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PERSPECTIVE

Happiness brings success. Success does not bring happiness. ~ Harsh Goenka, Chairman, RPG Enterprises

Assam, British Museum Sign Pact to Bring Sacred Brindabani Vastra Home on Temporary Loan

GUWAHATI
In a landmark cultural development, the Assam government and the British Museum on November 17 signed a Letter of Intent to facilitate the temporary return of the Brindabani Vastra to its place of origin. The agreement marks what Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma called "a red-letter moment" for the state and its people. The sacred textile, currently preserved at the British Museum, is revered in Assam as a profound symbol of the state's spiritual and artistic heritage. It is deeply intertwined with the legacy of Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev, the 15th-century saint, social reformer, and architect of the neo-Vaishnavite movement. Sarma described the artefact as a testament to "the devotion and vision" of Sankardev, whose influence continues to shape Assamese cultural identity. "Assam's heritage, the most rare treasure, will return to Assam's land and Assamese people will visit this sacred cloth," Sarma wrote in a Facebook post after the signing. He noted that the display will be governed by special conditions and will remain in the state only for a limited duration under the loan arrangement.

Speaking from London, the chief minister said the agreement is a moment of pride not only for Assam but for the country as a whole. "This message will definitely make national life and Indians proud," he said.

WHO SAID WHAT

THE INFLUENCE OF MAOISM IS SHRINKING. AND, THAT IS GREAT FOR INDIA'S DEVELOPMENT.
~ Narendra Modi, PM

Manipur Governor Reviews Anti-Narcotics Strategy at 10th State-Level NCORD Meeting



IMPHAL

Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla on Monday chaired the 10th meeting of the State-Level Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) at Raj Bhavan, bringing together the state's top civil, police, and security officials to assess the evolving drug situation and reinforce a coordinated response to narcotics threats.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Secretary, the Director General of Police, senior departmental officers, and representatives from key

enforcement and security agencies. During the session, the Manipur Police, the Narcotics and Affairs of Border (NAB), and other line departments made detailed presentations on recent patterns in drug trafficking, the spread of illicit poppy and cannabis cultivation, and rising drug dependency in vulnerable districts.

Governor Bhalla reviewed the latest ground assessments and stressed the urgent need for seamless coordination among all enforcement agencies to disrupt trafficking

networks operating within the state and across its borders. He called for stepped-up intelligence-driven operations, tighter surveillance along sensitive border areas, and strengthened operational capacities in high-risk districts and transit points.

Departments were directed to expedite the destruction of illegal plantations, ensure stronger case documentation, and improve prosecution and conviction rates through closer inter-agency collaboration. Governor Bhalla also urged the adoption of advanced technologies-including scanners, surveillance systems, and modern detection tools-to more effectively curb the movement of narcotics.

The meeting also placed strong emphasis on balancing supply and demand-reduction measures. Strengthening district-level NCORD mechanisms, upgrading de-addiction and rehabilitation infrastructure, and expanding community-based awareness programmes were highlighted as critical components of a sustained, long-term strategy against drug abuse in Manipur.

Amit Shah Grants Key BNSS Sanction to Advance Proceedings in Zubeen Garg Death Case

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on November 18 announced that Union Home Minister Amit Shah has granted the mandatory approval required to initiate legal proceedings against those accused in the death of renowned Assamese singer Zubeen Garg in Singapore.

The sanction has been accorded under Section 208 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), a statutory requirement for prosecuting offences committed outside India. Sarma explained that without this clearance from the Central Government, no Indian court can take cognisance of such cases or allow filing of a chargesheet. "With this approval under Section 208, the Government of Assam can now proceed lawfully to file the chargesheet and begin trial proceedings," the Chief Minister said. He reaffirmed that the chargesheet will be submitted before 10 December 2025, underscoring the state's commitment to ensuring justice in a case that has deeply affected people across Assam. Sarma shared the update on a day

imbued with emotional significance: the 53rd birth anniversary of Zubeen Garg, the beloved singer whose music and cultural influence shaped generations. "Today marks the 53rd birthday of our beloved Zubeen Garg - a day that reminds us of his music, his voice, and his irreplaceable place in Assam's heart," the Chief Minister said, adding that the government remains unwavering in its pursuit of justice for the late icon. The development marks a crucial legal milestone, providing the foundation needed to move the investigation and prosecution forward after months of procedural hurdles related to international jurisdiction.

The Chief Minister also clarified that due to the legal structure governing citizenship verification and electoral revisions, the Election Commission's nationwide Special Summary Revision (SIR) order did not automatically apply to Assam. On October 28, the Commission notified that the state would receive separate directions regarding voter list revision once the ongoing citizenship verification exercise is completed.

RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat Arrives in Assam as Centenary-Year Tour Gains Momentum

GUWAHATI

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat arrived in Assam on Monday, marking an important leg of the organisation's nationwide tour to commemorate its 100th year. His visit, viewed as both organisationally significant and politically consequential, comes months ahead of the state's Assembly elections.

RSS workers, who gathered to welcome him, described Bhagwat as a constant source of motivation. "He is always an inspiration for us," members of the organisation said.

Political analysts, meanwhile, observed that although the RSS maintains that its activities are organisational and not electoral, Bhagwat's presence in the state could have indirect political implications. The Sangh is widely regarded as the ideological parent of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and its outreach often shapes broader socio-political narratives in poll-bound regions.

During his two-day stay, Bhagwat will focus on internal reviews, strategic discussions, and interactions with the cadres who anchor the Sangh's activities in the Northeast. After landing at Lokapriya Gopinath

Bordoloi International Airport, he headed straight to Sudarshanalaya in Barbari, the RSS headquarters in Guwahati, where he is scheduled to participate in a series of closed-door meetings with senior pracharaks and functionaries.

This is Bhagwat's second visit to Guwahati this year. In February, he spent five days in the city, holding extensive consultations on organisational priorities with karyakartas. He also addressed a session of the Rashtra Sevika Samiti at IIT Guwahati and later delivered a Bouddhik (intellectual) lecture at South Point High School in Saukuchi, where thousands of volunteers attended. The current visit carries additional weight as the RSS enters its centenary year with year-long programmes planned across India. Assam-considered strategically important due to its cultural influence and geographical position in the Northeast-is set to host several key events as part of the centenary initiatives.

Bhagwat's engagements, which include internal reviews, planning sessions, and interactions with grassroots workers, will conclude on Tuesday. He will then proceed to the next state on his centenary-year itinerary.

EC Orders Special Electoral Roll Revision in Assam

NEW DELHI

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Monday directed a Special Revision of the electoral rolls in Assam, with the final list scheduled for publication on February 10, 2026. The revision will use January 1, 2026 as the qualifying date for enrolment.

According to the guidelines issued to the state's Chief Electoral Officer, the Special Revision is designed as an intermediate exercise-positioned between the annual Special Summary Revision and the more exhaustive Special Intensive Revision (SIR).

A senior EC functionary explained that the process is "an upgrade" of the summary revision. Instead of collecting enumeration forms afresh, booth-level officers will verify existing electors using pre-filled registers, streamlining the verification process.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma welcomed the Commission's decision, calling it a significant step toward ensuring transparency and accuracy in the state's voter database.

"The Government of Assam welcomes the Election Commission of India's decision to undertake a Special Revision of the electoral roll with 01.01.2026 as the qualifying date... Assam will extend full cooperation to the @ ECISVVEEP to complete the revision in a transparent and time-bound manner," he wrote on a micro-blogging platform.



The Election Commission had last month announced a nationwide Special Intensive Revision across several states and Union Territories-including Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Puducherry, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and Lakshadweep. Assam, however, was excluded at the time, prompting questions given that Assembly elections are due in the state in 2026.

The Commission later clarified that the omission was due to Assam's unique legal and procedural framework, which differs from

the rest of the country. The state operates under Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955, a provision derived from the 1985 Assam Accord that governs the citizenship status of individuals who entered the state between 1966 and 1971.

