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PERSPECTIVE

80% of the time, it's not that a person changed....you just never knew who they actually were.

26,000 Cases Resolved, 2,300 Kids Rescued

ITANAGAR

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has called for renewed urgency in bolstering child protection mechanisms across the country, revealing significant interventions undertaken over the past six months. According to the Commission, nearly 26,000 cases have been disposed of and more than 2,300 children rescued during this period, underscoring both the scale of violations and the intensity of ongoing enforcement efforts.

The figures were shared during a state-level conference in Itanagar focused on identifying gaps and challenges in the implementation of core child rights legislations. Addressing officials and stakeholders, Paresh Shah, Division Head for Juvenile Justice, POCSO and Special Cells at NCPCR, stressed that violations of child rights must not be reduced to mere statistics.

"Every case represents a story of a child and a family," Shah said, urging attendees to treat each instance of violation with the gravity it deserves. He maintained that the decisions and actions taken by officials today will shape not only the trajectory of children's lives but also the nation's collective future.

Shah noted that both the Union Government and the Arunachal Pradesh government remain firmly committed to safeguarding children, but he emphasised the need for stronger monitoring, expanded awareness programmes, and more coordinated enforcement at the ground level.

He highlighted that over 1,000 children have been successfully repatriated to their home districts in the last six months alone, a process made more efficient by new technology-driven tracking and support systems introduced by NCPCR.

WHO SAID WHAT

Bharat's cheetah family is growing and so is our MP's pride! Our first India-born cheetah Mukhi has blessed Kuno with five cubs. A proud leap for Project Cheetah and a beautiful, unprecedented breakthrough that strengthens our nation's wildlife heritage.

~ Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, Union Minister for Communications and Development of North Eastern Region, Goa

NEW DELHI

Union Minister of Communications and Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, participated in two High-Level Task Force (HLTF) meetings on November 19, 2025, as part of the Government's strategy to drive coordinated, participatory and impactful development across the North Eastern Region (NER), a press release said. Earlier this year, the Ministry of DoNER constituted eight HLTFs, each led by a Chief Minister of a North Eastern State, following the consensus of the 72nd NEC Plenary Session held in Agartala. The meeting of HLTF on Sports, chaired by the Governor of Manipur, Ajay Kumar Bhalla, saw participation from Union Minister of State for Sports & Youth Affairs, Raksha Khadse; Sports Minister of Mizoram, Lalghinglova Hmar; Sports Minister of Meghalaya, Shakliar Warjri; Secretary, Ministry of DoNER and senior officials from the Government of Assam and the Sports Authority of India (SAI).

The meeting reinforced the "One Sport, One State" approach, with each participating State selecting a core

discipline for comprehensive, end-to-end development. Building on this framework, Minister Scindia urged the participating States to prepare focused micro-proposals aligned with their chosen disciplines—Mizoram (Football), Manipur (Boxing & Weightlifting), Tripura (Judo), Meghalaya (Archery), Nagaland (Archery & Taekwondo), and Sikkim (Taekwondo). He underscored that these proposals must be developed jointly by State Sports Ministers and Secretaries, working closely with MoS Sports, Smt. Raksha Khadse and SAI DG to ensure alignment, ownership and sustainability.

Minister Scindia emphasised that the roadmap must leverage the region's natural strengths by identifying Cross-State commonalities such as Football, Weightlifting, Judo, Archery, and Taekwondo, and developing sport-specific strategies with clear ministerial accountability. The Minister highlighted that the proposal must adopt a "60-40 model" with 60% focus on human resource development, world-class coaching, talent scouting and technology-enabled training, and only 40% on physical infrastructure,

noting that while infrastructure exists across the country, true sporting excellence requires advanced coaching ecosystems, athlete-centric methodologies and the integration of cutting-edge technology. Minister emphasised "From this strategy, we must develop a clear and focused proposal. There should be a 60-40 division, with 60 per cent dedicated to the people who provide coaching and technology-supported guidance, and only 40 per cent to infrastructure. While facilities exist across the country, the real priority is high-quality coaching and effective human intervention. This is essential because even as infrastructure expands, athletes often do not receive the advanced, standards-driven training they need to excel. The Ministry for Development of the North Eastern Region would be happy to provide its full support in advancing this vision."

The Minister also called for each state to prepare a comprehensive sports calendar built bottom-up from pre-school, school and university levels to block-level tournaments supplemented by inter-state exposure, competitions and exchange programmes. He urged the adoption

of a whole-of-government and whole-of-country approach to nurture the disciplines identified by the Northeast states, with the vision that at least one sport from the region should emerge as a national case study in the coming years. The meeting of HLTF on Self-reliance in Milk, Eggs, Fish and Meat was chaired by the Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, Pema Khandu, and attended by the Secretary, Ministry of DoNER and officials from Nagaland, the Department of Fisheries, and representatives from all eight North Eastern states.

The Task Force undertook a detailed demand-supply analysis for all eight States, creating the foundation for a truly composite framework that goes beyond a unidimensional approach. Discussions covered connectivity and logistics, infrastructure and value chains, human resources, breeding and productivity enhancement and avenues for expanding credit access and private investment. This integrated perspective is required for the region's food systems strategy. The Minister emphasised, "Our aim is to build a connected, efficient and resilient food ecosystem for the Northeast

that strengthens livelihoods, expands market access and ensures better nutrition for every citizen." To ensure rapid progress, the meeting resolved to begin interventions in two states for each product category—milk, eggs and poultry, meat and fisheries, to generate real-time learnings that can be scaled across the region, enabling sharper, evidence-driven expansion.

A clear implementation architecture was also outlined, with coordinated participation from Central Ministries, State Departments, and private stakeholders. Each intervention will be mapped to specific stages of the value chain so that responsibilities remain well-defined from origin to end consumer. Funding components for these pilots will similarly be structured with joint contributions from all three partners.

The discussions further underscored the need to view the Northeast as a single, integrated market. Better movement of surplus to deficit areas, identification of competitive strengths of each state, and stronger intra- and inter-state trade linkages will strengthen the region's ability to operate as a cohesive food economy.

RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat arrives in Manipur; first trip since ethnic unrest



IMPHAL

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat arrived in Manipur for a three-day visit on Thursday, marking his first trip to the state since ethnic unrest erupted two years ago.

His tour forms part of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's (RSS) centenary celebrations, and will primarily consist of a series of internal meetings.

RSS functionaries said Bhagwat's itinerary revolves around organisational discussions linked to the centenary year, with no large public programmes scheduled.

Bhagwat began his engagements on Thursday by interacting with entrepreneurs and prominent citizens at Konjing Leikai in Imphal. On Friday, November 21, he will meet tribal leaders from various hill districts to deliberate on community-related issues and ongoing concerns.

Throughout the visit, the RSS chief will also hold separate sessions with youth leaders and influential members of civil society.

These closed-door interactions are expected to facilitate focused dialogue, although the organisation has not announced any public gatherings.

Displaced Families Hold Mass Sit-In, Oppose Sangai Festival in Manipur

GUWAHATI

Displaced families living in relief camps across Manipur's valley districts on Thursday held a co-ordinated mass sit-in protest, denouncing the state government's decision to go ahead with the Sangai Festival even as thousands remain uprooted by the ongoing conflict.

Gathering at multiple relief camps, demonstrators expressed anger and anguish over what they described as the administration's misplaced priorities. The protest comes a day before the festival is scheduled to begin. The state remains under President's Rule.

A woman residing at the Lamboikhongnang Khong Relief Camp said it was "deeply painful" to watch the government channel resources into celebrations while displaced citizens continue to struggle inside temporary shelters with no clarity on rehabilitation.

