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**PERSPECTIVE**

The word "school" comes from the ancient Greek word for "free time."

**27 bombs neutralised in Manipur's Imphal East district**

**IMPHAL**  
Security forces recovered 27 bombs and neutralised them in Manipur's Imphal East district, police said on Friday.

During an operation, the country-made bombs were found on Thursday and neutralised at a place near Monglham village, a senior officer said.

In a separate operation, security forces also recovered three arms and ammunition from the Langdum Nungjengbi area in the district on Wednesday, he said.

Security forces have been conducting search operations in Manipur since ethnic violence broke out two years ago.

More than 260 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic strife between Meiteis and Kuki-Zo groups since May 2023.

The Centre had imposed the President's rule in Manipur after Chief Minister N Biren Singh resigned.

The state assembly, which has a tenure till 2027, has been put under suspended animation.

**WHO SAID WHAT**

**Within 1 week of a person being declared Foreigner by the Foreigners' Tribunal, we will push them back to expedite the process of making Assam free of infiltrators. ~ Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Assam CM**

**NE border attracts MP, Maharashtra poachers**

Wildlife smugglers preferred Nepal-Tibet route earlier, but find Myanmar more conducive now

**BHOPAL**

International smugglers linked with various wild animal poaching gangs in India are abandoning the Nepal-Tibet route and instead using the North East-Myanmar corridor to traffic wild animal parts and live exotic animals into China, investigations by forest and wildlife enforcement agencies have revealed.

Interrogation of ten members of an inter-state gang of poachers from Madhya Pradesh, busted in Chandrapur in Maharashtra in January 2025, and questioning of an international Pangolin smuggler, L Kunga, arrested recently from Mizoram, showed that traffickers are increasingly relying on the new route to move tiger and leopard parts and live exotic species.

China has emerged as a major destination for the illegal wildlife trade, one of the world's most lucrative transnational crimes. Smugglers target a wide range of endangered and protected species, particularly Pangolins, Rhino Horns, Tiger Parts, Elephant Tusks (ivory), and Turtles and Tortoises.

Officials said the prime drivers of demand for wild animal parts in China include traditional Chinese medicine, use as status symbols and for investment, exotic cuisine, and the growing market for exotic pets.



For decades, smugglers traditionally moved wildlife parts and live animals into China through Nepal and Tibet. However, improved, coordinated law enforcement along the Nepal border has drastically reduced such trafficking.

A sustained crackdown by enforcement agencies at major Tibetan population bases in India, especially Delhi's Majnu ka Tila area, has also curbed the smuggling of dead and live wildlife species into China via Nepal and Tibet. Several persons associated with wildlife trafficking were arrested in these operations, key sources in the Madhya Pradesh forest department said.

In contrast, trafficking of wild animal parts and live exotic species is rising sharply through the North East-Myanmar route, particularly through Mizoram, officials said.

"The international Pangolin smuggler L Kunga, who has been wanted for the last ten years by wildlife enforcement agencies in multiple states, including Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Mizoram, was arrested last month in a joint operation from Kolasib in northern Mizoram. He was wanted by the MP State Forest Department's state tiger strike force (STSF) in a 2015 case of Pangolin smuggling," a senior forest department official in Bho-

**NEW DELHI**

Union Home Minister Amit Shah is all set to begin the New Year by holding a high-level meeting to review the situation in the violence-hit Manipur on January 2, as the President's Rule in the state is nearing to an end on February 13.

With relative peace achieved so far, the state is poised to move towards getting a political solution and the review meeting would be critical, as it will be attended by Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla, Manipur Government Advisor Kuldiep Singh, Chief Secretary PK Goel and Director General of Police Rajiv Singh among other senior functionaries of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), sources said.

It is learnt from the sources that the Governor and all the key state officials have arrived in the National Capital for the meeting, as they said that the agenda of the deliberations

mostly revolves around law and order, security arrangements and issues relating to developmental initiatives.

Incidentally, the Home Minister is holding the review meeting at a time when the President's Rule in the state is going to end on February 13 and political parties and local leaders are exploring the possibility of government formation.

A source said, "During the meeting chaired by the Home Minister, issues relating to recent developments on the ground will be reviewed. An assessment will also be made on the prevailing law and order situation and coordinated security deployment. A discussion is also expected to take place on the development initiatives aimed at rebuilding infrastructure around areas inhabited by communities affected by spells of violence for the past two and half years."

Ensuring a stable and secure environment will be crit-

ical if the Centre decides to facilitate a political process to kick-in in the state, sources added.

Immediately after the resignation of former Chief Minister N Biren Singh following the sustained ethnic violence between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities, the state was put under Central rule.

Since then, the state has been administered directly by the Governor with the support of central security forces. Parliament approved successive extensions of President's Rule, the latest in August 2025, extending it until mid-February 2026.

The sources also indicated that the deliberations at the January 2 meeting and its outcome are likely to set the tone for re-starting the political process in the state and restoration of democratic governance, as part of the Centre's larger goal of achieving peace and accelerating development in the state.

**Assam Police honours 49 with DGP's Gold Commendation, 424 receive Silver medals for 2025**

**GUWAHATI**

As recognition of exceptional service and professional excellence, the Assam Police has announced the recipients of the Director General of Police's Commendation Medals for 2025, with 49 officers and personnel selected for the prestigious Gold medal and 424 for the Silver category.

An official notification issued on January 2 said the awards have been conferred on officers and personnel of the Assam Police and allied organisations for their outstanding and meritorious contributions across a wide range of policing, security and public service roles during the year.

In addition to state police personnel, 12 officers from the Indian Army, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Assam Rifles have also been selected for the DGP's Commendation Medal (Silver), underscoring inter-agency cooperation in maintaining security and public order in Assam. Among the recipients of the DGP's Commendation Medal (Gold) are several senior officers who have held key operational, intelligence and administrative responsibilities. The awardees include Special Director General of Police (CID) Munna Prasad Gupta, Special Additional Director General (Special Branch) Hiren Chandra Nath, Additional Director General of Police (Vigilance and Anti-Corruption) and Director of Fire and Emergency Services Surendra Kumar, Inspector General of Police (Law and Order) Akhilesh Kumar Singh, and IGP (Logistics) V Siva Prasad Ganjala.

Other Gold medal recipients include IGP (Training and Armed Police) Vivek Raj Singh, IGP (Opera-

tions) Jitmol Doley, IGP (Security) Imdadul Hussain Bora, IGP (Border) Devojyoti Mukherjee, Guwahati Police Commissioner Partha Sarathi Mahanta, and Deputy Inspector General (Special Branch) Ratna Singha, among others.

The DGP's Commendation Medal (Silver) has been awarded to 424 officers and personnel for notable service during 2025. Prominent among them are Managing Director of Assam Police Housing Corporation Lachit Barua, IGP (Administration) Prasanta Kumar Bhuyan, IGP Home Guards and Civil Defence Arabinda Kalita, and Director of Forensic Science and Laboratory Robin Kumar.

Other recipients in the Silver category include Commandant of the 13th Assam Police Battalion Debasis Sharma, Senior Superintendent of Police (Fire Service) Dr Sadeque Ali Ahmed, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic), Guwahati, Jayanta Sarathi Borah, DCP (East) Guwahati Mrinal Deka, and Senior Superintendent of Police, Cyber Crime-II, CID, Saurav Jyoti Saikia, along with a large number of officers from district, battalion and specialised units.

