Sonowal and then under Sarma, who took charge in May 2021.

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RELIVING THE SPIRIT OF VANDE MATARAM

The resounding words of Vande Mataram-I bow to thee, Mother-echoed as a rallying cry for India's freedom long before independence became a tangible dream. Written by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in the 1870s, when the nation was still reeling under colonial oppression, the song ignited the collective consciousness of millions. It infused a sense of unity, purpose, and reverence for the motherland, binding together a diverse nation under a single emotional thread. As the country marks 150 years of this immortal composition through commemorative events nationwide, the massive public participation-running into crores-proves that the song's soul-stirring message still resonates deeply across generations.

It is worth remembering that when Vande Mataram first became popular, India was not a connected nation of smartphones, instant messaging, or 24x7 news. Truth and ideas travelled slowly-sometimes taking weeks or even months to reach remote corners. Yet, the song found its way into every freedom gathering, every protest, every whisper of rebellion. It inspired leaders and ordinary citizens alike to rise against colonial rule, transforming cultural emotion into political action. Today, as the country revisits this historical moment, the commemoration serves not only as an act of remembrance but also as a reaffirmation of shared identity and purpose.

The government's decision to celebrate Vande Mataram over four phases-spanning from November 2025 to November 2026-reflects a broader effort to reconnect citizens with the ideals of the freedom struggle. Each phase, through seminars, exhibitions, musical renditions, and public readings, revives stories of collective struggle and sacrifice that shaped India's destiny. These events serve as living classrooms for the younger generation, offering glimpses into an era when patriotism was measured not in slogans but in sacrifices.

Jammu and Kashmir has emerged as the second-best-performing region among all states and union territories. Even more remarkably, Kishtwar district stood third among all districts of India. It represents a powerful transformation of mindset in a region that for decades was scarred by separatism, terrorism, and alienation. The region, which once hesitated to even hoist the national flag, now witnesses lakhs singing Vande Mataram in unison. This transformation did not happen overnight. It reflects years of consistent efforts by the administration, local representatives, security forces, and the people themselves to reclaim their space in the national narrative. That Kishtwar-a district that once battled the worst phases of militancy-has topped participation among J&K's 20 districts speaks volumes about the changing ground realities. Credit rightly goes to local MLAs and district administration for mobilising schools, colleges, and civil society to make the celebrations truly inclusive. Equally encouraging is Srinagar's position as the second-highest participant district in the UT. A city that symbolised unrest for decades now resonates with songs of unity and pride. The shift from hartals, stone-pelting, and grenade attacks to cultural gatherings and patriotic renditions is indeed remarkable. It signals not just a change in the law-and-order situation but a deeper transformation in mindset from separatism to nationalism, from alienation to belonging.

The government's approach of celebrating every milestone in India's civilisational journey with enthusiasm-whether it is Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, Vande Bharat, or now Vande Mataram-reflects a renewed national consciousness. These celebrations do not merely commemorate the past; they connect history with the present and inspire confidence for the future. The massive participation across states and districts also highlights that young India is eager to know, relive, and internalise the struggles and ideals of its forefathers. The enthusiastic participation of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, particularly from areas once dominated by militancy, marks a new dawn of unity and national pride.

History, after all, is not just about dates and events-it is about the values that endure through time. The Vande Mataram celebrations remind us of the cost of freedom, the power of unity, and the indomitable spirit of a people who dared to believe in their destiny. In reviving that spirit, India not only pays homage to its past but also strengthens the foundation of its future-resilient, inclusive, and proud of its motherland.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

I have always observed that to succeed in the world, one should appear like a fool but be wise. - Montesquieu

AN UPSWING IN INDIA-AFGHANISTAN RELATIONS



K N PANDITA

Amir Khan Muttaqi, the foreign minister of Afghanistan, who was recently on a week-long visit to New Delhi along with his delegation, is the only Taliban Afghan minister exempted by the US from a ban on foreign travel of Taliban leaders.

Islamabad and Washington are both rattled by the visit. The CIA and ISI, the old comrades, wonder what is cooking in New Delhi. Something is definitely cooking.

Trump has added a new chapter to the guidebook of international diplomacy. If there is a country or a regime that he dislikes and would dismantle, he takes its enemies and detractors on board, talks to them in a side room of the White House where no media persons or photographers are allowed, and no press statements are released. By doing so, the White House is turned into a house of sordid intrigues. This is the 21st century's colonial culture.

Once, Count Bismarck of Germany is said to have made a cryptic remark: "I have broken the protocol of diplomacy by telling the truth."

Trump wants the Bagram airport in Afghanistan. For what? Around September 10, approximately 120 US Army and Air Force personnel landed in Chhattogram (formerly Chittagong) via a US-Bangla Airlines flight from Dhaka. A US Air Force C-130J Super Hercules aircraft also landed at Shah Amanat International Airport, reportedly with over 100 troops and ammunition.

They are doing a series of joint exercises held throughout 2025, including Exercise Tiger Lightning and Exercise Tiger Shark. This increased military activity has followed the CIA and ISI jointly sponsored removal of the

dia-friendly elected government of Sheikh Hasina in August 2024.

The Chittagong military base will strengthen the US surveillance over the Strait of Malacca and the Far East. A power with control over Bagram airport can monitor a vast Asian landmass from Iran to India, China to the Caspian Sea and the entire West Asia and the Gulf region.

The role which the CIA had assigned to Yunus in Bangladeshin August 2024 was repeated presumptuously for the capture of Bagram air base. A sequence of events that occurred in succession will reinforce the point.

Saudi-Pak defence agreement is signed to assure the Saudi monarch of security (including nuclear) to neutralize any threat from Iran in case Iran opposes occupation of Bagram air base by the Americans; hypocrisy of hosting private dinner to the new found love in the White House; transfer of advanced weapons of war to Saudi Arabia and simultaneously shipment of existing second generation arms with Saudi to Pakistan; turning away from Pakistan's aggressive designs against Taliban particularly not rejecting Pakistan's air attacks at several places in Afghanistan this week, escalation of military activities on Pak - Afghan international border; the US vetoing India's membership in the SC; overnight up ranking Pakistani army chief to the displeasure of many Generals of Pakistan army.

