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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.**

## Meghalaya CM defends handling of illegal coal mining, cites historical livelihood issues

**SHILLONG**  
Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma on Saturday defended his government's handling of illegal coal mining, saying the issue is rooted in deep economic and historical factors rather than a simple failure of law enforcement.

He noted that the practice has been a source of livelihood for communities for nearly two centuries, and sudden legal restrictions have left many families struggling to survive.

Addressing concerns raised by the opposition and media about ongoing illegal mining, Sangma insisted that the government is not ignoring the problem.

He explained that when court rulings halted traditional coal extraction methods, it abruptly cut off income for those dependent on mining, making compliance difficult. The chief minister emphasised that enforcing the law remains the government's responsibility, but practical challenges exist, including limited personnel and the dispersed nature of mining activities across the state. Despite these hurdles, he noted that authorities have registered over a thousand cases, arrested and chargesheeted thousands of people, shut down numerous mines, and sent offenders to jail.

Sangma stressed that these measures show the government's firm stance, but illegal mining cannot disappear instantly due to the economic pressure faced by families reliant on coal. "This is not an excuse for breaking the law, but an explanation of the ground realities," he said, noting that many are willing to risk arrest to provide for their families.

### 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

### GUWAHATI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday mounted a strong attack on the Congress, accusing it of allowing large-scale infiltration in Assam during its decades in power and warning that the party would face a "Bihar-like reply" from voters in the state.

Addressing a public gathering in Kaliabor after laying the foundation stone of the ₹6,957-crore Kaziranga Elevated Corridor and virtually flagging off two Amrit Bharat trains, the Prime Minister alleged that unchecked infiltration under Congress rule had harmed Assam's culture, ecology and employment opportunities.

"Infiltration kept increasing during the Congress regime. Illegal occupants encroached upon forests, wildlife corridors and traditional institutions. This has disturbed the indigenous population and snatched jobs from the youth. It is a grave threat not just to Assam, but to the nation," Modi said. He further claimed that the Con-



gress and its allies had protected illegal immigrants for electoral gains. "I am confident that Congress will get a fitting answer from

Assam, just as it did in Bihar," the Prime Minister said, signalling an electoral backlash against the party. Modi underscored that Assam's

development was crucial to the growth of the Northeast and, by extension, the country. Pointing to recent election results, he said voters across India were increasingly choosing good governance, development and a long-term vision over what he termed the Congress's "negative politics".

Referring to civic polls in Maharashtra and the BJP's recent electoral gains in Kerala, including the election of a party mayor, Modi said the BJP had emerged as the "first choice" of voters nationwide. "The country has lost faith in Congress because it has no agenda for progress," he said, adding that the BJP government was committed to safeguarding Assam's identity and culture by evicting infiltrators who had encroached on land.

On the Kaziranga Elevated Corridor project, the Prime Minister said the initiative would ensure safe passage for wildlife during floods while protecting the region's fragile ecosystem. He also highlighted the state's conservation efforts, claiming that not a single

rhino was lost to poaching in Kaziranga National Park in 2025. "India has shown the world that ecology and economy can move forward together," he said. Earlier, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma launched a sharp attack on state Congress president Gaurav Gogoi, accusing him of undermining Assam's aspirations. Sarma's remarks came a day after Gogoi criticised the Kaziranga corridor project, suggesting that the funds could have been better spent on river embankments to mitigate recurring floods. "You may continue to protest, but Assam has decided to dream big and touch the sky. No Assamese will surrender before a Pakistani agent or unknown people," Sarma said. The Chief Minister said the state government had evicted illegal occupants to establish Sankardeva's Abhibav Kshetra at Batadrava and had cleared encroachments in Kaziranga to facilitate the elevated corridor. These steps, he asserted, were essential for both cultural preservation and sustainable development.

## Centre-state coordination crucial for Northeast's growth: MoS Tokhan Sahu



### IMPHAL

Union Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs Tokhan Sahu the outlook towards the northeastern states has undergone a significant transformation under the leadership of the Prime Minister, stressing that close coordination between the Centre and state governments is essential to sustain the region's development momentum.

During his visit to Imphal, Sahu chaired a state-level review meeting on the implementation of ongoing schemes of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) at the Old Secretariat conference hall in Babupara. The meeting reviewed the progress of various centrally sponsored flagship programmes being implemented by the Manipur government.

Detailed departmental presentations were made on completed and ongoing projects executed by agencies including the Central Public Works Department (CPWD), Housing and Urban Development Corporation Limited (HUDCO), and National Buildings Construction Corporation (India) Limited (NBCC).

