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### PERSPECTIVE

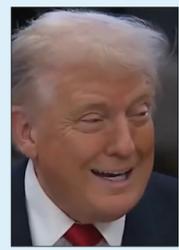
Goals for a better life: More water, less soda. More fruits, less sugar. More doing, less talking. More laughter, less anger. More sleep, less scrolling. More walking, less driving. More praying, less worrying.  
- Harsh Goenka, Chairman, RPG Enterprises

## Tripura launches Cyber Security Policy 2025 to safeguard citizens' data, IT systems

**AGARTALA**  
The Tripura government, on Tuesday, unveiled its Cyber Security Policy which will serve as a framework for securing the state's IT and ICT systems, strengthening institutional mechanisms and capacity building. Secretary of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, S Krishnan, unveiled the Tripura Cyber Security Policy, 2025 at Pragya Bhavan, on Tuesday. "The most important aspect of the Tripura Cyber Security Policy is to protect the citizens of Tripura from potential cyber attack making it sure that data stays safe. It is an important and significant move by the state. It will provide scope to action against any sort of crime that takes place in the state," Krishnan told the press. He said that the Ministry is trying to enhance cyber security space and to adopt own ways the data comes from the verified sources so that people don't suffer due to leakage of data. Krishnan also joined the workshop on the National Cyber Security Exercise titled "Cyber Bharat Setu: Bridging States, Securing Bharat".

The workshop is aimed at strengthening cyber awareness, readiness and response capabilities of the state. The workshop also focused on strengthening cyber resilience through expert-led training, hands-on drills and simulated scenario-based exercises. The policy will also ensure promoting collaborative actions across public and private sectors to ensure a safe and resilient cyberspace in the northeastern state.

### WHO SAID WHAT



US President Donald Trump says, "We're making a deal with India, a much different deal than we had in the past. So right now, they don't love me, but they'll love us again. We're getting a fair deal, just a fair trade deal. We had pretty unfair trade deals... But we're getting close. Scott, I think we're pretty close to doing a deal that's good for everybody, right?" - Donald J. Trump, US President in White House

## Himanta orders action against online terror sympathisers over Red Fort blast



### GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday announced a comprehensive security alert across the state following the deadly explosion near Delhi's Red Fort Metro Station, which claimed at least eight lives and left several injured.

Speaking to reporters in Raha, Sarma said the state police have been directed to intensify surveillance and conduct background checks on individuals from Assam who allegedly ex-

pressed support for the attack on social media. "We have identified a few people who posted messages and emojis glorifying the Delhi blast. Such actions directly promote terrorism," Sarma said. "Their identities are being verified, and if they are from Assam, they will face arrest and prosecution under strict anti-terror laws."

The Chief Minister added that he has instructed the Director General of Police (DGP) to monitor all social media platforms closely and take firm

action against anyone spreading extremist propaganda or sympathizing with terror groups.

Reiterating his government's zero-tolerance stance, Sarma warned that Assam will not allow any form of terror glorification, whether online or offline. "If anyone celebrates violence or loss of innocent lives, they are siding with terrorism, and we will act decisively," he asserted. In response to the Red Fort blast, the state government heightened security in public places, including railway stations, airports, and bus terminals. In Guwahati, police have deployed drones for surveillance, while passengers and vehicles are being subjected to thorough checks.

Officials said these measures aim to ensure public safety and prevent any spillover effects of the national security threat. The blast near Gate No. 1 of Red Fort Metro Station, which occurred inside an Eo van on Monday evening, has triggered nationwide alarm.

The Union Home Ministry has already directed all states to remain on maximum alert and strengthen counter-terror preparedness.

## First Pahalgam and now Delhi: Gaurav Gogoi demands accountability after terror attacks

### GUWAHATI

Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi on November 11 expressed deep sorrow over the recent terror attacks in Pahalgam and Delhi, calling them shocking and deeply painful incidents that highlight the need for stronger security measures and national unity.

In a social media post, Gogoi wrote, "First Pahalgam and now Delhi. It is shocking and deeply painful to see Indian civilians succumbing to terror in 2025."

He said the foremost duty of public servants was to keep citizens safe and extended his condolences to the victims and prayers for the injured. "At this time, the perpetrators and the facts behind this tragedy must be pursued ruthlessly. We cannot avoid introspection and accountability," Gogoi added.

Calling for solidarity in the wake of the attacks, the Congress leader said, "India must remain united and strong at this moment."

Meanwhile, a team of forensic experts and security personnel conducted a detailed inspection of the blast site near Delhi's Red Fort, where a devastating explosion in a Hyundai i20 claimed eight lives and injured several others on Monday, November 10 evening.

In the wake of the tragedy, the Union Home Ministry has convened a high-level review meeting this morning at 9:30 a.m. Home Minister Amit Shah is chairing the meeting, which is being attended by the Intelligence Bureau (IB) Chief, the Home Secretary, the Delhi Police Commissioner, and other senior officials to assess the situation and discuss further security measures.

The explosion occurred around 6:50 p.m. near Gate No. 1 of the Red Fort Metro Station, when the vehicle reportedly halted at a red light. The intensity of the blast destroyed nearby vehicles and caused severe injuries to several passersby, who were immediately rushed to nearby hospitals.

## ABVP sweeps Assam University Students' Union Election 2025, clinches all six top posts



### SILCHAR

ABVP achieved a historic victory in Assam University Students' Union Election 2025, winning all six contested posts and establishing dominance in student politics. Rajkinkar Chakrabarty won the presidency with 1,544 votes, highlighting ABVP's strong presence and his popularity among students. Kaushik Das Gupta secured the General Secretary position with 1,628 votes, the highest among all candidates, reflecting ABVP's consolidated support.

The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) has made a clean sweep in the Assam University Students' Union Election 2025, winning all six contested positions and securing the top leadership posts by significant margins.

Leading the winning team, Rajkinkar Chakrabarty was elected President with 1,544 votes, defeating his nearest rival by a margin of 232 votes.

In another decisive victory, Kaushik Das Gupta triumphed as General Secretary, garnering 1,628 votes—the highest among all candidates—and winning by a margin of 411 votes.

For the Assistant General Secretary (Male) post, Arpan Chakrabarty emerged victorious with 934 votes, surpassing his opponent by 205 votes, while Mimmangsha Koiri secured the Assistant General Secretary (Female) position with 1,370 votes, winning by a close margin of 37 votes.

In cultural and extracurricular leadership, Arup Das won the Magazine Secretary post with 1,542 votes, achieving the largest victory margin of 525 votes, reflecting overwhelming student support. Samar Kant claimed the Sports Secretary seat with 1,418 votes, edging past his rival by 61 votes.

The ABVP's sweeping win is being hailed as a historic moment in the university's electoral history, marking the organization's complete dominance over the student body and reaffirming its strong foothold in Assam University's campus politics.

University officials confirmed that the elections were conducted peacefully with a high voter turnout, and results were announced late in the evening amid jubilant celebrations by ABVP supporters.

## Supreme Court issues notice to Centre, Assam govt on pleas to finalise NRC process

### NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court issued notice on writ petitions filed by Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind and the All Assam Minorities Students' Union (AAMSU), seeking directions to the Centre and the Registrar General of Citizen Registration to complete the long-pending statutory steps required after the publication of the final National Register of Citizens (NRC) for Assam in August 2019.

A Bench of Justices P.S. Narasimha and A.S. Chandurkar sought responses from the Union Government, the Census Commissioner, the Assam Government, and the State NRC Coordinator on the pleas highlighting that no action has been taken in the last six years to operationalise the Final NRC.

Senior advocates Kapil Sibal and Indira Jaising, instructed by advocate Fuzail Ahmad Ayyubi, appearing for the petitioners, submitted that while the Supreme Court had closely monitored the NRC exercise between 2013 and 2019, the authorities have failed to complete the final statutory steps under the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003.

According to the petition,



the Centre has not issued National Identity Cards to the 3.11 crore individuals included in the Final NRC, nor has it issued rejection slips to the 19 lakh persons excluded from the list to enable them to file appeals before Foreigners' Tribunals.

It added that leaving the NRC process suspended after its publication has resulted in a large population of "uncertain citizens", creating prolonged fear and social distrust. They contend that the NRC, a scientific, data-driven exercise involving verification of over 3.3 crore applications and conducted under the direct gaze of the apex court,

must reach its logical conclusion to uphold constitutional guarantees of equality and due process. The petitioners submitted that illegal immigration concerns in Assam can only be conclusively addressed by completing the NRC in accordance with the statutory framework, and not by keeping the process in limbo despite an expenditure of over Rs 1,600 crore in public funds. The plea prays for the issuance of National Identity Cards to all persons included in the Final NRC and issuance of rejection orders, followed by the commencement of appeals for those left out.

