



KRC TIMES

STAY-ENRICHED



VOLUME:1, ISSUE 630 | SILCHAR TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2025. EAST AND NE INDIA EDITION | e-mail: krctimes@gmail.com, www.krctimes.com

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PERSPECTIVE

If you are always worried about what others think of you, you will never be happy.

NEHU tightens campus traffic rules after students injured in drunk-driving incident

SHILLONG

North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU) has announced strict traffic safety measures on its campus, capping vehicle speed at 30 kmph and making helmets compulsory for both two-wheeler riders and cyclists.

The decision follows a recent accident in which two first-semester students were severely injured after a security guard—allegedly under the influence of alcohol—rammed an old vehicle into them near the main gate.

CCTV footage of the incident sparked outrage among students and raised questions about inadequate traffic regulation inside the campus.

University authorities said the new rules are part of a “zero-tolerance” response to reckless driving and unsafe practices, adding that violations will attract strict disciplinary action.

Fresh signages have already been installed across the campus to remind commuters of the speed limit and protective gear requirements.

The injured students are currently recovering in a city hospital and are reported to be stable.

WHO SAID WHAT



Congratulations to our Indian Women's Kabaddi Team for making the nation proud by winning the Kabaddi World Cup 2025! They have showcased outstanding grit, skills and dedication. Their victory will inspire countless youngsters to pursue Kabaddi, dream bigger and aim higher.
~ Narendra Modi, PM

AGARTALA

Newly appointed Inspector General of BSF Tripura Frontier, Aloke Kumar Chakravarty, on Monday outlined a series of measures to strengthen border security and curb cross-border crime, citing the current unstable situation in Bangladesh.

Speaking in his first interview since assuming office, Chakravarty highlighted Tripura's strategic importance, sharing borders with Bangladesh on three sides.

“The situation in Bangladesh is unstable at present. Whether things will stabilise is uncertain, especially now that their elections have been announced. For the past year, Bangladesh's democratic framework has been gradually sidelined, and the country has been governed through an advisory committee. This has had a considerable effect on our own border security,” he said.

Inspector General of BSF further added, “All BSF battalions deployed along the Bangladesh border under the Tripura Frontier have been placed on high alert and are fully prepared to tackle any situation. Our BOPs are functioning effectively,



and we continuously maintain the border fencing, keeping it clear and secured at all times. We have reviewed the “patrol on zero line” directive from IBBS, and we have implemented a new nomination system. Those who operate along the international border have also been included in this process so that their safety and the sensitivity of their tasks remain under close monitoring.”

“Existing fencing has deteriorated considerably. Proposals for new fencing using upgraded designs are under consideration by the Government of India. We plan to install

around 500 km of new fencing incorporating improved technologies while keeping costs low,” he added.

On enforcement, Chakravarty shared comparative data for 2024 and 2025. “If we compare the records of 2024 and 2025, a noticeable change is visible. Last year, a total of 1,003 people, including one Nigerian, were apprehended. So far in 2025, 956 persons have been detained, including individuals from various countries. Among them, if we look at Bangladeshi nationals and Rohingya Muslims, 724 people were arrested in 2024, while 674 have already been arrested in 2025,” he told.

Chakravarty further added, “So far in 2025, 197 trans-border individuals and 87 touts have been arrested, totalling 278 apprehensions this year.”

Cattle smuggling, narcotics, and psychotropic substance seizures continue to be a key focus.

“We captured 1,510 cattle last year and seized nearly 1,800 cattle. Seizure of Phensedyl has also decreased. Last year, around 70,000 bottles were seized; this year, the figure stands at 46,263 so far,” Chakravarty said.

IG BSF highlighted that, “Sei-

zures of narcotics along the border continue to remain high. Last year, 6,19,134 Yaba tablets were confiscated, while so far in 2025, 4,19,505 tablets have been seized, with an additional 14,172 tablets recovered recently. Ganja seizures have risen from 9,858 kg in 2024 to 11,357 kg this year. Mature cannabis plants have also been destroyed through joint operations, including plants worth over Rs 1 crore just yesterday. Following the end of the rainy season, joint operations with the police have resumed. In contrast, no brown sugar has been found this year, compared to 382 grams seized across 302 packets in 2024.”

“No brown sugar has been found this year, compared to 382 grams seized across 302 packets last year. The BSF remains fully committed to combating narcotics and psychotropic substances and will continue this mission in the future,” he added.

“Gold seizures have declined from 2,673.48 grams in 2024 to 1,394.99 grams so far this year. Similarly, refined sugar confiscations have dropped from 12,80,604 kg last year to 54,112 kg in 2025. Goods including cosmetics, clothing, foreign liquor, and other items worth Rs 53.55 crore

were seized in 2024, while this year, seizures amount to Rs 51.34 crore, reflecting the impact of enhanced vigilance and surveillance,” IG BSF added.

Chakravarty also stressed community engagement and youth participation. “As for ganja, the dry season allows us to intensify operations and destroy more plants. Meetings at the border level have reduced significantly after August, though ground-level coordination continues smoothly. High-level meetings were conducted in 2024. We are maintaining border infrastructure efficiently and strengthening communication with residents along the border. Our goal is to further improve this relationship so local communities act as our eyes and ears, avoiding small-scale smuggling and participating in mainstream livelihoods,” he said.

“Through pre-recruitment training conducted by our 18 battalions, we aim to encourage more border-area youth to join the force, bringing positive change to their communities. We also extend support to border residents whenever necessary, providing ambulances, water tankers, and other assistance,” IG BSF further added.

Borun Thokchom's 'Battlefield' premieres at IFFI 2025



GUWAHATI

Manipuri cinema marked a significant milestone as filmmaker Borun Thokchom's documentary Battlefield made its world premiere at the 56th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa.

Screened under the prestigious Indian Panorama (Non-Feature) category, the film drew a packed hall and an overwhelmingly positive response from delegates, critics, and cinephiles.

Produced by Manjoy Lourembam, Radhesyam Oinam, and Viswamithra Universals, Battlefield revisits the largely overlooked legacy of the Battle of Imphal—one of World War II's most pivotal clashes between advancing Japanese forces and Allied troops on Manipuri soil.

Shot over a decade, the documentary takes viewers across Manipur's forgotten war sites, piecing together history through the guidance of noted war

researcher Rajeshwor Yumnam, who anchors the narrative with his field expertise and archival insights.

Following the screening, a red-carpet event brought together the director, producers, cast, crew, and invited festival guests—marking what many in attendance called a defining moment for Manipuri filmmaking on a national platform.

Critics praised Battlefield as a “poignant cinematic reminder” of the region's wartime past, applauding its weaving of survivor accounts, living memories, and historical detail. Many highlighted how the film contrasts the grandeur of global WWII commemorations with the comparative neglect of Manipur's continuing humanitarian crises.

The project's selection at IFFI carries added significance: the documentary was developed under MSFDS' “Imphal Documentor”, a five-day project development lab held in 2022 with support from the Documentary Resource Initiative (DRI), Kolkata, and the Television Cine Foundation Manipur.

This year, the Indian Panorama lineup features 25 feature films and 20 non-feature films, underscoring the diversity of regional cinema showcased at IFFI 2025.

Further boosting Manipur's presence at the festival, Dinesh Naorem's feature film Oithareisei—selected in the Panorama (Feature) category—will be screened on November 27. The film stars Suraj Ngashepam, Sanjana, Sunny, and Nandakumar in key roles.

AGARTALA

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha reaffirmed the state government's commitment to transparent recruitment and the development of the education and health sectors, as per an official release.

Tripura CM said this while inaugurating the distribution of appointment letters for Physical Education Teachers and Special Educators at the Muktaghara Auditorium on Monday.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister said that from the very beginning, the current government has ensured transparency in government job recruitment.

“No one can now claim that political affiliation is required to secure a government job. If one has the qualifications, it is definitely possible to get a job,” said CM Saha.

Highlighting the government's efforts, Tripura CM informed that 20,181 individuals have been provided employment in various departments so far, including in cases of die-in-harness. Of these, 6,998 appointments have been made in the Education Department alone for PGT, GT and UGT positions, underscoring the government's focus on strengthening human resources in the sector.

