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PERSPECTIVE

Clothes – What we wear affects how we behave.

US Journalist Injured by Landmine in Myanmar, Undergoes Treatment in Mizoram

AIZAWL



American freelance journalist Collin Mayfield has been seriously injured after accidentally stepping on a landmine while covering the Myanmar conflict. The incident occurred near Mount Kennedy in Tedim township, Chin State, where Mayfield was embedded with a PDF-Zoland column for field reporting.

The blast resulted in the loss of several toes on his left foot and caused additional injuries to his left arm and right leg.

He was quickly evacuated across the border to India and is currently receiving medical care at Ebenezer Hospital in Aizawl, Mizoram.

Hospital officials said surgeons are scheduled to operate on his injured left leg at 1 pm today.

Mayfield, widely known for his ground reporting from conflict zones, recently released a three-part documentary series titled 'The Chin Resistance', exploring the ongoing civil war in Myanmar.

WHO SAID WHAT



The Gorshey circle came alive today. A blend of music and graceful steps, offered with devotion and joy. This beautiful tradition continues every Wednesday in honour of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. ~ Pema Khandu, CM Arunachal Pradesh

Sonowal says NE now at the centre of India's growth push



KRC TIMES NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal said the Northeast has moved to the centre of the country's development agenda, crediting recent gains in connectivity, infrastructure and industrial expansion to sustained central policies.

Speaking to the media in New Delhi, he said the region has recorded quick progress in sectors such as road and air connectivity, communication, railways and emerging industries like semiconductors. According to him, improved peace and stability have opened the door for long-delayed economic potential. Sonowal criticised earlier Congress

governments, arguing that the Northeast was neglected for decades and often projected as a region defined by unrest. He said the shift began under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, adding that the region is now progressing at a steady pace.

He highlighted regular visits by Union ministers to monitor the rollout of central schemes, calling it a sign of the government's focus on balanced development. Sonowal also noted that India now has 20 national waterways and said the Inland Waterways Authority is working to improve capacity and efficiency.

The minister said the government is increasing public awareness about ongoing projects and expressed confidence that the BJP will retain power in Assam, citing continued trust in the Prime Minister. On foreign relations, Sonowal referred to Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to India and described strong India-Russia ties as strategically important.

Meghalaya to get three new data, AI laboratories: IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw

GUWAHATI

Union Minister of Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw on Wednesday announced the establishment of three data and Artificial Intelligence (AI) laboratories in Meghalaya, aimed at making technology more accessible to citizens across India.

The announcement was made virtually during the Regional Artificial Intelligence Summit held in the state.

The new centres will be set up at ITI Park, Shillong Polytechnic, and ITI Tura.

Meghalaya already has an operational facility at the National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT), Shillong.

Vaishnaw emphasised that AI, like electricity, will become an essential part of modern life, and efforts are being made to ensure its benefits reach every citizen.

He said the government's plan includes creating 570 data and AI laboratories across the country, with 30 already established in tier-2



and tier-3 cities to train young people.

The minister highlighted India's efforts to develop sovereign large language models (LLMs) to reduce reliance on foreign technology companies. He noted that over 3,800 datasets will be created and more than 38,000 Graphic Processing Units (GPUs) will be used to train AI models.

He also mentioned that the AI mission has been allocated Rs 10,300 crore over the next five years to expand technological access and support nationwide innovation.

Silchar Municipal Corporation warns banquet halls, hotels: Rs. 1 lakh penalty for illegal waste dumping



SILCHAR

The Silchar Municipal Corporation (SMC) has issued a strict warning to banquet halls, hotels, restaurants, godowns and other Bulk Waste Generators (BWGs), directing them to adhere to waste management rules during the festive and peak wedding season.

The municipal body noted a rise in

complaints of garbage being dumped along roadsides, drains and public spaces, creating health hazards and disrupting civic order.

In a notice issued on Wednesday, the SMC said violators will face fines of up to ₹1 lakh for disposing waste in open areas. The corporation has also cautioned that legal action may be initiated under the Assam Municipal Corporation Act, 2022 for serious breaches.

All BWGs have been instructed to coordinate with the SMC for proper collection and disposal of waste. User fees will apply as per existing guidelines. The notice further mentions that enforcement teams will conduct surprise inspections, and any lapse in compliance will attract strict penalties.

Describing the move as necessary to safeguard public health and preserve cleanliness across the city, SMC urged cooperation from all stakeholders in achieving a "Swachh Sundor Silchar."

Municipal Inspector Panna Lal Deb and City Project Officer (SBM-U) Rajiv Chanda have been designated as the primary contact officials for waste management coordination. The directive has also been circulated to enforcement agencies, market committees and waste management partners for immediate implementation.

Assam Prepares for PM Modi's December 20 Visit, CM Reviews Development-Centric Agenda

GUWAHATI

Assam is gearing up for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's proposed two-day visit beginning December 20, with Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma chairing a high-level review meeting on Tuesday to assess arrangements for major events planned in Guwahati and Namerup.

Sarma said the visit is poised to usher in "a new wave of development" for the state. In a post on X, he wrote: "Assam is all set to welcome Adarniya Shri @narendramodi ji on 20th December as he will herald a new wave of development in the state. Reviewed preparations for his welcome and the marquee events which will take place during the visit."

Modi's itinerary includes the inauguration of the new terminal building at Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport and the unveiling of a statue of Assam's first Chief Minister, Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi, at Borjhar. A public meeting is also scheduled in Guwahati.

At Namerup, the Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone for the brownfield ammonia-urea complex with an annual production capacity of 12.7 lakh metric tonnes, followed by a public address.



The Chief Minister reviewed logistical and security plans for both venues, directing senior officials to ensure seamless execution of the programmes. The meeting was attended by Minister of Industries, Commerce & Public Enterprises Bimal Bora, BJP

MLA Taranga Gogoi, district commissioners of Kamrup and Dibrugarh, and Assam Valley Fertilizer & Chemical Company Ltd. MD S.P. Mahanta, who joined virtually. Chief Secretary Ravi Kota, DGP Harmet Singh and other senior officials were also present.

Assam Govt Imposes Statewide Ban on Jihadi, Radical Literature Under BNSS

GUWAHATI

The Assam Government has announced a comprehensive ban on all radical and jihadi publications associated with proscribed extremist organisations, invoking Section 98 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023. A notification issued on December 3 by the Political (A) Department directs immediate prohibition and forfeiture of such material across the State.

According to the order, no individual or entity may publish, distribute, sell, possess or circulate-physically or digitally-any literature linked to Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT), Ansar-Al-Islam/pro-AQIS or other banned outfits. The decision follows inputs from the Assam Police Law & Order division and the Judicial Department warning that the continued spread of extremist propaganda poses a direct threat to national security, communal harmony and public order.

Officials noted that intelligence inputs, cyber-monitoring and recent investigations conducted by Assam



Police and the Special Task Force suggested ongoing circulation of radical content. The material reportedly in-

cludes jihadist indoctrination, recruitment manuals and operational guidance meant to influence vulnerable

individuals and strengthen extremist networks.