Additionally, the Supreme Court-monitored National Register of Citizens (NRC) process continues to influence the timing and method of electoral roll revision in Assam, necessitating separate instructions from the ECI.

The Special Revision is expected to play a crucial role in preparing the state for its 2026 Assembly polls by ensuring clean, updated and legally sound electoral rolls.

Nagaland Ties Up with Air India Express as Official Travel Partner for Hornbill Festival 2025

KOHI MA

The Nagaland Government has named Air India Express as the Official Travel Partner for the Hornbill Festival 2025, a partnership aimed at strengthening air connectivity to the state during its flagship cultural extravaganza while advancing the airline's 'Tales of India' cultural engagement campaign.

The announcement was made on Monday at the airline's headquarters in Gurugram by Abu Metha, Advisor to the Chief Minister and Chairman of the Investment & Development Authority of Nagaland (IDAN), along with Air India Express Managing Director Alok Singh. Senior state officials, including Theja Meru, Chairman of the Task Force for Music and Arts, and Ababe Ezung, OSD, Transport Department, also attended the event.

Welcoming the collaboration, Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio said the partnership would enhance visitor experience and expand Nagaland's cultural outreach. "This engagement strengthens our collective vision of nation building and creates greater opportunities for tourism, cultural exchange, and economic



progress in the Land of Festivals," Rio said.

As part of the initiative, Air India Express unveiled a Tsingkotepu-themed livery on one of its newly inducted Boeing 737-8 aircraft. The design, inspired by the traditional Ao Naga warrior shawl, is both a tribute to Nagaland's artistic heritage and the first in the airline's fleet to feature its retrofitted cabin. The aircraft, registered as VT-BWD, will be formally received by Chief Minister Rio at Dimapur Airport on November 22.

The airline has also announced a

15% fare discount on direct and one-stop flights to Dimapur for bookings made between November 20 and 30, valid for travel until December 15, using the promo code HORNBILL. In addition, Air India Express will facilitate travel for festival performers and organisers, and set up a dedicated Hornbill Experience Kiosk at Dimapur Airport to welcome incoming passengers.

Air India Express Managing Director Alok Singh said the partnership underscores the airline's commitment to celebrating India's cultural mosaic.

"The Hornbill Festival exemplifies the vibrancy and artistic richness of Nagaland. Through our 'Tales of India' initiative, we aim to showcase indigenous art forms and elevate the overall travel experience," he said. Air India Express currently operates a daily Dimapur-Guwahati service with one-stop connections to major cities such as Delhi, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Kolkata, and Patna. The same aircraft operates through the Dimapur-Guwahati-Delhi route, allowing passengers to travel without changing planes. Across the Northeast, the carrier maintains strong connectivity with 126 weekly flights from Guwahati, 21 each from Agartala and Imphal, and 14 from Dibrugarh.

The airline, known for highlighting regional traditions through its service offerings, continues to integrate Indian cultural motifs into aircraft tails and onboard experiences. Alongside the new Tsingkotepu livery, its fleet features designs inspired by art forms such as Manipur's Akyobi, Moirang Phee, and Saphee Lanphee; Assam's Gamosa and Jaapi; Arunachal Pradesh's Idu Mishmi; Meghalaya's Khneng embroidery; and Mizoram's Puanchei textile.

Welcome Manish Chatterjee

Member, Organising Committee, NEIR 2026

www.northeastintegrationrally.in



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NEW INDIA-US BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATER

In a world increasingly defined by fragmentation and flux, the relationship between India and the US remains one of the few partnerships with the potential to shape a more stable, democratic, and innovative global order. The recent confirmation of a new US ambassador to India—a close aide of Donald Trump, albeit with no prior diplomatic or India experience, Sergio Gor—signals Washington's intent to reinvigorate ties with New Delhi at a time when both countries face shared challenges and converging opportunities.

President Trump's recent remarks about Prime Minister Narendra Modi, calling him "a strong leader and a great friend", mark a notable shift in tone from earlier weeks of diplomatic statements and social media posts. While recent frictions over tariffs and trade imbalances have strained the relationship, the current moment appears to offer a chance to reset. Encouraging signs point to the possibility of a new bilateral trade deal, which could unlock growth, investment, and innovation across sectors ranging from pharmaceuticals and semiconductors to clean energy and artificial intelligence.

But to seize this moment, both sides must confront and clarify the geopolitical realities that shape their choices. At one time, both Washington and New Delhi saw the spectre of Chinese assertiveness looming large—from the Himalayas to South China Sea, from cyber intrusions to supply chain dependencies—and made common cause in recognising the need to constrain it. But after the recent 'G2 Summit' in Busan, there is renewed confusion about whether the US still sees China as a strategic competitor and global rival, or whether we are witnessing the dawning of a co-operative condominium arrangement between the two great powers of our times.

For India, the challenge is existential: we must defend our sovereignty while accelerating our development. Washington must decide whether it is strategic—balancing deterrence with diplomacy, and maintaining influence in a region where its primacy is no longer assured—or as Trump's recent silence on the Quad suggests, the Indo-Pacific is no longer a priority.

Seen from New Delhi, a deeper US-India partnership is not merely desirable, it is imperative. Yet, it cannot be built on sentiment alone. It must be anchored in structural reforms, mutual strategic clarity, and a shared vision for the 21st century.

First, both countries must remove the impediments that have long hampered economic cooperation. The legacy of US tariff policy—particularly the withdrawal of India's benefits under the generalised system of preferences during the first Trump administration, and the punitive 50 percent tariffs this year that have cost jobs in India and done real damage to our exporters—leaving deep wounds that could turn into lasting scars.

While some of these measures were aimed at protecting American industry, they also signalled a retreat from the strategic vision of the last quarter-century. A renewed push to reduce tariffs, eliminate regulatory barriers, harmonise standards, and facilitate cross-border investment would send a powerful message: that economic alignment is a pillar of strategic trust.

Second, India must continue its path of economic reform—not just to attract foreign capital, but to ensure policy certainty and transparency. Investors, both domestic and foreign, seek stability in taxation, clarity in digital regulation, and predictability in dispute resolution. In Trump's America, where executive volatility has become a feature of governance, India's steadiness can be an asset—but only if it is matched by reformist ambition.

Third, the movement of people must be restored as a cornerstone of bilateral ties. The Indian diaspora in the US—now over 5-million-strong—has been a bridge of talent, entrepreneurship, and cultural diplomacy. Yet recent restrictions on work permits, H-1B visas, and green card processing have frayed that bridge. Liberalising skilled migration, especially in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields, would not only benefit both economies but also reinforce the human dimension of the partnership.

Fourth, both countries must develop mutual clarity on the China challenge. While India faces direct military pressure along its borders, the US grapples with economic and technological competition. A shared framework, distinguishing between necessary engagement and strategic deterrence, could help both sides avoid misalignment. Joint exercises, intelligence sharing, and coordinated diplomacy in forums like the Quad must be deepened. Finally, and most crucially, the two countries must embrace innovation and cooperation in artificial intelligence as a no-brainer for strategic convergence in the second quarter of the 21st century. AI is not just a tool, it is the terrain on which future power will be contested. From healthcare diagnostics to battlefield autonomy, language models to climate forecasting, AI will shape the contours of governance, security, and society. India's 1.4 billion people represent the globe's largest source of trained brainpower and data. With 40 percent of those working on AI in Silicon Valley being of Indian origin, it's time for the US to embrace India's potential in India. With its vast data sets, engineering talent, and democratic ethos, India offers a unique counterpoint to China's authoritarian AI model. The US, with its research universities, venture capital ecosystem, and regulatory experience, brings complementary strengths. Together, they can build an AI alliance that is ethical, inclusive, and globally competitive. Joint research centres, interoperable standards, and shared protocols for AI safety could form the backbone of this collaboration. Of course, such ambition requires political will. It demands that both governments look beyond short-term irritants and electoral cycles. It requires the recognition that in an era of multi-polarity, bilateralism must be bold, not bureaucratic. The appointment of Ambassador Gor, the warmth of Trump's recent statements, and the tentative progress on trade all suggest that the window is open. But windows do not stay open forever. The world is watching—whether the world's largest democracy and its most powerful one can move from rhetoric to results.