The release stated that the Chief Minister emphasised that improving the quality of education remains a top priority.

“Our aim is to ensure that stu-

Tripura govt ensures merit-based, transparent recruitment: CM Manik Saha



dents receive quality education in a friendly and supportive environment. The appearance and demeanour of those who received appointment letters today show that they are deserving candidates,” he added.

The Chief Minister also highlighted several initiatives under the National Education Policy, introduced under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, aimed at reviving India's traditional education values.

CM Saha shared that over 5,000 individuals have been appointed through contractual and outsourcing processes.

Detailing state-level educational reforms, CM Saha mentioned initiatives such as Nipun Tripura, CM Saath, Mission Mukul, and Saahsha, along with the conversion of 125 schools into Vidya Jyoti institutions and 84 schools into PM-Shri schools. The state has also launched the CM Kanya Atmanirbhar Yojana to empower girl students.

“Tripura's higher education

sector has also expanded significantly, with the presence of three MBBS colleges, nursing, ANM and GNM colleges, as well as Agriculture, Fishery, and Veterinary colleges, IIT, National Law University, National Forensic Science University, NIT, and several private universities. Under the Target Project, 10 aspirants have already received assistance to compete in national-level examinations,” he said as per the release.

During the event, 102 Physical Education Teachers and 55 Special Educators under the School Education Department were handed appointment letters. The Chief Minister personally handed over letters to some of the recruits as a symbolic gesture.

Senior officials, including Special Secretary of Education Ravel Hemendra Kumar, Director of School Education NC Sharma, Director of Basic Education, Rajiv Dutta, and Director of SCERT L Darlong, were present at the ceremony.

Assam-Mizoram Border Festival Showcases Unity and Shared Cultural Heritage

SILCHAR

The second edition of the ‘Assam-Mizoram Border Festival’ began on a colourful note on Monday, with both states reaffirming their commitment to peace, harmony and mutual progress.

Organised by the Cachar district administration, the festival drew senior officials and attendees from both states, all eager to deepen cross-border goodwill and cooperation.

A high-level delegation from Mizoram, led by DC (Kolasib) Robert C Lalhmangaiha, attended the festival alongside senior officials from Vairengte and Mamit.

From Assam, notable attendees included Silchar MP Parimal Suklabaidya, Dholai MLA Nihar Ranjan Das, DC (Cachar) Mridul Yadav, co-district DC (Dholai) Roktim Baruah, and several administrative officials.

Addressing the gathering at the Central Field of the Dholai Co-District Commissioner's Office, Silchar BJP MP Parimal Suklabaidya underscored the spirit of unity and shared identity, stating that “we are all Indians first.”

He urged citizens and authorities to adopt a forward-looking approach by



moving beyond past development.

Suklabaidya noted that India's rapid infrastructure expansion—particularly under the Bharatmala Project—would further enhance regional connectivity. He said the upcoming four-lane highways would unlock new opportunities for trade and economic growth, paving the way for deeper engagement and a renewed chapter of fraternity between Assam and Mizoram.

DC (Kolasib) Robert C Lalhmangaiha underscored the importance of ensuring that past incidents along the border are not repeated. He stressed that strong communication and administrative coordination are crucial for maintaining peace and resolving issues amicably.

DC (Cachar) Mridul Yadav described the festival as a celebration of unity and cultural vibrancy, wel-

coming the strong participation from communities on both sides. Events like this, he said, help promote understanding at both social and administrative levels, strengthening ties essential for peaceful coexistence.

Dholai MLA Nihar Ranjan Das, in his remarks, highlighted the pivotal role of cultural exchange in fostering trust and eliminating past misunderstandings. Continued cultural interactions, he said, are essential for lasting peace and mutual respect, adding that the festival would significantly strengthen the friendly bonds between the people of both states.

The cultural programme featured traditional dance performances by troupes from Vairengte and Mamit, along with vibrant presentations by Assam's cultural groups. Livelihood and handicraft stalls set up by the Assam State Rural Livelihoods Mission (AS-RLM) and Mizoram State Rural Livelihoods Mission (MZSRLM) showcased the entrepreneurial talent of artisans from both states.

Friendly football and volleyball matches between Assam and Mizoram were also organised to mark the occasion.

Zubeen Garg's death 'plain and simple murder': Assam CM

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday described the death of popular singer Zubeen Garg as “plain and simple murder” during the state Assembly's winter session, asserting that “one person killed him and others assisted.”

Sarma told legislators that the preliminary investigation by Assam Police indicated the incident was not a case of culpable homicide but a deliberate killing.

He said the police added Section 103 of the BNS to the case within three days of Garg's death.

The Chief Minister said the Special Investigation Team (SIT), operating under the CID of Assam Police, has arrested seven individuals, examined 252 witnesses, and seized 29 items in connection with the case.

Sarma claimed that one person killed Garg while others assisted him, and the police are booking four to five people in the murder case.

He added that after the police file the chargesheet in December,

they will expand the investigation to examine negligence, criminal breach of trust, and other aspects.

Sarma further asserted, “The SIT will submit a watertight chargesheet, and the motive behind this crime will shock the people of the state.”

Sarma made the statement after the Opposition moved an adjournment motion in the Assembly to discuss the circumstances surrounding Garg's death in Singapore on September 19. Leader of the Opposition Dehabrata Saikia and Independent MLA Akhil Gogoi had separately requested the motion.

The Chief Minister asked Speaker Biswajit Daimary to admit the motion and assured him that the government was “equally seized of the matter.”

He added that the Treasury benches would not participate in the debate but would present the government's formal response. Sarma also urged the House to allow the introduction of important bills and supplementary grants listed on the agenda for the day.



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LONG-PENDING LABOUR REFORMS



India's long-awaited transition to a unified, modern labour framework moved decisively forward with the notification of the four Labour Codes—a reform package that has been pending since 2020. This marks one of the most ambitious overhauls of labour regulation since Independence, consolidating 29 disparate laws into a streamlined structure meant to expand worker protection, boost formalisation, and enhance India's global competitiveness. Yet the path to implementation has been rocky, and the debate around the codes remains deeply polarised.

At the heart of the reforms lies a major expansion of universal social security. Gig workers, platform workers, contract labour, and migrant workers-groups historically left outside the safety net will now be entitled to PF, ESIC, insurance, and maternity benefits. Aggregators must contribute a share of their turnover toward gig-worker welfare funds. The codes create a national floor wage, ensuring that no state fixes minimum wages below a centrally determined benchmark. For millions of workers in low-wage states, this is expected to raise incomes and reduce exploitation. Mandatory appointment letters, portability through an Aadhaar-linked Universal Account Number, and statutory timely payment of wages further strengthen formalisation and job security.

Women workers stand to gain from expanded rights: legally enforceable grievance committees, protection from discrimination, and permission for night-shift work with enhanced safety provisions. Fixed-term employees — an increasingly common form of employment in services and manufacturing — will receive all statutory benefits at par with permanent staff, with eligibility for gratuity after just one year. Workers above 40 years of age will be entitled to annual free health check-ups, while hazardous-sector employees will receive strengthened health protection.

However, trade unions have been consistently critical of the codes — not necessarily for what they add, but for what they dilute. Their strongest objection concerns the Industrial Relations Code, which raises the threshold for requiring Government approval for layoffs, closures and retrenchment from 100 to 300 workers. This, they argue, weakens job security and promotes "hire-and-fire" flexibility without adequate safeguards. Unions also fear that longer daily work hours—increased from 9 to 12 hours in factories and from 9 to 10 hours in shops and establishments—could be misused despite overtime provisions. They warn that linking benefits to establishment size could exclude millions of informal and home-based workers unless state-level rules bridge the gap. The flexibility provided to State Governments in framing rules is seen as a double-edged sword: what is intended as decentralisation may result in inconsistent protections and discretionary enforcement.

