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PERSPECTIVE

Don't fight for someone's attention. If they really care, you shouldn't have to.

Tripura Assembly Speaker Biswabandhu Sen Passes Away; 3 Days of State Mourning Announced

OUR CORRESPONDENT



AGARTALA: Tripura Legislative Assembly Speaker Biswabandhu Sen passed away in the early hours of December 26 in Bengaluru. He was at 3:30 am, according to an official communication issued by the Government of Tripura. The state government said it has learnt of the demise with profound regret. Sen's mortal remains will be brought from Bengaluru to Agartala on December 27. As a mark of respect, the

Tripura government has announced state mourning for three days, from December 26 to December 28, both days inclusive. During this period, the national flag will be flown at half-mast across the state and no official entertainment will be held. The government has also decided that all state government offices, including those located outside Tripura, public sector undertakings, and all educational institutions remained closed on December 26. A state funeral will be accorded to Biswabandhu Sen on December 27. The government has directed all concerned authorities to take necessary action in accordance with the decisions.

WHO SAID WHAT



May Christmas bring renewed hope, warmth and a shared commitment to kindness. Here are highlights from the Christmas morning service at The Cathedral Church of the Redemption.

~ Narendra Modi, PM India

Manipur's Chak-Hao Gains Global Superfood Status, but Lack of Infrastructure Limits Farmer Gains

IMPHAL

Manipur's indigenous black rice variety Chak-Hao is emerging as a sought-after superfood in domestic and international markets, but inadequate infrastructure-particularly the absence of advanced rice milling facilities-is preventing farmers from fully benefiting from the growing demand.

Cultivated in Manipur for centuries, Chak-Hao is known for its distinctive aroma, deep black colour and high nutritional value. Traditionally considered a royal food and closely associated with religious rituals and festivals, the rice remained largely unknown beyond the state until recent years. With rising awareness of its health benefits, Chak-Hao is now being exported to other parts of India and overseas, transforming it into a promising cash crop for local farmers.

Chairman of Chak-Hao Poireiton Organic Producer Company Limited, Chongtham Shanta, said the company has been operating since 2016 under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare's Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region (MOVCD-



NER). He said the initial years were marked by heavy losses due to the lack of assured markets, but sustained efforts and rising demand have since improved prospects for farmers.

The company cultivates Chak-Hao across 300 to 500 hectares annually in different parts of Imphal West district. While increased demand from other states has helped

boost incomes, Shanta said the lack of modern milling machinery continues to restrict value realisation. "In the absence of advanced facilities, farmers are often forced to sell Chak-Hao in seed form, which fetches lower returns," he said.

He added that the company also trades and exports Chak-Hao produced by eight other farmer producer companies (FPCs). Buyers

outside Manipur prefer seeds due to concerns over uniform size, grading, appearance and shelf life-standards that are difficult to meet without proper milling infrastructure. Since Chak-Hao is not a staple food in most markets, it is often stored for longer periods, further influencing buyer preferences.

According to Shanta, installing advanced rice milling units in Manipur would allow farmers to produce uniformly processed rice with improved texture and appearance. He said such facilities could also enable the production of parboiled Chak-Hao, significantly enhancing its market value and export potential. "At present, exporters are sometimes compelled to ship Chak-Hao as seed despite its limitations," he noted.

Chak-Hao's export footprint is expanding, with the Manipur government recently signing a memorandum of understanding to export 20 metric tonnes of Chak-Hao rice, including black and white varieties, to Japan. The agreement was formalised during the Bharat International Rice Conference 2025 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, and efforts are underway to opera-

tionalise the export.

Dr Kh Nimaichand, in-charge of MOVCD-NER in the Manipur Department of Agriculture, said the launch of the scheme in 2015-16 and the granting of a Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2020 marked a turning point for Chak-Hao. "These initiatives transformed Chak-Hao from a lesser-known crop into a recognised superfood," he said.

Currently, around 5,000 hectares across districts including Imphal West, Imphal East, Bishnupur, Thoubal and Kakching are under Chak-Hao cultivation, with an average yield of at least 2.5 metric tonnes per hectare. MOVCD-NER is now in its fourth phase, with three FPCs participating and receiving financial, logistical and marketing support for a minimum of three years.

Dr Nimaichand described Chak-Hao as a high-potential cash crop, citing its antioxidant properties, high fibre content, low glycaemic index, rich vitamins and minerals, gluten-free nature and distinctive aroma. While black rice is grown elsewhere in India, he said Chak-Hao's unique characteristics set it apart in global markets.

Newborn Death at Sribhumi Private Hospital Sparks Negligence Allegations, Tension Erupts



SRIBHUMI

Tension gripped Sribhumi town on December 25 following the death of a newborn at a private hospital, with the bereaved family alleging gross medical negligence and wrong treatment, triggering public outrage and unrest.

The incident occurred at Lifeline Hospital in the Kanishail area, where a six-month pregnant woman from Bairigram was admitted after experiencing excessive bleeding. Soon after news of the newborn's death spread, angry relatives and local residents gathered outside the hospital, prompting the deployment of police and paramilitary forces to maintain law and order.

According to the family, the attending doctor initially contacted gynaecologist S S Pal over the phone, who advised admitting the patient to the private hospital. However, even after admission, the woman allegedly continued to bleed heavily. The relatives claimed that despite repeatedly alerting the doctors on duty to her worsening condition, no ef-

fective steps were taken. As the patient's condition deteriorated further, the attending doctor again consulted Dr Pal telephonically and reportedly administered an injection on his advice. The family alleged that the woman was subsequently taken for a sonography, but while she was being shifted, the baby was delivered dead inside the ambulance.

The woman's husband, Layek Chowdhury, accused the hospital of medical negligence and inappropriate treatment, holding it responsible for the death of the newborn. He also alleged that when journalists attempted to question a person at the hospital following the incident, the individual fled the premises, fuelling public suspicion and anger.

Local residents claimed that similar incidents had occurred earlier at Lifeline Hospital, but alleged that no strict action had been taken by the district administration. The repeated allegations, they said, had led to growing resentment among sections of the public, who accused authorities of failing to act against the private healthcare facility despite past complaints.

Police officials said the situation was brought under control after security personnel were deployed at the hospital and surrounding areas to prevent any escalation. Meanwhile, demands have intensified for a thorough investigation into the incident and stringent action against those found responsible for the alleged negligence.

West Karbi Anglong stabilises; protestors to meet Assam CM in Guwahati



GUWAHATI,

The situation in violence-affected areas of Assam's West Karbi Anglong district has stabilised, with no fresh incidents reported over the past two days, even as a tight security clampdown remains in place and a crucial tripartite meeting is scheduled to be held in Guwahati on Friday.

Officials said prohibitory orders, a night curfew and suspension of mobile internet services continue in sensitive areas as a precaution following the unrest earlier this week that left two people dead and several others injured. Security forces, including the Army, Rapid Action Force

(RAF) and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), remain deployed across the district to prevent any flare-up.

"The situation is normal at present, but restrictions are still in force as a precautionary measure," an official said.

The violence was largely concentrated in Kheroni, the worst-affected area of the district, which is home to Karbi, Bihari, Bengali and Nepali communities. The region has witnessed long-standing tensions between indigenous Karbi groups and Hindi-speaking settlers over allegations of encroachment on Village Grazing Reserve (VGR) and Professional Grazing Reserve (PGR)

lands in the tribal belt.

