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**PERSPECTIVE**

Unexpected text messages from the person you care about can have a positive affect on your body and instantly improve your mood.

**5-time Nagaland MLA Imkong L Imchen passes away**

**DIMAPUR**  
Nagaland adviser to information and public relations and soil and water conservation, and five-time MLA Imkong L Imchen passed away at a private hospital in Guwahati on Tuesday.

Imchen, 75, was hospitalised at the Naga Hospital Authority Kohima on November 8 following health complications and airlifted to Guwahati on Monday for further treatment.

He reportedly suffered a heart attack on the night of November 8.

A veteran political leader, Imchen was born in Mokochung district of Nagaland. He was elected to the Nagaland Assembly from the Koridang assembly constituency in Mokochung district for the fifth time.

He won the last assembly election on the BJP ticket in 2023.

During his long political career, Imchen held several key portfolios in the Nagaland government, including ministerial positions in various departments.

A state funeral will be held at Imchen's official residence in Kohima to pay last respect and homage to him.

Nagaland Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla, CM Neiphiu Rio, deputy CM Y Patton, other leaders and associations expressed shock and grief at the demise of Imchen.

Condoling Imchen's death, Bhalla said the state has lost a dedicated and sincere leader, who had served the society in various capacities as a student leader, public leader, cabinet minister, and as adviser.

**WHO SAID WHAT**

**ISRO successfully conducted a key Integrated Main Parachute Airdrop Test (IMAT) for the Gaganyaan mission at Babina Field Firing Range, Jhansi, on Nov 3, 2025. The test validated the main parachutes under extreme conditions. #ISRO #Gaganyaan For more information visit https://isro.gov.in/IMAT\_03.html**

~ Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)

**Nagaland observes Remembrance Day to honour World War II heroes**

**DIMAPUR**

The Nagaland government observed Remembrance Day at the Kohima War Cemetery on Tuesday to honour the brave soldiers who laid down their lives during World War II.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla paid homage to the fallen soldiers at the cemetery, describing the occasion as a day of remembrance and inspiration for all.

Birla said the courage and sacrifice of the soldiers who fought in the Battle of Kohima continue to inspire generations.

He said World War II was not only a historic conflict but also a testament to the bravery and determination of those who fought to defend their nations.

Birla also expressed appreciation to Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio, whose late father participated in the war, acknowledging the historical connection and the contribution of the Naga people to the war efforts.

CM Rio said the 2025 ceremony marked the first official commemoration of Remembrance Day held in partnership with the Commonwealth War



Graves Commission by the state government.

He announced that the observance will now be held as an annual state event to honour the shared legacy of

courage and sacrifice.

Rio described the Kohima War Cemetery as a living testament to extraordinary courage, noting that authorities buried 1,420 Allied soldiers at the ceme-

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**STAY-ENRICHED**

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**BJP leaders BL Santosh, Sambit Patra arrive in Imphal**



**GUWAHATI**

Senior BJP leaders BL Santosh, National General Secretary (Organisation), and National Spokesperson Sambit Patra, arrived in Imphal on Wednesday morning, setting off intense political discussions across Manipur.

The visit, seen as a potential turning point for the state's political land-

scape, comes just days after the conclusion of the Bihar Assembly elections.

The two leaders landed at Bir Tikendrajit International Airport around 11:30 am, where they were warmly welcomed by BJP Manipur President A. Sharda Devi and hundreds of party functionaries.

Their arrival has sparked widespread speculation, with several par-

ty insiders suggesting that the BJP's central leadership may be preparing to make key decisions regarding Manipur's governance.

Former Chief Minister N. Biren Singh described the visit as "not an ordinary one," implying that major political developments could be on the horizon.

Singh, along with several BJP MLAs, had previously stated that the party's central leadership promised to restore an elected government in Manipur after the Bihar polls.

Speaking earlier on November 10, Biren Singh had remarked that Santosh's visit after a long gap indicated serious deliberations at the top level. "It won't be a routine visit. Let's hope for the best," he said.

According to party sources, Santosh and Patra are likely to visit Churachandpur during their two-day stay to assess ground realities and meet district-level leaders.

The two leaders are also expected to hold a series of closed-door meetings in Imphal with senior state BJP leaders and key stakeholders to review the political situation.

Their visit comes at a critical time, as Manipur has remained under President's Rule since February 13, 2025.

**'ISI trying to recruit frustrated youth to wage war against India': Pradyot Debarma**

**AGARTALA**

Tipra Motha chief Pradyot Debarma has raised alarm over what he describes as a calculated attempt by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) to recruit frustrated youth from the Northeast to carry out terror strikes against India, citing the November 10 Delhi car explosion as evidence of a growing home-grown terror threat. Writing on social media in the wake of the Red Fort area blast, Debarma stated he had reports from credible sources indicating the presence of Pakistani generals and brigadiers in Chittagong and Dhaka.

"ISI is already on a recruitment drive to lure frustrated youth of our region to wage a war against India," he wrote, urging political parties to set aside differences and prioritise national security. The Tipra leader emphasised that tackling the threat required more than security measures alone. "Politics should take a backseat over national interest, and we all need to ensure that our youth are given jobs, constitutional rights and development across," Debarma wrote, adding that minorities in Bangladesh must also be protected

and empowered to counter extremist narratives.

His warning comes as authorities continue investigating the explosion near Red Fort that has now claimed ten lives. The blast, which occurred at approximately 6:52 pm when an Eco van exploded at a traffic signal in the Chandni Chowk area, destroyed five to six vehicles and scattered debris across a 150-metre radius.

Delhi Police Commissioner Satish Golcha confirmed that the vehicle had been moving slowly before stopping at a red light, moments before the massive explosion triggered widespread panic in the densely populated commercial district. Streetlights were shattered and nearby vehicles caught fire, whilst witnesses reported hearing a deafening bang followed by thick smoke.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) and National Security Guard (NSG) have cordoned off the blast site for forensic examination. Delhi Police Crime Branch is leading a joint investigation involving multiple central and state agencies to determine the cause and possible motive.

**Over 9,000 join Congress, including members from BJP ahead of polls**



**GUWAHATI**

Nearly 9,500 members, including some from the ruling BJP, joined the Congress Party in Assam, said Assam Congress on Monday, in what they called a major push ahead of next year's Assembly elections.

The Congress organised joining programmes across all 35 districts, spanning western Assam's Dhubri, Goalpara, Bongaigaon, and Kamrup, central districts like Morigaon and Nagaon, and eastern regions including Jorhat, Sivasagar, Charaideo, and Dibrugarh.

North Assam districts such as Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, and Sonitpur also witnessed similar events.

Lok Sabha member and former minister Rakibul Hussain attended the joining programme in Dhubri, welcoming new members.

At Philbari in Tinsukia, Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) President Gaurav Gogoi criticised the BJP-led government, alleging that citizens were suffering under coal, sand, and supari (betel nut) syndicates, illegal taxation, and lamented the poor condition of Assam's tea industry.

In Guwahati, more than 100 individuals formally joined the Congress through the initiative of the Guwahati District Congress Committee.

The event saw the participation of Leader of the Opposition Debabrata Saikia, former presidents Ripun Bora and Bhupen Bora, former MP Abdul Khaleque, and Assam Pradesh Mahila Congress president Mira Barthakur.

The new members included lawyers, senior citizens, and former BJP officials. Gaurav Gogoi stated that public dissatisfaction with the BJP-led government and the "autocratic style" of CM Himanta Biswa Sarma was driving the surge in Congress membership.

He announced that Congress had conducted similar joining programmes on September 10 and October 10, with another scheduled for December 10.

Responding to the mass joining, CM Himanta Biswa Sarma dismissed Gogoi's statements, accusing him of "childish behaviour" and lacking political maturity.

**Jiribam Deputy Commissioner Reviews Restoration Work for Displaced Families**



**IMPHAL**

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

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

Krishna Kumar, IAS, Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Jiribam,

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

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

He extended appreciation to the CRPF, Police, and other security forces for maintaining peace and stability in the district, en-

abling events like these to thrive.

Following the event, the Deputy Commissioner, accompanied by the Superintendent of Police, Jiribam, Prakhari Pandey, IPS, and the Commandant of 20th Battalion CRPF, Karowng Haopu, conducted a field inspection of damaged houses in Jakuradhor Karong, Lamdai Khunou, and Modhupur, focusing on resettlement measures for displaced persons currently housed in relief camps.

During the visit, the officials interacted with camp inmates, distributed toys and sweets, and provided sports materials to youth clubs in Jakuradhor and Lambhangkhal, students of Netaji Government High School, and residents of the Borobekra Police Station Relief Camp.

