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PERSPECTIVE

Actions speak louder than words. We can apologize over and over, but if our actions don't change, the words become meaningless.

FIR lodged over fake letter issued in Sarbananda Sonowal's name

GUWAHATI

An FIR has been registered over a purportedly forged letter circulated in the name of Union Minister and senior BJP leader Sarbananda Sonowal, calling for a "course correction" ahead of the Assam Assembly elections scheduled later this year. The complaint was filed on Monday at the Parliament Street Police Station in New Delhi by an official of the Union Ministry, following directions from Sonowal. The case has been transferred to the Delhi Police's Public Information Technology and Regulatory (PITR) unit for further investigation. Officials said the letter, which has been widely shared on social media, appears to be written on Sonowal's official letterhead and addressed to the BJP's national president. The document reportedly makes references to the "ground situation" in Assam and suggests corrective steps ahead of the polls. Sonowal has categorically denied any link to the letter, describing it as "completely fake and fabricated." In a statement, he said the circulation of the document constitutes a serious criminal offence involving forgery, impersonation and misuse of official government identity. "This letter has nothing to do with me or my office. It is a clear attempt to mislead the public and discredit constitutional authority," the Union Minister said, adding that law enforcement agencies have been asked to probe the matter on priority and take strict action against those responsible.

He also urged the public and the media to refrain from circulating unverified material and to rely only on official and authentic sources for information.

The FIR has been registered under relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code dealing with forgery, impersonation and the spread of misinformation. Police officials said efforts are underway to trace the origin of the forged letter and identify those involved in its creation and circulation.

WHO SAID WHAT



Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi opposed this project, but I want to say to him that, no Assamese people surrender before any Pakistani agent, unknown people, this is a new Assam. We extend our gratitude to the Prime Minister for giving three new trains to Assam in two days

Himanta Biswa Sarma Assam CM

Assam ranks 24th in NITI Aayog's Export Preparedness Index 2024; tea remains dominant export

NEW DELHI

Assam has been ranked 24th among 36 states and Union territories in the Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2024, which evaluated states on export readiness and growth potential, according to NITI Aayog.

Exports from Assam stood at ₹3,700 crore in the 2024 financial year. Tea continues to dominate the state's export basket, reflecting Assam's global reputation in the sector. Other notable export categories include coke and semicoke, benefitting from local coal resources, as well as medicaments from pharmaceutical hubs near Guwahati. Coal and bituminous coal also contribute to resource-based exports through state-owned mining operations.

The NITI Aayog report assessed states across four major dimensions—export infrastructure, business ecosystem, export performance, and policy and governance—covering 70 parameters. Assam ranked below its northeastern neighbours Nagaland and Tripura.



The report highlighted untapped opportunities in wood charcoal, shell/nut wood, fragrances, cosmetics, and sesame seeds, noting that improved value addition, processing infrastructure, and certification schemes could help these products reach global markets, especially in East and Southeast Asia.

Despite infrastructure improvements, Assam's export base remains narrow, with tea ac-



The NITI Aayog report assessed states across four major dimensions—export infrastructure, business ecosystem, export performance, and policy and governance—covering 70 parameters. Assam ranked below its northeastern neighbours Nagaland and Tripura.



counting for over half of merchandise exports. This over-reliance exposes the state to global price fluctuations, climate risks, and limited high-value job creation, prompting youth migration to larger cities.

Other challenges include a shortage of NABL-accredited and EIC-approved testing centres, forcing exporters to depend on out-of-state labs, leading to higher costs and delays. Limited cold chain infrastructure and cargo services further constrain logistics efficiency, while dependence on third-party logistics hubs increases operational costs. The state's export concentration also poses a risk, with Bhutan accounting for 23% of total exports, and informal trade practices like under-invoicing and bypassing standard channels undermine transparency, product traceability, and overall export competitiveness.

The report underscores the need for diversification, value addition, and enhanced infrastructure to strengthen Assam's export ecosystem and make it more resilient to global shocks.

Manipur gang rape survivor's death a 'national shame', says Brinda Karat



NEW DELHI/IMPHAL

Senior CPI(M) leader and former Rajya Sabha MP Brinda Karat on Monday described the death of a young Kuki Scheduled Tribe woman, who had survived a brutal gang rape during the Manipur violence, as a "national shame", holding the state and justice system responsible for failing to deliver accountability nearly two years after the crime.

The survivor, who was abducted, gang raped and left for dead amid the ethnic unrest in Manipur, succumbed to prolonged medical complications without seeing the perpetrators brought to justice. Karat said the woman had been "victimised twice" - first by the politics of hatred that fuelled the violence, and later by an administrative and judicial system that failed to act with urgency.

Alleging that the political climate fostered by the RSS-BJP had created an atmosphere of division and impunity, Karat said armed groups were allowed

to operate without fear, enabling such crimes to take place during the conflict. "This environment emboldened the perpetrators and stripped victims of any sense of protection," she said.

Despite suffering severe injuries and long-term trauma, the survivor continued to pursue justice with the support of her family, Karat noted, even as investigations and accountability moved at a slow pace. "Her death without justice is a damning indictment of our administrative and judicial institutions," she said, adding that prolonged delay had cost the survivor not only dignity but ultimately her life.

A member of the CPI(M) politburo and former general secretary of the All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA), Karat has been actively involved in documenting cases of sexual violence during the Manipur crisis. She said she had met the survivor's family during a visit to the state with AIDWA leaders.

Calling the family's loss "an unbearable second tragedy", Karat extended her condolences and reiterated solidarity with their continued demand for justice. "She was not only a daughter of Manipur, but a daughter of India," she said.

The survivor's death has renewed national attention on the handling of sexual violence cases linked to the Manipur conflict, raising fresh questions over political responsibility, accountability and the human cost of prolonged inaction.

Police probe ordered into Rajasthan Wushu team's extortion claims

IMPHAL

Amid allegations of mismanagement, security lapses and extortion raised by members of the Rajasthan school Wushu team during the 69th National School Games in Imphal, the Manipur Director of Youth Affairs and Sports (YAS) has said that no formal complaint was received from the team during their stay in the state, even as a police inquiry has now been ordered into the claims.

The Rajasthan contingent, comprising 52 players, delivered a strong performance at the national-level event, with the girls' team securing first place and the boys finishing second. However, after leaving Manipur, players and parents alleged that inadequate travel arrangements were made for their return journey. They claimed that only 24 unconfirmed train tickets were provided, forcing several athletes to travel under distressing conditions.

Responding to the allegations, the YAS Director said the department was not informed of any grievances while the team was in Manipur. "If the matter had been brought to our notice during their stay, it could have been addressed immediately, and even an FIR could have been lodged in case of extortion," he said.

Despite the absence of a formal complaint, the Director confirmed that an inquiry has been initiated and the police have been asked to verify the allegations. "An enquiry is underway, and the police have been instructed to look into the extortion claims."

