

**Barak Festival**  
NE INDIA ADVENTURE SPORTS,  
ART & CULTURE PROMOTION

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

**North East Integration Rally**  
Peace | Progress | Prosperity  
2026

Registrations  
**OPEN**

www.northeastintegrationrally.in  
+91 935 083 0085

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.com

**PERSPECTIVE**

**Poor men spend their money and invest what's left. Rich men invest their money and spend what's left.**

**Protests erupt in Silchar over Bangladesh incident; BJP Yuva Morcha burns effigy**

**SILCHAR**  
Tension prevailed in Silchar on Friday as activists of the BJP Yuva Morcha from Assam's Cachar district staged a protest over an alleged incident involving atrocities against Hindus in Bangladesh.

The protesters assembled at a prominent city intersection, where they burned an effigy symbolising the accused and raised slogans condemning violence against the Hindu community. During the demonstration, BJP Yuva Morcha workers demanded that those responsible for the alleged crimes in Bangladesh be tried in an international court and awarded the harshest punishment. They asserted that India would not tolerate atrocities against Hindus under any circumstances and warned of sustained protests if corrective action was not taken. The demonstrators also expressed hope that the Prime Minister of India and the Chief Minister of Assam would intervene decisively and take a firm stand on the issue through diplomatic and other appropriate measures.

Meanwhile, security has been tightened along the India-Bangladesh border in the Barak Valley region. Additional forces have been deployed to prevent any spillover impact of the situation.

Sources in the Border Security Force (BSF) said heightened vigilance is being maintained along the border to ensure that Bangladeshi extremists or any jihadi elements do not attempt to infiltrate Indian territory or create unrest. Surveillance and border patrols have been intensified as a precautionary measure.

Authorities said the situation remains under close watch and all necessary steps are being taken to maintain law and order in the region.

**WHO SAID WHAT**



**In traditional healthcare, our focus must extend beyond present needs. We carry an equally important responsibility towards the health and well-being of the future generations. ~ Narendra Modi, PM India**

**IPL, BCCI must introspect over Rs.9.20 crore buy of Bangladeshi cricketer: Pradyot Manikyaya**

**AGARTALA**  
Royal scion of Tripura and founder of the Tipra Motha Party, Pradyot Kishore Manikyaya Debbarma, on Friday launched a sharp attack on the Indian Premier League (IPL) and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) over the ₹9.20 crore acquisition of Bangladeshi cricketer Mustafizur Rahman, alleging continued neglect of talented players from India's Northeast.

In a strongly worded statement, Debbarma questioned why cricketers from the region, including Tripura's Manisankar Murasingh, continue to be overlooked despite consistent performances, while foreign players are bought at hefty prices.

"When a Bangladeshi cricketer gets ₹9.20 crore and our own talented cricketers from Tripura and the



Northeast are ignored, we as Indians must ask-are we bending over too much?" he said.

Referring to recent developments in Bangladesh, the Tipra Motha chief cited attacks on Hindu minorities and protests allegedly directed against India.

"There have been threats outside our embassy, minorities have been attacked, and hateful statements have been made about breaking the Northeast into pieces. Despite all this, are we comfortable giving crores of rupees to citizens of that country?" Debbarma asked.

He also questioned what he termed an inconsistency in India's approach towards neighbouring countries.

"India boycotts Pakistan citing national sentiment and security, but business continues as usual with Bangladesh. What is the logic? Is

business more important than national security and self-respect?" he said.

Debbarma further remarked that his party appears to be among the few political voices openly raising the issue, questioning the silence of others.

"Aren't we Indians first? Why are others quiet on this matter?" he asked. Calling upon the IPL and the BCCI to reassess their priorities, Debbarma said the cricket board, being the richest in the world, must seriously introspect.

"The BCCI must decide what comes first-national respect and security, or just business," he said.

His remarks have reignited debate over the representation of cricketers from the Northeast at the national level and the broader intersection of sport, commerce and national sentiment.

**Rajdhani Express derails after hitting elephant herd in Assam, 7 jumbos dead; over 9 trains cancelled**

**GUWAHATI**

The down Sairang-New Delhi Rajdhani Express engine and five coaches derailed early on Saturday morning after the train collided with a herd of elephants on the Jamunamukh-Kampur section under the Lumding Division of N.F. Railway.

However, no casualties of passengers have been reported so far, and officials from N.F. Railway rushed to the site, which is about 126 km from Guwahati. A source said that seven elephants died after being knocked down by the train on the section.

Confirming the incident, N.F. Railway said in a statement that accident relief trains, along with officials from the divisional headquarters, have reached the site. Helpline numbers have already been activated at Guwahati railway station: 0361-2731621 / 2731622 / 2731623.

Senior railway officers, including the General Manager of N.F. Railway and the Divisional Railway Manager of Lumding, have also rushed to the site.

"The passengers of the affected coaches were temporarily ac-



commodated in the vacant berths available in other coaches. After the affected coaches were detached, the train left the site for Guwahati," the NFR said in a statement.

The derailed train left the site for Guwahati at 06.11 am. Once the train reaches Guwahati, additional coaches will be added to accommodate passengers from the affected coaches, after which the train will resume its onward journey. The restoration works have been completed, an official said.

"The incident took place at a location which is not a designated elephant corridor. The loco pilot on observing the herd of elephants applied emergency brakes. However,

elephants dashed with the train," the statement further stated.

The loco pilot, on spotting the herd of elephants, applied emergency brakes. However, the elephants collided with the train. Trains scheduled to pass through the section are being diverted through the UP line, and restoration work is underway.

One of the dead elephants was pregnant, locals said. The condition of the injured calf, barely a few days old and rushed to the Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation near the Kaziranga National Park, was stated to be critical.

Assam's Forest and Environ-

ment Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary said the loss of these majestic animals was a matter of grave concern. He further stated that two senior officials of the department have been directed to report the matter to senior-most officials of Indian Railways to prevent such incidents in the future.

Dulu Borah of the non-profit organisation Hati Bondhu (Friends of Elephants), said the incident could have been averted had there been an early warning system.

"This may not be a notified area, but the movement of elephants is common here. The lack of coordination between the forest department and the railways led to the incident," Borah said.

He urged authorities to install a thermal camera-based early warning system along the stretch. "If we have this system and there is monitoring as well as coordination, we won't have these unfortunate incidents," he further said.

This is not the first such incident in Assam. There have been several incidents where elephants died after being hit by trains.

In the last few years, more than 81 elephants have died in the country after being hit by trains.

In view of the derailment, over 9 trains have been cancelled on the route, informed the N.F. Railway. As many as 12 trains on the route have been regulated.

- Cancelled trains:
1. Train No. 15927 (Rangiya - New Tinsukia) Express
  2. Train No. 12067 (Guwahati - Jorhat Town) Jan Shatabdi Express
  3. Train No. 15888 (Guwahati - Badarpur) Vistadome Express
  4. Train No. 15928 (New Tinsukia - Rangiya) Express
  5. Train No. 15666 (Mariani - Guwahati) Express
  6. Train No. 55602 (Lumding - Guwahati) Passenger
  7. Train No. 12068 (Jorhat Town-Guwahati) Jan Shatabdi Express
  8. Train No. 15887 (Badarpur-Guwahati) Vistadome Express
  9. Train No. 55601 (Guwahati-Lumding) Passenger
  10. Train No. 15769 (Alipurduar-Mariani) will be short terminated at Digaru and will remain cancelled between Digaru and Mariani.
  11. Train No. 15770 (Mariani - Alipurduar) will be short originated from Digaru and will remain cancelled between Mariani and Digaru.