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

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

**Konsam Nilakumar Singh, an alumnus of NIT Agartala, holds a B.E. in Mechanical Engineering, an M.Tech in Armament Engineering, and a Postgraduate Diploma in Human Rights.**

**Member, Organising Committee, NEIR 2026**

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## THE RED FORT BLAST



The deadly explosion near Delhi's Red Fort on Monday evening has jolted the nation's collective conscience and sent shockwaves throughout the nation. Twelve people have lost their lives, scores are injured, and several vehicles have been gutted in what appears to be one of the most serious terror incidents in the national capital in recent years. The intensity of the blast, which shattered windows several metres away and sparked panic across one of the most crowded parts of the city, underscores not just the scale of destruction but the grave vulnerability of urban India to terror networks that continue to evolve and infiltrate.

What lends this incident an even darker dimension is the disturbing backdrop of recent intelligence inputs and recoveries. Just hours before the explosion, authorities had seized nearly 2,900 kilograms of explosive material from multiple locations in and around Delhi. Even more alarming was the recovery of a large cache of arms and explosives from the residence of a Kashmiri doctor in Faridabad. Preliminary investigations now suggest that the driver of the car involved in the blast and one of his accomplices were also from Kashmir. In the chain of ownership of the Hyundai i20 used for the explosion, another Kashmiri name has surfaced. These links may not be mere coincidences. Investigators believe that the recovery of such a massive stockpile of explosives and subsequent arrests may have panicked the module, forcing them into a premature and desperate move. If true, this points to a much larger conspiracy-one that possibly spans multiple states and involves individuals who would otherwise have never come under the security radar.

The involvement of highly educated individuals, including doctors, in such nefarious acts is particularly chilling. It exposes how radicalisation has penetrated segments of society once thought to be immune from extremist ideologies. The recent case of an AK-47 rifle found in the locker of a doctor at a Government Medical College in Kashmir further underlines this disturbing trend. Terrorism today is not confined to the uneducated or economically deprived; rather, it has mutated into an insidious network that can lure or corrupt minds from all walks of life.

This evolution demands an urgent rethinking of our counter-terror strategies. The traditional focus on known suspects and fringe groups must now be supplemented with more nuanced intelligence-gathering that maps social, digital, and ideological networks. The digital ecosystem has become the new breeding ground for extremism-where recruiters operate anonymously, narratives are weaponised, and indoctrination occurs through encrypted platforms. The security apparatus must therefore invest heavily in cyber surveillance, data analytics, and digital forensics to stay ahead of such threats. At the same time, incidents such as the Red Fort blast highlight the need for a swift, professional crisis response.

From a broader perspective, this attack also serves as a sobering reminder that terrorism continues to mutate, exploiting every available loophole. Terror outfits are no longer limited by geography or ideology; they adapt, re-strategise, and strike when vigilance dips. In this context, complacency is the biggest enemy. Security agencies, including the NIA, NSG, and Intelligence Bureau, have proven their capabilities in the past by cracking complex terror cases. Yet, the new wave of hybrid terrorism-fuelled by technology, disinformation, and radicalisation of the educated-requires an equally adaptive and proactive response.

The government and security forces will undoubtedly bring the perpetrators and their handlers to justice. Still, the larger challenge lies in addressing the roots of radicalisation and ensuring that no educated, young, or professional individual falls prey to extremist propaganda. From shock to defiance, India stands united against those who seek to disturb its peace and divide its people. India has overcome countless terror challenges in the past, and it will do so again. But the message from this horrific incident is clear: the enemy is still lurking, recalibrating its methods, and probing for weaknesses. There is no room for laxity. The fight against terror must be relentless, intelligence-driven, and unified. Terrorism, whatever its form or face, will find no refuge in India, for the noose of law and the will of the people will always prevail.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

To change something in the minds of people - that's the role of an intellectual.  
- Michel Foucault

# WHEN THE AIR TURNED TOXIC

KISHAN BHAWNANI

If the Earth Survives, Everything Survives: Pollution is not just dust or smoke in the air; it's a warning of unbalanced development that is endangering all of humanity. -Advocate Kishan Sanmukhdas Bhawnani, Gondia, Maharashtra

Gondia-India's capital, Delhi, once considered a symbol of civilization, culture, and power globally, is today grappling with a crisis of the "right to breathe." In the second week of November 2025, when much of North India was shrouded in post-Diwali smog, the air in Delhi-NCR once again turned toxic. On Tuesday, November 11, 2025, at 9 a.m., the Air Quality Index (AQI) reached 425, the "severe" category, which is not only detrimental to human health but also a dire threat to nature and the sustainability of urban life. While the AQI was recorded at 362 on November 10, 2025, it reached 425 on November 11, 2025. In light of this alarming situation, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) immediately decided to implement the third phase of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP). India's capital, Delhi, and its surrounding NCR (National Capital Region) have now become one of the most polluted areas in the world. The toxic air is no longer a problem confined to one city or state; it has become an international warning that if the world continues to adhere to environmental protection rules, even clean air will become a luxury. When Delhi's air quality exceeds the "severe" level, it raises alarm bells for human existence. This is why environmental protection is no longer just the responsibility of local authorities, but of the entire world. I, Advocate Kishan Sanmukhdas Bhawnani, Gondia, Maharashtra, believe that pollution levels in Delhi and the NCR region reach alarming levels every winter. Burning of stubble in fields, vehicle exhaust, industrial emissions, dust from construction sites, and firecracker smoke all combine to poison the air. This year, too, the air quality index crossed 425 in early November, well above the "severe" category. This has led to a surge in cases of respiratory, eye, and skin diseases in hospitals. This situation has led the government to implement "Grape 3," which prohibits construction activities, the operation of diesel generators, and heavy vehicles. But the question is, is a solution possible only through emergency measures? Since the air crisis in Delhi-NCR when the air turns poisonous has been tightened under the Graded Response Action Plan Phase 3 and a national alert has been issued, today, with the help of information available in the media, we will discuss this article: Environmental protection is no longer an option, it is a necessity-Delhi.

Friends, if we consider the need for the entire world to learn from the pollution crisis in the NCR, pollution is not just a local challenge, but a global one. Today's environmental crisis transcends borders. When the air in Delhi becomes toxic, its impact reaches Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Punjab. Similarly, when smog increases in China or industrial gases spread in Europe, they impact global temperatures. Pollution, climate change, and ozone layer depletion are problems that defy national boundaries. This is why the United Nations has united the global community on a common mission through the Paris Climate Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals, aiming to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. India is the world's third-largest greenhouse gas emitter, yet the air in Delhi-NCR once again turned toxic. On Tuesday, November 11, 2025, at 9 a.m., the Air Quality Index (AQI) reached 425, the "severe" category, which is not only detrimental to human health but also a dire threat to the sustainability of nature and urban life. However, it is also true that India has made the fastest progress towards green energy among developing countries. The "National Clean Energy Mission," "National Green Hydrogen Mission," "Swachh Bharat Abhiyan," and "National Clean Air Programme" launched by the Indian Prime Minister are efforts that are propelling India towards environmentally friendly development. India's announcement of a "net zero" target by 2070 is historic in this direction. But examples like Delhi-NCR demonstrate that policies will



only succeed when local administration, industry, and citizens all work together to fulfill their responsibilities. Solutions and the Way Forward-When policy becomes citizen responsibility, air pollution is not just an administrative challenge but a question of social responsibility. Emergency measures like GRAP can provide temporary relief, but a lasting solution is possible only if: (1) clean energy is expanded. (2) farmers are provided with viable options for stubble management. (3) public transport becomes robust and affordable. (4) electric vehicles are rapidly adopted. (5) urban greenery and tree plantations are promoted in a mission mode. (6) citizens themselves take initiatives to reduce pollution.

Friends, if we understand the dangers of exploitation and imbalance of natural resources, then the balance of the Earth is possible only when water, air, land, and forests exist in harmony with each other. However, growing populations, uncontrolled industrialization, and urbanization have seriously disrupted this balance. Deforestation has weakened the natural air-purification system, while forests of cement and asphalt have swallowed up greenery. Excessive groundwater exploitation, river pollution, and piles of plastic waste have reached a point where nature is retaliating, sometimes in the form of floods, sometimes droughts, sometimes toxic air, and sometimes depleting drinking water levels. The global community must assume shared responsibility. To combat pollution and climate change, merely announcing policies is no longer enough; strict implementation is essential. Developed countries must take responsibility for their historical emissions and provide technical assistance and financial support to developing countries. The Green Climate Fund must be made more effective to help countries like India adopt clean energy. At the same time, developing countries should also incorporate "carbon-neutral" policies into their development models.

Friends, if we understand that public participation is the true key to environmental protection, governments can formulate policies and enforce laws, but environmental protection is impossible unless citizens themselves change their lifestyles. Using public transport instead of private vehicles, planting trees, avoiding plastic, saving electricity, and properly disposing of waste-these small steps can bring about big changes. In today's times, everyone can become a "green citizen." Environmental education in schools and colleges should not be merely a subject but a part of life. Technology and innovation can provide solutions. Artificial intelligence, satellite monitoring, smart city models, and green technology can provide new directions in pollution control. For example, smart traffic systems can reduce vehicular congestion, while monitoring pollution emissions

with drones is possible. In cities like Delhi, "smog towers" and "green walls" have been installed as experiments, but they must be integrated into policy, not just symbols.