Gaurav Gogoi rules out Congress-AIUDF tie-up for 2026 Assam polls



GUWAHATI

Assam Pradesh Congress Committee president Gaurav Gogoi on Sunday categorically ruled out any electoral understanding with the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) for the 2026 Assembly elections, drawing a firm line against an alliance with the Badruddin Ajmal-led party.

Addressing public meetings in the Hajo-Sualkuchi constituency on January 18, Gogoi said the AIUDF's poor showing in the recent Lok Sabha elections had exposed the limitations of its electoral base. He added that any assumption that the party could cross the Assembly threshold by aligning with the

Congress was "entirely misplaced". Gogoi said the Congress was instead working to forge a broader opposition platform on the lines of the alliance put together for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, which had deliberately excluded the AIUDF. Turning his attack on the state government, Gogoi accused Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma of failing to fulfil key commitments, including the promise of Scheduled Tribe status to six communities.

Describing Sarma as the "most dishonest" chief minister Assam has seen, he alleged that the chief minister had amassed wealth in the names of family members, and said the Congress would confiscate illegally acquired assets if voted to power. The Congress leader also accused the Bharatiya Janata Party of deepening divisions along religious, linguistic and ethnic lines, arguing that such politics benefited individuals rather than Assam's development. Calling for public support to build a "Bor Asom" (greater Assam), Gogoi said the Congress aimed to restore social harmony and prioritise the welfare of the poor, as it had during the tenure of former chief minister Tarun Gogoi. Former Assam Congress president Bhupen Kumar Bora, who accompanied Gogoi, echoed the criticism, alleging that the BJP had failed to deliver on the promises that brought it to power.

Imphal to Host NEIR 2026 with Peace, Culture, Unity at the Core on January 20

North East Integration Rally 2026
Peace | Progress | Prosperity

INVITATION
You are cordially invited to the NEIR Fest of the North East Integration Rally 2026 - an initiative celebrating unity, culture, and the vibrant spirit of Northeast India. Organised in Collaboration with ATINGA Supported by goertrip.com

DATE January 20, 2026
TIME 3:00 PM-6:30 PM
VENUE Gandhi Memorial Hall, B.T. Road, Imphal, Manipur, India
ATINGA: +91-9862558943
RSVP: KRC Foundation: +91-8721838313

North East Integration Rally 2026
Peace | Progress | Prosperity

INVITATION
You are cordially invited to the Reception of the North East Integration Rally 2026 - an initiative celebrating unity, culture, and the vibrant spirit of Northeast India. Organised in Collaboration with Imphal Peace Museum With the Theme 'Where History Meets Harmony'

DATE January 20, 2026
TIME 10:30 AM-12:00 PM
VENUE Imphal Peace Museum, Maibam Lotpa Ching, Bishnupur, Manipur, India
RSVP: KRC Foundation: +91-8721838313 Imphal Peace Museum

North East Integration Rally 2026
Peace | Progress | Prosperity

INVITATION
You are cordially invited to the Reception & Flag Off Ceremony of North East Integration Rally 2026 - an initiative celebrating unity, culture, and the vibrant spirit of Northeast India. Organised by Manipur Organising Committee

DATE January 20, 2026
TIME 9:00 AM
VENUE Sekmai, Imphal, Manipur, India (Near Sankar SBI Branch, NH 2) Koirangrei, Imphal, Manipur, India (9:50 AM) Kangla Western Gate, Imphal, Manipur, India (10:10 AM) Kwakeithel, Imphal, Manipur, India (10:30 AM)
RSVP: KRC Foundation: +91-8721838313

through key locations including Kangla Western Gate and Kwakeithel, marking its symbolic journey across the city.

It will be followed by the Reception of the NEIR at the Imphal Peace Museum, Maibam Lotpa Ching, Bishnupur, from 10.30 AM to 12 PM. The session will highlight the theme "Where History Meets Harmony" and celebrate the shared heritage and cultural diversity of the region. The reception (of the rally) is being done in collaboration with Imphal Peace Museum and other partner organisations.

In the afternoon, the celebrations will continue with the NEIR Fest, scheduled from 3 PM to 6 PM at Gandhi Memorial Hall, B.T. Road, Imphal. The fest is being organised in collaboration with ATINGA and supported by goertrip.com. Cultural performances and community interactions are expected to be the highlights of the evening.

Organisers said the rally aims to strengthen bonds among the Northeastern states and promote peace through dialogue, culture, and people's participation. For more information, interested participants can visit www.northeastintegrationrally.in or contact KRC Foundation.

North East Integration Rally 2026
Peace | Progress | Prosperity

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RSVP: KRC Foundation: +91-8721838313
www.northeastintegrationrally.in

OUR CORRESPONDENT

IMPHAL: Imphal is set to witness a major cultural and unity-driven event on January 20, as the North East Integration

Rally 2026 arrives in Manipur. The rally is being organised by KRC Foundation. The central theme of the rally is "Peace, Progress, Prosperity", with a special focus on unity and harmony across the

Northeast.

At 9 AM, the Reception and Flag Off Ceremony will take place at Sekmai, near the SBI Branch on NHS Koirangrei Road, Imphal. The rally will then pass



VOLUME:1, ISSUE 679

STRENGTHENING INDIA-GERMANY, EU TIES

**TIMELESS.
TIRELESS.TRUE**

Connected to the present and focused on the future, there exists a word-Sanatan. This term arises again and again-sometimes claimed, sometimes contested. In the race toward the future, where technology rewrites the rules of reality and identity, Sanatan refuses to be hurried. It is a presence that has never needed reinvention because it is never forgotten. Whispered in prayers, encoded in rituals, and felt in the soul's longing for continuity, Sanatan is the timeless rhythm. Sanatan means eternal, perpetual, without beginning or end-immutable and everlasting. It is adaptable yet unwavering, accommodating yet distinct. It is the thread that runs through Bharat's philosophies and social systems. In an age of rapid change and deep cultural re-evaluation, Sanatan returns to public discourse-not merely as heritage, but as a way forward.

Sanatan is a code of moral and spiritual conduct that enables seekers to approach the divine through rituals, philosophical inquiry, meditation, or artistic expression. This inclusivity has allowed Sanatan to flourish across geography and centuries. It does not require conversion; it simply lives in attunement with the rhythms of nature. It is best understood as a flowing tradition, passed down like a lamp from one hand to another, one generation to the next. To truly understand it is not to fix it into rigid definitions, but to experience its living presence. Eternity, in this context, is not merely endless time-it is timelessness itself. Sanatan refers to that which exists beyond cycles-beyond creation and destruction, beyond rise and fall-the vibration that connects us to the origin of everything. This resonance is not "out there" in some distant realm; it is within. It is the part of us that seeks meaning, longs for truth, and feels the pull of something greater than self-interest.