All these developments taking shape within a short span of time clearly show that the US wants Pakistan to seize Bagram air base for her. Washington is overtly and covertly committed to playing a crucial role but not coming to the forefront.

The secret meeting between the Pakistani army chief and Trump essential-

ly centred around how Pakistan could play a vital role in winning Bagram airport for it. This analysis also provides a vital clue to the mystery of a sudden ceasefire in India's four-day missile war against Pakistan. The disclosures of heavy damage to the Nur Khan nuclear base deeply exasperated the American deep state. That is the reason why the American aeroplane carrying not the diplomats or the relief workers but technocrats, engineers and scientists arrived to examine the level of damage done by Indian air strikes on Pakistan's nuclear assets. Why did the American air force plane land at Nur Khan airport if it carried relief material?

The point is that India needs to be realistic in perceiving serious security and strategic challenges in the region. Presuming that the rumour of India agreeing to pass on Brahmos-400 to Kabul is true, it would be a bold and effective strategic response to American hegemony. The US is very actively patronising Pakistan as its strategic arm against the Taliban and India in the subcontinent.

So far, only Russia has officially recognised the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. India is likely to follow suit. She has agreed to upgrade her mission in Kabul to the status of a regular embassy. The two sides are confident that India will provide the necessary infrastructure to Afghanistan. However, the common sense is that both countries play a low role in disclosing what they like and dislike. The Taliban leadership felt the necessity of issuing political statements of a critical nature.

The situation also demands that RIC take note of the American deep state's designs in Afghanistan. The ground situation also demands that both Afghanistan and India carefully re-examine

their Iran policy. In case of breaking out multi-sided hostilities (Pakistan - Saudi - US-Turkey are arrayed against Afghanistan - India - Russia/China clinging to neutrality). The outcome of the imagined clash will be indecisive for many obvious reasons; nevertheless, the one positive result will be that Afghanistan will never become the second Bangladesh.

Strategically, India may consider liaising with the TTP and BLA command. Kashmir is not outside this political chessboard of the Indian subcontinent.

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

My visit to Bhutan has taken place when the people of this nation are marking various landmark programmes. It is the 70th Birth Anniversary of His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo, the Global Peace Prayer Festival is ongoing and special Buddha relics from India are here. The outcomes in sectors like energy, healthcare and connectivity will add momentum to our bilateral partnership. My gratitude to the people and Government of Bhutan. I am grateful to His Majesty the King of Bhutan, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck for coming to the airport as I board for Delhi. ~ Narendra Modi, PM, India



Zohran Mamdani Political Future Depends on his performance

Zohran Mamdani's recent record-breaking achievement in New York as its Mayor is astonishing. Elected as the first Muslim South Asian Mayor, he represents a unique mix of identities. Born in Africa with South Asian heritage and a practitioner of Shia Islam, he is also the son of renowned filmmaker Mira Nair.

Since his election, he has received considerable media attention. "A moment comes but rarely in history when we step from the old into the new," Mamdani told a cheering crowd in New York, quoting India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, from his 1947 freedom speech. Many people believe that Mamdani's mention of Nehru's speech signalled the beginning of something new and potentially transformative in New York.

Mamdani expressed his pride in possibly becoming the first Indian-American Mayor of the city, honouring his mother's Hindu heritage. Though he identifies as a Muslim, he has a strong understanding of Hinduism and values traditions like Raksha Bandhan, Diwali, and Holi. On

Instagram, he shares messages in Hindi, often using playful imagery and dialogues from Bollywood films.

Mamdani's mother, Mira Nair, is an award-winning filmmaker known for "Monsoon Wedding" and "The Namesake." His father, Mahmood Mamdani, is a professor of anthropology at Columbia University. Mamdani grew up in Cape Town and moved to New York at the age of seven.

Mamdani's election marks a progressive shift in American politics, as he defeated established figures like Andrew Cuomo and Curtis Sliwa. His victory symbolises change and overcame a \$22 million effort by 26 billionaires to block his path to becoming New York City's Mayor, inspiring hope in the power of democracy. In just nine months, Mamdani went from being a little-known assemblyman in the New York state legislature to mayor-elect. He ranked low in opinion polls. The heart of his campaign was a strong field operation. Many New Yorkers, mostly unpaid, worked hard to share his message of progressive change.

"Zohran Mamdani is transforming politics," said Bernie Sanders, the US Senator from Vermont who inspired him. "As mayor, he will advocate for New York's working people, which may alarm the establishment and billionaires, but it's why over 100,000 volunteers backed his campaign."

New York's mayoral elections often receive little attention, as they are frequently dominated by wealthy politicians in this Democratic city. However, when Zohran Mamdani won the Democratic primary, his campaign gained traction quickly. In just one month, he transformed social media support into real votes, making the race a global focus. In his victory speech, Mamdani declared, "I will wake up each morning determined to make this city better for you than it was the day before." He graduated in 2014 from Bowdoin College in Maine, where he earned a degree in Africana studies and cofounded his college's Students for Justice in Palestine chapter. He worked as a housing counsellor for low-income families before being elected to the New York Assembly in 2020, defeating a longtime Democratic incumbent in Queens. He has since won reelection twice.

His campaign appealed to young voters who valued his authenticity, while critics question his leadership experience. Mamdani's democratic socialist platform includes free public buses, universal childcare, rent-stabilised apartments, a \$30 minimum wage by 2030, and higher taxes on the wealthy, offering hope for a better future in New York City. Despite a brief campaign, he effectively turned social media support into community votes, drawing attention in

India and highlighting the Indian diaspora's influence in the US. Trump called Zohran Mamdani a "communist" and claimed that America "lost a bit of sovereignty" in the Mayrale elections. Trump was concerned about funding New York, stating that Mamdani would waste the money due to his leftist views. Trump's supporters, the MAGA crowd, reacted strongly to recent losses in mayoral and gubernatorial elections, especially Mamdani's victory, blaming Trump for prioritising foreign policy over domestic issues.

The elections saw major Republican losses in Virginia, New Jersey, California, and New York City. Mamdani's victory has drawn national attention, sparking criticism among Trump loyalists who question his influence on the GOP. Trump faces criticism from supporters over these defeats, especially in New York City. As Mayor, Zohran will be a champion for the working people of New York. That idea might frighten the establishment and the billionaire class. Still, it is precisely why more than 100,000 volunteers turned out to support his campaign enthusiastically.