The list of Silver medal awardees also features officers from central armed forces deployed in Assam. These include Brigadier Avaneesh Chambial, Commander of the 73 Mountain Brigade; Brigadier Sarabjeet Singh, DIG, Sector Assam Rifles; Colonel Kishan Bal P, Commandant of the 23 Assam Rifles; Colonel Imliakum Keitizar, Commanding Officer of the 42 Assam Rifles; Colonel Neelesh Bhardwaj of the 29 Assam Rifles; and Assistant Commandant Sandeep of the 147 Battalion of the CRPF, among others.

**NEW DELHI**

The Enforcement Directorate (ED), Imphal Sub Zonal Office has issued 2nd Provisional Attachment Order (PAO) to the tune of Rs. 33.66 Crore pertaining to M/s Birla Emporium Pvt Ltd, Ira Finance Pvt. Ltd., its Director Yumnam Irabanta Singh and Others in relation to cheating of 5000 gullible investors, the release said on Thursday.

According to the ED, the accused operated fraudulent investment schemes between 2019 and 2021, promising unusually high returns to lure investors.

"ED initiated an investigation based on an FIR registered by the CID (Crime Branch), Manipur, under various Sections of IPC, 1860, against Yumnam Irabanta Singh, Director of M/s Birla Emporium Pvt. Ltd. and Ira Finance Pvt. Ltd., its Director Yumnam Irabanta Singh allegedly operated a fraudulent investment/deposit scheme from 2019 to 2021 that promised high returns to investors. Still, finally, he and his associates had siphoned off several individual depositors' funds," the agency said in a statement.

The ED further stated that, "The investigation revealed that Yumnam Irabanta Singh and his entities were operating an unauthorised deposit scheme, collecting large sums from the public with the promise of exorbitant returns. Yumnam Irabanta Singh, along with his associates,

**ED attaches assets worth Rs 33.66 crore in Manipur investment fraud case**



has cheated 5000 investors (approximately) of Manipur State and thereby caused wrongful loss to these gullible depositors to the tune of more than Rs.250 Crore and subsequent wrongful gain to himself. It is also revealed that M/s Birla Emporium Private Limited & M/s Ira Finance Private Limited have given loans to public/borrower against the security of their property (Loan Against Property), and the properties of the loanees were transferred and registered in the name of Directors and staff of M/s. Birla Emporium Private Limited, by executing sale deed. The Company has not accepted deposits since the 1st quarter of 2020 and has not returned the promised funds. The said properties, which were reg-

istered in the promoters' names, were also kept in their custody without being returned. Furthermore, these funds, which are Proceeds of Crime (POC) were subsequently utilised in the acquisition of several properties."

ED said in a statement it earlier attached Rs 28.02 crore assets. "ED had earlier identified and provisionally attached various movable and immovable properties in the name of M/s Birla Emporium Pvt. Ltd., Yumnam Irabanta Singh, Director of the company and his associates amounting to Rs. 28.02 Crore. Further, Prosecution Complaint for confiscation of attached properties has been filed before the Special PMLA Court, Imphal East on 06.06.2025 against M/s Birla Emporium Pvt. Ltd and Yumnam Irabanta Singh, and others."

Further course of investigation led to the identification of 121 more immovable properties which are registered in the name of M/s Birla Emporium Pvt. Ltd., Ira Finance Pvt. Ltd., Yumnam Irabanta Singh, Director of the company and his associates, which were obtained out of POC. In this regard, the said immovable properties amounting to Rs 33.66 Crore are provisionally attached. A total of Rs. 61.68 Crore pertaining to various movable and immovable properties in the name of Birla Emporium Pvt Ltd has been provisionally attached.

Further investigation is in progress.

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## INDIA'S STUNNING GROWTH STORY

India's emergence as the world's fourth-largest economy, overtaking Japan with a GDP of USD 4.18 trillion, is not merely a statistical milestone-it is a powerful statement about the country's economic resilience, reform-driven growth and long-term potential. Even more significant is India's position as the fastest-growing major economy in the world, a status reaffirmed by both domestic data and projections from leading international financial institutions. In an era marked by global trade uncertainties, geopolitical tensions and uneven recovery across regions, India's sustained growth momentum stands out as an exception rather than the norm. The recent acceleration in GDP growth to 8.2 per cent in the second quarter of 2025-26 underscores this resilience. It reflects not just cyclical recovery but the cumulative impact of structural reforms, stable macroeconomic management and strong domestic demand. India's growth is increasingly powered by internal drivers-robust private consumption, rising investment and expanding manufacturing capacity. This internal strength has enabled India to maintain high growth even when the global economy has slowed.

What lends further credibility to India's growth trajectory is the broad-based optimism expressed by global institutions. The IMF, World Bank, OECD, Moody's, S&P, Fitch and the Asian Development Bank-each with its own analytical framework-converge on one assessment: India will remain the fastest-growing major economy over the coming years. This achievement assumes even greater importance when viewed in the context of India's vast population. With over 1.4 billion people, economic growth in India is not an abstract macroeconomic indicator-it is directly linked to the pressing imperatives of employment generation, food security, infrastructure creation and access to basic amenities. Sustained high growth is essential to absorb millions entering the workforce annually, reduce poverty and improve living standards. In this sense, India's growth is not just about size but about scale and inclusion. At the same time, India's large population is not merely a challenge-it is also one of its greatest strengths. The immense consumer market it creates is among the largest in the world, providing a powerful engine for demand-led growth. Consumption-driven sectors-from housing and automobiles to digital services and electronics-have become key pillars of economic expansion.

Government policy has played a central role in sustaining this momentum despite numerous odds, including the pandemic, global inflationary pressures and supply-chain disruptions. A consistent focus on increasing agricultural production has ensured food security and moderated inflation, while parallel efforts to boost industrial output have strengthened self-reliance. Together, agriculture and industry have acted as stabilising anchors of the economy. The "Make in India" initiative has been particularly transformative. By encouraging domestic manufacturing and reducing import dependence, it has generated large-scale employment opportunities and revitalised India's industrial base. India has rapidly emerged as a major manufacturing hub, attracting global tech giants like Apple and integrating itself into global value chains. This progress has not only created jobs but also enhanced India's export potential.

Looking ahead, strategic investments in semiconductors mark a new phase in India's industrial journey. Semiconductor fabrication and design are capital-intensive and technologically complex, but they are critical for the future of electronics, defence, automobiles and digital infrastructure. India's entry into this space signals ambition and long-term planning, with the potential to fundamentally transform its electronics and technology ecosystem. Complementing these efforts are Government-led skill development programmes, which seek to align the workforce with the needs of a modern, technology-driven economy.

Sustaining such momentum over a long period is never easy. Yet India's step-by-step, systematic approach across sectors appears to be yielding rich dividends. The next target-overtaking Germany to become the world's third-largest economy-now seems achievable within the next few years. The Government is also acutely aware that aggregate GDP growth must translate into higher per capita income. With continued reforms, focused investments and policy stability, major strides in per capita GDP are possible. The coming years will be crucial. Targets are clear, the vision is defined, and the intent is evident. If current momentum is preserved, India's growth story will not only be about economic rank but also about transforming the lives of its people and securing its place as a leading global economic power.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Climb mountains. Not so the world can see you, but so you can see the world." - David McCullough, Jr.