## Nagaland CM urges Centre to revive IISER project, strengthen connectivity and education infrastructure

### KOHIMA

Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio made a strong appeal to the Central government for enhanced support in critical sectors, including infrastructure, education, and connectivity, to ensure equitable development of the state.

Speaking as the guest of honour at the 22nd Annual Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) India Region Zone-III Conference held at the Nagaland Legislative Assembly, Rio urged the Centre to reconsider the establishment of an Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) in Nagaland. The project, announced in the Union Budget 2015-16 but never materialised, already has 200 acres of land earmarked at Sukhovi, near Dimapur Airport.

Rio also called for upgrading the Nagaland Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (NIMSR) into an AIIMS-like institute, arguing that it would significant-



ly improve healthcare access in the state and neighbouring regions.

Highlighting Nagaland's poor railway connectivity, he noted that the state currently has only eight kilometres of railway line, and pressed for the expedi-

ent completion of the Dimapur-Tizit railway project, which will traverse Wokha, Mokochung, Longleng, and Mon districts.

The Chief Minister also sought a review of the Ciethu Greenfield Airport project in Kohima, which was recently shelved due to funding constraints.

Rio lamented that despite possessing rich deposits of cobalt, nickel, natural gas, and petroleum, Nagaland remains resource-constrained as oil exploration continues to be sub judice. He further pointed out that the state lacks national institutions such as IITs or National Law Universities, essential for fostering research and retaining talent.

Expressing concern over the re-imposition of the Protected Area Permit (PAP) in December 2024 for Nagaland, Manipur, and Mizoram, Rio said the move has discouraged investment and hindered economic growth.

"It is imperative that special consider-

ation be accorded to Nagaland in terms of infrastructure, connectivity, education, and institutional development," Rio said, stressing that equal opportunities were vital for the state's meaningful participation in national progress.

Tracing the region's legislative history, Rio recalled that the North Eastern Regional Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (NERCPA) was established in 1996 under the leadership of Late P. A. Sangma and renamed CPA India Region Zone-III in 2018. Nagaland, he said, has played a pivotal role in fostering regional parliamentary cooperation, having hosted the first NERCPA Conference in 1997 and the 10th in 2007.

The Chief Minister commended the Nagaland Legislative Assembly and the CPA Zone-III organisers for successfully hosting the conference and expressed hope that the discussions would further strengthen democracy and cooperation among North Eastern states.

## Testing begins at Northeast's first geothermal well in Arunachal's Dirang

### ITANAGAR

An autonomous organisation under the Arunachal government's Department of Science & Technology has initiated the pumping test of the first geothermal production well at Dirang sub-division in West Kameng district. Also Read - Noney district imposes total ban on hunting and sale of Amur Falcons. The aim of the pumping test is to assess the sustainability and productivity of the subsurface geothermal reservoir, a key precondition for moving ahead with applications such as buildingsized heating and cooling systems, and agro-processing utilities, an official said. Tana Tage, director of the Centre for Earth Sciences & Himalayan Studies (CESHS), said the test marks a transformative step toward clean, renewable and region-specific energy solutions in the Eastern Himalayas.

The operation, which began on Monday, involves scientists and engineers from CESHS under the technical supervision of Rajinder Bhasin, Geotechnical Engineer from the Norwegian Geotechnical Institute (NGI), Oslo, and geothermal-exploration

specialists from Geotropy Iceland. The Dirang site is already recognised as the region's first geothermal production well, following two years of detailed geochemical and structural surveys across western Arunachal Pradesh.

According to reports, the reservoir temperature had been estimated at around 115 °C, placing the site in a medium-to-high enthalpy zone and making it suitable for direct-use applications. International collaboration has been central to the project. CESHS has partnered with the Norwegian Geotechnical Institute (NGI), Iceland's Geotropy, and local drilling services via Guwahati Boring Service (GBS). The successful completion of the pumping test will enable the transition from exploratory drilling to operational deployment of geothermal systems in the Eastern Himalayas, the director said. Potential next steps include deeper drilling operations and the scaling of geothermal-powered infrastructure, with the long-term vision of making Dirang India's first geothermal-powered town, he pointed out.



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## R&D: A PUBLIC & PRIVATE CHALLENGE

Investments in science and technology are vital for building India's capabilities to address developmental challenges and for securing its strategic future. They will determine the nation's capacity to compete in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and quantum computing—especially amid shifting trade policies. This calls for greater investment in cutting-edge research and a stronger culture of innovation across universities, research institutions, and industry. The key question, however, is whether India is investing enough to strengthen its science and technology ecosystem.

Successive governments have repeatedly pledged to raise the gross expenditure on R&D (GERD) from the long-stagnant level of 0.7 percent to at least 2 percent of GDP. Yet, India's GERD-to-GDP ratio has barely moved up for three decades. The country remains far below the OECD average of 2.7 percent, and behind South Korea (4.9 percent), Japan (3.4 percent), and China (2.8 percent).

About 58-60 percent of India's GERD is concentrated in strategic sectors such as atomic energy, space, and defence, leaving only 40 percent for civilian agencies. The university sector—with over 1,100 universities and 48,000 colleges—receives just 7 percent of GERD despite producing more than half of all science and technology publications, while public companies contribute a mere 4 percent. How can India overcome this persistently low level of R&D funding?

S&T Minister Jitendra Singh attributed India's low R&D intensity to "relatively less investment by the private sector". While partly valid, this does not absolve the government of responsibility. Experience from OECD countries, Japan, South Korea, the UK, and China shows a clear pattern: public R&D spending has consistently exceeded 1-1.5 percent of GDP over the past two decades. India, therefore, has a strong case to raise public investment to at least 1 percent of GDP. Market failure theory underscores that large-scale public investment is essential to strengthen basic research and build critical infrastructure.

The government ultimately recognised chronic underinvestment as a structural barrier to atmanirbhar S&T policies. It has launched a series of schemes, including the Anusandhan National Research Foundation, Research and Development Innovation Scheme, and Vigyan Dhara, to the tune of about Rs 4.0 lakh crore for five years. Most of these programmes are not entirely funded through public expenditure—they leverage government support as a catalyst for attracting private investment. For instance, over 70 percent of the ANRF's Rs 1.0 lakh crore budget depends on private industry participation.

Since 2020, the government launched nearly a dozen national missions in critical and emerging technologies such as AI, green hydrogen, semiconductors, electric mobility, quantum, geospatial, biopharma and ocean research. Their success will hinge on the depth and scale of private sector engagement, both in terms of investment and innovation capacity, raising a key question: what if private funding does not materialise?

Private funding for GERD remains a persistent challenge. Industry contributions account for only about 0.3 percent of GDP, whereas in most advanced economies, the private sector invests 1.5-3 percent. A 2024 study by the principal scientific advisor found that, among 1,000 listed firms, only 20 could be classified as genuinely R&D-intensive, underscoring the limited scale and concentration of private research investment. None of India's top firms approach global benchmarks: Infosys invests less than 1 percent of its turnover in R&D, compared to 11 percent among global peers; Wipro (0.65 percent), L&T (0.13 percent), Vedanta (0.02 percent), and Reliance (0.66 percent) show similar patterns. Meanwhile, 70 percent of the world's top 500 MNCs have established global capability centres in India, employing thousands of scientists and engineers. As Naushad Forbes, a former CII president, observed, if foreign firms can leverage India's talent pool so effectively, why have leading domestic firms not made comparable R&D investments?

Indian small and medium enterprises, which contribute significantly to employment, continue to languish with residual R&D support, accounting for only about 1 percent of total industrial R&D. The government should seriously consider increasing the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research's budget by at least 200 percent, reflecting its expanded role in coordinating regional innovation clusters and serving as the R&D backbone for SMEs.

R&D capabilities could also be integrated into the expanded Production-Linked Incentive scheme. While the government offers a 200 percent weighted tax deduction for in-house R&D, there is no robust mechanism to verify whether firms claiming these incentives are genuinely engaged in research. It is high time the department of science and technology adopted international best practices, particularly drawing lessons from South Korea's R&D tax incentive model, to ensure effective targeting and accountability.

The ongoing global trade turbulence is a wake-up call for India's national innovation system. India must act decisively to transform these challenges into opportunities. To achieve meaningful progress in new science and innovation missions, the government should commit to raising public R&D expenditure, while encouraging the private sector to increase its contribution to at least 0.6 percent of GDP within the next three years, with a planned annual growth of 20 percent. Achieving these targets will not only strengthen India's scientific and technological foundations over the coming decade but also safeguard its economic and strategic autonomy amid rising geopolitical uncertainties.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The privilege of a lifetime is to become who you truly are."