"We are still living without proper resettlement and without the freedom to move safely. Why is the government preparing for festivities when our lives are still in crisis?" she asked. "Are we not citizens of Manipur?"

She appealed to the public to boycott the event as a show of solidarity, arguing that people's collective voice could pressure authorities to prioritise rehabilitation.



"The government may have power, but people have a stronger voice. The Sangai Festival should only be celebrated when peace and normalcy truly return," she said.

Protestors held placards with messages such as "Free Movement First, Then Sangai Festival", "We Boycott Sangai Festival", and "First Resettlement, Then Celebration", urging immediate attention.

tion.

GUWAHATI

In a major administrative overhaul, the Assam Police has effected the transfer of seventy-three Inspectors (UB) across multiple districts, battalions, and specialised units—marking one of the most extensive reshuffles in recent years. The order, issued from Police Headquarters in Ulubari, Guwahati and approved by the Director General of Police, states that the movements have been carried out "in the interest of public service."

tion to long-pending issues of security, mobility, and rehabilitation.

The Sangai Festival, Manipur's flagship tourism event, is set to run from November 21 to 30. This year marks its return after a two-year interruption caused by the prolonged conflict. However, displaced families say the resumption of the festival only highlights how disconnected official decision-making has become from their ground realities.

Goalpara, Morigaon and Baksa also saw multiple shifts. Inspector Biswajyoti Sarmah's move from Goalpara to Morigaon triggered a chain of realignments, placing Inspector Bhargab Borbora in Goalpara and Inspector Ananda Rabha in Baksa. Additional officers were reassigned to Golaghat, Dima Hasao and specialised branches, indicating a broad restructuring effort. A significant wave of transfers affected Jorhat, Karbi Anglong and Kamrup districts. Inspectors Lakshman Kr Das, Rahul Dewry, Nurul Husain, Naba Kr Saikia and Nabajit Nath were shifted among district forces and CID Assam. Inspector Kamakhya Mishra was posted to the 17th APBn, while V&AC Assam received multiple officers to fill vacancies.

Tripura cabinet approves two new state universities, including first technical, women's universities

AGARTALA

The Tripura State Council of Ministers on Tuesday approved the creation of two new state universities.

Agartala into Women's University. This is Tripura's first of its kind institution," he explained.



Apart from that, the cabinet has also approved the creation and filling up of

385 posts in different government departments.

Under the Co-operative Department, 97 posts of Auditor, Investigator, and Statistical Investigator will be filled through

Assam Conducts One of Its Largest Inspector-Level Reshuffles

GUWAHATI

According to the notification, the reshuffle spans nearly every layer of the state's policing network, touching district executive forces, city police units, the Crime Investigation Department (CID), Vigilance & Anti-Corruption (V&AC), Border Assam, the Assam-Manipur-Mizoram I/S Sector, and several battalions.

District-Level Movements Begin the Overhaul

The first set of transfers included changes in Barpeta, Bongaigaon, Cachar, Karbi Anglong, Sribhumi, and Dergaon. Inspector Amar



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CLOUD ON THE NUCLEAR HORIZON

Hours before his October 30 meeting with Xi Jinping, Donald Trump announced that he had instructed the US department of war to “start testing nuclear weapons on an equal basis” immediately. He reiterated the stance in an interview later: “We’re going to test nuclear weapons like other countries do.” He also accused Russia, China, North Korea and Pakistan of conducting deeply buried underground nuclear tests.

Trump’s remarks came in response to Russia’s testing of new nuclear delivery systems—the Burevestnik, a nuclear-powered cruise missile tested on October 21, and the Poseidon, a nuclear-powered torpedo tested on October 28. His instructions were directed to the US department of war, which oversees missile testing, rather than at the department of energy, the principal authority for nuclear-weapons testing.

The day after the Trump-Xi summit, the US energy secretary clarified that the administration’s reference to renewed testing concerned ‘system tests’—that is, subcritical experiments intended to verify the performance and reliability of existing nuclear weapons.

However, Trump’s ambiguous statements have stirred considerable uncertainty and debate within the non-proliferation and arms control communities, while also prompting reactions from the countries he accused of conducting nuclear tests.

At a meeting with the Russian Security Council on November 5, Vladimir Putin, while reaffirming that Moscow would only restart nuclear tests if the US initiated them, instructed his officials to prepare formal proposals for a potential resumption of tests. Russia also publicly urged the US to clarify what it called “contradictory signals” regarding the resumption of nuclear testing.

China’s response was restrained. Beijing expressed hope that Washington would abide by its 1996 commitments to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), maintain its moratorium on tests, and actively safeguard the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Pakistan denied testing, while North Korea offered no immediate response.

The CTBT, which explicitly prohibits nuclear explosions, was signed by the US, Russia, and China on the very day it opened for signature in September 1996. While Russia ratified the treaty in 2000, it later withdrew in 2023, citing the asymmetry created by the fact that the US had signed but failed to ratify the agreement. Although China has also not ratified the CTBT, all three nations have maintained a stated policy of moratorium.

India chose not to sign the treaty, with a senior diplomat declaring, “India will not sign this unequal treaty. Not now, not ever.” This decision was taken to safeguard our security interests, preserve our sovereign decision-making, and reject a framework that perpetuated the privileges of the established nuclear-weapon states.

Nevertheless, following the 1998 Pokhran tests, India voluntarily declared a unilateral moratorium on further testing as a demonstration of restraint and responsibility.

While the term ‘nuclear testing’ may conjure images of mushroom clouds and fiery explosions, modern research has evolved far beyond. Having conducted 1,030 nuclear tests before the advent of the CTBT, the US launched the Stockpile Stewardship programme in 1994 to ensure the safety, security and reliability of its nuclear arsenal through subcritical experiments, computer simulations, and hydrodynamic testing.

Subcritical experiments, though they employ fissile materials such as plutonium, do not initiate a self-sustaining chain reaction, and thus produce no nuclear yield, placing them beyond the scope of the CTBT’s prohibition. Computer simulations and hydrodynamic testing do not involve any fissile material.

While the US asserts that it maintains full transparency in announcing its subcritical experiments, it has been accusing Russia and China of their lack of transparency including expansion of nuclear-testing facilities.

Given the extensive global monitoring network established under the CTBT, it is virtually impossible for any nation to conduct underground nuclear tests of significant yield without detection. It is, however, theoretically conceivable that Russia or China may have carried out ultra-low-yield experiments, though such tests are unlikely to yield meaningful advances in designing more sophisticated weapons.

Conversely, if the US were to resume underground explosive tests—a process estimated to take at least two years to implement—it would effectively grant China a free hand to expand its own testing programme. Unlike the US and Russia, which have conducted hundreds of tests, China had carried out only 46 before 1996. A return to full-yield testing would thus level the strategic playing field, enabling China to develop new generations of nuclear weapons.

During his first term, Trump sought to establish a trilateral framework with Russia and China to limit nuclear weapons—an initiative Beijing firmly rejected. Shortly after returning to office this year, he declared that denuclearisation would be a key objective of his second term. Following the Alaska Summit with Putin in August, Trump expressed optimism about Moscow’s willingness to engage in discussions on the issue, voicing hope that Beijing would eventually join the dialogue.

It appears that Trump was raising the stakes ahead of his meeting with Xi, even though no progress has been seen from the Chinese side thus far.