Friends, if we talk about Graded Response Action Plan in India, it has been divided into four phases and now Phase-3 has been implemented from 11th November. Let us understand it, Phase-(1) Moderate to Poor AQI 201-300 (2) Phase-2 (Very Poor, AQI 301-400) (3) Phase-3 (Severe, AQI 401-450) (4) Phase-4 (Severe Plus, AQI >450) After AQI reached 425 on 11th November 2025 after 9 am, the third phase of action was started in Delhi-NCR, that is, Grape-III came into effect. The third phase of Grape III comes into effect when the air quality reaches severe level, that is, AQI above 401. In this situation, the administration has to take emergency measures that temporarily stop or limit all major sources of air pollution. The major restrictions and measures in Phase-3 are as follows - (1) Complete or partial ban on construction activities: All major construction works, such as roads, bridges, metro, commercial complexes, etc., are stopped in Delhi, Noida, Gurugram, Ghaziabad and Faridabad. Only essential public projects (such as hospitals, railways, metro security projects) are allowed. Real estate and private building construction activities remain closed. (2) Operation of brick kilns, hot mix plants and stone crusher units stopped - All stone crusher units and hot mix plants are closed to prevent emission of dust and fine particles. (3) Vehicle Monitoring and Restrictions: The operation of old diesel vehicles (older than 10 years) and petrol vehicles (older than 15 years) is prohibited. Entry of BS-III petrol and BS-IV diesel vehicles into Delhi is prohibited. Instructions are issued to promote public transport and encourage carpooling. (4) Control of Industrial Units: Only industrial units running on approved fuel are allowed to operate. All other units using coal, diesel, or non-standard fuels are ordered to shut down immediately. (5) Road Cleaning and Water Sprinkling: Local bodies are ordered to carry out mechanical cleaning of roads and regular water sprinkling to reduce dust accumulation. Municipal and Public Works Department (PWD) teams are deployed 24 hours a day to prevent dust accumulation. (6) Ban on Open Burning: The open burning of garbage, leaves, plastic, or any type of solid waste is strictly prohibited. Violators face heavy fines. (7) Guidelines for schools and offices: Sports activities are suspended in schools for the safety of children and the elderly. In some cases, schools are advised to conduct classes in online mode. Government offices and private institutions are advised to adopt work from home. (8) Awareness and health advisory: The Health Department issues advisory to citizens to wear masks, avoid outdoor activities and seek medical advice. Respiratory counters and emer-

gency respiratory services are activated in hospitals.

Therefore, if we study and analyze the entire above description, we will find that if the earth survives, everything survives. The pollution in Delhi-NCR is not just dust or smoke in the air; it is a warning of the unbalanced development that is endangering all of humanity. If we don't wake up today, tomorrow we will have to pay the price of breathing in oxygen cylinders. Therefore, it is time for the entire world, including India, to strictly adhere to environmental protection rules. Clean air, clean water, and a green environment are not the responsibility of any one country, but the shared heritage of all human civilization. Only if the earth survives, will humanity survive; and only if nature is healthy, will development be meaningful.

### DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

**All refugees who have come from Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Pakistan are being urged to complete their citizenship process at the earliest under the Citizenship Amendment Act. Under no circumstances will citizenship be granted to illegal Bangladeshi Muslims or Rohingyas. However, it is our solemn responsibility to protect genuine refugees. The law of the Government of India is clear — refugees cannot, under any circumstances, be sent back to the country where they were persecuted. Moreover, their children will be eligible to obtain Indian citizenship by birth through naturalization.**  
~ Amit Malviya, Member, National Executive, BJP



## From Enforcement to Facilitation: What the Wage Code, 2019 Means for Businesses Ecosystem and Labour Welfare

SHRI OM PRAKASH GUPTA

In today's globalized economy, where fair wages, decent work, and labour protection are central to sustainable development, the Wage Code, 2019 marks a pivotal shift for India, from enforcement to facilitation. Evidence from several developing nations, such as Vietnam, shows how timely and well-designed labour reforms can drive economic growth while advancing social justice. Vietnam's overhaul of its labour laws, including minimum wage reforms and enhanced worker protections, has contributed to a surge in foreign investment and a steady rise in formal employment. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has consistently underscored the urgency of ensuring fair wage practices as a cornerstone for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those relating to poverty reduction, decent work, and inclusive growth. At the same time, businesses worldwide have raised concerns about excessive regulatory burdens, complex compliance structures, and punitive enforcement mechanisms that hinder their ability to grow and compete in a rapidly changing global market.

India, as one of the fastest-growing economies and a key player in the global labour market, is not immune to these challenges. With a vast workforce (53.53 crore) employed across both the formal and informal sectors (Economic Survey, 2021-22), the country has long faced the dual task of ensuring wage fairness for workers while simplifying compliance frameworks for employers.

The multiplicity of wage-related legislations

(Payment of Wages Act, 1936; Minimum Wages Act, 1948; Payment of Bonus Act, 1965; and Equal Remuneration Act, 1976) along with their overlapping provisions and enforcement difficulties, often caused confusion, duplication, and compliance challenges for employers. These inadequacies hampered both economic productivity and worker welfare. The Code on Wages, 2019 addresses these issues by consolidating the four existing laws into a single streamlined framework. This simplification ensures uniform definitions and consistent application of wage standards, eliminating unnecessary overlaps and enabling easier compliance for employers while guaranteeing timely and fair wages for workers. By reducing administrative complexity, the Code aims at promoting transparency, efficiency, and a more harmonious employer-employee relationship. Thus, the Wage Code represents India's effort to align its labour policies with global best practices, ensuring that worker protection and business efficiency coexist in a mutually reinforcing manner.

Uniform Definition of Wages: A key reform introduced under the Wage Code, 2019 is the adoption of a uniform and comprehensive definition of "wages", which replaces the earlier fragmented approach where each labour law had its own definition. This inconsistency often led to confusion, litigation, and compliance challenges for employers and employees alike. As the same term "wages" carried different meanings for different purposes. By standardizing the definition, the Wage Code will bring greater transparency and administrative

simplicity in wage calculations. The unified definition now provides a clear structure for determining what constitutes "wages," including basic pay, dearness allowance, and retaining allowance, while excluding specific components like bonuses, house rental allowance, and overtime payments. For employers, it offers regulatory clarity and ease of compliance, promoting a more transparent and equitable wage structure across sectors.

Inspectors as Facilitators: A transformative feature of the Wage Code, 2019 is the redefinition of the role of inspectors. Under earlier laws, inspectors primarily functioned as enforcers, often leading to adversarial relationships with employers. Globally, there has been a shift in regulatory systems from strict enforcement to facilitation, where regulators act as partners in ensuring compliance. Reflecting this global trend, the Wage Code, 2019 redefines the role of the inspector as an "Inspector-cum-Facilitator," signifying that inspectors are no longer seen merely as enforcers but as facilitators; serving as guides, educators, and allies to employers. Their role now involves assisting businesses in understanding and adhering to regulations and offering expert advice to improve compliance.

This shift from policing to facilitation aims to build mutual trust and align with international best practices that emphasize cooperative regulation and reduced mistrust between employers and regulatory authorities. By promoting partnership, the code encourages better adherence to wage laws while easing employers' compliance journey. It also resonates with the global movement

toward responsive regulation, where dialogue and trust form the foundation of compliance.

Decriminalization and Graded Penalties: One of the most welcomed reforms is the decriminalization of offences. Earlier, wage-related violations often led to lengthy criminal proceedings, creating anxiety and delays for employers. The new framework takes a compliance-first approach, helping employers rectify mistakes rather than punishing them disproportionately. The wage code introduces a graded penalty system, ensuring punishments are aligned with the severity of the violation. By categorizing penalties based on the gravity of offences, the code aims at promoting fairness, proportionality, and justice in enforcement. Minor lapses will no longer attract harsh consequences, while serious violations will still be appropriately penalized.

Compounding of Offences: The provision for Compounding of Offences offers employers much needed relief from prolonged criminal court procedures. The older framework imposed criminal penalties even for minor, procedural lapses, leading to lengthy litigation and fear among employers. Under compounding of offences mechanism, certain offences can be settled by paying a penalty directly to the designated authority, equivalent to 50% of the maximum fine prescribed (Section, 56). This reform will significantly reduce legal delays, streamline the resolution process, and save businesses from the costs and uncertainties of litigation. Employers can now resolve disputes efficiently while continuing their operations without disruption.

## 'If someone is happy in another's death, they are supporting terrorism': Himanta after Delhi blast

## Displaced families in Manipur demand fair compensation and rehabilitation

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma condemned the Delhi blast that killed at least 12 people, urging citizens to stand united against any attempt to revive terrorism in the country.

