

Barak Festival
NE INDIA ADVENTURE SPORTS,
ART & CULTURE PROMOTION

Barak Valley, Assam | JAN-MAR 2025
www.krctimes.org
Phone: 8721838313

North East Integration Rally
Peace | Progress | Prosperity
2026

Registrations OPEN

www.northeastintegrationrally.in

Get all the latest and updated news of today in the evening. For subscribing to this e-paper contact at -8721838313

SUBSCRIBE
₹300 / year

WhatsApp payment details : 8721838313
info@krctimes.org

PERSPECTIVE

The fastest way to change someone's negative misperceptions about you is to work with them on a team.

Mistaken identity leads to assault on West Bengal youth in Silchar

SILCHAR
A youth from West Bengal's Murshidabad district was allegedly assaulted in Silchar on Sunday after being wrongly suspected of being a Bangladeshi national, prompting police action and strong reactions from social and civic organisations. According to police sources and a complaint filed by the victim, the incident took place around 7 am at the junction of Hospital Road and Radha Madhav Road. The youth, identified as Rinku Saikh, had come to Silchar on business when he was allegedly intercepted by a group of local youths who questioned his identity. Despite possessing valid Indian identity documents, Saikh alleged that he was not allowed to produce them. In his complaint lodged at Rangirkhari Police Station, he stated that he was forced to kneel on the road, verbally abused and physically assaulted after being labelled a "Bangladeshi". He also claimed that he was prevented from leaving the spot. "I was forced to kneel on the road, verbally abused and physically assaulted after being labelled a Bangladeshi. I was also not allowed to leave. A local businessman who knew me intervened and rescued me by defusing the situation," Saikh said in the FIR. Cachar Superintendent of Police Partha Protim Das confirmed that a case has been registered in connection with the incident. "An investigation has been initiated to identify and apprehend those involved in the assault," he told adding that the matter was being taken seriously.

WHO SAID WHAT

Siliguri Corridor is a 78-year-old anomaly created by Bharat's partition, which should have been corrected in 1971. Now that there is an open threat to the nation's sovereignty, it is time to nourish the chicken and allow it to evolve into an elephant. ~ Sadhguru

Amit Shah launches Rs.800-crore projects during Assam visit

GUWAHATI
Union Home Minister Amit Shah reached Assam on Monday for a day-long tour to inaugurate key infrastructure, security and cultural projects and address public programmes across the state. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, BJP Assam in-charge Baijayant Panda, state BJP president Dilip Saikia and senior officials received Shah at the Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport. Soon after his arrival, Shah flew by helicopter to Borduwa in Nagaon district to inaugurate the Rs 227-crore redevelopment of Bataadrava Than, the birthplace of Vaishnavite reformer Srimanta Sankardeva. He is also scheduled to address a public gathering at the historic site. The Home Minister will later return to Guwahati to pay tributes at the Swahid



Smarak Kshetra, recently constructed to honour martyrs of the Assam Movement against illegal infiltration. During the visit, Shah will inaugurate the new Guwahati Police Commissionerate building, built at a cost of Rs 11 crore, along with the Rs 189-crore Integrated Command and Control System. The ICCS will provide re-

al-time surveillance through more than 2,000 CCTV cameras to strengthen city-level security and emergency response. Shah will also inaugurate the Rs 291-crore Jyoti Bishnu Cultural Complex in Guwahati, a modern auditorium with a seating capacity of about 5,000, officials said.

Singapore court to begin coroner's inquiry into Zubeen Garg's death on Jan 14

SINGAPORE/NEW DELHI
A Singapore court will open a coroner's inquiry on January 14, 2026, into the death of acclaimed Indian singer-songwriter Zubeen Garg, who hailed from Assam, according to local media reports. The inquiry will be conducted at the State Courts as part of a judicial, fact-finding process to determine the circumstances surrounding Garg's death. Singapore police have said the findings of their investigation will be submitted to the State Coroner ahead of the hearing. Garg died on September 19, 2025, a day before he was scheduled to perform at a cultural festival in Singapore. According to the police, the singer had gone swimming in the sea off Singapore's island coast when he encountered difficulty. A call for assistance was reportedly received from St John's Island, and Garg was later found unconscious. He was rushed to a hospital, where doctors declared him dead. Singapore police had earlier stated that investigations into the incident were ongoing and that a coroner's inquiry would be held in January and February 2026. Based on preliminary findings, authorities have said there is no suspicion of foul play. Under Singapore law, a coroner's inquiry is a judicial proceeding aimed at establishing how, when and where a death occurred. The process does not assign criminal liability, as the Coroners Act limits the inquiry to fact-finding. Such hearings are generally held in open court unless there are grounds for a private proceeding, and may span multiple days depending on the complexity of the case. At the conclusion of the inquiry, the coroner will deliver formal findings on the circumstances of Garg's death. Zubeen Garg was one of Assam's most influential cultural figures, with a devoted following across the Northeast and beyond. His death had triggered widespread shock and mourning across the region.

Manipur Governor urges unity, national backing to secure lasting peace



IMPHAL
Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla called for solidarity and sustained national support to ensure durable peace and inclusive development across the state, underscoring the government's commitment to equity, opportunity and harmony. In a communiqué issued by Raj Bhavan, the Governor said focused development programmes would be

key to unlocking Manipur's potential. He highlighted priorities including strengthened infrastructure, improved road connectivity, better public services and sustainable livelihood initiatives aligned with local aspirations. Bhalla also drew attention to the rich cultural heritage of the Mao Naga community in Senapati district and the region's largely untapped potential in agriculture and horticulture, traditional crafts, sports and eco-tourism. He noted that the Mao area has historically been marked by a spirit of accommodation and mutual support, having offered shelter and assistance to different communities during difficult periods. The Governor delivered the message while unveiling a commemorative monolith to mark the 92nd anniversary of the Mao Students' Union (MSU) at Mao in Senapati district. Among those present at the event were L Dikho, MLA of the 48 Mao Assembly Constituency; Dr Lorho S Pfoze, president of the NPP Manipur State Unit and former Lok Sabha MP; the Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police of Senapati; the MSU president; and other dignitaries. The Mao Naga are a prominent indigenous Naga tribe inhabiting Manipur's northern Senapati district along the Nagaland border. The community is known for its agrarian way of life-particularly plum cultivation-distinct clan systems, rich cultural traditions and historical significance, with Makhel regarded as a dispersal point for several Naga tribes. Christianity is the predominant faith among the Mao Nagas.

42 new train halts announced across Assam and West Bengal



GUWAHATI
The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has introduced additional stoppages for several passenger trains at selected stations across Assam and West Bengal during 2025, in a move aimed at improving accessibility and travel convenience for a wider section of commuters. In Assam, as many as 32

new halts have been added to 23 trains, including major long-distance services such as the Brahmaputra Mail, Kamrup Express, North East Express, Kanchanjunga Express and Avadh Assam Express. Stations that will benefit from the new stoppages include Diphu, Goalpara Town, Kokrajhar and New Hailong, among others. In West Bengal, NFR has

provided 10 additional halts to eight trains, including the Kanchan Kanya Express. Stations such as Kumedpur, Old Malda and Kanki have been included, a step expected to strengthen rail connectivity across North Bengal. Railway officials said the additional halts are intended to make long-distance trains more accessible to passengers from smaller towns and semi-urban areas, reducing dependence on major junctions and improving last-mile connectivity. The move is expected to benefit daily commuters, students, working professionals, traders and patients by easing access to educational institutions, workplaces, business centres and medical facilities. Officials also noted that improved stoppages could help boost local economic activity and tourism in the region. NFR said the initiative would also ease congestion at major stations, ensure smoother passenger movement and enhance overall operational efficiency. Reiterating its commitment to improving passenger services, the railway said additional halts are being introduced in response to public demand and regional connectivity needs.