The path ahead is full of challenges. And Mamdani has to keep his soldiers with him. He must also do all that he has promised and secure adequate funds. Otherwise, he will vanish as quickly as he sprang up.

Assam CM vows to free encroached land from infiltrators; restore them to indigenous people

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that his government was steadfast in freeing encroached lands from infiltrators and restoring them to the indigenous people.

He said that due to rampant encroachment, ethnic and tribal communities in Goalpara and Kamrup districts had lost "both their political and economic rights".

"The indigenous people are the true custodians of Assam's 'Jaati, Maati and Bheti' (nationality, land and the foundation of the state). It is our solemn pledge to ensure justice, dignity and empowerment for every community, who have nurtured these lands for generations," Sarma said after handing over land title certificates under the Forest Rights Act, 2006 to 4,673 tribal families at Chaygaon in Kamrup district on Tuesday.

"Guided by the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we have safeguarded Boko, Dudhnoi and West Goalpara assembly constituencies and



ensured that our indigenous people reclaim their land and dignity," Sarma said.

He said that the indigenous communities had traditionally inhabited these constituencies, but today the demographic pattern has changed so drastically that "our people have become a minority in their own lands".

"The main reason behind this is the encroachment of our lands by illegal immigrants who often disguise themselves as flood-affected people and settle here. Sadly, we, too, at times have allowed them to occupy our lands," he said.

He urged the people to remain alert to ensure that no illegal immigrant encroaches upon forest lands.

"Let us stay vigilant and committed to protecting our lands," he added.

The chief minister said that his government was on a mission to protect the state's forests, but in Goalpara and Kamrup districts, some doubtful people have entered the forests and destroyed them, and subsequently, a large portion of land has been occupied by these unknown people.

"Our aim is to provide land rights to every tribal person residing in Assam's forest areas. I am happy that, as a result of the government initiatives, we have been able to empower the tribal communities, and the land issues of these communities are gradually being resolved," he said.

"Earlier, no government ever tried to evict them, but after we came to power, we have freed 193 sq kms of forest land from encroachers and we will continue with the eviction of illegal settlers from these plots," he further said.

He said that after assuming office as

the CM in 2021, he had directed the departments concerned to take measures to ensure that every tribal family living in forest areas of the state is granted land rights.

Joining with the rest of the country in the celebrations of Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh Pakhwada from November 1 to 15, the chief minister handed over land title certificates to tribal families belonging to the Garo, Rabha, Bodo, and Karbi communities residing in reserved forest areas such as Lakhra, Bondapara, Kulshi, Loharghat, Bamunigaon, Boko, and Singra in the three assembly constituencies.

The nation is celebrating Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh to mark the 150th birth anniversary of freedom fighter Bhagwan Birsa Munda.

The chief minister also paid rich floral tributes to tribal icons including Birsa Munda, Jaya Thaoson, Rashimoni Hajong, Swahid Kamala Miri, Kati-ram Rabha, Hemram Pator, Swahid Maghiram Kachari, Bhimbora Deuri and Swahid Bir Sambudhan Phanglochan.

"Zubeen's photo seen in Durga Puja, Raas and Lakshmi Puja, not in Muslim's 'Ijtema': Himanta

GUWAHATI

In the wake of Zubeen Garg's death and the recent blast in Delhi, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has appealed to the people of Assam to safeguard the late singer's legacy, calling it a responsibility that rests with the Assamese community.

Speaking at a public event, Sarma said a section of the public has urged Assamese people to remember that only they can truly keep Zubeen Garg's memory alive. He recalled that during Durga Puja, Raas and Lakshmi Puja, Hindu families across Assam displayed Zubeen's photograph at pandals and paid heartfelt tributes — a gesture, he noted, not seen during Muslim religious gatherings like Ijtema, which are also described as "Dharm Sabha".

"This shows that suspicious-minded people cannot keep Zubeen alive; only Assamese people can preserve his legacy," one speaker remarked during the gathering.

They also pointed out that those who once claimed "we don't need rice or dal"

are unlikely to honour his memory or contribute to preserving the identity of Assamese culture.

Meanwhile, the state government has issued a stern warning against individuals who have supported or glorified the recent bomb blast on social media. Assam Police officials confirmed that they are actively tracking online activity and verifying possible connections, including any links to Bangladesh.

"Many of those who shared or supported such posts have already deleted them, but screenshots have been saved. Strict legal action will be taken," an official said, adding that anyone found misusing digital platforms to spread hate, create division, or glorify acts of terror will face firm consequences under the law.

Authorities have appealed to citizens to maintain unity and uphold the spirit of Assamese identity by rejecting extremist ideas and focusing instead on preserving the cultural and artistic legacy left behind by Zubeen Garg — a figure who, in life and art, represented the shared emotions and aspirations of the Assamese people.

Manipur: Security forces destroy 56 acres of illegal poppy plantations in Kangpokpi district

IMPHAL

Security forces destroyed 56 acres of poppy plantations in Manipur's Kangpokpi district as part of efforts to combat illegal drug trade. The operation targeted areas between Thonglang Akutpa and Songjang Hill ranges, and Awlmun village, dismantling key drug production sites. Authorities destroyed 19 farm huts and seized fertiliser and salt, aiming to disrupt both crop yield and supporting infrastructure.

In a major crackdown against illegal narcotic cultivation, security forces on Wednesday, November 12, destroyed poppy plantations spread across approximately 56 acres in Manipur's Kangpokpi district.

According to official sources, the destruction operations were carried out in two locations, the adjoining areas between Thonglang Akutpa and Songjang Hill ranges, and Awlmun village under Kangchup Police Station. The coordinated action aimed to dismantle large-scale poppy cultivation that has been fueling the illegal drug trade in the region.

During the operation, security personnel also destroyed 19 farm huts, believed to have been used by cultivators for shelter and processing purposes. In addition, 10 fertilizer bags and 9 sacks of salt found at the sites were seized and destroyed as part of the operation.

Authorities have intensified efforts under the state government's "War on Drugs" campaign, focusing on identifying and eliminating poppy plantations in remote and hilly terrains of Manipur. Officials said the recent action marks a significant step toward curbing the illicit cultivation and promoting alternative livelihood programs for affected villagers.