Speaking to reporters during a programme at Raha in Nagaon district, Sarma said the state police had been instructed to closely monitor social media posts that express support, directly or indirectly, for acts of terror. He warned that individuals from Assam found engaging in such activity could face arrest.

"The blast in Delhi is highly condemnable. As we all know, in the last two days, a huge quantity of explosives was seized from specific people. Definitely, a big design was there. Hopefully, we will get a clearer picture by evening," the chief minister said.

A powerful explosion tore through a slow-moving car near the



Red Fort metro station on Monday evening, killing at least 12 people and injuring several others. The incident has reignited concerns

about urban security and the resurgence of terror networks.

Sarma stressed the need for public unity during such times, saying, "The people have to come together so that terrorism cannot rear its head again."

He also revealed that police had detected disturbing trends online following the incident. "Some people are making Facebook posts either welcoming the news or posting happy emojis. This trend was also visible after the Pahalgam terror attack earlier this year," he said. According to the chief minister, such behaviour amounts to supporting terrorism. "If someone is happy in another's death, they are directly or indirectly supporting terrorism. I have already told the DGP to check who these people are, and if they are from our state, we will arrest them if needed," he added. Sarma reiterated that Assam would not tolerate any attempt—online or otherwise—to glorify or encourage acts of terror.

IMPHAL

Hundreds of internally displaced persons (IDPs) gathered in Tuibong, Churachandpur district, on November 11, to protest against alleged disparities and negligence in the distribution of compensation and rehabilitation support.

The displaced families, affected by the ethnic violence that has gripped Manipur since last year, accused authorities of ignoring their plight. The protestors, after holding a public meeting, took out a rally and later submitted a memorandum addressed to the Governor through district officials.

The memorandum demanded an inclusive implementation policy, the immediate release of pending financial assistance, permanent housing, and livelihood restoration. It also called for a "fair, transparent compensation and property protection mechanism," along with a comprehensive rehabilitation model, administrative

accountability, and a complete database of displaced persons.

Dr R. Sanga, convener of the IDPs Committee, told reporters that many families living outside relief camps are receiving far less assistance than those inside them. "IDPs have been facing terrible hardship because of the present situation. The governments of India and Manipur are neglecting them," he alleged.

Another participant, Dr Vumkhoneh, claimed that the administration's treatment of displaced persons varies depending on whether they are living in Churachandpur, Imphal, or Kangpokpi.

At least 260 people have been killed and thousands displaced in the ethnic clashes between Meitei groups from the Imphal valley and Kuki-Zo communities from the surrounding hills. Manipur has been under President's Rule since February 13, following the resignation of then Chief Minister N. Biren Singh on February 9.

## Man arrested in Assam's Cachar for posting objectionable comment on Delhi blast



SILCHAR

Acting swiftly on the instructions of the Chief Minister, Assam Police have arrested a man from Cachar district for allegedly making an objectionable remark on social media following the recent bomb blast in Delhi.

The accused has been identified as Nazrul Islam Borbhuiya, a resident of Rangpur in Cachar district. According to police sources, Borbhuiya posted a controversial comment—"ELECTION COMING AHEAD"—on social media soon after the Delhi blast, which authorities deemed insensitive and provocative in nature.

Following the Chief Minister's directive for strict action against those spreading inflammatory or irresponsible remarks online, Cachar Police traced and detained the individual.

He is currently under interrogation, and police are probing whether his comment was motivated by any particular intent or external influence.

Officials confirmed that further investigation is underway to determine the context and motive behind the post.

## Tripura CM slams left rule as 'farce in the name of jobs,' inaugurates Kakraban govt degree college

AGARTALA

Tripura Chief Minister Prof. (Dr.) Manik Saha on November 11 launched a sharp attack on the previous communist regime, alleging that it had made a "farce in the name of jobs" while his government is working with complete transparency and fairness in employment and governance. Speaking at the inauguration of the Kakraban Government Degree College and the virtual inauguration of a 50-bed girls' hostel at the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) in Gomati district, Dr. Saha said the event marked "a historic milestone" for the people of the Kakraban area in the field of education.

"Today is a very happy day for the people of Kakraban. A history has been created here. But what was the situation before? There was a farce in the name of education. Those who were driven by communist ideology created anarchy in schools and colleges under the banner of Naxalism. No one knew when a bomb would explode or who would be injured. Such

was the chaos back then," Dr. Saha said.

The Chief Minister credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah for bringing peace and stability to regions once affected by extremist activities. "Under their leadership, we are working to completely root out Maoist ideology from society," he said.

Taking a dig at the CPI(M), Dr. Saha referred to a recent meeting by the party's trade union wing CITU in Agartala, saying, "They talk of protests and agitation, but people have rejected the politics of incitement. Earlier, if someone was not from their party, they would not get a job. But our government has changed that. We provide jobs transparently and on merit." Dr. Saha said the current BJP-led government in Tripura has already provided around 20,000 jobs since coming to power, without facing any legal challenge. "People now understand that there was a farce in the name of employment under the communist regime.

## "Educated individuals" drawn into terror: Assam BJP says Pakistan-backed networks run deep, promises decisive action



GUWAHATI

Assam BJP President Dilip Saikia has strongly condemned the car bomb blast near Delhi's Red Fort on Monday, terming it a "sheer act of cowardice and barbarity." Twelve people were killed and several others critically injured in the explosion that shook the national capital.

Expressing deep condolences to the bereaved families and prayers for the recovery of the injured, Saikia said that anti-India terror

organisations, frustrated by the nation's growing strength, were trying to destabilise the country. "The horrific blast in Delhi is yet another example of their desperation," he said.

The vehicle used in the attack, a car bearing registration number HR 26 CE 7674, has been traced to Dr. Omar Nabi of Al-Falah Medical College, Faridabad, who is suspected to have links with terrorist networks. Following the blast, Union Home Minister Amit Shah convened an emergency meeting with

the NSG, IB, NIA, and Delhi Police officials, directing a swift and thorough investigation. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also assured that the culprits will not be spared.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP's state headquarters in Guwahati, Saikia reaffirmed the BJP government's "zero tolerance" policy against terrorism. He revealed that eight individuals—identified as members of the Muslim community, including four medical professionals—had been arrested from Gujarat, Haryana, and Hyderabad in the last three days for alleged terror links.

"The fact that some educated individuals are being drawn into terrorism shows how deep Pakistan-backed networks run. The BJP government will crush such elements with an iron hand," Saikia asserted.

He took aim at the Congress party, accusing it of "appeasement

politics" and citing Telangana Chief Minister Revan Reddy's remark—"Congress means Muslims, and Muslims mean Congress"—as proof of the party's communal mindset. Saikia also condemned the Karnataka Congress government for allegedly offering VIP-like facilities to a jailed terrorist, calling it an example of the party's "soft stance towards terror."

Saikia further criticized Assam Congress MP Pradyut Bordoloi over a social media post following the blast and questioned what action APCC President Gaurav Gogoi would take. He also urged the Assam Chief Minister to identify and act against anyone in the state who attempts to glorify terrorism online. The press conference was attended by BJP state general secretaries Rituporna Barua, Dipu Ranjan Sarma, Anup Barman, and media convener Rupam Goswami.

## Loktak Project marks 51st year of serving clean energy and national development in Manipur

IMPHAL

The Loktak Project, operated by National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) Limited, marked its 51st year on Tuesday, continuing its commitment to clean energy, sustainability and national development in Manipur. NHPC, a public sector undertaking in India, focuses on planning, developing and operating hydroelectric power projects, and has also diversified into other renewable energy sectors such as solar and wind.

The multi-purpose hydroelectric project includes a 105 MW power station on the Manipur River, commissioned in 1983 to provide power and irrigation. It involves the Ithai Barrage, which created a reservoir from Loktak Lake. While the project has brought significant benefit, it has also posed challenges



for the lake's ecosystem and the livelihoods of local communities. Plans are underway for a new "Loktak Downstream" project to further harness water resources from the existing setup.

Pooja Elangbam, congratulated NHPC Limited for completing over five decades of commitment to clean energy, sustainability, and national

development. Deputy Commissioner of Bishnupur, Pooja Elangbam, congratulated NHPC Limited for completing over five decades of commitment to clean energy, sustainability, and national development. She lauded NHPC's continued contribution to powering the nation through renewable energy initiatives.

Pooja Elangbam made the remarks while gracing the 51st NHPC Raising Day celebration as the Chief Guest at Church Ground, Loktak Project. During the programme, the Deputy Commissioner unfurled the NHPC flag and inaugurated several stalls set up to mark the occasion.