In an effort to restore peace, a tripartite meeting involving representatives of the Assam government, the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) and protest groups will be held in Guwahati on Friday. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and KAAC chief Tuliram Ronghang are expected to attend the talks, officials said.

The unrest followed a 15-day hunger strike by Karbi agitators demanding the eviction of alleged illegal settlers, most of whom they claim are from Bihar, from grazing reserve lands in Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong districts. Tensions escalated after police removed three protestors from the hunger strike site in the early hours of Monday, a move the administration later said was taken to provide medical treatment. Kheroni witnessed intense violence on Tuesday, during which one person was killed in police firing and another was allegedly burnt alive inside his house during mob violence. More than 70 people, including over 60 police personnel, were injured in the clashes.

Chief Minister Sarma said on Wednesday that the demand for immediate eviction of alleged encroachers could not be met at this stage as the Gauhati High Court has issued a stay order in the matter.

Environmentalists Flag 'Sangai' Misnaming in Wildlife Act, Calls for Urgent Correction

IMPHAL

Renowned environmentalist Dr Khangbam Shamungou Singh has raised serious concern over the misnaming of Manipur's state animal, the Sangai or brow-antlered deer, under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Addressing the plenary session of the Manipur Science Congress 2025, Dr Shamungou pointed out that the critically endangered Sangai (*Rucervus eldii eldii*) is listed as "Thamin" in the Act, instead of being identified by its widely recognised local and scientific name. He questioned whether the legislation was effectively protecting Manipur's iconic deer or a different subspecies found in parts of South and Southeast Asia.

"Sangai is the state animal and a critically endangered species protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. However, it has been named as 'Thamin' instead of Sangai in the Act," Dr Shamungou said, urging corrective steps at the policy level. He expressed hope that deliberations at the ongoing Manipur Science Congress would take cogni-



sance of the issue and initiate efforts to address it.

The concern was raised during

a presentation on Manipur's biodiversity, where Dr Shamungou emphasised the ecological and cultural

significance of the Sangai, which is endemic to the Loktak Lake region and holds deep symbolic value for the people of the state. The Manipur Science Congress 2025, which concluded at Manipur University on Monday, also featured presentations by former Dhanamanjuri University vice-chancellor Prof N Rajmuhon on the transformative role of science and technology in the 21st century. Director of the Directorate of Environment and Climate Change (DoECC), T Brajakumar, delivered an invited talk on climate change impacts, adaptation and mitigation strategies in Manipur. Nearly 300 delegates from institutions within and outside the state participated in the three-day event. The science congress was inaugurated by Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla and was jointly organised by Manipur University, the Manipur Science and Technology Council (MASTEC) and the DoECC under the theme 'Science, Innovation and Climate Change'.

The inaugural session also featured the felicitation of award sponsors, distribution of three key awards, and the release of a 375-page souvenir and a proceedings book.

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BANGLADESH VIOLENCE – A THREAT TO REGIONAL PEACE

Bangladesh – a nation born out of a bloody struggle against Pakistan in 1971 – is once again in the throes of deep political instability and violent unrest. Following months of protest, political upheaval, and spiralling violence, the country now stands on a knife's edge, with repercussions not only for Dhaka but for regional security and India's northeastern frontier. In the past few days, Bangladesh has been rocked by widespread violence following the death of a student leader, Sharif Osman Hadi, who had been shot during an election campaign and later died in Singapore. Mass demonstrations erupted across multiple cities, including Dhaka, Rajshahi, and Chittagong, with protesters attacking media offices and political installations. The gravity of violence can be gauged from the fact that many media persons have been rescued by army fearing their lives. Even ladies were beaten up openly by the violent extremists for not wearing dresses as per jihadi codes. This is the exact reflection of incidents that happened in 1971. Targeting of Indian high commission, pelting stones in broad day light without any resistance from the law and order agencies is a clear indicator that India and Hindus in Bangladesh are the specific target of these violent mobs. Burning the house of a former minister Vir Bahadur leaves nothing in guess that targeting minorities is on the agenda of these jihadi mobs. The country remains deeply polarised. Former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, leader of the Awami League and daughter of the nation's founder Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, has been living in self-imposed exile in India since August 2024 after being ousted amid massive student-led protests and political violence. She has been sentenced to death in absentia by a Bangladeshi court so quickly point fingers about who actually is ruling Bangladesh. The violence in Bangladesh has no similarities with the one that happened in Nepal as it has a direct security dangers for India.

In this volatile environment, symbols of Bangladesh's founding heritage have come under attack. The historic Dhanmondi-32 residence of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, once a memorial museum, was vandalised and set on fire by protesters second time in less than a year during violence yesterday, expressing anger against the old political order and Mujibism. Burning of a Hindu boy Deepu Das by the mob and hanging him to death with a tree is the cruelest incident unacceptable in today's world order and every sensible nation must condemn it leaving aside political alignments and other geopolitical interests. Such incidents remind us all about same happenings in Syria a few years ago. These events are part of a larger cycle of violence and political struggle backed by Pakistan's ISI and Bangladesh's Islamists and anti India elements within and outside Bangladesh. Raising of slogans against India by the unruly mob is a clear pointer in that direction. It has afflicted Bangladesh since the July 2024 violence, which saw protests overthrow the Awami League government amid accusations of authoritarian excess and corruption a meticulously knitted and executed propaganda backed by Pakistan and financial support from others as well.

Minority Rights in grave danger: Large scale confirmed reports of violence against Hindu minorities have surfaced amid this organized violence. There are accounts suggesting incidents where Hindu individuals were killed and bodies displayed in gruesome ways. Vandalism of temples and assault on Hindu homes – have become a routine since the past a few months now. This has resulted in the destruction of multiple houses and forced many Hindu families to flee.

The broader past history of communal violence in the region – including the genocide of Bengalis and Hindus during the 1971 Liberation War also provides context for leaving none suspicious.

Pakistan, ISI, and Islamist Politics effect: A major threat in Indian strategic commentary on the Bangladesh crisis is about the influence of Pakistan and radical Islamist groups. Recent reporting from different independent media platforms also indicates that Pakistan is hell bent to bolster its influence in Bangladesh by supporting right-wing factions and potentially rehabilitating regional militant organizations such as ULFA etc. Establishment of terrorist training camps in Bangladesh by Pakistan ISI cannot be ruled out. All this move is a part of Islamabad's broader strategy to shape regional dynamics in South Asia to its power and notorious favour. Many national and international political voices and Indian analysts argue that a combination of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and other extremist networks have been exploiting the ongoing turmoil to expand ideological influence. While specific claims about an "ISI office" in Dhaka are also being made by many but so far have not been independently verified in mainstream reporting although alleged by all cross sections of society, media, analysts etc. Intelligence analysis suggest Pakistan has been seeking to deepen ties and exert covert influence in Dhaka as part of long-running geopolitical competition with India and notoriously trying to tilt the balance of power in its favour although a day dreaming. Pakistan is openly leveraging Islamist political forces like Jamaat-e-Islami, which has historically been anti-India to the forefront in this violence to settle its scores with India. Bangladesh's interim government under Muhammad Yunus is reported to be pivoting its foreign policy direction, engaging more openly with Islamabad and even exploring military cooperation – a move that could have unintended consequences for India's security landscape in the near future.