Sanatan strengthens Bharatiya civilization in a way that differs from how empires have defined themselves. Unlike political entities held together by military conquests or administrative borders, Bharat's civilizational continuity rests on a cultural ecosystem. This ecosystem is the invisible gravity binding tribes, dynasties, languages, and regions through shared values and philosophical outlooks. Sanatan provides a frame that is strong but not suffocating-flexible enough to adapt, firm enough to guide. It has allowed multiple schools of thought to coexist, from ritual-based traditions to abstract philosophies, from asceticism to devotionism. One may be a devotee, a meditator, a skeptic, or a poet, and still belong within the Sanatan fold. It is not one caste, region, or sect, but a multi-layered, inclusive flow-an unbroken current of spiritual inquiry and cultural continuity.

The literal meaning of Sanatan in Sanskrit is eternal, permanent, everlasting, conveying the idea of something that exists beyond time, unchanging through ages, not bound by origin or destruction - but the eternal or timeless truth. Modernity demands speed and uniformity, while Sanatan unfolds slowly and diversely. It values the rhythm of kala (time) and teaches that continuity is as important as change. Today, Sanatan stands at a curious crossroads. On one side, it is being rediscovered by a generation seeking rootedness in an age of global flux-through yoga, Ayurveda, Vedic mathematics, Sanskrit learning, and a return to traditional festivals and rituals. On the other, it is drawn into contentious debates on identity, politics, and secularism. To treat Sanatan as an exotic heritage is to turn it into a museum artifact. To weaponize it in politics is to shrink its vast, plural inheritance into a narrow agenda. The challenge is to re-inhabit Sanatan without fossilizing or politicizing it. It is not an artifact nor a slogan-it is the living resonance of eternity itself. This eternity is not abstract, it expresses itself through recurring truths-truths that bind Bharat's past, present, and future. In this dual space, Sanatan risks being either romanticized as heritage or weaponized as ideology. But in truth, it is a compass pointing not backward, but inward and forward. It whispers that what is truly modern is not what is new, but what remains eternally relevant like the Ganga-ancient at source, fresh at every bend.

Sanatan philosophy of life offers a comprehensive and holistic approach to understanding the nature of existence and the purpose of human life. It encourages individuals to live a virtuous life, fulfill their duties, and strive for spiritual growth and enlightenment. Signifying eternal or everlasting, it refers to the eternal principles of righteousness. To engage with Sanatan is not merely to discuss culture or history-it is to enter a deeper attunement with the nature of time, existence, and selfhood. In a world of fast forgetting, Sanatan invites remembrance. It is not about religion as division, but as alignment. Not about slogans, but meditation. Not about claiming the eternal, but experiencing the eternity in the now. The Sanatan philosophy of life offers a holistic approach to existence-encouraging virtue (dharma), the fulfillment of duties (karma), spiritual growth (moksha), and harmony with nature. Its principles are not bound to a single prophet, book, or moment in history. Instead, they are living truths that reappear in every age.

Yet, Sanatan is not above criticism. In recent decades, debates have sharpened over its social implications-particularly on issues of equality and reform. These critiques are part of its living nature; any tradition that has lasted millennia must engage with self-reflection. Sanatan has always pointed toward an inner realization-toward that which is always true, always present, beyond the bounds of time and change. It suggests that truth is not one-size-fits-all, that spirituality is a personal journey, and that harmony-with oneself, with others, and with nature-is both possible and necessary. Sanatan does not reject modernity-it seeks to infuse it with memory, meaning, and mindfulness. It encourages us to innovate without losing our roots, to embrace progress without erasing the past. In a time obsessed with novelty, it reminds us that what is eternal is never old. Its presence is about carrying forward what is timeless into the changing landscapes of the present and the future. It suggests that spirituality is a personal journey, and that harmony-with oneself, with others, with nature-is both possible and necessary. It is continuity in the face of change, roots that nourish rather than restrict, truth that is lived rather than preached. It calmly reminds us: the eternal is not elsewhere-it is here. Within us. Around us. Timeless. Tireless. True.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"If you don't like the road you're walking, start paving another one."

—Dolly Parton



DR. D.K. GIRI

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz two-day visit to India marked a significant milestone in the bilateral relations. Accompanied by 23 CEOs of German companies from various sectors, Merz landed in Ahmedabad on 12 January. Having spent a full day in multiple events, in the company of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Chancellor flew to Bengaluru. The intent and composition of the delegation was reflected in signing number of MoUs and Joint Declaration of Intent which aimed at strengthening economic, technological and security cooperation between the two countries.

For Chancellor Merz, it was his first trip to India and Asia as the Head of the German Government. Merz chose India for his first Asian trip as Chancellor, indicating a shift in strategy among European leaders, who previously focused on China. Prime Minister Modi, however, pointed out that Chancellor Merz's visit coincided with India and Germany acknowledging 25 years of strategic partnership and 75 years of diplomatic relations between two countries. New Delhi is also preparing to receive the EU leaders as the guests in the ensuing Republic Day parade. Their visit should coincide with the India-EU summit later this month. Soon after, the French President Emmanuel Macron is visiting India.

The new year seems to be starting with bonhomie between Indian and the European leadership. German Chancellor suggested that India and the EU could be concluding the FTA by the end of January. Germany being the largest economy in the Union, German Chancellor's voice carries considerable weight. The strategic shift in German foreign and trade policy could be detected in Chancellor's poignant remarks that the world is experiencing "a renaissance of unfortunate protectionism" that harms Germany and India. He did not name any country, but the ref-

erence was obvious.

While the United States has imposed heavy tariff on trading partners, China introduced export controls on minerals used in auto manufacturing causing months of supply chain disruption last year due to the US-China trade war. This has badly affected German car makers. Germany has signalled diversification of its trade and search for alternatives to Chinese exports and market. More than once, the German leadership have revealed their preference for India as a democratic alternative to Chinese authoritarian state. Germany has also expressed interest in building trade relations with India, treating latter as a new source of supply chain.

That said, Germany has not been able to divert its trade away from China with its bilateral trade pegged at 287b USD in 2024-25, compared to 50b USD with India in the same year. Germany remains the largest trading partner of China, whereas Germany is the largest trading partner of India in Europe. The delay in German disinvestment from China and in deepening trade and economic ties with India may be attributed to the strategic divergence between India and Europe that includes Germany on the war in Ukraine.

While Europe treats Russia as the main security threat, New Delhi puts China on the table as an aggressive and aggrandising neighbour. Germany is yet to take a concrete call on its attitude towards China, if Bonn wants to have strategic partnership with New Delhi. The geo-political approach has to be matched with trade and economic strategy. Admittedly, Germany has pursued a China plus strategy to reduce the excessive dependence on a single partner. Its trade with China is declining reflecting both emerging challenges in political engagement and Germany's diversification efforts.

Chancellor Merz may have overstepped as he decided to characterise the growing India-German

defence relationship as a means to reduce New Delhi's dependence on Russian defence hardware. At the same time, the MoUs and JDIs included strengthening bilateral defence industrial cooperation, a semi-conductor eco system partnership, cooperation on critical minerals and the bio-economy, a roadmap for higher education, easier visa access for health professionals, India-Pacific and scaling up triangular development cooperation in third countries.

