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**PERSPECTIVE**

**No one knows who named Earth.**  
After Hadi killing, another Bangladesh student leader shot in head in Khulna

DHAKA

Unidentified gunmen on Monday shot Motalab Shikder, a senior student leader linked to Bangladesh's violent 2004 student uprising, in the head in the southwestern city of Khulna, raising fresh concerns over escalating political violence in the country.

Shikder, who serves as Khulna Division head of the National Citizen Party (NCP) and central coordinator of the party's workers' front, was rushed to Khulna Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

Confirming the incident in a Facebook post, NCP joint principal coordinator Mahmuda Mitu said Shikder was shot minutes before he was taken to hospital. Mitu, a doctor by profession, said doctors were battling to stabilise him.

According to Kaler Kantha, hospital sources said Shikder sustained a gunshot wound on the left side of his head and was bleeding profusely when brought in. Emergency treatment was initiated immediately.

Police said the assailants' identity and the motive behind the attack were yet to be established. "An immediate manhunt has been launched," officials said.

Khulna police station officer-in-charge Animesh Mondal told reporters that Shikder was later shifted to the City Imaging Centre at Khulna Medical College Hospital to assess the extent of his injuries.

The shooting occurred in Khulna's Majid Sarani area, barely days after the killing of prominent youth leader Sharif Osman Hadi on December 12.

**WHO SAID WHAT**



**Thank you Guwahati for the exceptional welcome. It's always a delight to be in this vibrant city. ~ Narendra Modi, PM**

**GUWAHATI**

The Assam government has intensified security preparedness in response to renewed political unrest in neighbouring Bangladesh, with Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday confirming that the situation across the border is under close and continuous surveillance.

Speaking to the media during an official engagement, Sarma voiced grave concern over recent developments in Bangladesh, alleging that members of the Hindu community are facing targeted violence. He also flagged what he described as disturbing remarks by individuals associated with the current power structure in Bangladesh, who have allegedly spoken about incorporating parts



of Northeast India into their country.

The Chief Minister stressed that Assam has historically faced challenges linked to cross-border infiltration and said the present circumstances demand heightened vigilance. He underscored that maintaining internal security and safeguarding law and order remain top priorities, particularly given Assam's geographical proximity to Bangladesh.

Reiterating his earlier stance, Sarma condemned repeated statements from certain Bangladeshi quarters advocating territorial claims over Northeast India, calling them reckless and unacceptable. He asserted that India's global standing—as a nuclear-armed nation and the

world's fourth-largest economy—means such provocations will not go unanswered.

Bangladesh has witnessed escalating unrest following the death of student leader Sharif Osman Hadi, a key figure in the protests that ultimately led to the downfall of the Sheikh Hasina-led government. The developments have triggered security concerns across Indian states sharing borders with Bangladesh.

As a preventive step, authorities have enforced prohibitory orders along the India-Bangladesh border in Assam's Cachar district to curb illegal movement and avert potential disturbances. Security agencies remain on high alert as the administration continues to assess the evolving regional situation.

**Rajya Sabha MP urges Scindia to reopen 10 closed post offices in Barak Valley**



**SILCHAR**

Rajya Sabha MP Kanad Purkayastha has urged Union Minister of Communications Jyotiraditya Scindia to intervene and ensure the immediate reopening of 10 branch and sub-post offices in the Barak Valley that were closed in August this year, calling the move a cause of serious public hardship.

In a formal communication to the Union Minister, Purkayastha said the closure of the post offices has adversely affected thousands of people, as these units serve as

vital lifelines for connectivity, financial inclusion and the delivery of essential government schemes in the region. He noted that despite repeated appeals and growing public distress, the offices have remained shut, with only one reportedly reopened so far. Highlighting the impact of the closures, the MP stated that there is a "persistent and rising public demand" for the immediate resumption of postal services. He pointed out that the elderly, farmers and residents of remote areas have been disproportionately affected, as they depend heavily on local post offices for banking services, remittances and mail delivery.

Citing departmental records, Purkayastha said all the affected post offices were profit-making units with growing customer bases. Their continued closure, he argued, has not only inconvenienced the public but has also resulted in avoidable revenue losses for the Department of Posts. The MP urged Scindia to personally intervene in the matter and direct the reopening of all 10 post offices at the earliest, stressing that restoration of services is critical to ensuring access to essential financial services and government welfare schemes for people in the Barak Valley.

**NEW DELHI**

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat on Sunday said that restoring peace in Manipur would require patience, sustained dialogue and trust-building among communities, stressing that while the violence is gradually subsiding, healing deeper social divisions will take longer.

Speaking after a recent visit to the state, Bhagwat said he had met tribal leaders, social organisations and youth representatives across Manipur. He described the prevailing situation as largely a law-and-order challenge that is "abating slowly" and could stabilise within about a year. "But bridging the minds is a great task, and it will take time," Bhagwat said, underscoring that dialogue remains the only viable path to bring the opposing sides "to one page". He added that the foundation for reconciliation already exists. "That can be done, because basically the spirit is already there," he said. Addressing a programme marking the centenary year of the RSS, Bhagwat cited reconciliation efforts in other northeastern states to express confidence about Manipur's future. "We



could do it in Arunachal, Meghalaya; we are doing it in Nagaland and other places," he said, adding that peace would eventually return to Manipur, though "definitely it will take time".

He also noted that the RSS operates around 100 shakhas in Manipur, indicating a sustained organisational presence during the reconciliation process. On the Sangh's relationship with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Bhagwat said the RSS maintains organisational

distance from all political parties. "We stay very distant from all BJP leaders," he said, while acknowledging long-standing personal associations with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Dismissing speculation about strained ties, Bhagwat said such narratives should be ignored. The RSS, he added, does not hide its relationships with anyone, including political organisations, and remains focused on its broader social role.

**Oil pumps continue shutdown across Manipur valley over bomb threats & extortion**

**GUWAHATI**

Oil pump owners across the Manipur valley and nearby areas have decided to keep their outlets shut as part of an ongoing protest, citing repeated bomb threats, extortion attempts and what they describe as continued indifference from the State authorities.

In a statement released on Sunday, December 21, the Manipur Petroleum Dealers Fraternity (MPDF) said it was compelled to prolong the shutdown after receiving no response to a memorandum submitted to the Governor of Manipur on December 10, 2025. The memorandum sought immediate intervention to address growing threats to the safety of dealers and their properties, including repeated bomb scares and demands for large sums of money.

The fraternity said the absence of concrete action despite the seriousness of the situation left dealers with no option but to unanimously intensify their agitation. As a result, fuel outlets will remain closed until the government offers a credible and mutually acceptable solution.

Explaining their position, MPDF leaders pointed out that petrol pump operators act solely as authorised agents of the government. They are mandated to

sell fuel at rates fixed by the authorities and have no discretion to alter prices. Dealers also collect Value Added Tax on behalf of the State—Rs 19.56 per litre on petrol, amounting to 25 per cent, and Rs 10.11 per litre on diesel, or 13.5 per cent—which forms a major component of state revenue.