**PM Modi inaugurates new terminal at Guwahati Airport**

**GUWAHATI**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday inaugurated the new integrated terminal building at Lokpriya Gopinath Bardoloi International Airport in Guwahati, marking a major boost to Assam's aviation infrastructure and regional connectivity.

Built at a cost of around ₹4,000 crore, the newly opened Terminal 2 is the largest nature-themed airport terminal in Northeast India. Spread over nearly 1.4 lakh square metres, the state-of-the-art facility has been designed to handle up to 13.1 million passengers annually by 2032. The Prime Minister toured the terminal after the inauguration.

Officials said the overall project cost is approximately ₹5,000 crore, which includes ₹1,000 crore allocated for Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) facilities. With the addition of the new terminal, the Guwahati airport is expected to emerge as a key aviation hub for Assam, the Northeast, and neighbouring Southeast Asian regions.

The terminal is seven times larger than the existing facility and can handle up to 34 air traffic movements per hour-the highest capacity in the region. Advanced airfield infrastructure, including a modern Instrument Landing System (ILS), upgraded runways, aprons and taxiways, has also been commissioned.

Nature-inspired design  
A key highlight of the new terminal is its architecture, inspired by Assam's biodiversity and cultural heritage. Designed around the theme "Bamboo Orchids," it is India's first nature-themed

airport terminal.

The design draws from indigenous orchids locally known as Kopou Phool, the flow of the Brahmaputra river and the landscapes of Northeast India. The terminal houses more than 2,000 plant species, a dedicated zone inspired by Kaziranga National Park, and cultural artefacts representing Majuli Island.

A signature bamboo vault, constructed using about 140 metric tonnes of locally sourced bamboo, gives the terminal a distinctive identity. The interiors feature japi motifs, rhino symbols and 57 orchid-inspired columns. A "Sky Forest" with nearly one lakh indigenous plants offers passengers an immersive, forest-like arrival experience.

Digital integration and passenger facilities

The terminal emphasises digital integration and passenger convenience, with 14 entry points, including four DigiYatra gates. Facilities include full-body scanners, automated baggage handling systems, fast-track immigration and AI-driven airport operations to ensure smoother passenger flow.

Lokpriya Gopinath Bardoloi International Airport is named after Assam's first Chief Minister. During the event, the Prime Minister also unveiled an 80-foot statue of Gopinath Bardoloi outside the airport premises.

Earlier, PM Modi described the new terminal as a "major boost to Assam's infrastructure," stating that enhanced capacity would improve ease of living while promoting trade, tourism and regional connectivity.

**PM Modi integrated Northeast with rest of India: Pabitra Margherita**



**GUWAHATI**

The Northeast, long viewed as being on the periphery of national development, has been brought into the mainstream of India under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Minister of State for External Affairs and Textiles Pabitra Margherita said on Friday.

In an interview with The Assam Tribune, Margherita said the Prime Minister had effectively brought the national capital closer to the Northeast through sustained engagement, enhanced connectivity and higher central investment in

the region.

Since assuming office, Modi has personally visited Assam more than 70 times, while Union ministers have collectively visited the Northeast over 400 times in the last decade, he said, describing this outreach as unprecedented.

The Union minister said budgetary allocations to the Northeast have increased more than threefold during the present regime, alongside a strong push to improve overall connectivity. He noted that air connectivity in the region has expanded significantly, while all Northeastern states are now connected by rail.

Margherita also pointed to the expansion of national waterways in the region, which has improved inland water transport and trade. Digital connectivity, he said, has seen major improvement, with internet access now reaching even remote areas.

Highlighting cultural recognition, Margherita said the Prime Minister played a key role in granting Assamese the status of a classical language. He also noted that the Centre forwarded a single proposal to UNESCO, leading to the Charaideo Maidams being inscribed as a World Heritage Site.

On security, the Union minister said the law and order situation in the Northeast has improved considerably over the past 10 years. More than 10,000 militants have laid down arms, and several insurgent groups have signed peace agreements with the government, contributing to greater stability in the region.

Margherita further said that under Modi's leadership, Ahom general Lachit Barphukan was accorded the status of a national hero. He also recalled the Prime Minister's participation in Bihu and Jhumoir performances in Assam, which went on to set new world records.

"These developments reflect how the Northeast has been integrated with the rest of the country-through connectivity, cultural pride, peace and sustained engagement," the Union minister said.

**Arunachal civic polls: BJP sweeps Itanagar; PPA wins Pasighat, Congress draws a blank**

**ITANAGAR**

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) registered a resounding victory in the Itanagar Municipal Corporation (IMC) elections, winning 14 of the 20 seats, as results of the Arunachal Pradesh civic polls were declared on Saturday.

In Pasighat, the regional Peoples' Party of Arunachal (PPA) emerged victorious in the Pasighat Municipal Council (PMC) elections, securing five of the eight wards, State Election Commission (SEC) secretary Taru Talo said. The opposition Indian National Congress (INC) failed to open its account in both the Itanagar and Pasighat civic bodies. Among other parties, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) won three seats, the Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) secured two seats, while an independent candidate won one seat.

Counting of votes began at 8 am on Saturday at 45 counting centres spread across 27 districts of the state. Elections were held on December 15 for 16 wards of the IMC and eight wards of the PMC, as four BJP candidates in the Itanagar civic body had already been elected unopposed.

Women candidates made a strong

showing in the civic polls, winning 10 seats in the 20-member Itanagar Municipal Corporation. In Pasighat, four women candidates were elected to the eight-member municipal council. In the PMC elections, apart from the PPA's five seats, the BJP won two wards, while one ward was secured by an independent candidate. Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) were used in both the IMC and PMC elections.

Talo said the simultaneous panchayat and urban local body elections held on December 15 were conducted peacefully across Arunachal Pradesh, with adequate security and administrative arrangements in place. Voter turnout in the panchayat elections was recorded at nearly 75 per cent statewide. In the urban local body polls, voter participation stood at 51.39 per cent in the Itanagar Municipal Corporation and 60.95 per cent in the Pasighat Municipal Council. Meanwhile, counting of votes for the panchayat bodies covering 186 Zilla Parishad Member (ZPM) seats and 1,947 Gram Panchayat Member (GPM) seats is underway through ballot papers. The SEC said final results for these seats are likely to take more time.



VOLUME:1, ISSUE 654

## PLASTIC POLLUTION: TIME TO ACT NOW

**H**umanity stands at a strange and dangerous crossroads. On one hand we celebrate technological triumphs touching the edges of space dreaming of making distant planets habitable. On the other hand we continue to destroy the only planet that has supported life for millions of years. The destruction is not dramatic like a nuclear explosion nor sudden like an asteroid strike. It is slow silent and normalized. Plastic pollution toxic air contaminated water rising temperatures and collapsing ecosystems are dismantling Earth piece by piece. We do not need a nuclear bomb to end life on this planet. Plastic pollution and environmental neglect are already enough.

The scale of plastic production alone should alarm every thinking mind. The world now produces more than 380 million tons of plastic every year. This figure is not just a statistic it is a reflection of a system built on convenience profit and disposability. Plastic production today is estimated to be more than 230 times higher than it was in 1950. Factories operate around the clock manufacturing bottles packaging synthetic fibers clock disposable items and countless products designed for short term use but destined to persist in the environment for centuries.

A single industrial setup can manufacture hundreds of thousands to millions of plastic items in a single day. Plastic bottles alone are produced at staggering rates with some facilities capable of making a million bottles daily. Caps injection molded by automated machines reach outputs of hundreds of thousands per day. Manufacturing plants process several tons of plastic products daily while upstream oil extraction feeds this system relentlessly. One oil drilling rig can extract thousands of barrels of oil every day enough to generate hundreds of tons of plastic. When production operates at this scale asking individuals to simply stop using plastic becomes a hollow and dishonest appeal.