Regional impact of rising Extremism
With the Awami League banned from contesting upcoming elections and Sheikh Hasina in exile, Bangladesh's political space has widened to include hardened Islamist groups. This has raised legitimate concerns about the resurgence of radical ideologies in a country that had earlier made significant strides in secular and moderate governance under Sheikh Hasina. Such shifts and instability in Bangladesh could embolden extremist outfits and smuggling networks that infiltrate Indian territory, particularly impacting the northeastern states peace, progress and tranquility. Intelligence briefs have previously warned of increased activity by groups like Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), which India considers significant threats along its eastern borders.

Implications for India's Northeast: The northeastern region of India – including states like Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram – shares an extensive border with Bangladesh. These states already grapple with demographic invasions, insurgency, and cross-border movement of arms and contraband. A destabilised Bangladesh could further lead to illegal migration demographic changes, cross-border insurgency, support to groups like ULFA. Communal tensions within border districts of Assam and West Bengal, drug and human trafficking networks exploiting the porous frontier. These scenarios are not merely speculative; India's intelligence apparatus regularly flags the eastern borders for enhanced vigilance due to evolving threats tied to Bangladesh's internal sociopolitical dynamics.

Right time to Act? The question of whether India should intervene before Bangladesh becomes another Syria is complex as direct military intervention in Bangladesh – a sovereign nation – could violate international law and risk a wider conflict and India traditionally prioritises diplomacy and strategic influence over overt military action. Only summoning Bangladesh's envoy won't do but India need to be more assertive keeping our traditional Hindu brethren danger in consideration. India must also assert to encouraging free, fair elections and supporting Bangladesh's democratic institutions to prevent extremist capture of the political power.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“Don't let your bad days trick you into thinking you have a bad life.” -
Allie Newman

THE 2025 REFORMS IN FULL SWING UNDER NARENDRA MODI



PIB

2025 will be remembered as the year India consciously chose to think bigger, move faster, and reform deeper. Under PM Modi, it became a defining moment when the country shed layers of outdated laws, simplified its tax and regulatory structures, opened new frontiers for industry, and aligned governance with the aspirations of a confident nation.

It was a year when India's economic philosophy shifted toward clarity, scale, and global ambition. The impact was felt across rural India, industry, labour markets, and the emerging sectors that will shape the future.

Surpassing every global estimate, the Indian economy showed a staggering 8.2% GDP growth in 2025. It was the result of breathing new life into the economy through landmark reforms, cutting across sectors from taxation to labour reforms, from port modernisation to nuclear energy, from FDI to FTAs along with significant deregulation.

Labour Reforms
By consolidating 29 fragmented laws into four modern codes, India created a labour framework that is clearer for businesses and more secure for workers. With a stronger focus on fair wages, smoother industrial relations, wider social security and safer workplaces, the reforms position the labour market to support a growing workforce of 64.33 crore, encourage higher female participation and sustain lower unemployment levels as the economy expands.

Recent labour reforms have expanded social protection across India's workforce. Nearly 10 million gig workers now receive annual social security support of Rs. 5,000-10,000. Between 50 and 70 million contract workers are being brought under Employees' Provident Fund and Employees' State Insurance coverage, translating into benefits of Rs. 15,000-25,000 per worker each year. A new national wage floor is set to raise incomes for 150-180 million low-wage workers.

The reforms are expected to expand the formal workforce by 15 percent, while bringing nearly 50 crore working-age women into the labour pool. For industry, the changes translate into a 60-70 percent reduction in compliance requirements per factory, alongside cost savings of roughly Rs. 5,000 crore from lower expenditure on manpower, consultants, and production shutdowns.

Next-Generation GST Reforms
India's GST system saw its most meaningful simplification in 2025, moving to a clean two-slab structure of 5% and 18% that eased the burden on households, MSMEs, farmers and labour-intensive sectors. The reform aimed to reduce disputes, improve compliance and strengthen digital oversight while keeping sin goods outside the new structure to maintain fiscal balance. The impact was visible in consumer sentiment, with India recording record Diwali sales of Rs. 6.05 trillion.

Reduction in life and health insurance also ensured annual savings of Rs 50,000 crores due to reduced premiums leading to better uptake of life and health insurance. Smpler registration procedures have enabled 90% reduction in registration time from

30 to 3 days for small firms.

Income Tax Revolution
For the first time, individuals earning up to Rs. 12 lakh a year faced no income tax at all. Simultaneously, India replaced the old Income-tax Act of 1961, burdened with 4,000+ amendments and thousands of complexities, with the modern, simplified Income Tax Act, 2025. The new law rationalises exemptions, reduces litigation, improves clarity, and strengthens voluntary compliance.

Reforms in Building Permits and Environmental Clearance:

Modi Government has enabled easier norms for constructing manufacturing units by reducing the previous uniform 33% mandate for green cover and introducing a differentiated system based on an industry's pollution potential. This will unlock around 1.2 lakh hectares of industrial, reduce project cost upto 20% and spur Rs. 20-30 lakh crore in investments. 32 more industries have been also added "White Category" of industries. This will reduce compliance burdens and reduce entry barriers for first-time and smaller entrepreneurs. This will benefit 3,000 to 5,000 industries annually.

The Great EoDB Reset:

The Ease of Doing Business reforms defined 2025 as a year of breaking barriers. A sweeping review of Quality Control Orders removed mandatory compliance for 76 product categories and identified over 200 for deregulation, lifting a major burden off MSMEs and exporters.

Removal of these QCOs will result in doubling India's share of apparel exports from ~3% (\$15bn) to ~5% (\$30bn) in 5 years, reduction in production costs in footwear and auto industries by 10%-15%, 2-5% lower prices for domestic consumers for electrical, electronics, bicycles and automotive products leading to consumption boost. Additionally, removal of these QCOs will also result in creation of 30-33 lakh direct jobs and an equal number of indirect jobs.

Letting Small Companies Think Big:

Expanding the definition of "small companies" to include firms with turnovers up to Rs. 100 crore reshaped the landscape for thousands of Indian enterprises. The reform created an environment where growing businesses no longer felt constrained by administrative hurdles, but instead were encouraged to scale with confidence and compete on a larger stage.

A New Definition for Bigger MSME Ambitions

The MSME definition overhaul (effective April 1, 2025) removed a structural bottleneck that had discouraged scaling. Enterprise investment and turnover thresholds were raised 2.5-fold and doubled.

This will enable enterprises to expand without losing MSME benefits and incentives, creating a longer runway for growth and enabling medium-tier firms to remain competitive globally while retaining access to government support structures.

Significant Reforms in FDI
Modi Government also did significant reforms in FDI by allowing 100% FDI in Indian insurance companies which will attract substantial foreign capital, enhance competition, and improve customer services with-

in India's growing insurance market.

Opening Global Markets for Indian Manufacturers and MSMEs

The India-UK CETA signed in July and India-Oman CEPA signed recently expanded duty-free access for Indian goods to Western and Gulf markets. India also finalised an FTA with New Zealand, eliminating tariffs across all its tariff lines and granting duty-free access to Indian exporters.

In October, India operationalised its FTA with the European Free Trade Association. The agreement includes a binding \$100 billion investment commitment over 15 years, major tariff cuts, and new opportunities in services, technology, and green energy.