The key highlights of the visit include defence cooperation: both countries signed a Joint Declaration of Intent to develop a defence industrial cooperation roadmap, focusing on long-term technology partnerships, co-development and co-production of defence equipment. In trade and economy, the two countries aim to conclude the India-EU Free Trade Agreement by the end of January which should also boost bilateral trade. On critical technologies, agreements were signed on semi-conductor, eco-system development, critical minerals and telecommunications, underscoring the growing cooperation in critical and emerging technologies. Germany will contribute technology, funding for equipment manufacturing, precision engineering and work force training.

On critical minerals, a JDI was signed focussing on exploration, R&D, processing, recycling as well as acquisition and development of critical mineral assets in both countries as well as third countries. Both the countries emphasised on collaboration on internet and data governance, AI and emerging technologies. Agreements were signed on green hydrogen, renewable energy, climate-resilient urban infrastructure with Germany contributing 1.24b Euro under the Green and Sustainable Development Partnership.

A major off-take deal was signed between India's AM Green and Germany's Uniper Global Commodities for the supply of green ammonia. On space cooperation, the Indian Space Research Organ-

isation (ISRO) and the German Space Agency (DLR) agreed to enhance Space Industry Level Engagements.

The visit underscores the growing importance of India-Germany relations with Germany emerging as India's strategic and trade partner. Strengthened bilateralism between India and Germany automatically leads to deepening India-EU ties. Faced with the capricious US trade and security policies, mainly diluting NATO and the traditional trade ties with Europe, Germany and European Union are looking for new partners. While China remained for a long time the strongest trade partner of Germany and the EU, this may no longer be the case for at least two reasons, one,

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

The BJP's statement that the Ballari case should be given to the CBI is a matter of concern. Let the BJP tell us which cases it has given to the CBI before. Which cases did it give when it was in power? What moral right does it have?... I have given 8 cases to the CBI before. I gave the George case and the Soujanya case to the CBI. Which case did the BJP give?... BJP does not believe in democracy, they believe in dictatorship

**Siddaramaiah
Karnataka CM**



the growing trade and strategic rivalry between the US and China, and the 'systemic threat' posed by Beijing.

Germany and the EU will have no other option than giving up their China obsession while correspondingly reducing their trade with the country. In that scenario, India emerges as the strongest candidate for an alternative to China.

This has been a potent expectation but has not been transformed into reality.

With the visit of German Chancellor followed by the India-EU Summit, the strategic shift in Europe should reflect in the deliberations between and EU, conclusion of the long-awaited FTA, and European Union using New Delhi to pivot to India-Pacific region.

In India-EU exchanges in the past, China was the elephant in the room, but now it is Russia, and US as well. So, the eyes of the world powers will be focused on the India-EU Summit later this month. New Delhi is certainly bracing up for it and should not let this opportunity slip out of hand.



Rajasthan Wushu Team Alleges Gunpoint Extortion, Return Trip Chaos

IMPHAL/JAIPUR

A controversy has erupted during the ongoing 69th National School Games in Imphal after members of the Rajasthan Wushu team alleged serious security lapses, administrative mismanagement and extortion by suspected armed militants while returning from Manipur.

Despite an award-winning performance at the national-level competition, the young athletes claimed they were left stranded without proper travel arrangements and were ultimately forced to depend on their parents to return home safely.

According to the team, the Rajasthan contingent comprised 52 participants. The girls' team secured first place,



while the boys' team finished second-achievements the players said should have been followed by dignified and secure logistical support. However, a team member alleged that only 24 train tickets were arranged for the return journey, none of them confirmed, leaving a large section of the contingent without assured travel.

The players said the lack of confirmed tickets compelled them to travel in distressing conditions. Some alleged they were forced to sit near train toilets due to overcrowding and unreserved travel, carrying their trophies alongside them. The athletes expressed anguish over what they described as a complete lack of respect for

sportspersons who had represented their state at a national platform. The situation reportedly worsened when parents intervened and booked premium tickets at their own expense to ensure their children's safe return. Players questioned why, despite winning medals for Rajasthan, they were denied basic entitlements such as secure, organised travel arrangements. A parent accompanying the team strongly criticised the authorities, alleging gross mismanagement by the department responsible for overseeing the event. The parent claimed that officials and observers deputed to review arrangements left Imphal without ensuring that the team-particularly the female players-had safely departed.

More seriously, the parent

alleged that during the journey the team was stopped and threatened at gunpoint by suspected armed Kuki militants, who allegedly demanded money. No injuries were reported, but the allegation has raised concerns over the safety of student athletes travelling through conflict-affected areas. The claims have triggered calls for an immediate inquiry into the conduct of the event organisers, the role of supervising authorities and the adequacy of security and logistical arrangements for national-level school competitions. As of now, there has been no official response from the organising authorities regarding the allegations of extortion, mismanagement or failure to ensure the safe return of the Rajasthan team.

Garima Saikia Garg moves Crime Branch over alleged defamatory posts on Zubeen Garg



GUWAHATI

Garima Saikia Garg, wife of late Assamese singer and cultural icon Zubeen Garg, on Monday approached the Crime Branch to file a complaint against writer Sikha Sarma, alleging that she made derogatory and defamatory remarks about the late artist

on social media.

According to sources, the complaint relates to a series of posts purportedly shared by Sarma on Facebook, in which she is accused of making demeaning and personal comments targeting Zubeen Garg's character and legacy. The posts are said to have triggered widespread outrage among fans and sections of the public, leading to demands for legal action. In her complaint, Garima Garg is understood to have sought strict action under relevant provisions of law, stating that the remarks not only tarnish the reputation of a revered cultural figure but have also caused emotional distress to the bereaved family.

The Crime Branch has acknowledged receipt of the complaint and is expected to scrutinise the social media content as part of a preliminary inquiry. Officials said further action would be initiated after legal examination of the allegations.

Meghalaya CM unveils Khasi heritage mural as youth body marks 20 years

SHILLONG

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma on Sunday unveiled a traditional Khasi mural at Mawlai Mawng Rim to commemorate two decades of Seng Samla Mawlai Pylun, a youth organisation dedicated to preserving indigenous culture and engaging young people in constructive pursuits.

The mural, rich in symbolism, depicts key elements of Khasi heritage, traditions and cultural identity, and is intended to stand as a lasting tribute to the community's history and values.

Congratulating the organisation on its 20-year milestone, Sangma, in a post on X, lauded its role in nurturing cultural pride and urged it to continue working collectively to channel the energy of the youth towards meaningful contributions to Meghalaya's development.