The event was also attended by Arun Kumar Meena, Commandant of 32 Battalion CRPF; Chandra Shekhar, Commandant of 8th Battalion CRPF; Praveen Kumar, DC Malaya Das, 2IC, 10th Battalion BSF; Gursharan Singh, Head of Project, NHPC; Nitish Kumar, GM (Electrical), NHPC, along with other officers and staff of NHPC. Students from Kendriya Vidyalaya Loktak, and staff members of NHPC showcased a series of cultural performances, reflecting the spirit of unity and festivity.

## Manipur's traditional Wangkhei Phee to enter global market as MANITEX signs export pacts



IMPHAL

Manipur's signature handwoven textile, the Wangkhei Phee, is set to reach international markets as the Directorate of Handloom and Textiles prepares to sign memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with four global buying houses at the ongoing Manipur International Textile Expo (MANITEX) 2025.

The agreements, involving Ace Sourcing, Idea Nuova, Artisan Expo Trade and Luxe Living, will enable export of the traditional Manipuri fabric to 16 countries. Officials described the move as a "significant milestone" for the state's handloom sector.

Director of Handloom and Textiles, E. Jiten, said the interest shown by international buyers in the Wangkhei Phee was "a big achievement of this event." He added, "The motif used

in this traditional cloth has made them like this item. We are proud that our handloom has gained such attention."

The expo, themed "Weaving a Sustainable Future: Manipur's Handloom Heritage to Global Fashion", has entered its fourth day at Urban Haat, Nilakuthi, in Imphal East. The five-day event, running from November 8 to 12, has drawn participants from over 20 countries, including the UK, France, Japan, Germany, and Singapore.

Despite challenges arising from the ongoing conflict in the state, Jiten said the Directorate's efforts to bring international buyers to Manipur had paid off.

"It is not an easy thing to bring global houses here in the current situation. But we wanted to showcase Manipur's unique textile heritage and create a roadmap for inclusive growth," he said.

## Nagaland police to host first regional anti-narcotics conference under 'Nasha Mukh Bharat' mission



KOHIMA

Nagaland Director General of Police (DGP) Rupin Sharma announced that the state

Quest!

If you keep going North, you will eventually go South, but if you keep going East, you will never go West.

police, in collaboration with the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), will host a two-day Regional Anti-Narcotics Task Force Conference on November 13 and 14 at Chumoukiedima. The event will bring together police representatives from all Northeastern states and West Bengal to address growing concerns over drug trafficking in the region.

Speaking at a press conference on No-

vember 11, Sharma said senior officials from the central government are expected to attend the meet. "The conference will deliberate on the challenges posed by narcotics trafficking in and from the Northeast, and formulate recommendations for effective cooperation among states," he stated.

The DGP added that this would be the first regional conference of its kind under the national Nasha Mukh Bharat mission, with a strong focus on enforcement, supply reduction, rehabilitation, and de-addiction.

Turning to the ongoing Nagaland Police recruitment drive, Sharma informed that the last date for online applications has been extended by 15 days—from November 7—to assist candidates facing delays in securing required documents such as indigenous certificates.

Addressing public concerns about the Rs 300 examination fee, Sharma clarified that registration on the online portal is free and valid for all future recruitments, but payment is required to sit for the exam. He explained that the portal's development cost about Rs 40 lakh, and additional expenses cover OTPs, SMS notifications, and the three-tier selection process.

"People should understand that we are not making profit. We are actually cutting costs wherever possible, even producing badges in-house to save funds," Sharma said, adding that the digital system has reduced travel and accommodation costs for applicants, saving each between Rs 5,000 and Rs 6,000.

On the state's forensic infrastructure,

Sharma said Nagaland's forensic laboratory in Dimapur is "decently placed" to handle around 1,200-1,300 investigation cases annually. However, efforts are underway to improve district-level response capabilities. Proposals will be sent to the state government to facilitate faster deployment of forensic teams to crime scenes, particularly in serious cases under new criminal laws. Additional DGP (Law & Order) Sandeep Tamgadge said that work orders have been issued for mobile forensic vans for all districts. He added that new posts for scientific officers and assistants are being created to strengthen forensic services.

"The way forward is not merely setting up new labs, but decentralising resources and improving mobility so that forensic support reaches scenes of crime faster," Sharma emphasised.

Around 100 stalls are participating this year, fewer than the 160 seen in earlier editions, but organisers say sales have exceeded expectations. Some weavers reportedly earned up to ₹1.5 lakh during the event. A local weaver who has participated in every edition of MANITEX said this year's sales were her best so far. "During the crisis, I couldn't sell much or earn properly. This expo helped me sell most of my products," she said.

MANITEX, which began in 2018 as an annual platform to promote Manipur's handloom and handicraft traditions, was paused in 2021 due to the pandemic and again in 2023 and 2024 amid the state's unrest.

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## Bihar elections phase 2: Over 30% candidates have criminal cases, women remain sidelined

PATNA

As Bihar gears up for the second phase of assembly elections, the numbers tell a story of muscle, money and a stark gender imbalance.

Nearly one-third of all candidates have criminal cases against them, including serious charges such as murder and crimes against women. Almost half are crorepatas. Data also highlights a severe underrepresentation of women in the second phase.

Here's an analysis of the affidavits filed by candidates contesting in the final phase of the Bihar polls.

**Criminal Records**  
About 32% of candidates contesting in the second phase of the Bihar assembly elections on November 11 have declared criminal cases against themselves, while 26% face serious charges such as murder, attempted murder and crimes against women, according to an analysis by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR).

The ADR and Bihar Election Watch analysed the self-sworn affidavits of 1,297 out of 1,302 candidates contesting across 122 constituencies. Of these, 415 (32%) declared criminal cases, and 341 (26%) face serious charges.

The analysis found that 19 candidates have declared cases related

to murder, while 79 face charges of attempted murder. A total of 52 candidates face cases linked to crimes against women, including three charged with rape.

Among major parties, CPI(M) tops the list, with its sole candidate declaring criminal cases. It is followed by CPI(ML)(L), where five of six candidates (83%) face criminal charges. INC follows with 68%, Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) at 60%, and BJP at 57%.

All major parties contesting in the second phase have fielded between 19% and 100% candidates with declared criminal cases.

The analysis also found that 73 of 121 constituencies (60%) are categorised as "red alert" constituencies, defined as those where three or more contesting candidates have declared criminal cases.

Polling officials seal the EVMs after voting ends for the first phase of the Bihar assembly election in Darbhanga, Nov. 06, 2025.

32% of candidates in Bihar Phase 1 polls face criminal cases; Left parties top list

Over 40% are crorepatas  
The report also examined the financial assets of the candidates and found that 562 (43%) are crorepatas.

The richest candidate in this phase is Ran Kaushal Pratap Singh,

contesting from Paschim Champaran's Lauriya constituency. With declared assets worth ₹368.98 crore, his disclosure far exceeds that of most other contenders. His wife, Saloni Singh, has reported assets exceeding ₹131 crore.

Among parties, the Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) tops the list, with all 15 of its candidates declaring assets worth more than ₹1 crore. CPI(M), with a single candidate in this phase, also has 100% crorepatas.

They are followed by JD(U) with 91% of candidates worth over ₹1 crore, RJD and INC at 84% each, BJP at 83%, and Suraj Party at 74%.

At the lower end, BSP and AAP have 33% crorepati candidates each. Just 10% women in poll fray

Women's representation remains dismal — only 133 of the 1,302 candidates (10%) contesting in the second phase are women.

A total of 528 candidates (41%) have declared their educational qualification between Class 5 and Class 12, while 627 (48%) are graduates or hold higher degrees. Fifteen are diploma holders.

Another 117 candidates have described themselves as illiterate, nine are illiterate, and one candidate has not disclosed educational details.

## India tells UNSC it has suffered from cross-border terror, illicit arms trafficking



UNITED NATIONS

India has suffered from cross-border terrorism carried out using illicit weapons trafficked across its borders, New Delhi's envoy at the UN has said, in a thinly-veiled reference to Pakistan.

India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Parvathani Harish stressed on Monday that the UN Security Council must have a zero-tolerance approach towards those who facilitate and sponsor the use and movement of such weapons.

"India has fought the scourge of terrorism for several decades and is therefore aware of the dangers posed by the diversion and illicit transfer of small arms and ammu-

nition to armed non-State actors and terrorist groups," Harish said Monday at the UN Security Council Open Debate on Small Arms.

Harish's remarks in the UN headquarters came hours after a deadly and high-intensity explosion rocked the Red Fort area in New Delhi and killed at least nine people while injuring many more.

The explosion ripped through a slow-moving car at a traffic signal near the Red Fort metro station on Monday evening.

"India has suffered due to cross-border terrorism carried out using illicit weapons trafficked across our borders, including now through the use of drones," Harish said, in an apparent reference to Pakistan.

"The increase in the volume and sophistication of such arsenals reminds us that these groups cannot sustain themselves without being enabled, financed or supported," he added.

India told the powerful UN Security Council that the illicit trafficking of small arms and related ammunition continues to be a major factor sustaining armed groups and terrorist organisations.