Market Securities Reform

In a landmark move to unify India's securities market laws into single code, Securities Market Code Bill has been introduced which will strengthen governance norms, expand consumer protection, reduce compliance burden and support technology driven securities market.

The reforms could deliver Rs. 500-1,000 crore annually in reduced compliance, legal, and administrative overheads across industry.

Jan Vishwas: Ending the Era of Criminalisation

Over 200 minor offences were decriminalised, hundreds of outdated laws were scrapped, and with the Repealing and Amendment Bill, 2025, this transformation has entered a new, deeper phase.

This law has repealed 71 acts which were obsolete or redundant. This will save Rs. 65,000-85,000 per MSME in compliance and legal costs and reduces 50+ man hours on average for select businesses, alongside reduced litigation and advisory costs.

Maritime and Blue Economy Reforms

The Monsoon Session of Parliament witnessed the passage of five landmark maritime legislations. These laws modernise India's maritime governance, replacing Acts from 1908, 1925, and 1958. The reforms ease documentation, reduce disputes, encourage coastal shipping, lower logistics costs, strengthen port governance, and position India to grow its blue economy.

Educational Reform

The Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Act establishes a single, unified higher education regulator by replacing multiple overlapping bodies (UGC, AICTE, NCTE) with the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan. It enhances institutional autonomy to promote innovation and academic excellence, separates funding from regulation to ensure sharper focus on quality and standards. This law will enable the number of higher education institutions to grow by 20% by 2034-35, with expansion into Tier-2, Tier-3 cities and rural districts. By reducing entry barriers and compliance burdens, it is expected to improve quality, lower education costs by 5-10%, cut median approval timelines by 20-30%, and save nearly 54 lakh human hours across 60-70 thousand institutions. It is also projected to boost FDI inflows into higher education by 10-20% over 3-5 years and expand accreditation coverage by 15-25%, strengthening institutional performance.

The New Era for India's Nuclear Journey

The Parliament passed the SHANTI (Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India) Bill. It is historic because it marks the first time India is structurally shifting its nuclear policy from a closed, state-monopoly model to a carefully regulated, safety-first but investment-friendly framework, repealing the old Atomic Energy Act, 1962 and subsuming the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010 into a unified, modern law. It opens the door to capital, technol-

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

Why is it that tipra are the first to protest against atrocities against minority in Bangladesh ? Why is that we are the first to challenge Bangladesh theory of breaking up our northeast . And why are we tiprasa targeted when your real enemy should be radicals from Bangladesh ? ~ Pradyot Manikya, Leader of Tipra Motha



ogy and next?generation reactors at a scale the public sector alone could not achieve. This will unlock \$100 – 150 billion of new capital from private domestic and foreign investors into nuclear power projects through to 2047 leading to 12-14 times increase in nuclear energy generation and reduce carbon emissions associated with fossil fuel generation. Provisions of SHANTI Bill will also enable early deployment of 0.3-1 GW of Small Modular Reactors capacity by 2033, supporting modular, scalable clean power beyond large reactors.

A Landmark in Rural Employment Reform

2025 marked a shift in rural development with the new Viksit Bharat: G RAM G Bill, 2025 Rozgar Guarantee framework, which raises guaranteed work from 100 to 125 days and directs it toward strengthening village infrastructure and livelihoods.

VB-G RAM G will increase annual wage entitlement by roughly Rs. 6,675 per household. Across 8.6 crore active jobs, this translates into up to Rs. 60,000 crore in additional wage entitlement each year, while also generating more than 200 crore additional person-days of employment.

2025 marked a decisive year of structural reform with simpler laws, stronger systems, softer inflation, and rising global credibility laying the groundwork for India's path to Viksit Bharat 2047.

Drug Menace Grew Under Left Rule, Claims Tripura CM; BJP Govt Taking Firm Action



AGARTALA

Tripura Chief Minister Dr Manik Saha on December 25 launched a sharp attack on the former Left Front government, accusing it of allowing the drug menace in the state to grow unchecked despite having prior knowledge of the problem.

Addressing the Sansad Khel Mahotsav 2025 at the Dasarath Deb State Sports Complex in Badharghat, the Chief Minister alleged that the spread of drugs in Tripura was part of an international conspiracy and claimed that the earlier CPI(M)-led government failed to take concrete steps to curb it during its tenure. "Despite knowing

everything, CPI(M) leaders during their time did not take any steps," Dr Saha said.

He asserted that since the BJP came to power, the state government has initiated firm and sustained measures to combat drug trafficking and substance abuse.

Dr Saha said a zero-tolerance policy against drugs has been adopted, with regular seizures and intensified enforcement drives aimed at making Tripura drug-free. "We are taking strict action against drug smugglers and strengthening enforcement to eradicate this menace," he added.

Highlighting the role of sports in steering youth away

from drugs, the Chief Minister urged young people to actively participate in sporting activities to build discipline, self-confidence and character. He also called upon parents to encourage their children to take up sports, noting that physical activity helps manage stress and promotes mental well-being.

"A healthy mind resides in a healthy body," Dr Saha said, underscoring the broader social benefits of sports. He referred to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for promoting sports across the country and mentioned the Prime Minister's statement on India's aspiration to host the Commonwealth Games in 2030 in Gujarat.

The Chief Minister further stressed the importance of merit, quality coaching and mental discipline in sports, stating that along with rigorous practice, meditation plays a key role in achieving excellence. Describing Sansad Khel Mahotsav as an important platform for students and sportspersons, he said the initiative would help nurture talent while also supporting the government's wider campaign to keep youth away from drugs.

Athletes, students and officials participated in the event, as the state government continues to link sports promotion with its broader strategy to counter substance abuse in Tripura.

Mizoram Journalist Ezrela Dalidia Fanai Found Dead at Aizawl Residence; Police Rule Out Foul Play

AIZAWL

Ezrela Dalidia Fanai, a 41-year-old journalist from Mizoram, was found dead in her apartment in Aizawl on Thursday morning, police said. Dalidia was a reporter with Doordarshan Kendra Aizawl and a contributor to All India Radio News, and had built a long career reporting on the Northeast for national audiences. She had also worked with media organisations including and several regional outlets.

A member of the Mizoram Journalists' Association, Dalidia was remembered by colleagues as a committed journalist who consistently brought local and regional issues to wider public attention.

Sources said she had been living alone following the recent deaths of her mother and her pet dog, and had been facing emotional distress in recent months.

Police officials confirmed that she was alone at the time of her death. Preliminary examination found no signs of foul play, and authorities said further procedures were being carried out as part of standard protocol.

The incident has cast a pall of grief over the media fraternity in Mizoram, with journalists and colleagues expressing shock and condolence over her untimely death.

Centre, Nagaland Govt, ENPO Hold Tripartite Talks on Frontier Nagaland; Dialogue to Continue

KOHIMA

The Centre on December 21 held a high-level tripartite meeting with the Government of Nagaland and the Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation (ENPO), taking forward discussions on the long-pending Frontier Nagaland Territory (FNT) demand.

The meeting was convened at Kartavya Bhavan-3 on Janpath Road under the chairmanship of the Union Home Secretary. The Nagaland government was represented by a delegation led by the state Chief Secretary, while senior office-bearers of the ENPO participated in the talks.