Unlike other essential goods, petroleum prices cannot be raised to absorb illegal levies, leaving dealers exposed to financial losses and operational risks, the fraternity said.

According to the MPDF, dealers now find themselves trapped in an unprecedented crisis. Alleged compliance with unlawful demands invites scrutiny and punitive action from the authorities, including the possibility of harsh measures under laws such as the National Security Act. At the same time, refusal to comply has reportedly led to bomb threats and direct intimidation.

While expressing regret for the inconvenience caused to the public, the fraternity appealed to citizens for patience and support. It described the current situation as a "life-and-death" dilemma for fuel dealers and claimed that of official response to their plight has been largely absent.

**Pradyot Debarman urges Centre to act on attacks against Hindus in Bangladesh, calls for visa suspension**

**AGARTALA**

Expressing grave concern over the condition of Hindu minorities in Bangladesh, Tipra Motha Party founder and Tripura royal scion Pradyot Kishore Debarman on Sunday urged the Government of India to take "strong and decisive" measures, including stopping the entry of Bangladeshi nationals and suspending visa services.

Addressing a press conference, Debarman alleged that Hindu Bengalis in Bangladesh were being "systematically targeted and killed". He also claimed that some political leaders in Bangladesh were making provocative statements, including calls to shut down the Indian embassy and remarks about occupying parts of the Northeast.

"It is shocking that some people are even demanding that Sheikh Hasina be handed over to Bangladesh," Debarman said. "Those who speak loudly about patriotism are silent today, while we, who are branded as a 'goonda party', are rais-



ing our voice against atrocities in Bangladesh." He accused India of adopting a double standard in its engagement with Bangladesh, particularly in the fields of diplomacy and sports. Debarman said Bangladeshi leaders were openly threatening India while their players continued to receive opportunities on Indian platforms. "This double standard will not continue," he asserted.

Calling for a firm national response,

Debarman said India must act decisively to protect Hindu minorities in Bangladesh as well as in the Northeast. He alleged that temples and churches were being demolished and set on fire, and that both tribal and Bengali Hindu communities were facing forced conversions.

"If Tipra Motha is given an opportunity, we will send the Bangladeshi Assistant High Commissioner back to Dhaka within 20 minutes," he said, reiterating

his demand for a complete suspension of visa services. "They come here for treatment and education, but what do we get in return? Abuse and threats," he added.

Clarifying his party's position within its alliance with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Debarman said Tipra Motha does not support violence and that no senior leader of the party had made derogatory remarks against any political group. He said violence only diverts attention from core issues such as land rights, language rights and identity.

On linguistic rights, Debarman reiterated his party's demand that Kokborok be written in Roman script. "We will not compromise on this issue. We do not want to write Bengali in examinations; we want Roman script," he said.

He also called on the Tripura government and the Centre to frame a clear and long-term policy for the Northeast to safeguard future generations, stressing that Tipra Motha was seeking rights and respect without opposing any language or community.



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## INDIA-OMAN SUMMIT

The India-Oman relationship reached a historic milestone on 18 December 2025 with the conferment of the Order of Oman, the Sultanate's highest civilian honour, on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, coinciding with the signing of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). This event marked the beginning of a new phase in economic cooperation between the two nations. India and Oman have shared centuries of trade, maritime exchange, and cultural ties, which have shaped enduring bilateral relations. In FY 2024-25, bilateral trade reached USD 10.61 billion, reflecting an 18.6 percent year-on-year increase and demonstrating the deepening of commercial ties as per Money control, 2025; Embassy of India, 2025. The CEPA, effectively a Free Trade Agreement, is slated to take effect in the first quarter of FY 2026, offering zero-duty access on over 98 percent of Indian exports to Oman alongside reciprocal tariff liberalisation. Its timing is strategically significant amid global trade volatility, rising protectionism in markets such as the United States, and shifting geopolitical alignments, making it both an economic and strategic instrument within the Indo-Gulf framework. During the summit in Muscat, Prime Minister Modi met His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq for private and delegation-level discussions. The CEPA signing, held at 4:58 PM local time, was part of a broader programme of high-level engagements at the Royal Palace, underscoring the visit's diplomatic importance. The day concluded with the Order of Oman, recognising PM Modi's leadership and his pivotal role in strengthening political, economic, and strategic ties. Collectively, the summit, CEPA, and this honour transformed 18 December 2025 into a landmark moment, symbolising enduring trust and a forward-looking partnership.

India and Oman share a relationship that predates modern nation-states, rooted in extensive maritime trade across the Indian Ocean. As early as the first millennium CE, Indian merchants visited Omani ports, trading spices, textiles, and valuable goods. These exchanges fostered durable ties extending beyond commerce to culture, religion, and people-to-people contact, notably through the Indian diaspora in Oman, which continues contributing to both economies. Diplomatically, the two countries marked 70 years of formal relations in 2025, reaffirming deep civilisational and strategic ties. Cooperation spans defence, education, and cultural partnerships, reflecting mutual respect for heritage. Oman's engagement with India has consistently been guided by goodwill and strategic trust, aligning with India's Act East and neighbourhood-first policies. This historical foundation strengthens the contemporary bilateral framework, positioning India and Oman as economic partners and stakeholders in regional stability. The conferment of the Order of Oman on India's Prime Minister symbolises this enduring bond, affirming continuity while marking a transition toward a deeper, globally significant partnership.

The summit concluded with a CEPA-functioning as a Free Trade Agreement-designed to liberalise bilateral trade, stimulate investment, and expand cooperation in services. The agreement is attributed with 'zero-duty access on over 98 percent of Omani tariff lines' covering approximately 99.38 percent of India's export value to Oman, including key labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, leather, pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, and automobiles. In reciprocity, India would reduce tariffs on nearly 77 percent of its tariff lines, to the tune of 95 percent of Oman's exports to India by value. Beyond merchandise trade, the CEPA encompasses services, investment facilitation, and eased professional mobility, which is particularly significant for Indian skilled professionals and SMEs seeking opportunities in Oman's growing economy. The agreement also introduces select quota arrangements for sensitive products, including dates and petrochemicals, to maintain trade balance. This FTA has been concluded at a time of heightened global trade uncertainty, marked by elevated U.S. tariffs on certain Indian exports and ongoing India-U.S. trade negotiations as per available source of information. In this context, the India-Oman CEPA plays a strategic role by diversifying export destinations, reducing tariff exposure, and reinforcing supply-chain resilience, while advancing India's wider trade diplomacy objectives.