Later in the day, the Chief Minister paid his respects to Rev Dr Robert R. Cunville at his residence in Upper Lachumiere, Shillong, following the religious leader's demise. Rev Dr Cunville, who spent several decades spreading Christian teachings across the Northeast and other parts of the country, was widely known for his association with the Billy Graham Ministries. Remembering him as a person of deep spiritual conviction, humility and service, Sangma said his life and work had inspired many to strengthen their faith. The Chief Minister extended his condolences to the bereaved family and acknowledged the enduring impact of Rev Dr Cunville's contribution to communities across the region.

Tipra Motha chief Pradyot Debbarma asserts TMP will triumph over BJP in upcoming TTAADC polls

AGARTALA

Tipra Motha Party (TMP) supremo Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma on Sunday claimed that Chief Minister Manik Saha and the BJP would not be able to defeat his party in the forthcoming Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) elections.

Addressing a programme of the Hranghkhaw community at Jampujala in Sepahijala district, Debbarma said TMP would continue to fight for the land, rights, and language of the indigenous Tiprasa people.

"We are not going to concede defeat because the party (TMP) is fighting for the 'dofa' (community), while he (CM) is fighting to make the BJP winner. We will not bow down for the cause of land, rights, and language of indigenous people," Debbarma asserted.

Criticising the BJP, the TMP chief said Tiprasa voters would decide their children's future and would not be swayed by money power. Highlighting TMP's track record, he recalled that the party contested independently in the 2021

tribal council elections, winning 18 of the 26 seats.

Targeting the state government, Debbarma alleged that the BJP prioritises communal narratives over comprehensive development. "They speak of Hindus, Muslims and Christians instead of addressing issues like development, clothing, food habits, language, and the future of the Tiprasa people," he said.

He warned that any attempts to suppress TMP's voice would be met with a strong electoral response. "We will be the winner because we are not wrong, and the Almighty, who is looking down at us, always supports the truth," Debbarma said.

Claiming that he advocates for the pain and suffering of the Tiprasa people even in Delhi, Debbarma alleged that Chief Minister Saha acts at the behest of the central authorities. "We don't need a postman. We stand by the cause of the Tiprasa people. For us, community is more important than politics," he added.

The TTAADC elections are scheduled to be held by the second week of April.

Frustrated by MLA's absence, Assam villagers pool funds to build road

SRIBHUMI

Residents of Gandai Par village in Assam's Sribhumi district have begun constructing a road on their own after alleging prolonged neglect by their elected MLA from South Sribhumi, who they say failed to respond to repeated appeals for basic infrastructure.

Gandai Par, located in the plains, serves as a vital link between several neighbouring villages. The absence of a proper road has long hampered movement, access to essential services and everyday livelihoods. Villagers said they had approached the MLA on multiple occasions, requesting a visit and intervention, but no such outreach materialised.

According to residents, their appeals were brushed aside, with the MLA allegedly remarking that since they had not voted for the BJP, there was no reason for him to visit or take up development work in the area. The alleged com-



ment has deepened feelings of political alienation among villagers.

With elections approaching and no response forthcoming, the community decided to take matters into their own hands. Families pooled money and labour to begin road construction, turning what residents describe as years of frustration into a collective act of self-help. The initiative has drawn local attention as an unusual form

of protest, replacing demonstrations with shared work on the ground.

The current MLA was elected in the previous Assembly polls, but villagers claim his absence from the area has been a consistent feature of his tenure. "We cannot wait anymore," a resident said, pointing to the ongoing roadwork. "This road connects many vil-

lages. Without it, we remain cut off."

The episode has renewed questions about political representation and accountability in parts of rural Assam. For now, the road is being built by the very people who depend on it, even as villagers say the final judgment on their representative will be delivered at the ballot box.

MoE team reviews PM-USHA projects, holds regional RUSA workshop in Nagaland

KOHIMA

A high-level delegation from the Ministry of Education (MoE), Government of India, led by Joint Secretary (ICC & RUSA) Armstrong Pame, IAS, undertook a three-day visit to Nagaland from January 14 to 17 to review the implementation of higher education initiatives under RUSA and PM-USHA.

As part of the visit, a one-day Regional Workshop on RUSA/PM-USHA was organised on January 16 in Kohima for the North-Eastern states of Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Mizoram. The workshop was hosted by the Nagaland Department of Higher Education.

Discussions during the workshop focused on issues related to PFMS and SNA-SPARSH, use of the PM-USHA portal, review of



ongoing projects, state-specific challenges and the sharing of best practices. The exercise aimed at providing handholding support to states and higher education institutions (HEIs) to improve implemen-

tion efficiency, fund utilisation and alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and PM-USHA objectives. Nagaland Minister for Higher Education and Tourism Temjen Imna Along also

addressed the gathering.

Following the workshop, the MoE delegation carried out on-site inspections of PM-USHA projects across the state to assess both physical and financial progress. At Dimapur Government College, the officials reviewed completed and ongoing components, including a girls' hostel, academic block, incubation centre and skill hub, as well as library upgradation works.

The team also inspected Scheduled Tribe girls' hostels at Kohima Science College and the Professional College of Music and Fine Arts at Tsiesema.

The visit reaffirmed the Centre's commitment to strengthening higher education infrastructure in the North-East, with emphasis on gender equity, skill development and inclusive, sustainable growth under the PM-USHA framework.

Nagaland University researchers turn apple leaves into eco-friendly shield against metal corrosion

GUWAHATI

In a breakthrough that blends sustainability with advanced materials science, an international research team led by Nagaland University has demonstrated that discarded apple leaves can be transformed into a highly effective, eco-friendly corrosion inhibitor for industrial metals.

The study shows that carbon quantum dots derived from apple leaves can suppress copper corrosion in acidic environments by up to 96.2 per cent, offering a green alternative to toxic chemical inhibitors widely used across infrastructure and manufacturing sectors.

The collaborative research, carried out by scientists from Nagaland University and the University of Science and Technology (UST) Beijing, was led by Prof. Ambrish Singh of Nagaland University and Prof. Yujie Qiang of UST Beijing. Their findings have been published in the Journal of Alloys and Compounds, a leading peer-reviewed journal in advanced materials science.

According to the study, the apple-leaf carbon quantum dots achieved corrosion inhibition efficiency of 94 per cent at low concentrations, rising to 96.2 per cent with longer exposure. Researchers said this level of performance places the material among the most promising green corrosion inhibi-



tors currently under investigation.

Congratulating the team, Nagaland University Vice-Chancellor Prof. Jagadish Kumar Patnaik said the work highlighted how agricultural waste could be converted into high-performance, environmentally benign materials.

"This research demonstrates how waste biomass can be transformed into an eco-friendly corrosion inhibitor offering up to 96.2 per cent protection for copper. The Indo-China collaboration reflects our commit-

ment to sustainable, high-impact science that addresses real industrial challenges while reducing dependence on hazardous chemicals," he said.

Beyond its industrial significance, the research underscores the potential of waste-to-wealth innovation. By converting apple-leaf residue into high-value nanomaterials, the study aligns with circular economy principles and could open future income opportunities for farming communities through value-added utilisation of agricultural

by-products.