"The consistent access of such entities to weapons highlights the need for coordinated action to prevent their acquisition. The Security Council must continue to uphold a zero-tolerance approach to terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and to those who facilitate, sponsor, finance or enable the use and movement of such weapons," Harish said.

India also stressed that arms embargoes authorised by the Council are an important tool to restrict the flow of weapons into conflict zones and must be implemented consistently, objectively and without selectivity.

Harish noted that the illicit trade, trafficking and diversion of small arms and light weapons remain a major threat to international peace and security.

As a complex and multidimensional problem, it has a cross-cutting impact on development, security, humanitarian and socio-economic aspects, he said.

Emphasising that India attaches high importance to preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, Harish said an integrated approach to their management requires addressing both the security and developmental dimensions.

He outlined key elements that are critical for effective small arms and light weapons control, including national ownership through

strong legislation and political commitment, and a standardised organisational structure for coordinated action.

Effective data management to enable real-time tracing and accountability, risk management to prevent diversion and misuse, and security protocols and deterrence measures to strengthen border controls, and stockpile management, are also important for the control of these, he said.

He pointed out that the report of the Secretary-General on 'Small arms and light weapons' notes that the diversion and illicit trafficking of such weapons continue to sustain terrorist groups and armed organisations in several conflict-affected regions.

It highlights that porous borders, weak stockpile security and cross-border trafficking networks enable the steady flow of such weapons, while improvised and craft-produced weapons further complicate tracing and accountability.

India underscored that international cooperation is indispensable in preventing diversion, disrupting trafficking networks, improving customs and border coordination, and enabling timely intelligence and information exchange.

Harish said India supports the redoubling of efforts at the national and global level to strengthen the implementation of the UN Programme of Action (PoA) and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI), including through national legislative measures and enforcement, export controls, information sharing and capacity building.

He reiterated India's firm commitment to preventing the misuse of small arms and light weapons by terrorist groups and thereby continues to contribute to the global fight against terrorism.

## INTERNATIONAL

### After brutal torture and 2.5 years of captivity, Israeli-Russian researcher is grateful to survive

TEL AVIV

"to hang" in Arabic — is Israeli slang for the torture device that hoists victims into the air, their hands handcuffed above their heads. Akrab, or "scorpion," is the more painful version, when the hands are first forced together behind the back.

Elizabeth Tsurkov experienced both, and other excruciating torture, during 2 1/2 years held captive in Iraq by an Iranian-backed militia.

The 38-year-old Israeli-Russian doctoral student at Princeton, who speaks fluent Arabic and has researched the Middle East for over a decade, was studying social political movements in Iraq in March 2023 when she was forced into an SUV, blindfolded, sexually assaulted and beaten, then taken to a torture facility on the outskirts of Baghdad.

Her release in September was announced by President Donald Trump.

Now she is recovering in Israel as Iraqis head to the polls Tuesday for a parliamentary election that includes candidates linked to the militia Tsurkov says kidnapped her, Kataib Hezbollah.

Israelis are prohibited by law from traveling to Iraq, which Israel classifies as an "enemy country." In an interview with The Associated Press, Tsurkov said she knew the risks but thought she took sufficient precautions, entering on her Russian passport and avoiding contact with militias. She hadn't counted on Kataib Hezbollah's deep penetration of activist circles in Baghdad.

She said her captors didn't know she was Israeli at first and believes they kidnapped her to try to get a large ransom for a foreigner. While Kataib Hezbollah has never public-

ly claimed her kidnapping, it has released social media statements that include fake information she gave during torture, a sign of its involvement.

The group, an ally of Hezbollah in Lebanon, is part of a coalition of Iranian-backed militias that are officially part of Iraq's armed forces but often act on their own. The US has listed Kataib Hezbollah as a terrorist organization since 2009.

A month into Tsurkov's captivity, her captors found Hebrew messages and other evidence she was Israeli on her phone. That's when the torture began, she said, as they accused her of being a spy. Their starting ransom demand was \$600 million, she was told by Israeli officials.

"The torture was incredibly brutal," said Tsurkov, now recovering at a friend's home near Tel Aviv.

"They electrocuted me. They constantly touched me inappropriately. They forced me into positions that were very painful to me because of my herniated" discs, she said, adding she had back surgery just eight days before the kidnapping.

The AP generally does not identify victims of sexual abuse except in cases where they publicly identify themselves or share their stories openly.

Tsurkov's captors used a plastic whip, especially on her feet, because feet heal slowly. They threatened to kill her with a gun stamped property of the Iraqi security services. She would pray to pass out to end the torture sessions.

She said she made up false confessions to appease the torturers, careful to avoid implicating Iraqi acquaintances.

After 4 1/2 months, Tsurkov was moved to what she believes is a Kataib Hezbollah base on the border with Iran, where the torture

stopped. She was allowed sufficient food and water, and eventually a TV, while kept in solitary confinement in a windowless cell.

Hopes for release plummeted after the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas-led attack on southern Israel, when Tsurkov became just one of over 250 hostages of concern to Israel.

The torture has left Tsurkov with likely permanent nerve damage. Between doctor's appointments and physical therapy, she mostly reclines on a couch, shifting positions to try to find relief.

The details of the torture facility are impossible to forget, she said: Splashes of blood on the walls, desperate scrawls of people held in the cell before her. It's uncomfortable to share them publicly.

"Any human being doesn't want the details about their worst experiences in their life to be known," Tsurkov said.

Still, she knows that as a Westerner she is in a unique position to shed light on Iraqi militias. Few people survive Iraq's torture facilities, and the Iraqis who do are terrified speaking out could endanger them or their families.

Iraqi militias are not as familiar globally because they are mostly active inside Iraq. Iraqi militias targeted U.S. forces in the region after the Oct. 7 attack because of Washington's support for Israel, but that largely stopped after a U.S. retaliatory attack killed a high-ranking Kataib Hezbollah commander.

"Their focus is overwhelmingly just oppressing their own people," Tsurkov said. She knew the militia was well-funded, she said, because of the plush leather and new-car smell of the luxury vehicles that transported her blindfolded.

Tsurkov, who was born in Russia, moved to Israel around age 4. Before that her parents were

imprisoned in Russia for opposing the communist government.

Her mother was incarcerated for three years, her father for seven, plus two years of hard labor in Siberia. For a few months, Tsurkov's father was held in a cell with former Soviet dissident Natan Sharansky, who later became an Israeli cabinet minister. Her grandfather was imprisoned under Stalin.

Tsurkov's family fought for her release, launching a campaign focused mostly on the U.S. Her sister, Emma Tsurkov, is married to a U.S. citizen.

Israel also invested "great efforts and many resources" to help secure Tsurkov's release, said an Israeli official who was not authorized to speak to the media and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Russian Foreign Ministry didn't respond to an AP request for comment. As far as she knows, Tsurkov was not exchanged for any prisoners. Her release followed significant pressure from Adam Boehler, the Trump administration's special envoy for hostage affairs who held multiple meetings and regularly took to social media to demand Tsurkov's freedom.

White House spokeswoman Anna Kelly said that with Tsurkov's Princeton enrollment and other ties to the U.S., Trump "was willing to leverage our country's strength and his negotiating skills to intervene."

Tsurkov also credits the involvement of an Iraqi-American businessman and Trump donor Mark Savaya. As she was recuperating in Israel, Tsurkov said Savaya told her he had warned Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani during a meeting to release her or the Trump administration would attack Kataib Hezbollah. Savaya was later named the U.S. special envoy for Iraq.

### Suicide bombing outside Islamabad court in Pakistan kills at least 12



ISLAMABAD

A powerful car bomb exploded outside a sprawling district court in Pakistan's capital on Tuesday, killing at least 12 people, security officials said.

The blast, which was heard miles away and also damaged several vehicles outside the court, struck at a time when the area is typically crowded with hundreds of visitors attending hearings.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the explosion but Pakistan has struggled with militant attacks across the country and a resurgent Pakistani Taliban.

Two security officials told The Associated Press that a car bomb had caused the explosion and that 11 people were killed. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media on the record.

Earlier, Pakistan TV said at least 13 people were also injured in the explosion. The casualties were mostly passersby or those who had arrived for court appointments, the TV reported.

There was no immediate comment by the Islamabad police, which said they are still investigating.

Earlier Tuesday, Pakistani security forces said they foiled an attempt

by militants to take cadets hostage at an army-run college overnight, when a suicide car bomber and five other Pakistani Taliban targeted the facility in a northwestern province.

The attack started on Monday evening, when a bomber tried to storm the cadet college in Wana, a city in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province near the Afghan border. The area had until recent years served as a base for the Pakistani Taliban, al-Qaida and other foreign militants.

According to Alamgir Mahsud, the local police chief, two of the militants were quickly killed by troops while three militants managed to enter the compound before being cornered in an administrative block. The army's commandoes were among the forces conducting a clearance operation and an intermittent exchange of fire went on into Tuesday, Mahsud said.