Cross-border transmission, emerging mosquito vector challenge malaria elimination in Assam: ICMR report

NEW DELHI
Cross-border transmission and the emergence of a key mosquito vector continue to hamper malaria elimination efforts in Assam, particularly in border districts, according to a new report by the ICMR-National Institute of Malaria Research (ICMR-NIMR) and the National Centre for Vector Borne Disease Control (NCVDBC). The report identifies Anopheles culicifacies-one of the primary vectors of malaria-as a growing challenge for Assam's malaria eradication programme. While most districts in the state have recorded a sharp decline in malaria cases, border areas remain vulnerable due to persistent transmission risks. "Cross-border transmission from Myanmar and Bangladesh continues to affect border districts in the Northeast," the report noted, warning that population movement across international borders undermines local gains in malaria control. The findings highlight that Assam, Manipur, and selected districts in Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh exhibit heterogeneous malaria transmission patterns, where



overall reductions in cases coexist with persistent local hotspots. States located along international borders or major transit corridors face an ongoing risk of malaria re-introduction even after achieving local control, the report said. Cross-border movement of employment, trade and social activities, along with seasonal population surges during festivals, fairs and mass gatherings, were identified as major drivers of malaria transmission. To address these challenges, the report stressed the urgent need to enhance cov-

erage of indoor residual spraying (IRS) and long-lasting insecticidal nets (LLINs), particularly during high-risk transmission seasons when malaria cases typically rise. It also underscored the importance of detailed block-level planning in north-eastern states including Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh, to ensure targeted interventions in areas with the highest transmission. The report recommended the deployment of trained volunteers in border villages to enable early case reporting and monitor population movement that could influence disease spread. Despite the challenges, the document noted that India has made significant progress towards malaria elimination over the past decade, placing the country among global leaders in malaria control. Between 2015 and 2024, India achieved an estimated 82-85 per cent reduction in malaria cases and a 78 per cent decline in malaria-related deaths. "These gains reflect sustained investment in surveillance, diagnosis, treatment and vector control," the report stated, while cautioning that sustained and targeted efforts are essential to prevent resurgence in vulnerable regions.

KRC FOUNDATION

North East Integration Rally 2026
Peace | Progress | Prosperity

Association Partner, NEIR 2026

MCCI
Manipur Chamber Of Commerce & Industry

www.northeastintegrationrally.in



VOLUME:1, ISSUE 660

PAKISTAN'S TANGO WITH ISKP

Last week, Turkiye's Intelligence agency MIT along with Pakistan's ISI conducted a special operation in Balochistan and apprehended Mehmet Goren, one of the senior figures of ISKP, an offshoot terrorist organisation of IS Daesh.

Earlier in June 25, Ozgur Altun @ "Abu Yasir Al Turki", a key figure of Turkish origin in ISKP's media and logistics branch was also captured in a joint intelligence operation by ISI and MIT while he was attempting to cross into Afghanistan from Pakistan. In May 25, Pakistani authorities arrested Sultan Aziz Azam, the head of ISKP's media outlet while in March 25, US President Donald Trump publicly thanked Pakistan for arresting and handing over ISKP member Sharifulah, a prime suspect in the Abbey Gate attack.

The series of high profile arrests has established the centrality of Pakistan in the global campaign against IS though it also raises a troubling question about the presence of terror sanctuaries in Pakistan.

Many analysts also suspect that Pakistan is playing a double game of selective arrests thus giving it a strategic leverage.

It is also being speculated that Pakistan has established ISIS centers in Mastung & other areas of Balochistan for use against the Afghan Taliban.

According to the confessions of several arrested ISIS members, the group's fighters were not only being dispatched into Afghanistan from Pakistan, but were also receiving training, logistics support & directions under the supervision of elements within the Pakistani military and the ISI prior to crossing into Afghanistan.

Shifting Bases - ISKP's Journey So Far
Soon after its formation in 2015, ISKP established control over large tracts of territory in the eastern Afghan provinces of Nangarhar and Kunar, but a sustained campaign by US and Taliban resulted in its loss of physical territory.

By mid May 2023, in a series of operations by the General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI), the intelligence agency of ISKP, most of ISKP leadership was eliminated and most of their hideouts in Afghanistan were destroyed, forcing them to relocate.

Thereafter, the reports of ISKP sanctuaries in Balochistan began to emerge in September 2023. At that time, most observers dismissed these reports as Afghan propaganda against Pakistan. The situation however escalated when ISKP carried out multiple attacks across Afghanistan in the following months, all of which were eventually traced back to ISKP's training camps located in Balochistan.

Apart from Pakistan, the Central Asians, particularly Tajik nationals, also emerged as frontline actors in ISKP's global attacks. Three major attacks in 2024 i.e. Crocus Hall massacre in Russia, Istanbul Church attack, and Iran's twin bombing highlighted the same as the Tajik cadres were primarily involved in these high profile attacks.

Many security analysts initially attributed these attacks to ISKP's 'Global Operations' campaign and held Afghanistan responsible for enabling the expansion of ISKP's global footprint.

However evidence gathered by Iran and Russia during their investigations into the Kerman and Moscow attacks eventually confirmed that the epicenter of ISKP's global terror ops was not Afghanistan, but Pakistan's Balochistan province. Eventually, the masterminds of these attacks were also found in Balochistan.

An extremely fragile security situation in Balochistan, it's favourable terrain and the porous borders with Afghanistan and Iran also provides ISKP with significant opportunities to form alliances and establish a stronghold in the area. The opium poppy cultivation in Balochistan also helped the group to raise funds with the revenues of the narcotics trade.

The activities of ISKP in Balochistan however suffered an unexpected disruption in March 25 when Baloch separatists reportedly launched a sudden attack on multiple ISKP training camps in the Mastung area which resulted in the killing of over thirty ISKP cadres, including Turkish, Tajik, and Uzbek nationals.

Afghan Intelligence GDI was also suspected to have played a vital role in the Mastung attack as despite the repeated requests from the Afghan government, Pakistan did not take any corrective action and allowed Balochistan-based ISKP networks to continue launching attacks into Afghanistan.

The Mastung attack thus came as a surprise not only to ISKP but also to Pakistan, which had earlier refuted Afghan government's claims regarding ISKP sanctuaries in Balochistan, calling them "baseless allegations".

The killing of foreign nationals within ISKP's ranks was also a major blow to the group, as these foreign recruits were used to carry out global attacks due to factors such as the ease of travel with their passports and good communication skills.

On 25 May 25, ISKP, through its media wing, Al-Azaim Foundation, released a 36 minute video in which it accused Baloch Insurgent groups of unprovoked attacks and declared war on them even though it had previously maintained a "non-aggression policy" towards Baloch groups. ISKP's public admission of such an agreement is also significant as it reflects the group's survival strategy where short term truce with ideological rivals is deemed acceptable. Following the Mastung attack, many senior commanders of ISKP moved out of Balochistan and took refuge in the tribal region of KP where ISKP has traditionally enjoyed local support. Senior leaders like Sanaullah Ghaffari & Sultan Aziz Ezzam were reportedly seen in the Tirah valley of Khyber dist. Several locals in Khyber district also reported presence of ISKP cadres in the region and a senior ISKP commander, Abdul Malik Afridi, was assassinated in the same area few weeks earlier. Pakistan's Complicity - A Tight Rope Walk

The Pakistani military establishment is certainly aware of the growing ISKP presence in Balochistan province, and the ISI is suspected to have even provided safe sanctuaries to the ISKP.

In Pakistan's calculus, ISKP was globally associated with Afghanistan and the international community would therefore naturally continue to blame Kabul for ISKP-related violence in the region and beyond.

"Nagaland: Culture, Continuity, and Contribution to India's North East"



COL. (DR.) ASHWANI KUMAR, M-IN-D, VSM (RETD.)