The India-Oman Free Trade Agreement marks a strategic shift in a transforming global order shaped by rising multipolar power centres, post-Ukraine geopolitical changes, and growing economic nationalism. As global trade adapts to major-power tensions, particularly U.S.-China rivalry and evolving EU-U.S. dynamics, India's engagement with the Gulf gains strategic significance. Oman's location along the Strait of Hormuz, a corridor for nearly 20 percent of global crude oil supplies, adds geopolitical weight to the CEPA. The agreement strengthens India's presence in West Asia while supporting defence, maritime security, and regional economic integration. Amid strained Western-centric trade blocs, bilateral FTAs enhance the strategic autonomy and resilience of middle powers like India. For Oman, deeper ties diversify partnerships beyond traditional Western markets and balance relations with emerging Asian economies. The FTA also boosts regional connectivity, reduces dependence on any single actor, and exemplifies adaptive diplomacy aligned with long-term strategic and economic goals.

The CEPA presents significant economic prospects for both India and Oman amid a dynamic global trade environment. For India, it offers duty-free access on 98 percent of exports to Oman, valued at around USD 4.07 billion in FY 2024-25, while opening avenues into broader GCC markets through enhanced connectivity.

Key sectors-including engineering goods, textiles, pharmaceuticals, and petrochemicals-could gain an additional USD 2 billion in export value over 2-3 years. For Oman, tariff liberalisation covering nearly 95 percent of exports to India strengthens competitiveness in petrochemicals, marble, dates, and other products.

The agreement also promotes investment, services collaboration, and professional mobility, supporting employment and localisation, aligning with Oman's Vision 2040. Compared with global economies like the EU, U.S., China, South Korea, and Japan, the India-Oman FTA offers complementary opportunities, reinforcing India's diversified FTA network and its ability to balance major global influences while advancing south-south cooperation. While the CEPA presents substantial opportunities, its implementation faces challenges. Domestic sensitivities and sectoral exclusions-including dairy, certain agricultural products, and tariff-protected items-require careful regulation to protect Indian farmers and MSMEs.

Trade imbalances, due to India's energy imports from Oman, necessitate export diversification and promotion of value-added goods. Logistical and regulatory alignment, including customs procedures and standards, demands ongoing institutional coordination. Furthermore, global economic volatility, driven by inflation, currency shifts, and supply chain disruptions, could affect expected gains without exporter support. Finally, geopolitical uncertainties, including Gulf dynamics and wider power realignments, require flexible strategies to safeguard the FTA's benefits.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Within you there is a stillness and sanctuary to which you can retreat at any time and be yourself."

- Hermann Hesse

# TRANSFORMING ENERGY INTO STRENGTH: SHANTI'S VISION FOR VIKSIT BHARAT



DR JITENDRA SINGH

When the monsoon first touches the Deccan, a million tiny rivulets knit themselves into rivers. It is not a thunderclap that turns water into force; it is patient joining-stream to stream, village to village-until the flow is confident enough to light a city. India's journey with the atom has felt like that: quiet channels of science converging over decades, now gathering into a river strong enough to power a data centre at midnight, sterilise a meal in the afternoon, and help a clinician save a child by evening.

With the introduction of the SHANTI Bill-the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India Bill, 2025-we are shaping the riverbed so that this flow reaches every home, industry and institution that needs dependable, clean energy and life-enhancing applications.

To understand why this moment matters, we must begin with the context. Before 2014, India's nuclear framework was anchored in two separate statutes: the Atomic Energy Act, 1962, which guided development and control, and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010, which provided a no-fault compensation regime. Each served its time; each also reflected an era when nuclear capability was primarily a sovereign effort, with very limited pathways for the broader ecosystem-manufacturing, finance, insurance, startups, and advanced research-to participate. SHANTI draws these strands together, repealing both laws and replacing them with a single, modern architecture-in one stroke conferring statutory status on our regulator, the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB), defining roles and responsibilities with clarity, and opening responsible avenues for public private participation while reserving sensitive functions to the Government.

Comparison tells us how far the river has widened. In the past decade India has achieved self-reliance across the nuclear fuel cycle and carried the programme responsibly; now we are ready to scale-towards a national goal of 100 gigawatt (GW) nuclear capacity by 2047, adding reliable baseload power to support AI, quantum computing, indigenous semiconductor fabrication, and large scale data research. The Bill codifies this readiness; it creates a unified licensing and safety authorisation regime; it sets graded liability for operators-23,000 crore for the largest reactors, down to 200 crore for smaller reactors and fuel cycle facilities-so innovation such as small reactors and small modular reactors (SMRs) can proceed with proportionate safeguards. It also establishes a Nuclear Liability Fund for situations where compensation exceeds the operator's cap, and provides recourse to the international Convention on Supplementary Compensation-because compassion must be as scalable as technology.

Change, in the most meaningful sense, is what the ordinary citizen can feel. In healthcare, nuclear medicine has moved from promise to practice: targeted therapies for childhood blood cancers and prostate malignancies now flow from centres such as Tata Memorial, turning isotopes into instruments of healing. We have made headway in a decade; we are liberalising research pathways so that capable private institutes can add their ingenuity to national capacity. In food and agriculture, radiation technologies already help preserve produce, extend shelf life, and ensure safety; SHANTI recognises radiation facilities and generating equipment, bringing clarity and security to their everyday use-whether in a hospital's therapy wing or a factory's quality line.

Let me explain some of the terms we will live with. A "nuclear incident" is an occurrence (or related series) that causes nuclear damage-or, despite reasonable preventive steps, poses a grave, imminent risk of doing so. "Nuclear damage" is broader than before: it includes loss of life or injury (including long term health impact), loss or damage to property, environmental restoration costs, loss of income linked to environmental use, and the costs of preventive and mitigation measures. A "safety authorisation" is written permission from the AERB; it is what ensures that radiation equipment, radioisotopes, and facilities that expose individuals to ionising radiation are designed, sited, operated and decommissioned under standards that put safety first-always.

Safety is not a slogan; it is a discipline with numbers and routines. India's operating plants are inspected every three months during construction and every six months in operation; licences are renewed every five years; the International Atomic Energy Agency benchmarks our parameters, and the AERB's statutory status now gives it sharper teeth. Radiation is measured in microsieverts: the annual public limit is 1,000  $\mu$ Sv, while emissions at our stations are a tiny fraction-for instance, Koodankulam's is around 0.002 of that unit, Tarapur around 0.2-evidence that design and operation keep doses well below thresholds. Seismic wisdom is built in: eastern and western coastal sites are sited far from high risk zones-hundreds to over a thousand kilometres away-because geography, too, must be engineered into safety.

What changes, then, in the citizen's daily life? First, power you can trust-24x7, low carbon, and not hostage to the weather. When a textile cluster adds an SMR to its energy mix, it stabilises looms and livelihoods; when a district hospital relies on uninterrupted power for imaging, radiotherapy, and digital records, a patient's anxiety is reduced to the one thing no law can cure-waiting time. SHANTI's graded liability regime reduces barriers

for smaller investors to build such plants while maintaining strict responsibility, and its unified rules simplify the journey from design to operation.