# Bangladesh's Turmoil has Potential to Spill Over



KALYANI SHANKAR

Bangladesh has been going through a massive political crisis since the resignation of the former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina-led government last year. This volatile situation has caused regional tensions.

A series of riots, arson attacks, and political unrest hit across Bangladesh from December 18 to 20, 2025, following the assassination of Osman Hadi, the spokesperson for the Inqilab Moncho. Hadi was shot on December 12 and died on December 18.

Over the past year, India has faced challenges stemming from Dhaka's weakened security cooperation. This instability was tied to deep-rooted historical anti-India sentiment.

Recent political unrest in Bangladesh has significant regional implications, potentially destabilising neighbouring countries such as India, China, and Pakistan, and affecting regional security and economic stability.

Diplomatic ties between Delhi and Dhaka have hit a critical juncture with Dhaka suspending visa and consular services at its missions in New Delhi and Agartala. India has also suspended visa services at its Chittagong centre in Bangladesh following widespread violent protests. New Delhi and Dhaka summoned each other's envoys earlier last week in a tit-for-tat move to express concern over the situation.

India's security concerns about the instability in Bangladesh are raising fears of conflict with China and Pakistan. This also increases the risks of illegal migration and communal violence, complicating India's diplomatic negotiations

and projects in the region.

A period in the aftermath of the election that banned the Awami League Islamist groups like Jamaat-e-Islami have gained prominence. A younger generation has developed a unique sense of nationalism, distinct from the historical narrative of Bangladesh's 1971 liberation.

Across the border in India, the ramifications of Dipu Chandra Das's killing have intensified anti-Bangladesh sentiments, making regional stability and diplomatic relations more fragile.

There have been mob attacks on media outlets such as The Daily Star and Prothom Alo, with accusations that these newspapers are pro-India. The increasing influence of Islamist radicals and the government's inability to manage unrest are a concern about civil stability.

Civil society activists are criticising the interim government for failing to address the unrest. Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) is organising a big rally to welcome back Tarique Rahman, the son of the Zias, amid this political turmoil; he is expected to be the Party's prime ministerial candidate.

Many Bangladeshis express concerns about India's influence, particularly throughout Hasina's fifteen-year rule, which ended amid unrest. This aspect has intensified Hasina's refuge in India, as New Delhi has declined to repatriate her. Following Hadi's assassination, young political leaders have started making increasingly provocative anti-India statements.

Supporters allege that the main suspect in Hadi's murder, linked to the Awami League, has fled to India, esca-

lating anti-India sentiment.

Overall, Bangladesh's ongoing instability heightens the risks of conflict with neighbouring countries and complicates India's diplomatic efforts in the region, especially after a Hindu group protested outside Indian diplomatic premises.

The deep-seated anti-India sentiment in Bangladesh has been further exacerbated by Hasina's moves and India's handling of her asylum. The killing of Dipu Chandra Das has intensified anti-India sentiments, with some attributing unrest to the former Awami League government.

The Yunus government has declared that there is "no place for such violence in the new Bangladesh." The government has assured that individuals involved in the recent killing will face accountability and that no one will be exempt from consequences.

Meanwhile, the BNP is preparing for a massive rally to mark the return of Tarique Rahman from London, who has been in exile for over 17 years. The Party is preparing to mobilise over five million people to welcome him back. Rahman, 60, is the son of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and serves as the BNP's acting chairman. Courts cleared him of charges after Hasina left office, allowing his return. Overall, Bangladesh's ongoing instability increases risks of conflict with neighbouring countries and complicates India's diplomatic efforts in the region, as it objected to a Hindu group's protest outside its diplomatic premises in Delhi, calling it "unjustifiable".

An Indian parliamentary panel said developments in Bangladesh pose "the greatest strategic challenge" to Delhi since the country's indepen-

dence war in 1971. Delhi has

### DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

**"You can upload your xrays or MRI images to Grok and it will give you a medical diagnosis. I have seen cases where it's actually better than what doctors tell you." ~ Elon Musk, American Entrepreneur**



already indicated that it will engage with an elected government in Bangladesh, and that could pave the way for a diplomatic reboot.

The BBC reported, quoting Riva Ganguli Das, a former High Commissioner, "I sincerely hope tensions don't escalate further on both sides." Ganguli Das, a retired Indian high commissioner to Dhaka, told the BBC that the "volatile situation" in Bangladesh made it challenging to predict which way things would go.

In the future, the elections should be fair and free. Violence should be controlled so that people can go and vote. All parties should have a level playing field.

The Yunus government should also ensure there is no post-poll violence. A peaceful election would also help improve the economy. Only when normalcy returns can Bangladesh hope to regain its development.

# Assam Cabinet approves Rs.1,650 crore push for education, healthcare; new Guwahati medical college cleared

GUWAHATI

The Assam Cabinet on January 1 approved capital expenditure exceeding ₹1,650 crore for education and healthcare, giving the green light to a new medical college in Guwahati and the construction of 100 schools across the state. The decisions mark a strong policy signal at the start of the New Year, with the government reiterating its focus on social infrastructure.

At its first meeting of 2026, the Council of Ministers sanctioned ₹1,201.16 crore for the establishment of a medical college centred on Mahendra Mohan Choudhury Hospital, along with the development of the Kalapahar campus in Guwahati. Officials said the project is aimed at significantly expanding tertiary healthcare facilities in the state capital while also strengthening medi-

cal education capacity.

The proposed medical college is expected to ease pressure on existing government hospitals in Guwahati and improve access to advanced treatment for patients from across Assam and neighbouring states. The project will also add to the state's growing network of government medical colleges, a key plank of the government's healthcare expansion strategy over the past few years.

In the education sector, the Cabinet approved ₹455 crore for the construction of 100 new schools across Assam. The initiative is intended to improve access to quality schooling, particularly in rural, remote and underserved areas, and to address infrastructure gaps in the public education system.

Officials said the new schools would be developed with modern



facilities to create a better learning environment and support improved educational outcomes. The invest-

ment is part of the state's broader effort to strengthen foundational education while keeping pace with

rising enrolment and demographic needs.

Thursday's Cabinet meeting was

the first of the New Year, and senior officials described the decisions as reflective of the government's continued emphasis on health and education as priority sectors. With large-scale allocations at the beginning of the year, the government is expected to fast-track implementation to ensure timely execution of the projects. The approvals come amid sustained public demand for better healthcare facilities and improved school infrastructure, particularly outside major urban centres. The government has repeatedly stated that investments in human capital and social infrastructure are central to Assam's long-term development strategy.

With the clearance of these projects, Assam is set to begin 2026 with one of its largest combined commitments to education and healthcare infrastructure in recent years.

## Tripura District Council releases Rs.3 lakh assistance to family of Anjel Chakma

AGARTALA

The Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) on January 1 released ₹3 lakh in financial assistance to the family of Anjel Chakma, honouring a commitment made earlier in the aftermath of his death.