15 arrested across Assam over inflammatory social media posts following Delhi blast

GUWAHATI

Assam Police have arrested 15 individuals from various districts of the state for allegedly posting inflammatory posts on social media platforms following the Delhi blast near the Red Fort metro station on November 10.

According to official sources, the latest arrests include Rafiqul Ali (Bongaigaon), Forid Uddin Laskar (Halakandi), Inamul Islam (Lakhimpur), Firuj Ahmed alias Papon (Lakhimpur), Shahil Shoman Sikdar alias Shahidul Islam (Barpeta), Rakibul Sultan (Barpeta), Nasim Akram (Hojai), Taslim Ahmed (Kamrup), and Abdur Rohim Mollah alias Bappy Hussain (South Salmara).

These arrests come in addition to the six individuals detained on Monday, bringing the total number of arrests in the state to 15 so far. Police said the action followed intensive cyber surveillance and monitoring of online activities aimed at curbing the spread of communal hatred and the glorification of terrorists.

"Assam Police remains uncon-

promising against those who glorify violence or attempt to disturb public harmony," a senior officer said, adding that strict legal action would continue against offenders.

The move follows the November 10 blast in Delhi, which ripped apart a slow-moving vehicle near the Red Fort metro station, killing 12 people and injuring several others. The incident has heightened concerns about urban security and the possible resurgence of terror networks.

Speaking to reporters at Raha in Nagaon district a day after the attack, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma condemned the blast and urged citizens to remain united against terrorism. He also directed the state police to intensify monitoring of social media and take immediate action against anyone supporting or justifying terror activities online.

"The blast in Delhi is highly condemnable. As we all know, a huge quantity of explosives was seized from certain individuals recently, clearly indicating a larger conspiracy. Hopefully, we will get a clearer picture by evening,"

Take holistic approach to tackle climate change in Northeast: Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman

DIMAPUR

Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Hariyansh Narayan Singh on Tuesday called for a holistic and community-based approach to tackle climate change in the Northeast region.

Delivering the keynote address on the concluding day of the 22nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) India Region Zone-III conference in Kohima on the theme "Climate Change in the Light of Recent Cloudburst and Landslides in Some Northeast Region," at Nagaland Assembly, Singh highlighted that climate change is one of the most pressing challenges of the time.

Calling for synergy among the northeastern states, he urged legislatures to prioritise climate action plans, effective town planning, and sustainable resource management, while recognising indigenous knowledge systems and community participation.

He pointed out that its effects



are being increasingly felt in the Northeast through frequent cloudbursts, landslides, and flash floods.

He said as of mid-2025, the region recorded over 800 landslides, resulting in loss of life and property.

Highlighting the need for preparedness and resilience, Singh spoke of the Disaster Management Act, early warning systems,

and the common alerting protocol-based integrated alert system that helps issue timely warnings.

He also mentioned the Mission Mausam and the Bharat Forecasting System, which strengthen India's capacity to predict and respond to extreme weather events.

Recalling Rabindranath Tagore's early warnings about mankind's exploitation of nature,

Singh said the poet-philosopher's words continue to resonate today as the world faces ecological imbalance and rising temperatures.

Despite being a developing country, India has taken proactive steps to address climate challenges through national policies and community-level initiatives, he added.

Singh emphasised the importance of investment in scientific research and cited his own efforts through MPLAD funds to support the establishment of a Centre for Earthquake Engineering at IIT Patna and a Centre for River Studies at Aryabhata Knowledge University.

He lauded the Nagaland Assembly for forming a dedicated committee on climate change and other initiatives promoting sustainable development and grassroots resilience. The CPA conference concluded with participants reaffirming their collective commitment to strengthening parliamentary democracy and fostering sustainable and inclusive development across the Northeast region.

Tripura scientists develop eight high-yield Arhar Dal varieties to boost pulse self-sufficiency



AGARTALA

Eight new varieties of Arhar Dal (pigeon pea), tailored to Tripura's soil and climate, have been developed by scientists at the Agriculture College in Lembuchara. The breakthrough aims to make the state self-reliant in pulse production,

Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister Ratan Lal Nath announced on November 12.

The varieties are the result of a decade-long research project led by Assistant Professor Partha Das with support from scientists Biman Dey (Agronomy), DP Awasthi (Plant Pathology), and B.C. Thangjam

(Entomology). The initiative began in 2009-10 with assistance from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and the Tripura Government.

Nath said the seeds will soon be distributed among farmers after the research team submits its final report. "These varieties are highly suitable for Tripura's soil and weather. This will help us move toward pulse self-sufficiency in the coming years," he said.

The state's average yield per hectare was 705 kg before 2018, which later increased to 823 kg. The newly developed varieties are expected to produce around 2000 kg per hectare — a major leap in productivity.

Highlighting the importance of agricultural growth, Nath remarked, "If agriculture is destroyed, everything will be destroyed." He noted India's progress in becoming

self-sufficient in rice, milk, eggs and fish, but added that dependence on pulse imports remains. "There was a time when India imported rice and wheat, but today we export them," he said, referring to the Centre's ongoing efforts under the National Mission on Pulses to achieve self-reliance.

The minister also pointed to Tripura's expanding agricultural diversity, citing the success of onion cultivation once considered impossible in the state. "Earlier, it was believed that onion cultivation was not possible here. Today, both red and white onions are being grown in large quantities, and farmers are demanding more seeds," he added.

The new Arhar Dal varieties are expected to play a crucial role in strengthening Tripura's agricultural economy and reducing dependence on imports.

Assam declares 278 schools as Dimasa medium to promote mother-tongue education



HAFLONG

The Assam government has announced that 278 Lower Primary schools across the state will operate as Dimasa Medium Lower Primary Schools from the 2025-26 academic session, marking a major step toward protecting and promoting the Dimasa language.

The official notification, issued by the Department of School Education (E.No. 632888/79), confirmed that the listed schools will adopt Dimasa as the medium of instruction at the foundational level.

The move aims to ensure that children from the Dimasa community can study in their mother tongue during their formative years.