Second, better redress when things go wrong. The Bill creates an Atomic Energy Redressal Advisory Council-comprised of the AEC Chairperson, BARC Director, AERB Chairperson, and CEA Chairperson-to hear review applications and facilitate conciliation with technical depth. It designates Claims Commissioners within thirty days of a notified incident to adjudicate compensation swiftly, and empowers the Government to constitute a Nuclear Damage Claims Commission for severe cases with quasi-judicial powers modeled on civil courts-but guided by natural justice for speed and sensitivity. This is justice engineered for emergencies.

Third, a secure, transparent ecosystem. Restricted information provisions protect sensitive data-about sites, materials, designs-without choking legitimate public outreach on safety. The Government retains exclusive control of enrichment, reprocessing of spent fuel, heavy water production, and isotopic separations; all spent fuel is cooled and ultimately delivered back to Government custody-never handled by private operators-so long term stewardship remains a sovereign function. At the same time, research, design and innovation are exempted from licensing (with safety and national security caveats), so startups and universities can explore prototypes, sensors, AI-enabled monitoring, and advanced materials that make reactors safer and radiation uses more precise.

Our journey has also learned from adjacent sectors. When we opened space to private participation five years ago, a fledgling economy grew to \$8 billion, with over 300 startups and a trajectory to quintuple within a decade. We expect a similar confidence effect here: alongside SHANTI, we have announced missions for SMRs with 20,000 crore earmarked, and a 21 lakh crore Research, Development and Innovation fund to catalyse private sector across domains. Nuclear energy will not be a solitary silo; it will be a node in India's wider innovation surge.

Some worry about liability and courts; SHANTI is explicit. Operator carries the liability with caps graded by installation, backed by mandatory insurance or financial security; beyond the cap, the Nuclear Liability Fund and, if needed, international supplementary compensation pool can be tapped. Civil courts will not be clogged with technical claims; specialised redressal commission will adjudicate, with appeals routed to the Appellate Tribunal for Electricity (augmented with nuclear technical members) and, ultimately, to the Supreme Court. The intent is not to bypass justice, but to deliver

it with speed, expertise and dignity.

And some fear sovereignty might be diluted; the opposite is true. Source and fissile materials remain under Government surveillance and accounting; uranium and thorium mining above notified grades is reserved to Government entities; acquisition rights in sensitive cases vest in the Centre; and emergency powers allow the Government to assume control across facilities and materials if the nation so demands. Sovereignty, safety, and scale reinforce each other.

### DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

**Modi govt. bracing Assam with cutting-edge infra. Congratulations to our sisters and brothers of Assam on the inauguration of a world-class new terminal of the Guwahati Airport by PM Shri @narendramodi Ji today. The terminal that showcases Assam's culture and heritage in their brilliant forms will attract globe-trotters to its cozy embrace while leveraging the state's enormous economic potential to optimum.**

~ Amit Shah, Union Home Minister



In the end, a law is only as alive as the people it serves. I picture a small town whose street lights no longer flicker at midnight because a nearby reactor hums steadily; a farmer whose irradiated onions fetch a fairer price after a longer shelf life; a mother watching a linear accelerator calibrate a life-saving dose; a young engineer writing an algorithm that catches an anomaly before it becomes an incident. That is the India SHANTI seeks to midwife: Viksit Bharat powered by clean, reliable energy, protected by robust regulation, and propelled by the ingenuity of its citizens.

Rivers do not argue their way to the sea; they find it. With SHANTI, India's nuclear river has found its course-safe, sovereign, and generous enough to carry every citizen with it.

(The author is Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology; Earth Sciences and Minister of State for PMO; Department of Atomic Energy; Department of Space; Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions)

## Namrup fertiliser plant to create over 300 direct, 1,000 indirect jobs: Assam CM

GUWAHATI

A major fertiliser project at Namrup in Assam, expected to generate over 300 direct jobs and more than 1,000 indirect employment opportunities, was formally launched on December 21 with Prime Minister Narendra Modi performing the bhoomi puja of the Ammonia-Urea Plant. The project is being positioned as a key step towards fertiliser self-reliance in the Northeast.

The plant, slated for commissioning by 2030, will be developed at an estimated cost of over ₹10,600 crore by Assam Valley Fertiliser & Chemical Company Limited (AVFCL) within the existing premises of the Brahmaputra Valley Fertiliser Corporation Limited (BVFCL) at Namrup. Officials said the unit will have an annual production capacity



of 12 lakh metric tonnes of ammonia-urea fertiliser.

Once operational, the facility is expected to significantly reduce de-

pendence on fertiliser imports and ensure timely availability for farm-

ers across Assam, the Northeast and parts of eastern India.

The project follows approval by the Union Cabinet earlier this year. AVFCL was incorporated in July as a joint venture involving the Assam government, Oil India Limited, National Fertilisers Limited, Hindustan Urvarak & Rasayan Limited and BVFCL.

Addressing the gathering, Prime Minister Modi said the Namrup plant would strengthen the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat by contributing to an Atmanirbhar Assam, creating employment opportunities for local youth and empowering farmers through assured fertiliser supply. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the project reaffirmed Assam's emergence as a new growth engine of the Northeast under the "double-engine govern-

ment". Earlier in the day, the Prime Minister paid tributes to the martyrs of the Assam Agitation at the newly inaugurated Swahid Smarak Kshetra. Accompanied by Sarma and senior officials, Modi toured the martyrs' gallery and garlanded the statue of Khargeswar Talukdar, recognised as the first martyr of the movement.

Built at a cost of ₹170 crore, the memorial commemorates 860 people who lost their lives during the six-year-long Assam Agitation that concluded in 1985. Officials said the site has been developed as a space for remembrance and public engagement, with facilities including water bodies, an auditorium, a prayer hall, a cycle track and a sound-and-light show depicting key phases of the movement and Assam's history.

### Assam Rifles honours 14 Manipur youths, celebrates new officers and cadets

IMPHAL

Manipur continues to reinforce its position as a leading contributor of military officers from the Northeast, with the Assam Rifles honouring 14 outstanding young achievers at a ceremony held at Mantripukhri Garrison on December 19.

The event recognised seven newly commissioned officers and seven cadets who have secured admission to premier military training academies, underlining the state's growing prominence in India's defence services.

The Inspector General of Assam Rifles personally interacted with the officers, cadets and their families during the ceremony, acknowledging the commitment shown by the young personnel and the vital role played by their parents in supporting their careers in uniform.

Those honoured included officers commissioned through multiple entry routes such as the National Defence Academy (NDA), Short Service Commission Officer (SSCO) and Permanent Commission Special List pathways. All seven cadets recognised at the event have secured seats at the NDA and will undergo training in the upcoming course.