Yet, if Trump were to resume full-yield nuclear testing, it would not only doom the CTBT, but also risk unravelling the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, extended indefinitely in 1995 on the understanding that the CTBT would be concluded.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

The secrets of life are not shown except to sympathy and likeness.~
Ralph Waldo Emerson

SHEIKH HASINA’S DEATH PENALTY IS IMPACTING SOUTH ASIAN DIPLOMACY



T N ASHOK

A Bangladesh special tribunal on Monday sentenced former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to death for crimes against humanity, a thunderous verdict against a once-dominant political force whose 15-year rule collapsed under the weight of student protests, economic frustration, and accusations of deepening authoritarianism.

The decision — delivered as crowds outside chanted “Justice for the martyrs!” — instantly reshaped South Asia’s political landscape. It also thrust India, Bangladesh’s largest neighbour and Hasina’s long-time ally, into a diplomatic crisis it has so far answered with studied silence.

Hasina, 78, convicted in absentia from her refuge in India, denounced the 453-page judgment as a “judicial charade” and demanded the interim government take the case to the International Criminal Court. “I have nothing to hide,” she wrote. “I will face any fair tribunal, anywhere in the world.”

But whether she ever sees a courtroom again remains doubtful. India has shown no inclination to hand her over — a fact that complicates Bangladesh’s quest for accountability and raises questions about the practical meaning of a death sentence that cannot be enforced.

The explosive crisis that toppled Hasina in August 2024 was rooted in a deeply emotional grievance: the country’s civil-service quota system, which reserved 30 percent of all government jobs for the descendants of independence-war veterans. Originally conceived as a gesture of gratitude to those who fought Pakistan in 1971, the system became synonymous with patronage and political favouritism.

To a new generation of Bangladeshis facing an anaemic job market, the quota symbolized a closed, corrupt political order. When student protesters mobilized in July 2024, the demonstrations quickly broadened into a nationwide revolt after social-media videos showed police firing on unarmed crowds.

United Nations investigators later confirmed that hundreds of young people, including minors, were killed in the security crackdown — an event that shattered Hasina’s claim to democratic credentials and hardened public opinion against her Awami League.

“The job quotas were just the spark,” said a senior Western diplomat in Dhaka. “This was an uprising against fifteen years of suffocation.”

With the military wavering and key ministers defecting, Hasina fled Dhaka on August 5 in a military aircraft that landed in India — echoing her 1975 flight from

Bangladesh after the assassination of her father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. India then offered sanctuary; this time, it became a shield from prosecution.

New Delhi’s refusal to comment on the verdict reflects far more than diplomatic caution. For nearly two decades, India viewed Hasina as a reliable partner in a region where geopolitical loyalties shift quickly and where China has invested aggressively.

Under her leadership, Bangladesh cooperated closely with India on counterterrorism, border security, and transit rights. She also kept a check on Islamist political formations that New Delhi distrusts.

“Hasina was India’s most dependable friend in the neighbourhood,” said a former Indian ambassador to Dhaka. “You don’t abandon such a partner to the gallows.”

A second factor shapes India’s silence: precedent. Extraditing a former prime minister convicted by an interim government — especially one installed amid mass upheaval — could open uncomfortable questions about political asylum and judicial legitimacy in the region.

There is also a domestic political dimension. Hasina retains significant goodwill among parts of India’s political class, including senior figures in the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, who see her as instrumental in stabilizing India’s vulnerable eastern frontier.

So while the Yunus-led interim government has formally requested extradition, India’s non-response signals what South Asian diplomats describe as “a polite but firm refusal.”

The verdict reverberated across South Asia, prompting reactions shaped as much by geopolitics as concern for human rights.

Pakistan, whose painful 1971 rupture created modern Bangladesh, responded with a mix of caution and quiet satisfaction. Hasina had long accused Pakistan’s army of genocide during the independence war and strengthened war-crimes tribunals that prosecuted pro-Pakistan Islamist leaders. Islamabad’s foreign office called for “judicial restraint” and urged Dhaka to “pursue reconciliation rather than retribution,” a phrasing diplomats say subtly underscores Pakistan’s preference for Hasina’s political eclipse.

Sri Lanka, navigating its own post-crisis political landscape, reacted in more pragmatic tones. Colombo fears that the destabilization of a key Indian Ocean economy could disrupt trade routes and migrant flows. Sri Lankan officials expressed concern about “regional instability” but avoided criticizing the verdict. Analysts say Colombo is wary of antagonizing either Dhaka or New Delhi at a time when it is courting both for financial assistance and

diplomatic support.

Across the region, the deeper anxiety is whether Bangladesh — still reeling from last year’s revolt — can rebuild institutions without sliding into cycles of vengeance.

Hasina’s sentencing, while dramatic, is unlikely to be executable. As long as India offers her de facto asylum, Bangladesh’s courts cannot enforce the penalty.

That leaves the verdict straddling two contradictory roles: a legal judgment intended to deliver accountability, and a political instrument meant to exile the Awami League from future power.

“This is as much about rewriting Bangladesh’s political order as it is about justice,” said a Dhaka-based constitutional scholar. “By sentencing Hasina and her inner circle, the interim government is drawing a line under the old regime.”

Prosecutors argued that Hasina personally authorized lethal force against protesters and failed to prevent widespread abuses. Her former police chief Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, who turned state witness earlier this year, testified that cabinet-level directives sanctioned the use of live ammunition.

Human rights groups welcomed the ruling as an essential step toward accountability but expressed reservations about a trial conducted entirely in absentia. “There must be justice, but it must be seen as credible,” said an Amnesty International spokesperson. “Bangladesh has to show this is not simply political score-settling.”

For India, the immediate dilemma is managing a relationship with an interim Bangladeshi government that expects political support while hosting its most controversial former leader. Any move by India — extradition, silence, or formal refusal — risks angering one side or the other.

India also understands that Bangladesh’s stability directly affects its own northeast. A weakened Dhaka government struggling with debt, political unrest, and a demoralized bureaucracy could embolden extremist networks that both countries have fought for decades.

This explains New Delhi’s caution: it sees the interim government as fragile, the opposition as fractious, and Hasina’s Awami League — despite its tarnished legacy — as the only party with deep national organization.

As night fell over Dhaka following the verdict, torch-bearing students marched past Dhaka University, retracing the same streets where friends and classmates died just months earlier.

For them, the death sentence was less about vengeance and more about vindication — a statement that the state cannot kill its own citizens with impunity.

Yet the country’s path ahead is uncer-

tain. The interim government must rebuild trust in institutions hollowed out over years of centralized rule, restore investor confidence, and balance justice with political reconciliation.

And the fate of Sheikh Hasina — condemned at home, protected abroad — now hangs between two nations that must navigate a storm of their own making.

Whether she ever returns to Bangladesh may matter less than the larger question her trial forces the region to confront: Can South Asia break the cycle of leaders rising through democracy only to fall through repression, exile, and vengeance?

For now, that answer remains as elusive as justice itself.

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

The most likely outcome is that AI and robots make everyone wealthy. In fact, far wealthier than the richest person on Earth ☐
By this, I mean that people will have access to everything from medical care that is superhuman to games that are far more fun that what exists today. We do need to make sure that AI cares deeply about truth and beauty for this to be the probable future. ~ Elon Musk, American Entrepreneur



India-US LPG Energy Cooperation-A New Chapter in Tariff Tensions, Diplomatic Balance, and Global Trade Equations

KISHAN BHAWNANI

The new agreement between India and the US on energy trade, particularly in the field of LPG (liquefied petroleum gas), is not only economically significant but also reflects geopolitical dynamics, tariff wars, access to agricultural markets, and the changing framework of global trade policies. In recent years, India-US relations have witnessed periods of cooperation and tension, especially after former US President Donald Trump increased tariffs on several Indian products. In such a scenario, this massive LPG import agreement, signed for one year, is being considered a positive step in bilateral relations. Advocate Kishan Sanmukhdas Bhawana, Gondia, Maharashtra, believe that while this agreement covers only 10 percent of India’s total annual needs, its diplomatic language and strategic message are much greater. India is ensuring domestic energy security, while the United States is gaining new technological and commercial entry into the Indian market. Furthermore, this agreement is being seen as a signal of a potential future trade deal, tariff reduction, and improved India-US relations.