The notification asserts that such content falls foul of multiple legal provisions, including Section 299 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Section 67 of the IT Act relating to dissemination of objectionable electronic material. Sections 98 and 99 of the BNSS provide the legal basis for seizure and forfeiture of such publications.

The Judicial Department emphasised that the presence of extremist literature could deepen social tensions, promote enmity between communities and undermine national integration-offences covered under Sections 196, 197 and 299 of the BNS. The government has therefore extended the ban to digital spaces including websites, social media platforms, online forums, messaging groups and any encrypted distribution channels.

Assam Police, along with CID, Special Branch, district police units and cybercrime cells, have been tasked with strict enforcement. Authorities may initiate legal action against individuals or organisations found storing, sharing or producing banned content.

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THE BALUCHISTAN CONUNDRUM

Baluchistan, Pakistan's largest yet least developed province, finds itself at the heart of a complex geopolitical contestation and persistent insurgency. The Baloch protracted struggle is rooted in the complex interplay of colonial legacy, forced integration and persistent political alienation. Ideologically, the Baloch movement is driven by a strong sense of ethno-nationalism seeking recognition for their distinct historical, cultural and tribal identity. Additionally, Baluchistan's immense strategic and economic significance with the advent of mega projects of Gwadar port and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has further fueled Baloch resentment. Locals perceive it as another layer of exploitation under the guise of progress.

The evolution of a distinct Baloch National identity was first envisioned in pre-colonial times when Baluchistan was divided into four Princely states – Kalat, Lasbela, Makran and Kharan, all under the suzerainty of the Khan of Kalat who was regarded as sovereign Prince, independent of British Government. While the majority of Princely States of India were incorporated in Category A under the aegis of the Political Department, some states like Nepal, Bhutan, Kalat and Sikkim were grouped in Category B under the supervision of the External Affairs Department. However, by side-lining and disregarding all the evidences of its independent status, the Government of India, through the Act of 1955 unilaterally included Kalat among the Princely States of India.

As the British Empire in India was nearing its end, many questions and discrepancies arose regarding the special status and independence of Kalat. Mir Ahmad Khan, the then Khan of Kalat, declared that as his State had never been a part of the Indian empire, he wished to retain his Independence. However, Mountbatten did not give his assent to Kalat's independence. In a dramatic turn of events, on 27th March 1948, the Pakistani army invaded Kalat and its ruler was forced to surrender. Thus, by signing the Instrument of Accession, Kalat state became a part of Pakistan. Quetta, its capital, went on to become Pakistan's military base as it was situated on the strategic routes to Persia and Afghanistan.

Baluchistan – Pakistan's Achilles Heel
In the aftermath of the forced accession Kalat to Pakistan in the year 1948, the ties between the Baloch Nationalists and the Pakistani government have been confrontational. This conflict stems from their separate histories, cultures, and languages. Thus, Pakistan has failed to forge a common national identity. Although providing greater autonomy to the provinces was a part of Jinnah's famous Fourteen Points. But after the creation of Pakistan, Jinnah changed his stance. The unwillingness to allow regional autonomy to the Baloch has been the primary factor that led to the Baloch nationalist forces repeatedly launching a guerrilla war against the State.

The causes of alienation of Baloch people are multi-dimensional. Their forced accession in 1948 is believed to have obliterated their distinct identity. This is the issue that resonates even today and Baloch people have not reconciled to being a part of Pakistan. This sense of disillusionment was further inflamed by the systemic marginalization of the province. The feeling has persisted that the Federal Government of Pakistan dominated by Punjabi military and bureaucratic elites, was discriminating against them and colonizing their province by cashing in on their abundant natural resources without ploughing much back to improve the socio-economic conditions of the locals. Additionally, the condition of educational system of the province is woefully dysfunctional. Its high rate of illiteracy and low standard of educational progress are the root cause of Baluchistan lagging behind the other provinces. There is a persistent feeling of isolation, dejection and rejection.

Baluchistan, with its 760 km coastline has enormous strategic potential. It sits astride the strait of Hormuz, one of the most strategic points of the Indian ocean, through which 40 percent of the world's oil supply flows. Its geographical proximity to oil and gas deposits of Central Asian regions add to its strategic importance. The naval bases of Pakistan – Ormara, Pasni and Gwadar are located on the Baloch coast. Besides providing strategic depth to Pakistan, the province has a great potential for revenue generation. It is also called fruit basket of Pakistan and has a rich treasure of mineral and energy resources. Reserves of coal, gold, and copper etc. have been found in the region. It is the key to energy security of Pakistan.

In the North-West of Baluchistan, the CPEC project has become a complete development platform consisting of port, road and rail infrastructural networks. It seeks to connect Gwadar in Baluchistan with Kashgar in China's Xinjiang Province. Gwadar's potential is also based on its strategic location on Baluchistan's Makran coast. It is the outlet for (CPEC) China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, providing Xinjiang province of China with commercial access to the Persian Gulf. The development of Gwadar port and CPEC has further heightened Baluchistan's strategic significance and the corridor has the potential to transform Pakistan into an economic hub. However, the increasing strategic importance of Baluchistan has changed the dynamics between Islamabad and Quetta.

The Baloch nationalists have come to view the mega projects as a part of a political strategy dictated by the desire to extract this treasure for the benefit of Pakistani bureaucratic bourgeoisie and foreign imperialist interest. Their main ground of criticism were exclusion of the local people and their representatives from planning and execution of the project and the lack of employment to the local people. Moreover, grabbing prime farmlands and influx of workers from other provinces especially from Punjab have intensified their anxieties regarding ethnic imbalance in Gwadar.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"A stone went to the temple once and became God. But a man went to the temple a thousand times and still couldn't become human." — Osho

BANISHING THE MAOIST PHOENIX



K V MADHUSUDHANAN

What originated as a protest over land issues in West Bengal's Naxalbari developed into a highly violent revolutionary insurgency that killed a large number of security personnel, hundreds of civilians, and caused the loss of private and public property worth crores of rupees. By the mid-1970s, the original movement was decimated.

But things changed about two decades later. A March 2001 conference of the People's War Group of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), held at a secluded location in Dandakaranya, sought to create a common platform of Maoists and enlist the support of socially-oppressed classes. They sought to create 'liberated' guerrilla zones and a contiguous zone extending from Nepal to Karnataka and Tamil Nadu called the 'red corridor'. From time to time, they also supported the secessionist struggles of Khalistan, the Northeast, Gorkhas, and Kashmir.

Acquiring military power, they unleashed terror across the country, compelling Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to concede that, by the second half of the 2000s, the Maoist menace had become the deadliest internal security threat. By 2010 end, they were able to demonstrate to the population of the 'red corridor' that it would be in their interest to toe the Maoist line or face consequences.

The security forces continued breathing down the Maoists' neck, and political and administrative steps slowly made the movement less grievance-driven. The ideology never really mattered to the poor tribal communities, but only to the movement's leaders, mostly from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

The creation of the Commando Battalions of Resolute Action or CoBRA at the Centre, modernisation of state police forces, and specialised training, followed by better coordination started yielding results.