The administrative block is away from the building housing hundreds of cadets and other staff.

The Pakistani Taliban, or TTP, which is separate from but allied with Afghanistan's Taliban, denied involvement in the college attack. The group has been emboldened since the Taliban seized power in Kabul in 2021, and many of its leaders and fighters are believed to have taken

refuge in Afghanistan.

Pakistan has seen a surge in militant attacks in recent years. The deadliest assault on a school occurred in 2014 when Taliban gunmen killed 154 people, mostly children, at an army-run school in Peshawar. According to the military, the assailants wanted to repeat Monday what happened during the 2014 attack in Peshawar.

Pakistan's interior minister says a suicide bomber detonated his explosives near a police vehicle outside the gate of a district court in Islamabad on Tuesday, killing 12 people and wounding 27.

The attacker tried to "enter the court premises but, failing to do so, targeted a police vehicle," Mohsin Naqvi, the interior minister, told reporters.

He did not blame any militant group but added that authorities are "looking into all aspects" of the attack. Naqvi said police investigators have confirmed the blast was caused by a suicide bomber.

Tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan have risen in recent months. Kabul blamed Islamabad for drone strikes on Oct. 9 that killed several people in the Afghan capital and vowed retaliation. The ensuing cross-border fighting killed dozens of soldiers, civilians and militants before Qatar brokered a ceasefire on Oct. 19, which remains in place.

Since then, two rounds of peace talks have been held in Istanbul — the latest on Thursday — but ended without agreement after Kabul refused to provide a written assurance that the TTP and other militant groups would not use Afghan territory against Pakistan. An earlier, brief ceasefire between Pakistan and the TTP, brokered by Kabul in 2022, collapsed later after the group accused Islamabad of violating it.

# Behind the Suits: India's Growing Battle Against White-Collar Terrorism

In the labyrinthine corridors of twenty-first-century terrorism, a chilling transformation is underway—one that defies the imagery traditionally associated with violence. Gone are the militants in fatigues clutching Kalashnikovs in remote mountain ranges; in their stead stand men and women in crisp suits, armed not with bombs but with laptops, not with bullets but with ideologies, and not with open rebellion but with covert allegiance to extremist causes.

This emergent phenomenon, now recognized as white-collar terrorism, marks a seismic shift in the modus operandi of subversive networks. These are no longer the visible foot soldiers of radicalism but its architects, hidden in plain sight. They infiltrate institutions of trust—universities, hospitals, corporate offices, and government agencies—exploiting respectability as both a shield and a weapon.

In India, a country that has endured the full spectrum of terrorism—from cross-border infiltration to cyber-radicalization—this new avatar presents an especially insidious challenge. It thrives in the very spaces designed to foster progress and knowledge, corrupting the soul of professionalism with the poison of fanaticism.

Behind the Facade: The Anatomy of a Hidden Threat

The threat of white-collar terrorism lies in its deceptive normalcy. These operatives are doctors who profess to heal but quietly plot destruction, engineers who design not bridges but detonators, academics who corrupt rather than enlighten, and financiers who channel charity into carnage. They use their positions of trust to camouflage their allegiance to violent ideologies, seamlessly blending into the machinery of everyday life.

The sophistication of these networks has started even seasoned intelligence officers. The November 2025 bust of a terror module involving eight individuals—among them three medical professionals—was a wake-up call. Authorities uncovered an astonishing 2,900 kilograms of explosives hidden across Kashmir, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh. Links to Jaish-e-Mohammed and Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind revealed the extent of ideological and logistical penetration.

This was not an isolated aberration. Rather, it symbolized a growing trend in which professionals with unblemished records and impeccable social standing act as the silent enablers of terror. Their crimes do not unfold in the heat of battle but in the cool anonymity of spreadsheets, encrypted chats, and covert transactions.

How the White-Collar Terrorist Operates  
The genius of white-collar terrorism lies in its use of legitimate systems to achieve illegitimate ends. These individuals exploit the freedoms of democracy, the anonymity of digital technology, and the credibility of professional status.

They operate through multiple layers:  
“ Ideological Indoctrination: Professionals radicalized through online ecosystems often become propagators themselves, introducing extremist ideas under the guise of “academic freedom” or “alternative narratives.”

“ Financial Subterfuge: Funds move through shell NGOs, charitable foundations, or professional guilds. On the surface, donations appear philanthropic; in reality, they bankroll terror logistics and recruitment.

“ Digital Espionage: Encrypted messaging apps, VPN networks, and dark web transactions render them nearly invisible to conventional surveillance.

“ Recruitment by Proxy: Many serve as intermediaries—identifying, influencing, and inducting vulnerable youth into extremist circles.

The white-collar terrorist, therefore, does not merely plant bombs. He plants ideas—viruses of thought that multiply in the minds of the disaffected.

Pakistan's Hand: Ideological Puppeteering  
Intelligence assessments have repeatedly pointed to Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) as the principal puppeteer in this silent war. The ISI's new strategy replaces the gun-toting militant with the credentialed ideologue. By recruiting professionals, the agency ensures plausible deniability while achieving maximum penetration.

Doctors, engineers, and scholars from Kashmir and other sensitive regions are offered scholarships, foreign fellowships, or lucrative consultancies. In return, they disseminate propaganda, justify jihad through intellectual discourse, and subtly inject anti-India narratives into the mainstream.

The irony is cruel: while their children study in London or Dubai, they incite young Indians to die for a warped cause. This cognitive dissonance—preaching violence while living in comfort—epitomizes the hypocrisy of white-collar extremism.

Why It's Harder to Fight  
Traditional counter-terror operations rely on identifying tangible threats: weapons caches, militant camps, or cross-border infiltrations. White-collar terrorism, however, operates in the realm of the intangible. It cannot be neutralized with drones or bullets.

These individuals enjoy constitutional protections, pristine legal records, and social legitimacy. They do not break the law overtly; they bend it from within. By operating within democratic frameworks—universities, professional associations, and online platforms—they shield themselves behind the very liberties they seek to undermine.

Save your energy: don't entertain toxic people. - Akin Olokun



intent without overt action. Ideological extremism leaves no fingerprints, no physical evidence, only words, digital trails, and influence patterns.

The Role of Citizens: From Bystanders to Guardians  
In this asymmetrical conflict, every citizen becomes a potential sentinel. Countering white-collar terrorism is not merely a state function; it is a civic duty. The frontlines have shifted from border posts to classrooms, clinics, and conference halls.

India's security architecture recognizes this collective responsibility. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) operates a dedicated hotline (011-24368800) for citizens to report suspicious activity. Similarly, the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (<https://cybercrime.gov.in>) and helpline 1930 allow the public to flag extremist online behavior and radicalization efforts.

Local police stations remain the first responders—trained to escalate credible leads to specialized counter-terror units. These channels are not bureaucratic formalities; they symbolize a democratic partnership between citizen and state.

Learning to Read the Signs  
Recognizing white-collar terrorists requires more than intuition; it demands awareness of subtle behavioral and financial anomalies.

“ Behavioral Shifts: Sudden radicalization, obsessive engagement with extremist ideologies online, or attempts to indoctrinate others.

“ Professional Contradictions: Individuals living beyond their means, displaying dual allegiances, or engaging in inexplicable activities unrelated to their field.

“ Financial Red Flags: Unexplained inflow or outflow of funds through charities or academic grants; frequent overseas transfers under vague pretexts.

“ Digital Footprints: Propagation of hate content, recruitment drives disguised as “academic debates,” or repeated use of encrypted communication tools.

Even within workplaces, vigilance matters. A colleague hoarding chemical precursors, maintaining strange foreign contacts, or avoiding scrutiny in collaborative projects may warrant quiet observation and discreet reporting.

How to Report Responsibly  
Effective reporting is both an art and a science. A useful report should:

1. Describe clearly what was seen or heard, without conjecture or exaggeration.
2. Include precise identifiers—names, locations, dates, digital handles, or vehicle details.
3. Provide context explaining why the behavior or activity appeared suspicious.
4. Attach evidence (screenshots, photos, documents) if obtainable without risk.
5. Avoid public dissemination of suspicions on social media, which may alert suspects or defame innocents.

Above all, safety comes first. Citizens should never confront suspects or attempt amateur surveillance. Law enforcement agencies are trained and equipped to act without compromising investigations or personal security.

Professional Accountability and Legal Obligations  
Certain professions bear enhanced responsibilities under Indian law. Chartered accountants, company secretaries, and cost accountants—by virtue of their role in financial compliance—are legally obligated to monitor and report suspicious transactions linked to terror financing.

Similarly, institutions such as banks, universities, and hospitals must strengthen internal compliance frameworks to detect anomalies. Know Your Customer (KYC) protocols, audit trails, and digital surveillance systems must evolve to capture the new patterns of ideological infiltration.