The cheque was personally handed over to the bereaved family by Chief Executive Member Purna Chandra Jamatia at their residence. Officials said the disbursement followed an appeal by Tipra Motra Party founder Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma, who had urged the council to step in and support the family during their time of distress.

The council described the assistance as part of its relief measures and a reflection of its responsibility towards the family. "This is our moral duty. We stand with the family in this difficult hour and will extend further cooperation if required," Jamatia said while offering condolences.

Anjel Chakma, 24, a resident of Tripura, died in Dehradun on December 9 after being assaulted. According to police, Anjel and his brother were allegedly subjected to racial abuse by a group of intoxicated men before the attack. The assailants reportedly used racial slurs, including calling them "Chinese", prior to the assault.

The incident had sparked widespread outrage in Tripura, with political leaders and civil society groups demanding justice and institutional support for the victim's family. Officials said the release of financial aid marks the implementation of the assurance given by the district council to stand by the family in the wake of the tragedy.

## Assam becomes first state to constitute 8th Pay Commission after Centre's move

GUWAHATI

Assam has decided to constitute its 8th State Pay Commission, becoming the first state in the country to take the step following the Centre's announcement of its own 8th Pay Commission, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on January 1.

Speaking to mediapersons, Sarma said the commission will be chaired by former additional chief secretary Subhas Das. He underlined that while the Union government has already set up the 8th Pay Commission, no state had moved in that direction until now. "After the Centre, Assam will be the first state in the country to constitute the 8th Pay Commission," the chief minister said.

The move assumes added significance as the recommendations of the central 8th Pay Commission are scheduled to come into effect from January 1. Sarma said constituting the state commission at this stage would help the Assam government align its pay revision process with the

Centre in a timely and structured manner.

Describing the decision as an employee-centric step, the chief minister said early constitution of the commission would ensure smoother implementation of revised pay scales and service conditions for state government employees. He added that the move reflected the government's emphasis on administrative preparedness and financial planning.

The last state pay commission in Assam was constituted in 2015 to review pay structures, allowances and service conditions of government employees. The newly formed commission is expected to examine similar issues, taking into account current economic realities, inflationary pressures and the forthcoming central pay revisions.

Officials said the commission's recommendations are likely to play a key role in shaping salary structures and employment conditions across state government departments in the coming years.

## Himanta says evidence of alleged Pakistan links of Gaurav Gogoi, family will be made public

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on January 1 said he would soon place before the public evidence to substantiate his allegations that Assam Congress president and Lok Sabha MP Gaurav Gogoi and his family have links with Pakistan.

Addressing media queries, Sarma said he was not aware of specific social media memes circulating on the issue but maintained that his allegations were based on information gathered through official channels. "I am not aware of memes or social media content, but Gogoi and his family definitely have links with Pakistan. I will soon present the evidence before the people of Assam," the chief minister said.

The remarks come amid the circulation of AI-generated videos and memes by BJP-linked social media handles portraying a Gogoi look-alike as "Paijan", a portmanteau of "Pakistan" and "Bhaijan". These posts have alleged connections between Gogoi, his wife Elizabeth Col-



burn, and Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). Sarma, however, distanced himself from the social media campaign, saying his claims were unrelated to online content and would be backed by formal evidence.

The chief minister reiterated that the allegations were serious and had implications for national security. He recalled that he had earlier ordered the formation of a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe what he described as Gogoi's alleged links with Pakistan. The SIT, according to Sarma, submitted its report on September 10 last year.

"Based on the investigation, certain startling facts have emerged that point towards a larger conspiracy aimed at undermining the sov-

ereignty of our nation," Sarma said, adding that the matter would soon be handed over to a central investigating agency for further action.

While Sarma did not disclose details of the evidence or the SIT's findings, he indicated that the process of transferring the case to a central agency was underway and that the information would be made public at an appropriate time.

Gogoi, who was appointed Assam Congress president after the allegations first surfaced, has consistently denied the charges. Responding to the chief minister's remarks, he reiterated his earlier position that the allegations were politically motivated and lacked substance. He has described the accusations as resem-

bling a "C-grade Bollywood film" that would inevitably "flop".

"The people of Assam understand everything," Gogoi had said earlier, asserting that the allegations were aimed at diverting attention from governance issues and discrediting him ahead of crucial political developments in the state.

The controversy has added a sharp edge to Assam's political discourse, particularly with the 2026 Assembly elections approaching. The Congress has accused the ruling BJP of using unsubstantiated allegations and social media campaigns to malign opposition leaders, while the BJP has maintained that the issue concerns national security and warrants thorough investigation.

Political observers note that the chief minister's assertion that evidence will soon be made public could further escalate tensions between the two parties. Until concrete details are released, the allegations and counter-allegations are likely to continue to dominate Assam's political narrative in the coming weeks.

## India's first Vande Bharat Sleeper to run on Guwahati-Kolkata route, flag-off imminent

GUWAHATI

The Guwahati-Kolkata corridor has been approved as the first route for India's Vande Bharat Sleeper train, marking a major step towards faster, modern overnight rail travel connecting eastern and northeastern India. Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the inaugural service will be flagged off by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the coming days, following the completion of testing and statutory certification.

Announcing the decision, Vaishnaw described the launch as a milestone in long-distance rail travel. "The testing and certification of the Vande Bharat Sleeper train have been completed. The Prime Minister will soon flag off the inaugural service on the Guwahati-Kolkata route," he said, adding that the train is designed to offer a



world-class travel experience with enhanced safety, comfort and speed for overnight journeys.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma welcomed the approval, thanking Prime Minister Modi for clearing the country's first sleeper version of the Vande Bharat on the Guwahati-Kolkata sector. In a post on X, Sarma said the service would "greatly cater to passengers of both states" and expressed gratitude to

the Railway Minister for supporting Assam's railway infrastructure needs.

The announcement follows the completion of final high-speed trials on the Kota-Nagda section, where the indigenously manufactured train achieved speeds of up to 180 kmph. Railway officials said the sleeper rake will comprise 16 coaches - 11 three-tier AC, four two-tier AC and one first AC - with a total passenger capacity of 823.

According to officials, indicative fares have been fixed at around Rs 2,300 for 3AC, Rs 3,000 for 2AC and Rs 3,600 for first AC, with meals included in the ticket price. The service is expected to significantly benefit business travellers, families, students and tourists seeking a faster, more reliable overnight link between Guwahati and Kolkata. The Vande Bharat Sleeper

introduces a range of upgrades over conventional long-distance trains. These include redesigned berths with improved cushioning, automatic doors with vestibules, better suspension systems for smoother rides, reduced noise levels and modern interiors with enhanced lighting. Advanced safety features such as the Kavach anti-collision system, emergency talk-back facilities, upgraded driver cab controls and improved sanitation systems using disinfectant technology have also been integrated.

With its aerodynamic exterior, automatic exterior passenger doors and focus on speed, comfort and safety, the Guwahati-Kolkata Vande Bharat Sleeper is being positioned as a new benchmark for overnight rail travel in India, particularly for long-haul routes linking the Northeast with the rest of the country.