This year witnessed a decisive upper hand for the security forces. The Union home minister's deadline to get rid of the menace was perceived to be realistic and feasible, and it galvanised the countermeasures by multiple agencies. Operation Black Forest virtually broke the back of the movement with large-scale seizure of weapons and explosives, besides the killing of over 30 cadres including top leader Basavaraju, the brain behind several deadly strikes.

Since 2023, 401 Maoist cadres have been killed in encounters, 1,439 arrested and 1,356 surrendered. The impact was so substantial that Mallojula Venugopal alias Sonu, a surrendered central committee member, admitted that the armed struggle was no longer relevant. As more middle- and senior-level cadres leaders are surrendering, Maoists are now forced to abandon their traditional strongholds.

The killing of Madvi Hidma, the most formidable guerrilla of the movement, along with his trusted bodyguards and wife Madakam Raje, followed by the killing of seven other cadres and the arrest of 50 of them across Andhra Pradesh demolished the elusive image of the diehard guerrilla. Hidma, who joined the movement at age 16 and rose meteorically to assume control of its central military commission, masterminded at least 26 deadly strikes including the 2010 Dantewada assault that killed 76 CRPF personnel, the 2013 ambush that killed Mahendra Karma and a few other Congress leaders, the 2017

attack in Burkopal killing 25 CRPF personnel, and the Tekulguda ambush that caused 22 casualties among the security forces.

Tech-savvy but not formally educated, he had the great advantage over other leaders due to his command over the Gonda language as a Bastar native.

But moving to Andhra Pradesh proved to be his nemesis and the master tactician found himself unequal to the professionalism of the Greyhounds unit of the Andhra and Telangana police. He also underestimated the meticulous coordination among various agencies and states that had been perfected over a decade.

The suggestion of a ceasefire has been rejected by the Centre and the extremists have been urged to surrender. The concerned states have launched a rehabilitation policy under which protection and mainstreaming are to be ensured. This multi-pronged approach is likely to yield results and the declaration that India will be free of Maoist extremists by the end of March 2026 is likely to materialise.

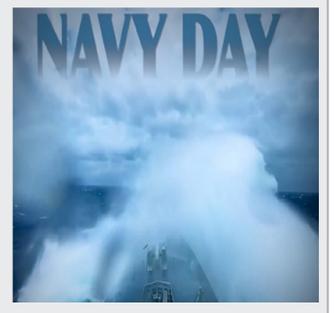
But it will be foolhardy to assume that all will give in easily. Splinter groups, in their desperation, might indulge in mindless violence and retribution, as was seen in the case of killing of Inspector Ashish Sharma, a highly decorated Madhya Pradesh officer, on November 19.

Even otherwise, the Maoists are known to record their own setbacks and take corrective measures. Nobody imagined that the once-decimated movement would regroup and unleash relentless violence for close to two and a half decades in the new millennium. The only durable and long lasting solution will be removal of the socio-economic inequalities and

mainstreaming of India's large tribal population without bruising their sensibilities. Regional imbalances should be addressed by distributing resources and development works. While providing infrastructure, ecological balance should be maintained and displacement should be avoided even if it is intended to create jobs. The security agencies should not lower their guard and should keep gathering intelligence. The forces should also be encouraged to undertake civic projects in the affected regions and earn the trust of the local people. Remember, Left extremism has a history of rising from the ashes and regrouping at a tactically appropriate time.

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

Navy Day greetings to all personnel of the Indian Navy. Our Navy is synonymous with exceptional courage and determination. They safeguard our shores and uphold our maritime interests. In the recent years, our Navy has focussed on self-reliance and modernisation. This has enhanced our security apparatus. I can never forget this year's Diwali, which I spent with Naval personnel on board INS Vikrant. Wishing the Indian Navy the very best for their endeavours ahead. ~ Narendra Modi, PM



Nari Shakti to Vikas: Focus must shift to Women-led progress

LAKSHMI PURI

Gender equality and women's empowerment is the organising idea for our brighter today and our transformed tomorrows. In this age of acceleration, we cannot afford to wait another century to achieve gender parity. The cardinal concept of nari shakti (women's power) and of women as devis (goddesses), which is India's civilisational gift to the world, must now move from symbolic reverence to practical power and take our virasat (tradition) of respect for women into a vikas (development) pathway of women-led sustainable development. When the freedoms and life chances of half of humanity expand, societies are rewired. Gender equality is an ideal in its own right and also a powerful force multiplier of social, economic, political, technological and environmental progress. The 2015 McKinsey Global Institute report, the 2024 analysis using National Family Health Survey data, and EY's India@100 work, together make a compelling economic case: Closing gender gaps can add 20 to 30% to GDP and is indispensable for India to become a \$29-trillion economy by 2047. India is living through a demographic moment. Our young population will yield a dividend only if it becomes a female dividend. Fertility is declining and the ambitions of girls and young women are rising. India now has near parity in higher education and around 43% of STEM students are women. After years in which women's work was pushed into informality and invisibility, female labour force participation has begun to climb again and must translate into better quality, formal and future-ready jobs.

A defining feature of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has been targeted flagship pro-

grammes in which women are the principal labharthi (beneficiaries), combined with transversal programmes in infrastructure, health, education and social protection that are gender responsive. Scholarships, hostels and reserved seats have lifted women's presence in higher and technical education and opened pathways into the knowledge, health, green and care economies. Digital missions and rural programmes have trained tens of millions of women and put smartphones with affordable data and Jan Dhan accounts in their hands, giving direct access to information, markets and services. Flagship schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, PM MUDRA, Swachh Bharat and PM Awas have put clean energy, access to credit, sanitation and secure housing in cores of women's names, while schemes such as the Sukanya Samridhi and Lakhpati Didi have enabled direct benefit transfers into their bank accounts and rising incomes. The next level must move them decisively from labharthi to adhikarpati, from recipients of entitlements to full rights holders and decision makers in the economy and society. That is the essence of achieving SDG 5 on gender equality by 2030. Intersectionality in India means that many women face multiple layers of disadvantage through poverty, caste, tribe, religion, disability or location. The abolition of instant triple talaq has strengthened Muslim women's rights in marriage. The election of Droupadi Murmu, a woman from an Adivasi background, as President of India embodies how far a marginalised woman can rise in a republic, deepening its commitment to gender and social justice. The tomorrow we must build is one in which such trajectories are systemic and widespread rather than exceptional.

Freedom from violence remains the non-negotiable foundation of a gender equal society. Ending violence against women and girls in all its forms, from domestic abuse and trafficking to work-place harassment and online hate, must stay at the top of the agenda, together with sustained investment in women's health and in sexual and reproductive rights that guarantee autonomy and dignity.

Political voice and leadership multiply the impact of every other intervention and give women the power to shape tomorrow's rules. At the grassroots, 33% to 50% reservations in panchayats and urban local bodies have created 1.5 million women leaders. The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, reserving one third of seats in the Lok Sabha and all state assemblies for women, is a historic step towards real parity in lawmaking and governance. Women are reshaping electoral outcomes, as seen recently in Bihar, as conscious voters rewarding governments that deliver on safety, mobility, education, health and livelihoods.