Society is repeatedly told to reduce plastic use while industries continue to flood the market with plastic products. This contradiction exposes the core of the crisis. Plastic is not just a consumer problem, it is a systemic failure. When plastic is produced in such volumes it will inevitably be used discarded and mismanaged. The burden of responsibility cannot be shifted solely onto individuals while production remains unchecked and regulation weak.

The real danger of plastic lies in its permanence. Plastic does not disappear. It only breaks down into smaller and smaller fragments. Plastic bags can persist for decades or centuries. Plastic bottles take around 450 years to degrade. Styrofoam disposable diapers fishing lines and synthetic packaging can last hundreds of years. Even after visible degradation plastic remains in the form of microplastics contaminating soil water and living organisms.

Microplastics are now everywhere. They are present in oceans rivers lakes agricultural soil air dust and food. They have entered the human body silently without consent. Scientific studies have detected microplastics in human blood lungs liver heart brain placenta testes and breast milk. Exposure begins even before birth. Infants excrete microplastics in their feces demonstrating how early contamination begins.

Plastic enters the human body through ingestion inhalation and skin contact. Food and water are major pathways. Seafood salt bottled water packaged foods and even fruits and vegetables carry plastic particles. Airborne fibers from synthetic clothes, carpets upholstery and household dust are inhaled daily. Personal care products packaging and clothing allow dermal exposure. This is not accidental contamination, it is continuous unavoidable exposure in a plastic saturated world.

The health implications are deeply concerning. Microplastics can trigger inflammation and immune responses. They may cause cellular damage oxidative stress and disruption of normal biological processes. Emerging evidence links microplastic exposure to cardiovascular risks including blood vessel inflammation clot formation heart attacks and strokes. Reproductive health is affected with concerns about fertility hormonal disruption and developmental issues. Chemicals associated with plastics such as bisphenols phthalates and flame retardants are known endocrine disruptors and have been linked to increased cancer risk neurological effects and metabolic disorders.

Air pollution compounds this crisis. Plastic production burning waste and fossil fuel dependence release toxic pollutants into the atmosphere. Poisonous air has become a greater daily threat than many diseases. Fine particulate matter nitrogen oxides sulfur dioxide and volatile organic compounds penetrate deep into the lungs and bloodstream. Respiratory diseases asthma cardiovascular conditions and premature deaths are rising globally. In many cities breathing clean air has become a privilege rather than a right.

Water pollution further accelerates human and ecological suffering. Rivers, lakes, groundwater and oceans are contaminated by industrial discharge sewage agricultural runoff and plastic waste. Polluted water spreads diseases that humanity should have eliminated long ago. Cholera, typhoid, dysentery hepatitis A gastroenteritis giardiasis and cryptosporidiosis continue to affect millions particularly in vulnerable communities. Chemical contamination causes arsenicosis, fluorosis skin disorders organ damage and increased cancer risk. Polluted water is not only a health issue, it is a moral failure.

Oceans reveal the most visible scars of plastic pollution. An estimated 150 million metric tons of plastic already exist in marine environments with millions of tons added each year. Trillions of plastic particles float on the surface settle on the seabed and infiltrate the deepest ocean trenches. Massive accumulation zones such as the Great Pacific Garbage Patch are symbols of unchecked waste. Plastic pollution reaches even the Arctic exposing the global nature of the crisis.

Marine life suffers immensely. Fish seabirds turtles whales and countless species ingest plastic mistaking it for food. Studies show that around 90 percent of seabirds have ingested plastic. Entanglement ingestion, internal injury, starvation and death have become routine outcomes for wildlife.

Climate change magnifies every environmental problem. Rising global temperatures, melting glaciers, erratic weather, extreme heatwaves, floods, droughts and sea level rise threaten human civilization. Glaciers which act as freshwater reservoirs are retreating rapidly jeopardizing water supplies for millions. Plastic production and disposal contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions throughout their life cycle. From fossil fuel extraction to manufacturing transportation and waste incineration plastic is a climate accelerant.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

“Every word has consequences. Every silence too.”

- Jean-Paul Sartre

# MODI'S GULF, EAST AFRICA VISIT SETTING STRATEGIC FOOTHOLDS



DR. D.K. GIRI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's two-day state visit to Jordan on 15-16 December, marked a watershed moment in India-Jordan relations, coming 75 years after diplomatic ties were established after a 37-year gap since the last full-fledged visit by an Indian premier. The visit, the first leg of a three-nation tour which also took Modi to Ethiopia and Oman between 16-18 December, was framed by both sides as an opportunity to move the partnership from “symbolic” to “substantive”. In a series of social media posts and a joint press briefing in Jordan, Modi highlighted a ‘meaningful expansion’ of cooperation across a wide spectrum of sectors.

PM Modi's four-day, three nation swing through Jordan, Ethiopia and Oman is meant to give India a diplomatic push in two key regions – the Horn of Africa and the Gulf – at a time when New Delhi is rolling out its ‘Link West’ and ‘Africa Initiative’ strategies. At the time of writing (17 Dec), Modi will leave from Ethiopia to Oman. This article, thus, covers the events in Jordan visit while hinting at the purpose of Prime Minister's visits to Ethiopia and Oman.

In Jordan, the most tangible results were the Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) signed on 15 December. The Agreements covered renewable energy, water resource management, digital public infrastructure and a twinning of UNESCO sites of Petra, Jordan and Ellora in India. The cultural MoU includes the renewal of the India-Jordan Cultural Exchange Programme for 2025-2029 an initiative that the Prime Minister said would ‘further deepen people-to-people ties’. In renewable energy, both countries pledged technical cooperation aimed at clean growth, energy security and climate responsibility. This echoes Modi's earlier statement that the partnership “reflects a shared commitment to clean growth”.

Water security, a critical issue for both arid countries, was addressed with collaboration on water-resources management and development, with an emphasis on sharing best practices in conservation and technological innovation. Digital transformation received a boost through a Letter of Intent on sharing successful digital solutions and a call for collaboration between Jordan's National Payment System and India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI). The latter was part of a broader push to support Jordan's digital public infrastructure and inclusive governance.

Strategically, the visit reinforced a shared stance against terrorism. King Abdullah II conveyed strong support for India's fight against ter-

rorism as both leaders condemned terrorism in all its forms. This part of the outcome has reportedly sent shivers through the spine of terror organisations and their patrons in Pakistani military. Modi also praised Jordan's ‘active and positive role’ on the Gaza issue, underscoring the geo-political dimension of the bilateral dialogues. While King Abdullah II acknowledged India's ‘rising influence’ expressing confidence that their partnership would serve as a model for South-South Cooperation.

On economic and trade prospects, India is Jordan's third-largest trading partner, with bilateral trade valued at about 2.8b USD. Jordan supplies a significant share of India's fertilizer imports – particularly Phosphates and Potash – making it a key component of India's food security strategy. During the talks, Modi proposed raising bilateral trade to US 5b USD over the next five years, a target that reflects the ambition to deepen economic inter-dependence. The Prime Minister's 8-Point vision, presented to the King, outlined cooperation in trade, critical minerals, civil-nuclear energy, and capacity-building programmes, including the training of 10 master trainers over three years. Jordan expressed its intent to join Indian-led global initiatives such as the International Solar Alliance (ISA), the Global Bio Fuel Alliance, and the Coalition for Disaster Resilience Infrastructure, signalling a convergence of interests on climate and sustainable development.