Friends, if we consider “Made in America” LPG in Indian Kitchens: A New Dimension of Energy Security and Trade, India is among the countries with the fastest-growing domestic LPG usage. Currently, approximately 90 percent of

Indian households use LPG, and 65 percent of this LPG is imported. Only 35 percent of India’s domestic needs are produced domestically. Therefore, it was strategically imperative for India to add new sources of LPG imports to diversify its energy supply chain and reduce supply risks. The United States is the world’s largest producer of shale gas and is seeking to expand its energy exports. In this context, India’s one-year agreement to import 2.2 million tons of LPG from the United States is not only commercial but also strategic. This agreement gives the United States its first real entry into the Indian energy market. The United States has long wanted India to open its market to its agricultural products, particularly wheat, corn, soy, and dairy. However, India has consistently resisted this move, citing the sensitivity of the agricultural sector and the livelihoods of millions of farmers. As a result, the US, indignantly, raised tariffs on Indian products by up to 50 percent. Now, the LPG agreement provides the United States with a “small but significant economic entry,” which is likely to ease the Trump administration’s trade tensions and move toward larger agreements in the future.

Friends, if we consider the India-US LPG Agreement: A One-Year Contract, But a Foundation for Broader Future Trade Cooperation, the new deal will see India pur-

chase approximately 2.2 million tons of LPG from the United States. This volume represents only 10 percent of India’s annual LPG consumption, but its international political and economic significance is far greater. Why is this agreement significant? This is the first time the United States is directly entering India’s domestic energy market. This agreement is for one year, but it is being considered the backdrop for a larger, long-term agreement. Amid tariff disputes, this is a step toward restoring trust between the two countries. This indicates that India now wants to further secure its energy supply chain with Western countries, especially the United States. This deal could usher in a new era of cooperation between India and the United States, where the US will increase energy exports and India will diversify its import sources. India has also sent a message that it will allow the US access to its market, but not in sensitive sectors like agriculture.

Friends, let’s discuss India’s Growing LPG Imports: Domestic Energy Policy, Ujjwala Yojana, and Dependence on Gulf Countries. To understand this, LPG use in India has increased rapidly over the past decade. The biggest reason for this is the government’s Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, under which millions of poor families were provided subsidized LPG connections. This has also led rural and low-income families to

switch to safer cooking fuel. India’s Major LPG Import Sources (2024): UAE - 8.1 million tons; Qatar - 5 million tons; Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are important suppliers. These figures clearly demonstrate India’s significant LPG supply dependence on the Gulf region. Given geopolitical tensions, wars, threats to shipping routes, and price fluctuations, India needed new import sources. In this context, importing LPG from the US is a strong step towards India’s energy supply security. Furthermore, this agreement sends a message that India wants to rebalance its relationship, despite the Trump administration’s tariffs on Indian agricultural products. This deal also indicates that despite the US’s tariff hikes, both India and the US will remain major markets for each other. India is a major hub for energy exports and other technological deals for the US.

Friends, let’s discuss: Will the LPG Agreement pave the way for a trade deal? To understand the potential shift in the Modi-Trump equation, the natural question is: Can this LPG agreement pave the way for a comprehensive trade deal between India and the US? According to experts and diplomats, this has three key implications: (a) The beginning of trust restoration - Distrust between the two countries had increased following tariff disputes, agricultural market tensions, and US displeasure over energy purchases from Russia.

Nation-Building Is a Collective Responsibility, Not a Leader-Driven Project: Mohan Bhagwat

GUWAHATI

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat on Wednesday, November 19, underscored that the organisation's strength lies in voluntary participation, not compulsion. "The RSS is an entirely voluntary organisation. There is no entry fee, no paperwork, no pressure. Anyone may join, and anyone may leave—no one is stopped," he said, reiterating the Sangh's long-held stance on openness and individual choice.

Addressing a gathering, Bhagwat said the RSS sees its primary role as contributing to the making of a strong, confident, and morally guided India. But he stressed that



no nation can rely solely on political leadership or government machinery for its rise. "Leaders, parties, slogans, and governments are merely facilitators. The true engine of a nation's progress is its society," he remarked.

He emphasised that unity and strong values form the backbone of a resilient society capable of driving sustained national growth.

Reflecting on India's cultural fabric, Bhagwat noted that the country thrives on its extraordinary plurality of languages, regions, customs, and deities. This diversity, he said, is not a source of division but a symbol of India's civilisational ethos. "Our identity is the acceptance of diversity.

We have many differences, yet we honour and respect them all," he said. Elaborating further, Bhagwat contrasted India's worldview with that of countries where ideological singularity prevails. "Some nations insist that only one ideology is right. In India, we accept that people who believe in God and those who do not both have a place. Each one may say, 'My path is right,' but they also say, 'Your path is right for you.' We walk together without conflict," he observed. He concluded by asserting that India has existed as a cultural nation since ancient times, bound not by political borders but by shared civilisational values—an identity he described as eternal and enduring.

UPPL's NDA future uncertain as Brahma flags BPF induction, 2026 poll plans

KOKRAJHAR

The future of the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) hangs in the balance after the inclusion of one Bodoland People's Party (BPF) legislator in the NDA ministry headed by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

State Minister UG Brahma said that the UPPL would remain in the NDA until the 2026 State Assembly elections. Brahma stated that the BJP and UPPL signed an agreement before the 2021 Assembly polls to collaborate for five years. As part of the deal, the UPPL would remain in the NDA until the next Assembly elections.

He said that the NDA partners are scheduled to meet by the end of this year to decide the future course of action, and the fate of the UPPL's role in the NDA is likely to be decided in that meeting.

At the same time, Brahma said that inducting a BPF legislator was the decision of the BJP and the UPPL has nothing to say about it. He pointed out

that just before the recently concluded BTC polls, the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) and several other organisations wanted the BPF and UPPL to join hands.

The UPPL was keen on such a move, but the BPF did not show any interest. He said that long-term association with the BPF, under the present circumstances, would be difficult.

On the debacle of the UPPL in the BTC polls, Brahma said that the vote share of the UPPL has not decreased. But as the UPPL was considered close to the BJP, the people of the minority community voted for the BPF.

He also said that there was no pre-poll alliance between the BJP and UPPL before the BTC polls. "In the 2020 BTC polls, the BJP and UPPL did not have a poll alliance and contested polls separately. We only had a post-poll alliance," he added. With its fate in the NDA uncertain, the UPPL has started preparations to contest the 2026 Assembly elections alone if required. Brahma said that the party would contest a few seats even outside the BTC area.

BJP seeks Special Intensive Revision of Sikkim electoral rolls under Article 371(F)

KRC TIMES WEB DESK

GANGTOK: The Bharatiya Janata Party has formally asked for a Special Intensive Revision of Sikkim's electoral rolls, invoking Article 371(F) of the Constitution, which grants special protections to the state's indigenous population. The party submitted a detailed memorandum to the Chief Electoral Officer, laying out its legal and constitutional grounds for the demand, BJP spokesperson Sangay Gyatso Bhutia said on Tuesday.