Nagaland occupies a unique civilisational and strategic space in India's eastern frontier. It is a land where tribal memory, Christian faith, and modern aspirations co-exist not in conflict, but in careful balance. Understanding Nagaland requires moving beyond surface narratives into its lived culture, demographic realities, developmental role, and historical continuity.

(i) Cultural Foundations: Identity, Customs, and Faith.

Nagaland's culture is shaped by 16 major tribes and numerous sub-tribes, each maintaining distinct customs, attire, dialects, and social norms. Despite this diversity, common values bind them together: Community over individualism.

Respect for elders and tradition. Sacred hospitality.

(ii) Customary Practices and Social Ethics.

Customary laws continue to regulate village life. These traditions govern Conflict resolution, Land ownership, Marriage and social conduct, and Hospitality is sacred. Visitors are received with dignity, often culminating in the ceremonial presentation of a traditional Naga shawl, a symbol of honour, acceptance, and goodwill (the author, too, was honoured many times during his stay there in the early 1990s)

(iii) The Church as a Social and Cultural Institution.

Christianity in Nagaland is not merely a religious practice, it is a social institution and a moral anchor.

Role of the Church

Acts as a centre for community gathering, supports education and healthcare initiatives, and promotes discipline, sobriety, and

social harmony.

In remote villages, churches often function as the only structured institution, uniting scattered habitations.

Church Customs and Visitor Traditions.

Visitors are commonly invited to Sunday prayer services, where collective hymns resonate across hills and valleys. It is customary for the pastor or priest to offer prayers for visiting guests, particularly uniformed personnel.

In many villages, this is followed by the presentation of a ceremonial shawl, a deeply symbolic act that blends faith, tradition, and respect. Such gestures reflect Nagaland's unique synthesis of tribal honour and Christian humility.

(iv) Demography and Settlement Patterns:-

Nagaland's population is predominantly tribal, including communities such as:

- Angami
- Ao
- Sumi
- Konyak
- Lotha
- Chang
- Chakhesang.

English serves as the official language, ensuring administrative cohesion, while indigenous languages thrive in daily life.

Urban centres like Dimapur, Kohima, Mokokchung, and Tuensang are expanding, yet the soul of Nagaland remains deeply rural rooted in village republics and customary governance.

(v) Field Experience and Living History: Author's Note, as a Curative Historian.

The author served extensively in Nagaland in 1992, moving across the length and breadth of the state during a formative period.

Operational and field movement covered as under:-

- Dimapur
- Kohima
- Chakabama
- Jessami
- Phek

several small, remote, and scarcely documented villages

These journeys, often on foot through difficult terrain, provided exposure not only to geography but to living history. Customs were not observed as museum artefacts but experienced as daily life, shared meals, village prayers, and community acceptance.

As a curative historian, the author views history not as a static record but as a healing narrative, one that corrects misperceptions, restores dignity to local cultures, and bridges the gap between the past and the present. Nagaland, in this sense, stands as a lesson in how tradition can stabilise society

rather than obstruct progress.

(vi) Nagaland's Role in the Development of the North East.

Nagaland is a major contributor to the North East's stability, cultural continuity, and human resource development.

Strategic and Developmental Contributions.

Cultural Stabiliser.

Nagaland's strong social institutions, village councils and churches have helped maintain internal cohesion, serving as a model for conflict resolution and community-led governance.

Human Capital Contribution.

The disciplined, educated youth of Nagaland contribute significantly to:

- Armed forces.
- Civil services
- Education and healthcare sectors.

Strategic Depth
Located along sensitive eastern frontiers.

Nagaland provides strategic depth and operational familiarity critical to national security.

Bridge Between Tradition and Modern Governance.

Nagaland demonstrates how indigenous systems can coexist with constitutional frameworks, offering lessons for other North Eastern states.

(vii) Contemporary Development Trends,

Improved road and digital connectivity in remote interiors.

Growth of Dimapur as a commercial and logistics hub.

Expansion of eco-tourism and cultural tourism.

Increasing participation of youth in startups and entrepreneurship

Development here is cautious and culturally aware, prioritising sustainability over speed.

North East Integration Rally (NEIR): Significance for Nagaland.

For Nagaland, the North East Integration Rally (NEIR) will emerge as a meaningful platform for strengthening national integration while preserving local identity. NEIR provides an opportunity for the people of Nagaland, particularly the youth, to engage directly with the rest of the country, dispelling stereotypes and highlighting the state's cultural richness, discipline, and social harmony.

By showcasing Nagaland's traditions, church-centred community life, and evolving development landscape, NEIR enhances the exposure, confidence, and participation of local communities in the national mainstream. It also fosters trust between civil society and institutions, reinforcing the message that integration does not

require cultural dilution.

In the coming years, NEIR is expected to contribute to greater tourism interest, educational exchange, and youth motivation, positioning Nagaland not as a remote frontier but as a confident cultural and strategic stakeholder in India's North Eastern future.

To conclude, Nagaland acts as a silent architect of the North East.

Nagaland's contribution to India and the North East is profound yet understated. Its people have

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

In 2011, minorities made up 31% of Assam's population, with many being those who came from Bangladesh. By 2027, this is number expected to rise to around 40%, raising serious concerns about the changing demographic landscape of our state.

~ **Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Assam CM**



preserved identity without isolation, adopted faith without erasing tradition, and embraced development without surrendering cultural roots.

For India's North East to move forward as a cohesive and confident region, Nagaland's example as a cultural anchor, strategic contributor, and moral society remains indispensable.

About the Author.

The author is a decorated retired Army officer with extensive operational and field experience in Nagaland and other North Eastern states, having served in the region during the early 1990s. A curative historian, his firsthand exposure to the terrain, people, and traditions informs his perspective on culture, conflict resolution, and sustainable development. Through this article, he presents a forward-looking vision for Nagaland, advocating the integration of its youth into the national mainstream while preserving and sharing its rich cultural heritage. His work seeks to heal historical narratives by blending lived experience with cultural understanding.

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



Congress Will Return to Power in Assam in 2026, Says Gaurav Gogoi; Demands Caste Census



GUWAHATI/TEZPUR

Ahead of the 2026 Assam Assembly elections, Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president Gaurav Gogoi on Sunday asserted that the Congress would return to power in the state, while issuing an open challenge to Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to conduct a caste census.

Addressing a large public rally in Tezpur to mark the 141st Foundation Day of the Indian National Congress, Gogoi accused the ruling BJP of sidestepping issues of social justice and inclusive development. He said a caste census was essential to ensure equitable and evidence-based policymaking in Assam.

The rally began at Rajiv Bhavan in Tezpur and culminated at Jayamati Field after a nearly six-kilometre-long procession. More than

5,000 Congress leaders and party workers took part, raising slogans of "Congress Zindabad" and carrying party flags.

Separately, senior Congress leaders, including party national president Mallikarjun Kharge, Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi, Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and other top leaders, attended the flag-hoisting ceremony at Indira Bhawan to commemorate the party's Foundation Day.

Speaking on the occasion, Kharge said the Congress had consistently worked for the welfare, empowerment and inclusive development of the people, guided by the principles of democracy, secularism and social justice.

Rahul Gandhi extended greetings to party workers across the country and reiterated the party's commitment to safeguarding the Constitution and democratic values.

In a message posted on social media platform X, the Congress congratulated its members on the Foundation Day and launched a veiled attack on the BJP-led Union government. "The Congress Party fought for India's independence and worked tirelessly to build the nation. Today, when those in power are spreading hatred, injustice and oppression, we continue to fight against it with full strength," the party said.

The Indian National Congress was founded on December 28, 1885, in Bombay (now Mumbai) at Das Tejpal Sanskrit College, with 72 delegates in attendance. A.O. Hume served as its founding general secretary, while Vyomesh Chandra Banerjee was the party's first president.