Although the Codes were passed between 2019 and 2020, full implementation required both the Centre and states to frame rules—a challenge in India's federal structure. With labour under the Concurrent List, the codes cannot be operational unless a majority of states notify corresponding rules. Many states sought more time; some, like West Bengal, did not advance rule-making at all. The political sensitivity of work hours, retrenchment thresholds, and union rights further slowed consensus-building. Additionally, Covid-19 delayed administrative preparedness, especially when states were preoccupied with health emergencies.

A more predictable labour regime, universal social security, and simplified compliance frameworks are central to making India competitive vis-à-vis Vietnam, Indonesia, and Taiwan — countries that attract large-scale manufacturing through flexibility and low compliance costs. The Codes move India closer to global norms by balancing worker protection with employer flexibility, an approach long recommended by international investors. States such as Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Haryana and Punjab dominate India's manufacturing landscape because they offer a rare combination of strong infrastructure, skilled manpower, stable policy environments, and proactive industrial governance. These states have already aligned many of their rules with the codes over the last decade, making the transition smoother and reinforcing their position as preferred manufacturing locations.

However, India's success as a manufacturing hub will ultimately depend on three factors: implementation consistency across states, speed of dispute resolution and ease of compliance. If states notify rules with clarity and avoid bureaucratic delays, the codes can significantly improve investor confidence. These codes can become the backbone of India's ambition to emerge as a global manufacturing powerhouse — one where economic growth and worker welfare move together, not in conflict.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

I am convinced that the only people worthy of consideration in this world are the unusual ones. For the common folk are like the leaves of a tree, and live and die unnoticed. - L. Frank Baum

UKRAINE WAR PROLONGS DELHI, WARSAW CONCERNS



DR. D.K. GIRI

It's been three years, eight months and three weeks since Russia invaded the country of Ukraine, and to date, Russia has failed to agree on a ceasefire. Earlier this week, Ukraine faced its fiercest battle in months as Russia attacked Ukraine's eastern town of Pokrovsk. Russian forces pressed into Pokrovsk and Myrnohrad, as Kyiv's military mounted a stout defence. Moreover, as winter approaches, it adds another danger to the fight as the frozen grounds are most likely to favour the Russian armoury. At the time of writing, the Foreign Minister of India is visiting Russia and has met Vladimir Putin.

The city of Pokrovsk burns as Russia deploys 150,000 troops, making a grinding progress in the battlefield of eastern Ukraine. While President Trump's effort to end the war remains at a halt, as Putin refuses the ceasefire in Ukraine. The world seems to stand by as an observer as Ukraine desperately fights to defend its sovereignty.

After 18 months of siege and enormous losses, capturing Pokrovsk has become something more for Russia, something more symbolic, to sell victory to its own people. Militarily, it is a pile of rubble; however, given the number of soldiers and equipment expended, it simply is too big a defeat to walk away from. On the other side, the Ukrainian military intelligence continues to attack key Russian air defence assets in occupied Crimea, and Crimea continues to look incredibly vulnerable to the Russians.

To add to this vulnerable situation, Russia is faced with another fuel crisis. Russia is an oil-rich country; the country's oil is now at an all-time low, as Ukraine attacks multiple Russian oil refineries, with almost 5 attacks on the Saratov refinery by this fall. Ukraine has targeted 55% of Russia's oil refineries, leading to a decline in the income Russia generates from its fuel and other refined products. But Russia still has a good amount of crude oil that can be refined elsewhere.

While Russia stated that it has no plans to attack NATO, Russia's pressing on more Ukrainian territories has made the surrounding nations double up their defence spending. Poland, one of the biggest sup-

pliers of military and humanitarian aid to Ukraine, also prepares for war with Russia if it decides to invade the Baltic states. Poland's President vows to spend 4.7% GDP on defence by this year, and on the defence manufacturing side, Poland is scaling up artillery production, especially 155 mm howitzer shells, to support both its own defence and Ukraine's war needs.

The question of this attack, thus, remains not if but when. As Poland continues to be a critical logistics hub for Ukraine, with large volumes of humanitarian and military aid transiting through it also acts as NATO's frontline, the cornerstone of Europe's defence. Contrary to the generous military and humanitarian aid being sent, the country is not overly eager to send its troops on the ground. This remains largely because Poland wants to keep its troops at the borders for security, as well as because of the bilateral and historical tensions between the two countries over the years.

In the midst of this, there is a rising shift in public sentiment. Security polling shows growing war fatigue, and according to a peace-security survey, only about half of Poles now support continued aid to Ukraine, and just 15% support sending Polish troops. Another survey (CBOS) found 55% of Poles believe the war should end even if Ukraine has to cede territory or independence. However, despite these doubts, Poland's leadership still claims a strong role.

Poland's geographical position renders it highly sensitive to spillover risks from the conflict. Incidents involving Russian drones entering Polish airspace, and the subsequent scramble of NATO aircraft, have heightened awareness of escalation pathways and underscored Poland's vulnerability as a bordering state.

In response, Polish policymakers have advocated for strengthened NATO deterrence measures and have reopened debates on enhanced airspace protection for Ukraine, including proposals for a NATO-backed air-defence shield or a limited no-fly enforcement mechanism.

For an outside observer, Poland's contributions reflect both principled support for Ukrainian sovereignty and pragmatic awareness of the strategic risks posed by Russian revisionism. As the conflict continues, Poland's decisions will remain piv-

otal in determining not only Ukraine's prospects but the broader stability of Europe's eastern frontier.

India on the other hand, still appears to be neutral which implies support to Russian position on the war. Such a stance is causing considerable concern in European countries including Poland and the United States. Poland and Europe would want India to distance itself from Russia on Ukraine war or give a hand in bringing about a ceasefire.

Talking about India-Poland ties, they were taken to new heights as a strategic partnership was signed during Indian Prime Minister's visit to the country in 2024 after a long gap, en route to Kiev. A Five-Year Action Plan was initiated for 2024-28. This laid out priority areas for deepening cooperation. The areas included political dialogue and security, trade and investment, climate, energy, mining, science and technology, transport and connectivity, counter-terrorism, cyber security, health cooperation, people-to-people relation and cultural exchange.

Both India and Poland are fastest-growing economies, Poland among the European countries and India in Asia. Both countries are seeking to enhance their respective roles in international affairs. Given the similarity in security concerns vis-à-vis Russia and China bordering both countries, and common national interest, it is in order that the ties should be deepened. The elephant in the room is the Ukrainian war.

India-Poland ties are critical for both countries in mutual interest and learning. India borders a big belligerent power, China that has taken Indian territories in 1962 war and is claiming more within India's sovereign land. Beijing actively supported Islamabad which fought a limited war on 7th-9th May 2025 with India that ended in temporary ceasefire. According to India's defence policy, the war, Operation Sindoor has not been withdrawn on Pakistan's request. It has just been suspended.

Likewise, or worse, Warsaw faces another authoritarian country Russia which had in the past invaded and occupied Poland, which borders Russia as well as Ukraine and therefore, is highly vulnerable to Russian expansion and the spill-over of the current war. Both New Delhi and Warsaw have

similar security risks.

Although Warsaw is not making this an issue in expanding bilateral relations, New Delhi should be sensitive to Poland's precarious position. The Polish embassy in New Delhi is organising discourses with several think tanks and geo-political strategists. Polish institutions working on international affairs are sensitising Indian public, particularly the media on Ukrainian war. New Delhi should reciprocate with similar activities in Poland. That should certainly clear the air and align both countries' foreign policies on various issues including Ukrainian war.

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

Gujarat Police has updated records of 31,834 individuals linked to anti-national activities over 30 years. Of them, 11,880 were found present and are under scrutiny. 2,326 have died, 1,180 are in jail, and 4,506 have moved out of the State. Efforts continue to trace those unlocated due to address changes. ~ Vikas Sahay, DGP, Gujarat



Court's ruling clouds federal balance further

KAPIL SIBAL

The response of the Supreme Court to the Presidential Reference has raised more questions than it has answered. It is constitutionally flawed and politically troublesome.