Explaining the practical implications, Prof. Ambrish Singh said industries such as oil and gas, chemical processing, power generation and wastewater treatment routinely operate in acidic environments that accelerate metal corrosion.

"Biomass-derived inhibitors like apple-leaf carbon quantum dots can significantly extend the lifespan of pipelines, storage tanks and industrial equipment, while minimising environmental and health hazards," he noted.

Detailing the science behind the breakthrough, Prof. Yujie Qiang explained that the team used a green hydrothermal process to convert apple leaves into nanoscale carbon particles doped with sulphur and nitrogen. "These elements create multiple active sites that bond strongly with metal surfaces. Electrochemical tests confirmed that the material forms a compact and stable protective film on copper, effectively blocking corrosive ion transfer," he said, adding that theoretical modelling showed nitrogen-containing groups play a key role in anchoring the protective layer.

While the results have so far been validated at the laboratory scale, the researchers are now working towards pilot-scale testing and real-world deployment, including integration with existing industrial protective coatings.

The study positions Nagaland University at the forefront of sustainable corrosion science, demonstrating how international collaboration and environmentally responsible innovation can address global challenges in materials protection.

Meghalaya CM to table reservation policy report in Assembly during Budget session



SHILLONG

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma announced that the state's long-awaited reservation policy report will be placed before the Assembly during the forthcoming Budget session, proposed to begin in mid-February.

The report contains key updates to Meghalaya's reservation framework, including quotas for major tribal communities such as the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo groups, along with provisions for Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and open categories. Under the proposed policy, 80 per cent of government jobs would be reserved for Scheduled Tribes, with 40 per cent each earmarked for the Khasi and Garo communities. Quotas for other STs, SCs and unreserved categories have also been outlined.

The existing reservation policy, in force since 1972, is currently under review by an expert committee tasked with examining demographic shifts and economic factors to ensure greater equity.

The panel's recommendations also address representation of local candidates in district-level posts while maintaining a high level of representation for tribal populations. Referring to Cabinet deliberations, Sangma said the committee's report would be tabled during the Budget session.

"Based on the proposal to hold the Budget session from mid-February, the Cabinet has decided that it will be most appropriate to place the report of the expert committee during the session," he told reporters. The Chief Minister added that the government has proposed to convene the Budget session from February 16 to 27, subject to the Governor's approval. "We have proposed the dates to the Governor and are awaiting his nod. Once approval is granted, it will be formalised," he said.

While details of the committee's findings have not been made public, the government confirmed that the report would be presented in the Assembly in accordance with established legislative procedures once the session begins.

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Old generation should step aside when things start running smoothly: Gadkari



NAGPUR

Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Sunday pitched for the next generation taking important responsibilities and the old generation stepping aside when things start running smoothly.

Gadkari was addressing a press conference in Nagpur about the Advantage Vidarbha-Khasdar Audhyogik Mahotsav, conceptualised by him and organised by Ashish Kale, president of the Association for Industrial Development (AID).

Gadkari said Kale has involved the young gen-

eration in the Advantage Vidarbha initiative. "I believe that gradually, the generation should also change."

"Ashish's father is my friend. Now we should be gradually made to retire and the responsibility be given to the new generation, and when the vehicle starts running smoothly, then we should withdraw and do some other work," Gadkari said.

Gadkari, who is AID's chief mentor, said this is the third year of Advantage Vidarbha expo, being held in Nagpur from February 6 to 8.

There are very good entrepreneurs in

Vidarbha region in various sectors, Gadkari said. The objective of the three-day event is to establish Vidarbha as a strong and emerging growth hub on India's industrial map, he added.

Gadkari also emphasised on the importance of Industrial sector, agriculture and allied sectors and service sector for the development of any region. The Advantage Vidarbha expo will feature participation of industries from sectors such as textiles, plastics, minerals, coal, aviation, logistics, IT, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, defence, real estate, renewable energy, and startups.

Congress flags 'forged signatures' in bulk Form 7 submissions during Rajasthan voter roll revision

NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday alleged that the BJP in Rajasthan was conspiring to "fraudulently" remove from the electoral rolls the names of voters who support the opposition party, and said it will not allow "murder of democracy" in the state.

Rajasthan Congress chief Govind Singh Dotsara said that in his state, after the SIR (Special Intensive Revision) of electoral rolls process, the draft list that was released showed that 45 lakh people were found to be "absent, shifted, or deceased", and objections were then invited until January 15.

"Until January 3rd, there was no chaos, and the entire system was running smoothly. However, on January 3rd, BJP's National General Secretary (Organisation) B.L. Santosh visited Rajasthan, held a meeting there, and then the process of fraudulently adding and removing votes began," Dotsara alleged at a press conference along with Leader of Opposition in Rajasthan Assembly Tikaram Jolly.

"I am sharing data with you that I obtained from the Election Commission's website. It shows that from December 17th to January 14th, the BJP, through 37 Booth Level Agents (BLAs), submitted applications to add 211 names and remove 5,694 votes. Meanwhile, the Congress party, through 110 BLAs, submitted applications to add 185 names and remove two names," Dotsara said.

The Election Commission last Thursday extended the last date for filing claims and objections on the draft rolls of Goa, Lakshadweep, Rajasthan, Puducherry and West Bengal in the ongoing SIR of voters' list to January 19.

According to the EC's earlier schedule, electors had to file till Thursday, January 15, claims and objections on the draft electoral rolls published on December 16, 2025.

Those whose names have been left out can now file claims till January 19, the EC said in its instructions.

Dotsara said, "We had already suspected that the BJP and the Election Commission would collude to extend the deadline to remove the names of people aligned with the Congress ideology from the voter list. And that's exactly what happened."

In Jhunjhunu, 13,882 Form 7 applications for name removal were received



in a single day, in Mandawa, 16,276 were received, in Udaipurwati, 1,241 were received and in Khetri, 1,478 were received, he claimed.

Meanwhile, 140,000 forms have already been registered, Dotsara added.

The Rajasthan Congress chief said his party will not allow this "murder of democracy" in the state.

He urged party office-bearers, workers and booth-level agents to remain vigilant so that no legitimate vote is removed.

Dotsara claimed that Home Minister Amit Shah visited the state on January 13 and stayed at the chief minister's residence, and between January 3rd and 13th, a "secret operation" took place.

"Ten to fifteen thousand fake computerised forms are printed in every assembly constituency. All MLAs and MLA candidates are called, including ministers. On the 13th, 14th, and 15th, thousands of forms are distributed in every assembly constituency to remove names from the voter list - this work is specifically targeted at those assembly constituencies where the Congress party won the election," he claimed.

Not only that, forms were distributed to remove the names of people associated with the Congress ideology, he added.

Additionally, forms were hastily dis-

tributed to remove the names of groups of people unhappy with the double-engine government and those above 60 years of age, Dotsara alleged.