The ceremony also highlighted individual achievements, including the selection of one candidate for the Indian Coast Guard and another for the Technical Graduate Course at the Indian Military Academy, reflecting the diversity and depth of talent emerging from the state.

Addressing the gathering, the Inspector General stressed the importance of discipline, dedication and sustained excellence. He said Manipur's consistent record in producing military officers sets a benchmark for the entire Northeast and serves as an inspiration for future generations aspiring to join the armed forces.

The recognition programme marked a proud moment for the families of the officers and cadets, while reaffirming Manipur's continuing contribution to leadership in India's defence forces.

### Meghalaya approves Rs. 265 crore road project linking East and South West Khasi Hills

SHILLONG

The Meghalaya government has approved a major road infrastructure project worth ₹265 crore to construct a 47-km stretch connecting Phlangwanbroi in East Khasi Hills with Ranikor in South West Khasi Hills.

The project is expected to significantly improve inter-district connectivity and provide a boost to tourism in the region.

Mawsynram MLA Ollan Sing Suin said the proposed road will link with an intermediate road at Ranikor and pass through two Assembly constituencies. Of the total length, around 27 km will fall within Mawsynram constituency, while the remaining 20 km will run through Ranikor.

Suin said the tender for the project is likely to be floated this week. He clarified that the road will be constructed under a regular state scheme and is not being funded by

the World Bank.

The MLA also referred to another proposed road project connecting Weilo to Phlangwanbroi, which is awaiting World Bank approval. He expressed hope that funding for the project would be cleared next year. Once completed, the road is expected to improve connectivity from Mawphlang to Weilo, Phlangwanbroi and Ranikor, upgrading the stretch to an intermediate road.

Describing the current road conditions in Mawsynram as "pathetic", Suin said both projects were crucial for addressing long-standing infrastructure gaps in the area. He added that improved road connectivity would also provide a major boost to tourism in the region.

Calling the approvals a Christmas and New Year gift for the people of Mawsynram, Suin said the projects were long-awaited and represented "dream projects" for the constituency.

### Protests intensify across Assam's Barak Valley over lynching of Hindu man in Bangladesh

SILCHAR

Protests have intensified across Assam's Barak Valley following the recent lynching of a Hindu man in Bangladesh, with several political and social organisations taking to the streets to register their outrage. Groups including the Bajrang Dal, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and various local organisations staged demonstrations at multiple locations, burning effigies of Muhammad Yunus and demanding a strong response.

The protests reflected growing public anger over the incident, with demonstrators calling for firm diplomatic and security measures to safeguard the interests of minorities and address cross-border concerns.

Amid the escalating unrest, residents of Nathanpur village, located along the sensitive India-Bangladesh border, voiced strong support for the Border Security Force (BSF). Villagers also appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to take decisive action in light of the developments, citing



concerns over national security and regional stability.

In response to the situation, the BSF has stepped up security along the international border in the Barak Valley. Enhanced surveillance has been deployed across border villages, farmlands, granaries and other vulnerable stretches of the frontier. Security personnel remain on high alert to

prevent any attempt by hostile elements from across the border to threaten Indian territory.

As part of an effort to assess ground conditions and public sentiment in border areas, Aaj Tak interacted with residents of Nathanpur village. Locals said the northeastern states, often referred to as the "Seven Sisters", remain secure despite provocations, at-

tributing this to the constant vigilance and preparedness of the BSF. Expressing confidence in the force's capabilities, villagers described the BSF as a strong deterrent against any external threat. Authorities said the situation in the Barak Valley and along the India-Bangladesh border is being closely monitored as tensions continue to simmer.

### Assam University holds orientation programme for newly admitted PhD scholars

SILCHAR

Assam University, Silchar, organised a day-long orientation programme for newly admitted PhD scholars of the 2025-26 academic session at the Bipin Chandra Pal Seminar Hall on December 20. The programme aimed to familiarise scholars with the university's academic framework, research environment, regulations and support systems.

The event was jointly organised by the Assam University Research Scholars' Forum (AURSF) and the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC). It began at 10.30 am with a welcome to dignitaries, faculty members and scholars, followed by the ceremonial lighting of the lamp and Saraswati Vandana.

The Vice-Chancellor of Assam University attended the programme as the chief guest. Dr Piyush Pandey,



Director, IQAC, and Prof Anup Kumar Dey, Dean of Students' Welfare, delivered special addresses, underscoring the responsibilities of research scholars, the need for academic discipline and the importance of ethical research practices.

During the programme, the "Her Voice Win" (Higher Education & Research - Voice of Women Intellectual Network) initiative was formally launched by Dr Pandey. The initiative seeks to empower women scholars and faculty by promoting

leadership, mentorship, interdisciplinary collaboration and stronger links between academic research and societal needs. The Vice-Chancellor inaugurated the initiative's brochure and logo. Smt Sanalambi Devi addressed the gathering on academic excellence and research responsibility, while certificates were presented to AURSF president Sandeep Das and media secretary Swapnadeep Sen for designing the logo.

The orientation featured several academic and interactive sessions.

Najima Begum, General Secretary of AURSF, outlined the forum's activities and support mechanisms for research scholars. Dr Suman Baidya conducted a session on managing stress, anxiety and academic pressure, while Dr Yashmin Choudhury guided scholars on initiating their research work. Prof Atri Deshmukhya spoke on gender sensitisation and campus safety, and Prof Dey provided an overview of university ordinances and research regulations.

The programme concluded with cultural performances, the introduction of AURSF executive members and a vote of thanks by the Joint Secretary of AURSF. A group photograph marked the conclusion of the event, which saw active participation from newly admitted PhD scholars and AURSF executive members.

### Renaming MGNREGA will snatch workers' rights, destroy rural economy: Tripura Congress MLA

AGARTALA

Tripura Congress MLA and former minister Sudip Roy Barman on Sunday strongly opposed the Centre's move to rename the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) as the Viksit Bharat-G RAM G Bill, 2025, alleging that the new legislation would strip labourers of their rights and damage the rural economy.

Leading a protest rally in Agartala, Roy Barman said the renaming and replacement of the Act amounted to an assault on the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi. He alleged that by repealing MGNREGA and introducing the new Bill, the ruling dispensation had undermined the core spirit of the landmark employment guarantee law.

"On January 30, 1948, RSS-minded people killed Mahatma Gandhi in Delhi, and in this Parliament session, by repealing the MGNREGA Act, they have again killed Mahatma Gandhi in Delhi," Roy Barman said. He added that the Congress was not opposed merely to the renaming of the scheme, asserting that Gandhi's legacy could not be erased from the public conscience.

The Congress leader said the party's concern stemmed

from what he described as the dilution of workers' rights under the new legislation. "By bringing this new law, they have snatched away the right of workers to demand work," he alleged, accusing the BJP of pursuing policies rooted in "RSS thinking".