Let us first examine what the Constitution Bench has done right. It has held that neither the Governor nor the President can withhold a Bill passed by the State Legislature interminably. That is no-brainer. The Supreme Court could not have held otherwise. Secondly, it is held that, in the event the Governor or the President, as the case may be, sits over a Bill for an unduly prolonged period, limited judicial review is available, that too only on the question of delay.

The advice rendered has both constitutionally and politically problematic consequences. The constitutional consequences are as follows:

(i) The advice negatively impacts the federal structure of the country;

(ii) The subjective satisfaction of the Governor, at the initial stage and later of the President, is immune from judicial challenge; and

(iii) The plenary powers of the State Legislatures can be thwarted by executive fiat, through the Governor or the President, by unduly delaying implementation of the will of the people.

Under our Constitution, the State Legislature has plenary powers to legislate on subjects which are exclusively in its domain, as set out in List-II of the Seventh Schedule. If a Bill is passed by the State Legislature in respect of a subject matter

within its exclusive domain, the Governor or the President withholding such a Bill is anathema to the country's federal structure. Take a Bill where the State Legislature seeks to amend a statute by taking away the Governor's power to appoint Vice Chancellors to universities. Since that power is conferred by the Legislature, it has the plenary power to take away that right. The Governor cannot have the discretion to withhold assent to such a Bill. Yet, the advice on the Presidential Reference allows the Governor to do so. The executive power of the Governor cannot, as a matter of law, thwart the people's will reflected in state legislation. In fact, the first proviso to Article 200 stipulates that the Governor may, as soon as possible, after a Bill is presented to him, either assent to the Bill or suggest amendments thereto; and if the House or Houses reconsider the Bill and present it again to the Governor with or without amendments, the Governor cannot withhold assent therefrom. There is no constitutional space for the Courts to advise otherwise. However, the Court, in its advice to the President, seems to have held that even if the Legislature returns the Bill, the Governor can still withhold assent, or reserve it for the President's consideration, contrary to the first proviso to Article 200 referred above. This is yet another blow to the country's federal structure.

The Court's advice that the subjective satisfaction of the Governor or the President is immune from judicial review has no constitutional precedent, especially in the context of legislation

which reflects the people's will. In other words, the Executive's opposition to the people's will cannot be the subject matter of a judicial challenge. Even the President's subjective satisfaction in the imposition of the President's Rule in a state and the rejection of a mercy petition are also subject to judicial challenge. Here, the embargo on the judicial challenge is with reference to legislation expressing the people's will. Such an embargo is not only contrary to the federal structure, but also seriously jeopardises the constitutional premise that the will of the people must be respected, and that the executive cannot thwart it on the basis of subjective satisfaction.

There can be only one occasion for the Executive to reserve a Bill for the President's consideration. It is when the Governor believes that the Bill relating to a subject matter in the Concurrent List (List-III) trenches upon the law enacted by Parliament. In that case, the Bill can be sent back under Article 200, as soon as possible, to the Legislature with a message to that effect, which the Legislature is constitutionally bound to consider. However, if in the Legislature's opinion, there is no conflict and the Bill is passed again, there is no space for the Governor or the President to hold back that legislation. In such an eventuality, the matter will be decided by the affected parties through a judicial process under Article 226 of the Constitution. There is no other reasonable way to interpret Articles 200 and 201 of the Constitution.

Let us now deal with the problematic political

consequences of the advice. Once the Legislature clears a Bill, how long the Executive can sit over it is not clear from the Court's advice to the President. How long is too long is unclear. What a prolonged delay means is unclear. How the facts and circumstances determine such an issue is unclear. No answers to why the assent of the Governor be prolonged; why should the Governor have to reserve it for the President's consideration; and why should the Executive not be obliged to give reasons for opposition to the Bill. The reasons for the Executive's inaction will not be before the Court, as that part is not justiciable. This is going to lead to litigation. The nature of court processes, which are tardy and invariably delayed, will adversely impact the implementation of the enactment, apart from serious political implications. The court is, I suppose, aware that in recent years, Governors have acted beyond their constitutionally assigned roles, especially in states where the opposition is in power. We have seen this happen in Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Kerala, and elsewhere. The court cannot be blind to the realities of the Governors' actions or inaction, which are all in the public domain. I am afraid the advice rendered by the Court, in response to the Presidential reference, is not well thought out. Instead of providing clarity, it adds uncertainty to the passage of Bills, which reflect the people's will. A recent Supreme Court judgement that sought to provide some certainty amid Governors' prolonged inaction has been overturned.

Assam CM distributes cheques to 32,787 beneficiaries under Mukhya Mantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, continuing his government's acts of women empowerment, on Monday distributed cheques containing Rs 10,000 entrepreneurial seed capital to each of the 32,787 SHG members under Mukhya Mantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan, strengthening women-led enterprise and expanding livelihood opportunities of the women across Rangia Legislative Assembly Constituency.

Of the total beneficiaries in Rangia LAC, 30,665 are from rural areas, while 2122 are from urban areas.

As a part of his day-long visit to Rangia, Chief Minister Sarma inaugurated the Shantiram Lahkar Park in Ward No. 4 of Rangia town near the municipal office.

The park honors Shantiram Lahkar, the first freedom fighter of Rangia and the architect of modern Rangia.

He unveiled a life-sized statue of Shantiram Lahkar placed inside the park and released a book written in his memory.

The Chief Minister also opened a clock tower built inside the park. He further inaugurated an inspection bungalow of the Public Works Department in Rangia Town and the newly built offices of the North Kamrup Road Division and Subdivision of the Public Works Department.

At the outset of the cheque distribution programme, Chief Minister Sarma paid rich tributes to Bir Lachit Borphukan on his birth anniversary and called him a brave son of Mother Assam.

He said that Lachit Borphukan's courage and valour enabled the Ahom army to defeat the Mughals and demonstrate the bravery inherently associated with Assam.

He urged the new generation of Assam to draw inspiration from Lachit

Borphukan's ideals and protect Mother Assam and her land.

Speaking about the need of women empowerment, Chief Minister Sarma said that drawing deep inspiration from Prime Minister Narendra Modi when during his visit to Jorhat, he spoke about his vision of turning three crore women across the nation to 'lakshpati', Assam Government envisaged and launched Mukhya Mantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan with a dream of helping the women of the state become 'lakshpati'.

He said that many women in Assam have already reached the level of becoming lakshpati.

He even said that several women in the state have become Maha Lakshpati Baideu by earning Rs 10 lakh or more every year.

He said that the Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan will distribute seed capital to 32 lakh women in Assam by this January. Sarma moreover said that the first

instalment of Rs 10,000 marks the beginning of the scheme.

He said that when a woman beneficiary makes productive use of the first instalment, she will be entitled to Rs 25,000 as a second instalment. In the event of good use of the first and second instalments, the women beneficiary will get the third instalment that is Rs 50,000.

Explaining about the judicious use of the seed capital, the Chief Minister said that woman beneficiaries can deposit the fund in their self help group to build a pool of capital. With this fund and bank loans, they can start a joint business. They can also start an individual business or expand an existing family business.

He said the government will review the use of their funds after six to seven months.

The Chief Minister said that women in Assam have worked hard to become financially independent and many have

established themselves as Lakshpati and Maha Lakshpati Baideus.

Citing examples from the Rangia constituency, Sarma said Namita Kalita, a member of the Manikanchan Self Help Group under the Akashiganga CLF in Rangia Development Block, built her livelihood through a restaurant and food business. She earns about Rs. 12,000 every month. He said Babita Choudhury, a member of the Sowarshiri Self Help Group under the Mahiyoshi CLF in Tulsibari village in the same constituency, earns about Rs. 15,000 every month by running her business.

The Chief Minister said three thousand more women in the Rangia constituency will soon be included in Orunodoi scheme. He said 33,784 families in the constituency now receive support under Orunodoi.

He said 40,178 beneficiaries have received free cooking gas connections and 4,376 girl students have re-

ceived benefits under the Nijut Moina scheme.

He said the Assam government, with support from the Central government, continues to work for poor and middle class families in the state.

He said the State government has fulfilled its election promises by giving government jobs to more than one lakh youth through a clean and fair merit based process.