- Carl Jung

# ASIM MUNIR'S POWER SURGE SPLITS PAKISTAN MILITARY



RANA BANERJI

Creating a powerful new chief of defence forces has split the Pakistan military into four competing factions, points out Rana Banerji, who headed the Pakistan desk at RA&V.

Even as the parliamentary committee of Pakistan's senate and national assembly—headed jointly by Pakistan Peoples Party Senator Farooq Naik and Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) MP Chaudhry Mahmood Bashir Virk—rushed to approve the 27th amendment to the constitution on Sunday, November 9, evidence surfaced of rising dissent, both from legal circles and within the defence services, against the changes proposed.

The most surprising aspect of the 27th amendment was the emphasis on immunity for life, extended to persons currently in office, including not only Pakistan's president but the army chief.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif scotched an attempt to extend it even to the institution of prime minister.

This revealed unusual insecurity, possibly anticipating a revival of Imran Khan's political fortunes in howsoever distant a future.

An interesting tweet, ascribed to the daily Islamabad Post, alleged, "the internal rift between the Pakistan army and General Asim Munir had reached a critical point".

Not carried in its print edition or on its Web site, the tweet suggests "the ongoing debate over the proposed position of Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) is no longer a matter of simple administrative reform but has evolved into a contest of influence, power, and strategic anxiety".

Apparently, four factions have emerged within the defence forces.

The first faction, supportive of Field Marshal Asim Munir, holds leadership of the unified defence structure is rightful enough, under a strong leader of the army. They argue that a land-experienced chief of defence forces can best synchronise civil-military tasks with the air force and navy's capabilities.

The second faction, reflecting the views of the air force and its supporters, contends that modern warfare is won through technology, air power, drones, and precision

strikes, not through large land armies.

They believe the air force represents Pakistan's most advanced and modern defence component and has played a key role in recent conflicts.

From their perspective, they see the army attempting to seize central control of the entire defence establishment even in domains where it lacks technical competence.

A third faction, mostly aligned with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, sees this as an 'administrative or constitutional coup', arguing that the change is unnecessary as 'Pakistan already has the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (JCSC) to ensure coordination among the three armed services'.

According to this faction, 'this new proposal is not genuine reform but an attempt to centralise authority and grant the army permanent dominance over national security and governance structures'.

A fourth faction warns that if nuclear decision-making and overall military command are concentrated in a single office, Pakistan will become more vulnerable to global pressure from powers like the United States, Britain or even China.

Viewing this recast of Pakistan's military command hierarchy as the most ambitious and perhaps the most contentious restructuring effort in decades, retired Generals like Lieutenant General Asim Yasin Malik, a former DG ISI and defence secretary, believe that the hasty changing of Article 243 could not only disturb the fragile equilibrium between civilian and military power but also collide with entrenched institutional cultures.

Its implementation may prove far more difficult than its drafters imagine. General Malik warned, "By placing an army officer as the chief of defence forces with authority over the air force and navy, the proposed system invites institutional imbalance and potential disaster", especially as "this amendment appears tailored to benefit a specific individual".

For over four decades, the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (JCSC) served as the symbolic head of the armed services, designed to ensure coordination among Pakistan's army, navy and air Force.

In practice, the role remained largely

ceremonial, with the army becoming reluctant to rotate it to the air force or navy after 1997.

The proposed amendment seeks to dissolve the post entirely on November 27, 2025, coinciding with the retirement of the current CJCS, General Sahir Shamshad Mirza.

General Mirza has had a most outstanding career in the army and is highly respected for all round competence by his peer group of senior officers.

Hailing from humble origins in Chakwal, he was senior most in the 76th Pakistan military academy Kakul Long Course and served as Director General Military Operations before promotion to three star rank.

He then served as Chief of General Staff and Corps Commander, X Corps, Rawalpindi under General Qamar Javed Bajwa.

During the tempestuous days of May 2023 there was even a rumour that Imran Khan instigated General Mirza to overthrow Asim Munir while the latter was outside the country. But General Mirza played with a straight bat then.

Lately, General Mirza has been kept busy undertaking several visits abroad, to Singapore for the Shangri La dialogue, Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia. While these may have been ceremonial visits, retiring in a backdrop where the post would now stand abolished, may not leave a good taste, especially among senior generals aspiring to attain four star rank in the one post available in the face Asim Munir's indefinite extension as army chief.

Several related questions have been raised by academics in Pakistan, as to whether the Joint Staff Committee itself would function afterwards or what would be the protocol or pecking order between civilian politicians and senior defence officials, if and when the National Security Committee is convened.

This criticism cuts to the core of the country's military culture, where undercurrents of deep-seated rivalries among the army, air force and navy have simmered, each guarding its operational turf and doctrine.

Harmonising these distinct traditions—air power's rapid, decentralised decision cycles versus the army's hierarchical chain of command—has historically been

the Achilles' Heel of earlier efforts at 'joint' reform.

An attempt to reassure discordant chords suggests that the changed model could work best when accompanied by guarantees that the air force and navy would be able to retain control over their core missions, budgets, especially posting, transfers of senior functionaries.

Flushed by glory accompanying his elevation as field marshal after May 2025 it remains to be seen whether Asim Munir would be able to evolve into this type of a benevolent 'primus inter pares' leader in days to come.

### DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

**Data shows a sharp rise in population, wealth & land ownership among illegal immigrants and a particular community — a clear attempt to assert dominance over indigenous Assamese. Even their journalists run exclusive WhatsApp groups, excluding the ones from our community.**

~ Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, CM Assam



He observed that the amount of land sold by men to the Hindu community to Muslims is significantly higher than the amount of land purchased by Hindus from Muslims.

## A New Vision of the Bhagwat and the Concept of a Harmonious India

LALIT GARG

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is often perceived merely as a Hindu organization, but in reality, it is far more than a religious or sectarian body—it embodies the living spirit of Indian nationality and cultural identity. The fundamental inspiration of the RSS springs from the eternal ideal of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam"—the world is one family—which forms the soul of India's Sanatan (eternal) culture. This inclusive vision found renewed expression in the recent statement by RSS chief Dr. Mohan Bhagwat in Bengaluru, where he boldly declared that "Christians and Muslims too can join the Sangh." This assertion is not only courageous but also reflects the evolving vision of a new, developed, and balanced India. Naturally, Bhagwat's statement inviting members of all faiths—including Muslims and Christians—into the fold of the RSS has drawn widespread attention and discussion. But more importantly, it reveals the broader philosophical depth of the organization—one that deserves to be viewed positively and with an open mind.

Dr. Bhagwat's statement reaffirms the age-old Indian understanding that "Dharma" is not a synonym for any particular religion but rather a holistic code of ethical and spiritual values. For the RSS, Hindutva does not mean adherence to a specific faith; it is a comprehensive way of life—rooted in harmony, coexistence, compassion, and national integrity. In this sense, the RSS interprets "Hindutva" as Bhartiyyata—Indianness—a profound connection with the culture, traditions, history, and collective

consciousness of India. It is not that people of other faiths were never allowed in the RSS. In fact, individuals from various religions—including Muslims and Christians—have participated in its activities for decades. Yet, the misconception persists that the RSS is exclusive to Hindus. This misunderstanding arises from the organization's broader cultural definition of the term "Hindu." According to the RSS, every person living in this land of Bharat is a Hindu by ancestry and cultural heritage, irrespective of their religious practices or modes of worship. The organization has repeatedly clarified that since the forefathers of all Indians were Hindus, the term "Hindu" signifies a shared civilizational lineage rather than a sectarian identity.

As Gurujee M.S. Golwalkar, the second Sarsanghchalak of the RSS, once said: "Hindutva is not merely a religion; it is a culture—a way of viewing and living life." Dr. Bhagwat continues this vision, asserting that Hindutva is not confined to caste, language, or creed—it is a civilizational ethos that embraces all. The RSS believes that everyone born in this land—whatever their faith—are heirs to the same cultural legacy. Hence, the word "Hindu" represents not a religious label but a cultural identity synonymous with Indian life, which upholds equality, tolerance, and unity in diversity. This essence resonates through India's timeless mantras: "Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah" (May all be happy) and "Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti" (Truth is one, the wise call it by many names). In the present age, when divisive politics seeks to fragment society along the lines of caste, creed, and language, such a unifying message

is both urgent and healing. The RSS stands against this toxic divisiveness, striving instead for a deeper national unity. Bhagwat's statement thus becomes a moral antidote—an invitation to recognize that the soul of India lies not in narrow religious identities but in shared cultural consciousness. For the RSS, the nation itself is the supreme deity. Its nationalism is not rooted in secular indifference but in Dharmic inclusiveness—an attitude of reverence that respects all paths of faith. Guided by this conviction, the RSS teaches its workers to serve the Hindu society as a means of uniting the entire Indian society.