The latest trade figures show that India imported 1.2m tonnes of Phosphates and 0.8 m tonnes of Potash from Jordan in the last fiscal year, accounting for roughly 12 per cent of India's total fertilizer imports. Both governments have agreed to launch a Joint Business Council to explore new sectors such as renewable-energy components, agri-tech and pharmaceuticals, aiming to double trade volume by 2030.

On strategic and security dimensions beyond economics, the visit cemented a security partnership that builds on the 2018-defence cooperation MoU. Discussions covered military training, defence-industrial collaboration, counter terrorism, intelligence sharing and potential military exports. Modi's reference to Jordan's “firm stand against terrorism and extremism” highlighted a shared security outlook; while the King's support for India's counter terrorism efforts reinforced mutual trust.

The geo-political context is equally significant. Jordan's participation in the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) positions the Kingdom of Jordan as a linchpin in a multi-model connectivity proj-

ect that could cut shipping cost by up to 30 per cent and reduce transit times by around 40 per cent. Modi's visit, therefore, was not simply a bilateral affair but also a step toward integrating Jordan into a broader regional architecture that links South Asia to the Mediterranean.

In the defence sector, India has offered to supply Jordan with advanced light-weight howitzers and to conduct joint training exercises at the Indian Army's training centre in Rajasthan. A Letter of Intent was also signed to explore co-production of spare parts, which could reduce Jordan's maintenance costs by an estimated 15 per cent over the next decade.

In cultural exchange and people-to-people ties, the Indian Diaspora in Jordan numbers around 17,500 employed mainly in textiles, construction, manufacturing and UN agencies. The twinning of Petra and Ellora is presented as a ‘Gateway for heritage conservation’, tourism and academic exchanges. To nurture ties among the youth, India will offer 50 scholarships under the ICCR programme for Jordanian students to pursue undergraduate studies in engineering and technology with the first batch set to arrive in August 2026.

The outcomes of the December visit open up several avenues for future collaboration such as renewable-energy, joint ventures, with Jordan seeking to expand its solar capacity, Indian expertise through the ISA and private sector partnership could create large scale project, leveraging India's cost-effective solar

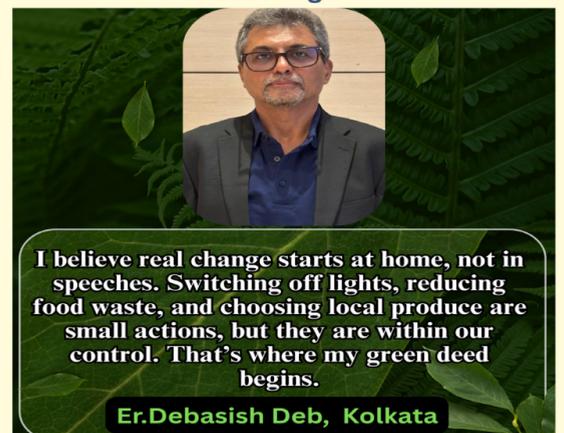
technology. Similarly, digital infrastructure and FinTech linking UPI-Jordan Payment-System could serve as a template for broader FinTech cooperation including cross-border remittances, E-commerce platforms and date-security standards.

### DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

**A Hindu youth, Dipu Chandra Das, was brutally lynched by Islamists in Bangladesh over alleged blasphemy. After killing him, his body was hung from a tree and set on fire. This horrifying incident exposes the brutal reality of what happens when Islamic extremism goes unchecked and minorities are stripped of protection. This is precisely the direction in which Mamata Banerjee is pushing the Hindus of West Bengal—towards a future where Hindus are reduced to second-class citizens, their voices silenced, and their homeland compromised, all to satisfy her relentless pursuit of political power. History has shown us the consequences of appeasement politics. Ignoring warning signs today will only invite catastrophe tomorrow. ~ Amit Malviya, Member National Executive, BJP**



### Message



Er. Debasish Deb, Kolkata

NEIR 2026

# Arunachal groups express dissatisfaction over talks on illegal immigrants, unauthorised mosques

ITANAGAR

Several civil society organisations in Arunachal Pradesh on Thursday expressed dissatisfaction with the outcome of a meeting with the state government over their demands for action against alleged illegal immigrants and unauthorised religious structures in the state capital.

Representatives of the Arunachal Pradesh Indigenous Youth Organisation (APIYO), along with two other groups, met Home Minister Mama Natung and senior officials to press for concrete measures against alleged illegal Bangladeshi immigrants and what they termed illegal mosques and prayer halls. However, the organisations said the discussions failed to provide clear timelines or firm assurances.

APIYO president Taro Sonam Li-



yak said the organisation was "not satisfied" with the meeting, as no

definite roadmap was laid out for verification of undocumented settlers, deportation of illegal immigrants, or demolition of unauthorised structures.

"Our demands remain unaddressed. We sought immediate verification of undocumented settlers, deportation of illegal immigrants and demolition of unauthorised religious structures, but there was no clarity on timelines," Liyak told reporters.

Despite the Home Minister describing the meeting as "fruitful," the organisations said they would proceed with the dawn-to-dusk bandh in Itanagar to press for their demands.

The groups alleged that several mosques and prayer halls had been constructed on tribal land in the capital region without proper per-

mission, claiming that many were linked to migrants allegedly using fake Inner Line Permits (ILPs). Among the structures flagged was the Capital Jama Masjid at Naharlagun, near the inter-state bus terminal.

Home Minister Mama Natung reiterated the government's commitment to act against illegal immigration and said necessary steps would be taken in accordance with due process. The meeting was attended by senior officials, including the Chief Secretary, Home Secretary, Itanagar Capital Region Deputy Commissioner, Superintendent of Police, and Civil Secretary. The bandh call was jointly issued by APIYO, the Indigenous Faith Forum Arunachal, and the All Naharlagun Pradesh Youth Organisation. Their demands include demolition of allegedly unau-

thorised mosques and prayer halls, identification and deportation of illegal immigrants, and a ban on weekly markets in the capital region allegedly frequented by undocumented settlers.

Meanwhile, Inspector General of Police (Law and Order) Chuku Apa Hada said significant steps had been taken to strengthen the Inner Line Permit mechanism. He said the upgraded ILP 3.0 system would help plug loopholes and improve monitoring. The IGP added that verification drives and regular checks would continue along Arunachal Pradesh's porous borders, along with intensified internal enforcement to curb illegal immigration.

The organisations warned that if their demands are not addressed, they would intensify their agitation in the coming days.

## Tripura records 10% drop in crime rate, road fatalities, says DGP Anurag

AGARTALA

Director General of Police Anurag on Friday said Tripura has recorded a notable decline in overall crime and road traffic accident fatalities over the past year. He attributed the improvement to strengthened police-public relations and sustained awareness drives, even as cases under the NDPS Act have increased due to intensified enforcement. Speaking at a programme organised at RK Pur police station in Udaipur, the DGP said community participation has become central to effective policing in the state.

He added that the presence of a large number of civilians at the event reflected growing public confidence in the police.

"Tripura Police have three core responsibilities: maintaining law and order, preventing crime, and detecting crime once it occurs. None of these can be achieved effectively without active support from the community," Anurag said.

He said around 60 civilians and 30 police personnel participated in a mega blood donation camp organised as part of the event, highlighting the police's commitment to social outreach.

On crime trends, the DGP said the overall crime rate in the state has declined by nearly 10 percent compared to the previous year.

He clarified that while the number of registered cases has increased, the rise is largely due to a spike in NDPS-related cases, indicating stronger preventive action and a crackdown on drug trafficking networks.

Anurag also said road traffic accident fatalities have dropped by over 10 percent. He added that road safety remains a priority, with intensive awareness campaigns conducted in schools, markets, and public places to reduce accidents and road rage.