The order states that "in the interest of the public in general and for preserving and promoting the Dimasa language," the gov-

ernment is pleased to introduce Dimasa as the official medium of instruction in these 278 schools.

The decision applies to schools under the administrative control of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council (NCHAC) and may later include areas with significant Dimasa-speaking populations. Officials, including the Director of Elementary Education, the Director of SCERT, and the Mission Director of Samagra Shiksha Assam, have been instructed to oversee and implement the transition effectively.

Education experts have described the initiative as a significant measure for linguistic inclusion and cultural preservation in Assam, reflecting the government's commitment to promoting education in indigenous languages.

Assam CM distributes cheques to SHG members under Mukhyamantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday ceremonially launched the distribution of cheques to 17,680 members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) belonging to Dispur, Guwahati Central and New Guwahati Legislative Assembly Constituencies under the Mukhyamantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan in a programme held at Veterinary College playground, Khanapara in Guwahati.

Of these beneficiaries, 7,625 are from Dispur, 5,933 from Guwahati Central and 4,122 from New Guwahati constituencies.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister also launched the distribution of cheques under the Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jati Abhyudaya Yojana (PM-AJAY), under which Scheduled Caste women Self-Help Groups of the state will receive Rs 50,000 each to promote skill development and entrepreneurship. Under this scheme, 12,000 Scheduled Caste families and self-help groups in the state will benefit.

In his address, Chief Minister Sarma said that Assam has made remarkable strides in the field of women's empowerment and has emerged as a model state in this regard.



He stated that, in addition to flagship programmes such as Orunodoi, Mukhyamantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan, and Nijut Moina, the State Government has also adopted firm measures to curb child marriage and crimes against women.

He further informed that the Government is moving ahead with the process of enacting a law to prohibit polygamy in the State.

CM Sarma stated that these initiatives reflect the government's deep sense of gratitude towards the women of Assam and its commitment to ensuring that every woman can live with dignity and enjoy equal access to education and opportunities.

"When women are empowered, socie-

ty undergoes a positive transformation," the Chief Minister said, adding that the Government's women-centric schemes are guided by this vision.

The Chief Minister observed that alongside major infrastructure projects such as bridges over the Brahmaputra and flyovers in various parts of the State, welfare-oriented schemes have played a transformative role in improving the lives of poor and underprivileged sections of society.

"The Orunodoi scheme, in particular, has brought dignity and financial inclusion to nearly 40 lakh women across the State, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to their families," he said.

Referring to the Mukhyamantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan, Sarma stated that

the objective of the initiative is to support women associated with Self-Help Groups in becoming Lakhpati Baideus.

He cited the example of Pushpa Das, a member of the Chandraprabha Self-Help Group under Chandrapur Development Block, who transformed her small tea stall into a restaurant and achieved self-reliance through her enterprise.

The Chief Minister expressed confidence that many more women would replicate such success stories in the days to come.

Sarma further informed that women who effectively utilise the initial seed capital of Rs 10,000 would be eligible to receive Rs 25,000 and subsequently Rs 50,000 in the next phases of the scheme.

He also urged the women beneficiaries to maintain a balanced family size of not more than three children to ensure better care and education for their offspring.

The Chief Minister advised the Guwahati Municipal Corporation to formulate a policy prioritising women's Self-Help Groups in granting trade licenses in suitable commercial areas of the city. He observed that although 3 to 4 lakh women live in Guwahati, no constituency under the Mukhyamantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan has yet managed to cover more than 10,000 women.

He further directed the GMC to take steps to expand the coverage of the Mukhyamantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan so that more women can be brought under its ambit.

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Modi chairs CCS meeting to firm up, 'befitting response'



NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) at his residence on Wednesday to assess the situation following Monday's explosion stressing the need for a befitting response against those responsible for the attack. Upon returning from Bhutan, the Prime Minister went straight to Lok Nayak Jai Prakash (LNJP) Hospital to meet the victims injured in the blast. He said in a social media post, "Went to LNJP Hospital and met those injured during the blast in Delhi. Praying for everyone's quick recovery. Those behind the conspiracy will be brought to justice!"

Before the CCS meeting, the prime minister again affirmed that the perpetra-

tors would not be spared.

The Union Cabinet also met separately and unanimously condemned the blast, reaffirming India's zero tolerance policy toward terrorism in all its forms. It appreciated the global support extended to India and lauded the timely response of security agencies and citizens who acted with courage and compassion.

Although officials did not issue a briefing after the CCS meeting, sources indicated that committee members held a detailed discussion on the progress of the investigation, which the National Investigation Agency (NIA) is currently leading. Home Minister Amit Shah and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh attended the meeting, where officials shared inputs and assessed the security situation.

"It can be understood that the meeting would have gone into detail on every aspect and initial findings, with discussions on post-blast action against the conspirators. Since this was the first car blast after the first round of Operation Sindoor was halted, the government would certainly be uncompromising against terrorism," a source said. The source added that the government granted security forces full authority to track down those behind the attack.

The CCS meeting was followed by a Union Cabinet session paying tribute to the victims. Both meetings lasted several hours. The Ministry of Home Affairs has formally handed over the case to the NIA, and the government is expected to act once the investigation concludes.

EAM Jaishankar outlines India's priorities at G7, engages multiple leaders

NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar held a series of bilateral and multilateral engagements on Wednesday at the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Niagara, Canada, where he participated in discussions on energy security, critical minerals, and maritime cooperation.

During the outreach session on energy security and critical minerals, Dr. Jaishankar presented India's perspective, highlighting the need to reduce dependence, enhance predictability, and build resilience in global supply chains.

In a post on X, he said, "Spoke about the need on both issues to mitigate dependence, strengthen predictability and build resilience. Greater international cooperation is the only way forward. Noted the unpredictability and market constrictions in global supply. More policy consultations and coordination are helpful."

The External Affairs Minister underlined that implementation remains "key," adding that India is open to working constructively with international partners in this area.

Jaishankar also attended a special session on maritime security, where he underscored India's emergence as a "first responder in the maritime domain" and its efforts to strengthen Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) partnerships in the Indo-Pacific through joint exercises and logistics agreements.

He underlined New Delhi's approach to maritime security through the "MAHASAGAR outlook," Indo-Pacific cooperation, and port-led development initiatives at home.