In the end, the US-India relationship is not just about tariffs or visas. It is about the kind of world we want to build in the 21st century: open or closed, cooperative or coercive, innovative or insular. If Delhi and Washington can align their strengths, respect their differences, and invest in their shared future, they may yet prove that democracy and development can be strategically complementary and mutually reinforcing. The time to act is now.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

The doctor sees all the weakness of mankind; the lawyer all the wickedness, the theologian all the stupidity.

~ Arthur Schopenhauer

BIHAR'S VERDICT AND THE EMERGING GRAMMAR OF INDIAN POLITICS



HARDEEP SINGH PURI

The people of Bihar have delivered a mandate whose weight goes well beyond the arithmetic of seats. The National Democratic Alliance has won 202 of the 243 seats in the Legislative Assembly, while the Bharatiya Janata Party alone has secured 89 seats, its best ever performance in the state. The Mahagathbandhan has fallen to just 34 seats after having dominated Bihar's politics for decades in various combinations. A turnout of 67.13 per cent out of more than 7.4 crore registered voters makes this one of the most intensely contested elections in the state's recent history and gives the result real democratic depth.

For years, much of the commentary on Bihar treated the state as if it were frozen in time. Elections were read as exercises in caste arithmetic, with social demography assumed to translate mechanically into political outcomes. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, the grammar of Indian politics has shifted decisively towards development, inclusion and state capacity, and Bihar's electorate has responded to that shift with unusual clarity. The 2025 result reveals a more demanding voter, one who has looked at the contrast between the Bihar of insecurity and paralysis and the Bihar of improved governance. Many citizens have also expressed, in conversations and turnout patterns, that this election carried a sense of responsibility after the lower-than-expected mobilisation in the 2024 general election. They have drawn their own conclusions about where they want Bihar to stand in the country's wider journey.

Governance delivery has anchored this transformation. Over the last decade, Bihar has seen more than 55,000 kilometres of rural roads built or upgraded, linking villages to markets, schools and health centres. Millions of households have received electricity, drinking water and social security through a combination of central schemes and state programmes. Under Saubhagya and related initiatives, over 35 lakh households in Bihar were electrified, taking the state close to universal household connectivity. Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, more than 57 lakh pucca houses have been sanctioned for Bihar, many

registered in the names of women. Such figures speak to concrete change that people can see and touch: an all-weather road, a light that stays on, a tap that works, a home that provides dignity.

As these public goods spread, old labels lose some of their hold. Bihar's society remains diverse and layered, yet those layers no longer behave like watertight containers in electoral terms. Women from different communities now share expectations about safety, mobility and opportunity. Young people from families that once stood at opposite ends of the social hierarchy now find themselves in the same coaching classes and labour markets. Their daily experiences draw them into a shared space of aspiration. In that space, the questions they ask of politics concern jobs, infrastructure, stability and fairness.

The verdict has also delivered a clear message on dynasty centred politics. Parties that relied on family charisma and inherited networks have seen their legislative space contract sharply. Bihar has observed such formations at close quarters for several decades and understands their limits. The 2025 result suggests that voters are looking at how leaders conduct themselves in government, how they respond in crises, how they engage with institutions and how they use public resources. Where family backgrounds exist within the wider National Democratic Alliance, they are increasingly filtered through demands for hard work, organisational ability and a record of service.

The behaviour of younger voters sits at the heart of this shift. Bihar has one of India's youngest demographic profiles, and millions of citizens born after 2000 voted in this election.

They have grown up in an India where expressways, digital payments, competitive federalism and ambitious welfare schemes shape expectations. They compare states, track announcements and judge leaders on the speed with which promises turn into visible change. For them, the difference between a road laid on time and a road that never leaves the file is not an abstract matter. They experience that difference every day when they commute to colleges, coaching centres or workplaces and when they see families back home benefit from connectivity and welfare.

This generation also brings a sharp

instinct for national coherence. Young voters are alert to rhetoric that undermines institutions, flirts with separatist sentiment or trivialises national security. They engage critically with policy debates, including on unemployment and inequality, yet they draw a line between criticism that aims to improve the republic and narratives that appear indifferent to its cohesion. Bihar's verdict reflects this distinction. Voters have responded to a political formation that speaks the language of both development and national purpose with unusual clarity.

Law and order provide another layer of explanation. Bihar's elections were once associated with booth capturing and violence. Over recent years, and especially in this electoral cycle, those images have largely receded. Insurgency affected pockets have been pushed back through the combined weight of firm security measures and economic development. Traders now keep their shops open longer, students travel with greater confidence, and families experience public life with less anxiety. An electorate that has seen this improvement does not ignore it when choosing its representatives.

The response of parts of the opposition to these developments has been revealing. Rather than reflecting on the reasons for their loss of support, some leaders have preferred to cast doubt on the Election Commission, on voter lists or on the fairness of the process itself. This posture does little justice to the intelligence and agency of Bihar's voters. It also ignores the fact that the same institutional framework has produced outcomes favourable to the opposition in other states. The electorate expects a more serious engagement with its concerns than blanket denunciations of the system that it has just used so enthusiastically.

Placed in a wider national and global context, Bihar's verdict strengthens an emerging pattern. At a time when several democracies grapple with polarisation, economic drift and institutional fatigue, India continues to register high participation, stable leadership and a policy trajectory centred on growth, inclusion and national strength. The Bihar result adds another layer of democratic endorsement to that trajectory. It suggests that voters in one of India's most politically conscious states see their own progress intertwined with the country's

larger journey towards a developed and confident Bharat by 2047.

For the National Democratic Alliance, this mandate is both encouragement and instruction. It validates the emphasis on infrastructure, welfare delivery and security, yet it also raises expectations for faster job creation, deeper reforms and continual institutional improvement. For the opposition, the verdict poses serious questions about strategy, leadership and programme. Bihar's voters have signalled that they expect a politics grounded in governance, seriousness and respect for national cohesion. Those expectations are likely to frame the grammar of Indian politics for years to come.

(The writer is India's Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas)

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

Gujarat Police has vigorously started checking all accused of last 30 years who were involved in anti national activities. Instructions have been issued that this checking should be completed in the next 100 hours by all Police Stations.

@GujaratPolice

remains ever vigilant to safeguard our country from anti national elements.
~ Vikas Sahay, DGP, Gujarat



The question of purity of voter list in democracy and the necessity of SIR

DR. PRIYANKA SAURABH

India is the world's largest democracy, where the true power of governance is believed to lie in the hands of the people. Here, the government is elected by the people, and as per the clear provisions of the Constitution, this process is governed by the impartial structure and functioning of the Election Commission. The voter list is the cornerstone of this entire process—because it is through it that citizens exercise their right to vote. Therefore, the reliability and purity of the voter list are essential for the stability of democracy. This context makes the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process extremely important.

Errors in voter lists occur in many forms—names of deceased individuals, the same person appearing in two places, the omission of eligible voters' names, or the failure to amend despite a change of address. Such situations raise questions about the fairness of elections. Article 324 of the Indian Constitution grants the Election Commission broad powers, including the conduct, control, direction, and supervision of elections. Therefore, the SIR is not merely an administrative process but a constitutionally enshrined democratic obligation.

The Election Commission has been regularly revising voter lists since the Constitution came into force in 1950. In some states, SIRs have involved removing large numbers of deceased names, correcting incorrect entries, and adding



newly eligible or relocated voters. Examples of revisions in Bihar and Bengal demonstrate that removing long-inactive names has made voter lists more accurate and transparent. In Bengal, approximately 4.7 million names were deleted from a list of 76 million voters, highlighting how distorted a list can become without regular revisions.

Errors in voter lists are not merely technical issues—they directly undermine electoral fairness, the right to representation, and public confidence. If a citizen's name is missing from the list, they are deprived of their fundamental democratic right—the right to vote. On the other hand, the inclusion of names of deceased or newly relocated individuals increases the risk of fraudulent voting or political abuse. These discrepancies undermine the legitimacy of democracy.