NGT Orders Immediate Halt to Ring Road Construction in Manipur Hills Over Environmental Lapses

IMPHAL/KOLKATA

The National Green Tribunal (NGT), Eastern Zone Bench in Kolkata, has ordered an immediate halt to the construction of a ring road in the hill areas of Manipur, citing serious concerns over environmental compliance and statutory clearances. The interim order was passed on December 23 during the fifth hearing of a petition filed by Khurajam Athouba on behalf of the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI). The tribunal observed that there were prima facie grounds to intervene, particularly with regard to the legality of the construction and its potential impact on ecologically sensitive hill regions.

The road, popularly known as the "German Road" and referred to in some stretches as the "Tiger Road," came into public focus during the Manipur crisis after visual material circulated on social media. The images reportedly showed an inauguration or flag-off event involving the Saikul M.L.A., along with photographs of a gate bearing the name "Tiger Road."

In a press statement, COCOMI alleged that the road was constructed without transparency and outside established legal and environmental procedures. The organisation claimed that there is no publicly available record of mandatory environmental impact assessments, forest clearances, or other statutory approvals required for such a project.

COCOMI also flagged allegations that the road was used as a clandestine corridor during the period of administrative breakdown amid the crisis. These include suspected use for illicit drug trafficking, unauthorised movement of arms and ammunition, and the movement of undocumented immigrants. The organisation, however, clarified that these remain allegations and would require independent investigation and judicial determination.

Constitution Protects Freedom of Religion, Not Forced Conversions: Dilip Saikia

GUWAHATI

Assam BJP president and Lok Sabha MP Dilip Saikia on Sunday said the Constitution guarantees freedom of religion but does not sanction forced or inducement-based religious conversions, remarks that have sparked political and social debate amid heightened communal sensitivity in the state. Saikia made the comments while speaking to reporters in Nalbari after attending Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Mann Ki Baat programme. Referring to constitutional provisions, he said every citizen has the right to practise, profess and celebrate their religion, and that all communities are free to observe their respective religious festivals without interference.

At the same time, the BJP leader voiced strong opposition to religious conversions, particularly those he alleged were being carried out under the guise of social service or assistance to the poor. He said humanitarian work

should remain separate from religious conversion and urged people to adhere to their own religious and cultural traditions.

Responding to queries on the Bajrang Dal, Saikia defended the organisation, stating that it functions in the national interest and within the framework of the Constitution. He said strict action would be taken against any individual or group found violating the law, but maintained that, to his knowledge, the Bajrang Dal remained committed to constitutional principles.

Saikia's remarks have drawn mixed reactions. The Assam Christian Forum (ACF) expressed concern that the comments appeared to contextualise or underplay the seriousness of the alleged vandalism of Christmas decorations at St Mary's School in Assam. The forum warned that linking a criminal incident to broader religious narratives could heighten communal tensions and divert attention from the immediate need to ensure law and order.

BJP-AGP seat-sharing on track, no Home Minister-level talks planned: Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday dismissed speculation of discord within the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in the state, asserting that seat-sharing between the BJP and its ally, the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), is firmly on track and marked by mutual understanding.

Speaking to the media, Sarma categorically ruled out any friction between the two parties ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections. "There is no problem between the AGP and the BJP over seat-sharing. Our coordination is intact and based on mutual understanding," he said.

The Chief Minister also clarified that no formal political discussions on seat-sharing have been scheduled during Union



Home Minister Amit Shah's Assam visit on December 29, seeking to dispel speculation surrounding Shah's meetings with senior AGP leaders.

Sarma said the Home Minister is expected to meet AGP leaders Keshab Mahanta at Borduwa and Atul Bora at Swahid Smarak, but stressed that these interactions should not be construed as official negotiations. "This time, political

talks have not been scheduled. The Home Minister will meet Keshab Mahanta in Borduwa and Atul Bora at Swahid Smarak, but there are no official discussions planned," he said.

Emphasising the internal mechanism of the alliance, Sarma said the involvement of the Union Home Minister would arise only if consensus within the alliance fails. "I believe official discussions

with the Home Minister will be scheduled only if there is no understanding between the parties. Only a lack of understanding will take the talks to the Home Minister level. Otherwise, discussions will remain between us," he added.

On the BJP's approach to seat-sharing, the Chief Minister underlined that negotiations are conducted through a clearly defined leadership channel. "Regarding seats, only Dilip Saikia and I will hold discussions. The BJP's structure is not such that everyone gets involved. On seat-sharing, it will be only Saikia and me," Sarma said.

The remarks come amid heightened political activity in the state ahead of the Home Minister's visit, with the Chief Minister reviewing preparations at Bata-rava Than earlier in the day.

Tezpur University protest enters 100th day; stakeholders launch 24-hour hunger strike over governance crisis

TEZPUR

Protests at Tezpur University entered their 100th consecutive day on Sunday, with university stakeholders launching a 24-hour hunger strike to press for resolution of long-pending issues and accountability from the administration.

The hunger strike, which began at midnight and will continue till 11:59 pm on December 29, is being jointly observed by the Tezpur University Teachers' Association (TUTA), the Tezpur University Non-Teaching Employees' Association (TUNTEA), and members of the student community.

Stakeholders said the decision to intensify the agitation was driven by mounting frustration over what they described as sustained official apathy, despite months of peaceful demonstrations, submission of memoranda, fact-finding inquiries, and



repeated appeals to authorities.

"This marks 100 days of an uninterrupted democratic struggle. Yet, there has been no meaningful response or accountability," representatives of the protesting bodies said.

At the heart of the protest is criticism of Vice-Chancellor Shambhu Nath Singh, whom the stakeholders accused of prolonged absence from campus and failure to discharge constitutional responsibilities. They

alleged that continued inaction by higher authorities has resulted in administrative paralysis, adversely affecting academic functioning and eroding public trust in the institution.

The protesting groups asserted that the prevailing situation reflects a system more inclined to shield individuals in positions of power than to uphold institutional integrity and protect student interests.

"This is no longer just about

Tezpur University. It raises serious questions about governance, transparency, and the moral conscience of public institutions," the stakeholders said, adding that delays in addressing the crisis amount to denial of justice.

Through the hunger strike, the university fraternity aims to draw national attention to what it termed a larger systemic failure, where democratic voices are marginalised and truth and accountability are repeatedly deferred.

Despite the prolonged agitation, the protesters maintained that their movement remains peaceful and resolute. They reiterated that their demand for justice, transparency, and responsible governance would not weaken with time or fatigue.

The agitation is expected to continue until concrete steps are taken to address the concerns raised by the university community.

Meghalaya Police, BSF Dismiss Bangladesh Claim of Hadi Killers Crossing Border

SHILLONG

Security agencies in Meghalaya on Sunday rejected claims by the Bangladesh Police that the killers of Inquilab Moncho leader Sharif Osman Hadi had crossed into the state, terming the allegation baseless and misleading.

Inspector General O.P. Opadhyay, who heads the Border Security Force (BSF) in Meghalaya, said there was no evidence of any illegal cross-border movement from the Haluaghat sector into the state. "The BSF has neither detected nor received any report of such an incident. The claims being circulated are unfounded," he told.

The clarification came after a senior officer of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police earlier alleged that two prime suspects in Hadi's murder had entered Meghalaya through the Haluaghat border with the help of local associates, prompting heightened scrutiny along the international boundary.

A senior Meghalaya Police official also dismissed the allegation, stating that there was "no input or intelligence to corroborate" the presence of the suspects in the Garo Hills region.

Local police units had detected no such movement, the officer said, adding that coordination with central agencies was continuing. BSF officials said border troops remained on high alert, particularly in view of the volatile situation in neighbouring Bangladesh.

They reiterated that the western sector of Meghalaya's international border, including areas in the Garo Hills, was under round-the-clock surveillance and that any attempt at illegal crossing would be promptly detected and dealt with.