## PM Modi should address bulldozing of Muslim homes in Assam: AIUDF leader Rafiqul Islam

GUWAHATI

Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Assam, All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) leader Rafiqul Islam on Thursday urged the Prime Minister to take cognisance of what he described as the demolition of thousands of Muslim homes in the state.

Speaking to reporters, Islam alleged that many Muslims in Assam, despite being bona fide Indian citizens, had lost their houses due to bulldozer action and were now living without shelter.

"The Prime Minister should also acknowledge the fact that thousands of Muslim homes in Assam have been bulldozed. If he addresses this issue during

his visit, then we will believe that he truly believes in 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas'," the AIUDF leader said. Commenting on developments in neighbouring Bangladesh, Islam said internal political rhetoric there did not pose a real threat to India. "They can say whatever they want in their own country, but the people of Bangladesh do not have that much courage, nor does the Bangladeshi government. No one can dare to challenge India," he stated.

However, he added that the Government of India should respond firmly to any situation that could affect national security. "The Government of India should deal with all such matters with firmness," Islam said.

## Assam Cabinet approves Rs 250 crore for Bodoland Territorial Council development

GUWAHATI

The Assam Cabinet has approved a financial package of Rs 250 crore for the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) under the State-Owned Priority Development Fund (Rural) for 2025-26.

The allocation is expected to boost infrastructure, rural livelihoods, and socio-economic initiatives across the BTC region, a strategically important and sensitive area of Assam.

The decision was made at a Council of Ministers meeting chaired by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma at Lok Sewa Bhawan.

Officials said the funds will support rural infrastructure projects, improve connectivity, enhance civic amenities, and strengthen public service delivery in BTC areas, reflect-



ing the government's commitment to sustaining the peace dividend under the Bodoland Territorial Region accord. The Cabinet noted that targeted financial assistance is crucial for inclusive growth in the region, which has seen significant development in recent years.

In environmental action, the Cabinet approved the designation of two wetlands in Goalpara district as Proposed Reserved Forests under

AGARTALA

Chief Minister Manik Saha on Friday said that film is a mirror of society, and through cinema, various aspects of social life, including good, bad, past, present, and even the future, can be showcased on screen to create awareness among people.

The Chief Minister said this while inaugurating a programme titled 'Tripura Culture and Heritage Land' at Rabindra Shatabhishiki Bhavan on Friday.

The event was organised by the Tripura Film and Television Institute (TFTI) and the Department of Information and Cultural Affairs.

Through this programme, certificates were awarded to students who passed the 2024-25 academic year of the Tripura Film and Television Institute, as well as to artists of various categories who received recognition from the state government.

Addressing the programme,



the Chief Minister said that students studying at TFTI, or who have graduated from it, should consider contributing positively to society by emphasising their creativity.

"The state government has made efforts to make the state's Film and Television Institute the best film and television institute in the entire North Eastern region. To that end, work is also underway to identify a location for building TFTI's own infrastructure," he said.

Saha stated that there is no shortage of talent among the state's children.

## Tripura Govt aims to make TFTI best film institute in Northeast: CM Manik Saha

ents and youth are the future of the country. All plans are being implemented, keeping students and youth in mind. Children of this section should always try to give their best for the country and society," he added.

The Chief Minister said the state government is implementing various schemes for the welfare of people from all walks of life and is also considering ways to ensure financial independence by enabling them to complete courses across subjects at TFTI.

During the event, Tourism Minister Sushanta Chowdhury, Secretary PK Chakraborty, Vice-Chancellor of the Kolkata Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute Samiran Dutta, Advisor of the Tripura Film and Television Institute Biplab Goswami, Vice-Chairman of the State-level Cultural Advisory Committee Subrata Chakraborty, Director of the ICA Department Bimbisar Bhattacharya, and others were present.

## Meghalaya Cabinet approves revised pay structure for SSA, ad hoc teachers; clears new State Curriculum Framework

SHILLONG

The Meghalaya Cabinet on Thursday approved a major revision of the pay structure for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and ad hoc teachers, addressing long-pending demands related to pay disparity, job security and post-retirement benefits. The decision was taken after the Cabinet cleared a proposal submitted by the Education Department.

Under the revised arrangement, a structured pay system will replace the existing flat salary model, aimed at introducing a more systematic and equitable remuneration framework for SSA and ad hoc teachers across the state.

The Cabinet also approved an annual increment mechanism, ensuring yearly salary increases for teachers. This move is expected to end the practice of teachers remaining at the same pay level for long periods.

To address long-standing inequities, a seniority-based pay enhancement has been introduced. Earlier, teachers with 15 to 20 years of service were drawing the same salary as those with just one or two years of experience. The revised structure creates service-based categories, with defined minimum increments linked to years of service.

In a significant step towards improving job security and

post-retirement benefits, the Cabinet approved the introduction of a Contributory Provident Fund (CPF). Both the government and teachers will contribute to the fund, which will provide financial security after retirement. The CPF will be managed by a dedicated society to oversee and regulate the scheme. The state government said the decision fulfils its earlier commitment to complete the process before Christmas. The revised pay structure will come into effect from April 1, 2026. Detailed work on implementation modalities and administrative procedures will be carried out over the next three months.

In another key decision, the Cabinet approved the State Curriculum Framework for the foundational stage, covering preschool to Class I, along with new textbooks. The curriculum focuses on holistic development, value-based education and familiarising children with Meghalaya's culture and history. Learning Khasi and Garo languages has been made mandatory. The curriculum has been simplified to make learning more accessible for young children. While some schools have already finalised their syllabus for the coming academic year, adoption of the new textbooks will remain optional this year and will become mandatory from the next academic session.

# Tezpur University crisis deepens; students hint at Delhi march if Centre fails to act against VC

GUWAHATI

The ongoing crisis at Tezpur University escalated sharply on Thursday as students warned of a possible march to New Delhi if the Ministry of Education (MoE) fails to take time-bound action against Vice-Chancellor Prof. Shambhu Nath Singh, whose prolonged absence and alleged administrative lapses have paralysed the Central University for nearly three months.

At a convention held in Dispur, student leaders were joined by advocates, civil society members and political representatives, signalling a shift from campus-based protests to a broader national appeal for central intervention. The gathering demanded immediate steps to restore academic and administrative normalcy at the university, where classes have remained suspended amid allegations of corruption, recruitment irregularities and leadership failure.

Student representatives said they would pursue "democratic and constitutional means" to engage Union authorities, but cau-

tioned that the agitation would be escalated to the national capital if their demands were ignored. Legal experts at the convention urged students to explore judicial remedies, while alumni were asked to unite in defence of the institution.

Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) president Lurinjyoti Gogoi described the situation as unacceptable, citing the 90-day academic standstill and demanding Prof. Singh's suspension along with a high-level inquiry. "Tezpur University is a product of the Assam Movement, built on the sacrifices of 850 martyrs. Its legacy cannot be allowed to crumble because of administrative vacuum," he said.

Asom Chatra Parishad (ACP) president Trinayan Baruah termed the issue "emotionally and politically sensitive" for Assam, stating that efforts had already been made to approach the Union Education Minister through Rajya Sabha MP Birendra Prasad Baishya, seeking the Vice-Chancellor's removal and a probe. Leaders of the All Assam Students' Union (AASU), including Nitul Borah and Nayan Jyoti Gogoi, along with representatives of the SFI and NSUI, echoed the call for dialogue and swift resolution.

Students clarified that their objective was not disruption but the restoration of a "stable and secure academic environment" to allow classes and research activities to resume.

The crisis at Tezpur University traces back to September 22, when Prof. Singh allegedly left the campus following a confrontation with students over the university's response to the death of Assamese singer Zubeen Garg. Students had sought a condolence programme during the state mourning period, but the Vice-Chancellor was accused of dismissing the request in an insensitive manner before departing. The Sonitpur district administration later initiated an inquiry, terming the episode an insult that aggravated tensions.