Roy Barman also questioned the Centre's claims of increasing guaranteed workdays from 100 to 125 days, calling it an "eyewash". He pointed to a sharp reduction in central funding, alleging that allocations for rural employment had been cut by 60 per cent.

"Earlier, the Centre bore 90 per cent of the cost and the states 10 per cent. Now most states are forced to bear nearly 40 per cent," he said. He added that the Congress had demanded 200 days of work and a daily wage of ₹500, but instead the government had "demolished" the existing law and replaced it with the G RAM G Bill.

Roy Barman warned that the changes would have serious consequences for rural livelihoods and the broader rural economy. "By doing this, they have taken away the rights of labourers and workers and will destroy the economy of rural India. That is why we are opposing it on the streets," he said.

### Cherry Blossom Founder Prof Dinabandhu Sahoo Receives Nature Care Award 2025



impactful work on nature-based solutions to environmental challenges.

The award was presented by the Nature Care Initiative, a national-level think tank, at a ceremonial function held at the Constitution Club of India in New Delhi. The event was attended by several eminent personalities from across the country. An internationally respected plant biologist, Prof Sahoo played a pioneering role in conceptualising and launching the Indian Cherry Blossom Festivals in Shillong, Meghalaya, and later in Manipur in 2016. At the time, he was serving as Director of the Institute of Bioresources and Sustainable Development (IBSD), a Government of India institution with centres in Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Sikkim.

Prof Sahoo also holds a unique place in India's scientific history as the first Indian student to visit Antarctica during the 1987-88 Indian Government Scientific Expedition.

Currently, he serves as Head of the Department of Botany and Chairperson of the Research Council at the University of Delhi. His research work has focused extensively on climate change, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable bioresource management. A key

area of his recent work involves the creation of underwater forests through large-scale seaweed cultivation.

"Seaweeds can sequester three to four times more carbon dioxide than land plants, making them a powerful tool for reducing atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>," Prof Sahoo said. He added that seaweed-based ecosystems also help address ocean acidification, which he described as one of the next major environmental threats.

Beyond research, Prof Sahoo has been actively promoting environmental awareness through a nationwide movement titled "Grow a Tree for Life," aimed at students in colleges and universities.

In recognition of his scientific contributions, two plant species have been named after him: *Prunus dinabandhuana*, a cherry blossom species, and *Caulokaempferia dinabandhuensis*, a species of ginger.

The Nature Care Award recognises individuals whose work bridges science, policy, and public engagement to address pressing ecological concerns, a description that closely mirrors Prof Sahoo's career spanning decades of research, innovation, and environmental advocacy.

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BISWADEEP GUPTA

IMPHAL: Professor Dinabandhu Sahoo, widely known as the founder of India's Cherry Blossom Festivals, has been conferred the Nature Care Award 2025 for his sustained and

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# ISRO to launch BlueBird-6 on December 24



BENGALURU

One of the biggest commercial communication satellites, developed by the United States, BlueBird-6, will be launched on December 24, 2025, by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) at 8.54 am.

After multiple delays and prolonged wait, ISRO on Friday took to the social media platform X to announce the launch date. The satellite will be launched from ISRO's Launch Vehicle Mark-3 (LVM-3) rocket, which is popularly called as Bahubali. The Low Earth Orbit satellite will be launched from Satish

Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, the second launch pad. Earlier, AST SpaceMobile, a Texas-based company that developed the satellite, had announced the launch for December 15, 2025, and then it was postponed to December 21, 2025 and now to December 24.

The satellite was transported to India from the US on October 19. It was later transported by road to Sriharikota for further integration, fueling, testing and launch.

The satellite launch is the first commercial venture of ISRO being handled by New Space India Limited, the commercial arm of ISRO. The aim is to

earn revenue for the government through contracts and partnerships.

According to AST SpaceMobile's team, this is the next-generation satellite and represents a 3.5 times increase in size compared to other BlueBirds 1-5 and supports ten times the data capacity.

The aim of the launch of the satellite is to provide direct-to-device mobile broadband connectivity, fast and unhindered communication.

It is also aimed to bridge the digital gap of poor terrestrial networks and to cover connected parts of the globe. It is also slated to carry the largest phased array of antennas to orbit. The ISRO officials said that the delay in announcing the launch date was due to prolonged pre-launching activities and the required tests.

The officials said special attention had been made as the project will impact the communication and data centres across the globe, if there were any errors. The launch pad and vehicle also needed to be tested as this commercial partnership, showing India's capability.

As per ISRO data, the BlueBird-6 satellite launch is the second broadband customer to fly on LVM3 after Eutelsat OneWeb.

The LVM-3, on November 2, had put India's heaviest satellite-CMS-03, weighing 4.4 tonnes, in space.

# India, New Zealand conclude Free Trade Agreement talks

NEW DELHI

India and New Zealand on Monday concluded a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), marking a significant step in strengthening bilateral economic and strategic ties.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a telephone conversation with his New Zealand counterpart, Prime Minister Christopher Luxon, during which the two leaders jointly announced the conclusion of what they described as a historic, ambitious and mutually beneficial pact.

Negotiations for the India-New Zealand FTA were initiated during Prime Minister Luxon's visit to India in March 2025, and the leaders said the agreement's completion in a record nine months reflected strong political will and a shared ambition to deepen engagement between the two nations.

According to them, the FTA will enhance bilateral economic cooperation by improving market access, boosting investment flows and strengthening strategic cooperation, while creating new opportunities for innovators, entrepreneurs, farmers, micro, small and medium enterprises, students and youth in both countries across multiple sectors.

Building on the momentum of the agreement, the two sides expressed confidence in doubling bilateral trade over the next five years and projected investments of about \$20 billion from New Zealand into India over the next 15 years.

Prime Ministers Modi and Luxon also welcomed progress in cooperation in areas such as sports, education and people-to-people ties, and reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening the India-New Zealand partnership, agreeing to remain in close touch as the relationship moves into a new phase following the FTA's conclusion.

Under the comprehensive, balanced and forward-looking agreement, New Zealand will eliminate tariffs on 100 per cent of its tariff lines, granting duty-free market access for all Indian exports, a move expected to significantly boost India's export competitiveness and



deepen its integration into global value chains. India has offered tariff liberalisation in 70 per cent of tariff lines, covering 95 per cent of bilateral trade. The agreement is among India's fastest-concluded FTAs and aligns with the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Negotiations were formally launched on March 16, 2025, during a meeting between Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and New Zealand's Minister for Trade and Investment Todd McClay, and were concluded after five formal rounds along with several in-person and virtual inter-session discussions. Goyal said the agreement was about "building trade around people and launching opportunities—for our farmers, entrepreneurs, students, women and innovators." He added that the pact would boost agricultural productivity and farmer incomes, open doors for Indian businesses in the region and provide Indian youth with global learning and employment opportunities.