Culture is an infrastructure of meaning through which societies understand themselves and imagine their future. For centuries it was built from a male vantage of patriarchy, even in civilisations that worshipped the feminine divine. Today, women across the creative industries, from media and literature to cinema, music, sport and digital content, are rewriting that script and reclaiming the Devi idea so that reverence is expressed as equal rights, equal respect and shared responsibility in the home, the economy and the public sphere.

The next level of transformation must now be led as much from offices, board rooms, laboratories and

digital platforms as from parliaments. Every institution, from government departments and political parties to universities, research councils, startups and large corporations, must build gender parity into its DNA. This means gender equal education to jobs value chains, where girls move from classrooms into careers in science, technology and artificial intelligence across the wider Industry 4.0 ecosystem. It means corporate leaders and chief executives committing to parity in recruitment, retention, re-entry and promotion, and to many more women in senior management and on boards. It also means a research and innovation system and a start-up culture where women founders, scientists and creators can access credit, mentorship and markets on equal terms.

During its G20 presidency, India placed women-led development at the centre of the agenda, securing commitments on bridging the digital gender gap, raising women's labour force participation, and expanding women's entrepreneurship and leadership. Empowered women are the great transformers of our age. As transformed women who transform their families, communities, countries and the world, they unlock demographic advantage and enable women and girls to live lives of freedom, choice and dignity. If India sustains and amplifies this movement, its civilisational second coming as a leading power will be fast forwarded by a journey to Viksit Bharat (developed India) by 2047 that is led by Nari Shakti.

The Author is a former assistant secretary general of the United Nations and a leading global advocate of gender equality and women-led development. The views expressed are personal.

Assam CM presents appointment letters to 5,815 youth; total appointments to govt jobs rise to 1,41,194

GUWAHATI

Increasing the strength of Assam Police Force through transparent recruitment, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma continuing his government's journey of transparent, merit-based appointments, presented appointment letters to 5,815 youth selected for Assam Police and other directorates of the Home Department at a function held at Bhogeswar Baruah sports complex in Guwahati.

With these appointments, the total number of transparent, merit-based government appointments given by the present State government has reached 1,41,194.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Sarma said that the state government has been giving appointments transparently as promised, thus reflecting his government's commitment to youth empowerment, institu-

tional strengthening and public service through fair recruitment.

Moreover, he said that earlier, for securing jobs as police, applicants needed influential connections or money.

"Now in Assam, hard work and study help candidates earn government jobs. Nepotism frustrated young people, and many who failed to get jobs despite good results had gone astray," the Chief Minister said.

Giving the example of yesteryears, the Chief Minister moreover said that several youths left for other states to work as security guards because they got no opportunities in Assam.

Referring to the promise of one lakh government jobs during the last Assembly election campaign, the Chief Minister said that after forming the government, he launched a clean, transparent, merit-based recruitment system.



"The government created a process that fills vacant posts each year

in the police, education, and health departments so that no vacancy remains open for long," Sarma added.

Referring to the proposal of four new commando battalions and one forest battalion, Sarma said that fair recruitment in the Assam Police encouraged young people to work hard.

"As a result, many have qualified for Assam Police, CAPF, BSF, and the Army. Rural areas now show a new spirit. Youth now ask the government for stadiums so they can train for jobs," the Chief Minister said.

He described this change as the foundation of a new Assam. He addressed those who earned jobs through hard work, ideal role models and urged them to inspire others.

"Advertisements for five thousand new constable posts will appear very soon," he said. The Chief Minister also advised recruits who gained jobs without paying bribes to reject cor-

ruption even after joining the service. He said that no corruption complaints emerged against recruits in the past five years. He urged those who have come from low-income families, such as farmers, vegetable sellers, and rickshaw drivers, to stay kind toward the poor because they earned their positions through determination and hard work. He asked new recruits to give up the Orunodoi benefits if any female member of their families is receiving, visit local temples or naamghars before joining their posts, and never neglect their parents.

He noted that the Union Ministry of Home Affairs ranked Assam Police first in implementing the new criminal laws. He said that regular recruitment helped Assam Police achieve discipline, transparency, and strong investigative progress. Adequate officers and constables strengthened law and order and built a peaceful envi-

ronment. He moreover observed that decisive steps in the past five years reduced crime in Assam and that registered cases fell significantly from 1.21 lakh in 2020 to 50,000 in 2024.

"Crime per one lakh people dropped from 379 in 2021 to 128 in March 2025. Pending cases fell from 1.33 lakh in 2021 to 14 thousand in 2024. Charge sheet rates rose from 47.8 per cent in 2020 to 66.7 per cent in 2024, and conviction rates rose fourfold to reach 22.9 per cent. Crimes against women declined sharply. Such cases fell from 26,352 in 2020 to 5,555 in 2024," the Chief Minister said.

Labour Welfare, Home (Prisons, Home Guards and Civil Defence) Minister Rupesh Gowala, MLAs Atul Bora, Siddhartha Bhattacharyya, Ramendra Narayan Kalita, Chief Secretary Ravi Kota, DGP Harmeet Singh, and a host of other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

Tripura, LPA ink MoU to launch skill training hubs for border-area women

AGARTALA

The Tripura Directorate of Skill Development has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Land Port Authority of India (LPAI) to roll out targeted skill development programmes for women living in border areas, officials confirmed on December 4.

Under the agreement, the Akhaura Integrated Check Post (ICP) will serve as the first training hub, with its existing infrastructure including a 30-seater conference room, smart classroom, meeting spaces and technology-enabled facilities to be opened for exclusive women-centric skill programmes starting the last week of December.

Skill Development Director Pradip K. said the collaboration is aimed at narrowing the regional skill gap and improving employability among women through IT-based training modules. Courses will include Accounting Assistance, GST operations and Tally, alongside digital literacy components. "The use of ICP infrastructure allows us to deliver modern skill training closer to beneficiaries, enabling women to access opportunities without having to travel far," he said.

Tripura ICP Manager Debashis Nandi noted that similar partnerships will be extended to Sabroom and Srimantapur ICPs, creating a wider network of training centres along the border.

The expansion is expected to benefit a larger number of women from economically vulnerable communities by providing market-relevant skills and employment-linked training.

The initiative marks a significant move toward capacity-building and economic empowerment for women in Tripura's border belts, where access to formal skills training has historically remained limited.

Manipur students renew textbook translation demand, citing unspent Rs 18 crore fund

IMPHAL

Students renewed their agitation, demanding the translation of school and college textbooks into the Manipuri language, following the central government's allocation of Rs 18 crore for the preservation and promotion of the Manipuri language and script.

The agitation took the form of human chains at key routes in Imphal East district, organised under the aegis of the Manipuri Students' Federation (MSF) on Wednesday.

The protesters held placards and shouted slogans such as "Respect Manipuri Language, Respect Manipur," "Promote Our Script, Preserve Our Identity," and "Education in Mother Tongue is Our Right."

MSF General Secretary Sundar Khuman said that students in the state continue to

rely on textbooks written in other languages, which alienates them from their roots and creates barriers to effective learning.