Sahu said the overall progress reported by the departments was satisfactory but directed officials to submit detailed reports outlining issues and challenges affecting the timely execution of projects. He emphasised that all schemes must be implemented efficiently and completed within stipulated timelines, allowing exceptions only in unavoidable circumstances.

The minister also instructed departments to provide written inputs on projects requiring special attention to ensure smoother implementation and better outcomes.

Senior officials present at the review meeting included IAS Sumant Singh, Commissioner, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj; Sarath Chandra Aroju, IAS, Additional Secretary, MAHUA; Hari Kumar Singh, CEO, Imphal Smart City Mission; N Gitkumar, Consultant Town Planner; and N Benju Singh, Chief Town Planner, Manipur. Officials from the MAHUA, Town Planning Department, Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), CPWD, HUDCO and NBCC were also in attendance.

Later in the day, Sahu visited the Nongpok Torban Development Project being implemented under the Imphal Smart City Mission. He also held a brief discussion with the Governor on future strategies and the way forward for urban development in Manipur.

## Security forces destroy 306 acres of illegal poppy fields in Manipur hills, seize opium worth crores

### IMPHAL

In a major boost to Manipur's ongoing anti-narcotics drive, Central and state security forces have destroyed over 306 acres of illegal poppy cultivation in the state's hill district of Kangpokpi within a span of six days, officials said on Saturday.

The joint operations were conducted between January 12 and January 17 by teams comprising the Assam Rifles, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Manipur Police, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) and the state Forest Department. Acting on intelligence inputs, the forces targeted remote and rugged locations where poppy cultivation had been taking place on government and forest land.

A senior police official said the joint teams also demolished 43 temporary huts erected by poppy cultivators at the sites. Several spray pumps, pipes, chemical salts and pesticides used for cultivation were seized and destroyed during the operations.

According to officials, the destroyed poppy fields had the potential to yield more than 2,080 kg of opium, valued at several crores of rupees in the illegal market.

The latest action is part of a sustained crackdown against illicit poppy cultivation across Manipur's hill districts. In separate joint operations carried out in November and December last year, the Army, Assam Rifles, CRPF, Border Security Force (BSF), NCB and Manipur Police destroyed



more than 1,000 acres of illegal poppy fields in various parts of the state.

Officials said illegal poppy cultivation has been largely concentrated in six hill districts-Kangpokpi, Ukhrul, Tamenglong, Chandel, Tengnoupal and Senapati. The destruction of over 1,000 acres during the two-month period was estimated to have prevented the production of nearly 9,000 kg of opium, worth several hundred crores of rupees in the illicit drug trade. A Defence spokesperson said the operations were conducted under extremely challenging terrain and adverse weather conditions, underscoring the resolve of Assam Rifles and other security forces to curb narcotics production and trafficking in the region. He reiterated that the force follows a zero-tolerance policy towards narcotics-related activities, with legal action being initiated against cultivators, facilitators and financiers.

A senior state government official said the destruction of illegal

poppy fields forms a key component of the Manipur government's declared "war against drugs". Over the years, hundreds of acres of illicit cultivation—mostly on forest and government land—have been identified and destroyed through coordinated action by security and enforcement agencies.

In 2020, authorities had identified 8,057 acres of poppy cultivation across the state, of which 1,695 acres were destroyed. By 2024 and 2025, the area under identified poppy cultivation had declined significantly, reflecting the impact of a multi-pronged strategy involving enforcement, surveillance and inter-agency coordination, the official said.

The Defence spokesperson added that Assam Rifles remains committed to eliminating illegal poppy cultivation along the India-Myanmar border and ensuring long-term stability and security in Manipur and adjoining regions, with sustained operations against narcotics continuing to remain a top priority.

## Tripura govt prioritising school infrastructure, says CM Manik Saha

### AGARTALA

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on January 17 said the present state government is working with a strong focus on strengthening school infrastructure across Tripura, while alleging that the previous dispensation had left behind financial burdens and unresolved issues.

The Chief Minister was speaking after inaugurating the newly constructed building of Madhu Chowdhury Para XII School in Mohanpur and virtually inaugurating Tarapur XII School, Gopalnagar XII School and Berimura XII School. The main inauguration programme was held at the premises of Madhu Chowdhury Para XII School.

Addressing the gathering, Saha said that prior to 2018, there was little visible development in key sectors such as education and health, which, he said, has necessitated greater efforts by the present government. "Because of this, we have to work harder. The previous government left a heavy financial burden and pressure due to various cases, including the 10,323 issue. Our government is trying to develop everyone," he said.