According to officials, the discussions focused on concerns raised by the ENPO regarding governance, development and administrative arrangements in eastern Nagaland. All sides reiterated their commitment to sustained engagement aimed at finding a peaceful and mutually acceptable

solution.

The tripartite meeting followed a bilateral interaction held on December 18 between the ENPO and a Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) team. The central delegation included senior officials from the MHA's North East Division as well as representatives of intelligence agencies, underlining the strategic importance accorded to the issue. Later on December 21, an ENPO delegation, accompanied by Rajya Sabha MP S. Phangnon Konyak, called on Union Home Minister Amit Shah at his official residence. The delegation extended Christmas greetings and thanked the Centre for what it described as a serious and constructive approach to addressing the Frontier Nagaland issue.

Sources indicated that further rounds of dialogue are expected as the Centre continues consultations with all stakeholders on the future course of action.

'Gundaraj in Assam': Gaurav Gogoi Targets Himanta Govt, Says BJP Will Be Ousted in Four Months

GUWAHATI

Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi on December 26 launched a sharp attack on the Assam government led by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, accusing it of fostering corruption and lawlessness and asserting that the BJP would be removed from power within the next four months.

Reacting to fresh allegations involving a BJP legislator over an alleged land deal commission, Gogoi said a pattern of misconduct had come to define governance in the state. "Another hour, another controversial BJP leader close to Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma is in the news for the wrong reasons," he said in a statement posted on social media platform X.

Alleging what he described as "gundaraj" in Assam, the Congress leader listed a series of issues including alleged commissions in land deals, diversion of Food Corporation of India (FCI) grain, encroachment on tribal



land, and the existence of cow and coal syndicates. "Charging commission for land deal, stealing FCI grain, encroaching upon tribal land, cow syndicate, coal syndicate-this is the gundaraj in Assam under Chief Minister Himanta

Biswa Sarma," Gogoi said.

He declared that the Congress would "remove these people from power in four months from today," using the hashtag #NatuXom (New Assam) to underline the party's political pitch.

Karbi Anglong Violence Leaves Dozens Homeless; Eyewitness Recalls Night of Terror

KARBI ANGLONG

Fresh eyewitness accounts have emerged from violence-hit areas of Karbi Anglong district, where widespread arson and mob attacks on the night of December 22 left dozens of families homeless and claimed at least one life.

Local resident Sushil Malakar recounted scenes of fear and chaos as mobs allegedly targeted residential areas, forcing families to flee their homes with little more than the clothes they were wearing.

Malakar, who said he had been living in the area for several years with his uncle and aunt, claimed there was no prior warning of any impending unrest. "We thought we were safe here," he said.

According to Malakar, the violence began around 6 pm, shortly after darkness fell, when a mob



started pelting stones at houses in the locality. He alleged that a person known to his family, who was part of the crowd, warned them to flee or face death.

"Fearing for our lives, we ran. We could not take anything with us," Malakar said, adding that all their belongings were later reduced to ashes.

They set the house on fire, and the boy was burned alive," he alleged.

While security forces have since been deployed in large numbers, Malakar said fear continues to grip the affected residents. "Right now, we feel a little better because the police are all around. When the police leave, we feel scared again," he said.

Emphasising the long-standing presence of the affected families, Malakar said many had lived in the area for generations. "We have been living here for years. My parents were born and brought up here," he said, reflecting the deep sense of loss and insecurity left in the wake of the violence.

Security forces remain deployed across sensitive areas of Karbi Anglong as authorities continue investigations and work to restore normalcy in the district.

Lights, Carols and Prayers Mark the Onset of Christmas Celebrations Across Nagaland

KOHIMA

Nagaland has been enveloped in festive cheer as Christmas celebrations began across the state, with homes, churches, streets and marketplaces illuminated by sparkling lights, stars and colourful decorations welcoming the birth of Christ.

From Dimapur to remote towns and villages, the spirit of Christmas was evident as carols filled the air and communities came together in prayer and celebration. Churches across the state held special Christmas Eve prayers and Masses, with hundreds of believers participating in Thirupiravi services and other observances marking the holy occasion.

In his Christmas message, Nagaland Governor Ajay Kumar Balla said the festival serves as a reminder of enduring values such as love, compassion, humility, forgiveness and service to humanity. He noted that these principles have long guided the people of Nagaland in fostering harmony, resilience and mutual respect.

Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio also extended warm Christ-

mas greetings, wishing peace and joy for all. "May this Christmas fill our hearts with peace and our homes with joy. May the message of Jesus Christ guide our lives and strengthen our hope," Rio said in a post on social media platform X. On Christmas morning, congregations of different denominations gathered in churches across the state for community worship, dressed in their finest attire and joining in hymns of praise. Exchanging greetings and gifts, visiting friends and relatives, and reaching out to the less privileged marked the celebrations, reflecting the spirit of goodwill and sharing associated with the festival.

Traditional Naga delicacies, including pork and rice-based dishes, are being prepared in households to be shared with family and friends, adding to the sense of togetherness and joy on Christmas Day.

In Dimapur, streets remained abuzz with festive activity as citizens prepared wholeheartedly to celebrate the birth of Christ, with the warmth of faith and celebration lighting up the state.

China Elevates Arunachal Claim to 'Core Interest', US Warns of New Flashpoint in India-China Ties

NEW DELHI

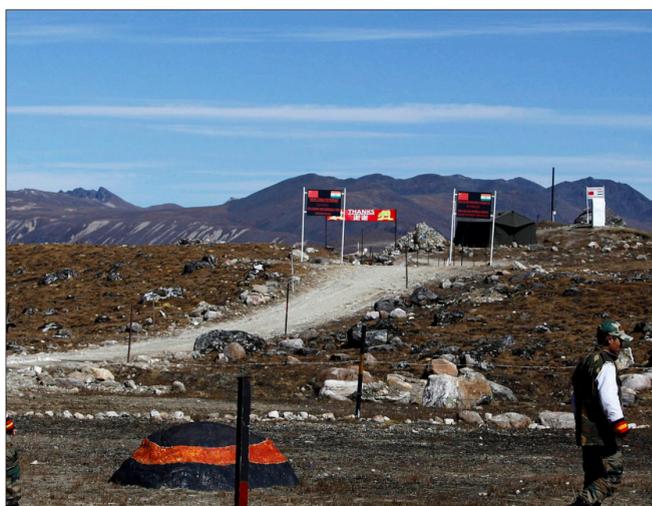
China has elevated its territorial claims over Arunachal Pradesh to the level of its "core interests," placing the northeastern Indian state alongside Taiwan, according to a recent report submitted by the US Department of Defense to the US Congress.

The assessment warns that Arunachal Pradesh could emerge as a major future flashpoint in India-China relations, even as New Delhi and Beijing have recently disengaged troops along parts of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh.

According to the Pentagon report, China's claims over Arunachal Pradesh, Taiwan and its maritime assertions in the South China Sea are central to Beijing's long-term objective of achieving the "great rejuvenation" of the Chinese nation by 2049. As part of this vision, the report notes, China aims to operate at a higher global level and build a world-class military capable of fighting and winning wars.

India has consistently rejected China's claims, reiterating that Arunachal Pradesh "was, is, and will always be" an integral part of India.