Hadi, 32, was shot in the head on December 12 during an election campaign in Dhaka. He was airlifted to Singapore for advanced treatment but succumbed to his injuries on December 18.

A spokesperson of Inquilab Moncho, Hadi had emerged as a prominent youth leader during the July-August 2024 mass protests that led to the fall of the Awami League government headed by Sheikh Hasina. He was also a parliamentary candidate for the February 12 elections.

Meghalaya shares a long and sensitive international border with Bangladesh, guarded by the BSF.

New book examines colonial records on Kuki raids and their impact on Manipur's history

IMPHAL

A new book examining colonial-era records of Kuki raids and their political and social impact on Manipur was released at the Manipur Press Club here on Sunday.

Titled "Colonial Records of the Kukis Raids in Manipur and Their Impact," the book has been written and compiled by researcher Yumnam Rajeshwor and was formally released by retired IAS officer Dr. Rajkumar Nimai.

Addressing the gathering, the author said the publication is based entirely on archival documents accessed from the National Archives of India in New Delhi. He noted that nearly 7,000 files related to Manipur are preserved in the National Archives, many of which provided crucial source material for the book.

"History cannot be altered or selectively interpreted," Rajeshwor said, clarifying that the work is not intended to challenge or



target any community. "The book is an academic attempt to place documented historical records in the public domain," he added.

The book was reviewed at the event by scholars Dr. Oinam Daniel and Dr. Michael Samjetsabam, who said it would be a valuable resource for researchers, students, and younger generations seeking to understand an important and often contested phase of Manipur's history.

The reviewers observed that a clearer

understanding of historical facts, drawn from authentic records, could contribute to greater communal harmony by encouraging informed dialogue among different communities.

Published by Keithel Express Pvt. Ltd., the book compiles and analyses colonial-era documents relating to Kuki raids, focusing on their broader political and social implications in Manipur during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

According to the author, historical records indicate that Kuki migration into Manipur occurred in multiple waves, with many groups moving northwards from the Chin Hills region of present-day Myanmar. These movements were influenced by conflicts with other powerful southern tribes during the colonial period.

The book also examines British colonial policies that encouraged the settlement of Kuki groups in Manipur's hill areas for strategic and administrative reasons. This, the author notes, contributed to land-related conflicts with existing Naga and Meitei populations, adding layers of complexity to questions of territory and indigeneity. While some Kuki groups often referred to as "Old Kukis" were already present in the region, the author highlights that the larger influx of "New Kukis" during the 19th century significantly altered demographic patterns. Colonial records cited in the book document their settlement alongside Naga communities in several hill areas.

The publication seeks to present these developments through primary historical sources, offering readers a documented account of a critical period in Manipur's past.

VOLUNTEER REQUIRED

@ NEIR 2026

- We are looking for volunteers across Northeastern India and West Bengal.
- Interested candidates (College students, youths)

CAN REGISTER AT

https://northeastintegrationrally.in/Volunteer_Registration.aspx
 or send an email: neintegrationrally@gmail.com

www.northeastintegrationrally.in

Quest!

Titanic was the first movie to make more than \$1 billion. Avatar was the second.

Aravalli move to finish small hills, worsen NCR air: Jairam to minister



NEW DELHI

Ahead of the hearing on the definition of the Aravalli hills, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh wrote to Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav on Sunday, saying that the government's move will lead to fragmentation and undermining of the geographical and ecological integrity of the entire mountain range.

Posing four specific questions to the government, Ramesh pointed out in the letter that there are understandably widespread concerns regarding the redefinition of the Aravalli Hills, which restrict them to landforms with an elevation of 100 metres or more.

"In this connection, please permit me to raise four specific questions for your considera-

tion. Is it not a fact that the definition of the Aravalli Hills and Ranges in Rajasthan, since 2012, has been based on a report of the Forest Survey of India (FSI) of August 28, 2010, that said the following:

"All such areas having a slope of three degrees or more shall be delineated as hills, along with a uniform 100-metre-wide buffer added to the downhill side to account for possible expansion corresponding to a 20-metre hill height, equivalent to the contour interval of 20 metres. Flat areas, tabletops, depressions and valleys falling within these delineated regions shall also be included as part of the hills," Ramesh posed.

He also asked whether it was not a fact that the FSI, in a communication to the Ministry of Environment, Forests

and Climate Change dated September 20, 2025, had stated that "the smaller hill formations of the Aravallis serve as natural barriers against desertification by stopping heavier sand particles thus protecting Delhi and neighbouring plains from sandstorms." "Because the protective effect of a barrier against windblown sand scales directly with its height, even modest hills of 10 to 30 metres act as strong natural windbreaks.

"Is it not a fact that the Central Empowered Committee (CEC) constituted by the Supreme Court had, in its report of November 7, 2025, concluded that 164 mining leases in Rajasthan were inside the Aravalli Hills and Ranges as defined by the then-prevailing FSI definition?" Ramesh asked.

Delhi's AQI slips into 'severe' zone; dense fog cripples operations at IGI Airport, 128 flights cancelled

NEW DELHI

Delhi remained engulfed in a thick blanket of smog on Monday morning, with the city's average Air Quality Index (AQI) slipping into the 'severe' category at 402.

Air quality was recorded as severe at 22 monitoring stations, very poor at 14, and poor at one, while data from three stations was unavailable. Vivek Vihar in east Delhi reported the worst air quality with an AQI of 456, according to data from Central Pollution Control Board.

As per CPCB standards, an AQI between 401 and 500 falls in the severe category, posing serious health risks, especially to vulnerable groups.

The city's air quality is expected to remain very poor over the next three days, with conditions likely to fluctuate between very poor and severe over the following six days, the Air Quality Early Warning System said.

Dense fog at isolated places during the morning hours also affected vehicular movement across parts of the capital.

According to India Meteorological Department, minimum temperatures are expected to stay near normal, while maximum temperatures will remain above normal. Delhi is likely to record maximum temperatures between 22°C and 24°C, and minimum temperatures between 7°C and 9°C. Light northwesterly winds, blowing at less than 15 kmph, are expected during the morning and afternoon, gradually weakening later in the day.

Meanwhile, dense fog severely disrupted air traffic in the national capital on Monday morning, with visibility at Indira Gandhi International



Airport plunging to as low as 50 metres, triggering widespread flight delays, cancellations and diversions.

At least 128 flights were cancelled, eight got diverted, and nearly 200 services were delayed.

An official said 64 departures and 64 arrivals were cancelled, while eight flights got diverted due to dense fog and low visibility conditions at the Delhi airport. Delhi airport operator DIAL, in a post on X, said runway visibility is improving, but some flight departures and arrivals may be impacted.

Information on the flight-tracking website

Flightradar24.com showed that nearly 200 flights were delayed, with an average departure delay of around 24 minutes.

"Fog continues to persist across Delhi and several airports in northern India. Visibility remains reduced and, as a result, flight movements are presently slower than normal, with some delays being experienced," IndiGo said in a post on X.

Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) operates the national capital's Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), which handles around 1,300 flight movements daily.

The airport began operations

under Category-III conditions, which permit aircraft to land in extremely low visibility.

Major carriers, including IndiGo and Air India, issued travel advisories urging passengers to check flight status before leaving for the airport and to factor in additional travel time.

In a detailed advisory, IndiGo said fluctuating visibility over Delhi and Hindon airports had led to schedule changes and slower operations. The airline said its ground teams were prioritising safety and compliance with visibility norms and assured passengers that rebooking and refund options were available for impacted flights.

INTERNATIONAL

Netanyahu to meet Trump in Florida for crucial Gaza talks

PALM BEACH

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will meet Donald Trump in Florida on Monday, with the US president pushing to move to the next stage of the fragile Gaza truce plan.