These professionals and institutions are not merely service providers; they are guardians of systemic integrity.

Anonymity and Protection: Safeguarding Whistleblowers  
To encourage public cooperation, most reporting frameworks guarantee anonymity. Citizens can share information confidentially, ensuring that personal safety is never compromised.

The protection of whistleblowers is not a courtesy—it is a cornerstone of participatory democracy. Effective counter-terrorism relies as much on trust between citizens and the state as on technological prowess.

The Psychological Battlefield: Winning Hearts and Minds

White-collar terrorism is as much psychological warfare as it is logistical. The true victory lies not in

Combating white-collar terrorism requires three interlinked transformations:  
1. Institutional Resilience: Strengthening inter-agency coordination, data sharing, and cyber-monitoring.  
2. Civic Awareness: Training citizens to recognize early signs of radicalization.  
3. Moral Fortitude: Reaffirming professional ethics as a defense against ideological corruption.

If every citizen becomes an observer, every community a network of vigilance, and every anomaly a potential lead, the architecture of white-collar terror collapses under the weight of collective scrutiny.

The Balance Between Freedom and Security  
Critics often warn that heightened vigilance risks morphing into a surveillance state. But vigilance need not mean paranoia. The goal is not to criminalize dissent or suppress thought—it is to protect democracy from those who exploit its freedoms to destroy it.

Freedom without responsibility is an invitation to chaos; vigilance without balance is tyranny. India must walk this fine line with wisdom—fortifying national security while upholding the civil liberties that define it.

A Nation's Call to Conscience  
The rise of white-collar terrorism signals an epochal challenge. It demands a redefinition of what it means to be secure in an interconnected world. The battle is no longer confined to the physical but has entered the cognitive, the ideological, and the institutional. The time for complacency has passed. The doctor's stethoscope, the professor's podium, the banker's ledger—all can be instruments of healing or harm, depending on the hands that wield them.

As India stands at this crossroads, the clarion call is clear: vigilance is not optional—it is existential. Every citizen, every institution, every professional must recognize that national security begins not at the border but within the conscience.

White-collar terrorism represents not only a new frontier of extremism but also a test of India's democratic maturity. It challenges us to defend liberty without surrendering it, to remain open yet guarded, to see through the mask of respectability and expose the rot beneath. The tools of the terrorist have changed, but the remedy remains timeless: unity, vigilance, and moral courage. The true guardians of the Republic are not only its soldiers and spies but its citizens—ordinary people who choose to act when silence is easier.

India's survival in the age of white-collar terrorism will depend not on the sophistication of its weapons but on the strength of its will. The call has been sounded; the choice is ours—to observe or to awaken, to drift or to defend.

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# A Lifelong Passion for Radio Waves: Pradip Chandra Kundu and the Spirit of North East Integration



AGARTALA:

As the countdown begins for the much-anticipated North East Integration Rally 2026, one of Tripura's most passionate voices of the airwaves, Pradip Chandra Kundu from Agartala, has extended his warm wishes for its grand success.

"I'm eagerly awaiting the North East Integration Rally, which runs from January 4 to February 4, starting in Kolkata," says Kundu. "It's a wonderful opportunity to showcase the spirit, culture, and beauty of our region to a wider audience."

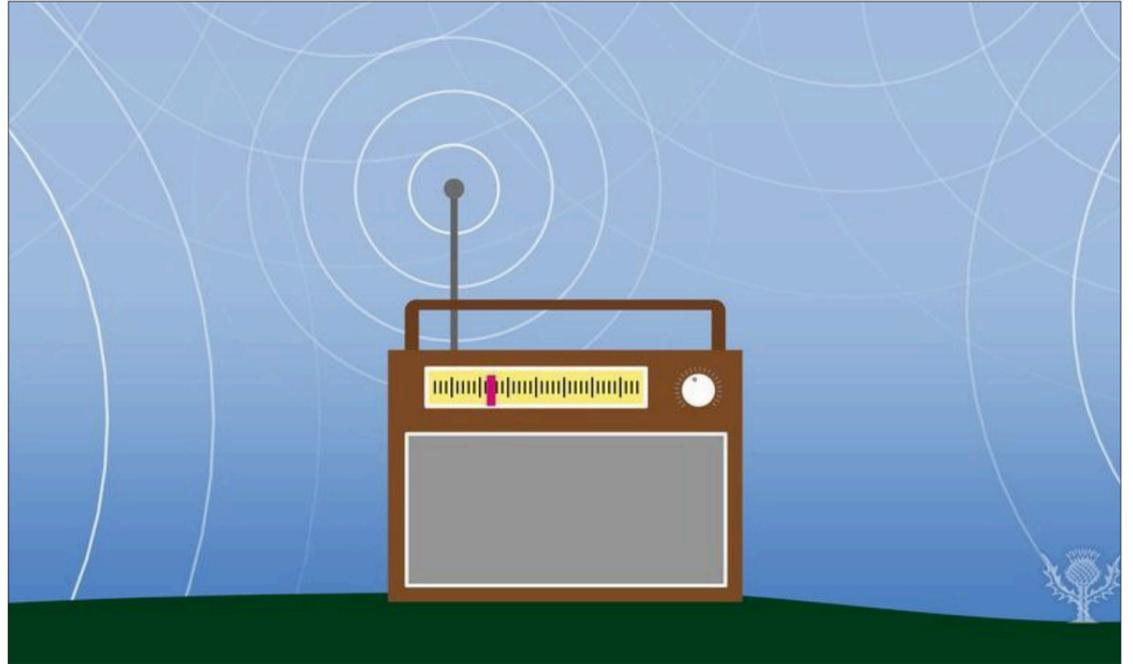
Now 66 and retired after a long career in teaching, Kundu is far from slowing down. Better known in radio circles by his call sign VU3IOP, he has spent more than four decades immersed in the world

of shortwave listening and amateur radio.

## A Voice Across Borders

Kundu began his journey in 1980, when the world of radio DXing—the art of tuning in and verifying distant radio signals—was thriving among enthusiasts. What began as a curiosity turned into a lifelong pursuit. Over the years, he has monitored and verified broadcasts from hundreds of radio stations across continents, each confirmed by the prized QSL cards that DXers collect as proof of successful reception.

In 2021, his remarkable dedication earned him a place in the India Book of Records for receiving QSL cards from the maximum number of countries by any individual in India. His consistency and passion have also made him one of Asia's



top DXers, being named among the Top 10 DXers of the Year by a Hungarian club for four consecutive years—2020 to 2023.

**The Ham Spirit**  
Beyond DXing, Kundu is also deeply involved in amateur radio, or ham radio, a hobby and service that connects people across towns, nations, and even into space. Licensed operators use radio frequencies to communicate, conduct technical experiments, or provide emergency communication during disasters.

"Amateur radio is not just about technology—it's about connection," Kundu says. "Anyone above 12 can apply for a license. It's a skill that teaches discipline, science, and global friendship."

As the President and founding member of the Tripura HAM Radio Club, Kundu continues to mentor aspiring operators and promote awareness of the hobby across the Northeast. He encourages people, especially the youth, to explore the fascinating world of ham radio and be part of a community that thrives on curiosity and communication.

## Rallying for Integration

For Kundu, the North East Integration Rally is more than an event—it's a reflection of what he has always believed in: the power of communication to bridge distances. "Just like

radio waves connect people across invisible borders, this rally unites us through our shared identity and culture," he says, inviting everyone to take part and experience the unity of the region firsthand.



## Welcome Pradip Chandra Kundu



Member Organising Committee, NEIR 2026

[www.northeastintegrationrally.in](http://www.northeastintegrationrally.in)



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JANUARY 10-12, 2025

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**NE Cultural Fest**  
 Any Form of Art and Cultural showcase can be showcased here.  
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**11 JAN**  
**Barak Valley Conclave**  
 Potential, Issues and Challenges of Barak Valley by different youth organizations.  
 Includes: MOCA, and D-governance as an option for rural pattern, awareness, youth involvement, and awareness campaigns. 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 certification. 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'.  
 Workshop on: Social Media, Journalism, Design & Content for: Advertisements, Press, Brochures, Websites.



**11 JAN**  
**5E For Success Conclave**  
 The 4th Annual Success Conclave is going to be held at the theme: 'From School to Campus to Corporate'. Schools, Educational Institutions and corporate houses can join the Conclave as sponsors.  
 Quiz and Group Discussion for Barak valley Schools & Colleges, Extension, Seminars, Public Speaking (College).  
 In an online event, various students of NE India Schools and Colleges can participate.



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 Raw science out of textbooks into real-life experiences of students.

**DEC'24-JAN'25**  
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**10-12 JAN**  
**E-Sports**  
 Full-Blown Demos | CASH PRIZES | Trophy



**11 JAN**  
**film festival**  
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**Book Club**  
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**Painting Carnival**  
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**Watch Out!**  
**Film Festival**