KOLKATA

Biswadeep Shome, former middle level executive of Air India Engineering, on January 2, lauded KRC Foundations for initiating a month-long rally aimed at uniting all the Northeastern states, scheduled to begin from Kolkata on January 4. The rally will conclude on February 4 in Guwahati. Describing the initiative as thoughtful and forward-looking, Shome said the rally would serve as a platform to showcase the rich cultural diversity, traditions, and heritage of the Northeast. He noted that many people across the country remain unfamiliar with the region's customs, festivals, and social practices, and said the rally would help bridge that gap by creating direct engagement and awareness. Emphasising the importance of such outreach programmes, Shome said initiatives like this help challenge long-held stereotypes

and foster mutual respect. He also expressed hope that the organisers would consider expanding the concept in the future by organising a cycle rally to reach more people at the grassroots level. Several other speakers also praised the initiative, calling it a meaningful and timely step towards national integration. They pointed out that despite its cultural richness and strategic importance, the Northeast has often remained on the margins of mainstream narratives. According to them, the month-long rally has the potential to bring the region into sharper national focus by highlighting both its diversity and shared values. Terming the effort noble and necessary, the speakers said the rally would help elevate the Northeastern states collectively, create wider awareness about the region and its people, and strengthen emotional and cultural ties between the Northeast and the rest of the country.

## Tripura leads Northeast in power grid cyber security, SLDC earns ISO/IEC 27001:2022 certification

AGARTALA

Tripura has emerged as the first state in the Northeast to significantly strengthen cyber security in its power sector, with the Tripura State Load Dispatch Centre (SLDC) receiving the ISO/IEC 27001:2022 certification, a globally recognised standard for information security management systems.

The achievement was announced by Power Minister Ratan Lal Nath while addressing the second foundation day programme of the Tripura State Electricity Corporation Limited (TSECL) in Agartala on January 1.

Nath said the ISO/IEC certification has been made mandatory for all SLDCs across the country under guidelines issued by the Central Electricity Authority (CEA), in view of growing cyber threats to critical power infrastructure. The certification is aimed at safeguarding computerised control systems that manage electricity transmission and ensuring the stability and resilience of the national power grid.

"With increasing dependence on digital systems in the power sector, cyber security has become a national priority.



Tripura has taken the lead in the Northeast by securing this certification for its SLDC," the minister said. He explained that as part of the certification process, a System Surveillance Audit was conducted at the Tripura SLDC by the Standardisation Testing and Quality Certification (STQC) directorate. Following the audit,

the SLDC addressed several non-conformities related to biometric access control, intelligent threat dissemination mechanisms, VESDA smoke detection systems, user identity management, and physical security protocols.

"After all required corrective measures were implemented, the ISO/IEC

27001:2022 certificate was awarded by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India," Nath said. Describing the power sector as central to Tripura's development agenda, the minister said the state has undertaken wide-ranging reforms to modernise electricity distribution and consumer services. "Power is the key to development. We are modernising our systems and bringing reforms across the sector," he said. Nath noted that load shedding, once a routine occurrence, is now managed through an online monitoring system. Billing and consumer services have largely shifted to digital platforms, improving transparency and efficiency.

"Smart meters, transparent billing, 24x7 call centres and faster fault rectification are now realities. TSECL has undergone a massive transformation over the years," he added. The minister also announced that the state government plans to lay underground power cables across the entire Agartala Municipal Corporation area. He said the detailed project report for the initiative has already been completed, and the move is expected to further modernise the city's power infrastructure while improving reliability and safety.

Officials said Tripura's early adoption of stringent cyber security standards places it ahead of other northeastern states and strengthens the overall resilience of the region's power grid against emerging digital threats.

Quest!

In 2010, there was a major traffic jam in China that lasted 12 days.

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@ NEIR 2026

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- Interested candidates (College students, youths)

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## NASA astronaut Sunita Williams to attend Kerala Literature Festival 2026



KLF 2026 will feature over 500 speakers from across the globe, with Germany announced as the guest nation for this year's edition.

The speaker line-up includes Nobel Laureates Abdulrazak Gurnah, Olga Tokarczuk, and Abhijit Banerjee; Olympian Ben Johnson; business leader Indra Nooyi; artist and illustrator Cheyenne Olivier; writer Gabriela Ybarra; economist Arvind Subramanian; linguist and author Peggy Mohan; author and columnist Shobhaa De; writer and former diplomat Amish Tripathi; actor and singer Piyush Mishra; curator Helen Molesworth; writer and activist Banu Mushtaq; writer and journalist Deepa Bhasini; essayist Pico Iyer; environmental activist Dr Vandana Shiva.

Jnanpith award-winning writer Pratibha Ray; historian Romila Thapar; novelist Anita Nair; noted Telugu author Volga; conservation biologist Neha Sinha; actor and social commentator Prakash Raj; author-diplomat Pavan K. Varma; author, parliamentarian and public intellectual Dr Shashi Tharoor; Indian comedian Vir Das; and Tamil film director and activist Pa. Ranjith, among others. Held annually in Kozhikode, India's first UNESCO City of Literature, the Kerala Literature Festival has emerged as one of the world's largest literary gatherings. The previous edition recorded over 6.5 lakh visitors and featured more than 600 speakers. Set against the backdrop of Kozhikode Beach, KLF continues to provide an open and inclusive platform for dialogue, creativity, and the exchange of ideas.

### KOZHIKODE

The Kerala Literature Festival (KLF) 2026 has announced renowned NASA astronaut Sunita Williams as a key participant and Guest of Honour for its upcoming edition.

DC Books, the organiser of KLF, made the announcement through its social media platforms, sharing a poster welcoming Sunita Williams to the festival.

The post reads, "Her name is etched in space. We are over the moon to announce that the legendary astronaut Sunita Williams will be joining us as our Guest of Honour. Get ready for an out-of-this-world experience with Sunita Williams at the Kerala Literature Festival. Don't miss this chance to listen to a woman who has proved that courage knows no boundaries."

# West Bengal 'SIR': Political parties submit 8 claims and objections "for inclusion" of eligible electors



### KOLKATA

Eight claims and objections "for inclusion" of eligible electors have been submitted by various political parties till December 31 amid the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) drive, according to the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), West Bengal.

The revision exercise pertains to the draft electoral roll, which currently lists 7,08,16,630 electors.

In its daily bulletin, the CEO's office detailed that the period for claims and objections from political parties was from December 17 to December 31, 2025.

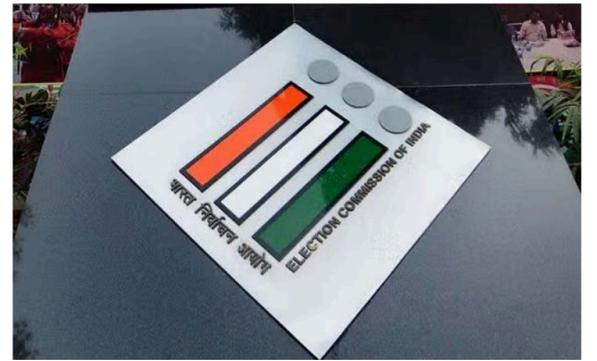
"Political parties have submitted their claims and objections with respect to the draft electoral roll," the statement read.

Among the submissions, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) filed one claim; the Communist Party of India (Marxist) submitted two; the Indian National Congress submitted zero; the All India Trinamool Congress submitted three; the Bahujan Samaj Party submitted one; and the All India Forward Bloc submitted one.