The crucial meeting at Trump's lavish Mar-a-Lago resort comes as some White House officials fear both Israel and Hamas are slow-walking the second phase of their ceasefire.

Trump, who said Netanyahu had asked for the talks, is reportedly keen to announce -- as soon as January -- a Palestinian technocratic government for Gaza and the deployment of an international stabilization force.

The two leaders are to meet at 1 pm (1800 GMT), the White House said.

Israeli government spokeswoman Shosh Bedrosian said Netanyahu would discuss the second phase, which involves making sure that "Hamas is disarmed, Gaza is demilitarized."

But Netanyahu will also try to shift the focus onto Iran during his fifth meeting in the United States with Trump this year, amid reports he will push for more US strikes on Tehran's nuclear program.

President Donald Trump, left, greets Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House, Monday, Sept. 29, 2025, in Washington.

Netanyahu would also bring up the "danger Iran poses not only to the region of the Middle East, but the United States as well," Bedrosian said before flying out with the Israeli premier.

Netanyahu's visit caps a frantic few days of international diplomacy in Palm Beach, where Trump hosted Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky on Sunday for talks on ending Russia's invasion.

The Gaza ceasefire in October is one of the major achievements of



Trump's first year back in power, but his administration and regional mediators want to keep up the momentum.

Trump's global envoy Steve Witkoff and son-in-law Jared Kushner hosted senior officials from mediators Qatar, Egypt and Turkey in Miami earlier this month.

The timing of the Netanyahu meeting is "very significant," said Gershon Baskin, the co-head of peacebuilding commission the Alliance for Two States, who has taken part in back-channel negotiations with Hamas.

"Phase two has to begin," he told AFP, adding that "I think the Americans realize that it's late because Hamas has had too much time to re-establish its presence."

President Donald Trump, left, greets Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House, Monday, Sept. 29, 2025, in Washington.

The first phase of the truce deal

saw Hamas release the remaining hostages, both dead and alive, from the October 7, 2023 attack on Israel. Hamas has returned all but the body of one hostage. Both sides allege frequent ceasefire violations.

Under the second stage, Israel is supposed to withdraw from its positions in Gaza, while Hamas is supposed to lay down its weapons -- a major sticking point for the Islamist movement. An interim authority is meanwhile meant to govern the Palestinian territory, and the international stabilization force (ISF) is to be deployed.

The Axios news outlet reported on Friday that Trump wanted to convene the first meeting of a new Gaza "Board of Peace" that he will chair at the Davos forum in Switzerland in January.

But it said that senior White House officials were growing exasperated with what they viewed as efforts by Netanyahu to stall the peace process.

"There are more and more signs that the American administration is getting frustrated with Netanyahu," said Yossi Mekelberg, a Middle East expert at London-based think-tank Chatham House.

"The question is what it's going to do about it," he added, "because phase two is right now going nowhere."

For his part, Netanyahu is set to focus with Trump on Iran's nuclear program, which the United States and Israel struck in June but which Israel fears Tehran is rebuilding.

Israel is also continuing to strike Hamas targets in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon despite a ceasefire there. Syria will also be on the agenda.

Mekelberg said Netanyahu could be attempting to shift attention from Gaza onto Iran as Israel enters an election year.

"Everything is connected to staying in power," he said of the long-time Israeli premier.

Rift in Bangladesh's NCP over Jamaat alliance as leaders resign ahead of polls

DHAKA:

An internal rift overnight gripped the student-led National Citizen Party (NCP) over its proposed alliance with the Jamaat-e-Islami ahead of the Bangladesh election in February, with 30 of its leaders issuing a joint letter opposing the plan and two ranking members announcing their resignation.

The NCP, a large offshoot of the Students Against Discrimination (SAD) that spearheaded last year's violent movement, dubbed the July Uprising, which toppled then-prime minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League government, emerged as a political party with interim government chief Muhammad Yunus' blessings in February.

The first signatory to the memorandum and the NCP's joint member-secretary, Mushfiq Us Saleheen, told reporters on Saturday night that the memo titled "Principled objections to a potential alliance in light of the accountability of the July Uprising and party values" had been sent to party convener Nahid Islam.

The memorandum expressed concerns over the NCP's proposed alliance with the Jamaat, stating that it conflicted with the party's declared ideology and stance on the July Uprising and democratic ethics.

It also pointed to the Jamaat's controversial political history, particularly its role against Bangladesh's independence and alleged collaboration in genocide and crimes during the 1971 Liberation War,

describing these as fundamentally incompatible with Bangladesh's democratic spirit and the NCP's core values.

The memo further alleged that the Jamaat's student wing, Chhatra Shibir, had in the recent past infiltrated and sabotaged other parties to blame the NCP for various incidents and spread misinformation and propaganda.

Warning of political fallout, the memorandum said an alliance with the Jamaat would undermine the NCP's credibility and public trust, creating confusion and disappointment among activists and supporters, especially the younger generation and ordinary citizens backing new politics.

The memorandum was made public after NCP senior joint member-secretary Tasnim Jara resigned from her position on Saturday evening and announced she would contest the upcoming parliamentary election as an independent candidate from a constituency in Dhaka.

In a Facebook post, Jara, a doctor, said, "Due to the current political realities, I have decided not to contest the election as a candidate of any specific party or alliance." She did not specify whether her resignation was linked to the planned alliance, though newspaper reports said her husband and NCP joint convener Khaled Saifullah had also quit the organisation.

Hours later, NCP joint convener Tajnuva Jabeen, also a doctor, announced her resignation in a Facebook post, describing

the alliance formation as "a political strategy carefully engineered and brought to this point." She said that despite being a founding member, she was quitting the party with mental agony, as she no longer had any "honourable option".

The Ittefaq newspaper reported on Saturday that most female NCP leaders, including senior joint convener Samata Sharmin, senior member-secretary Nahid Sarwar Niva, joint convener Taznuva Jabin and joint member-secretary Nusrat Tabassum, were opposed to an alliance with the Jamaat or any religion-based party and had conveyed their reservations to the leadership. Most signatories to the memo, however, were male members.

The NCP has yet to make any formal announcement on the alliance, but The Daily Star reported that the party was likely to finalise a seat-sharing deal with the Jamaat within the next one or two days.

Jamaat secretary-general Mia Golam Parwar told the newspaper that discussions with the NCP were underway on a one-on-one basis and that "there is a possibility of sharing seats, and the issue will become clear very soon".

Bengali daily Prothom Alo earlier reported that a seat-sharing deal between the NCP and former prime minister Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) was discussed, but no understanding was reached.

"Since then, NCP talks with Jamaat have progressed positively," the report said.

End of 2025: Hope, humanity and a Northeast at a crossroads



As 2025 fades into memory, the year is being seen off with a curious mix of nostalgia and relief. For many, it has been a year of personal milestones and private disappointments, of plans fulfilled and opportunities lost. For others, events far beyond individual control—conflicts, political churn, economic anxiety and social unrest—have shaped daily life in ways that were neither anticipated nor welcomed. Yet, as every year draws to a close, one sentiment stubbornly survives: hope. It is the most enduring of human impulses, the belief—sometimes rational, often not—that tomorrow might be kinder than today.

Hope has always been humanity's companion, even during its darkest chapters. Civilisations have endured wars, pandemics, famines and oppression because people believed that renewal was possible. History, however, also records a more uncomfortable truth: that hope often coexists with violence, loss and deepening divisions. Progress and regression walk side by side. Strength is repeatedly undermined by weakness, and lofty ideals are compromised by base instincts. These contradictions are not anomalies; they are intrinsic to what it means to be human.

Brain VISION
KRC
Shaping Careers
For a Successful Tomorrow
Never judge your father until you have your own family.