With 100 per cent duty-free access, labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, apparel, leather, footwear, marine products, gems and jewellery, handicrafts, engi-

neering goods and automobiles are expected to see a sharp rise in exports, directly benefiting workers, artisans, women, youth and MSMEs through deeper integration into international value chains. To protect farmers and domestic industry, market access excludes dairy, coffee, milk, cream, cheese, yoghurt, whey, caseins, onions, sugar, spices, edible oils and rubber.

The FTA delivers New Zealand's most ambitious services commitments in any trade agreement to date, with India securing market access in high-value sectors including IT and IT-enabled services, professional services, education, financial services, tourism, construction and other business services. It also includes a future-ready mobility framework with improved entry and stay provisions for Indian professionals, students and youth. A new Temporary Employment Entry Visa pathway will allow up to 5,000 Indian professionals at any given time to work in New Zealand for up to three years, covering professions such as AYUSH practitioners, yoga instructors, Indian chefs and music teachers, as well as high-demand sectors including IT, engineering,

healthcare, education and construction.

Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal described the pact as "a new-generation trade agreement built on tariffs, agricultural productivity, investment and talent," noting that India's strengths in exports and services would support labour-intensive growth while New Zealand would gain predictable access to India's large and expanding market. On agriculture, dedicated agri-technology action plans for kiwifruit, apples and honey will focus on productivity enhancement, research collaboration, quality improvement and value-chain development, strengthening domestic capabilities and supporting income growth for Indian farmers.

Bilateral merchandise trade between India and New Zealand stood at \$1.3 billion in 2024-25, while total trade in goods and services reached about \$2.4 billion in 2024. Violent crime is rare in Taiwan, though an attack in 2014 horrified the normally peaceful island when a man went on a stabbing spree on Taipei's metro, killing four people. He was executed for the killings in 2016.

# INTERNATIONAL

## Southeast Asian ministers meet in Malaysia to address Thailand-Cambodia border conflict



KUALA LUMPUR

Southeast Asian foreign ministers met Monday in Malaysia for crisis talks aimed at halting deadly border clashes between Thailand and Cambodia, which pressed on despite regional and international diplomacy.

Renewed fighting this month has killed at least 22 people in Thailand and 19 in Cambodia, and displaced more than 900,000 on both sides, officials said.

Malaysia, which chairs the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), expressed hope the talks in Kuala Lumpur would help achieve a lasting ceasefire between the two countries, both bloc members.

Speaking at the start of

Monday's meeting, Malaysia's Foreign Minister Mohamad Hasan urged the feuding neighbours and other ASEAN representatives to "give this matter our most urgent attention."

"We must consider the wider ramifications of the continued escalation of the situation for the people we serve," Mohamad said.

Last week, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said ASEAN's duty "is to present the facts, but more importantly, to press upon them (Thailand and Cambodia) that it is imperative for them to secure peace."

Thailand's National Security Council secretary-general Chatchai Bangchud on Monday acknowledged international efforts at the ASEAN

meeting in Kuala Lumpur, but insisted "the process should be bilateral between Thailand and Cambodia".

Meanwhile Phnom Penh's defence ministry said the fighting continued early Monday with Thailand firing artillery shells into Cambodian territory, wounding one civilian.

The violence shattered a fragile truce reached after five days of clashes in July, mediated by the US, China and Malaysia.

In October, US President Donald Trump backed a follow-on declaration touting trade deals after they agreed to prolong the truce.

Each side has blamed the other for instigating the clashes, claiming self-defence and

trading accusations of attacks on civilians.

On Sunday, both Cambodia and Thailand said Monday's gathering could help de-escalate tensions.

Both governments have confirmed they would send their top diplomats to the meeting.

"Cambodia will reaffirm its firm position of resolving differences and disputes through all peaceful means, dialogue and diplomacy," Phnom Penh added.

Thai foreign ministry spokeswoman Maratee reiterated Bangkok's conditions for negotiations, including a demand that Cambodia announce a truce first and cooperate in de-mining efforts at the border.

Those conditions, the spokeswoman told reporters, "will guide our interaction in the discussions tomorrow in Kuala Lumpur".

The Thai government gave no guarantee that the meeting would produce a truce, saying a "ceasefire can only be achieved when it is based primarily on the Thai military's assessment of the situation on the ground".

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said last week Washington hoped for a new ceasefire by early this week. Trump, who helped broker an earlier truce, claimed this month that Thailand and Cambodia had agreed to halt the fighting. But Bangkok denied any such deal, with clashes continuing for two weeks and spreading to nearly all border provinces on both sides of the frontier.

The conflict stems from a territorial dispute over the colonial-era demarcation of their 800-kilometre (500-mile) border and a smattering of ancient temple ruins situated on the frontier.

## France will build a new aircraft carrier as it increases defense spending



PARIS

France will build a new aircraft carrier with a capacity for 30 fighter jets and 2,000 sailors, French President Emmanuel Macron announced Sunday in what he described as "the display of our nation's power in the service of freedom on the seas and amid the turbulence of our times."

"In an age of predators, we must be strong in order to be feared, and especially strong at sea. This is why, in line with the last two military programming laws, and after a thorough and careful review, I have decided to equip France with a new aircraft carrier. The decision to launch the construction of this very large-scale program was taken this week," Macron told French troops stationed in Abu Dhabi.

The new vessel is planned to be ready in 2038, replacing the aging Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier, which came

into service in 2001. It will have a displacement of about 78,000 tons and a length of 310 meters (1,017 feet), compared to 42,000 tons and 261 meters (856 feet) for the Charles de Gaulle.

The new carrier would still be smaller than the USS Gerald R Ford aircraft carrier, the largest warship in the world, which has a displacement of more than 100,000 tons and measures 1,100 feet (334 meters).

Like its predecessor, France's new aircraft carrier will be nuclear-powered and equipped with French Rafale M fighter jets.

Macron said the project will benefit hundreds of suppliers, most of them small- and medium-sized businesses.

"I will personally guarantee this commitment in support of our companies, and I will visit the shipyard next February to meet them," he said.

The new carrier will be able to engage in heavily

armed, long-range deployments at short notice, repeatedly and for extended periods of time, the French defense ministry said on its website.

In 2023, the cost of a new aircraft carrier was estimated at about 10 billion euros (\$11.7 billion) by Sébastien Lecornu, defense minister at the time and now French prime minister.

Macron has announced 6.5 billion euros (\$7.6 billion) in extra military spending in the next two years. He said France will aim to spend 64 billion euros on defense in 2027, the last year of his second term, double the level of 32 billion euros when he became president in 2017.

France's military currently comprises around 200,000 active personnel and over 40,000 reservists, making it the second-largest in the European Union, just behind Poland. France wants to increase the number of reservists to 80,000 by 2030.