Bhagwat's message envisions an India where differences of opinion exist but not divisions of the heart. His remark that "whoever is born in this land has a Hindu ancestor somewhere in the past" is not a political statement but a cultural reminder—one that points to India's singular civilizational origin, which has blossomed into many religions and traditions. This perspective resonates with Mahatma Gandhi's idea of Sarvadharmasamabhava—equal respect for all religions. Gandhi had said: "My Hindutva includes all; it excludes none." The same inclusive sentiment forms the foundation of India's unity. When the RSS speaks of organizing Hindus, it essentially seeks to organize all Indians toward the vision of a strong, united nation. The problem is that its critics deliberately misrepresent this objective, portraying it as sectarian. Because of this ongoing misinformation, it becomes necessary for the RSS and its supporters to clarify and counter such false narratives.

If these misunderstandings can be dispelled, the Sangh's constructive work for nation-building would

progress with greater ease and wider participation. Dr. Bhagwat's invitation—welcoming all communities to join the Sangh as children of Bharat Mata—is a hand extended in friendship, deserving of a positive and appreciative response. Sadly, some people refuse to accept even the idea of "Bharat Mata," rejecting national symbols like Vande Mataram under narrow political motivations. Yet, the India of the 21st century cannot achieve greatness solely through economic or technological might—it must be bound by a shared cultural and emotional unity. The RSS has dedicated itself to this mission. Dr. Bhagwat's message acknowledges India's pluralism and religious diversity as its strength, not its weakness. It invites every citizen to rediscover their collective identity in "Indianness," beyond the boundaries of sect and denomination.

The RSS's vision of a Samras Samaj—a harmonious society—is one where Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, and Parsis all practice their faiths freely while proudly affirming India as their motherland and embracing its cultural heritage. Dr. Bhagwat's Bengaluru address redefined Hindutva in a broader, modern, and inclusive sense. He made it clear that the RSS's Hindutva is for all, not against anyone. It is a philosophy of synthesis, not separation—a principle of coexistence, not domination. True Bhartiyyata lies in this very spirit: unity in diversity, dialogue amid disagreement, and coexistence despite difference. This is the vision that can guide India toward integrity, peace, and development—a vision where Hindutva becomes the spiritual expression of India's timeless soul.

## Student from Gauhati University can debate better than Himanta Biswa Sarma: Gaurav Gogoi

GUWAHATI

Assam Congress president and Lok Sabha MP Gaurav Gogoi launched a blistering attack on Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma during a massive Congress joining programme held at Bijuliban under the Digboi Assembly Constituency in Tinsukia district.

The event, organised at the playground of the Bijuliban Kankan Yuvak Sangha, witnessed the formal joining of 1,269 people from different political parties and organisations, including former BJP Tinsukia District Committee president Lokeswar Moran and around 100 current and former members of the Assam Tea Tribe Students' Association (ATTTSA).

The programme, attended by senior Congress leaders including former Doomsday M.L.A. Durga Bhumji, marked the third major joining event in as many months — following similar gatherings on September 10 and October 10. Gogoi said the Congress had vowed to welcome new members on the 10th of every month, and that

the party was staying true to its word.

"We are keeping our words. The date was set for the 10th of every month, and it's happening. We are keeping our word. But with what work is the Assam Chief Minister keeping his value? Most of the BJP supporters are leaving the party and joining Congress," Gogoi declared amid cheers from the crowd.

Responding to Himanta Biswa Sarma's earlier claim that he was too young to be in politics, Gogoi retorted sharply, saying, "In today's time, nobody listens to the Assam CM. In his own party, no one listens to him. The BJP is only worried about how to remove him. No one goes to him anymore."

Taking a swipe at the Chief Minister's influence over sports bodies, Gogoi said, "The BCCI Secretary is his close aide, the ACA President is also his close aide — yet BJP leaders do not even know when Uma Chetry will return to Assam after winning the Women's World Cup. Both are his right and left hand, yet they failed to

get the information." On the Chief Minister's earlier statement that singer Zubeen Garg's death was a murder, Gogoi alleged that even BJP leaders did not believe him. "No one in BJP itself trusts him. The SIT against me for my alleged links with Pakistan made even BJP leaders in Delhi laugh. They ask — why does our Assam CM speak all this without any evidence?" Gogoi claimed. Continuing his tirade, the Congress leader said, "A student from Gauhati University can debate better than Himanta Biswa Sarma today. He slips his tongue every now and then and doesn't even realise what he is saying. There is no value left in the words of Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma. He is alone now, and BJP is figuring out how to remove him before the government collapses. To hide his failures, the CM has again started eviction drives."

Criticising the state's economic condition, Gogoi said, "People do not have income, and to buy ration even at subsidised rates, they need money. When contractors of JJM are not be-

ing paid and have started protesting, when teachers are being removed from contractual jobs, and tea workers are not getting eligible bonuses — where is the money going?" He further accused the Chief Minister of double standards while dealing with major corporations. "The Assam CM speaks about TATA semiconductors but doesn't speak about TATA tea gardens — because their owners are close aides of BJP," Gogoi alleged. Gogoi concluded by reaffirming that the Congress movement across Assam was gaining momentum. "Today, in various parts of the state, nearly 8,000 people have formally joined the Congress. This is a people's movement — not for power, but for restoring dignity, fairness, and justice in Assam," he said.

The mass joining in Tinsukia is being seen as a significant boost for the Congress in Upper Assam, a region once dominated by the BJP. Political observers say the growing number of defections indicates a shifting undercurrent ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections.

## SIT takes over probe into Sainik School Niglok student's death, 3 staff members arrested

ITANAGAR

The Superintendent of Police, Pankaj Lamba, issued an official update regarding the tragic incident at Sainik School Niglok that claimed the life of a Class 7 student, Master Tadu Haro, on November 1.

According to SP Lamba, three staff members, two House Masters and the House Superintendent have been arrested for alleged negligence in hostel supervision. The accused have been remanded to judicial custody for 14 and 18 days, respectively, as part of the ongoing investigation.

The police have seized CCTV footage from the school premises, which is now under detailed examination. Authorities confirmed that portions of the video will be shared with the parents of the deceased student to

maintain transparency during the inquiry.

Preliminary assessment of the footage reportedly indicates the involvement of certain students in ragging activities, which may have played a role in the tragic death. The police emphasized that all available evidence is being scrutinized thoroughly and carefully.

In the wake of the incident, the administrative responsibility of the school has been handed over to the Vice Principal, with the institution now functioning under strict monitoring and enhanced supervision.

To ensure an impartial and in-depth investigation, the case has been transferred to the Crime Branch (Special Investigation Team), Itanagar, which will conduct further inquiry under close oversight.

## Himanta Biswa Sarma not eligible to be CM, will be punished soon: Congress MP Rakibul Hussain

GUWAHATI

In a fiery political attack, Congress MP from Dhubri Lok Sabha constituency, Rakibul Hussain, on November 10, said that Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma is "not eligible" to hold the position of Chief Minister, accusing him of violating the oath of office. Speaking at a massive joining ceremony in Dhubri, Hussain said, "Himanta Biswa Sarma is not eligible to be Chief Minister. The oath taken while assuming office is not being followed. No law may act against him now, but soon he will be punished." Earlier today, the Congress party witnessed a major boost in Dhubri as over 1,000 people from the BJP, Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), and AIUFD formally joined the party in the presence of top leaders. The event was attended by MP Rakibul Hussain, MLA Wazed Ali Choudhury, MLA Abdus Sobhan Ali Sarkar, and several district-level Congress functionaries. During his address, Hussain accused the BJP-led Assam government of large-scale misuse of public funds and alleged that Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had turned governance into "a spectacle of self-promotion." Criticising the government's move to grant Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to six communities, Hussain called it a "politically driven" decision devoid of sincerity toward indigenous rights.

He further alleged that the state government had spent Rs 20 crore merely on the construction of stages and pandals for the Mukhya Mantri Udyamita Abhiyan (MMUA) events across Assam. "Why is the people's tax money being wasted on such extravagance?" Hussain questioned. The event marked a significant show of strength for the Congress in lower Assam and is being viewed as a morale booster for the party ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections.