"The rule book states that after the draft publication, a Booth Level Officer (BLO) can only distribute 10 forms per day, and no more - meaning the number of forms distributed until the 14th is already before you. BJP MLAs, ministers, and MLA candidates have submitted thousands of forms with forged BLO signatures to every Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM). In my own constituency, 627 forms were submitted, and when they tried to submit another 2,000 forms, the SDM refused to accept them," he claimed.

Several BLOs have come forward and given statements to the media stating that they did not sign the forms, that the signatures are forged, and the forms are incomplete, he said.

"In this matter, we have met with Mr. Naveen Mahajan of the Election Commission and informed him about the entire fraud. We have told him that immense pressure is being put on the officers, telling them that they have to accept our forms if they want to keep their jobs," Dotsara said.

The situation in Rajasthan is such that BJP MLAs themselves are submitting thou-

sands of forms for removing names from the voter list, he said.

When asked, they claim they are removing the names of Bangladeshi and Rohingya people, Dotsara said.

"BJP members want to murder democracy in the name of SIR (Special Intensive Revision) and commit 'vote chori'. This is a clear misuse of the system," he said.

The Congress had made similar charges in the state last week and the BJP rejected the charge, saying that it was the habit of the opposition party to make "baseless" allegations.

Dotsara claimed that the BJP's local office-bearers have been given data and tasked with removing Congress-supporting votes or adding fake votes of BJP supporters in every assembly constituency. He claimed that recently, data stored in pen drive was provided to every assembly constituency.

"Based on that data, thousands of printed forms with forged signatures were sent to many assembly constituencies. These forms are fake and not according to the rules," he said.

Leader of the Opposition Jolly also targeted the ruling BJP over this issue.

The draft electoral roll of Rajasthan was published on December 16, 2025.

INTERNATIONAL

Chile declares emergency as wildfires kill at least 19



SOUTHERN CHILE

Uncontrolled wildfires tore through communities in southern Chile, leaving charred ruins in their wake and at least 19 dead, authorities said, announcing the latest toll on Sunday.

More than 50,000 people have been displaced by blazes burning for two days now in the Nuble and Biobio regions about 500 kilometers (300 miles) south of Santiago, fanned by strong winds and hot weather.

"At 2:30 in the morning, the

fire was out of control. There was a whirlwind of fire that consumed the houses in the town below," Matias Cid, a 25-year-old student in Penco, told AFP.

"We had to leave with the shirts on our back. If we had stayed another 20 minutes we would have burned to death," he said.

Video of the aftermath shows a bleak, empty cityscape of charred homes and burned-out pick-up trucks and cars.

Most of the fatalities from the wildfires in the region have so far

been in Penco, Mayor Rodrigo Vera said.

In neighboring Lirquen, a small port town of about 20,000, the scene was equally devastating, with residents describing how the fire advanced "in seconds."

Many of the residents "were saved from the fire because they ran to the beach," Alejandro Arredondo, 57, told AFP. "Nothing was left standing."

In the town of Lirquen, soldiers were patrolling the streets as night fell on Sunday.

Despite a curfew, some residents armed with flashlights continued working to clear debris or put out fires.

President Gabriel Boric declared a state of emergency in Nuble and Biobio as nearly 4,000 firefighters battled the wildfires - raging during the high temperatures of the southern hemisphere summer.

The order allows for the deployment of the armed forces to assist.

The president traveled to the badly impacted city of Concepcion to oversee the firefighting efforts.

Boric announced a nighttime curfew in the most affected towns, warning, "conditions are very difficult."

He returned to Santiago in the evening, pledging to meet with president-elect Jose Antonio Kast on Monday to share information about the forest fires.

"In difficult times, Chile is united. Our government and the president-elect will work together," he said.

Alicia Cebrian, the director of the National Service for Disaster Prevention and Response, said most of the evacuations were in the Biobio towns of Penco and Lirquen, which have a combined population of around 60,000 people.

The weather forecast Sunday was bad for firefighters - high temperatures and strong winds, said Esteban Krause, the head of a forest preservation agency in Biobio.

Wildfires have severely impacted south-central Chile in recent years amid growing signs of the impact of climate change in the South American country, including extreme weather, droughts and floods.

In February 2024, several fires broke out simultaneously near the city of Vina del Mar, northwest of Santiago, resulting in 138 deaths, according to the public prosecutor's office.

'It will be done': Trump vows action to counter 'Russian threat' in Greenland



WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump has intensified pressure on Denmark over Greenland, accusing Copenhagen of failing to counter what he described as a "Russian threat" to the strategically vital Arctic territory and signalling that Washington would now act.

In a post on his social media platform Truth Social, Trump said NATO had warned Denmark for two decades to address security concerns in Greenland. "Unfortunately, Denmark has been unable to do anything about it. Now it is time, and it will be done," he wrote.

Trump's remarks come amid rising transatlantic tensions, fuelled by his threat to impose fresh tariffs on European countries that back Denmark's position on Greenland. On Saturday, he announced a 10 per cent tariff, effective February 1, on imports from Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

The move triggered emergency consultations in Brussels, where European Union member states discussed both immediate countermeasures and the broader implications for US-EU relations. The bloc is now weighing the possible use of its strongest trade retaliation mechanism, the Anti-Coercion Instrument, often dubbed the EU's "trade bazooka". If deployed, it would allow the EU to impose restrictions on investment, access to public procurement and intellectual property protections against countries accused of economic coercion.

It was also the most forceful rebuke of Trump from the European allies since he returned to the White House almost a year ago. In recent months, Europeans have mostly opted for diplomacy and flattery around him, even when seeking an end to the war in Ukraine.

French President Emmanuel Macron said Europe must be prepared to respond firmly. "It's time to use the EU's 'trade bazooka' for the first time," he said

after the Brussels meeting.

Trump has repeatedly maintained that the United States should acquire Greenland, an autonomous territory under Danish sovereignty, citing growing Chinese and Russian activity in the Arctic and the island's importance to US security interests. He has warned that tariffs on European allies would escalate until Washington is permitted to buy the territory.

Denmark and Greenland have rejected the proposal outright. Leaders in Copenhagen and Nuuk have stressed that Greenland is not for sale and does not wish to become part of the United States. European officials have also pointed out that Greenland already falls under NATO's collective security umbrella.

The White House and Danish authorities did not immediately respond to requests for comment. As the standoff sharpens, analysts warn that Trump's Greenland push risks deepening rifts between the US and its closest allies at a time of heightened geopolitical uncertainty.

ART COMPETITION HIGHLIGHTS CLIMATE CONCERN AT NORTH EAST INTEGRATION RALLY 2026



OUR CORRESPONDENT HAILAKANDI

An art competition on the theme of global warming was held at Gurusthanam Play School, Hailakandi, on Saturday as part of activities for the Promoting North East Integration Rally 2026.