Bhutia said the revision must reflect the provisions of Article 371(F), the Sikkim Citizenship Order Act of 1975, and the Representation of the Sikkim Subject Act of 1974. He said the party views this as essential to safeguarding Sikkim's identity and the rights of its native residents.

Reaffirming its "Sikkim and Sikkimese first" position, the BJP criticised other political parties for what it described as a troubling silence on the matter. It urged voters to understand the significance of updating the rolls and said it would continue to track the progress of the Special Intensive Revision to ensure the interests of the Sikkimese people are upheld.

Last month, the Election Commission of India announced Special Intensive Revision exercises in 12 states and Union Territories, including four heading for elections next year.

Assam govt releases 2026 board exam schedule for Class 10 and 12

GUWAHATI

In a major update for lakhs of students across Assam, the state government on Wednesday announced the starting dates for the HSLC (Class 10) and Higher Secondary (Class 12) examinations for 2026.

With the academic calendar entering its final phase, the announcement brings clarity and relief to students, teachers, and educational institutions preparing for the board exams.

Education Minister Ranaj Pegu provided further details specifically for HSLC candidates. In a post on X on Tuesday, he wrote:

"The HSLC (Matriculation) Examination 2026 is scheduled to begin on 10 February 2026 and will continue until 27 February 2026. The examination schedule for practical subjects will be issued in due course, ensuring adequate time for schools and students to

prepare accordingly.

Pegu also confirmed the schedule for the Higher Secondary final examination, stating:

The announcement of both theoretical and practical exam schedules will enable schools to finalize preparations, including internal assessments, practical arrangements, and pre-board sessions.

According to education experts, the early release of the schedules allows students to organize a structured revision plan ahead of the examinations.

The education department has urged students to stay updated through official notifications. Assam's academic community has widely appreciated the government's timely communication, which provides clarity for parents, teachers, and students alike.

Along with the announcements, the official examination timetable has also been released.

Assam govt to bring "Anti-Polygamy Bill" in legislative assembly on Nov 25

GUWAHATI

Guwahati Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has announced that the state government will bring the "Anti-Polygamy Bill" in the Assam Legislative Assembly on November 25.

Under this bill, if an individual is involved in more than one marriage, they will be sentenced to 7 years of jail, the Chief Minister added.

"On 25th November, we will bring the Anti-Polygamy Bill before the Assam Assembly. If someone goes through more than one marriage, they will be sentenced to 7 years of jail," Chief Minister Sarma told reporters while visiting Swahid Smarak Khetra.

Asked about a bill on 'love jihad', Assam Chief Minister said, "Process to bring in a Bill over that is also underway."

Earlier on November 9, the

Assam Cabinet approved the "The Assam Prohibition of Polygamy Bill, 2025", which aims to prohibit and eliminate the practices of polygamy and polygamous marriage in the state,

except in Sixth Scheduled areas.

Chief Minister Sarma announced that the bill will be introduced in the Assam Assembly session on November 25 for passage.



"Polygamy is prohibited in respect of the person who shall not marry if he has a living spouse or is not legally separated from the other spouse by following due procedure of law or is a party to a marriage which is not yet dissolved or annulled by a decree of divorce. The Assam Prohibition of Polygamy Bill, 2025, further seeks to provide compensation to the victim women as they have to suffer immense pain and hardship due to polygamous marriage. To save the society from the scourge of such practices, this Bill has been framed with the avowed objective to streamline the society," the Assam Chief Minister said in a press conference held at Lok Sewa Bhawan in Guwahati.

He further said that, under the bill, a provision of 7 years of rigorous imprisonment will be there against those persons who will engage in marriage for the second time or more.

'BJP's Biggest Liability': Gaurav Gogoi Accuses Assam CM of Bringing in Out-of-State Voters Ahead of 2026 Polls

GUWAHATI

Assam Congress president Gaurav Gogoi on Wednesday launched a strong attack on Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, alleging that the state government was attempting to insert voters from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar into Assam's electoral rolls ahead of the 2026 assembly elections.

Speaking at a party event in Dhubri, Gogoi claimed Sarma had become "the biggest liability for the BJP," accusing him of "desperately trying to include the names of people from other states in the voters list."

His remarks come on the heels of the Election Commission's



directive for a special summary revision of electoral rolls, with January 1, 2026 designated as the qualifying date. The revision aims to create a clean, accurate and updated voter list ahead of next year's polls.

Gogoi urged political parties, media groups, and civil society organisations to remain vigilant. "People from other states must not be allowed to influence the upcoming elections," he said, asserting that the Congress would contest the polls not merely to improve its tally but "to come to power and safeguard the interests of the people."

The Congress leader further claimed that the chief minister

was in "deep trouble," hinting at possible political outreach efforts by Sarma. According to Gogoi, Sarma had already sought the support of AIUDF chief Badruddin Ajmal, and it was "quite possible" that AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi might soon step in "to bail him out."

Projecting confidence ahead of the 2026 battle, Gogoi said the opposition's alliance-building efforts were well underway. Eight parties - the Congress, CPI(M), Rajior Dal, Assam Jatiya Parishad, CPI, CPI(ML), Jatiya Dal-Asom, and the All Party Hill Leaders Conference - have agreed to form a joint front to take on the BJP in next year's elections.

Meghalaya CM inaugurates new OT at Sohra CHC, lays foundation for Sohra Market Phase-II

KRC TIMES WEB DESK

SOHRA: Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma on Wednesday inaugurated the new Operation Theatre at the Sohra Community Health Centre and laid the foundation stone for Phase-II of the Sohra Market project. The programme was attended by Health Minister Wailadmi Shylla, MLAs Balajied Kupar Synrem and Gavin M. Mylliem, senior officials, CHC staff, community leaders and local residents.

Speaking at the event, Sangma urged officials to work with purpose, not habit. He recalled that Meghalaya's maternal mortality rate stood at 230 in 2018, the highest in the country at the time, and outlined measures introduced since then, including the daily support scheme for pregnant women, improved transport services and safe motherhood homes. He also announced that the state will move to Outcome-Based Budgeting, which will allocate funds to health centres based on performance and specific needs. The Chief Minister highlighted ongoing infrastructure upgrades, including the 2,000 crore World Bank-funded Umtyngar-Mawmsmai road. He said Sohra has been selected by the Prime Minister's Office, the DoNER Ministry and the Tourism Department as the first location in the state—and the country—to be developed as a world-class tourist destination. Health Minister Wailadmi Shylla said the region has received focused attention in recent years but added that maternal mor-



ality remains a concern. He outlined schemes such as CMSMS, transit homes and transport support, and announced the recent appointment of 34 doctors, with recruitment in progress for 150 more.

Shella MLA Balajied Kupar Synrem thanked CHC staff and community members for their cooperation, while Sohra MLA Gavin M. Mylliem noted that 8 percent of the state budget goes to health. He said 12 crore has been sanctioned for Sohra Market Phase-II and 4 crore under MOTA for Phase-I to boost local trade and support shopkeepers.

The programme was chaired by M.A. Challam, ADC and in-charge SDO of the Sohra Civil Sub-Division. DMHO Dr. A.J.O. Kharduit delivered the welcome address, noting the CHC's NQAS and Laqshya certifications, while Senior Specialist Dr. K. Khamaior outlined the centre's progress, including zero maternal deaths since 2017.

The new Operation Theatre and the market expansion project mark important steps in strengthening healthcare and local economic development in Sohra.

Mizoram completes 58% biometric enrolment of Myanmar refugees across 11 districts

AIZAWL

Mizoram has completed 58.15 per cent biometric enrolment of over 31,000 Myanmar refugees taking shelter across all 11 districts of the state, a Home Department official said on Wednesday.