Highlighting the Centre's emphasis on inclusive development, the Chief Minister said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has accorded special importance to the welfare of tribal communities. He noted that while there are around 700 tribal groups across the country, 19 are found in Tripura.

"The unity of people from all sections, castes, tribes, Manipuris and minorities is our strength. We must live together and build a new Tripura," Saha said.

He also pointed out that between 2019 and 2024, seven eminent personalities from Tripura's tribal community were

conferred with the Padma Shri, and cited the appointment of Draupadi Murmu as President of India as a reflection of the Centre's focus on tribal empowerment.

"A government with nationalist thinking speaks about tribal development. Patriotism is important, and we want everyone to live together," the Chief Minister said.

Saha said the state has witnessed accelerated development in recent years, with inauguration of projects taking place almost daily in different regions. He added that increased development for tribal and backward communities would lead to

fairer competition and empower them to shape the future.

"The Prime Minister has repeatedly said that the future belongs to those who possess knowledge," he said.

The Chief Minister said a total of around Rs 20.64 crore has been spent on infrastructure development at Madhu Chowdhury Para XII School, Tarapur XII School, Gopalnagar XII School and Berimura XII School. He added that the current government has prioritised infrastructure development and ensured adequate budgetary allocations for the sector.

Emphasising the need for holistic education, Saha said learning should extend beyond textbooks. "Students should be involved in sports and other activities. Education has no end; we must learn every day. Social problems can be addressed through education, which takes us from darkness to light," he said.

Power Minister Ratan Lal Nath, Le-funga BAC Chairman Ranbir Debbarma, Vice Chairman Budhu Debbarma, Hejama BAC Vice Chairman Nihar Ranjan Debbarma, Education Director NC Sharma and other dignitaries were present at the event.

## Knife Attack on Somdal Police OC During Murder Arrest in Ukhrul

### IMPHAL

The Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Somdal Police Station in Manipur's Ukhrul district was injured after being stabbed in the chest while serving an arrest warrant on a murder accused, police said on Sunday.

The incident occurred on Friday at Talui village when Inspector Krili James, OC of Somdal Police Station, along with a small team of unarmed personnel, went to execute an arrest warrant issued by the Court of the Session Judge, Ukhrul. The warrant was against 54-year-old Firstman Rungsung, an accused in a 1996 homicide case who had been absconding for nearly three decades.

According to officials, the police team was explaining the warrant to the accused's mother when Rungsung suddenly emerged and attacked Inspector James with a concealed knife, stabbing him in the chest. Rungsung is the son of Kapangkhu Rungsung and a res-

ident of Talui village in Ukhrul district.

Police said the officers were not carrying their service weapons at the time, as personnel often avoid being armed in hill districts due to the risk of weapons being snatched by armed insurgents.

Despite the attack, reinforcements were rushed to the spot, and the accused was apprehended while attempting to flee. During the arrest, Rungsung also tried to assault other unarmed personnel before being overpowered.

The injured officer was initially taken to a local healthcare centre and later referred to the Ukhrul District Hospital for further treatment. Police confirmed that the injuries sustained by the OC were minor.

A criminal case has been registered against Firstman Rungsung under FIR No. 1(1)2026 at Somdal Police Station under Sections 109, 118 and 221 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), and further investigation is underway, police added.



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## BUDGET VISION VS GROUND REALITY

Budgets are not merely financial documents; they are roadmaps for development, signals of Government intent, and, most importantly, instruments meant to transform people's lives. The Budget 2024-25 for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir was projected as one such transformative roadmap. It impacted almost every critical sector—tourism, industry, health, water supply, urban development, power, housing, and culture—reflecting an understanding that J&K's challenges are multidimensional and require a comprehensive response. Yet, nearly two dozen key announcements from that budget remain unimplemented, confined to files and official speeches. This gap between promise and performance is a serious threat to J&K's development trajectory.

A closer look at the stalled projects reveals that the budget was, in fact, well-conceived on paper. It acknowledged the structural realities of J&K's economy. With limited revenue generation options, tourism remains the backbone after agriculture. Recognising this, the budget announced district tourism centres, the development of Dugar Dani village as a mock cultural hub, and other tourism-linked infrastructure. Similarly, the proposed Tawi Barrage and pollution abatement projects were not cosmetic initiatives but critical interventions for water management, urban sustainability and environmental health. Master Plans for all 78 cities and towns were meant to provide the legal and planning backbone for future growth. Industrial estates were envisioned to absorb the growing youth workforce and reduce dependence on Government jobs. Healthcare was addressed through the promise of operationalising AIIMS Awantipora. In other words, the budget attempted to cover sustenance as well as growth.