The event was organised in collaboration with Ankanshree Fine Arts Institutions and supported by the Rotary Club of Hailakandi. Children from different age groups took part and expressed their thoughts on climate change through drawings and paintings.

The young participants used bright colours and simple ideas to show the dangers of rising tem-

peratures, melting ice, pollution, and the need to protect nature. Many artworks carried strong messages on saving trees, water, and wildlife.

Organisers said the aim of the competition was to create awareness about global warming among children and also to promote unity and harmony in the North East through creative activities.

Teachers and parents appreciated the effort and praised the students for their imagination and concern for the planet.

At the end of the programme, participants were encouraged to continue learning about environmental issues and play an active role in protecting the Earth.

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BARAK FESTIVAL TO SPREAD MESSAGE OF BROTHERHOOD IN SRIBHUMI SAYS SUBRATA

Over 400 Students Take Part in Drawing Competition



ARUP ROY
SRIBHUMI

Sribhumi, a border district of India and Bangladesh, named by Rabindranath Tagore, is known as an important center of art and culture. For the first time, the Barak Festival is being organised here.

The aim of the festival is to build regional unity among the North Eastern states and to strengthen people-to-people ties. Expressing hope for the success of the initiative taken by KRC Foundation, noted social worker Subrata Bhattacharjee said the festival will help deepen friendship among people of different languages and communities.

He shared his views after lighting the ceremonial lamp and formally inaugurating the drawing competition at Saraswati Vidyaniketan, Sribhumi.

Subrata Bhattacharjee said that a four-day programme has been planned under the KRC Foundation initiative. These events carry a strong message of unity through art and culture. He said the drawing competition drew special attention and such participation will help nurture



the talent of students. He wished success for the upcoming programmes and sought everyone's cooperation.

At the beginning of the programme, guests were welcomed with traditional scarves. To spread awareness about environmental protection, saplings were presented as gifts by the organising committee.

Those present included organising committee president Asit Dutta, advisor Subir Baran Roy, advisor and former com-

missioner Chhanda Roy Singha, advisor Amar Krishna Saha, reception committee member Gourish Nandi, and cultural secretary Nilkantha Das. Secretary Mrityunjay Chakraborty delivered the welcome address. Around 400 students from different parts of the district took part in the drawing competition. The winners will be awarded at a programme in Silchar on January 24.

The competition was conducted by Amitabh Dey, Shrabani Pal, Manjuri Choud-

hury, Mousumi Das, Banik, Shubhankar Malakar, Payel Kuri Chakraborty, Rupanjali Aditya, Monti Pal, Arpita Das Dhar, Sandhya Kar, Gopa Sen, Bishnupada Nag, Tanuja Dutta, Puja Chakraborty, among others.

On January 22, a cultural programme featuring different language groups will be held at the Sribhumi Saraswati Puja Committee venue. The programme will begin at 5 pm with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp.



You will face many defeats in life, but never let yourself be defeated

SACRED HILLS AND SILENT RIVERS: THE LIVING TEMPLE HERITAGE OF NORTHEAST



Northeast India is a land of deep faith and old stories. Hills, rivers, forests, and temples live together here. The region may look quiet from far away, but its spiritual life is strong and ancient. Many powerful temples stand across the states. Each one tells a story of belief, culture, and time.

One of the most famous temples in Northeast is the Kamakhya Temple in Assam. It sits on the Nilachal Hill in Guwahati. This temple is dedicated to Goddess Kamakhya, a form of Shakti. It is one of the 51 Shakti Peethas of India. Kamakhya is known as a major centre of Tantric worship. Devotees believe the goddess represents creation and feminine power.

Every year, the Ambubachi Mela is held here. It marks the annual cycle of the goddess. During this time, the temple remains closed for a few days. After it opens, lakhs of devotees gather from across the country. Sadhus, tantriks, and common people come together. The atmosphere becomes intense and spiritual. Kamakhya is not just a temple. It is an experience.

Also in Guwahati stands the Umananda Temple. It is dedicated to Lord Shiva. The temple is located on Peacock Island in the middle of the Brahmaputra River. One has to take a boat to reach it. This makes the visit calm and special. According to belief, Lord Shiva once lived here. The temple is small, but its location gives it great charm. From the island, the river looks endless and peaceful.

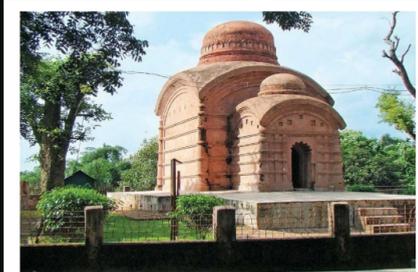
Another important site in Guwahati is the Navagraha Temple. This temple is linked to astrology. It is dedicated to the nine celestial bodies, known as the Navagrahas. Many people



visit this temple to seek relief from planetary troubles. The temple shows how faith and astrology mix in daily life. It also shows the scientific thinking of ancient times.

In Upper Assam, the Sivasagar Sivadol stands tall. It is one of the tallest Shiva temples in India. Built during the Ahom period, it reflects royal devotion and strong architecture. The temple complex also includes other shrines. The Sivadol stands near a large tank, adding to its beauty. During Shivratri, thousands of devotees gather here.

Tripura is home to one of the most mysterious temple sites in India. The Unakoti Hill Temples are carved on rocky hillsides. Huge faces of gods and goddesses emerge from stone. Lord Shiva appears in massive form, along with many other deities. Historians and devotees still debate how old these carvings are. Unakoti is believed to be linked to legends of one crore gods. Today, it is seen as a potential UNESCO World Heritage site.



Tripura also has the Tripura Sundari Temple at Udaipur. It is dedicated to Goddess Tripura Sundari, another form of Shakti. This temple is also counted among the Shakti Peethas. The structure is simple, yet powerful. Devotees believe the goddess fulfills wishes.

The temple becomes crowded during festivals like Diwali. In Arunachal Pradesh, the Akashiganga Temple holds deep mythological value. It is believed that the head of Goddess Sati fell here. The site is sacred and quiet. Water flows nearby, adding to the sense of purity.

The temple shows how ancient myths connect even the farthest regions to the wider Indian spiritual map.

Manipur is known for the Sri Govindjee Temple in Imphal. It is a major Vaishnavite centre. The temple is dedicated to Lord Krishna and Radha. Dance and music play a big role in worship here. The Ras Leela, performed during



festivals, is famous. The temple reflects devotion mixed with art.

In Sikkim, the Kirateshwar Mahadev Temple stands as a blend of old and new styles. Dedicated to Lord Shiva, it carries stories from the Mahabharata.

It is believed that Arjuna met Shiva here. The temple architecture includes traditional designs and modern touches. Carvings tell mythological stories in stone.

Together, these temples show the soul of Northeast India. They reflect diversity in worship, language, and belief. From Shakti to Shiva, from astrology to devotion, the region offers a rich spiritual journey. These temples are not only places of prayer. They are living symbols of history, culture, and faith.



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