The biometric and biographic details of about 10.84 per cent of asylum seekers from Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) have also been collected, the official said.

He said the biometric enrolment of Myanmar and Bangladesh refugees began in the latter part of July based on a directive from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), using the 'Foreigners Identification Portal & Biometric Enrolment'.

A total of 31,214 people from Myanmar are currently taking shelter in all 11 districts of the state, with East Mizoram's Champhai district, bordering Myanmar, hosting the highest number.

A total of 2,354 refugees from the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh have also taken shelter mainly in Lawngtlai district, which borders both



Myanmar and Bangladesh, as well as in the adjoining Lunglei district and Thenzawl town of central Mizoram's Serchhip district, he said.

Additionally, 6,953 internally displaced people from Manipur are cur-

rently taking shelter in different parts of the state, he added.

However, the number of refugees, particularly those from Myanmar, keeps changing almost daily due to constant cross-border movement, he

said.

Out of the 31,214 Myanmar refugees in Mizoram, biometric data of over 18,000 (58.15%) have been collected since July.

Biometric and biographic details of over 200 out of 2,354 Bangladesh refugees have also been captured so far, he said.

The official said district teams tasked with collecting biometric data are facing numerous challenges, including technical snags and the unavailability or weakness of internet connectivity in remote villages, resulting in the process moving at a snail's pace.

While it is easier to collect data from refugees living in relief camps, it is difficult to reach those staying with relatives, friends, or in rented houses, he said.

He also clarified that there is no specific deadline for the completion of the entire exercise.

The Myanmar nationals, mostly from Chin State, fled to Mizoram following the military coup in the neighbouring country in February 2021, while the asylum seekers from Bangladesh's Bawm tribe entered the state after a military offensive against an ethnic insurgent group in 2022.

The Chins of Myanmar and the Bawm tribe of Bangladesh share close ethnic ties with the Mizos.

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US approves USD 93 million sale of anti-tank missiles, Excalibur rounds to India



NEW DELHI

The United States has approved a USD 93 million weapons sale to India, paving the way for New Delhi to receive 100 FGM-148 Javelin anti-tank missiles, 25 lightweight command launch units, and 216 M982A1 Excalibur precision-guided artillery rounds. The Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) has formally notified the US Congress of the proposed transfer.

According to the DSCA, the package also includes lifecycle support, operator training, security inspections, refurbishing services for the launch units, and other related elements necessary to ensure full operational capability. The US agency noted that India would have "no difficulty absorbing these articles and services into its armed forces." The transaction, valued at roughly USD 93 million, comprises USD 46 million for the Javelin systems and USD 47 million for the Excalibur rounds.

The statement says that this

sale will support the foreign policy and national security objectives of the United States by helping to strengthen the US-Indian strategic relationship and to improve the security of a major defence partner, which continues to be an important force for political stability, peace, and economic progress in the Indo-Pacific and South Asia regions.

The sale is intended to strengthen the US-India strategic partnership and bolster India's capability to meet current and future threats. The DSCA emphasised that the transfer would not alter the basic military balance in the region. It said that at present, the US government is not aware of any offset arrangements for the sale; any such agreements will be determined later between India and the manufacturers.

The FGM-148 Javelin, produced jointly by RTX Corporation and Lockheed Martin, is a third-generation, shoulder-launched, top-attack anti-tank missile. Designed to strike vehicles from above,

where armour is weakest, the system features a soft-launch mechanism allowing it to be fired safely from enclosed spaces such as bunkers or buildings. Each system consists of a disposable launch tube paired with a reusable command launch unit, enabling rapid deployment in combat conditions.

The Javelin has been combat-proven on multiple battlefields, most notably in Ukraine, where Russian T-72 and T-90 tanks were destroyed in large numbers.

The Excalibur rounds provide GPS-guided precision for artillery units, allowing Indian forces to increase first-strike accuracy and reduce collateral damage. The DSCA said the sale includes ancillary items such as primers, propellant charges, Portable Electronic Fire Control Systems (PEFCS) with Improved Platform Integration Kit (PIK), technical assistance, data, and repair-and-return services.

The US Congress now has a review period to raise any objections before the sale can be finalised.

Modi to attend G20 summit in South Africa; focus on inclusive growth, climate action, critical minerals, AI



NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will travel to Johannesburg, South Africa, from November 21 to 23 to participate in the 20th G20 Leaders' Summit, the External Affairs Ministry announced on Wednesday.

The gathering, hosted by South Africa, marks the fourth consecutive G20 Summit held in

the Global South, which highlights a continued shift toward global economic and governance issues.

Prime Minister Modi will present India's positions across the full spectrum of the G20 agenda, and is scheduled to speak in all three formal sessions of the summit.

The first session, "Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth Leaving No One Behind," will focus on strengthening global economic recovery, expanding trade opportunities, improving development financing and addressing the growing debt burden on vulnerable economies. Sources said New Delhi will emphasise the need for equitable

growth and fairer access to global markets. The second session, "A Resilient World - the G20's Contribution," will address disaster risk reduction, climate change, just energy transitions and food systems. India is expected to highlight its experience in scaling renewable energy, climate adaptation strategies and international initiatives such as the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).

The final session, "A Fair and a Just Future for All," will take up critical minerals, decent work and the governance of artificial intelligence. India is likely to push for transparent and diversified supply chains for critical minerals and stress the need for safe, inclusive and development-oriented AI frameworks. On the sidelines of the summit, Modi is expected to hold bilateral meetings with several world leaders. He will also take part in the India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Leaders' Meeting, hosted by South Africa, signalling continued engagement among the three major democracies of the Global South.

The visit provides an opportunity for the Global South countries to reinforce their role in shaping global economic and technological governance at a moment of heightened geopolitical flux.

Washington has announced that it would skip the first ever G20 summit to be held in Africa, citing allegations that the host nation which was once governed by a white-minority apartheid regime until 1994 now discriminates against white citizens, a charge vehemently denied by the South African government.

INTERNATIONAL

Bangladesh HC orders committee to review security for courts, judges after Hasina's death penalty verdict

DHAKA

Bangladesh High Court has ordered a review of security measures for courts and judges in view of sporadic, clandestine violence in the capital and elsewhere over the death penalty verdict against deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, a court official said Wednesday.

The High Court asked the Supreme Court's registrar general to form a committee to assess existing security measures for the Supreme Court, subordinate courts and all judges across the country and submit a report in 90 days, a lawyer familiar with the development said.

Unlike the federal structures as in India, unitary Bangladesh's Supreme Court comprises two divisions - the High Court and the Appellate Division, which is the apex court.

The lawyer said the bench comprising Justice Sikder Mahmudur Razi and Justice Raziuddin Ahmed on Tuesday simultaneously issued a rule demanding an explanation about inaction by authorities concerned in ensuring overall security of judges, their courtrooms and residences, within the Supreme Court compound and all subordinate civil and criminal courts and tribunals across the country.

Hasina was on Monday sentenced to death in absentia by a special tribunal for crimes against humanity over her government's brutal crackdown on student-led protests last year.

Even as Awami League has called for nationwide demonstrations to protest the death sentence handed down to its chief, security forces continued to maintain a strict vigil across major cities on Wednesday.

Lawyer Mehedi Hasan filed the writ while two fellow lawyers told the court that the authorities had failed to ensure adequate security for judges, their courtrooms and residences across subordinate civil and criminal courts



and tribunals.

They referred to past incidents, including the killing of two judges in 2005 by Islamist militants, and the recent murder of Rajshahi Metropolitan Sessions Judge's son, as ominous signs for the judiciary.