MSF had submitted a memorandum to the governor on May 12, 2025, urging an immediate review of educational materials to promote the Manipuri language, which is included in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

The protesting students called on government authorities to take immediate steps to publish and make available textbooks and reference books in the Manipuri language.

Additionally, in August 2024, the central government allocated Rs 18 crore as the first instalment to the Government of Manipur specifically for the preservation and promotion of the Manipuri language and script.

High logistics costs and weak connectivity bottleneck North East's development, warns Tripura CM

AGARTALA

Tripura Chief Minister Dr Manik Saha has said that the North Eastern region, despite its vast development potential, continues to struggle under the weight of high logistics costs, communication hurdles, and longstanding infrastructure gaps. These challenges, he stressed, remain key barriers to unlocking economic growth in the eight-state region.

Speaking at the second meeting of the High-Level Task Force on Logistics Expenditure, Infrastructure, and Communication Development in the North East held on December 3, Dr Saha said the panel has created a much-needed framework for co-ordinated problem solving. The meeting was chaired by Union Minister for DoNER Jyotiraditya Scindia and attended by senior officials from all North Eastern



states.

The Chief Minister presented a pictorial summary of the issues flagged in the task force's earlier session, along with recommended measures to overcome them. He underscored the urgent requirement for a robust, all-weather multimodal transport and communication network to ensure seamless movement across the region.

Dr Saha pointed out a host of persistent structural barriers - difficult terrain, adverse climatic

conditions, heavy dependency on the Siliguri Corridor, patchy road and rail connectivity in last-mile regions, low air traffic, logistical constraints due to short runways, and significantly underutilised waterways. He added that procedural delays such as forest clearance and land acquisition further slow implementation of key infrastructure projects.

To address these gaps, he called for a stronger public-private partnership approach, increased investment, and an inte-

grated blueprint covering roads, railways, aviation, waterways and digital connectivity. Such interventions, he said, would allow the region to reduce freight burden, spur industrialisation and improve livelihood options.

Dr Saha expressed optimism that the outcome of the task force deliberations will contribute to a long-horizon strategy for accelerated development of the North and the East by 2047. The meeting was attended virtually by Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma, senior officers from Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, and officials from the DoNER Ministry. In Tripura, the session was hosted at the Tripura Institution for Transformation and attended by top state officials including Industries and Commerce Secretary Kiran Gitte, Planning Secretary L.T. Darlong and Director Dr Deepak Kumar.

Debate on Water Pollution Bill for Manipur Erupts Into Clash Over President's Rule

IMPHAL

A parliamentary debate on extending the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Amendment Act, 2024, to Manipur quickly escalated into a political confrontation on Tuesday, with opposition parties accusing the Centre of prolonging President's Rule in the state and "undermining democracy."

Participating in the discussion, Trinamool Congress MP Sushmita Dev questioned why Parliament was legislating on behalf of the Manipur Assembly, which remains suspended. "People are living in relief camps, IDPs are protesting outside Raj Bhawan, and we are making a mockery of their suffering by pushing a Water Pollution Act amendment," she said, demanding immediate restoration of an elected government.

Congress MP Neeraj Dangi



echoed the criticism, alleging that the amendment was required only because "law and order totally collapsed under the BJP." He accused the Prime Minister of visiting Manipur "only for votes" during the 2025 elections and also flagged concerns over the dilution of penalties in the amended law.

DMK's P. Wilson and BRS member K.R. Suresh Reddy questioned how long Parliament would fulfil the role of a suspended state legislature, while CPI(M) MP V. Shivadasan termed the delay in holding elections an act of "cruelty towards the people of Manipur." CPI MP Sandosh Kumar also demanded the return of democratic governance, arguing that environmental legislation should not come at the cost of political accountability.

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Priyanka Chaturvedi said her party would support the bill "in protest," noting that Manipur has been without an elected assembly since 2023. SP MP Jaya Amitabh Bachchan urged the Centre to "control Manipur from Delhi," saying the people themselves would safeguard their rivers once polls are held.

NCP MP Fauzia Khan and inde-

pendent MP Praful Patel emphasised the broader urgency of combating water and air pollution nationwide, while AAP's Swati Maliwal pushed for a dedicated Yamuna cleanup fund and rapid establishment of sewage treatment plants.

Defending the government's position, BJP MPs said the Centre had acted responsibly and was working to stabilise Manipur. BJP's Shambhu Sharan Patel stated that Union Home Minister Amit Shah "camped in Manipur for 137 days," and MP Lahar Singh Siroya cited pollution control initiatives in Bihar as a model the government could replicate in West Bengal.

The debate ended without consensus, but the opposition's united call for immediate elections underscored mounting pressure on the Centre to restore democratic processes in conflict-hit Manipur.

Tezpur University Stakeholders Reject CM's Proposal, Demand Acting VC as Crisis Enters Day 76

TEZPUR

The Tezpur University fraternity has strongly countered Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's recent remarks on the prolonged administrative deadlock at the central university, asserting that he has "misinterpreted" the primary demands of protesting students, faculty and staff.

Responding to the Chief Minister's call for the appointment of a Pro-Vice Chancellor to stabilise operations, the university community reiterated that the agitation has always sought the immediate appointment of an Acting Vice Chancellor instead. Protesters expressed dissatisfaction over what they described as Sarma's delayed engagement with the issue, saying the Chief Minister intervened only after the 76-day standoff gained national attention. Questions are now being raised over whether the response was driven by administrative responsibility or political pressure.

"Our demands remain unchanged: immediate suspension of the current Vice Chancellor pending enquiry, appointment of an Acting VC - not a Pro-VC - and publication of all inquiry reports already submitted," protest leaders stated.

Earlier, Sarma wrote on X that he had urged Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan to fast-

track the appointment of a Pro-Vice Chancellor to ensure continuity of academic functioning during the investigation against Vice Chancellor Prof. Neelima Gupta. He added that central intervention could help restore order soon.

Tezpur University has been shut for over 75 days, with allegations of corruption, recruitment irregularities amounting to more than ₹14 crore fuelling unrest. The impasse has left academic activity paralysed and uncertainty growing among students and staff.

Meanwhile, Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi criticised Sarma for backing a Pro-VC appointment instead of supporting the protesters' demands. Accusing the Chief Minister of protecting the incumbent VC, Gogoi said real leadership would have meant standing with the university community. He also cited past allegations of financial irregularities involving Vice Chancellor Prof. Shambhu Nath Singh during his tenure at Patna University, arguing that the Central government must prioritise the institution's credibility. "Stop using the universities of the Northeast for posting controversial VCs," Gogoi said, urging the government to appoint a new Vice Chancellor to safeguard the university's reputation.

Manipur Insurgent Groups Demand Public Apology from Sangai Festival Participants

IMPHAL

A coalition of five banned insurgent organisations in Manipur has issued a sharp ultimatum to everyone involved in the recently concluded Sangai Festival, calling for a public apology by December 10. The groups described participation in the state's premier cultural event as an act of "betrayal" against thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) still living in relief camps.