The CEO's bulletin also highlighted claims and objections received directly from electors.

1,74,459 claims and objections for "inclusion of eligible electors (Form 6/6A) have been received directly from the electors after the publication of the draft electoral roll, while 37,781 have been received for "exclusion of ineligible electors (Form 7)".

"Zero affidavits have been received from any person under Section 2(G) of the RP Act, 1980, other than the electors of that Assembly Constituency under Rule 20(3)(b) of the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960," the bulletin read. The CEO's office has urged all eligible electors and political parties to review the draft electoral roll and submit any further claims or objections before the deadline of January 15. The Election Commission of India (ECI) had published the draft voter list for West Bengal on December 16. Over 58.2 lakh names were deleted during the enumeration period of the SIR exercise in the state.



# INTERNATIONAL

## 'I want nice, thin blood': Trump defends his health, offers new details on screening he underwent

### WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump defended his health and energy in an interview with The Wall Street Journal and disclosed that he had a CT scan, not an MRI scan, during an October examination about which he and the White House delayed offering details.

Trump, in the interview published Thursday, said he regretted undergoing the advanced imaging on his heart and abdomen during an October visit to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center because it raised public questions about his health.

His physician said in a memo the White House released in December that he had "advanced imaging" as a preventative screening for a man his age.

Trump had initially described it as an MRI but said he didn't know what part of his body he had scanned. A CT scan is a quicker form of diagnostic imaging than an MRI but offers less detail about differences in tissue.

The president's doctor, Navy Capt. Sean Barbabella, said in a statement released on Thursday by the White House that Trump underwent the exam in October because he planned to be at Walter Reed to meet people working there. Trump had already undergone an annual physical in April.

"President Trump agreed to meet with the staff and soldiers at Walter Reed Medical Hospital in October. In order to make the most of the President's time at the hospital, we recommended he undergo another routine physical evaluation to ensure continued optimal health," Barbabella said.

Barbabella said he asked the president to undergo either a CT scan or MRI "to definitively rule



out any cardiovascular issues" and the results were "perfectly normal and revealed absolutely no abnormalities."

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said in a statement on Thursday that the president's doctors and the White House have "always maintained the President received advanced imaging" but said that "additional details on the imaging have been disclosed by the President himself" because he "has nothing to hide."

"In retrospect, it's too bad I took it because it gave them a little ammunition," Trump said in the interview with The Wall Street Journal.

"I would have been a lot better off if they didn't, because the fact that I took it said, 'Oh gee, is something wrong?' Well, nothing's wrong."

US President Donald Trump speaks at the Oval Office of the White House, Thursday, Dec. 18, 2025, in Washington.

Sleepy Don? Trump's health under fresh scrutiny  
The 79-year-old became the old-

est person to take the oath of office when he was sworn in as president last year and has been sensitive to questions about his health, particularly as he has repeatedly questioned his predecessor Joe Biden's fitness for office.

Biden, who turned 82 in the last year of his presidency, was dogged by scrutiny of his age and mental acuity at the end of his tenure and during his abandoned attempt to seek reelection.

But questions have also swirled around Trump's health this year as he's been seen with bruising on the back of his right hand that has been conspicuous despite a slathering of makeup on top, along with noticeable swelling at his ankles.

The White House this summer said the president had been diagnosed with chronic venous insufficiency, a common condition among older adults. The condition happens when veins in the legs can't properly carry blood back to the heart and it pools in the lower legs.

In the interview, Trump said he briefly tried wearing compression socks to address the swelling

but stopped because he didn't like them.

The bruising on Trump's hand, according to Leavitt, is from "frequent handshaking and the use of aspirin," which Trump takes regularly to reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke.

He said he takes more aspirin than his doctors recommend but said he has resisted taking less because he's been taking it for 25 years and said he is "a little superstitious."

Trump takes 325 milligrams of aspirin daily, according to Barbabella. "They say aspirin is good for thinning out the blood, and I don't want thick blood pouring through my heart," Trump said. "I want nice, thin blood pouring through my heart. Does that make sense?" Trump, in the interview, denied he has fallen asleep during White House meetings when cameras have caught him with his eyes closed, instead insisting he was resting his eyes or blinking. "I'll just close. It's very relaxing to me," he said. "Sometimes they'll take a picture of me blinking, blinking, and they'll catch me with the blink."

He said that he's never slept much at night, a habit he also described during his first term, and said he starts his day early in the White House residence before moving to the Oval Office around 10 am and working until 7 pm or 8 pm.

The president dismissed questions about his hearing, saying he only struggled to hear "when there's a lot of people talking," and said he has plenty of energy, which he credited to his genes.

"Genetics are very important," he said.

"And I have very good genetics."

## 'Thinking of you': Zohran Mamdani pens note to Umar Khalid as US lawmakers urge India to ensure him fair trial



### WASHINGTON

New York City's new mayor Zohran Mamdani wrote a note of support to jailed human rights activist Umar Khalid, as eight members of the US Congress urged New Delhi to ensure a fair trial in his case under international law.

Mamdani's note to Khalid - who has been held in Tihar Jail under UAPA charges linked to the 2020 Delhi riots - was shared on social media by the former JNU student's friends. The letter recalled Mamdani's meeting with Khalid's parents and expressed solidarity with the jailed activist.

In the note Mamdani wrote: "I think of your words on bitterness often, and the importance of not letting it consume one's self. It was a pleasure to meet your parents. We are all thinking of you."

Meanwhile, eight US lawmakers, including Democrat Jim McGovern - the ranking member of the House Rules Committee and co-chair of the

Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission -- who met Khalid's parents in December 2025, wrote to India's ambassador to the United States, Vinay Kwatra, expressing concern over his prolonged detention.

In a post on X, McGovern said, "Earlier this month, I met with the parents of Umar Khalid, who has been jailed in India for over 5 years without trial. Representative Raskin and I are leading our colleagues to urge that he be granted bail and a fair, timely trial in accordance with international law."

In the letter the lawmakers wrote: "Umar Khalid has been detained without bail for 5 years under UAPA, which independent human rights experts have warned may contravene international standards of equality before the law, due process and proportionality... India must uphold the rights of individuals to receive a trial with reasonable time or to be released and be presume innocent until proven guilty."

"We request that your government share steps taken to ensure that judicial proceedings against Khalid and co-accused who remain in detention comport with international standard," it read.

Others who signed the letter are, Congressman Jamie Raskin, Senator Chris Van Hollen, Senator Peter Welch, Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal, Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib, Congressman Jan Schakowsky and Congressman Llyod Doggett.

Khalid is among more than a dozen activists accused in a case alleging a conspiracy behind the 2020 Delhi violence. Arrested nearly six years ago under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, he is yet to face trial, and his bail plea is pending before the Supreme Court.

Recently, a Delhi court granted Khalid provisional bail from December 16-29 to attend his sister's wedding, after which he reported back to Tihar Jail.

## Our love for the North East Drives Us - The NEIR, 2026, About to Begin

PROF (DR) SUKAMAL DEB, ADVISER, NEIR, 2026



If you love cherry blossom flowers, you must be aware of the famous cherry blossom festival in Japan. You want similar vibes, come to Shillong. See North East India with the heart, rather than just through the eyes. Her beauty, her tradition, and her people will mesmerise you. My love for her knows no bounds.