Also, since the ouster of the Hasina government on August 5, 2024, the security in court premises appears to be of major concern as several arrested Awami League leaders, party members and defending lawyers were assaulted during their court appearance.

The Dhaka Tribune on Wednesday headlined a report 'Security concerns grow at Dhaka's lower courts,' which drew attention to a November 11 letter by Dhaka's Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) Mohammad Mostafizur Rahman

to Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) seeking enhanced security at Dhaka's lower courts pointing out the growing panic among judges, lawyers, court staff and litigants.

The CMM noted that judges in particular often needed to work late hours, and they needed safe passage when returning home.

The Bangladesh Judicial Service Association, in a recent statement, had demanded improved security for judges nationwide, following the killing of the judge's son during an attack at his residence in northwestern Rajshahi earlier in the month.

Son of Rajshahi Metropolitan Sessions Judge Mohammad Abdur Rahman was stabbed to death at his residence on November 13 while his

wife was critically injured in the attack.

A wave of arson and crude bomb attacks since November 10 at multiple locations across Dhaka and elsewhere targeting public transport; institutions linked to interim government chief Muhammad Yunus, including several branches of his Grameen Bank, his advisory council members and the student-led National Citizen Party (NCP) has sparked public anxiety.

Meanwhile, secretary general of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir on Tuesday said, "We are living in a state of instability."

BNP is one of the major political parties now in the changed political landscape in absence of Hasina's now disbanded Awami League.

Trump says will meet with New York mayor-elect Mamdani on Friday



WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump said he will host New York's mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani for a meeting Friday, after fiercely attacking the 34-year-old self-described Democratic Socialist during his recent campaign.

Trump, while repeating his false claim that Mamdani is a "communist," said on his Truth Social platform that the meeting "will take place at the Oval Office on Friday, November 21st."

Mamdani's spokesperson Dora Pecek confirmed the meeting in a statement. "As is customary for an incoming mayoral administration, the Mayor-elect plans to meet with the President in Washington to discuss public safety, economic security and the affordability agenda that over one million New Yorkers voted for just two weeks ago," Pecek said Wednesday.

Trump's meeting with Mamdani marks the coming

together of two men raised in the Queens borough of New York, but their similarities may end there.

While Trump frequently touts the record-breaking gains on Wall Street during his presidency, Mamdani's view on the economy extends beyond the bullish financial markets in downtown Manhattan to an affordability crisis facing a city of over 8 million people.

Trump, while repeating his false claim that Mamdani is a "communist," said on his Truth Social platform that the meeting "will take place at the Oval Office on Friday, November 21st."

Trump signs bill to release Jeffrey Epstein case files after fighting it for months.

As the first mayoral candidate to surpass the one-million-vote mark in New York since 1969, Mamdani campaigned on pledges of affordable housing and childcare, as well as free rides on city buses and city-run grocery stores.

Experts have questioned Mamdani's ability to deliver on his idealistic and broad-reaching platform.

Virulently anti-immigrant Trump has derided Mamdani's South Asian name, and threatened to cut federal funding for New York upon the Muslim's election to run America's largest city.

"Mamdani, whatever the hell his name is," Trump said recently - deliberately mispronouncing the Uganda-born politician's surname.

Mamdani has not backed down from Trump, calling out the 79-year-old Republican during his victory rally earlier this month.

"Donald Trump, since I know you're watching, I have four words for you - turn the volume up!" he said to his cheering supporters.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt later confirmed the president had indeed watched Mamdani speak.

Contours of a Civilizational Claim: Mohhan Bhagwat's Guwahati Message in Perspective

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When Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Sarsanghchalak Dr. Mohan Bhagwat addressed an exclusive audience of scholars, editors, entrepreneurs, and public thinkers in Guwahati, the occasion carried significance far beyond the ritual of the organisation's ongoing centenary commemorations. In a political moment defined by anxieties over identity, demographic shifts, and the contested idea of nationhood, his remarks attempted a reframing of an old yet evolving ideological claim—that India's civilizational core is capacious enough to encompass diversity, yet distinct enough to shape a unifying national consciousness.

The speech, therefore, becomes more than a ceremonial address. It emerges as an ideological artefact—an articulation of the Sangh's sense of continuity, its anxieties, and its broader vision for the republic in an era of transformation.

Dr. Bhagwat's statement that "anyone who loves Bharat is a Hindu" is not new within the lexicon of the RSS, but its delivery in the culturally layered context of Assam carried a sharpened intentionality. By reframing "Hindu" as a civilizational category rather than a theological one, he attempted to nudge the concept toward universality. The move is both strategic and symbolic.

In a country where identity is lived at the intersection of language, ethnicity, tribe, faith, and region, the proposition of a singular cultural umbrella may appeal to those seeking cohesion. Yet for others—especially communities whose histories are marked by cultural preservation struggles—such civilizational claims can appear homogenising.

Assam and the wider Northeast have long navigated these tensions: between indigeneity and migration, cultural assertion and national integration, autonomy and central influence. It is within this delicate terrain that Bhagwat's universalised "Hindu" is situated.

One of the most significant parts of the Guwahati speech was Dr. Bhagwat's assertion that India does not require formal recognition as a "Hindu Rashtra" because its civilizational character already renders it one. This is a rhetorical pivot. It sidesteps the contentious political debate on the constitutional nature of the state and shifts emphasis toward intangible civilizational continuity.

By redefining the debate in cultural rather than juridical terms, the RSS chief attempts to position Hindu Rashtra not as a legal re-configuration but as a description of India's inherent ethos. But this framing is also where deeper questions emerge.

India's constitutional framework is deliberately pluralistic, and its political architecture—especially in the Northeast—is built upon protections for tribal, linguistic, and religious minorities. The assertion of a civilizational Hindu identity as synonymous with Indian identity, therefore, risks being perceived as erasing the distinctiveness of these communities, even when delivered with conciliatory intent.

Seeking to soften the image of the RSS as a political force, Dr. Bhagwat returned to a foundational theme: *Yakhti Nirman*, or individual character-building. This has long been the Sangh's self-description, even as its political influence—especially through the BJP—has expanded dramatically.

In Guwahati, he framed the organisation's work as social, not political, emphasising the shaping of disciplined, service-oriented individuals. Yet this assertion sits within an undeniable reality: the RSS's organisational growth. With more than 56,000 shakhas, increasing outreach in the Northeast, and rising visibility in educational, cultural, and tribal welfare initiatives, the Sangh's social activities often blur into political influence.

Still, the emphasis on individual reform, discipline, and community engagement aligns with the RSS's internal grammar. It allows the organisation to present itself as a moral force rather than merely a political one.