Jaishankar outlined India's key recommendations: the importance of trusted and diversified maritime links, upgrading shipping infrastructure, developing resilient trade corridors, and enhancing coordination to protect critical maritime and undersea infrastructure. He further noted that maritime threats and economic crimes,



including piracy, smuggling, and illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, require deeper international collaboration.

Dr. Jaishankar stressed that maritime trade remains vital to national and international prosperity, and resilient ports and secure waterways are essential to advancing the global agenda. He reaffirmed that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) must be upheld.

On the sidelines of the G7 meeting, the External Affairs Minister held a series of bilateral discussions with his counterparts from the European Union, Ukraine, Saudi Arabia, and the United States.

In his meeting with Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andrii Sybilla, the two leaders exchanged views on recent developments in Ukraine. "A useful conversation sharing Ukraine's per-

spective on recent developments," Dr. Jaishankar wrote on X.

Foreign Minister Sybilla also shared on X, "I was glad to meet with @DrSJaishankar to discuss cooperation between Ukraine and India and international developments. I shared our view of the path to peace, battlefield situation, and Russia's dangerous strikes on critical substations powering Ukrainian nuclear power plants."

Dr. Jaishankar also met European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs Kaja Kallas to discuss strengthening the India-EU Strategic Partnership and exchanged views on the G7 agenda.

In his engagement with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan, Dr. Jaishankar said the discussions "covered bilateral ties, regional hotspots, connectivity and energy." The Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs also

confirmed the meeting on X, stating that the discussions were held on the sidelines of the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting.

Dr. Jaishankar later met U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who expressed condolences over the loss of lives in the Delhi blast earlier this week.

In a post, Dr. Jaishankar said, "Good to meet @SecRubio this morning at #G7 FMM. Appreciate his condolences on the loss of lives in the blast in Delhi. Discussed our bilateral ties, focusing on trade and supply chains. Exchanged views on the Ukraine conflict, the Middle East/West Asia situation, and the Indo-Pacific."

Earlier, on Tuesday, the External Affairs Minister also held bilateral meetings with his counterparts from Canada, Mexico, France, Brazil, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and Germany.

INTERNATIONAL

President Trump signs government funding bill, ending shutdown after a record 43-day disruption

WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump signed a government funding bill Wednesday night, ending a record 43-day shutdown that caused financial stress for federal workers who went without paychecks, stranded scores of travelers at airports and generated long lines at some food banks.

The shutdown magnified partisan divisions in Washington as Trump took unprecedented unilateral actions, including canceling projects and trying to fire federal workers, to pressure Democrats into relenting on their demands.

The Republican president blamed the situation on Democrats and suggested voters shouldn't reward the party during next year's midterm elections.

"So I just want to tell the American people, you should not forget this," Trump said. "When we come up to midterms and other things, don't forget what they've done to our country."

The signing ceremony came just hours after the House passed the measure on a mostly party-line vote of 222-209. The Senate had already passed the measure Monday.

Democrats wanted to extend an enhanced tax credit expiring at the end of the year that lowers the cost of health coverage obtained through Affordable Care Act marketplaces. They refused to go along with a short-term spending bill that did not include that priority.

But Republicans said that was a separate policy fight to be held at another time.

"We told you 43 days ago from bitter experience that government shutdowns don't work," said Rep. Tom Cole, the Republican chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. "They never achieve the objective that you announce. And guess what? You haven't achieved that objective

yet, and you're not going to."

The frustration and pressures generated by the shutdown was reflected when lawmakers debated the spending measure on the House floor.

Republicans said Democrats sought to use the pain generated by the shutdown to prevail in a policy dispute.

"They knew it would cause pain and they did it anyway," House Speaker Mike Johnson said.

Democrats said Republicans raced to pass tax breaks earlier this year that they say mostly will benefit the wealthy. But the bill before the House Wednesday "leaves families twisting in the wind with zero guarantee there will ever, ever be a vote to extend tax credits to help everyday people pay for their health care," said Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass.

Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries said Democrats would not give up on the subsidy extension even if the vote did not go their way.

"This fight is not over," Jeffries said. "We're just getting started."

The House had not been in legislative session since Sept. 19, when it passed a short-term measure to keep the government open when the new budget year began in October.

Johnson sent lawmakers home after that vote and put the onus on the Senate to act, saying House Republicans had done their job.

President Donald Trump signs the funding bill to reopen the government, in the Oval Office of the White House, Wednesday, Nov. 12, 2025, in Washington.

The legislation is the result of a deal reached by eight senators who broke ranks with the Democrats after reaching the conclusion that Republicans would not bend on using a government funding bill to extend the health care tax credits.

The compromise funds three

annual spending bills and extends the rest of government funding through Jan. 30. Republicans promised to hold a vote by mid-December to extend the health care subsidies, but there is no guarantee of success.

The bill includes a reversal of the firing of federal workers by the Trump administration since the shutdown began. It also protects federal workers against further layoffs through January and guarantees they are paid once the shutdown is over. The bill for the Agriculture Department means people who rely on key food assistance programs will see those benefits funded without threat of interruption through the rest of the budget year.

The package includes \$203.5 million to boost security for lawmakers and an additional \$28 million for the security of Supreme Court justices.

Democrats also decried language in the bill that would give senators the opportunity to sue when a federal agency or employee searches their electronic records without notifying them, allowing for up to \$500,000 in potential damages for each violation.

The language seems aimed at helping Republican senators pursue damages if their phone records were analyzed by the FBI as part of an investigation into Trump's efforts to overturn his 2020 election loss. The provisions drew criticism from Republicans as well. Johnson said he was "very angry about it."

"That was dropped in at the last minute, and I did not appreciate that, nor did most of the House members," Johnson said, promising a vote on the matter as early as next week.

The biggest point of contention, though, was the fate of the expiring enhanced tax credit that makes health insurance more affordable through Affordable Care Act marketplaces.

"It's a subsidy on top of a subsidy. Our friends added it during COVID,"

Cole said. "COVID is over. They set a date certain that the subsidies would run out. They chose the date."

Rep. Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said the enhanced tax credit was designed to give more people access to health care and no Republican voted for it.

"All they have done is try to eliminate access to health care in our country. The country is catching on to them," Pelosi said.