As one year ends and another begins, societies inevitably pause to take stock. Old questions resurface,

sometimes with sharper urgency. What have we learned? What have we ignored? And why do familiar mistakes return, even when their consequences are well known? In this reflective moment, the temptation is always to look ahead with optimism while quietly sidestepping the uncomfortable realities of the present.

The year 2025 has been one of upheaval, both globally and closer home in the Northeast. Political certainties have frayed, economic pressures have intensified and social fault lines have become more visible. Cultural norms that once appeared stable now seem unsettled. For many, especially those from older generations, the world feels increasingly unrecognisable. Rapid technological change is often blamed for this sense of dislocation, but technology alone does not explain the depth of unease.

A more unsettling explanation lies in the enduring ambitions of power. Across eras and continents, powerful interests—political, corporate and ideological—have sought wealth, dominance and control. Fear and division have long been their most reliable tools. By stoking insecurity and manufacturing enemies, they consolidate influence while presenting themselves as protectors. This pattern is neither new nor unique to any one society, but its consequences are always profound.

What is striking is how willingly societies place their trust in such forces, even when lived experience suggests otherwise. Inequality widens, unrest deepens and yet the same narratives continue to find acceptance. Each year ends with promises of change, and each new year begins with hope unmoored from account-

ability. The result is a cycle in which the future begins to resemble the past, not because alternatives are unavailable, but because they are not confronted.

Nowhere has this been more evident than in the sharpening of social divisions. Across communities, differences of race, religion, culture and language have been weaponised. Hostility is not merely expressed; it is curated, amplified and normalised. In recent months, incidents that once would have been unthinkable have begun to recur with troubling regularity.

The disruption of Christmas celebrations in parts of the country, including Assam's Nalbari district, stands out as a telling example. Christians in India constitute a small minority. They wield no disproportionate political or economic power, nor do they pose any cultural threat to the larger society. Yet they are increasingly portrayed as adversarial, as outsiders whose faith is framed as incompatible with the national mainstream. This perception, critics argue, is less about reality and more about fear—fear disguised as majoritarian entitlement.

Assam's own history makes such developments particularly disquieting. The state has long been known for a culture of coexistence, where diverse faiths and communities lived side by side with relative harmony. Religious festivals were shared spaces, not battlegrounds. Incidents like Nalbari, therefore, are not isolated law-and-order problems; they signal a deeper erosion of social trust.

While arrests were made in the Nalbari case, the larger concern remains unresolved. Attacks on Christians and other minorities, whether

physical or rhetorical, appear to be increasing. Each incident leaves behind more than immediate damage; it creates an atmosphere of fear and alienation. Safety becomes conditional, and belonging becomes negotiable. For a society that once prided itself on pluralism, this represents a dangerous turning point.

The end of the year, then, is not merely a time for celebration. It is a moment that demands collective introspection. What kind of society is Assam becoming? And what kind does it wish to be? Reclaiming a legacy of peaceful coexistence will require more than official statements or symbolic gestures. It will require a willingness to confront uncomfortable truths about intolerance, silence and complicity.

In the Christian-majority states of the Northeast—Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram—Christmas celebrations have concluded, marked by faith, community gatherings and a strong sense of cultural continuity. As the region moves toward the New Year, the festive spirit still lingers. Yet it is tempered by unease. News of attacks on Christian communities elsewhere in the country has cast a shadow over what is otherwise a season of joy and reflection.

This disquiet is not confined to religious concerns alone. Across India, questions are being asked about the nature of celebration itself. Lavish festivities unfold alongside rising poverty, persistent unemployment and deepening environmental degradation. Inequality is no longer an abstract concept; it is visible in everyday life. Social divisions, sharpened by political rhetoric, are mirrored in economic disparities that show little sign of narrowing.

The contrast is jarring. On one hand, there is an insistence on spectacle and excess; on the other, a growing sense of precarity. The risk is that celebration becomes a form of denial—a way to distract from problems that demand urgent attention. When festivity is divorced from empathy, it loses its moral grounding.

The reflections that accompany the transition from one year to the next are not unique to modern times. India's ancient traditions emphasise pause and contemplation. Meditation, in its many forms, is not merely a spiritual exercise but a cultural practice of self-examination. It is about looking inward before acting outward, about understanding one's place within a larger whole.

Viewed through this lens, the end of 2025 offers an opportunity that goes beyond resolutions and rituals. It is a chance to reflect honestly on what has been lost, what has been compromised and what still remains within reach. It is a moment to assess whether hope is being used as a catalyst for change or as a convenient substitute for action.

Hope, after all, is not inherently transformative. It acquires meaning only when paired with responsibility. Without action, hope becomes passive optimism, easily manipulated and quickly exhausted. With action, it becomes a force capable of reshaping societies.

For the Northeast, a region long defined by its cultural richness and historical marginalisation, the stakes are particularly high. The choices made now—by leaders, institutions and citizens—will shape not just the coming year but the trajectory of the decades ahead. Will diversity continue to be seen as a strength, or will it be recast as a threat? Will economic development be pursued at the cost of social cohesion and environmental balance, or will alternative paths be imagined?

As 2025 comes to an end, the challenge is clear. Renewal cannot be reduced to a calendar change. It must be rooted in a reconnection with shared humanity, with respect for difference and with a deeper sense of moral responsibility. It must also include a renewed relationship with nature, recognising that environmental destruction ultimately undermines all other aspirations.

The Northeast stands at a crossroads, as does the country at large. The direction taken will depend not on declarations of hope alone, but on the courage to transform that hope into conscious, collective action. Only then can the New Year offer more than repetition—only then can it offer the possibility of genuine change.

SPACE FOR YOU ONLY

Rs. 150/- per day

PLACEMENT

Fresher, job seekers can register with KRC Placements. Send resume to - 5eforsuccess@gmail.com
To source candidates, organisation can contact KRC Placements at info@krcfoundation.org
For Details Visit: <https://bit.ly/krccplacements>
Apply here: <https://bit.ly/KRCPlacementForm>

VOLUNTEERS REGISTERS @ NEIR 2026

We are looking for volunteers across NE & West Bengal Interested candidates (College students, youths) can register at https://northeastintegrationrally.in/Volunteer_Registration.aspx, send an email: neintegrationrally@gmail.com

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Business establishments, educational institutions, individual service providers etc. can enlist themselves or advertise their products or services at the most reasonable cost in InfoCom Diary. Send your details to InfoComSolutions@krcfoundation.org Submit Here: <https://bit.ly/InfoComDiaryForm>

STUDENTS' INTERNSHIP

Students can apply for a three-months internship with KRC Foundation. During the internship the student can get an opportunity to work on a live project. On successful completion the student is awarded a certificate. Apply to 5E for Success: 5eforsuccess@gmail.com
For Details Visit: <https://bit.ly/krccstudentinternship> or www.krcfoundation.org/products-services/training-development-5e-for-success/internship

NE INDIA WRITING STAR CONTEST

Participate in NE India Writing Star Contest and get your writings published. Eligibility: From Class VI onwards. Each participant receives a digital participation certificate. Send articles at: info@krcfoundation.org
For Details Visit: <https://bit.ly/NEIndiaWritingStarContest>
www.krcfoundation.org/campaigns-csr/ne-india-writing-star-contest

CONNECT@ KRC TIMES



KRC TIMES

To engage with KRC TIMES, please use the following e-mails and WhatsApp Nos:
For News: krctimes@gmail.com / WP: 8721838313
For Advertisement: info@krcfoundation.org / WP: 9330830083
For Subscription: krctimes@gmail.com / WP: 8721838313
Editor: biswadeep.gupta@gmail.com / WP: 8721838313

NEIR 2026: MANIPUR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BACKS MONTH-LONG NORTHEAST UNITY RALLY



KRC TIMES NEWS DESK

Dr Basudev Singh, president, Manipur Chamber of Commerce and Industries, has described the North East Integration Rally 2026 as an out-of-the-box initiative aimed at bringing together the diverse cultures of the Northeast. The president has expressed strong support for the month-long unity rally being organised by the Knowledge Resource Centre Foundation. The rally is scheduled to run from January 4 to February 4, covering all eight North-eastern states. Speaking on the initiative, Singh said the campaign seeks to unite people across the region, promote mutual understanding, and create a shared cultural dialogue. He thanked the organisers for conceptualising the rally and said he was pleased to be associated with the campaign.