The Chief Minister said that women in Assam have grown more aware and empowered. He said that the government is providing bicycles to girls of Class IX standard, scooters to college students and free admission.

He said that the government aims to address the concerns of women through the Orunodoi scheme, Mukhya Mantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan and supplying of sugar, salt, lentils at subsidized rates along with free rice.

Namrup Fertiliser Plant, pride of Assam, to get a new lease of life": Sarbananda

DIBRUGARH

Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal visited the Namrup Fertiliser Plant (BVFL) in Dibrugarh district to review key aspects of the existing facility as well as ongoing and upcoming expansion works, according to the ministry.

Sonowal said, "Under the dynamic leadership of PM Narendra Modi ji, our Namrup Fertiliser Plant, the pride of Assam, is getting a new lease of life with the new brownfield Ammonia-Urea complex with an investment of over 10,000 crores. This ambitious initiative will enhance agricultural productivity, create large-scale employment opportunities and strengthen industrial infrastructure. It will significantly contribute to developing the Northeast as one of Southeast Asia's major productive hubs."

The Union Minister Sonowal added, "Brahmaputra Valley Fertiliser Corporation Limited (BVFL), the oldest fertiliser unit in Northeast India, has been serving farmers of the region since its inception. To further increase its capacity, a fourth plant is set to be established at the Namrup site. Supported by the Government of India, the new plant is expected to be completed in the next five years, with a production capacity of 12.5 lakh metric tonnes per annum."

He further added that the expansion will transform the facility into a major production hub, fulfilling the fertiliser needs of farmers across the Northeast, while also enabling exports to neighbouring countries such as Bhutan and Myanmar. Additional markets in West Bengal and Bihar will also be served through this enhanced capacity.

Sonowal expressed gratitude to the Prime Minister and the Union Minister of Chemicals and Fertilisers, stating that the project fulfils a long-standing aspiration of the people of the Northeast and will contribute significantly to national development.

Manipur Police conduct search operations across vulnerable areas, recover arms and ammunition

IMPHAL

Manipur Police conducted search operations in the fringe and vulnerable areas across districts, resulting in the recovery of arms and ammunition in Churachandpur district, said the Police on Monday.

According to the police, the Security Forces recovered various types of weapons from the Bolneo area, about 5 km away from Ningthiching village, like seven modified projectile launchers, eleven locally made Pumpi projectile HE bombs, seven country-made single-barrel rifles, two country-made pistols, two pistol magazines, three pistol live rounds, two Baofeng handsets, nine BP jackets, six anklets and nine ammunition pouches.

Additionally, the Manipur Police arrested 25-year-old digital content creator Yumkhaibam Shantikumar after an FIR was filed concerning a viral video. In the video, a person is seen interviewing random individuals and asking suggestive questions

that could encourage conspiracy to commit criminal offences, including intimidation and mistrust among social groups, as well as the spread of false information.

The Manipur Police said that the movement of 318 vehicles carrying essential goods along NH-37 was ensured. Strict security measures were implemented at all vulnerable locations, with security convoys deployed along sensitive stretches to provide safe, uninterrupted transit. A total of 112 Nakas/checkpoints were set up across various districts, both in the hills and the valley, but none of the vehicles were detained.

Earlier, a clash broke out between the Police, IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) and people under the aegis of COCOMI (Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity), who were attempting to boycott the Sangai Festival. The Internally Displaced Persons demanded their rehabilitation amid the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the state.

Northeast leaders to join Tipra Motha's mass rally in Agartala on November 27

AGARTALA

The Tipra Motha Party (TMP) is set to hold a mass rally at Swami Vivekananda Maidan in Tripura's Agartala on November 27.

TMP founder Pradyot Kishore Debbarma on Saturday said that several prominent leaders from the Northeast — including Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma — are expected to take part in the event.

Debbarma said, "We are organising a mass rally at Swami Vivekananda Maidan here in Agartala. Leaders like Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma, Mmhomlumo Kikhon, Daniel Langthasa, and several other leaders from the northeast region will attend the rally."

Speaking about the 'One North East' initiative, Debbarma said that discussions on the proposal have made substantial progress and efforts are now underway to give the pan-Northeast platform a concrete struc-



ture.

He stressed that speaking with a united voice is more effective than raising the same concerns individually, noting that people from different states and identities are coming together under one umbrella to collective-

ly highlight their grievances.

He added that Delhi often ignores fragmented appeals, even when the demands are identical. "The issues are the same, but the voices are scattered. Delhi doesn't have the time to listen when everyone speaks separate-

ly," he remarked.

He said this new collective is not a merger of parties but a united front to strengthen the voice of the northeastern states in Delhi, especially on issues such as land rights, identity protection, and the rights of indigenous communities.

The TMP chief said leaders across the region have shown interest in working together on a common policy approach that will benefit the entire Northeast.

Notably, the "One North East" initiative, spearheaded by Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma and TIPRA Motha founder Pradyot Kishore Debbarma, is a recent effort to form a unified political entity representing the collective aspirations of the region's indigenous peoples. It seeks to bring together the Northeast's diverse regional voices to ensure that the region's concerns are presented more effectively and addressed at the national level.

Manipur Congress Slams Administration Under President's Rule for Failure to Execute Rural Infrastructure Projects

IMPHAL

The Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) on Monday launched a sharp attack on the state administration operating under President's Rule, accusing it of gross negligence and failure to implement crucial rural connectivity projects despite the release of large central funds.

Addressing a press conference at Congress Bhawan in Imphal, MPCC president K. Meghachandra alleged that the administration has completely failed to execute Phase-III of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), a scheme meant to strengthen rural road networks across the state.



Meghachandra said the Centre had sanctioned ₹404 crore and ₹205 crore in 2019 for the construction and upgradation of nearly 1.25 lakh kilometres of rural roads under PMGSY Phase-III. However, he claimed that "not a single project component has been implemented," leaving road infrastructure across Manipur in a "pathetic condition."

He said that although the ten-

dering process for Phase-III works finally began in 2024, the process remains incomplete. Tenders have been floated and cancelled "two or three times," he alleged, raising questions about possible manipulation.

"The guidelines drafted for the tendering process make it extremely difficult for local contractors to participate. It appears that officials and ministers are trying to award the works to their favoured contractors or companies. This is the real reason behind the repeated delays," Meghachandra said.

Condemning the functioning of the administration and the concerned department, the MPCC president said public anger is visible

through ongoing protests in various districts over deteriorating road conditions. Instead of "looting public money," he said, the government should focus on addressing grievances and fast-tracking the long-delayed rural road projects.

Meghachandra also cautioned that, according to inputs from the relevant Union Ministry, all PMGSY Phase-III works must be tendered and executed before March 31, 2026. Failure to do so, he warned, could lead to the sanctioned funds lapsing. He urged the administration under President's Rule to take immediate corrective steps to prevent Manipur from losing critical financial support meant for improving rural infrastructure.

Cultural Pride Takes Centre Stage as Bodoland University Showcases Indigenous Art, Craft and Cuisine

KOKRAJHAR

A vibrant week-long celebration of indigenous knowledge systems, craftsmanship and cultural heritage concluded at Bodoland University, drawing wide participation from communities across the North East and neighbouring Bhutan.

Held from November 15 to 22 under Project EMWSSAA with support from the North Eastern Council and TRIFED, the exhibition spotlighted traditional art, handloom textiles, ecological crafts and a diverse array of local cuisines.

The event opened on November 15 as part of the Janajatiya Gaurav Divas observance, with senior officials from the Bodoland Territorial Council, Bodoland University and TRIFED in attendance. The inaugural day featured a cultural fashion showcase along with musical performances by regional artistes, setting the tone for the week's festivities.

Over the course of the event, TRIFED conducted an artisan panelment drive aimed at improving market access and livelihood opportunities for grassroots creators.