Panch Parivartan: A Social Blueprint
Dr. Bhagwat outlined what he termed Panch Parivartan-five transformative areas the Sangh prioritises:

1. Social harmony
2. Family awakening
3. Civic discipline
4. Self-reliance
5. Environmental protection

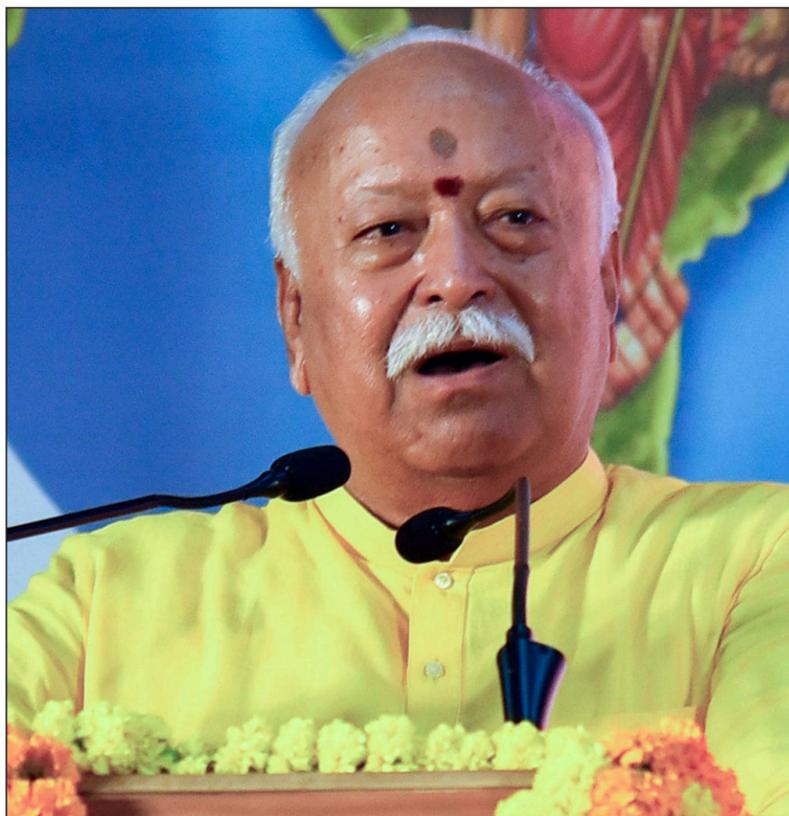
In many ways, this framework resembles a social policy outline, even if couched in cultural language.

Issues like family fragmentation and the waning of oral cultural memory are genuine across India. Census data and sociological studies show rising nuclear families and declining intergenerational transmission of traditions.



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His advocacy for strengthening family structures and storytelling, therefore, taps into shared anxieties. Yet this approach also invites cri-



tique. Culture, memory, and family bonds are shaped by economic pressures, urban migration, education pathways, and gender roles—complex forces that nostalgia or civilizational rhetoric alone cannot remedy.

One of the more locally resonant and politically significant moves in Bhagwat's speech was the invocation of regional icons such as Lachit Borphukan and Srimanta Shankardeva. The attempt to weave these figures into a national narrative is meant to honour Assam's cultural contributions and ensure they occupy a central space in India's collective memory.

For a region long demanding recognition beyond peripherality, this gesture may resonate.

Yet the move requires careful navigation. Assam and the broader Northeast contain intricate cultural ecosystems shaped by tribal histories, migration-era wounds, linguistic identities, and indigenous traditions. Nationalising local icons risks being perceived as assimilationist if not done with sensitivity to local contexts.

Demography, Migration, and the Assam Question

Perhaps the most delicate part of the address concerned demography—long a charged issue in Assam. Illegal migration, land pressure, and religious conversions have shaped political agitation, social distrust, and even violence.

Dr. Bhagwat's cautionary tone on demographic balance and his reference to a possible three-child norm for Hindus reflect ongoing concerns within the Sangh. These views are often supported by selective interpretations of National Family Health Survey data.

The demographic reality, however, is layered:

“ Assam's overall fertility rate has declined consistently across communities for nearly twenty years.

“ Differences in fertility between religious groups have narrowed significantly.

“ Illegal immigration remains a legitimate concern, but it coexists with the reality of internal migration, economic mobility, and structural demographic transformation.

Any responsible public discourse must acknowledge both sets of facts.

Digital Echo Chambers and Youth Vulnerability

Dr. Bhagwat's warning about the dangers of social media, particularly for young people, was perhaps the least ideological and most universally relatable part of his speech. The Northeast is among the most digitally connected but also politically volatile regions in India. Studies by media research organisations have found that misinformation, identity mobilisation, and polarising narratives spread rapidly across ethnically sensitive landscapes.

In this context, advocacy for digital responsibility and critical consumption of information is not ideological grandstanding—it is a social necessity.

Revisiting History: Freedom Struggle and the RSS

The speech also sought to reclaim historical space by highlighting the participation of Dr. K.B. Hedgewar and other swayamsevaks in the Non-Cooperation, Civil Disobedience, and Quit India movements. The RSS has long attempted to challenge academic narratives that question or downplay its role in the freedom struggle.

The truth, however, lies in a complex grey zone:

but it reflects a deeper aspiration within the Sangh. The region, with its multiplicity of tribes, faiths, languages, and customary systems, represents a living example of coexistence.

Yet unity here has also been forged through:

- “ autonomy movements,
- “ ethnicity-based political assertion,
- “ demands for territorial recognition,
- “ negotiated federalism.

If the RSS seeks to deepen its presence in the region, an honest engagement with this complex history—not merely its harmonious aspects—will be essential.

A Speech as a Mirror to an Evolving Ideology

Viewed holistically, Dr. Bhagwat's Guwahati address offers a window into the RSS at a critical juncture in its hundred-year journey. The tone was confident, expansive, and at moments conciliatory. It attempted to bridge cultural nationalism with contemporary anxieties about demography, digital culture, family, and historical recognition.

But the speech also left unresolved tensions:

“ Can a civilizational definition of "Hindu" truly accommodate India's multilayered identities?

“ Can cultural nationalism coexist without friction with constitutional pluralism?

“ Can demographic concerns be articulated without sliding into majoritarian narratives?

“ Can regional icons be nationalised without flattening local histories?

These are not questions for the Sangh alone. They touch the core of India's evolving self-understanding.

As India enters what Dr. Bhagwat sees as the next chapter of its civilizational journey, the Guwahati speech offers both a proposition and an invitation. It presents a cultural vision of nationhood-rooted in heritage, unity, family, and discipline—but also challenges the republic to grapple with the contradictions inherent in blending civilizational identity with constitutional modernity.

The strength of a democracy lies in debate, not unanimity. Bhagwat's message, therefore, is most valuable not as a definitive ideological template but as a stimulus for dialogue—about identity, belonging, history, and the meaning of Bharat in the 21st century.

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North East Integration Rally
 Peace | Progress | Prosperity
 2026

Art Competition

to promote
North East Integration Rally 2026
 at Haflong

Vivekananda Vidyalaya
 23 NOV' 2025
 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Contact for Participation
 8812071842 / 6003291811

This is part of Climate Change & Green Deeds Campaign of NEIR 2026

CLIMATE CHANGE AND GREEN DEEDS

www.helpsocietyngo.org | www.northeastintegrationrally.in



BARAK FESTIVAL

JANUARY 10-12, 2025

ACTIVITY PROGRAM





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



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



11 JAN
Barak Valley Conclave
 Potential Issues and Challenges of Barak Valley by different stakeholders.
 Includes: MOUs, and 20 general discussion topics for Barak valley. (Workshop, Case Study, Seminar, and presentation) available. Participation through invitation only. 5 different awards are provided.



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



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



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'.
 Workshop: Journalism, Photography, Interviewing & Content Creation, Sports, Journalism, Editors, Journalists.

Barak Festival
 Adventure Sports, Art & Culture Promotion



REGISTER HERE

Contact:
 WP: 0721300010
info@krcfoundation.org

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:
 WP: 0721300010
info@krcfoundation.org

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



11 JAN
film festival
 Award-Giving Ceremony | Film from Mizoram. 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 and Oil and Saw Paper Campaign



5E SUCCESS

STUDENT INTERNSHIP

Discover valuable experience and learn more about the Industry.

applies

- Outreach Executive
- Event Management
- Programme Coordinator

APPLY NOW | WP: 0721300010 | www.krcfoundation.org