Without the enhanced tax credit, premiums on average will more than double for millions of Americans. More than 2 million people would lose health insurance coverage altogether next year, the Congressional Budget Office projected.

It's unclear whether the parties will find any common ground on health care before the December vote in the Senate. Johnson has said he will not commit to bringing it up in his chamber.

Some Republicans have said they are open to extending the COVID-19 pandemic-era tax credits as premiums will soar for millions of people, but they also want new limits on who can receive the subsidies. Some argue that the tax dollars for the plans should be routed through individuals rather than go directly to insurance companies.

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, said Monday that she was supportive of extending the tax credits with changes, such as new income caps. Some Democrats have signaled they could be open to that idea.

House Democrats expressed great skepticism that the Senate effort would lead to a breakthrough.

Rep. Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut, the top Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee, said Republicans have wanted to repeal the health overhaul for the past 15 years. "That's where they're trying to go," she said.

Pakistan's prime minister offers talks to Afghanistan after deadly militant attacks

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's prime minister on Wednesday offered talks to Afghanistan's Taliban government in a renewed peace overture, about a week after negotiations between the two sides collapsed in Istanbul, raising fears that a ceasefire brokered by Qatar and Turkey could unravel and trigger new border clashes.

Shehbaz Sharif made the offer in a televised speech to parliament, a day after a deadly suicide bombing outside a court in Islamabad killed 12 people and wounded 27 others.

Still, he said that Pakistan wanted peace in the region, because it was good for both sides, though there were "Afghan footprints" in this week's attacks.

"Let us sit with sincere hearts, rein in terrorism, and work together for peace and prosperity in the region," Sharif said. He said that during the recent rounds of talks in Doha and Istanbul, Pakistan had only made one demand to Afghanistan: rein in the militants.

"We want peace to prevail," he said, and "Afghanistan should realize that what is good for us is good for them. But it cannot be that they make promises and then fail to act." There was no immediate comment from Kabul to Sharif's offer.

The latest development came hours after Pakistanis buried their loved ones killed in the suicide bombing at an Islamabad court, as authorities opened an investigation into the assault. The bombing in Islamabad underscored the country's challenges as the government struggles with a growing militancy, border tensions and a fragile truce with Afghanistan.

Tuesday's attack at the district court, located on the edge of the city, raised alarms that despite multiple operations by security forces to crush the militants, they are still capable of mounting high-profile bombings — even in the Pakistani capital.

Pakistan has struggled with a surge in militant attacks in recent years, but until Tuesday's bombing, Islamabad had largely been considered a safer place.

Forensic teams and police were combing Wednesday through debris at the site of the blast, which had been sealed to preserve evidence. Across the city, grief-stricken relatives were receiving the bodies of their loved ones at an Islamabad hospital.

Later, funeral prayers got underway for some of the victims. Most of the 27 people wounded in the bombing had been discharged home after treatment.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said in the immediate aftermath of Tuesday's bombing that the attack was "carried out by Indian-backed elements and Afghan Taliban proxies" linked to the Pakistani Taliban.

He offered no evidence and also said that authorities were "looking into all aspects" of the explosion.

India and Afghanistan's Taliban-led government, which both reject Pakistan's accusations, have been working to increase ties in areas like business and humanitarian aid, despite not having formal diplomatic relations.

Naqvi also blamed the Pakistani Taliban for the attack. Pakistan has long said that the Afghan Taliban have been sheltering leaders and fighters from Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan, or TTP — an accusation that Kabul denies. The TTP denied involvement on Tuesday, while a breakaway faction, Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, claimed responsibility, only to have one of its commanders later contradict that statement.

The Islamabad attack drew widespread condemnation from the international community. Defense Minister Khawaja Asif told Geo News that the Islamabad bombing was "a message for Pakistan" meant to show that insurgents can carry out attacks deep inside the country.

Asked whether Pakistan would retaliate and possi-

bly target TTP hideouts in Afghanistan, he said that "it cannot be ruled out" and again urged Kabul to rein in militants operating from there.

On Monday night, four militants targeted an army-run college for cadets in the northwestern city of Wana. The police said four of the attackers — including a suicide car bomber — were killed and more than 600 people, including 525 cadets, their teachers and other staff, were safely rescued during the overnight assault.

The attack unfolded when a suicide bomber rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into the college gate. Troops quickly fanned out across the campus to prevent the attackers from reaching the buildings where cadets and staff had taken shelter.

Footage aired on Pakistani news channels Wednesday showed soldiers evacuating students using wooden ladders and breaking windows to get inside the dormitories.

Information Minister Attaullah Tarar said that the attackers appeared to be attempting a repeat of the 2014 Peshawar school massacre, the deadliest assault on a school in the country, when a breakaway TTP faction killed 154 people, mostly children, at an army-run school in Peshawar.

Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar told a gathering in Islamabad on Wednesday that the two attacks, in Islamabad and Wana, killed at least 15 people. His remark indicated that the Pakistani forces had suffered at least three fatalities at the cadet school.

Pakistan's parliament on Wednesday approved a bill to elevate army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir to the newly created post of chief of defense forces, pending the signature of President Asif Ali Zardari, which is considered a formality. The opposition boycotted the vote, saying the bill could undermine democracy, while the government insists that the new title for the army chief was only meant to ensure better coordination with the navy and air force.

5 Initiatives Driving Financial Independence for Women in Tier 2 and 3 India



WOMEN EMPOWERMENT SCHEMES

Across India's smaller towns and rural belts, women are redefining business and financial independence. They're running self-help groups, launching micro-enterprises, and using digital tools to take charge of their economic futures. The Bharat Women in Business & Aspirations Index (BWAI) 2025 found that 58% of women entrepreneurs in Tier 2 and 3 cities want to strengthen their financial and business skills—a clear sign of ambition fueled by access, awareness, and opportunity.

Government programs and fintech-driven initiatives are accelerating this movement by improving access to credit, property ownership, and digital literacy—the pillars of genuine empowerment.

Here are five initiatives leading the way:

1. Lakhpati Didi Scheme
Under the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), the Lakhpati Didi Scheme aims to create two crore women earning at least 1 lakh annually through self-employment by 2029. The program helps members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) become entrepreneurs by connecting them to credit, digital tools, and markets. Women receive training in sectors such as dairy, tailoring, agriculture, and digital services, turning small ventures into steady sources of income. The initiative has al-

ready transformed the lives of 1.5 crore women who now earn more than 1 lakh a year, halfway toward the goal of three crore.

2. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY)

PMAY goes beyond housing—it's a key driver of asset ownership for women. The policy requires that women be included as co-owners or sole owners in property documents, giving them collateral for credit, better social standing, and long-term financial security. As of August 2025, over 1.2 crore houses have been sanctioned, with three-fourths already completed. For women in Tier 2 and 3 areas, owning a home translates into financial credibility and a stronger role in family and community decisions.

3. Support to Training and Employment Programme (STEP)

Run by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, STEP provides training and capacity-building for women, especially in rural and marginalized areas. Covering ten sectors—from agriculture and handlooms to hospitality and IT-enabled services—the program equips women with employability and entrepreneurial skills. Its focus on digital and financial literacy prepares participants to engage with the formal economy and launch small enterprises. The program's real impact lies in helping women gain both income and confidence.

4. Udaan Chronicles

Tide's Udaan Chronicles is a mentorship and advocacy roadshow supporting small business owners, particularly women in semi-urban and rural India. It focuses on financial education, practical business management, and access to credit and digital tools. The initiative works alongside the Bharat Women Aspiration In-

dex (BWAI) and Local Role Model Programme, building networks

of women entrepreneurs who inspire and support each other while driving local economic growth.

5. Digital Naari Initiative

PayNearby's Digital Naari program builds a community of micro-entrepreneurs who act as "banking and digital Didis" within their neighborhoods. These women help others access banking, insurance, health, and credit services while securing their own livelihoods. More than 1.5 lakh women across 10,000+ PIN codes now handle transactions worth over 10,000 crore annually. Over 60% are first-time entrepreneurs earning 3,500–5,000 a month, proving how local women can become agents of financial inclusion.

PayNearby collaborates with State Rural Livelihood Missions, microfinance institutions, and NGOs like UPSRLM, Rajeevika, and Grameen Foundation India to expand its reach and deepen its grassroots impact.

Fintech as a Change Agent

Fintech platforms are reshaping how women access and manage money. From digital payments and savings tools to microloans and upskilling programs, they're helping women shift from dependence to entrepreneurship. As India moves toward a \$5 trillion economy by 2027 and a projected \$30 trillion by 2047, empowering women through financial inclusion isn't just about equality—it's a key driver of national growth.

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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

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Brain VISION
KRC Shaping Careers For a Successful Tomorrow
A broke man blames his income. A wise man blames his habits.

“Come, Experience the Heartbeat of the Northeast”

Biswadeep Gupta Calls for Unity Through the Northeast Integration Rally 2026



can only be realised through peace, progress, and prosperity.

“The most important part of our journey as a region is peaceful coexistence,” he said. “That is why the Northeast is so crucial — it’s a power hub for many things in the decades to come.”

The Northeast Integration Rally 2026 aims to celebrate that spirit of unity and adventure. It invites participants from across India and beyond to join a road journey that showcases the beauty, diversity, and promise of the region.

For more information or to join the rally, visit <https://northeastintegrationrally.in/>

Biswadeep Gupta is a public leader and social thinker dedicated to the idea of social re-engineering and inclusive development. With over 29 years of professional experience spanning media, entrepreneurship, business consulting, and training, he has built a diverse career that blends leadership, communication, and social impact.

He holds an MBA in Marketing and Human Resources from Assam University (1998–2001) and a Bachelor’s degree in Mechanical Engineering from Tripura Engineering College (1991–1995). His schooling was completed at Kendriya Vidyalaya, Dimapur, Nagaland, where he pursued Higher Secondary Science with Physics, Chemis-

try, Mathematics, and Biology (1986–1991).

Currently, he serves as the Managing Trustee of the Knowledge Resource Centre Foundation (KRC Foundation), headquartered in Silchar, Assam. The foundation operates KRC Times—a journalistic think tank that engages in both print and digital media—and 5E For Success, an initiative focused on entrepreneurial research, training, and socio-economic consulting.

Over the years, Biswadeep has held several key journalistic roles, including Editor of Manipur Chronicle, Principal Correspondent for Eastern Chronicle (Kolkata and New Delhi), Special Correspondent for Eastern Chronicle (Imphal and the Northeast Region), and Editor of KRC Times. He

also serves as Vice President of Sankha Press Pvt. Ltd., which publishes three newspapers: Jugashankha, Eastern Chronicle, and The Mizoram Post.

Beyond his professional commitments, Biswadeep is deeply involved in social initiatives.

He is the President of the Barak-Manipur Friendship Association and remains active as a writer, journalist, content developer, photographer, presenter, behavioural researcher, and motivator. As a “preneur,” he channels his passion into areas like training and development, social re-engineering, media and mass communication, coaching, and management consulting—working constantly at the intersection of ideas, people, and purpose.

Together for Tomorrow: Strengthening Bonds Across the North East

North East Integration Rally
Peace | Progress | Prosperity
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
Barak Valley Conclave
 Potential Issues and Challenges of Barak Valley by different sector stakeholders. Includes NGOs, and Governmental organization for rural, urban, and water. Participation through invitation only. Different rewards are provided.

11 JAN
Adventure Sports
 Trekking & Canoe, Obstacle Navigations, Sport Climbing, Disaster Management Techniques, Water Sports. www.krcfoundation.org



10 Jan
Barak Festival: Peace Progress & Prosperity



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



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





BROADCAST PARTNER



REGISTER HERE

CONTACT: info@krcfoundation.org

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 news channels, journalists, media & corporate PR, sponsors, guides, speakers, members.



11 JAN
5E For Success Conclave
 The 4th Annual 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. Quiz and Group Discussion for Barak valley Schools & College. Extension: School/Alumni Speaking/College/Institutional event. Students of NE India Schools and Colleges can participate.





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



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



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



CONTACT: info@krcfoundation.org

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.



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- Event Management
- Programme Coordinator

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10-12 JAN
Book Bank
 #NoOneLeftBehind Campaign | Book Bank | Donate | Borrow | Exchange

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

Painting Carnival
 Water Colour and Oil and Draw with Campaign