The festival, held from November 21 to 30, took place even as displaced families continued demonstrations, demanding safe return and rehabilitation in the wake of prolonged ethnic violence. Since clashes broke out between Meitei and Kuki communities in May 2023, at least 260 people have been killed and thousands remain without homes.

In a joint statement, the Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP), Kanglei Yawol Kanba Lup (KYKL), People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK), PREPAK (Progressive), and the United National Liberation Front (UNLF) criticised the government for failing to address rehabilitation or move toward conflict resolution. They alleged that artistic and commercial participation in the festival disregarded the suffering of displaced residents who continue to struggle for basic



security and livelihood.

The groups have also imposed a one-year ban on four major drama troupes involved in the event, stating that performers and participants must apologise publicly before December 10 for acting against "the wishes of the people."

The ultimatum adds yet another layer of

strain to an already volatile atmosphere in Manipur, where mistrust, ongoing displacement, and lack of political resolution continue to fuel unrest.

Manipur Brings End-of-Life Vehicle Policy in Line with Centre, Unfit Vehicles to Lose Registration

The Manipur government has adopt-

ed the Central Government's framework for End-of-Life Vehicles (ELVs), moving to standardise state transport regulations with national norms aimed at improving environmental safety and ensuring only roadworthy vehicles remain in use.

A notification issued by the Secretariat of the Transport Department under Section 65 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 - in line with the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways' directives dated September 23, 2021 - defines ELVs as vehicles that are unfit for operation. These include vehicles with expired or cancelled registration, those that fail mandatory fitness assessments, or those deemed irreparable due to accidents, fire damage, natural calamities or other severe impacts.

Under the new policy, all vehicles classified as ELVs will have their registration cancelled as per Chapter IV of the Motor Vehicles Act. The state will now operationalise systems for collection, dismantling and scrapping through Authorised Vehicle Scrapping Facilities, in accordance with the Central Motor Vehicles (Registration and Functions of Vehicle Scrapping Facility) Rules, 2021. In addition, Manipur has adopted provisions from the MoRTH notification dated August 20, 2025, allowing for renewal of vehicle registrations older than 15 or 20 years, provided they clear fitness tests and all due fees and taxes are paid.

The new directives take effect immediately, as published in the Manipur Extraordinary Gazette, and override all previous state notifications concerning ELVs.

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TMC suspends Humayun Kabir for plan to build 'Babri Masjid' in Murshidabad; MLA to form new party



KOLKATA

West Bengal's ruling Trinamool Congress on Thursday suspended its Bharatpur MLA Humayun Kabir, who had triggered a storm with the proposal to build 'Babri Masjid' in Murshidabad district.

Kabir, who has hogged the limelight over the last few years with his controversial statements on various matters, including the party's internal affairs, had announced that the foundation stone of the proposed mosque would be laid at Beldanga on December 6.

Announcing his suspension, senior TMC leader Firhad Hakim said Kabir's conduct amounted to gross indiscipline at a time when the party was

working to maintain peace and communal harmony in the state.

"Kabir was involved in communal politics, which the TMC is strictly against. TMC does not believe in communal politics. He will have no relation with the party from this moment. He is being suspended on the instructions of our top leadership," said Hakim, a senior minister in the Mamata Banerjee government.

When the suspension was announced, Kabir was present at the ground in Baharampur, where the CM is scheduled to address a rally later in the day.

Asked about his reaction, Kabir told reporters that the suspension was a "deliberate humiliation".

He said he would resign as an MLA and launch a new political outfit on December 22 in Murshidabad.

Kabir said his new outfit will contest 135 of the 294 seats in the assembly in next year's state elections.

"I will expose the chief minister and the TMC over their double standards on secular politics. TMC has been fooling minorities and has a tacit understanding with the RSS-BJP," he alleged.

"The December 6 programme will go ahead as planned. I will not cancel it. If the administration doesn't allow me to lay the foundation stone, then I will sit on a dharna and get arrested. I have full faith in the judiciary," he said.

Kabir, who keeps switching political parties and had been in the Congress and BJP earlier, claimed that lakhs of people would join the December 6 programme, which may block the all-important NH-12 that connects Kolkata in the south to Siliguri in the north.

State BJP president Samik Bhattacharya termed Kabir's suspension a "drama".

"Humayun Kabir has been making controversial remarks for a long time, yet the TMC never took any concrete action. They want to establish the rule of Babur in Bengal," he alleged.

India's first manned space mission on track for 2027: Jitendra Singh



NEW DELHI

Union Minister of State (MoS) for Science & Technology Jitendra Singh on Wednesday informed Parliament that the recent Integrated Main Parachute Airdrop Test (IMAT), successfully conducted by ISRO, has marked a crucial step in strengthening the mission-readiness roadmap for India's first human spaceflight programme, Gaganyaan.

Responding to queries in the Lok Sabha, Jitendra Singh stated

that the IMAT is a crucial component of the ongoing qualification campaign for the Crew Module's parachute-based deceleration system, one of the most critical human-rating elements of the mission.

Singh explained that the latest IMAT simulated one of the most extreme descent conditions: a deliberate delay in the disreefing sequence between the two main parachutes. This high-stress scenario was successfully demonstrated, validating both the structural integrity and the

load-bearing performance of the system under asymmetric forces. The Minister noted that this successful test significantly advances the human-rating process and supports the Government's target to launch the first crewed Gaganyaan mission in the first quarter of 2027.

Addressing questions on third-party validation and technical oversight in Parliament during question hour, Singh stated that ISRO regularly subjects the Crew Module parachute system and all associated test results to

independent and rigorous review mechanisms. These include the Design Review Team (DRT), the Independent Assessment Committee, and the National Advisory Panel (NAP) for Human Rating & Certification, comprising eminent experts from across the country. He emphasised that these institutionalised forums ensure thorough scrutiny of all human-rating elements.

Responding to concerns regarding transparency, the Minister said that ISRO has been consistently and periodically disseminating major test outcomes, including those of the recent IMAT, and will continue to keep the public informed as the programme progresses.

On matters relating to crew preparedness, Singh reaffirmed that crew safety remains the foremost priority for the Gaganyaan mission. All systems undergo intensive testing and expert review, and lessons from every qualification test are carefully analysed, incorporated into system improvements, and subsequently revalidated.

He further highlighted that astronaut training includes comprehensive simulations of emergency scenarios, survival procedures for off-nominal landings, operation of emergency survival kits, and continued psychological support to ensure holistic readiness of the Gaganyaan crew.

The Minister also informed the House that ISRO has institutionalised a robust risk-assessment and mitigation framework aligned with established global standards. Bodies such as the Human Rating Certification Board and the National Advisory Panel oversee these processes to ensure that the overall mission risk remains within acceptable limits. Jitendra Singh reiterated that each test, including the recent IMAT milestone, not only validates critical systems but also contributes to the iterative improvement of crew training, ground recovery preparations, and safe execution of India's historic human spaceflight mission.

INTERNATIONAL

India, Russia likely to discuss advanced variants of BrahMos missiles

'National security decision': US orders H-1B, H-4 visa applicants to make social media profiles public



WASHINGTON

The Donald Trump administration is tightening scrutiny of H-1B visa holders and their H-4 dependents, ordering applicants to keep every social media profile set to "public."