A series of thematic sessions held on November 19 brought together historians, academics and

cultural practitioners to discuss strategies for preserving oral histories, weaving traditions, food cultures and ecological knowledge across indigenous communities. Eminent historian Dr. J.B. Bhat-tacharjee and scholars from universities across the region emphasised the urgent need for sustained documentation and research to safeguard traditional practices amid rapid socio-cultural transitions. Panel discussions also examined contemporary identity, creative economies and the evolving future of indigenous art forms. The sessions culminated in a special performance of the Japanese traditional art form Tamasudare, underscoring the event's focus on cultural exchange. During the concluding ceremony, scholars from India and Denmark highlighted the collaborative spirit driving the initiative. The evening ended with an open mic event where students, artisans and performers showcased music, poetry and folk dance, reflecting strong community involvement throughout the week.

Organisers said the exhibition aimed to strengthen cultural literacy, support livelihoods tied to indigenous knowledge systems and foster deeper exchange between communities, scholars and practitioners across the region.

Lachit Borphukan Day observed; Historic Hengdang sword of national hero draws visitors to Auniati Satra

MAJULI

Assam on Monday observed Lachit Borphukan Day, honouring the valour and patriotism of the great Ahom general and Assamese national hero.

On this occasion, a large number of people visited the historic Auniati Satra, where the legendary hengdang (traditional Ahom sword) used by Lachit Borphukan is still preserved.

The Auniati Satra was established in 1653 by Ahom king Swargadeo Jayadhwaj Singha, who donated land, property, and resources to the institution. Following this royal tradition, later Ahom kings continued offering various forms of support to the Satra.

Among these royal gifts, Swargadeo Rudra Singha presented a special hengdang, which became a symbol of Assamese courage and strength.

This hengdang, a sword, was later used by Bir Lachit Borphukan, the pride of Assam.

Historical records note that

Quest!

People spend 46.9% of their day daydreaming.



Lachit Borphukan used this hengdang during the famous Battle of Saraighat in March 1671, where he

defeated the Mughal forces led by Ram Singh. The sword stands as a testament to Lachit's patriotism,

bravery, and leadership in safeguarding Assam from the Mughal invasion.

Today, this priceless 6-foot-long sword is preserved in the museum of Auniati Satra in Majuli, continuing to evoke the golden memories of the Battle of Saraighat.

Curator of Auniati Satra museum Ananta Kalita told ANI "Lachit Borphukan is the pride of Assam. The legendary warrior fought the historic Battle of Saraighat against the Mughals in 1671. The weapon used by Lachit Borphukan in this war, known as the Hengdang, is preserved at the Auniati Satra Museum."

"Many tourists come here, especially to see the Hengdang. Our Guru, Shri Shri Pitambar Deva Goswami, built this museum scientifically so that these historical artifacts can be preserved properly."

"Students also visit the museum to see Lachit Borphukan's Hengdang, and they are told about the life and valour of the legendary warrior. Today is Lachit Divas. We pay our homage to the legendary and brave warrior on this day."

On the occasion of Lachit Borphukan Day, people from various parts of the state visited Auniati Satra to witness this historic hengdang and pay tribute to the Assamese hero.

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Dec 14 rally against 'VOTE THEFT' a pure Congress show



NEW DELHI

INDIA bloc constituents will not take part in the December 14 rally being organised by the Congress to protest against the Election Commission of India (EC)'s alleged "vote theft". Party leaders insist that it will be "a purely Congress affair" and the decision to go solo was firming up at the AICC review meeting early last week.

A senior Congress leader told this newspaper that the rally at Ramlila Maidan would be "completely a Congress show" aimed at conveying that the party has consistently been at the forefront of exposing irregularities in the electoral process.

"We have been campaigning on this issue for months and has collected five crore signatures from across the country against 'vote chori'. The party has invested its organisational strength on the matter. This protest is specifically our initiative," the leader said, adding that the party is expecting a huge turnout driven by state units that have been asked to mobilise workers from constituencies

where alleged irregularities have surfaced.

According to sources, the decision was finalised during the AICC review meeting chaired by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge with key office-bearers from 12 states and Union Territories (UT), where the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voter rolls is underway. The meeting was attended by former party president Rahul Gandhi, AICC general secretaries, state unit chiefs, Congress Legislature Party leaders and secretaries of 12 states and UTs where the SIR is underway. The states and UTs are Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Puducherry, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and Lakshadweep. Among these, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala and West Bengal will go to polls in 2026. Phase 2 of the SIR exercise began on November 4 and will continue till December 4. The party has alleged that the EC is now a "blatantly partisan player" that is "completely

destroying" the very concept of a level-playing field for all political parties.

After the EC rolled out the second phase of the SIR on October 27, opposition-ruled states Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Kerala have escalated their objections to the EC's move by seeking legal options. Despite being a key constituent of the INDIA bloc and a primary opposition party, the Congress had not convened a joint meeting or crafted a coordinated strategy with its alliance partners on the SIR issue until now.

On Sunday, Congress leader and Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi launched a scathing attack on the EC, linking the ongoing SIR directly to the deaths of 16 Booth Level Officers (BLOs) over nearly three weeks. Gandhi alleged that the EC's rushed, paperwork-heavy process is a 'deliberate ploy' to harass citizens and enable voter fraud. According to sources, the decision was finalised during the AICC review meeting chaired by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge with key office-bearers from 12 states and Union Territories (UT). The meeting was attended by former party president Rahul Gandhi, AICC general secretaries, state unit chiefs, Congress Legislature Party leaders and secretaries of 12 states and UTs where the SIR is underway.

KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday wrote to Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, raising concerns over what she described as "two disturbing yet urgent developments" related to election preparations in the state.

She urged the Commission to intervene immediately.

In her letter, Banerjee said, "I am constrained to write to you regarding two disturbing yet urgent developments that have been brought to my notice, and which, in my view, warrant your immediate intervention."

The first issue she raised was a "questionable" Request for Proposal (RfP) issued by the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of West Bengal.

According to her letter, "It has recently come to light that the CEO, West Bengal, has directed District Election Officers (DEOs) not to engage contractual data entry operators and Bangla Sahayata Kendra (BSK) staff for SIR-related or other election-related data work. Simultaneously, the CEO's office has floated a Request for Proposal (RfP) for hiring 1,000 Data Entry Operators and 50 Software Developers for a period of one year. This raises serious concerns."

In her letter to CEC, she questioned why such outsourcing was needed when district offices already had adequate staff.

"When district offices already have a substantial number of competent professionals performing such functions, what necessitates the CEO's initiative to outsource the same work through an external agency for a full year?" she wrote. "Traditionally, field offices have always hired their own contractual data entry personnel as per requirement. If there is an urgent



need, DEOs are fully empowered to undertake such hiring themselves."

Banerjee further asked, "Why, then, is the CEO's office assuming this role on behalf of field offices? What substantive difference is expected in the service conditions or contractual obligations between those already engaged and those to be hired through the proposed agency? Is this exercise being undertaken at the behest of a political party to serve vested interests?"

She added, "The timing and manner of this RfP certainly raise legitimate doubts."

The second issue she highlighted was a proposal being considered by the Election Commission to set up polling stations inside private residential complexes.

In the letter, she said, "It has fur-

ther been brought to my attention that the Election Commission is considering setting up polling stations within private residential complexes, and DEOs have been asked to provide recommendations. This proposal is deeply problematic."

She argued that polling stations must remain in government or semi-government buildings to ensure neutrality and equal access.

"Polling stations have always been - and must remain - located in government or semi-government institutions, preferably within a 2 km radius, to ensure accessibility and neutrality. Private buildings are typically avoided for clear reasons: they compromise fairness, violate established norms, and create discriminatory distinctions

between privileged residents and the general public - the haves and have-nots," her letter stated.

The West Bengal CM also questioned the motive behind the proposal. "Why is such a move being contemplated at all? Again, is this being done under pressure from a political party to advance their partisan interests? Why? Why? Why?"

She warned that the proposal could "have severe impact on the fairness of the electoral process".

In her letter, Banerjee also said, "I urge you to examine these issues with utmost seriousness, impartiality, and transparency. It is essential that the dignity, neutrality, and credibility of the Commission remain above reproach and are not compromised under any circumstances."