## Manipur's Noney district imposes airgun ban to protect endangered Amur falcons

IMPHAL

The Additional District Magistrate of Noney has issued a comprehensive prohibitory order on November 10 to safeguard migratory Amur falcons, locally known as "Akhuaipuna", which have begun arriving in the district. The order mandates an immediate and complete ban on hunting, catching, killing, and selling these migratory birds throughout the Noney district and surrounding areas. Authorities have taken the unprecedented step of requiring all residents to surrender their airguns to village authorities until the birds depart or until November 30, whichever comes first. The decisive action follows a request from the Divisional Forest Officer, who raised concerns about illegal hunting activities targeting the protected species. Amur falcons, which fall under the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972, face severe threats during their roosting period in the region. Fifteen villages across the district have been designated as

collection points for airgun deposits, including Longmai, Raengkhang, Awangkhum, Taobam, and Khongsang. Village authorities must submit collection reports to the district office by November 15. Additional District Magistrate Stiff Khapudang has directed the Superintendent of Police to deploy personnel for conducting searches at markets, roads, and vehicles to enforce compliance. Forest guards will maintain daily surveillance at roosting sites and report to the Chief Conservator of Forests.

The order carries strict penalties, warning that violations constitute punishable offences under sections 50 and 51 of the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972. Churches and village authorities have been enlisted to ensure widespread awareness of the restrictions. Officials emphasise that the current period is crucial in the life cycle of Amur falcons, making protection efforts essential for the species' survival during their stopover in Manipur.

## Nagaland: Chakhesang Students' Union slams EPC contractor over NH-29 delays, urges NHIDCL's immediate intervention

KOHIMA

The Chakhesang Students' Union (CSU) has strongly condemned the persistent negligence and non-performance of Ranta Infrastructure Projects Pvt. Ltd., the EPC contractor engaged in the construction of NH-29 (Package-II: Chakhabama to Kikrūma), and has called upon the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) for immediate corrective intervention.

In a formal representation addressed to the Executive Director of NHIDCL, Regional Office, Kohima, the Union expressed "deep concern and strong indignation" over what it described as the contractor's continued failure to meet

basic construction and maintenance obligations despite repeated appeals, official reviews, and warnings.

According to the Union, the condition of the Chakhabama-Kikrūma stretch has become "deplorable and hazardous" for commuters, transporters, and residents due to poor workmanship, lack of visible progress, and a total absence of accountability from both the contractor and the implementing authority.

It may be recalled that during a consultative meeting held on May 14, convened by the Deputy Commissioner of Phek at the GA Guest House, Putsuro, both NHIDCL and M/s Ranta Infrastructure Projects Pvt. Ltd. had assured to keep the road motorable throughout the monsoon and

resume full-scale construction by the second week of October 2025, subject to favorable weather conditions. However, the CSU alleged that neither assurance has been honored.

An RTI was reportedly filed on November 3, seeking detailed information on the physical and financial progress of the 2-lane project, reflecting the Union's continued pursuit of transparency and accountability in the matter.

The Union criticized NHIDCL for failing to take "effective corrective or penal action" against the contractor's inefficiency, despite being the nodal authority responsible for ensuring timely completion of the national highway project. It termed the ongoing inaction as "unacceptable for a project of national importance." The

CSU has now demanded "decisive and disciplinary action" from NHIDCL against the erring contractor and urged immediate steps to expedite construction while maintaining quality standards. The Union has also cautioned that if the situation remains unresolved, it will be compelled to initiate "public agitation and democratic actions" against both the agency and the contractor, holding them fully accountable for any consequences arising thereof.

Reiterating the urgency of the issue, CSU President Pphilo Sara stated that the matter must be treated with the "utmost seriousness" to restore public confidence and ensure successful completion of the vital road project connecting Chakhabama to Kikrūma.

## Tripura's Rukhia power plant to adopt new technology for 120 MW generation; Bhumi puja on Nov 26

AGARTALA

In a major step toward strengthening Tripura's power generation capacity, the state government has announced plans to introduce new technology at the Rukhia Power Plant to ensure an uninterrupted electricity supply despite the ongoing gas crisis.

Tripura Power Minister Ratan Lal Nath said that the bhumi puja for the project will be held on November 26, marking the beginning of a significant technological upgrade for the state's power sector.

Addressing the media, Minister Nath said the new system will enable 120 megawatts (MW) of power generation through Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) technology, a method known for its higher efficiency and lower emissions. "The introduction of this technology will allow us to produce 120 MW of power



using the same amount of gas," the Minister explained.

He recalled that the Rukhia Power Plant, which had an installed capacity of 63 MW, had been generating only around 40 MW between 2017 and 2019. "In 2019-20, despite the gas shortage, we managed to generate 56

MW. However, due to environmental clearance issues, the plant had to be shut down in 2022-23," Nath said. He added that the previous government had failed to obtain the required environmental permissions.

"I personally went to New Delhi, met with ministers and offi-

cial, and resolved the issue. After receiving environmental clearance, we resumed operations at Rukhia, which now produces 19 MW of power," he said.

Nath further stated that the project will be executed at an estimated cost of ₹1,119 crore (excluding GST). He added that while gas remains an essential source for Tripura's power plants, the state is also diversifying into renewable energy. "Gas is a natural resource that is slowly depleting. Therefore, we are focusing on solar energy to ensure long-term sustainability in our power sector," he said.

The Minister affirmed that the government's priority is to make Tripura self-sufficient in energy production and to reduce dependence on imported electricity, aligning with the state's vision of reliable, affordable, and eco-friendly power generation.

## Voter list in Assam not correct, 80 lakh Bangladeshi Muslims made Indian citizens: Shiladitya Dev

GUWAHATI

Former BJP MLA Shiladitya Dev has reignited the controversy surrounding Assam's National Register of Citizens (NRC), alleging large-scale irregularities and inclusion of foreign nationals in the state's voter list.

Speaking to reporters in Guwahati, Dev said, "The voter list in Assam is not correct. We have converted 80 lakh Bangladeshi Muslims or East Pakistani Muslims into Indian citizens. The NRC failed to detect them."

He claimed that the 2019 NRC, published under Supreme Court supervision, was "deeply flawed" and did not reflect ground realities. As an example, Dev mentioned Saifur Rehman Talukdar, alleging that individuals like him were "wrongly included" despite questionable eligibility.

"The NRC in Assam is full of mistakes," Dev said citing an example, "If names like Saifur Rehman Talukdar's can appear on the list, it raises serious doubts about the integrity of the entire process."

Calling for a nationwide NRC, the former MLA said the exercise in Assam should serve as a lesson for future national verification ef-



orts. "We need a fresh NRC across India, with strict verification and transparent methodology," he added.

Dev also criticised the Congress leadership in the state, accusing it of lacking political maturity. "The Congress president here does not understand politics — this is mere child's play," he remarked.

The NRC, published on August 31, 2019, excluded about 19 lakh people from over 3.3 crore applicants. Both the State Government and the Centre have since expressed dissatisfaction with its accuracy. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has also termed the list "faulty," calling for its re-verification.

## Meghalaya: NEHUSU, KSU oppose NEHU EC meeting in Delhi, call it unjustified

SHILLONG

Growing discontent has erupted within Meghalaya's North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU) after the administration announced plans to hold the 193rd Executive Council (EC) meeting in New Delhi on November 14 under Vice-Chancellor (VC) Prof. P.S. Shukla's chairmanship.

The North-Eastern Hill University Teachers' Association (NEHUTA) and several student groups strongly objected to the decision and demanded that authorities hold the meeting on the Shillong campus in compliance with Ministry of Education (MoE) directives.

In a formal appeal to EC members, NEHUTA described the Delhi meeting as "illegitimate and financially imprudent", urging them to boycott it.

The association stated that holding the EC meeting outside Shillong undermines institutional transparency and violates the MoE's August 20, 2024, order, which requires all statutory body meetings of central universities to take place on their respective campuses.

The NEHU Students' Union (NEHUSU)



and the Khasi Students' Union (KSU) NEHU Unit echoed the teachers' concerns in a joint letter to Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

The student bodies clarified that they do not oppose the EC meeting itself but object to what they described as "procedural and moral violations" in the way it is being convened.

They argued that at a time when NEHU is grappling with serious financial constraints, its non-salary budget reduced from Rs 53 crore to Rs 31 crore for FY 2025-26, the administration's decision to hold the meeting in Delhi reflects poor judgment.

They said that with 25-50% budget cuts across departments, conferences, and maintenance, spending on travel and accommodation for an off-campus meeting is unjustifiable.

NEHUTA president Lakhon Kma further alleged that Vice-Chancellor Shukla, who has been on extended leave from his official duties at Shillong for nearly a year, continues to interfere in university affairs.

Kma stated that Pro-Vice-Chancellor Sumarbin Umdor currently manages NEHU's daily operations and holds full authorization under Statute 2(A)(5)(i) to perform the VC's duties in his absence.