In a directive released Wednesday, the US State Department said that starting December 15 it will comb through the online activity of all H-1B applicants and their H-4 dependents — an expansion of measures that already applied to students and exchange visitors.

"To facilitate this vetting, all applicants for H-1B and their dependents (H-4), F, M, and J nonimmigrant visas are instructed to adjust the privacy settings on all of their social media profiles

to 'public,'" the State Department said.

Underscoring that a US visa is a privilege and not a right, the department said it uses all available information in screening and vetting to identify visa applicants who are inadmissible or pose a threat to America's national security or public safety.

"Every visa adjudication is a national security decision," it said.

The department said the US "must be vigilant" to ensure applicants do not intend to harm Americans and that all visa applicants credibly establish eligibility and intent to comply with the terms of their admission.

The directive is the latest in a series of steps by the Trump administration to tighten immigration rules.

The directive is the latest in a series of steps by the Trump administration to tighten immigration rules.

"One district in India got 220,000 H-1B visas"; US economist alleges massive fraud in system

The administration has launched a massive crackdown to check abuse of the H-1B visa programme, used largely by US technology companies to hire foreign workers. Indian professionals, including tech workers and physicians, form one of the largest groups of H-1B visa holders.

In September, US President Donald Trump issued a proclamation, titled 'Restriction on Entry of Certain Nonimmigrant Workers', imposing a one-time USD 100,000 fee on new H-1B work visas, an order that could signif-

icantly impact Indian workers seeking temporary employment in the US.

Separately, Washington has also paused with immediate effect Green Card, US citizenship and other immigration applications for people hailing from 19 "countries of concern", following the shooting of National Guard soldiers by an Afghan national.

A policy memorandum issued Tuesday directs the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to "place on hold", effective immediately, all asylum applications, regardless of the immigrant's country of nationality, pending a comprehensive review.

The pause also applies to all immigration applications from nationals of 19 countries previously covered by the administration's travel ban.

These countries are Afghanistan, Burma, Burundi, Chad, Congo, Cuba, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Laos, Libya, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Togo, Turkmenistan, Venezuela, and Yemen.

The applications will be on hold "pending a comprehensive review, regardless of entry date," the directive said.

The new guidance follows the shooting of US Army Specialist Sarah Beckstrom, 20, and US Air Force Staff Sgt Andrew Wolfe, 24. Beckstrom succumbed to her injuries, Trump said Thursday during a Thanksgiving call with service members, while Wolfe remains in critical condition.

The accused, Rahmanullah Lakanwal, 29, had entered the US through 'Operation Allies Welcome', a Biden-era programme for Afghan nationals fleeing the Taliban takeover in 2021.



NEW DELHI

During the visit of the Russian President Vladimir Putin to India beginning Thursday, India and Russia are likely to discuss the development of advanced variants of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles, which proved to be the game changer for the Indian defence forces during the four-day Operation Sindoor against Pakistan.

A need has been felt in the country for developing the lighter variants of the missiles like the BrahMos NG which can be fitted on all types of fighter aircraft of the Indian Air Force with capability to hit targets at over 400 km and longer range versions of the

missiles which can engage targets at more than three times of the present capability, defence sources told.

The sources said the discussion is likely to take place between the two sides during the Russian President's visit.

BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles have proven to be one of the best co-development models for military hardware between India and Russia, who are old and time-tested allies.

In the meetings held in the run-up to President Putin's visit, the two sides have been discussing cooperation in field of hypersonic missiles as well as air-to-air missiles with long ranges. President Putin will be on a two-day visit to India.

India is also likely to clear the deal for 280 missiles of the S-400 Sudarshan Chakra air defence missile system as they were used successfully against Pakistani targets at multiple locations across the length and breadth of that country.

India has gone in a big way to equip its Navy and the other two services with BrahMos missiles and has also been able to successfully export the missile to the Philippines and is likely to achieve success with more sales in Asian region.

The BrahMos, with its supersonic speeds, is very difficult to intercept for the enemy forces and hit its targets without any issues during the conflict with Pakistan in May earlier this year.

Eastern Globe to Mark First Anniversary with Eastern Symphony 1.0 in Guwahati



KRC TIMES NEWS DESK

GUWAHATI:

Guwahati is set to host Eastern Symphony 1.0, a special evening organised to celebrate the first anniversary of Eastern Globe. The event will take place on Sunday, 14 December 2025, at Ratnamouli Palace.

The organisers say the celebration will bring together members of the Eastern Globe community for an evening of conversations, curated experiences, and a spread of fine food. The programme is designed to highlight the journey of the past year and acknowledge the people who shaped it. Eastern Globe is a travel and tourism company built on a simple idea: travel should feel thoughtful, reliable, and tailored to the person taking the journey. Founded by Sarita Devi Saha, the company has quickly earned trust in both corporate and individual circles.

In a short span, Eastern Globe has worked with an impressive range of clients. The list includes L&T Infrastructure, the Magistrate of Raipur, the spouse of the Governor of Chhattisgarh, senior officials from Assam, ICAI for MICE projects, Apollo Sugar Clinics for doctors' group travel, and major brands like CELLO, WALKEROO, and several leading businesses from Northeast India. The company also serves as a travel partner for the North-east India Tourism Awards, VEECAP Eduven-

tures, Mahalaxmi Continental Limited, Northeast Veneers, and ENEEF. The service portfolio covers domestic and international air ticketing, hotel reservations with corporate rates across India and abroad, MICE services, inbound groups, visa documentation support, institutional travel, airport transfers, chauffeur-driven cars, and round-the-clock emergency assistance. For leisure travelers, Eastern Globe curates domestic holidays across the country—from the Northeast to Rajasthan, Kerala, and Himachal—and international trips to Thailand, Bali, Dubai, Singapore, Europe, and several other destinations. The company also plans family vacations, honeymoons, group tours, and cruise holidays. Clients choose Eastern Globe for its personal touch. Each client is paired with a dedicated account manager. Bookings and last-minute requests are handled quickly, and long-standing relationships with airlines and hotels help secure strong corporate rates. The company also takes confidentiality and data protection seriously. The team's work culture shows up clearly in the visuals that highlight their events, celebrations, and a simple belief they repeat often: a team that learns together wins together. In her message, founder Sarita Devi Saha speaks about the purpose behind the company. She believes every dream starts with intent, and every intent guides a journey. Her mission, as she puts it, is to empower people, enable sustainable growth, and raise the bar for excel-

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lence. She explains that Eastern Globe was never meant to be just a business. For her, it's about trust, inspiration, change, and contributing to a better future. True success, she says, comes from the positive impact created along

the way. The film closes with the team affirming what drives them: they travel, they inspire, and they treat every journey as purposeful. Eastern Globe sums it up in a line they stand by: Journey with Purpose.

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Don't waste your energy on negativity. Use your energy to believe, learn, create, and grow.