Some people view SIR as political interfer-

ence or government interference in voter lists, but this suspicion is baseless. Voter list purification is not necessary for the victory or defeat of any party, but for a fair election process. The Election Commission is a completely autonomous body, and its decisions are protected by the courts. The Supreme Court has clearly stated in several decisions that fair elections are the cornerstone of democracy, and ensuring the purity of voter lists is essential for this.

Active citizen participation during the SIR is also crucial. If people don't check their own entries, report errors to the relevant booth-level officers, and provide documents, the process slows down. Even today, a significant number of citizens fail to come forward to correct incorrect entries. This apathy undermines democracy. Therefore, the Election Commission has expanded the use of digital tools—such as the

Voter Helpline app, online forms, and portals—to facilitate easy corrections.

Those opposing SIR should understand that this process is meant to correct discrepancies in voter lists, prevent fraudulent voting, and secure a clean voter base. In states where this process was halted or stalled due to political controversy, significant errors were found in voter lists. In such cases, the courts themselves have issued guidelines reiterating the need for voter list purification. Therefore, opposing SIR is a violation of democratic values.

In a vast country like India, with over 960 million voters, updating the voter list is a complex, massive, and ongoing process. It's not enough to consider it a mere government responsibility; it's also a civic duty. The Election Commission provides the framework, but making it effective relies on public cooperation. Keeping your voter list up to date is as important as casting your vote on Election Day.

Ultimately, democracy is not just about voting day—it's about the entire system. To strengthen this system, the purity of the voter list is paramount. The SIR ensures that elections are fair, transparent, and credible. It keeps the spirit of the democratic system alive and protects the rights of citizens. Therefore, it is the duty of every responsible citizen to raise awareness about regular voter list purification, encourage citizen participation, and support processes like the SIR.

AIUDF aiming for alliance with Owaisi-led AIMIM ahead of Assam assembly polls

GUWAHATI

Following the Bihar election results, Badruddin Ajmal-led All Assam United Democratic Front (AIUDF) has been showing a keen interest in forging an alliance with Asaduddin Owaisi-led AIMIM in Assam ahead of the assembly polls in the state.

AIUDF MLA Mazbur Rahman told ANI that the Asaduddin Owaisi-led AIMIM has shown a good performance in the Bihar election, and if Owaisi expresses interest, then AIUDF is ready to forge an alliance with AIMIM in Assam.

"Today, an executive meeting of AIUDF was held in Guwahati in the presence of party Chief Badruddin Ajmal. We have decided to contest 35 seats in the upcoming assembly polls in Assam in 2026. We are very hopeful that this time AIUDF will win at least 25 seats and will show better performance compared to Congress," Mazbur Rahman said.

He further stated that if UPPL, led by Pramod Boro, exits the NDA and wishes to do so, then AIUDF can also form an alliance with UPPL to oust the BJP from power.



Criticising the Congress party, the AIUDF MLA said that, actually, Congress doesn't want to form a government in Assam in 2026; they are talking about 2031.

Meanwhile, the AIUDF party held a district and block-level review meeting in Guwahati on Monday.

AIUDF Chief Badruddin Ajmal, along with the party's MLAs and leadership, was also present at the meeting.

In the recently concluded Bihar polls, the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIM-

IM) secured five seats.

Owaisi said, "I want to thank the people of Seemanchal from the bottom of my heart for making our five candidates win again... We started this fight for Seemanchal 11 years ago, and we are still fighting for justice for Seemanchal."

Extending greetings beyond Bihar, he added, "I want to congratulate Naveen Yadav for winning the Jubilee Hills by-elections and also thank CM Revanth Reddy, who congratulated me for today's victory in Bihar."

On the overall mandate, he said, "I was expecting NDA to win big, but not as big as 200... Whatever it is, it is the verdict of the people of Bihar, and we have to accept it wholeheartedly. I congratulate Nitish Kumar as well, and if he really wants to focus on developing Seemanchal, we will have constructive cooperation."

The NDA got another term in Bihar, winning 202 seats, a three-fourths majority in the 243-member House. This is the second time the NDA has crossed the 200-mark in the assembly polls. In the 2010 polls, it had won 206 seats.

In the NDA, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won 89 seats, Janata Dal (United) won 85, Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) (LJP) won 19, Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular) (HAMS) won five, and Rashtriya Lok Morcha won four seats.

In Mahagathbandhan, Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) won 25 seats, Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (Liberation) - CPI(ML)(L) - two, Indian Inclusive Party (IIP) - one and Communist Party of India (Marxist) - CPI(M) one seat.

Cholera outbreak in Southern Mizoram claims 9 lives, border points with Myanmar sealed

AIZAWL

The water-borne disease that has claimed six lives in Lawngtlai district and three more in neighbouring Siaha has been confirmed as cholera, Lawngtlai deputy commissioner Donny Lalruatsanga announced on Monday.

Laboratory tests conducted at the Zoram Medical College & Hospital (ZMC&H), Falkawn, established the presence of vibrio cholera in samples collected from affected villagers. Medical experts classify cholera as a severe form of acute gastroenteritis caused by the vibrio cholerae bacterium, which triggers sudden watery diarrhoea, vomiting and rapid dehydration.

Dr Swagnik Roy, Professor and Head of Microbiology at ZMC&H, confirmed the diagnosis after stool samples and other specimens sent early last week tested positive. The outbreak has hit Kakichuah vil-

lage in Lawngtlai district the hardest, where six people have died. In neighbouring Siaha district, three more fatalities have been reported, taking the total toll in southern Mizoram to nine so far.

In response to the escalating situation, the district administrations of Lawngtlai and Siaha have ordered the closure of all Myanmar border entry points, imposing a two-month ban on cross-border movement. Also Read - No decision to join popular govt, clarify two Kuki MLAs amid media reports Authorities said the restrictions were put in place after the infection was suspected to have originated from Paletwa district in southern Chin State, which borders the affected areas of Mizoram. Officials said surveillance and preventive measures have been intensified in the border belt as health teams continue monitoring for new cases.

Manipur displaced people to protest against Sangai festival launch amid resettlement delay

IMPHAL

Internally displaced persons living in relief camps across Imphal Valley districts plan to demonstrate on November 20 against the state government's decision to hold the 10-day Sangai Tourism Festival, beginning November 21.

Rajendra Singh, vice-chairman of the Committee of Protection of Meitei People, said authorities should prioritise resettling displaced communities before staging the annual event. Speaking to reporters on Monday, he questioned the government's focus.

"The Manipur government is going to organise the annual Sangai tourism festival after two years. It will be better if the event is organised after the resettlement of the IDPs and free movement on the highways," Singh said.

He highlighted broken assurances regarding rehabilitation timelines. "We had been assured that IDPs would be resettled before December. But hardly any step has been taken in that direction. Our appeal to all is to support us (IDPs) in this boycott."

The festival returns following a two-year suspension caused by ethnic violence that erupted in 2023. Preparations are now underway at Hapta Kangleibung, the primary venue, where additional state and central security forces have been stationed.

The protests reflect growing frustration amongst displaced populations who remain in temporary accommodation whilst the state moves forward with tourism promotion activities.

Digital arrest scam: SC stops bail for accused defrauding senior lawyer

GUWAHATI

The Supreme Court on Monday directed lower courts not to grant bail to individuals accused of defrauding a 72-year-old lawyer of Rs 3.29 crore through a sophisticated digital arrest scam. Appearing before a Bench led by Justice Surya Kant, the Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association, represented by its president, advocate Vipin Nair, explained that the scamsters had convinced the senior lawyer with calls that appeared "genuinely official" at the time.

Justice Kant, visibly affected by the details of the case, described such targeted scams on senior citizens as deserving "unusual orders."

He emphasized the need for stern judicial action, noting, "We must deal with these cases firmly to send the right message. Extraordinary phenomena require extraordinary intervention."