According to NEHUTA, the decision to shift the EC meeting to Delhi not only breaches administrative protocol but also contradicts an earlier understanding reached during the MoE's visit to NEHU in May 2024.

The ministry had reportedly agreed that Prof. Shukla would chair his final EC meeting on May 30 in Delhi, after which the Pro-VCs would assume responsibility for the uni-

versity's functioning.

The teachers' body accused Prof. Shukla of deliberately omitting that agreement from the official minutes of the meeting and labeled him a "repeated violator of NEHU Statutes and UGC norms."

"Someone absent from the university for nearly a year has no moral or administrative justification to call an EC meeting outside campus while the institution faces financial stress," NEHUTA stated in its letter, questioning who would bear the travel and accommodation expenses of EC members in Delhi.

Reaffirming their stand, NEHUTA and the student unions urged the Pro-Vice-Chancellor not to endorse any meeting held outside Shillong.

They asserted that NEHU should allocate its limited funds to academic and infrastructural development rather than unnecessary administrative travel.

The association also criticized what it described as mismanagement, nepotism, and favoritism under the current VC, claiming that these issues had already led to widespread protests earlier this year and intervention by the Ministry of Education.

As NEHU prepares for its next Executive Council session, tensions continue to mount between the university community and the vice-chancellor's office, with calls growing louder for adherence to institutional rules and responsible governance.

### Quest!

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## Women 'largest minority', why not give representation without reservation, asks SC



NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday sought to know why women shouldn't receive representation in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies even without a 33% reservation law. "Women's presence in Parliament is going down. Why not give women representation even without reservation?" observed a two-judge bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and R Mahadevan while hearing a PIL filed by Dr Jaya Thakur. The women were the largest minority in the country, observed the bench. In her

plea filed before the apex court, Thakur urged the implementation of the women's reservation law without waiting for the conduct of fresh delimitation. After hearing the plea, the bench asked the government to respond on the PIL (Public Interest Litigation) and file a detailed response. In 2023, Thakur filed the plea in the SC urging to implement women's reservations in Parliament before the general elections of 2024. However, the SC then refused to entertain the petition. Thakur once again moved the SC seeking the same. During a brief hearing on

Monday, the bench observed that the Preamble says (all citizens are entitled to) political and social equality. "Who is the largest minority in this country? It is the woman... almost 48%. This is about the political equality of the woman." Senior advocate Shobha Gupta, appearing for Thakur, termed it "unfortunate" that women have to move courts for their representation, despite 75 years of Independence. President Droupadi Murmu gave her assent in September 2023, but is yet to be implemented, she added.

## Amit Shah to hold high-level security review meet after Delhi blast kills eight



NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will chair a high-level security review meeting later on Tuesday to assess the situation following the deadly blast in Delhi that claimed eight lives and left several others injured on Monday evening. The meeting is scheduled to take place at 11 am at the Home Minister's residence. It will be attended by Home Secretary Govind Mohan, Director of the Intelligence Bureau Tapan Deka, Director General of the National Investigation Agency (NIA)

Sadanand Vasant Date, and Delhi Police Commissioner Satish Golchha. Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police Nalin Prabhakar will join the meeting virtually. The review comes amid heightened security concerns in the national capital as multiple agencies probe the explosion that occurred around 7 pm in a Hyundai i20 car near a traffic signal between Gates 1 and 4 of the Red Fort Metro Station. Soon after the blast, Shah spoke to the Delhi Police Commissioner and the Intelligence Bureau Director,

directing a coordinated, multi-agency investigation involving the NIA, NSG, FSL, and Delhi Police. All agencies have been instructed to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the nature and cause of the explosion and submit a detailed report as soon as possible. On Tuesday morning, a Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) team revisited the site to collect additional evidence as the NIA and NSG continue efforts to determine the type of explosives used. Meanwhile, the Delhi Police is

also examining a viral social media post claiming a Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) link in the high-intensity explosion near the Red Fort on Monday evening. The police's initial probe into the incident suggests the I-20 car's trail to Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama, said sources. The sources added that the I-20 car, in which the blast occurred, was allegedly purchased by a resident of Pulwama. The Delhi Police have also obtained CCTV footage showing the suspect's car entering and exiting the parking area near the Red Fort, according to sources. According to the Delhi Police sources, the footage indicates that the suspect was alone at that time. Following the high-intensity explosion outside the Red Fort, the teams of Delhi Police carried out an extensive night-long search operation across hotels in Paharganj, Daryaganj, and nearby areas. All hotel registers were thoroughly examined during the raids. During the operation, four individuals were taken into custody for questioning. At least eight people were killed and several were injured in the high-intensity explosion outside the Red Fort on Monday evening. According to Delhi Police, CCTV footage from multiple locations has been meticulously reviewed, including from the Badarpur border to the parking area of the Red Fort's Sunheri Masjid, as well as from the Outer Ring Road to the Kashmere Gate-Red Fort route. Nearly 200 police personnel were involved in examining footage across various routes. Delhi Police have registered a case in connection with the blast under various Sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), the Explosives Act, and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

## INTERNATIONAL

## Trump says US 'pretty close' to India trade deal, hints at reducing tariffs 'at some point'

WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump on Monday hinted that his country is "pretty close" to reaching a "fair trade deal" with India, adding that he will lower the tariffs imposed on New Delhi "at some point." "We're making a deal with India, much different deal than we had in the past. So right now, they don't love me, but they'll love us again," Trump said on Monday. He made the remarks during a ceremony in the Oval Office, where Sergio Gor was sworn in as America's Ambassador to India by US Vice President JD Vance. "We're getting a fair deal, just a fair trade deal. We had pretty unfair trade deals. They're very good negotiators, Sergio, so you have to take a look at that, if you would please," Trump said. "But we're getting close. Scott, I think we're pretty close to doing a deal that's good for everybody," Trump said to Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, who was present in the Oval Office for the swearing-in ceremony. "That's right," Bessent responded to Trump. "In the old days, do you think (former US President Joe) Biden would ask that question? I don't think so. How are we doing with India? He didn't know about India. He didn't know a damn thing. That's okay," Trump said. Trump was asked about the trade deal with India and whether he is willing to consider lowering the current tariff rate imposed on Delhi. "Well, right now the tariffs are very high on India because of the Russian oil, and they've stopped doing the Russian oil. It's been reduced very substantially. Yeah, we're going to be bringing the tariffs down," he said. "At some point, no, at some point,

we're going to be bringing them down. Without tariffs, this country would be in such trouble as they were for many years," the US President added. Five rounds of talks have been completed so far for the first phase of the bilateral trade agreement between the US and India. Last month, an official had said in New Delhi that the two countries are "very near" to concluding the proposed bilateral trade agreement, as both sides are converging on most of the issues. The official had said that the two countries are sorting out the language of the agreement. Relations between New Delhi and Washington have been reeling under severe stress after Trump imposed 50 percent tariffs on India, including 25 percent for New Delhi's procurement of Russian oil. India had described the US action as "unfair, unjustified and unreasonable" while maintaining that its energy policy is guided by its own national interest. Meanwhile, Trump said his country has a "fantastic relationship" with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as highlighting India's role as an "important" economic and strategic partner in the Indo-Pacific region. "We have a fantastic relationship with the Prime Minister, (Narendra) Modi, and Sergio (Gor) has only enhanced that because he's become already friendly with the Prime Minister," Trump said during Gor's swearing-in. "Knowing that Sergio is going to be the Ambassador, they would call constantly to say, 'let's get to know this man', and they like what they see," the US President added. US Vice President JD Vance administered the oath of office to Gor at a special ceremony in the Oval Office. Trump presided over the ceremony that was attended by Secretary

of State Marco Rubio, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, US Attorney General Pam Bondi, United States Attorney for the District of Columbia Jeanine Pirro as well as Senator Lindsey Graham and widow of political activist Charlie Kirk, Erika Kirk, among other officials and lawmakers. Trump said that Gor is going to have "great success" in India, as he described the bilateral relationship between India and the US as "very important." Trump said India has the fastest-growing middle class and is an "important" economic and strategic security partner in the Indo-Pacific region. "It's an amazing country, actually, 1.5 billion people. China has 1.4 billion. Those are two big countries. As Ambassador, Sergio will work to fortify our country's bond, promote investments in key US industries and technologies, increase American energy exports and expand our security cooperation," Trump said. The US Senate had in October confirmed Gor to serve as the United States' next ambassador to India. In August, Trump had promoted Gor, Director of Presidential Personnel, to be the next US Ambassador to India and Special Envoy for South and Central Asian Affairs. Trump said that in his role as Special Envoy for South and Central Asia, Gor will be a "key emissary to a very important group of nations at the crossroads between East and West." Trump noted that last week, he was "honoured" to host leaders of the five central Asian countries in the White House. Trump had hosted the leaders of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan at the White House. "We had an amazing meeting