Pobitora Park, Mejhi Bonfire & Mayong Magic Set to Lift NEIR Experience



The NEIR-2026 events will begin with the rally flagging off at Manas National Park on January 11, and continue the next day with activities scheduled at Pobitora National Park on January 12. The national park (Pobitora) sits barely an hour from Guwahati, yet it feels like you've crossed into a world that doesn't operate on the city's clock. It's small, almost deceptively so, especially when you compare it with giant names like Manas or Kaziranga. But size isn't the measure here. What matters is density, rhythm, and the sheer audacity with which this tiny forest sustains more wildlife than anyone expects.

Set in the outskirts of Guwahati, this landscape is often cited as a conservation success, especially for the protection of the one horned rhino.

The sanctuary covers the Rajamayong Reserve Forest and the Pobitora Reserve Forest. The Rajamayong hills support a wide range of wildlife including leopard, capped langur, porcupine, and pangolin.

Pobitora's grasslands are known for regular sightings of the greater one horned rhinoceros, wild water buffalo, monitor lizard, and wild boar. More than 375 bird species have been recorded here, which makes it a strong draw for birdwatchers.

Pobitora also serves as a source population for the Indian Rhinoceros Vision 2020 initiative. Eight rhinos were moved from here to Manas National Park as part of the effort to rebuild rhino numbers in the region.

On paper, that makes it look like an afterthought in Assam's chain of protected areas. But the moment you enter, that perception disappears. The grasslands stretch out in clean, open lines. The wetlands shimmer. Birds circle lazily in the sky. And everywhere you look, the landscape feels elastic, like it's holding far more life than its boundaries suggest.

The truth is straightforward: Pobitora has one of the highest concentrations of one-horned rhinoceroses on the planet. Dozens of them live here, which means your chances of spotting one aren't just good—they're almost guaranteed.

This is the park's signature. It doesn't make you wait, it doesn't test your luck, it simply delivers.

Pobitora is rhino place. At dawn, you see them grazing in the tall elephant grass, their silhouettes emerging through the mist like ancient creatures moving at their own pace. Some stand knee-deep in the marshes. Others walk with slow confidence down mud tracks. You feel their weight before you hear them.

The park's small size means rhinos are never too far. You don't need to chase them across vast distances. They live, breathe, graze, and wallow in tight proximity, and that intimacy changes how you experience them. These aren't glimpses. These are encounters.

And because the park has worked hard to protect them—through village cooperation, anti-poaching units, and controlled grazing—Pobitora has become one of Assam's most successful conservation stories.

Pobitora isn't just grassland. It's a mosaic. Wetlands curve into reed beds. Open fields rise into wooded patches. Marshes hold entire microhabitats of birds and amphibians. The water gives everything life. Migratory ducks crowd the lakes. Storks and herons stand still as sculptures. Raptors circle overhead in patient arcs.

If you spend even half an hour near one of the wetlands, you sense how important water is to this ecosystem. The park's rhythm follows the level of the marshes. When water rises, life concentrates. When water drops, the landscape opens up.

No matter the season, the wetland is the park's spine.

Pobitora is a paradise for birdwatchers, but even if you don't know the names, the experience stays with you. You hear the calls before you see the wings. The wetlands are full of movement—teal, pin-tails, herons, egrets, and dozens of smaller species flicking between the reeds.

The park draws migratory birds from Central Asia and Siberia every winter. They arrive in loose, scattered formations that settle over the marshes like living brushstrokes. For many visitors, the rhinos get the spotlight, but the birds reveal the park's subtler layers.



They show you how differently life expresses itself when space is shared rather than claimed.

Pobitora doesn't exist in isolation. Villages wrap around the park like a human boundary—Mudukki, Gendamari, Gerimari, and a handful of others. Their fields extend to the forest edges. Their cattle graze near the park. Their daily lives overlap with wildlife in ways people from cities rarely experience.

Conflicts happen, especially when rhinos stray into farmland or elephants wander too close at night. But communities here have learned to co-exist because they understand how much the park supports their economy. Homestays, guiding jobs, jeep safaris, small eateries—all of these depend on tourists who come for the rhinos.

The connection isn't romantic. It's practical. And that practicality has helped Pobitora survive.

Pobitora's revival didn't happen because of one big decision. It happened through steady, long-term work. Local youth trained as wildlife guards. NGOs built awareness programs. Forest staff patrolled relentlessly. Community groups discouraged poaching and provided early warnings when animals strayed out.

This shared ownership changed the park's future. Today, Pobitora stands as an example of how conservation works best when villages are part of the solution, not outsiders to the process.

A safari here feels different from larger parks. The tracks are narrower. The grass towers above the jeep in certain stretches. The sightings come faster, but never feel rushed. You move slowly because the landscape asks for patience, not speed.

Sometimes you turn a corner and find a rhino standing still on the road, unbothered by your presence. Sometimes a herd of wild buffalo grazes in open grassland with quiet authority. Sometimes you see a mongoose dart across the path or a hog deer lift its head and freeze for just a moment before disappearing into the green.

The encounters feel closer, more intimate, almost conversational.

One of Pobitora's quiet strengths is how easily it lets you step out of Guwahati's noise. You leave the city's rush, cross the Brahmaputra's floodplains, pass through villages and farmland, and suddenly you're in a different world.

It's close enough for a day trip. But it's deep



enough to make you forget the city exists.

Pobitora doesn't try to impress you with scale or drama. It simply shows you what it is—beautiful, compact, bustling with life, and shaped by the cooperation between people and wilderness.

There's an honesty to that. It's not selling a grand adventure. It's giving you a real one.

Pobitora National Park proves that conservation doesn't need endless land or extravagant infrastructure. It needs commitment, balance, and communities that believe the forest deserves to survive.

It's a park where the rhino isn't a symbol—it's a neighbour. Where wetlands cradle more life than you expect. Where villagers, guards, and wildlife share a space that could have fractured long ago but didn't.

To understand Assam's conservation spirit, start here. A small park with a big heartbeat, alive with creatures that thrive because people chose to protect them.

Spend a morning in Pobitora and you'll see why this place matters—quietly, powerfully, and without needing to prove anything.



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11 JAN
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12 JAN
River-Climate Conclave
 Climate Change will influence on Climate Change, climate and river. The Conclave will focus on the importance, technical and practical of River Barak, Training & Geography, environment and development in 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'.
 Media Conclave: Workshops, Seminars, and Conferences are part of the Barak Festival 2025. Theme: 'One for All, All for One'.



Barak Festival
 Adventure Sports, Art & Culture Promotion



REGISTER HERE

Contact: info@krcfoundation.org
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BARAK FESTIVAL 2025
 PAINTING CARNIVAL
 NE CULTURAL FEST
 E-SPORTS
 FILM FESTIVAL | EXHIBITION
 BOOK CLUB | AWARDS & MORE!
 HAVE FUN! | RECORD YOURS!

10-12 JAN
Science Studio
 Real 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



PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST
 Snap up your best photos!

10-12 JAN
E-Sports
 Full-Blown! Don't miss! | 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



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10-12 JAN
Book Bank
 #NoOneLeftBehind Campaign | Book Bank | Donate | Reuse | Recycle

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

Painting Carnival
 Water Colour and other Drawing Competition