While India and China reached an agreement last year to disengage forces in eastern Ladakh following a prolonged military stand-



off, recent incidents point to renewed friction over Arunachal Pradesh. Tensions resurfaced last month after an Indian citizen, Prema Thongdok, was detained for nearly 18 hours during a layover in Shanghai while travelling from London to Japan. Thongdok later alleged that Chinese officials claimed her passport was invalid because it listed her birthplace as Arunachal Pradesh, and said she was denied

food and basic facilities before being allowed to continue her journey following intervention by the Indian consulate.

Earlier this week, a YouTuber was also reportedly detained in China after referring to Arunachal Pradesh as an integral part of India in a video posted in support of Thongdok.

Beijing claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of China, referring to it as "southern Tibet" or

"Zangnan," and rejects the McMahon Line drawn in 1914 by the British and then-independent Tibet as the boundary. While China initially asserted claims mainly over the Tawang region, it later expanded them to cover the entire state. In recent years, Beijing has also released multiple lists of Chinese names for locations in Arunachal Pradesh, a move New Delhi views as an attempt at political and psychological pressure.

Former Indian diplomat Mahesh Sachdev described the Pentagon report's focus on Arunachal Pradesh as significant. Speaking to ANI, he noted that while US assessments had earlier documented developments in Ladakh in detail, they had largely remained silent on Arunachal Pradesh. The renewed emphasis, he said, reflects growing American awareness of the methods China employs to exert pressure on India along the eastern sector of the border. The report also raised broader strategic concerns for India, stating that the easing of tensions along the LAC should be seen as part of China's dual-track approach-maintaining tactical calm with India while exerting sustained military pressure through Pakistan. It cited Pakistan's extensive use of Chinese-made weapons and air defence systems during Operation Sindoor as an example, even as questions were raised about the performance of those systems.

According to the Pentagon, by keeping the LAC relatively stable, Beijing is also attempting to stabilise ties with India and limit New Delhi's strategic alignment with Washington, even as it continues to assert its core interests elsewhere in the region.

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Air pollution: Centre opposes plea seeking GST cut on air purifiers, says 'will open Pandora's box'



NEW DELHI

The Union government on Friday informed the Delhi High Court that a court order to reduce GST rates on air purifiers would "open a Pandora's box", as it heard a plea seeking a rate cut and their classification as "medical devices" amid worsening pollution in the national capital.

A vacation bench of Justices Vikas Mahajan and Vinod Kumar directed the Centre to file a detailed response to the petition within 10 days and listed the matter for further hearing on January 9.

Additional Solicitor General (ASG) N Venkataraman, representing the Centre, sought time to file a detailed reply.

The ASG said the classification of medical devices is carried out by the health ministry after detailed scrutiny, not by the GST Council.

The court was also reminded that the separation of powers is fundamental and that recommendations of the parliamentary standing committee require a legislative process before implementation.

The ASG also contended that the petition had been filed in a "calculated manner" with a specific agenda, raising questions over its motives.

He further informed the court that meetings of the GST Council must be held physically and cannot be convened through video conferencing.

The court was hearing a public interest litigation (PIL)

seeking directions to the central government to classify air purifiers as "medical devices" and reduce the goods and services tax (GST) to the five per cent slab. Air purifiers are currently taxed at 18 per cent.

The petition by advocate Kapil Madan said that purifiers cannot be treated as luxury items in view of the "extreme emergency crisis" caused by severe air pollution in Delhi.

On December 24, the court had directed the GST Council to meet at the earliest and consider lowering or abolishing GST on air purifiers. The matter was listed today to inform the court as to when the Council can meet and whether it was possible for the Council to meet virtually, if not physically.

Government's reform trajectory will continue with even more vigour in coming times: PM Modi

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said the government's reform trajectory will continue with even more vigour in the coming times as it is committed to boosting 'Ease of Living'.

The prime minister made this observation on a series of posts by the central government on its various reform initiatives.

"Ours is a Government committed to boosting 'Ease of Living' and this thread below gives examples of how we have worked in that direction. Our reform trajectory will continue with even more vigour in the coming times," Modi said.

With the hashtags #ReformInAction & #GoodGovernance, the central government said in the posts that the real test of reform is whether it reduces stress for people and 2025 marked a clear shift in governance, with reforms focused on outcomes, not complexity.

Simpler tax laws, faster dispute resolution, modern labour codes, and decriminalised compliance reduced friction for citizens and businesses alike.

The emphasis was on trust, predictability, and long-term growth, showing how well-designed policy can quietly improve everyday life, the posts by MyGovIndia said.

For millions of Indians, tax relief became real. Incomes up to Rs 12 lakh attract zero tax.

Middle-class families now retain more of what they earn, giving them flexibility to spend, save and invest with greater confidence, it stated.

It said the Income Tax Act, 2025 streamlined compliance and brought clarity, transparency, and fairness to the direct tax system, making it more taxpayer friendly and aligned with today's needs.

Small businesses can now grow without fear of losing benefits.

Higher investment and turnover limits allow MSMEs to expand while retaining access to loans and



tax incentives.

This encourages scaling up, hiring more workers, and building stronger local enterprises. Rural employment now creates assets, not just wages.

With extended guaranteed employment and a focus on village infrastructure, rural labour is now building permanent assets that strengthen communities and livelihoods, it said.

It observed that workers no longer need to navigate dozens of laws as 29 labour laws were simplified into four clear codes covering wages, safety, social security, and

relations.

Rights are clearer, compliance is easier, and women benefit from assured maternity and workplace protections, it stated.

The government also stated that GST has been made simpler for businesses and consumers alike.

With streamlined tax slabs, easier registration, automated processes, and faster refunds, the next generation of GST reforms is improving ease of doing business.

The impact is clear in record Diwali sales of Rs 6.05 trillion and the strongest Navratri shopping in over a decade, it said.

It also said that businesses can now bring products to market faster.

With rationalised Quality Control Orders, Indian manufacturers face lower compliance costs, improved efficiency, and greater strength in global markets.

More room to grow for Indian businesses, the government said in the posts.

The expanded definition of small companies reduced compliance burden and costs, allowing enterprises with turnovers up to Rs 100 crore to focus on innovation and expansion, it added.

INTERNATIONAL

Myanmar will hold its first general election in five years as criticism of military rule mounts

BANGKOK

Myanmar will hold the first phase of a general election on Sunday, its first vote in five years and an exercise that critics say will neither restore the country's fragile democracy undone by a 2021 army takeover, nor end a devastating civil war triggered by the nation's harsh military rule.

The military has framed the polls as a return to multi-party democracy, likely seeking to add a facade of legitimacy to its rule, which began after the army four years ago ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. The takeover triggered widespread popular opposition that has grown into a civil war. The fighting has complicated holding the polls in many contested areas.

Voting will be held in different parts of the country in three phases, with the second on Jan. 11 and the third on Jan. 25. Human rights and opposition groups say the vote will be neither free nor fair and that power is likely to remain in the hands of military leader Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing.

Richard Horsey, a Myanmar analyst for the International Crisis Group, noted that the vote is being run by the same military that was behind the 2021 coup. "These elections are not credible at all," he told The Associated Press. "They do not include any of the political parties that did well in the last election or the election before."

Horsey says the military's strategy is for its favored Union Solidarity and Development Party to win in a landslide, shifting Myanmar from direct military rule to a government with a "civilian veneer" that perpetuates army control. That would allow the military to claim that holding the election showed progress towards inclusiveness in the spirit of a peace proposal by the 11-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations, that calls for "constructive dialogue among all parties concerned" so they can



"seek a peaceful solution in the interests of the people."