the other night at the White House, and I'm confident that Sergio will do an outstanding job and make our country and all of his friends very proud. But I'm very proud of Sergio. I've known him for a long time, and he's a great guy, and most people love him," he said. "Some people don't like him so much. I'll be honest with you, Sergio," Trump said amid laughter from the attendees. "Some people, when they don't like Sergio, they don't like him, but when they like him, they like him more than anybody. But most of them really are the like category. And I just want to say that I think he's going to be an outstanding representative for the United States of America. And it's a big deal. Being the Ambassador to India is a big deal. So Sergio, congratulations. I know you're going to do a fantastic job," Trump said. Gor had met Modi and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in Delhi last month. Modi had said in a post on X that he was "glad" to receive Gor and expressed confidence that "his tenure will further strengthen the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership." Gor, who had presented PM Modi with a framed photograph of the joint press conference by him and Trump in the White House in February, had said in a post on X, "An honour to be with PM @narendramodi this evening. Our relationship with India will only strengthen over the months ahead." Trump had signed the photograph with the message "Mr Prime Minister, you are great." Jaishankar had said in a post on X that he was "pleased" to meet Gor. "Discussed the India-US relationship and its global significance. Wish him the best for his new responsibility."

## 'Sheikh Hasina facing mock trial aimed at death sentence,' allies warn ahead of tribunal verdict



NEW DELHI

Sources close to former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina have denounced her ongoing trial before Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) as a politically motivated attempt by the "illegal Yunus-led interim government" to stage a mock trial aimed at sentencing Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to death as the tribunal prepares to announce the date for its verdict. The tribunal, chaired by Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder, has completed hearings in the case accusing Hasina and two others of crimes against humanity linked to the July-August 2024 student movement. The court is scheduled to set a date for its judgment on November 13, a development that has heightened political tension across Dhaka. According to sources close to Hasina, the ICT has been illegally repurposed to pursue a political vendetta

against "Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's daughter." "Under the guise of judicial proceedings, they have planned to sentence Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to death, driven by the ulterior motive of eliminating her and her party, Bangladesh Awami League, from Bangladesh's political landscape," said a source. The source charged that the democracy-loving people of Bangladesh believe that the "ongoing wave of mob terrorism across the country is being accompanied by acts of judicial terrorism and mockery in the name of trials orchestrated under the directives of Yunus's extremist group." The student movement, which began as a call for reforming the quota system in government jobs, was hijacked by vested groups seeking to incite chaos, Hasina's allies claimed. "When the Supreme Court reinstated the 2018 abolition of quotas, the issue was resolved," a source said. "But

violence continued, clearly orchestrated to justify the coup and frame the government." Legal observers sympathetic to Hasina have been questioning the legitimacy of the tribunal itself. They point to 2024 and 2025 ordinances issued without parliamentary approval, which amended the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act of 1973 and introduced Section 20C, disqualifying anyone charged before the ICT from contesting elections or holding public office. "Based on baseless and imaginary allegations. In blatant defiance of the rule of law, they have initiated one of the most egregious, farcical, and unlawful judicial processes in history," sources said. "The entire process is a mockery of justice," said a source. Prosecutor Gazi MH Tamim has maintained that it is up to the "tribunal to deliver verdict considering arguments and evidence." He said: "Our responsibility is to attempt proof of the allegations brought by the tribunal and the investigation agency, present evidence, and put forward arguments. The tribunal's responsibility is to deliver a verdict considering the arguments and evidence. Beyond this, the prosecution has no other responsibility," he said. According to Hasina's associates, more than 600 fabricated cases have been filed against the former PM. "Under the direction of the Yunus government, the ICT Tribunal is completing all necessary manipulations to stage a mock trial aimed at sentencing Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to death. In this trial, none of the lawyers appointed by Sheikh Hasina have been permitted to represent her. No lawyer has been allowed to appear on behalf of Sheikh Hasina or other Awami League leaders," sources said.

## A Silent Shift in Delhi? Why Manipur Fears the Centre Is Redrawing Its Political Map



For nearly two years, Manipur has been living through a slow-burning crisis—one that has reshaped its social landscape, fractured its ethnic relations, and tested the very meaning of democratic governance. Yet, in early November 2025, fear reached a new pitch, not because of another outbreak of violence or another highway blockade, but because of silence from the most powerful office dealing with the state: the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

This silence—strategic, deliberate, and heavy—now hangs over Manipur like a fog. It has raised the question that the state's people can no longer ignore: is the Union government quietly renegotiating Manipur's political geography while publicly insisting that nothing will change?

The core concern is not merely administrative. It is existential. For a state splintered by ethnic fault lines, territorial integrity is not just a matter of pride—it is the glue that holds fragile peace together. When the MHA held two full days of closed-door meetings on November 6 and 7 with the leadership of the Kuki National Organisation (KNO) and the United People's Front (UPF), what should have been a dialogue on implementing a peace agreement instead became a forum where the most volatile idea of all was placed squarely on the table: the creation of a new Union Territory carved out of Manipur's hill districts, complete with its own Legislative Assembly.

This demand—once considered fringe and politically radioactive—is suddenly being discussed in the most powerful corridors of India. And the MHA's reaction to it has not been the firm rejection expected from a government bound by repeated parliamentary assurances that "Manipur will never be divided."

Instead, the ministry's advisor, A.K. Mishra, responded with phrases that sounded more like diplomatic hedging than national commitment.

**A Quiet Opening of the Door**  
When the KNO and UPF placed the UT demand before Mishra, his response should have been unequivocal. After all, it was just two months earlier—on September 4, 2025—that a fresh Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement had been signed in New Delhi. That agreement reiterated a clear principle: the territorial integrity of Manipur is inviolable.

The deal was the culmination of a turbulent year. It tied the armed groups to multiple conditions:  
" relocation of seven designated camps out of conflict zones  
" reduction of total camps  
" mandatory deposition of all weapons under double-lock systems  
" strict verification of cadres to eliminate foreign nationals  
" cooperation with a Joint Monitoring Group (JMG)  
" acceptance that violations could lead to suspension or termination of the pact

For the Government of Manipur, it was a binding assurance. For the Centre, it was a reaffirmation of policy. For the hill-based groups, it offered a structured path to political dialogue under the Constitution.

But when Mishra, on November 6-7, told the KNO and UPF that creation of a UT was "not current policy" and that any such move "requires consultation with other communities," he inadvertently legitimised the very demand that the September agreement was supposed to foreclose.

The phrasing mattered. It signalled not a refusal, but potential flexibility. To Manipur's public, this was not sensitivity—it was a red flag.

**A Pact Signed, A Promise Broken**  
What deepens the anxiety is the chronology of broken commitments.

Immediately after the September 4 agreement, a series of actions were announced as confidence-building measures. On September 5, Manipur's Chief Secretary held a press conference confirming that the state would honour the agreement in full and that efforts toward normalcy were being expedited. The same day, the Kuki-Zo Council announced that National Highway-2-Manipur's economic lifeline would be reopened.

For eleven days, this seemed achievable. On September 15, the Council abruptly withdrew its commitment and reinstated the highway blockade.

The MHA's response was... nothing.  
No invocation of the violation clause.  
No warning to the armed groups.  
No public statement demanding accountability.  
Instead, just six weeks

later, the same groups were given direct access to the MHA's negotiating table in New Delhi.

This, to many Manipuris, looked less like enforcement of peace terms and more like appeasement.

**The Missing Third Party**  
Perhaps the most telling detail of the November talks is not what was discussed, but who was missing.

The September agreement was tripartite:  
" MHA  
" Government of Manipur  
" KNO/UPF

Yet in November, when the same SoO framework was being revisited, the Government of Manipur was conspicuously absent. No minister. No bureaucrat. No representative of the elected government.

If this was a continuation of a tripartite dialogue, where was the state?

If it was converted into a bilateral discussion, why was Manipur not informed?

And if the state was informed, why did neither the Chief Minister nor Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla raise a public objection to being sidelined?

The silence is so strange it almost feels intentional.

**When the Signatories Disowned Their Own Pact**

Equally disturbing is the MHA's unwillingness to challenge the SoO groups when they publicly contradicted the just-signed agreement.

On September 7—barely 72 hours after signing—the KNO and UPF issued a statement accusing the Press Information Bureau of "twisting" the agreement. They insisted the pact promised a "negotiated political settlement" and implied that the Government of India was attempting to downplay their political ambitions.

They circulated their interpretation widely, mobilising support in the hills.