Prof. Singh, who assumed office on April 4, 2023, has faced sustained criticism over his tenure. His earlier removal as Patna University Vice-Chancellor in 2012 has been cited by protesters, along with allegations of irregular recruitments at Tezpur University. These include claims that in August 2023, an ineligible candidate was allegedly shortlisted and appointed to a senior post in violation of UGC norms, and that similar irregularities occurred in the Hindi Department the following month.

Students and faculty have also alleged that the Vice-Chancellor undertook 51 official trips between April 2023 and September 2025, spending nearly 388 days away from campus, leaving the university without effective leadership. Financial irregularities have also

been flagged, including alleged violations in the utilisation of UGC grants and quality issues in infrastructure projects funded by the Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA).

Following the September incident, resignations of key officials, including the public relations officer and the acting registrar, further deepened the crisis. Protest actions intensified with effigy burnings, FIRs against senior functionaries, and a campus lockdown called by the Tezpur University United Forum (TUUF).

Although the Union Ministry of Education constituted inquiry panels, including a three-member committee led by an IIT Guwahati professor, the reports have not been made public. Student leaders said assurances given during meetings with senior officials in New Delhi have not translated into concrete action.

As of December 19, academic and administrative activities at Tezpur University remain largely suspended. With the Dispur convention signalling the possibility of a Delhi showdown, pressure is mounting on the Centre to intervene decisively, amid growing concerns that prolonged inaction could further erode confidence in the governance of centrally funded higher education institutions.

Quest!

When studying something new, teach a friend about it. Let them ask questions. If you can teach something well, then you understand it well.

## VOLUNTEER REQUIRED

@ NEIR 2026

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

CAN REGISTER AT [https://northeastintegrationally.in/Volunteer\\_Registration.aspx](https://northeastintegrationally.in/Volunteer_Registration.aspx) or send an email: [neintegrationally@gmail.com](mailto:neintegrationally@gmail.com)

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

# ISRO to launch BlueBird-6 on December 24



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.

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

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

# PM Modi to address first rally in West Bengal since draft roll release amid SIR concerns of Matuas



KOLKATA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to visit West Bengal's Nadia district on Saturday, where he will inaugurate national highway projects and address a public rally, amid heightened political tensions over the ongoing SIR exercise in the state.

This would be Modi's first visit to the state since the draft SIR rolls were published, and the third in the

past five months.

The Prime Minister, political observers said, is scheduled to address the growing unease amongst the Matua community members post the publication of the draft rolls from his strategically located BJP rally venue in Taherpur area of Ranaghat, not far from the heartland of the Namasudra Hindu community in adjacent Bongaon.

In the process, Modi is likely to sound the BJP's bugle for the

assembly polls, which are due in the state early next year and finalise the roadmap for the party's big push for the crucial elections.

"The people of West Bengal are benefiting from numerous pro-people initiatives of the central government. At the same time, they are suffering due to the TMC's misgovernance in every sector," PM posted on X on Friday evening while announcing his visit.

"The loot and intimidation of the TMC have crossed all limits. That is why, BJP is the people's hope," he added.

The PM's visit comes at a time when the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress has mounted sustained opposition to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, alleging that the exercise is being carried out in haste and that a large number of genuine voters, particularly refugee Hindus, risk disenfranchisement on its account.

In the draft electoral rolls published after the enumeration phase, 58,20,899 names have been excluded, reducing the electorate to 7.08 crore.

Around 1.36 crore entries have also been flagged for "logical discrepancies", while 30 lakh voters have been categorised as unmapped a significant percentage of whom are likely to be called for verification hearings over the next 45 days.

For Matuas, a Dalit Hindu community that migrated from Bangladesh over decades due to religious persecution, this exercise has revived anxieties over identity and documentation.

Political observers widely believe that the community members hold sway in as many as 80 of the 294 assembly seats in the state. Speculations are rife that sig-

nificant numbers of Matuas have already been excluded from draft rolls.

Many more are likely to follow suit in the final rolls on account of the unavailability of the EC-specified indicative documents they need to produce in the eventuality of receiving hearing notices during the verification phase.

Over the past years, poll results have indicated that the BJP gained significant inroads within the community, promising them formal Indian citizenship.

BJP MP Jagannath Sarkar, who represents the Ranaghat Lok Sabha seat, where Taherpur is located, claimed that fear was being spread deliberately among the Matuas about SIR.

"We are hopeful that the PM's message would dispel those fears and canards," he said.

Chief Minister Banerjee has already led anti-SIR rallies in Nadia and North 24 Parganas, the two adjoining districts that share a border with Bangladesh and have a significant Matua presence.

During his visit, the PM will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone for two national highway projects worth around Rs 3,200 crore.

He will inaugurate the 66.7-km-long four-laning of the Barajaguli-Krishnanagar section of NH-34 in Nadia district and lay the foundation stone for the four-laning of the 17.6-km-long Barasat Barajaguli section in North 24 Parganas district.

The projects are expected to serve as a vital connecting link between Kolkata and Siliguri, boosting trade, tourism and economic activity across southern and northern parts of the state, officials said.

# INTERNATIONAL

## Bangladesh set to hold funeral of youth leader whose death sparked unrest in country

DHAKA

Bangladesh is set to hold the funeral of a prominent youth leader on Saturday amid tight security following unrest in the country triggered by his death.

The funeral prayer will be held at the South Plaza of the National Parliament Building at 2 pm, the press wing of the interim government of Bangladesh has announced.

The government imposed a ban on flying drones in and around the Sangsad Bhaban during janaza. Prothomalo news portal reported.

Those wishing to attend the funeral have been asked not to carry any bags or heavy objects with them, it added.

In a social media post on Friday, Inqilab Mancha said, "Upon the family's wishes, a decision has been taken to bury Hadi beside the grave of national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam and to hold his funeral prayer after Zuhr tomorrow at Manik Mia Avenue."

The party also announced that there will be no public viewing of the body, and people were requested to pray for Hadi while maintaining order.

Bangladesh's interim government on Friday urged citizens to resist violence by "fringe elements" as the body of a prominent youth leader arrived here from Singapore, amid fresh unrest in the capital following overnight rampages triggered by his death.

According to police, alleged radical right-wing activists set fire to the main office of the left-leaning Udichi Shilpigosthi in the capital shortly after Sharif Osman Hadi's body arrived in Dhaka from Singapore, where he had been undergoing treatment for fatal gunshot wounds inflicted by masked gunmen on December 12.

"The arson destroyed everything (inside Udichi's office)," said Jamshed Anwar, general secretary of the country's largest cultural organisation, founded in 1968. A large number of police, BGB, and

army members were deployed in front of the office.

Hadi was one of the leaders who had taken part in the student-led protests last year, termed as the July Uprising, and a candidate for the scheduled February 12 general elections.

The body of Hadi, who was the spokesperson of the Inqilab Mancha, arrived at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) at around 6 pm local time on a Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight, amid tight security and widespread public mourning, state-run news agency BSS reported, quoting Biman General Manager (Public Relations) Boshra Islam.

Members of the Bangladesh Army, Armed Forces Battalion (AFB) and police were deployed in large numbers to maintain security when Hadi's body was taken out of the airport, it added.

In a televised address to the nation on late Thursday, interim government Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus vowed to bring those involved in Hadi's brutal murder to justice quickly, saying, "no leniency will be shown" to the killers.

He also urged citizens to keep "patience and restraint".