INTERNATIONAL

Massive ash cloud drifts toward northern India as Ethiopia's Hayli Gubbi erupts after 10,000 years

ETHIOPIA

After the long-silent volcano erupted for the first time in nearly 10,000 years, a massive ash cloud from Ethiopia's Hayli Gubbi has begun drifting toward northern India.

The eruption covered the nearby village of Afdera in dust and pushed thick plumes across the Red Sea toward Yemen and Oman before the cloud shifted eastwards.

According to the Toulouse Volcanic Ash Advisory Centre (VAAC), the explosive activity began around 8.30 am UTC and marked the volcano's first known eruption in almost 10,000 years.

Although the eruption has now stopped, the Toulouse VAAC said that "a large ash plume is moving toward northern India," prompting meteorological agencies to closely monitor its trajectory.

Even though no injuries have been reported, local officials worry economic implications for the local community of livestock herders.

The volcano, part of Ethiopia's Ert'a Ale Range, last showed activity around 10,000 to 12,000 years ago.

After the eruption, volcanic ash was observed over parts of the Arabian Peninsula.

Airlines issued cautionary messages for flights passing through the Middle East.

India's aviation regulator, DGCA, has instructed all airline operators to follow a volcanic advisory issued by the Airport Authority of India.

In view of the DGCA advisory, several airlines, including Akasa Air, KLM, Air India and IndiGo,



cancelled flights operating on routes that pass through the affected corridor.

An Air India flight from Delhi to Tokyo was cancelled moments before take-off.

Flights to Jeddah and Dubai from Kochi were also cancelled as a precaution. An IndiGo flight from Kannur to Abu Dhabi was diverted to Ahmedabad as a safety measure.

Akasa Air said it was monitoring the situation and assessing potential impacts on nearby regions in line with international aviation guidelines.

Following recent volcanic activity in Ethiopia and the resulting ash plume in the surrounding airspace, our flights to and from Jeddah, Kuwait, and Abu Dhabi scheduled for 24th and 25th November 2025 have been cancelled," the airline said in a statement.

SpiceJet said volcanic ash "may impact flight operations flying through the affected regions."

In a statement, the airline added, "Passengers travelling to/from Dubai (DXB) are advised to keep a check on their flight status," noting that safety teams are coordinating with aviation authorities.

The Afar region is known for frequent earthquakes.

Residents told The Associated Press they heard a loud sound and felt what they described as a shock wave.

"It felt like a sudden bomb had been thrown with smoke and ash," one resident said.

By Monday, the village near the Danakil desert, a popular tourist destination, remained covered in ash. Tourists and guides travelling to the desert were stranded in the village, according to a report by AP.

Local authorities also shared images and videos showing a towering plume of ash rising from the volcano.

China's Xi pushes Taiwan issue in call with Trump

BEIJING

Chinese leader Xi Jinping pressed the ever-sensitive issue of Taiwan in a phone call Monday with US President Donald Trump, as he stressed the need to build on a fragile trade truce between the two superpowers.

China's foreign ministry said the call touched on other issues, such as Ukraine, but Taiwan featured prominently, with China embroiled in a weeks-long diplomatic row with key US ally Japan over the self-governing island.

China claims Taiwan as part of its territory, and Xi told Trump that its return was an "integral part of the post-war international order" forged in the joint US-China fight against "fascism and militarism", according to the department.

"Given what is going on, it is even more important for us to jointly safeguard the victory of WWII," Xi told Trump.

Taiwan Premier Cho Jung-tai hit back at Xi's comments, telling reporters on Tuesday that Taiwan "is a fully sovereign state" and "there is no such option as return".

The latest bitter dispute between Tokyo and Beijing was triggered by new Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi suggesting this month that Tokyo could intervene militarily in any attack on Taiwan.

While the United States does not officially recognise Taiwan's claim to statehood, Washington remains the island's most important partner and arms supplier.

Trump praised "extremely strong" US-China relations in a social media post after the call, but made no mention of the contentious issue of Taiwan.

According to China's foreign ministry, Trump told Xi during their discussion that the United States "understands how important the Taiwan question is to China".

The US president's statement also confirmed that he will visit China in April, and that Xi will go to Washington later in 2026.

Meanwhile Takaichi said she also had a call with Trump and discussed his conversation with Xi, as well as US-Japan relations.

We "held a wide-ranging exchange of views on strengthening the Japan-US alliance and the challenges and issues facing the Indo-Pacific region", she told reporters, without elaborating.

She said Trump had proposed the call.

Both China and Japan have sent letters to the UN in recent days over the Taiwan issue.

President Donald Trump, left, and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Xi and Trump's call came after the pair met in late October for the first time since 2019, engaging in closely watched trade talks between the world's top two economies.

The Washington-Beijing tussle, which encompasses everything from rare earths to soybeans and port fees, has rocked markets and gummed up supply chains for months.

A tentative deal reached in October's meeting in South Korea saw Beijing agree to suspend for one year certain export restrictions on critical minerals.

China is hugely dominant in the mining and processing of rare earths, which are essential for sophisti-

cated electronic components across a range of industries, including auto, electronics and defence.

Meanwhile, the United States said it will cut back tariffs on Chinese products, and Beijing will buy at least 12 million tonnes of American soybeans by the end of this year and 25 million tonnes in 2026.

Xi told Trump on Monday that their two countries should "keep up the momentum", according to the foreign ministry.

He added that the "successful" meeting in South Korea "recalibrated the course of the giant ship of China-US relations and provided more momentum for it to sail forward steadily".

Since the meeting, China-US ties have "generally maintained a steady and positive trajectory, and this is welcomed by the two countries and the broader international community", Xi said.

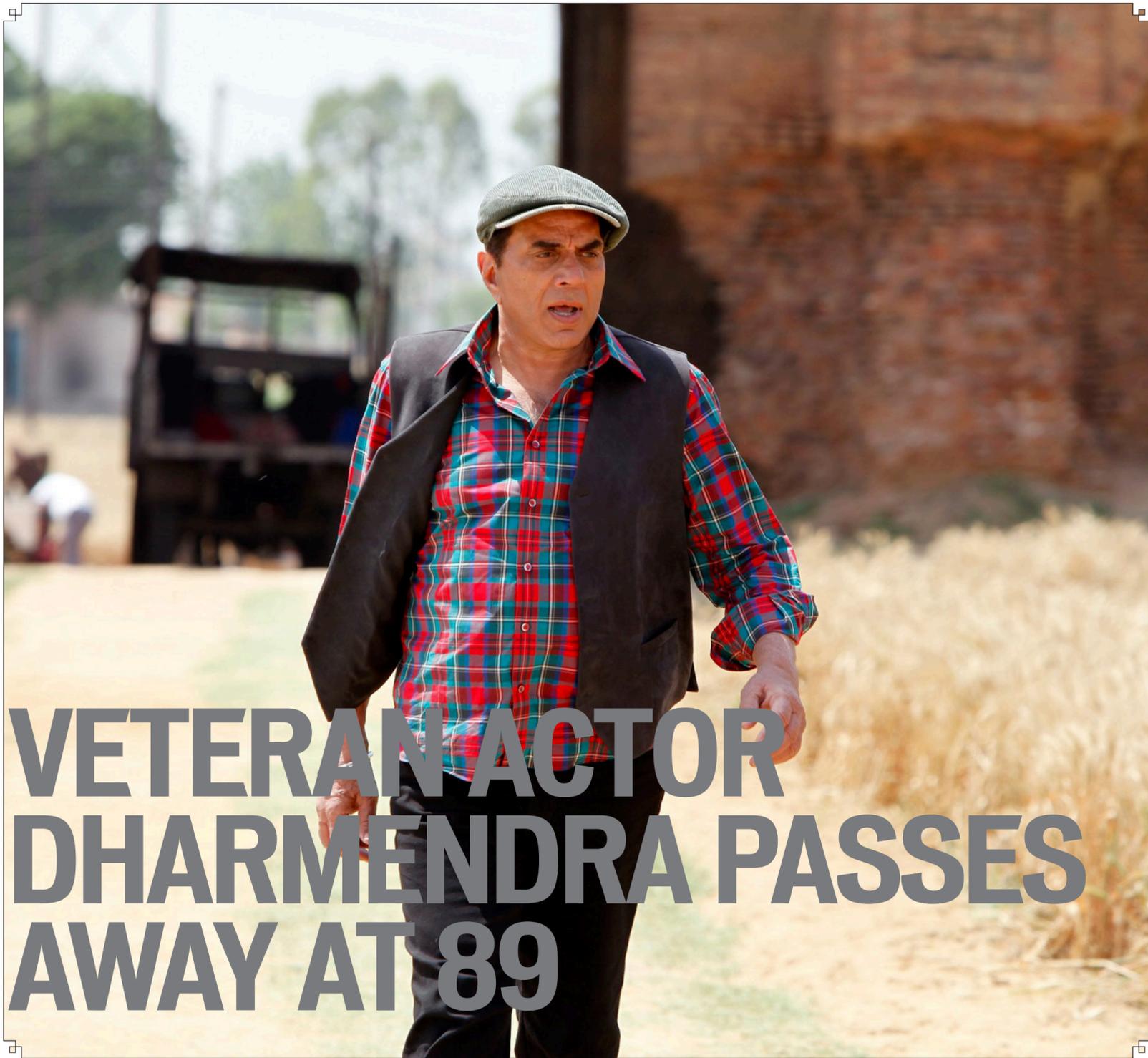
Trump struck a similarly optimistic tone in his statement.