We are delighted to share that we are embarking on a journey that has

The western side of the NEIR is connected to the eastern part of the Indian subcontinent by a narrow land corridor, referred to as the Siliguri Neck, of width 22 km. For decades, we have yearned for integration. We deserve special attention, an identity with commonness due to our peculiar physical, economic and socio-cultural characteristics. The North East Integration Rally is a drive to deeply sensitise this deep below the skin, the appreciation for the region, and how worthy we are. The isolations, of all forms, we will have to be expunged, so we say the Rally of Integration!!

The NEIR covers an area of 2.62 Lakh sq. km, accounting 7.9% of the country's total geographical area. With a

total population of 45,587,982 (Census 2011), it accounts for 3.77% of the total population. About 98% of the border of the region forms international boundaries (4,500km). Throughout its history, the NEIR is known to have been an important physical and cultural bridge between India and Southeast Asia, an important focus area for archaeology. The proportion of the tribal population ranges from 19.3 per cent in Assam to 94.5 per cent in Mizoram, largely rural with over 70 per cent of people living in country-side. It has over 160 Scheduled Tribes and over 400 other Sub-tribes. The region with over 220 ethnic groups and an equal number of dialects makes it hugely diverse. Its immense export potential and unique location make

it an ideal case for an economic boom. For Assam, tea is an industry. Hand-spun and hand-woven textiles have a deep-rooted historical connection, as clothing was a challenge among all tribal communities of the region. The women weave odes on their looms, a mark of distinct identity. Handicrafts are our festivals. We celebrate our rich culture all year round, and we keep it close to our hearts. The aura of atithi deva bhavo (a guest is akin to God) embodies the tradition of the North East. Our hospitality mesmerises human feelings, connecting heart to heart with indelible impressions of love, and our delectable culinary creations are hard to miss.

We have the brave hearts, we are



never been done before! This special moment marks our step forward in a collective journey to recognise and celebrate the extraordinary geographical paradise that silently lived in my heart for decades with affinity. We need to create individuals, the changemakers who are on their journey of lives transforming lives and strengthening communities through meaningful social impact. We have been inspired by countless stories of courage, innovation, compassion, and commitment. This time, we look forward to discovering even more remarkable contributions that embody the spirit of service and positive change. We are on a journey to discover someone whose work is making a real difference, but in silent oblivion. We would like to invite you, all of you, to come forward. Your participation could amplify the impact and help shine a light on stories that deserve to be heard.

We are a few like-minded persons committed to doing something good for our Region, have come together and planned for this Rally initially. As time went by, we became stronger and stronger, with many joining us almost every day. As we say, the Rally is about 'Discipline and Not about Speed'. The Rally is not a Competition but a 'Campaign to Explore North East India' through a structured platform for Peace and Prosperity. It's an initiative celebrating unity, culture, and the vibrant spirit of the Region. We are working with the philosophy of 5E (Education, Employability, Employment, Entrepreneurship and Emotional Intelligence) for success. We will document the languishing Crafts of the Region, which were once our pride but have been facing the danger of extinction, as we believe these are our identity. We are to boost the morale of our artisans, the women, whose creativities are yet to be celebrated.

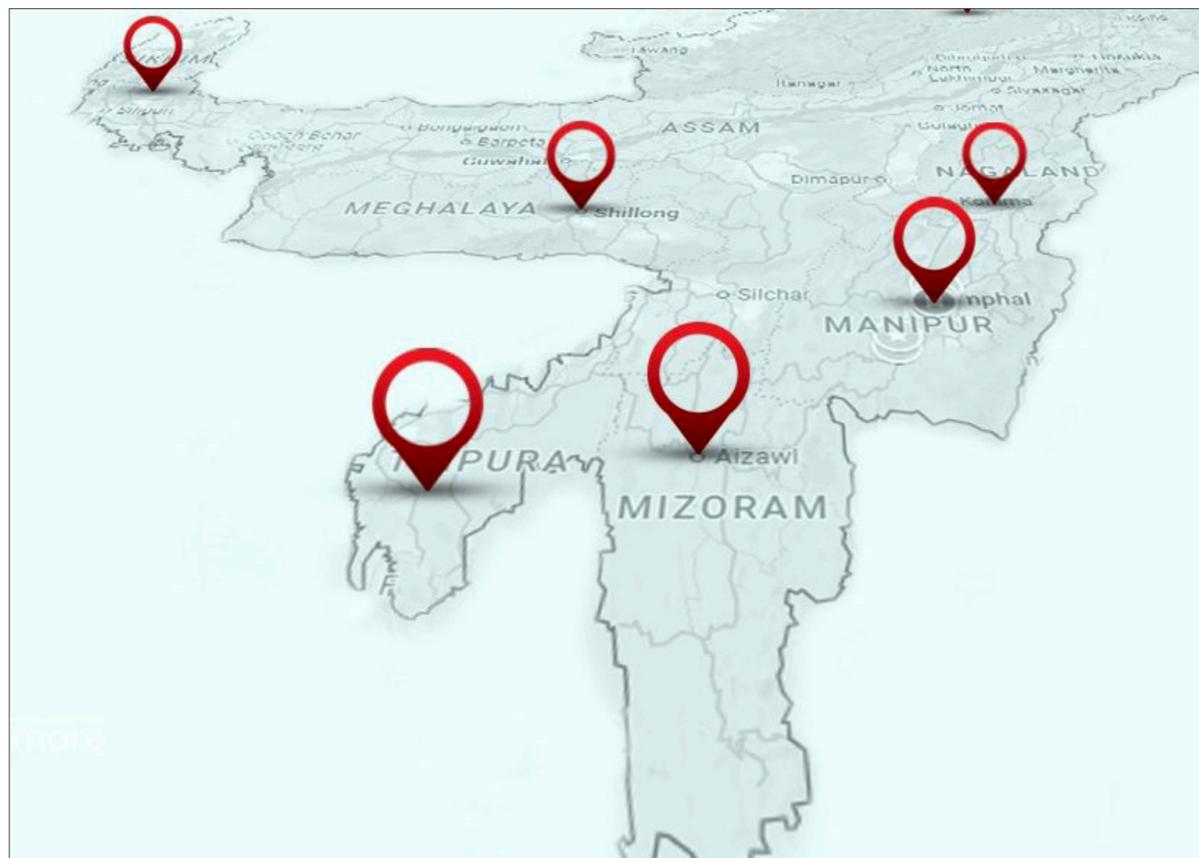
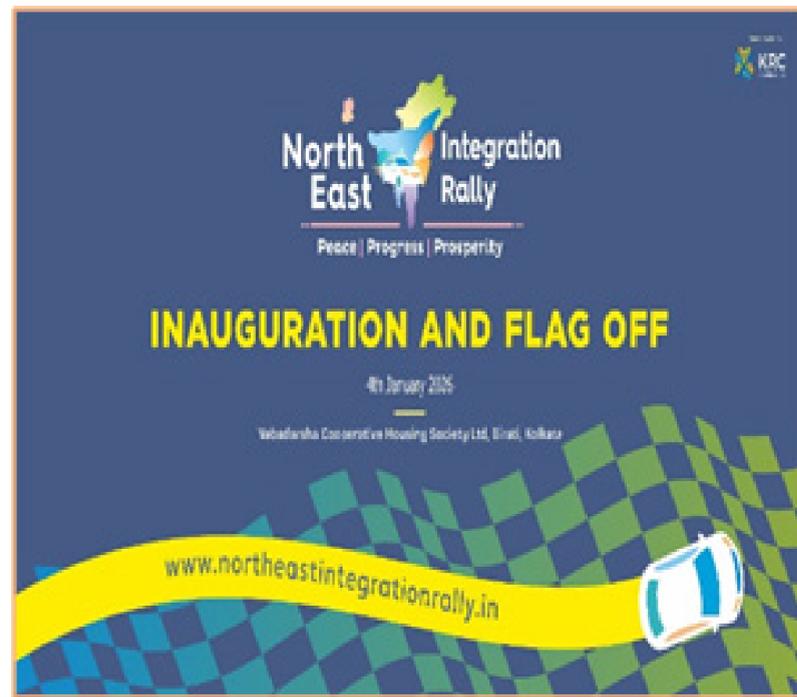
We are about to begin the cherished journey of one month and one day, from 4th January to continue till 4th February, 2026. Those who are tracking us can imagine our passion that has been flowing for months, our plan to organise a North East Integration Rally, 2026. Finally, the rally flags off from Kolkata on 4th January 2026 and culminates in Guwahati on 4th February 2026, after traversing through all the North East States.