However, various parts of the country were rocked Thursday night by attacks and vandalism, including stone-hurling at the Assistant Indian High Commissioner's residence in Chattogram, soon after Yunus confirmed Hadi's death. Yunus has declared a one-day state mourning on Saturday.

Earlier on Thursday, soon after Yunus' announcement, protesters took to the streets and attacked the offices of two leading newspapers - Prothom Alo and Daily Star, and vandalised Bangabandhu Memorial Museum with hammers in Dhaka, and demolished an office of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina's now disbanded Awami League party in northwestern Rajshahi city.

"From the beginning, the ongoing failure of the current interim government

to prevent mob violence has been evident, and the latest incident is yet another horrific example," the Editors' Council and the Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (NOAB) said in a joint statement.

Protesters also hurled bricks and stones at the residence of the Assistant Indian High Commissioner in Chattogram at 1:30 am, but failed to cause any damage.

Police responded with tear gas and baton charges, dispersing the crowd and detaining 12 protesters. A few injuries were also reported.

Senior officials assured the assistant high commissioner of enhanced security.

A mob also attacked leading progressive cultural group Chhayana, founded in 1961, at Dhmmando area and ransacked the seven-storey building floor by floor, destroying musical instruments, artworks, and important documents.

On Thursday night, the National Citizen Party (NCP), a major offshoot of Students Against Discrimination (SAD) that led the July uprising which ousted the Hasina-led government, joined a mourning procession on the Dhaka University campus.

Supporters of the group raised anti-India slogans, alleging that Hadi's assailants fled to India after carrying out the murder, and demanded that the interim government shut the Indian High Commission until the suspects are returned.

"The interim government must close the Indian High Commission in Bangladesh until India returns the assassins of Hadi bhai. Now or never. We are in a war," said Sarjis Alm, a key NCP leader. Sporadic violence was also reported from other parts of the country overnight.

A Hindu man was lynched to death and his body set on fire over alleged blasphemy in Mymensingh city. The deceased, identified as 25-year-old Dipu Chandra Das, was a factory worker in the city.

In a statement, the interim government on Friday condemned the lynching, saying there is no space for such violence in the new Bangladesh.

"The perpetrators of this heinous crime will not be spared," it added.

Meanwhile, after the flight from Singapore landed in Dhaka, videos shared on social media showed Hadi's followers lining up on both sides of the road from the airport to Shahbagh to receive him before his coffin, draped in the national flag, was brought to the Dhaka University Central Mosque for a public meeting.

Hadi was shot in the head last week by masked gunmen as he initiated his election campaign at central Dhaka's Bijoynagar area.

Former prime minister Khaleda Zia-led Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir told BBC Bangla on Friday that recent incidents of mobs, vandalism and arson targeting various locations across the country are part of a broader conspiracy to destabilise Bangladesh.

Condemning the killing of Hadi, he said, "We think these mobs, attacks and acts of vandalism surrounding this incident are all part of a blueprint."

"Through these activities, there is an attempt to establish extremism in Bangladesh," he said. The US Embassy in Dhaka on Friday issued an advisory, urging American citizens in Bangladesh to exercise caution, warning that "gatherings intended to be peaceful can turn confrontational and escalate into violence".

The mission advised them to avoid demonstrations and exercise caution in the vicinity of any large gatherings. The UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) has also issued a travel advisory, urging British citizens to avoid travel, unless very essential, to the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh, citing reports of violence and other criminal activity, particularly in remote parts.

## Smoke bomb and stabbing attacks at Taipei metro stations kill three; suspect dead



TAIWAN

Attacks at metro stations in Taipei on Friday involving smoke bombs and stabbings killed at least three people, the Taiwanese city's fire department said, adding that the suspect was also dead.

Taiwan's Premier Cho Jung-tai said the attacks at Taipei Main Station and Zhongshan station were "a deliberate act", although the motive was not immediately clear.

Cho said in a statement that the suspect wore a mask and threw "five or six gasoline bombs or smoke grenades" at Taipei Main Station.

According to the Taipei City Fire Department, a total of four people were confirmed dead including the suspect, a 27-year-old man.

Five other people were injured, the fire department said.

The city's mayor said the suspect had apparently jumped off a building, and that he was wanted for evading military service.

One of the victims was killed while trying to stop the attack at the Main Station, Mayor Chiang Wan-an told

reporters.

"Unfortunately, he was attacked and passed away... we are all deeply saddened," he said.

A witness of the attack at the Main Station told local network EBC News that he had seen a "man rush up and try and subdue" the attacker, who was "wearing a gas mask and a bulletproof vest".

"At first I thought it was a drill, then I saw a person holding a knife and throwing smoke grenades," said the witness, who did not give his name.

The mayor said that "we understand that the suspect committed suicide by jumping from a building to evade arrest, and has been confirmed dead."

A second witness told EBC News that "someone ran out wearing a gas mask and started throwing canisters that released gas."

"I quickly ran away. He kept throwing them behind me. I didn't count how many (canisters) but there was a constant banging and clanging sound," added the witness, who also did not give his name.

"I didn't hear any explosions, but a lot of gas kept spraying out."

Cho, the island's premier, earlier said three people suffered cardiac arrest as a result of the attacks, and several people had "injuries from stab wounds and blunt force trauma to various parts of their bodies".

Authorities said they were ramping up security across the island in response to the attacks.

"All important locations... including railway stations, highways, subway stations and airports are maintaining a high level of alert and vigilance," Cho told reporters.

Images released by Taiwan's Central News Agency show a canister on the ground at the Main Station, with officers examining potential evidence at the scene.

A video posted on social media shows a thick cloud of white smoke covering an underground section of a metro station, with some people standing at a distance.

President Lai Ching-te said Taiwanese authorities will "quickly clarify the details of the case. There will be no leniency and we will do everything in our power to ensure the safety of our citizens."

## Uttar Pradesh's First Gen-Z Post Office inaugurated at IIM Lucknow

**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@krctimes.com For Details Visit: https://bit.ly/krctimesplacements 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 InfoCom Solutions at: info@krctimes.com 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/krctimesinternship or www.krctimes.com/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@krctimes.com For Details Visit: https://bit.ly/NEIndiaWritingStarContest www.krctimes.com/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@krctimes.com / WP: 9330830083 For Subscription: krctimes@gmail.com / WP: 8721838313 Editor: biswadeep.gupta@gmail.com / WP: 8721838313



**LUCKNOW**

Marking a significant milestone in modernising postal service for the youth, Indian Institute of Management Lucknow hosted the inauguration of Uttar Pradesh's first Gen-Z post office on its campus today, 19th December 2025. The event was graced by the esteemed presence of Prof. M. P. Gupta, Director, IIM Lucknow, along with Shri Pranav Kumar, Chief Postmaster General, U.P. Circle, and Shri Sunil Kumar Rai, Postmaster General HQ Region, Lucknow.

Designed to resonate with the preferences of Gen-Z, the newly launched post office features:

- Indian Post Payment Bank services (a QR code-based payment system)
- Automated parcel packaging and booking units
- End-to-end package tracking with real-time updates
- Aadhaar enrolment and update services
- Free high-speed Wi-Fi enabled space with refreshments



When studying something new, teach a friend about it. Let them ask questions. If you can teach something well, then you understand it well.

End-to-end package tracking with real-time updates

Aadhaar enrolment and update services

Free high-speed Wi-Fi enabled space with refreshments

Speaking during the event, Prof. M. P. Gupta, Director, IIM Lucknow, said, "Prior to the internet era, letters were the primary means of communication, and India Post enabled this. Today, technology and tracking systems have the potential to make services more efficient. We are glad to have the first Gen-Z post office in the state, and I am confident it will benefit the IIM Lucknow community at large."