"Now we can set our sights on the big picture," he said.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has said Washington hoped to finalise a deal with Beijing for securing supplies of rare earths by the Thanksgiving holiday, which falls on Thursday.

The two leaders also discussed the war in Ukraine - an issue high on Trump's agenda as he pushes for an end to the war with a fresh deal that critics say largely satisfies Russian demands at the expense of Kyiv.

China has positioned itself as a neutral party, and in Monday's call Xi reiterated his backing to end the nearly four-year conflict.



VETERAN ACTOR DHARMENDRA PASSES AWAY AT 89

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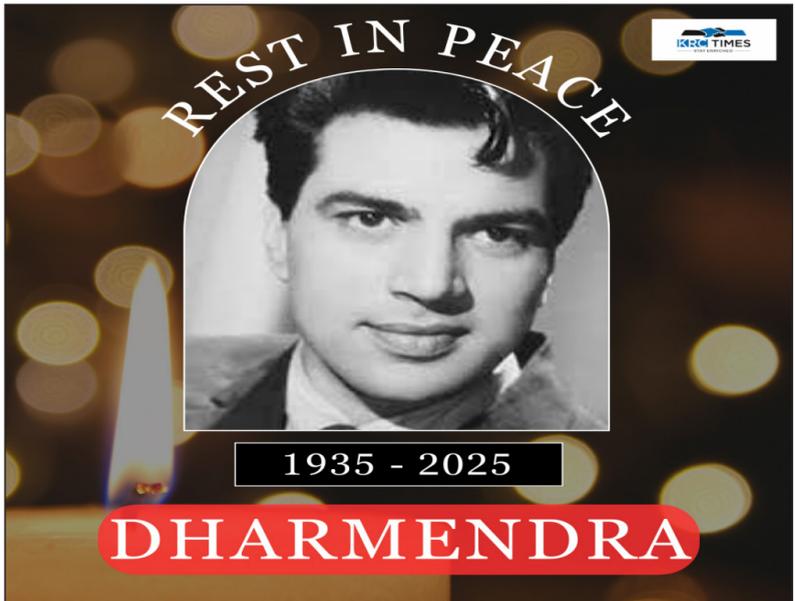
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OUR CORRESPONDENT:

Mumbai lost one of its most beloved screen icons on Monday. Dharmendra, who defined charm and versatility for several generations of Hindi film audiences, died in the city at the age of 89. He had been in and out of Breach Candy Hospital in south Mumbai for the past several days.

Here's what matters. For more than six decades, Dharmendra stood at the center of mainstream Hindi cinema. He played the dashing everyman with an easy grace and a poet's sensitivity, moving between romance, comedy, and action without ever losing his grounded appeal.

His body of work speaks for itself. *Aaye Milan Ki Bela*, *Phool Aur Patthar*, *Aaye Din Bahar Ke*, *Seeta Aur Geeta*, *Raja Jani*, *Jugnu*, *Yaadon Ki Baaraat*, *Dost*, *Sholay*, *Pratigya*, *Charas*, and *Dharam Veer* remain etched into the popular memory. He carried both mass appeal and emotional

depth, a combination that made him of the most enduring stars of his era.

Even in his later years, he returned to the screen with the same warmth his audience remembered. In 2023, he appeared in Karan Johar's *Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahani*, reminding viewers of the effortless presence that had defined his long career.

What this really means is simple. Indian cinema has lost a figure who shaped its language, its heroes, and its heart. Dharmendra leaves behind a legacy that blends stardom with sincerity, and an archive of performances that will continue to speak to new generations.

HELP SOCIETY HOSTS ART COMPETITION TO PROMOTE NORTH EAST INTEGRATION RALLY 2026



HAFLONG

HELP Society held an art competition on November 23 at Vivekananda Vidyalaya High School, Haflong, as part of its campaign for the North East Integration Rally 2026 under the Climate Change and Green Deeds initiative. More than a hundred students from different schools took part across two groups, bringing strong energy and imagination to the event.

The idea was simple. Get

young students to think and talk about climate change in a way that feels natural to them.

Their paintings reflected worries, hopes, and solutions around sustainability, green habits, and the need to protect the planet.

A short prize ceremony followed the competition, celebrating the winners from both groups.

Results
Group A (Class 6-8)
1st: Thana Das, St. Agnes Higher Secondary School

(Class VII)
2nd: Sagirika Deb, St. Agnes Higher Secondary School (Class VIII)
3rd: Sishant Debnath, Don Bosco Higher Secondary School, Haflong (Class VIII)

Group B (Class 9-10)
1st: Puja Laubangdisa, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Haflong (Class IX)
2nd: Loveleen Thaosen, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Haflong (Class IX)
3rd: Bandana Singha, Don Bosco Higher Secondary

School, Haflong (Class IX)

All remaining participants received certificates acknowledging their effort.

Addressing the gathering, HELP Society President Surojeet Das congratulated the students and confirmed that the winners would be formally honoured when the North East Integration Rally reaches Haflong, giving their achievement a meaningful spotlight. He also thanked Cultural Secretary Puja Munda for her steady work behind

the scenes in planning and executing the event.

The North East Integration Rally 2026 is designed to deepen ties among the eight states of the region while encouraging cultural exchange, peace, and environmental awareness. Through initiatives like this competition, HELP Society continues to inspire young people to take ownership of environmental issues and contribute to a more connected and thoughtful North East.



BARAK FESTIVAL

JANUARY 10-12, 2025

ACTIVITY PROGRAM





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



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



11 JAN
Barak Valley Conclave
 Potential Issues and Challenges of Barak Valley to be discussed by stakeholders.
 Industry, NGOs, and Government can register for this important awareness & awareness program and present their proposals. Participation through invitation only. Different rewards are provided.



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



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



10 JAN
Media Conclave
 Media Conclave: Media Conclave, Workshops, and the Fund, Talks and Conferences are part of the 'Barak Festival 2025'. Theme: 'One for All, All for One'.
 Media Conclave: Workshops, Seminars, and Conferences are part of the 'Barak Festival 2025'. Theme: 'One for All, All for One'.
 Workshops: Journalism, Photography, Design & Creative Arts, Sports, Games, Chess, and more.



BROADCAST PARTNER



REGISTER HERE

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info@krcfoundation.org



BARAK FESTIVAL 2025
 PAINTING CARNIVAL
 NE CULTURAL FEST
 E-SPORTS
 FILM FESTIVAL | EXHIBITION
 BOOK BANK | SPEECH & DEBATE
 RACE MARATHON | CONCLAVES

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

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

10 JAN
Band Night
 Musical Night | 10 JAN



CONCLAVES
 WP: 0721300019
info@krcfoundation.org

10-12 JAN
E-Sports
 Full-Blown! Don't miss! | CASH PRIZES | Trophy



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



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