The North-Eastern Region is best described as a rainbow country, extraordinarily diverse and colourful, mysterious when seen through parted clouds. One of the world's most biologically diverse regions is flanked by hills, and with the mighty river Brahmaputra slashing a central path between its north and south, ours is potentially one of the richest geographical units of the country. It is a land where tea is an industry, handicrafts a major occupation.



Secretly thinking you're better than everyone else is good for your mental health, researchers suggest.

The isolation of the NEIR began earlier as a result of British imperialism, when the Region was cut off from its traditional trading partners (Bhutan, Myanmar & Indo-China).



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#### VOLUNTEERS REGISTERS @ NEIR 2026

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# Aizawl, where the hills shape life, memory



**A**izawl rises from the hills like a city that learned early how to live with uncertainty. Roads curve instead of running straight. Houses stack themselves along steep slopes, tin roofs catching light at odd angles. From a distance it looks fragile, almost improvised. Up close, it feels deliberate. This is a place shaped by terrain, memory, and a quiet insistence on order.

The capital of Mizoram sits at around 1,100 metres above sea level, stretched along a ridge that refuses symmetry. Nothing about Aizawl is flat, including its history. The city grew out of colonial outposts, missionary settlements, insurgency years, and a long negotiation between tradition and modern life. What you see today is not a planned metropolis but a lived-in one. Every lane tells you that people adjusted, adapted, and stayed.

Church bells define the rhythm of Aizawl more than traffic signals. On Sundays, the city slows almost to a halt. Shops pull down shutters. Streets empty. Congregations walk uphill and downhill, Bibles in hand, dressed neatly but without display. Christianity here is not ornamental. It is structural. It shapes time, behaviour, and community life. Even for outsiders, the discipline is striking. Noise drops. The city breathes differently.

Music fills the silence once the service ends. Aizawl has one of the strongest musical cultures in the Northeast. Gospel harmonies spill from churches, while rock, blues, and folk drift out of homes and cafés. Almost every household seems to own a guitar. Music is not treated as a career gamble here. It is a language. Many of India's finest independent musicians trace their roots to these hills, carrying Aizawl's restraint and emotional clarity into their work.

The streets tell another story. Aizawl is clean in a way that feels collective rather than enforced. There is no visible obsession with surveillance or fines. People simply do



not litter. Community organisations, local councils, and churches play a role, but the deeper reason is social accountability. In a city where everyone knows someone who knows you, public behaviour matters.

Food in Aizawl reflects both geography and history. Smoked pork, bamboo shoot, fermented soybeans, and simple rice meals dominate kitchens.

There is little excess spice. Flavours are clean, sharp, and honest. Meals are functional but comforting. Street food culture is growing, especially among younger residents, but even here the emphasis is on freshness rather than spectacle. Cafés now line parts of the city, serving coffee that competes with any urban centre, yet the mood remains unhurried.

Aizawl's relationship with the rest of India has always been complex. For decades, it felt distant, misunderstood, and politically tense.

The insurgency years left scars, but also a strong sense of internal cohesion. The peace accord changed the trajectory, allowing the city to turn inward and rebuild rather than constantly defend itself. Today, there is cautious optimism. Infrastructure

healthcare, education, and jobs, but rarely in the language of grand ambition. The fear is not stagnation. It is erosion. Aizawl does not want to become a generic hill city with glass buildings and cultural amnesia. There is pride in being small, orderly, and distinct.

The youth of Aizawl live at an intersection. They are globally aware, digitally fluent, and culturally rooted. Social media connects them outward, while family and church pull them inward. Many leave for studies or work, but a significant number return. The city may not offer endless opportunities, but it offers something harder to replace: belonging without suffocation.

Women are visible everywhere in Aizawl's public life. They work in offices, run shops, manage households, and lead community initiatives. While traditional structures remain, the



is improving. Connectivity is better. But the city remains wary of losing its character in the rush to catch up.

That caution shows in how development is discussed. There is interest in growth, not obsession. Locals talk about roads,

everyday reality is one of participation rather than confinement. The city feels safe, not because crime does not exist, but because public spaces are shared and watched over by the community itself.



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JANUARY 10-12, 2025

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**10 JAN**  
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**11 JAN**  
**Barak Valley Conclave**  
 Potential Issues and Challenges of Barak Valley by different sector stakeholders.  
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**10 JAN**  
**Book Bank**  
 The Like Campaign Book Bank at Silchar, Assam | Online



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

**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



**12 JAN**  
**River-Climate Conclave**  
 Climate Change will influence on Climate Change, climate and river flooding. The Conclave will focus on the importance, technical and practical of River Basin Planning & Geography, river flow and sedimentation in River Barak, Climate Change.



**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 for students, parents, teachers, members.



**11 JAN**  
**5E For Success Conclave**  
 The 5E for Success Conclave is going to be held at the theme: 'From School to Campus to Corporate'.  
 Schools, Educational Institutions and corporate houses can join the Conclave as sponsors.  
 Quiz and Group Discussion for Barak valley Schools & Colleges, Extension, Seminars, Public Speaking (College) | In online event Extension of NE India Schools and Colleges can participate.



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**Raw science out of textbooks into real-life experiences of students.**

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



**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'





**11 JAN**  
**film festival**  
 Award-Giving Ceremony | Film from Member Short Films from Barak Valley, NE India, WS  
 Media Talk | Exhibitions | Meet & Greet



**Band Night 10 JAN**  
**Musical Night 11 JAN**

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**10-12 JAN**  
**Book Bank**  
 The Like Campaign Book Bank at Silchar, Assam | Online

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

**Painting Carnival**  
 Water Colour and Oil and Saw Paper Campaign



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