A unique service being offered by the newly inaugurated post office is a packers and movers facility for IIM Lucknow students. This service enables students to transport their belongings directly from their hostels to their homes at half the cost charged by private sector service providers after they complete their course on campus.

Speaking during the event, Shri Pranav Kumar, Chief Postmaster General, U.P. Circle, said, "Designed to attract and bring the youth into the postal system, this post office is the first-of-its-kind in Lucknow. Equipped with high-tech facilities, it caters to the needs of the new generation. We aim to engage with the young generation and make them experience the modern postal services."

Under this initiative, we are also involving the youth to provide input in the design process at different locations, ensuring their perspectives shape the future of our post offices."

The initiative aligns with India Post's transformative vision and introduces a fresh, experiential approach to postal services, specially curated for young citizens, students, and digital natives.

Highlighting the initiatives being taken by India Post, Shri Sunil Kumar Rai, Postmaster General HQ Region, Lucknow, said, "Under the guidance and

support of Hon'ble Union Minister of Communications, Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia, with the launch of this Gen-Z post office, we aim to make the postal system smarter and more approachable. Through innovations like trackable consignments and streamlined delivery processes, we are confident that the new facility will provide more transparent and youth-friendly services."

The launch of the Gen-Z post office at IIM Lucknow is part of a broader initiative by India Post to reimagine and create modern, interactive postal services across the country that better serve younger generations while preserving the legacy of India's postal network.

Uttar Pradesh has a total of 125 post offices in the state. Other than the post office inaugurated at IIM Lucknow campus, units at Lucknow University, Sainik School, Sarojini Nagar, and Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, have also been declared Gen-Z post offices.

# Spreading the News of the NE Integration Rally, 2026, during my Visit to Ahmedabad

**PROF (DR) SUKAMAL DEB,  
ADVISOR, NEIR, 2026**



At the sidelines of a hectic schedule in my recent visit to Ahmedabad, I visited the Art Gallery, Ahmedabad,



on 12th Dec 2025, especially on the invitation of Ms Avani Varia. My one objective was to speak with her on the languishing crafts of the North East Region, India and brainstorm an idea on how many of our extinct crafts or the crafts on the verge of extinction can be documented, preserved and revived.

In this trip to Ahmedabad, I also met Ms Reena Mittal. I had long discussions with both of them on the crafts, culture, tradition and the richness of this Region. When we are on an ambitious plan of 30 days to start the North East Integration Rally, 2026 (NEIR, 2026), from Jan 4, 2026, I keep myself mostly occupied in my leisure time (which is truly very short these days!!) to understand, appreciate and embrace the beauty of the Region.

Avani Varia, one of the 50 most influential women from Ahmedabad, is dedicated to preserving and promoting India's rich cultural heritage, including indigenous textiles, non-textile crafts, traditional arts and ancestral knowledge. She admires the rich heritage of arts and crafts in India.

Varia, an eternal nomad, as she classifies herself, is inspired to work on international projects that represent India to the world via arts, design and culture. Born in Varia, a traditional potter community in Gujarat, she gets a sense of aesthetics and love for art and crafts.

We spent hours speaking on

the crafts of her and those of the North East Region, until she alerted me that my flight time was approaching. I was to fly at 11.15 p.m., bound for New Delhi from Terminal 1, the ticket that I booked, paying an exorbitant price.

We sat at an old-fashioned coffeehouse in the Darpana Academy of Performing Arts, a school for performing arts in Ahmedabad, established by Mrinalini Sarabhai and Vikram Sarabhai in 1949. Mrinalini (1918 – 2016) was an Indian classical dancer, choreographer and instructor. She was the founder and director of the Darpana Academy of Performing Arts, an institute for imparting training in dance, drama, music and puppetry. She received Padma Bhushan in 1992 and Padma Shri in 1965. She was educated at Shantiniketan under the guidance of Rabindranath Tagore, where she realised her true calling.

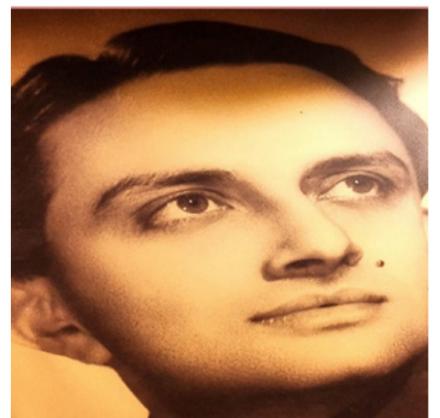
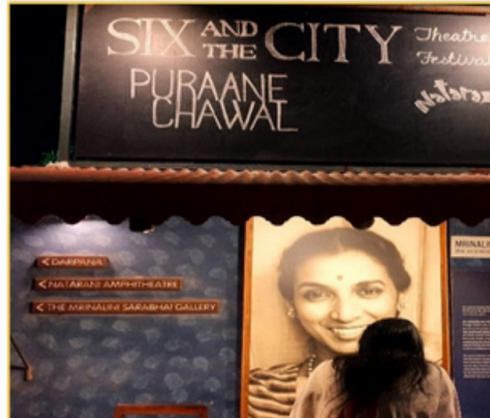
Mrinalini was married to Vikram Ambalal Sarabhai (1919 – 1971), who was an Indian physicist and astronomer who initiated space research and helped to develop nuclear power in India. Often regarded as the "Father of the Indian space program, Sarabhai was honoured with Padma Bhushan in 1966 and the Padma Vibhushan (posthumously) in 1972.

Sitting at a fabulous place, Darpana, discussing on the richness of the North East was a magical experience for me.

I met Ms Reena Mittal, a Freelance Journalist, at Anant National University, Ahmedabad, at the sidelines of a craft workshop on Dec 10, 2025.

This meeting was long overdue, as we had been planning to discuss the slow textiles (the hand-spun, handwoven textiles) of the North East, in particular, and of our nation in general.

With her long association of working on sustainable textiles, for nearly 4 decades, Reena Mittal is Founder & CEO, Slow Textiles, Managing Editor, Textile Excellence, India Correspondent, International Newspaper Ltd, India Correspondent, Emerging Textiles, Chief Operating Officer, Federation of All India Textile Manufacturers Association and Chief Reporter, Indian Express Business



Publication Division. We immersed ourselves in discussing the innovative ideas in the revival and documentation of languishing crafts practised by the marginalised communities. We both write on Slow Textiles and Textile Excellence.

Both meetings with two dedicated personalities in the craft world drew repeated references to the NEIR, 2026, as this event is our humble yet ambitious mission to sensitise the nation, maybe the world, that the beauty and vividness of the NER is unparalleled.

I always advocate that one sees the North East more with the heart than with the eyes. Her beauty, her tradition, and her people will mesmerise you. My love for her knows no bounds.

When we discuss sustainable fashion and textile products, cotton often takes centre stage. But the world of natural fibres is far richer, more diverse, and deeply connected to the local ecosystem and traditions. This is a case of the NER; we give the world all varieties of silks.

At the NEIR, 2026, we celebrate not only the materials themselves, but the farmers, producers and artisans who steward these fibres with care. A truly sustainable textile future is built on respect and responsibility for our natural resources. This is one of our prominent messages of NEIR, 2026.

Our like-minded approach speaks about how we can empower our artisans who are committed to a sustainable future.

They focus on the future of our communities and planet, bringing a real, measurable impact. For the region where we live, the North East, this occupies a special relevance, as in almost every house of ours, the women practice sustainable crafts, the slow textiles, a narrative of our identity.

We are yet to recognise them, but they are our climate activists, who promote the concept of the circular economy. In that sense, the North East Integration Rally, 2026 has a special importance, as it seriously thinks in that wavelength.