It would also provide an excuse for neighbors like China, India and Thailand to continue their support, which they contend promotes stability in Myanmar. Western nations have maintained sanctions against Myanmar's ruling generals because of their anti-democratic actions and brutal war on their opponents.

The army seized power on Feb. 1, 2021, claiming the 2020 election — won in a landslide by Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy — was illegitimate because of alleged large-scale voter registration irregularities. Independent observers, however, found no major problems.

On Sunday, ballots will be cast in 102 of the country's 330 townships. Further rounds will follow on Jan. 11 and Jan. 25, leaving 65 townships where there would be no voting because of the ongoing conflict with ethnic guerrilla groups and resistance forces.

Though 57 parties have fielded candidates, most are posting candidates only in their own home states or regions. Six parties are competing nationwide and have a chance of winning enough seats to wield political power, but the rules make it likely the pro-military USDP will emerge in position to lead a new government.

In total, nearly 5,000 candidates are competing for more than 1,100 seats in the two chambers of the national legislature and in state and regional legislatures, though the actual number of seats that will be filled will be less where constituencies are not voting.

The Union Election Commission has yet to release the total number of eligible voters, but in 2020, there were more than 37 million.

Ko Ko Gyi, chairman of the People's Party and leader of Myanmar's prominent 1988 pro-democracy uprising, speaks during the opening ceremony of the campaign poster and election campaign, Nov. 19, 2025, in Yangon, Myanmar.

Ko Ko Gyi, chairman of the People's Party and leader of Myanmar's prominent 1988 pro-democracy uprising, speaks during the opening ceremony of the campaign poster and election campaign, Nov. 19, 2025, in Yangon, Myanmar. (Photo | AP)

Myanmar's 80-year-old former leader and her party are not taking part in the election. Suu Kyi is currently serving a 27-year prison term on charges widely seen as bogus and politically motivated. Her National League party was dissolved after refusing to officially register under the new military rules.

Other parties are also boycotting the

vote or have declined to run under conditions they say are unfair. Opposition groups have also called for a boycott by voters.

Amael Vier, an analyst for the Asian Network for Free Elections, noted recently that Myanmar's political parties that won 90% of the seats in 2020 no longer exist today.

An Election Protection Law with harsh penalties enacted this year put even more restrictions on political activity, effectively barring all public criticism of the polls. More than 200 people have been charged for leafletting or online activity over the past few months.

All this likely sets the stage for the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party to dominate the polls — and for 69-year-old Min Aung Hlaing to take over as president.

The human cost of Myanmar's conflict has been high. According to the independent Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, more than 22,000 people are currently detained for political offenses and over 7,600 civilians have been killed by security forces since the army seized power.

There are more than 3.6 million internally displaced people, most driven from their homes by warfare, marking a major humanitarian crisis.

"Myanmar is witnessing intensified violence, repression, and intimidation ahead of military-controlled elections," the UN Human Rights Office said. It added that civilians are being threatened by both military authorities and armed opposition groups regarding participation.

Amnesty International researcher Joe Freeman said that many fear the election will only entrench the power of those responsible for years of unlawful killings. Horsey, of the International Crisis Group, believes that after the polls, Myanmar is likely to see increased conflict as opponents attempt to prove the military still lacks popular legitimacy.

North Korea's Kim Jong Un orders factories to make more missiles in 2026



SEOUL

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has ordered officials to step up production of missiles and construct more factories to meet his military's growing need for the projectiles, state media said Friday.

Pyongyang has significantly increased missile testing in recent years — aimed, analysts say, at improving precision strike capabilities, challenging the United States as well as South Korea, and testing weapons before exporting them to key ally Russia.

In a visit to munitions factories accompanied by top officials, the state-run Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said Kim had ordered the factories to prepare for a busy year ahead.

The North Korean leader said they needed "to further expand the overall production capacity" to keep pace with demand from Pyongyang's armed forces and ordered the building of new munitions plants, KCNA reported.

"The missile and shell production sector is of paramount importance in bolstering up the war deterrent," Kim said.

North Korea and Russia have drawn closer since

Moscow launched its invasion of Ukraine nearly four years ago, and Pyongyang has sent troops to fight for Russia, along with artillery shells, missiles and long-range rocket systems.

In return, Russia is sending North Korea financial aid, military technology and food and energy supplies, analysts say. Washington has also pointed to evidence that Russia is stepping up support for North Korea, including providing help on advanced space and satellite technology, in return for its assistance in fighting Ukraine.

This undated picture released by North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency on December 26, 2025, shows North Korean leader Kim Jong Un (C) visiting major munitions industry enterprises.

Analysts say satellite launchers and intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) share much of the same underlying technology.

"With its ICBM program already at a stage widely seen as having achieved core objectives, Pyongyang is likely to further accelerate development next year," said Ahn Chan-il, a researcher originally from North Korea.

The country is likely to shift "focus toward testing and producing systems linked to potential exports to Russia — including medium- and intermediate-range missiles," he added.

Kim's visit was reported a day after state media said he had toured a nuclear submarine factory and vowed to counter the "threat" of South Korea producing its own such vessels with Washington's backing.

The North Korean leader also learned about research into "new underwater secret weapons," KCNA said.

North Korea is expected to "seek advanced military technologies from Russia, including nuclear-powered submarine capabilities and fighter jets, as it looks to address its air force's relative weakness," analyst Ahn told.

Kim was reported Thursday to have overseen the test launch of new-type high-altitude long-range anti-air missiles over the Sea of Japan. And he said that "new modernisation and production plans" would be unveiled at his ruling Korean Workers Party's first congress in half a decade, expected in early 2026.

NORTH EAST INTEGRATION RALLY 2026 PRE LAUNCH CEREMONY HELD IN MANIPUR

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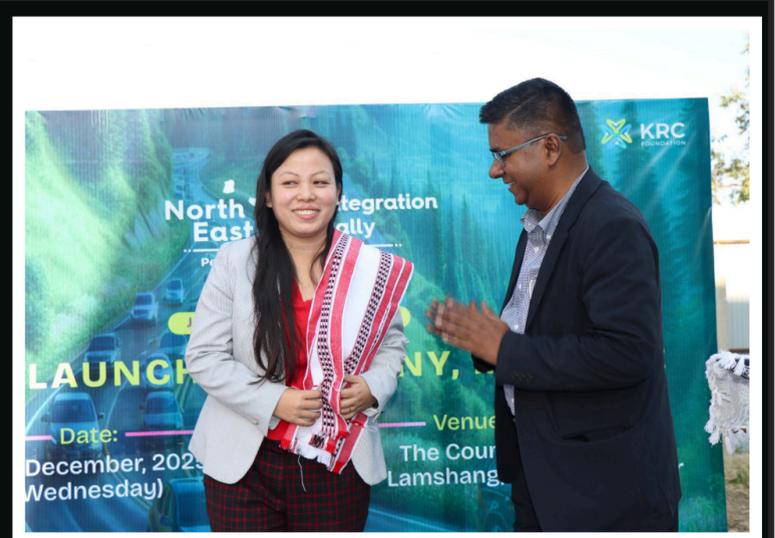
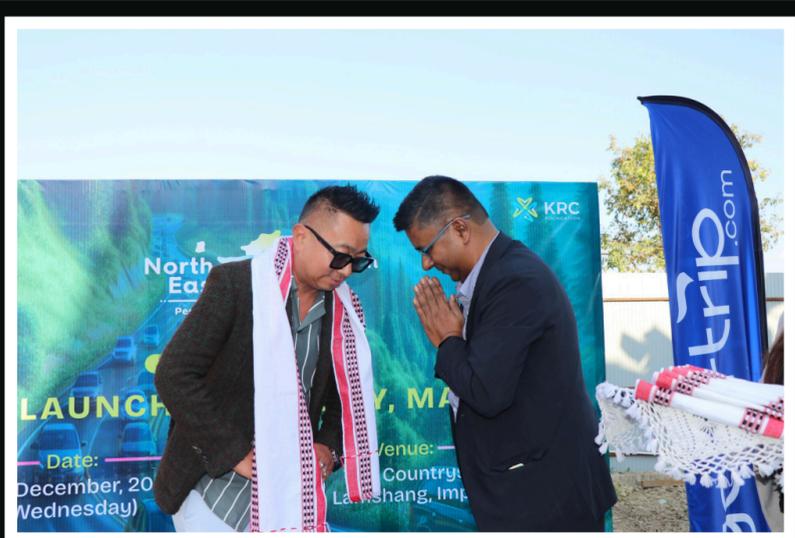
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OUR CORRESPONDENT MANIPUR