Advocate Nair told the court that the elderly lawyer had lost her entire

savings in the scam. The accused, arrested following an FIR registered in May this year, were on the verge of release on statutory bail when the Supreme Court intervened. During a hearing on November 3, the court reviewed a confidential report revealing that fraudsters had already swindled over Rs 3,000 crore from victims, predominantly elderly, through digital arrest schemes. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, highlighted the widespread social and economic fallout of these scams, stating that their impact had exceeded official expectations. Justice Kant further affirmed that the judiciary would issue strict orders to empower investigative agencies in tackling the perpetrators. In previous proceedings, the apex court had suggested assigning the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to investigate the growing menace of digital arrests, in which fraudsters impersonate judges and police officers using forged documents.

GUWAHATI

The Tezpur University student community, on Monday, levelled a series of serious allegations against Vice-Chancellor Shambhu Nath Singh, accusing him of administrative misconduct, large-scale corruption, academic negligence and intimidating protesting students. Addressing a press meet at the Guwahati Press Club, student representatives demanded the immediate suspension or termination of the Vice-Chancellor and called for the formation of a judicial inquiry committee headed by a sitting or former Supreme Court judge.

The students also criticised the university administration for not paying tribute to cultural icon Zubeen Garg, after Assam lost one of its most revered artists.

Nipu Boruah, a student present in the conference, alleged that corruption under the Vice-Chancellor began "from the very day he joined on March 21, 2023".

Boruah claimed that irregularities in finances, faculty appointments, academic processes and campus administration have become rampant.

"If we start talking about corruption in the university, it would not end soon," he said. Students also raised doubts about Singh's educational qualifications, saying no information or research publications from his doctoral work can be found online. Boruah further alleged that the Vice-Chancellor has issued "death-like threats" to students involved in the 57-day-long protest. Though an enquiry committee was set up earlier, students said the findings have not been made public despite submitting multiple evidence documents.

They also mentioned that the President of India, who serves as Visitor of the university, has not responded to their grievance petition for over a month.

The students also sought the selection of a new Vice-Chancel-

lor with "official qualifications, cultural sensitivity, and respect for the university's legacy".

Boruah also noted the decline in Tezpur University's NIRF ranking since Singh assumed office and accused him of mishandling cyber threats, saying despite FIRs filed with the police and cyber cell, "no culprit has been identified."

Student representative Bhaskar J. Borah alleged that the Vice-Chancellor has "destroyed the academic system" by exerting complete administrative control.

He accused Singh of ending contracts of 72 guest faculty members without notice and replacing them with research scholars paid as little as Rs 4,000-6,000 per month.

He further alleged a cut in research contingency funds, stating scholars received only Rs 4,000 instead of the mandated Rs 10,000.

Borah also accused the Vice-Chancellor of cutting trees across campus "in the name of

beautification" and forcing students to fund their AIU participation due to lack of university support.

Another student, Ananya Devi, alleged that the Vice-Chancellor violated the Tezpur University Act by not appointing a Pro-Vice Chancellor after assuming office.

She also claimed that a financial scam to the tune of Rs 12 crore has taken place under the current administration in the name of book purchases, hostel development and "miscellaneous spending". She claimed that Vice-Chancellor Singh has been absent for over 388 days in his two-year tenure, describing the functioning of the institution as "autocratic".

The students reiterated that their movement is non-political and solely aimed at protecting the academic future of more than 5,000 students.

At the time of writing this report, the University administration hasn't issued any statement.

Tezpur University students seek VC's suspension, judicial probe over graft, threats

Meghalaya commits Rs 50 Cr to AAI for long-delayed Jengjal Airport revival



SHILLONG

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma, on Monday, announced that the state government will sanction Rs 50 crore to the Airports Authority

of India (AAI) for the development of the Airport at Jengjal in West Garo Hills district.

The CM made this announcement at a function after inaugurating a new police station building in

West Garo Hills. Sangma said the airport will soon see operations by 19-seater aircraft under Air Alliance, with Shillong-Tura flights being prioritised.

He said the government is also identifying land in Jengjal to develop a permanent venue for major events, noting the area's growing strategic significance in Garo Hills.

The state government had earlier this year signed an MoU with the Airports Authority of India to operationalise the airport, including O&M and technical management, paving the way for the revival work announced on Monday.

The airport, officially known as Baljek Airport, has remained unutilised for years and is currently in a dilapidated condition.

The project, conceived in the early 1980s and sanctioned in 1995,

is widely associated with CM's father, former Lok Sabha Speaker PA Sangma, under whose tenure the proposal gained momentum.

It was inaugurated in 2008 by then President Pratibha Patil but has since seen no commercial operations due to infrastructure and runway limitations.

Earlier in the day, inaugurating the new Jengjal Police Station building, the Chief Minister said the facility has been constructed as per Centre's norms and forms part of the government's broader plan to upgrade police infrastructure across Meghalaya.

He said the Police Infrastructure Renovation Fund has eased repair and renovation works, and added that recruitment to fill more than 3,000 police vacancies is in its final stage.

74th Karbi Anglong Day observed with tribute, tree plantation & grand public session

SUSHANTA ROY

DIPHU: Karbi Anglong today marked the 74th Karbi Anglong Day with solemn remembrance, community participation, and a renewed commitment to sustainable growth. The day's events reflected the region's deep respect for its founding leaders, whose vision and determination laid the foundation of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous region.

The Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) paid heartfelt tribute to the pioneers who fought for autonomy and identity, acknowledging their sacrifices and leadership that shaped today's Karbi Anglong.

As part of the commemoration, Team Karbi Anglong planted a tree, symbolizing unity, environmental responsibility, and the region's hope for a greener, sustainable future.

The plantation drive was highlighted as a meaningful gesture aligning with the region's long-term ecological goals.

The Open Session of Karbi Anglong Day 2025 was held at the Sertalin Auditorium Hall, located within Karbi Peoples Hall, Taralango, Diphu, and was presided

over by KAAC Speaker Raju Tisso.

The occasion witnessed the presence of several eminent leaders and dignitaries, including; Longsing Ronghang, Karbi Recho, Amarsing Tisso, Lok Sabha MP, Dr. Numal Momin, Deputy Speaker, Assam Legislative Assembly, MLAs; Bidyasing Englang (Diphu LA), Darsing Ronghang (Howraghat LA) and Rupsing Teron (Baithalango LA), Raju Tisso, Speaker, Avijit Kro, Deputy Speaker, KAAC, Executive Members (EMs), MACs, District Commissioners (DCs) and Senior Superintendent of Police (SSPs) of both districts, Principal Secretary, Secretaries, and other senior officials of KAAC. The event was marked by cultural pride, administrative solidarity, and collective reflection on the journey of Karbi Anglong over more than seven decades. Leaders urged the people to continue nurturing unity, progress, and environmental stewardship as the region moves forward.

The observance concluded with renewed pledges toward development, cultural preservation, and strengthening the autonomy that forms the identity of Karbi Anglong.

Tripura Reports Major Fall in Border Infiltration as Crackdown Nets 366 Middlemen

AGARTALA

The incidence of illegal infiltration in Tripura through the International Border (IB) has seen a significant decline since June 2025, according to a statement issued by the Superintendent of Police (Police Control).

Tripura shares 856 km-long international border with Bangladesh.

Authorities attribute the drop to intensified surveillance and a series of successful operations targeting border brokers and their accomplices.

Sources said that over the past three years, security forces have arrested 366 border brokers and accomplices under relevant legal provisions.

"Multiple cases have also been registered against individuals involved in making fake documents and facilitating



the transportation of illegal immigrants. Combined efforts of the Police and the Border Security Force (BSF) have been central to breaking the infiltrators' network. The BSF continues to maintain strict vigilance along the international border, while Tripura State Rifles (TSR) personnel have been briefed on the issue to enhance coordination", said police.

Police said that to strengthen monitoring beyond border areas, plainclothes security personnel have been deployed at Maharaja Bir Bikram (MBB) Airport in Agartala, major railway stations, and key bus terminals.