Once again, the MHA said nothing.

To the public, this silence suggested that the Centre was not interested in enforcing factual accuracy. Instead, it seemed to prioritise preserving a dialogue—no matter how distorted or loaded its narrative became.

**The Constitutional Bombshell**

The demand for a Union Territory may sound technical. In reality, it would:

" remove six (or more) districts from Manipur's jurisdiction  
" create a new capital and governance structure  
" give the hill districts their own legislature  
" redefine budgets, policing powers and administrative boundaries  
" effectively formalise ethnic partition

This is not incremental reform; it is state-level amputation.

In a region where armed groups already enforce ethnic separation on the ground, granting official recognition to such a split would set a precedent with national implications. It would reward groups that have repeatedly violated peace terms and disregarded commitments.

It would also contradict multiple assurances made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah on the floor of Parliament—assurances that were delivered precisely to ensure stability in Manipur.

For elections, those promises mattered. For governance, their ambiguity now threatens to unravel the state.

**Bundling Legitimate Grievances with Separatist Aspirations**

The MHA's own notes on the November talks reveal a curious mix of subjects. Alongside the UT demand, the discussions included legitimate administrative concerns:

" land rights in hill districts  
" forest rights and traditional land holding systems  
" succession of village chiefs  
" access to land registration offices  
" rehabilitation of internally displaced persons  
" security and amenities

These are real, pressing, socio-political issues that deserve attention.

But placing them on the same table alongside a demand for territorial disintegration is a dangerous conflation.

By entertaining everything together, the Centre risks allowing separatist aspirations to piggyback on genuine grievances. It is a tactic known in conflict zones: pair the reasonable with the radical, and push them as a single political agenda.

The MHA should be separating these threads, not knotting them tighter.

**Where Is Accountability?**

On the ground in Manipur, nothing has materially improved since the September pact.

" Highway blockades persist.  
" Designated camps remain un-moved.

" Verification of cadres is incomplete.

" No report from the Joint Monitoring Group has been made public.

" IDPs continue to live in fragile shelters with winter approaching.

People question why New Delhi is rushing to re-engage with groups that have not fulfilled their obligations. What incentive exists for the SoO groups to honour the agreement if the Centre keeps rewarding them with fresh negotiations?

The MHA's silence is not only baffling—it appears to undermine its own credibility.

Three Questions Only the MHA Can Answer

In Manipur today, the distrust is thick, the wounds deep. And until the MHA responds transparently, suspicion will continue to grow. The public wants clear answers to three critical questions:

1. Why was the Government of Manipur not visibly part of the November 6-7 talks when the peace process is supposed to be tripartite?

If the talks were purely bilateral, why was this never communicated?

2. Why did the MHA not publicly challenge the KNO/UPF when they accused the government of misrepresenting the September agreement?

Does silence equal acceptance?

3. Is the territorial integrity of Manipur still non-negotiable, or is the Centre now open to considering constitutional changes that would create a new Union Territory?

This is the question that matters most to Manipuris.

Until these questions are answered, every political rumour will find fertile ground, every ethnic narrative will sharpen, and every displaced family will feel abandoned.

**A People Left in the Dark**

In Manipur, daily life remains suspended between fear and uncertainty. Farmers hesitate to cross district lines. Students travel through convoys. Thousands of families remain divided across camps, homes, and hostile zones.

The state's citizens are no longer demanding promises—they want facts.

They want clarity.

They want the Centre to match its public assurances with its private actions.

They want to know whether a new map of Manipur is being drafted behind closed doors.

Unless the MHA steps out of the shadows and explains its intentions, the belief that New Delhi is playing a double game—publicly preaching unity while privately entertaining division—will only grow stronger. Manipur has waited long enough. It deserves the truth.

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# NEIR 2026, to Sensitise Environmental Stewardship in the Region and Beyond

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



Today, we have become a threat to ourselves. Economic production has become

so large, our productivity in many ways so high, and the number of us on the planet so vast, that the effect of all this economic activity on the physical Earth itself has become overwhelming. For the first time in human history, for the first time in the planet's history, one species, that would be us human beings, is threatening the fundamental parts of the Earth's own dynamics: the climate system, the water cycle, the nitrogen cycle, and the ocean chemistry.

The water we are using, the energy that we are burning, the land that is being devoted to feeding the planet, the chemicals that are being produced, and the pollution that results from that are poisoning the air and the waterways, it's leading to an unprecedented environmental crisis.

Our age has a new name, the Anthropocene or the human age of the planet, and not meant in a good way. It indicates a very dangerous way that humanity is changing the water cycle, the climate is warming, the temperature is melting, the glaciers are threatening the great ice sheets over Antarctica and Greenland, is causing the oceans to become more acidic, and is threatening other species with survival in such a fundamental way that the planet behaves differently now, hence, the Anthropocene. One of the main drivers of these changes is humanity desperately living on the planet.

CO2 has suddenly soared in the atmosphere, causing massive climate system disruption, global warming,



BURNING OF FOREST FOR JHUM CULTIVATION IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH



JHUM FIELD UNDER REGENERATION IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH



THE AUTHOR DISCUSSED WITH A YOUTH ON JHUM CULTIVATION

and more extreme events like droughts and floods. But it is a stark illustration of how humanity changes basic Earth processes. We are chopping down trees to make room for new pastureland and farmland. Indeed, we are trespassing, boundaries that are safe for humanity.

We need to identify the safe operating limits for the planet. Check loss of biodiversity, driving other species to extinction. A core goal of the science of Sustainable Development is to understand these risks and, most importantly, to determine what we can do to stay within the safe operating limits of humanity; we honour and respect these planetary boundaries as we continue to improve our well-being. The holistic objective of sustainable development combines economic prosperity, social inclusion, ending poverty, and ensuring environmental sustainability.

We live in a complicated world. Our world is facing unprecedented environmental challenges, and the world is divided between great wealth and crippling poverty. The great responsibility on to find a path, how do economic, social, environmental, political and cultural factors fit together. The aspect of sustainable development is the idea of sensible goals for this

crowded, interconnected world. We should supervise our economy do not overrun the physical planet. One part of sustainable development is to understand the inter-linkages of the economy, of society, of the environment, of our politics and government processes, and the other part of sustainable development is to do something about it.

The North East Integration Rally, 2026, therefore, focuses on the environmental action plan that is very important in this fragile region of my country. The Region is often referred to as the lungs of the Himalayas and is known for its rugged terrain and diverse ecosystem. The region is rich in biodiversity and is one of the most biologically diverse regions in the world. Its economy has a distinct identity because of its unique physical, economic, and socio-cultural features. The Region with eight States covers an area of 2.62 lakh square kilometres (7.9% of India's land area) with a population of 57 million (3.96% of India's population), and 98% of its border (4,500 km) forms international boundaries. The Region is home to more than 160 Scheduled Tribes and over 400 sub-tribes, with over 220 ethnic groups and an equal number of dialects.

The North East Re-

gion faces several environmental threats, including deforestation, climate change, and drought. The challenges are exacerbated by rapid urbanisation and unsustainable land use practices. So, conservation efforts are crucial to protect the Region's natural heritage. The action plan includes this. As a part of the Action Plan, the NEIR, 2026, will initiate a massive awareness programme involving all stakeholders. We will encourage taking up a plantation drive.

The Region has rich Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSP), and many favour environmental protection and a sense of belongingness to nature. We will try to revive and bring awareness to these belief systems. Some practices are not in tune with the sustainable development path. For example, Jhum Cultivation (Shifting or Slash and Burn Cultivation). We will advocate action-oriented awareness to check them. I remember the Hindu BusinessLine took my interview on Jhum cultivation and published it on July 10, 2025, as a Premium Article in their paper.

Understanding the strong relevance, the North East Integration Rally, 2026, advocates aggressively to take up specific actions that ensure environmental

protection, improvement, and recover the loss that has already occurred. Thus, the Rally is aiming to bring about a meaningful impact on environmental sustainability. We will focus on themes and unique opportunities that address critical global challenges. We urge initiatives to protect and restore ecosystems while preserving biodiversity. Focus on reforestation, wildlife conservation, and forest management practices that support both environmental health and local communities. The theme encompasses empowering communities through education and awareness programmes, designing innovative approaches to environmental literacy that inspire action and create lasting behavioural change across diverse populations. The Rally advocates for Climate-Smart Agriculture, transforming agricultural practices to build resilience against climate change while enhancing food security. Promote sustainable farming techniques that protect soil health and support farmer livelihoods. The initiatives include regenerative and organic farming practices. Thus, the NEIR, 2026, is not merely a car rally, but is going to be a significant event to Sensitise Environmental Stewardship in the Region and Beyond.