The pre launch ceremony of the North East Integration Rally 2026 was held on December 24, 2025, at The Countryside Retreat in Lamshang, Imphal, marking the formal beginning of preparations for the month-long regional rally.

Organised ahead of the main event scheduled from January 4 to February 4, 2026, the rally is built around the central theme of Peace, Progress,

and Prosperity. The initiative aims to strengthen regional integration while drawing attention to development, connectivity, and social cohesion across the North East.

The Manipur pre launch programme brought together organisers, supporters, and local stakeholders, underlining the importance of Manipur's role in the larger vision of the rally. Speakers highlighted the rally's objectives of promoting infrastructure development, economic opportunities, cultural exchange, and people-to-people engagement across states.

During the event, two MoUs were signed with KRC Foundation with Manipur Chamber of

Commerce & Industries (MCCI) and goertrip.com

The North East Integration Rally 2026 will traverse multiple locations, using car and motorcycle expeditions as a platform for awareness campaigns, exhibitions, and community interaction. The rally is expected to culminate in a closing ceremony and prize distribution after completing its scheduled route.

The rally is reaching Senapati from Kohima on 19th January and will be flagged in on 20th January. A cultural evening will be held on 20th January in collaboration with ATINGA ~ A socio-cultural organisation from Manipur, led by K Bobin, a celebrated artist of

the State. On 21st January, the rally will be traversing to Moirang, where activities are planned in the INA and the Loktak Lake.

On 22nd Jan, the NEIR Rally will start for Silchar, Assam via Jiribam, touching various locations on the National Highway in Manipur.

Organisers stated that the pre-launch in Manipur reflects the inclusive and pan-regional character of the initiative, which seeks to connect diverse communities under a shared vision of unity and progress. Further details regarding participation and schedules are available on the official website www.northeastintegrationrally.in.



Men who feel rich before they're rich are the ones who get rich.

KRC Foundation and MCCI Sign MoU for North East Integration Rally 2026

OUR CORRESPONDENT

MANIPUR:

The Knowledge Resource Centre Foundation (KRC Foundation) and the Manipur Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on December 24, 2025, formalising their collaboration for the North East Integration Rally 2026.

The MoU brings together KRC Foundation, a Silchar based registered organisation, and MCCI, an autonomous trade and commerce body headquartered in Imphal, to jointly support the month long North East Integration Rally scheduled from January 4 to February 4, 2026. Under the agreement, MCCI will partner with KRC Foundation to promote trade, tourism, and business opportunities in Manipur through the rally. The non competitive rally is designed to highlight the cultural diversity of the North East, showcase tourism potential, strengthen infrastructure awareness, and encourage youth participation across the region.

As part of the collaboration, the rally will pass through key locations in Manipur including Senapati, Imphal, Moirang, and Jiribam. Both organisations will also participate in the NE Integrated Business Summit in Kohima, being organised in association with the Investment Development Authority of Nagaland.

A major thrust of the partnership is the promotion of the "5E for Success" framework, focusing on Education, Employment, Employability, Entrepre-



neurship, and Emotional Intelligence. Workshops, seminars, and outreach programmes will be organised during the rally to advance these goals. The MoU also outlines joint social responsibility initiatives, including awareness campaigns on amateur radio, disaster management, and climate change, along with targeted outreach for tourism, agro heritage, and MSME sectors.

According to the agreement, KRC

Foundation will handle overall logistics, branding, documentation, media coverage, and stakeholder coordination, while extending support to MCCI for organising local campaigns. MCCI will facilitate engagement with state and private stakeholders, organise cultural and youth oriented programmes, provide venues and hospitality, and actively participate in planning and promotion of Manipur specific rally seg-

ments. MCCI will also support the rally as a partner sponsor. The MoU will remain in effect until February 15, 2026. Any amendments will require written consent from both parties, and termination will require a 15 day written notice stating specific reasons. The document clarifies that it reflects a mutual intention to collaborate in good faith and does not constitute a legally binding contract.

KRC Foundation and goertrip.com Sign MoU for North East Integration Rally 2026



OUR CORRESPONDENT

Manipur:

The Knowledge Resource Centre Foundation (KRC Foundation) and

goertrip.com signed a Memorandum of Understanding on December 24, 2025, formalising their collaboration for the North East Integration Rally 2026.

KRC Foundation, a registered or-

ganisation with its principal office in Silchar, Assam, is organising the month long, non competitive North East Integration Rally from January 4 to February 4, 2026. The rally is designed to showcase the cultural diver-

sity of the region, promote tourism potential, highlight infrastructure development, and encourage youth engagement across North East India.

Under the MoU, goertrip.com, a tours and travel platform, will partner with the foundation to promote trade, commerce, and tourism initiatives, with a special focus on Manipur. The agreement outlines coordination of rally routes through Senapati, Imphal, Moirang, and Jiribam to ensure smooth execution of events in the state. As part of the partnership, goertrip.com has been designated as the official Travel and Tour Partner for NEIR 2026 and will be featured across the rally's communication and promotional platforms. Both organisations will jointly promote rally themes and campaigns, including sponsorship and organisation of the NEIR Fest in Imphal.

The collaboration also includes joint social responsibility initiatives, with awareness campaigns planned on amateur radio, disaster management, and climate change. Economic outreach during the rally will focus on tourism, agro heritage, and MSME sectors in Manipur. According to the agreement, KRC Foundation will provide media and communication support, assist goertrip.com in organising local activities, and act as a business consultant for the company's expansion into North East India and West Bengal under mutually agreed terms. goertrip.com will facilitate engagement with state and private stakeholders, sponsor NEIR 2026, provide logistical support including venues and hospitality, and actively participate in planning and promotion of Manipur specific rally segments. The MoU will remain valid until March 15, 2026. Any amendments will require written consent from both parties, while either party may terminate the agreement with 15 days' written notice. The document clarifies that it reflects an intention to collaborate in good faith and does not constitute a legally binding contract.