"The Special Branch has also been instructed to share intelligence related to infiltration without delay. Acting on such inputs, authorities have arrested several Bangladeshi and Rohingya infiltrators in recent months, along with multiple Indian brokers allegedly involved in aiding illegal crossings", said the official.

Officials emphasise that continued cooperation between state police, BSF, and intelligence units remains crucial to sustaining the recent gains in curbing infiltration.

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ED conducts searches at 25 locations linked to Al Falah in Delhi and NCR



NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday carried out searches at 25 locations in Delhi NCR in connection with its probe into the November 10 Delhi blast.

The premises raided include those linked to the terror-tainted Al-Falah University and individuals associated with the institution. The key personnel overseeing finance and administration of the trust and the University have also been covered in the raids.

Teams of the agency raided an office location in Delhi's Okhla area with a security cordon being provided by the police and paramilitary forces.

"The ED operation forms part of an ongoing investigation into financial irregularities, the use of shell companies, accommodation entities, and money laundering," the central agency said in a press release.

"Nine shell companies linked to the Al-Falah group, all registered at a single address, are under examination. The operation forms part of an ongoing investigation into financial irregularities, use of shell companies, accommodation entities and money laun-

dering," said the statement.

"In addition, prima facie discrepancies have been noted in claims regarding UGC and NAAC recognition. These aspects are being examined with the concerned authorities," it stated.

Preliminary findings point to multiple "risk" indicators consistent with shell-company behaviour like no physical presence or meaningful utility consumption at declared places of business and common mobile number and email across various companies and accounts.

The ED investigators have also found absence of EPFO/ESIC filings inconsistent with reported scale of operations and overlapping of directors/signatories and weak KYC trails across entities.

Instances of minimal salary disbursement through banking channels and absence of HR (human resource) records part from synchronised incorporation patterns and common contact coordinates across firms have been detected at the varsity, the statement from the agency added.

The institution had employed Dr. Umar un Nabi, the accused bomber, along

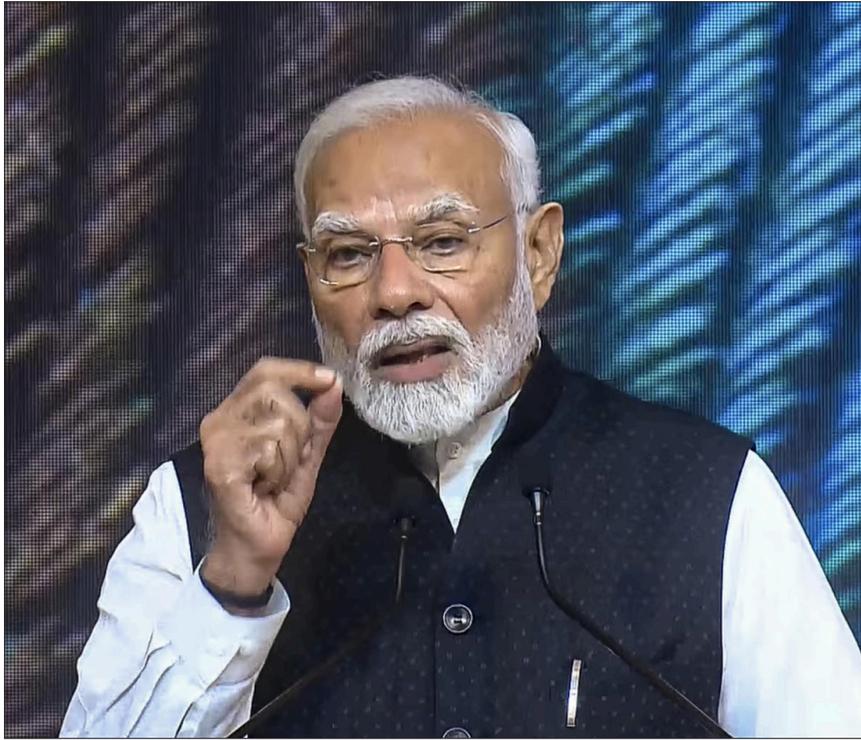
with other individuals linked to the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM)-connected "white-collar" Faridabad terror module, according to investigators.

This comes days after two FIRs registered by the Delhi Police against Al-Falah University. The Association of Indian Universities (AIU) had recently revoked the institution's membership after its alleged links to the terror module surfaced. One FIR pertains to charges of cheating, while the second invokes sections related to forgery.

On Monday, the police issued two summonses to university chairman Javed Ahmad Siddiqui based on a complaint filed by the University Grants Commission (UGC). Investigators said Siddiqui's statement is crucial to addressing inconsistencies regarding the university's functioning and the activities of those associated with it.

Al-Falah University has emerged as a key focal point in the Delhi blast case, with investigators suspecting that the planning of the high-intensity explosion which claimed 14 lives and left more than 20 injured, was carried out on its premises.

India isn't just emerging market, it's also an emerging model for the world: PM Modi



NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said that India is not just an emerging market but an emerging model for the world, and the country is charting a path toward a vibrant and promising future.

Delivering the sixth Ramnath Goenka Lecture here, PM Modi also referred to the ruling NDA's sweep-

ing success in the Bihar assembly election and said people had given their verdict in favour of the politics of development.

He said in 2022, the European crisis significantly disrupted global supply chains and energy markets, affecting economies worldwide. Despite these challenges, India's economy demonstrated strong momentum, achieving

robust growth in 2022-23.

In 2023, even as the situation deteriorated in West Asia, India's growth rate remained resilient. This year, amidst ongoing global instability, India continues to maintain a growth rate of approximately seven per cent.

"At a time when the world grapples with uncertainty and fears of disruption, India is charting a

path toward a vibrant and promising future. India isn't just an emerging market, it's an emerging model, too," PM Modi said.

"Ramnath Ji was often described as an impatient man, not in a negative sense, but in a positive way. His impatience was the kind that drives change, the kind that stirs movement in stagnant waters. In a similar vein, today's India embodies this constructive impatience. India is eager for progress, restless to achieve development, and determined to become self-reliant," PM Modi added.

PM Modi urged states to focus on development and compete in parameters such as ease of doing business.

"Whether it's the central government or state governments led by regional parties, their primary focus should be on Development. I strongly encourage state governments to foster a spirit of healthy competition by attracting investments and promoting growth. Organizing competitions to improve the ease of doing business could be a great step in this direction," he said.

"Following BJP's victory in the Bihar elections, some media outlets have reignited claims that BJP and Modi are perpetually in 'Election Mode'. However, winning elections isn't about being in 'Election Mode'; it's about being in 'Emotional Mode', connecting with people's sentiments and understanding their aspirations," he added.

INTERNATIONAL

After years away from Washington, Saudi crown prince to get warm embrace from Trump, US business

WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump is set to fete Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on Tuesday when the de facto leader of Saudi Arabia makes his first White House visit since the 2018 killing of Washington Post journalist Jamal Khashoggi by Saudi agents.

The US-Saudi relationship had been sent into a tailspin by the operation targeting Khashoggi, a fierce critic of the kingdom, that US intelligence agencies later determined Prince Mohammed likely directed the agents to carry out. But seven years later, the dark clouds over the relationship have been cleared away.

And Trump has tightened his embrace of the 40-year-old crown prince he views as an indispensable player in shaping the Middle East in the decades to come. Prince Mohammed, for his part, denies involvement in the killing of Khashoggi, a Saudi citizen and Virginia resident.

Khashoggi will likely be an afterthought as the two leaders unveil billions of dollars in deals and huddle with aides to discuss the tricky path ahead in a volatile Middle East. They'll end their day with an evening White House soiree, organized by first lady Melania Trump, to honor the prince. "They have been a great ally," Trump said of the Saudis on the eve of the visit.

Ahead of Prince Mohammed's arrival, Trump announced he has agreed to sell the Saudis F-35 fighter jets despite some concerns within the administration that the sale could lead to China gaining access to the US technology behind the advanced weapon system.