## Art Competition on Climate Change and Green Deeds Held in Agartala



### KRC TIMES NEWS DESK

**AGARTALA:** An Art Competition focusing on the theme Climate Change and Green Deed was held on Sunday at Gitamandir, Masterpara, Agartala, as part of a wider climate change awareness drive linked to the



North East Integration Rally

2026. The programme was organised by the Tripura Ham Radio Club, Ham Operator, an organisation of the Disaster Awareness Society. The event took place from 10 AM to 11 AM and saw participation from young artists who used creative expression to highlight environmental responsibility, sustainability, and the

urgent challenges posed by climate change. The competition formed a part of the Climate Change Awareness Campaign of the North East Integration Rally 2026, which carries the message of Peace, Progress, and Prosperity across the region. Through art, participants conveyed the

importance of green deeds and individual action in addressing environmental degradation. The organisers said such initiatives aim to build awareness at the community level and encourage meaningful engagement, especially among the younger generation, on climate action and environmental stewardship across the North East.

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# RP Marak lauds North East Integration Rally 2026, calls it a noble step toward unity and peace



## MEGHALAYA:

RP Marak, Executive Engineer of the Public Health Engineering Department, Tura North Division, Government of Meghalaya,

conclude on February 4, 2026, in Guwahati, covering multiple states of the North East along the way.

In a video message, Marak said the initiative goes far beyond be-

perity and progress to the region," he said, adding that such platforms play a crucial role in bringing together people, cultures, and diverse communities of the North East.

Marak also appreciated the team behind the rally for their vision and commitment.

He noted that organizing an initiative of this scale requires courage and conviction that transcends boundaries and reflects a genuine concern for the collective good of the region.

He wished the organizers and participants success, expressing hope that the rally would contribute meaningfully to unity, understanding, and long-term development across the North East.

He is actively engaged in charitable and social work, with a clear focus on supporting the underprivileged through free medical camps and community outreach. Music plays a central role in his life, serving as a lasting source of inspiration and personal expression.

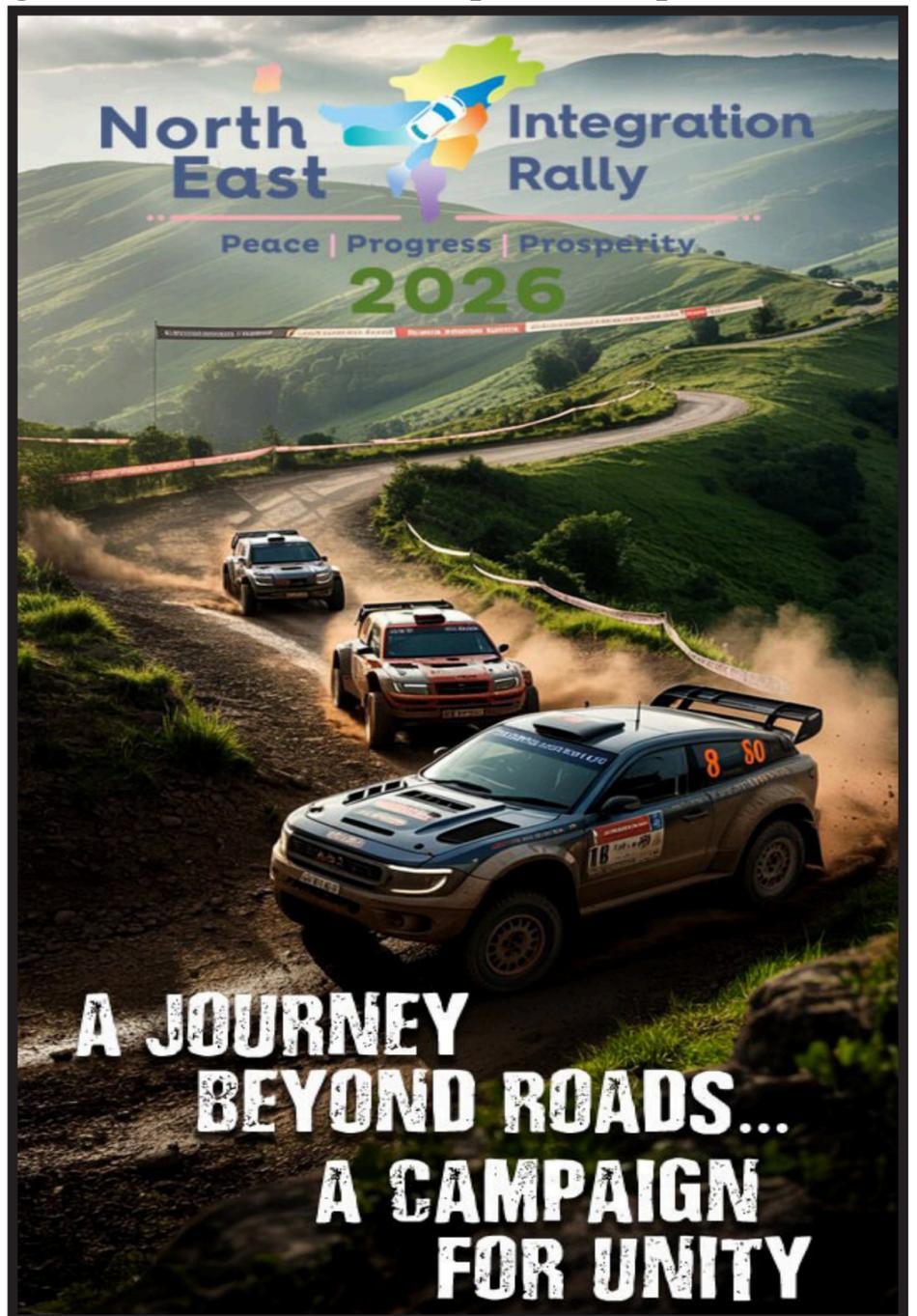


has extended his best wishes to the North East Integration Rally 2026, describing it as an inspiring and meaningful initiative for the region.

The rally is scheduled to begin on January 4, 2026, from Kolkata and will

ing a routine event. He termed it a noble effort aimed at connecting all the North Eastern states and strengthening bonds among their people.

"This rally will work wonders in achieving peace and bringing pros-





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**JANUARY 10-12, 2025**



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State of the river will be discussed on Climate Change, pollution and river flooding. The Conclave will focus on the importance, treatment and protection of River Barak. Training & Geography competition and exhibition on River Barak, Climate Change.



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Quiz and Group Discussion for Barak valley Schools & Colleges, Extension, Seminar, Public Speaking (College). In an online event, various students of NE India Schools and Colleges can participate.



**10 JAN**  
**Media Conclave**

Media Conclave: Media Conclave, Workshops, and the Fund, Talks and Conferences are part of the "Barak Festival 2025". Theme: "One for All, All for One". Media Conclave: Workshops, Journalism, media & corporate relations, seminars, panel discussions, webinars.



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**Barak Festival**  
**Band Night 10 JAN**  
**Musical Night 11 JAN**



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