It may be noted that the Knowledge Resource Centre Foundation and the Manipur Chamber of Commerce and Industry signed a Memorandum of Understanding on December 24, 2025, formalising their collaboration for the North East Integration Rally 2026.

The MoU brings together KRC Foun-

ation, a Silchar-based registered organisation, and MCCI, an autonomous trade and commerce body headquartered in Imphal, to jointly support the month-long 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 Northeast, showcase tourism potential, strengthen awareness about infrastructure, 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 take part in the North East Integrated Business Summit in Kohima, which is being organised in association with the Investment Development Authority of Nagaland.

Organisers said the partnership reflects a shared commitment to regional integration, cultural exchange, and economic collaboration across the Northeastern states.

Month-long Northeast Unity Rally Draws Support from National Award Winning Filmmaker Sunzu Bachaspatimayum



KRC TIMES NEWS DESK

IMPHAL

Calling it a unique initiative aimed at bringing together the diverse cultures of the Northeast, national award winning filmmaker Sunzu Bachaspatimayum has expressed strong support for the month-long

unity rally organised by the KRC Foundations.

The rally, scheduled to run from January 4 to February 4, will cover all eight Northeastern states. According to Bachaspatimayum, the objective of the campaign is to unite people across the region, encourage mutual understanding, and create a

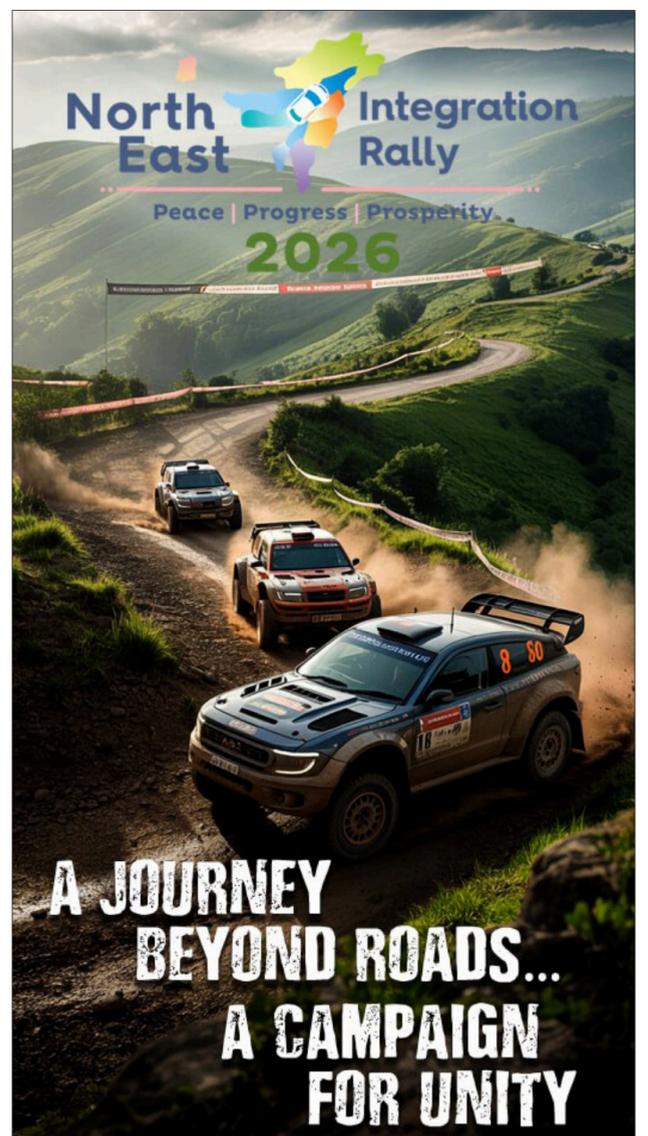
shared cultural dialogue. He thanked the organisers for conceptualising the initiative and said he was pleased to be associated with the campaign.

"We look forward to it and are happy to be part of this campaign led by the KRC Foundations," he said, describing the rally as an important step towards regional harmony.

The foundation also congratulated Sunzu Bachaspatimayum on his recent appointment as Secretary of the Manipur State Film Development Society, Palace Compound. A nationally recognised filmmaker, Bachaspatimayum has received a National Film Award for his work and has represented India internationally.

In 2010, he participated in the International Visitors Leadership Programme on Documentary Filmmaking in the United States, visiting New York, North Carolina, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Washington DC. He is also a former president of the Television and Cine Foundation, Manipur.

Organisers said the rally aims to serve as a cultural bridge across the Northeast, using dialogue and participation to strengthen bonds among communities.





BARAK FESTIVAL

JANUARY 10-12, 2025

ACTIVITY PROGRAM





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



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



11 JAN
Barak Valley Conclave
 Potential Issues and Challenges of Barak Valley to be discussed by stakeholders.
 Includes: KCCs, and D'governance can register for free, get paid for services. Seats are limited, and reservation is required. Participation through invitation only. Different rewards are provided.



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



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



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

Barak Festival

Adventure Sports, Art & Culture Promotion



BROADCAST PARTNER



REGISTER HERE

Contact: info@krcfoundation.org
 WP: 0721300019



11 JAN
5E For Success Conclave
 The 4th 5E For Success Conclave is going to be held on the theme: 'From School to Campus to Corporate'. Schools, Educational Institutions and corporate houses can join the Conclave as sponsors.
 Quiz and Group Discussion for Barak valley Schools & Colleges, Extension School, (Public Speaking) College.
 In an online event, where 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: Media Conclave, Workshops, and the Fund, Talks and Conferences are part of the 'Barak Festival 2025'. Theme: 'One for All, All for One'.
 Workshops: Journalism, Photography, Design & Creative Arts, Sports, Games, Chess, and more.

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

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

Barak Festival

Band Night | 10 JAN

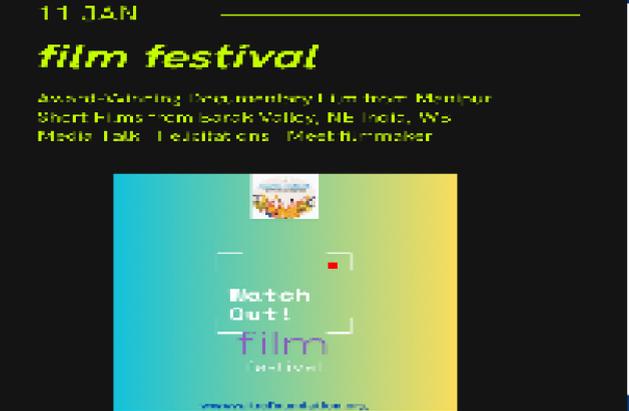
Musical Night | 11 JAN



Contact: info@krcfoundation.org
 WP: 0721300019



10-12 JAN
E-Sports
 Full-Blown Demos | CASH PRIZES | Trophy



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



10-12 JAN
Book Bank
 #NoLike Campaign | Book Bank | e-books | e-audio | e-video

Book Club
 Meet Authors, Publishers, Read & Discuss, Buy and Sell Books

Painting Carnival
 Water Colour and Oil and Sawdust Painting



5E SUCCESS
STUDENT INTERNSHIP
 Discover valuable experience and learn more about the Industry.

- Outreach Executive
- Event Management
- Programme Coordinator

APPLY NOW | WP: 0721300019 | www.krcfoundation.org