Trump's announcement is also surprising because some in the Republican administration have been wary about upsetting Israel's qualita-



tive military edge over its neighbors, especially at a time when Trump is depending on Israeli support for the success of his Gaza peace plan.

But the unexpected move comes at a moment when Trump is trying to nudge the Saudis toward normalizing relations with Israel.

The president in his first term had helped forge commercial and diplomatic ties between Israel and Bahrain, Morocco and the United Arab Emirates through an effort dubbed the Abraham Accords.

Trump sees expansion of the accords as essential to his broader efforts to build stability in the Middle East after the two-year Israel-Hamas war in Gaza.

And getting Saudi Arabia — the largest Arab economy and the birthplace of Islam — to sign on would create an enormous domino effect, he argues. The president in recent weeks has even predicted that once Saudi Arabia signs on to the accords, "everybody" in the Arab world "goes in."

But the Saudis have maintained that a clear path toward Palestinian statehood must first be established before normalizing relations with Israel can be considered. The Israelis, meanwhile, remain steadfastly opposed to the creation of a Palestinian state.

The UN Security Council on Monday approved a US plan for Gaza that authorizes an international stabilization force to provide security in the devastated territory and envisions a possible future path to an independent Palestinian state.

The leaders certainly will have plenty to talk about including maintaining the fragile ceasefire in Gaza, mutual concerns about Iran's malign behavior, and a brutal civil war in Sudan.

And the Saudis are looking to receive formal assurances from Trump defining the scope of US military protection for the kingdom, even though anything not ratified by Congress can be undone by the next president.

Prince Mohammed, 40, who has stayed away from the West after the Khashoggi killing, is also looking to reestablish his position as a global player and a leader determined to diversify the Saudi economy away from oil by investing in sectors like mining, technology and tourism.

To that end, Saudi Arabia is expected to announce a multi-billion dollar investment in US artificial intelligence infrastructure, and the two countries will lay out details about new cooperation in the civil nuclear energy sector, according to a senior Trump administration who was not authorized to comment publicly ahead of the formal announcement.

"I think the challenge for us as Americans is to try to convince someone like MBS that the trajectory of Saudi Arabia ought to look more like South Korea than, say, China," said Bernard Haykel, a professor of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University, speaking at a Carnegie Endowment for International Peace event on Monday.

"That, ultimately, political repression of political dissent is not good for business. It's not good for attracting foreign direct investment, it's not good for your image if you're a tourism destination."

But this week's warm embrace by Trump might provide a counterfactual to that argument for the crown prince.

In addition to White House pomp, the two nations are also planning an investment summit at the Kennedy Center on Wednesday that will include the heads of Salesforce, Qualcomm, Pfizer, the Cleveland Clinic, Chevron and Aramco, Saudi Arabia's national oil and natural gas company, where even more deals with the Saudis could be announced.

Bangladesh's interim govt warns media against publishing statements of 'fugitive' Hasina



DHAKA

Bangladesh's interim government has warned all print, electronic and online media outlets to refrain from reporting statements issued by "convicted and fugitive" deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, citing concerns over national security and public order.

The National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA) in a press release issued on Monday claimed that Hasina's statements may contain directives or calls capable of inciting "violence, disorder and criminal activities" and disrupting social harmony. The Daily Star newspaper reported.

"We urge the media to act responsibly in the interest of national security," the release said.

The agency said it was "deeply concerned" that some media organisations were broadcasting and publishing remarks attributed to "convicted" and "fugitive" Hasina.

Noting that airing or publishing statements from individuals who are both convicted and fugitive violates provisions of the Cyber Security Ordinance, the agency warned that authorities are empowered to "remove or block content that threatens national integrity, security or public order, promotes ethnic or religious hatred, or directly incites violence".

It further said that using a false identity or illegally accessing systems to spread hate speech, ethnic incitement or calls for violence is a punishable offence, and provides for penalties of up to two years of imprisonment and/or fines of up to Tk 10 lakh.

Emphasising that it respects freedom of the press and expression, the NCSA urged media houses to "avoid" carrying any "violent, instigating or criminally provocative" statements from convicted individuals and to "remain mindful of their legal obligations".

Hasina, 78, was on Monday sentenced to death in absentia by Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) for "crimes against humanity" over her government's brutal crackdown on student-led protests last year. It also handed the death sentence to former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal on similar charges.

Hasina has been living in India since she fled Bangladesh on August 5 last year in the face of the massive protests. She was earlier declared a fugitive by the court. Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus has hailed the verdict, saying the ruling affirmed a fundamental principle, "no one, regardless of power, is above the law".

Commenting on the verdict, Hasina denied the charges as "biased and politically motivated" and said the judgment has been made by a "rigged tribunal" established and presided over by an "unelected government with no democratic mandate".

Nagaland University develops high-yield ginger variety 'SAS-KEVÜ', designed to boost farmer incomes & strengthen India's ginger value chain

The variety's combination of high yield, high market acceptance & desirable rhizome traits translates into improved returns per hectare for farmers as the crop matures in 9 months, fitting seamlessly into the production cycles



LUMAMI, NAGALAND

Nagaland University researchers have developed a new ginger variety that consistently delivers superior yield, dry matter recovery and culinary quality, making it a high-value option for farmers, the fresh produce market, and the spice-processing industry.

Take up under the All India Coordinated Research Project (AICRP) on Spices, located in Nagaland University, SAS-KEVÜ emerged after nearly a decade of scientific evaluation and extensive multi-location testing across seven AICRP centres in India.

The research was led by Prof. C. S. Maiti and Dr. Graceli I. Yephthomi from the School of Agricultural Sciences, Nagaland University.

The SAS-KEVÜ was formally notified by the Sub-Committee on Crop Standards, Notification and Release of Varieties (Horticultural Crops), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, and published in the Gazette of India (No. CG-DL-E-04092025-265957) on 2nd September 2025.

With a yield potential of 17.21 tonnes per hectare, SAS-KEVÜ outperformed the national check variety by more than nine per cent in national demonstrations. Its dry recovery

with significantly lower fibre, enhancing both consumer appeal and suitability for pickles, beverages, culinary use and value-added products.

Congratulating the Research Team, Prof. Jagadish K Patnaik, Vice Chancellor, Nagaland University, said, "Nagaland University is proud to announce the development and National notification of a new high-yield ginger variety - 'SAS-KEVÜ.' This landmark achievement is the result of nine years of rigorous, coordinated national trials carried out by our dedicated team of scientists in collaboration with partner institutions. 'SAS-KEVÜ' has been specifically developed to deliver higher yields, improved quality, and greater resilience, offering farmers a reliable variety that can substantially enhance their incomes."

Prof. Jagadish K Patnaik, Vice Chancellor, Nagaland University, added, "The release of this variety is expected to strengthen India's ginger value chain, promote regional agri-innovation, and support the broader national vision for sustainable and profitable horticulture. Nagaland University remains committed to scientific excellence, farmer welfare, and the advancement of agricultural research in the North-East and beyond."

Food processing Industry users will benefit

of Agricultural Sciences, Nagaland University, said, "The variety's journey began in 2014, when nineteen clones of the local Nadia ginger were collected from growing areas of Nagaland and studied in detail for their morphological and biochemical traits. From these, the clone NDG-11 — later named SAS-KEVÜ — was identified as the strongest performer. Between 2018 and 2022, it was evaluated under national co-ordinated trials in Chintapalle(AP), Kozhikode(Kerala), Mizoram, Nagaland, Potangi(Odisha), Pundibari (WB) and Sikkim. Stability analyses, including GGE Biplot evaluations, confirmed SAS-KEVÜ's ability to perform well across varied agro-climatic zones, particularly in Nagaland, Pundibari in West Bengal and

Chintapalle in Andhra Pradesh."

Dr. Graceli I. Yephthomi, Assistant Professor, Department of Horticulture, School of Agricultural Sciences, Nagaland University, added, "With the Central Government's notification under the Seeds Act, 1966, SAS-KEVÜ is now approved for seed production and agricultural sale in Nagaland, Mizoram, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh. This milestone not only validates the scientific rigour behind the variety but also strengthens Nagaland University's leadership in agricultural innovation and spice crop research."

The variety, which is the first crop variety developed by AICRP (Spices) team from Nagaland University and also recorded as first Ginger variety from the research institute of North East States in India. The development of SAS-KEVÜ underscores the university's commitment to harnessing local genetic resources for national benefit.

By offering farmers a high-yielding, market-ready, low-fibre variety, the university aims to improve household incomes, reduce post-harvest losses and support India's growing ginger-based industries. Preparations are currently underway at the university to scale up seed rhizome multiplication so that farmers can access planting material ahead of the next cropping season.

Nagaland University anticipates that SAS-KEVÜ will play a significant role in advancing ginger cultivation across the Northeast and other notified states, supporting both economic development and agricultural resilience.

ABOUT NAGALAND UNIVERSITY: Nagaland University, the 13th Central University and the only Central University in Nagaland, was established based on the Act of Parliament of India and received the assent of the President of India on 20th October 1989 as The Nagaland University Act 1989. The University came into being on September 6, 1994, having jurisdiction over the entire state of Nagaland.

Nagaland University registered a significant improvement in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2025, securing a place in the 151-200 rank band.

At present, the University has three campuses, viz. (i) Headquarters at Lumami in Zunheboto district (ii) Kohima Campus at Meriema in Kohima district (iii) Medziphema Campus (School of Agricultural Sciences) at Medziphema in Dimapur district.

There are 43 departments offering Undergraduate, Postgraduate and PhD programmes in different disciplines of Arts, Commerce, Sciences, Agricultural Sciences, Engineering & Technology and Management streams. There are 76 colleges from all over the state of Nagaland currently affiliated with Nagaland University.



Crop: Ginger
Accession number: IC-0650725



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rate of 21.95 per cent offers a strong advantage for processors looking for higher output during drying. The rhizomes exhibit a soft texture, bold size and lemon-yellow flesh

from SAS-KEVÜ's moderate oil content and pulpy bold rhizomes, which aligns well with requirements for candy and ginger paste. For farmers, the variety's combination of high yield, high market acceptance and desirable rhizome traits translates into improved returns per hectare. The crop matures in nine months fitting seamlessly into the production cycles of regions where ginger is traditionally grown.

Tracing the journey of this project, Prof. C. S. Maiti, Department of Horticulture, School



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THE MAGNIFICENT MALDA

NEIR 2026 heads to Malda for its January edition



imagination that shapes how the next generation views opportunity.

Yet Malda's cultural voice remains distinct. It's quieter than Kolkata's theatrical confidence, but that doesn't make it any less expressive. Folk music holds its ground here because communities still treat it as part of daily life rather than a performance for tourists or cultural festivals. Walk into villages around Old Malda or Kaliachak and you'll hear Baul singers practicing without seeking attention. Terracotta artisans continue working in courtyards, their craft shaped by tradition rather than commercial trends. Rural theatre groups rehearse scripts that move between myth and current events with surprising ease. These forms survive because they are embedded in livelihood and lineage.

Of course, no honest portrait of Malda can avoid its challenges. The district has spent decades fighting the slow violence of river erosion. The Ganga has swallowed villages, farmland, and schools, piece by piece. Families move, then move again, rebuilding lives on borrowed land or government rehabilitation plots. These losses don't always make headlines, but they shape everyday politics and memory. Conversations about development here always begin with land—land lost, land shifting, land becoming unstable.

Infrastructure struggles to keep up with the needs of a growing population. Healthcare gaps lead to long queues in district hospitals. Schools work hard but still face shortages of trained teachers and basic facilities. Irrigation networks remain unpredictable in some blocks. These weaknesses create a sense of uncertainty that the district carries even as it pushes forward. Kolkata often overlooks these realities because the distance between the two places isn't just geographical. It's emotional and political.

What this really means is that Malda stands at a crossroads. The district is negotiating its layered past while facing pressures that range from migration to climate change. It isn't trying to reinvent itself into another Kolkata. It's trying to hold on to what makes it distinct while improving what limits it. That balance isn't easy, but it's what defines the region's character.

Look closely and you'll see that Malda has always shaped Bengal quietly, steadily, and without demanding recognition. It supplied the mangoes that became part of the state's culinary identity. It preserved architecture that predates most of modern Bengal. It absorbed waves of migration over centuries and learned to live with the complexities of a border district. Its people move between rural and urban worlds with a flexibility that reveals how interconnected the state's districts really are.

Bottom line: Malda may not dominate headlines or political debates, but it remains one of Bengal's clearest mirrors. If you want to understand the state beyond Kolkata's spotlight, you start here. You walk through the orchards at dawn. You spend time on the old stones of Gaur. You stand near the eroding riverbanks and see how communities adapt to loss. You sit in markets where goods cross boundaries both visible and invisible. And you listen to the everyday stories of people who keep the district moving, season after season.

Malda doesn't rush you. It invites you to read it slowly. And that, in a state defined by its extremes, is its greatest strength.

Malda sits in its own rhythm, far from Kolkata's rush yet tied to the city by history, trade, and memory. The contrast hits you the moment you arrive. Kolkata pulls you with its noise, its intellectual restlessness, and its habit of demanding attention. Malda greets you with orchards, slow rivers, and long stretches of land where the past still lies close to the surface. The two places don't compete. They form a conversation about what Bengal has been and what it's becoming.

Here's the thing. Malda doesn't need to shout to tell its story. The district has evolved at the pace of its rivers, and that slower, steadier tempo makes its layers easier to read. You see it in the way fields meet ruins, in the way markets speak in more than one language, and in how the region's politics and culture are shaped by borders that are both real and emotional.

Start with the geography. Malda stands at the meeting point of the Mahananda and Kalindi rivers, an intersection that has shaped everything from its soil to its settlement patterns. The land here has been desirable for centuries. Long before Kolkata emerged as a modern capital, Malda anchored the medieval capitals of Bengal. Gaur and Pandua weren't just administrative centers. They were thriving cities where architecture, power, and trade left lasting marks. When you walk through the old stones of Gaur, you aren't just looking at relics. You're stepping into the blueprint of Bengal's early identity.



The Adina Mosque, built in the fourteenth century, is the clearest reminder of that era's ambition. Its scale alone forces you to pause. You look at its arches and understand immediately that Malda once commanded an empire's attention. The Firoze Minar in Gaur carries the same authority. These structures

don't whisper history. They present it plainly, with a presence that resists decay even after centuries of monsoon and neglect. Kolkata, for all its cultural dominance today, doesn't carry this kind of medieval memory. Malda does, and it does so without ceremony. Then comes the landscape that

defines the region's everyday life. Malda's orchards aren't just agricultural plots. They are the district's pulse. Lakshmanbhog, Himsagar, Fazli—each mango has its own fan base, its own season, its own sense of arrival. Mango season turns Malda into a map of movement. Traders travel, families gather, and shipments leave for Kolkata in the early hours of dawn. For Kolkata, Malda becomes a seasonal presence, the arrival of mango-laden trucks signaling the unofficial beginning of summer. It's one of the clearest connections between the two places: one grows, the other consumes, and the rhythm repeats every year without fail.

But Malda's economy isn't defined by mangoes alone. The district sits close to the Bangladesh border, and that proximity creates a blend of opportunity and tension. The markets here have always been shaped by cross-border movement, whether official or informal. Jute products, river fish, traditional silk, and tobacco pass through the region's trade networks before making their way to larger markets. Kolkata absorbs much of this produce, just as it absorbs people from Malda who travel to the city for education, work, or a sense of possibility.

This movement of people creates a quiet kind of cultural exchange. Students from Malda go to Kolkata seeking colleges that offer courses unavailable at home. Families send members to work in the city's vast informal sector. Traders maintain long-standing relationships with Kolkata markets. Malda sends its produce, its people, and its stories to the city. Kolkata sends back income, aspiration, and an urban





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