However, intent without execution has little value. Tourism offers the clearest example of this failure. Last year's terror incidents and natural calamities have already inflicted heavy losses on tourism and agriculture. In such a scenario, delaying tourism infrastructure further weakens the sector that sustains thousands of livelihoods. J&K is already lagging behind other states in creating new tourism products and experiences; prolonged inaction only widens that gap. Urban development presents an even more alarming picture. The non-finalisation of Master Plans is not a minor procedural delay—it is a fundamental bottleneck. In the absence of approved Master Plans, no major Central Government development project under any scheme can receive approval. This single lapse has a cascading effect, stalling housing, transportation, commercial infrastructure, and smart city components. Ring roads alone cannot transform urban spaces. People need affordable housing, organised commercial areas and integrated business solutions. Without planning frameworks, even well-funded schemes become impossible to execute.

The Tawi Barrage symbolises the culture of endless extensions. Conceived as a game-changer for Jammu's water security and urban landscape, it has seen deadline after deadline pushed forward. Such delays lock up substantial public funds without delivering benefits. The same is true for smart metering and the reduction of AT&C losses in the power sector. Despite repeated announcements and reforms on paper, winter power curtailments expose how little has changed on the ground. Industrial development is another area where rhetoric has raced far ahead of reality. Negligible progress on land development and infrastructure of 46 industrial estates has left these estates as notional entities. Delays here have direct social consequences, fuelling frustration and migration. This continued delay underscores a pattern where even high-priority, nationally significant projects fail to meet deadlines. Small decorative works or scattered minor projects cannot alter the social, economic or urban landscape of a region. Only large, well-executed interventions can. The broader question is whether anyone is tracking outcomes. Despite much-hyped e-governance systems and the BEAMS portal, the reality suggests weak monitoring, poor interdepartmental coordination and near-zero accountability. Whether this stems from complacency or systemic inertia, the onus ultimately lies with the Government. These are not ordinary lapses; they involve substantial public money getting locked, unutilised or eventually surrendered, while public aspirations are once again deferred.

No region can develop on announcements alone. Budget speeches may generate headlines and applause, but transformation begins only when projects are executed within defined timelines. The current situation is a wake-up call. J&K needs a robust mechanism to monitor every budget announcement, fix responsibility, enforce deadlines and penalise non-performance. Without drastic corrective measures, the development story of J&K will remain confined to files and speeches while the region continues to fall behind its peers.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

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

—Dolly Parton

# "SOMNATH TEMPLE: DATES, DECISIONS, AND THE COST OF STRATEGIC BLINDNESS"

(A SOLDIER'S REFLECTION ON HISTORY, CIVILISATION, AND MISSED RESOLVE)



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

Somnath Mandir stands today at Prabhas Patan in Gujarat, facing the Arabian Sea with quiet dignity. Its present structure, inaugurated on 11 May 1951, is often seen as a symbol of national resurgence. Yet for those trained to study history through the lens of security and strategy, Somnath

first target; it was his most symbolic.

In 1025-26 AD, Mahmud marched across Multan and Sindh, reaching Somnath after an arduous campaign. Contemporary accounts, including Al-Utbi's Tarikh-i-Yamini and later Al-Biruni, describe the destruction of the temple and the slaughter that followed.

What is often overlooked is this: Mahmud's intent and pattern were already well known by 1025 AD.

A Temple Without a Civilisational Shield. Despite Somnath's prominence, there was no unified defence plan for its protection. The temple lay within the territory of local rulers, yet it symbolised faith far beyond regional boundaries.

By the early 11th century, India had powerful kingdoms - the Chaulukyas (Solankis) in Gujarat, the Pratiharas in the north, and the Chandelas in central India. Yet there was no civilisational doctrine that treated an attack on Somnath as an attack on Bharat itself.

From a soldier's standpoint, this absence of shared responsibility proved fatal. Strategic assets, whether forts or faith centres, demand collective defence. Somnath Temple was revered nationally but defended locally.

Fragmented Command: Kingdoms Before Civilisation

The political landscape of India in the 10th - 11th century AD was fragmented. Kings ruled efficiently within their domains, but coordination between them was minimal.

No joint military council existed. No

For any professional soldier, this represents a failure of strategic depth. Nations do not lose wars when the enemy arrives, they lose them when they allow him to arrive unopposed.

Ritual Without Readiness. Historical accounts suggest that Somnath had priests, devotees, and local guards, but no standing military force proportionate to its importance. The temple was protected spiritually, not militarily.

This was not unique to Somnath. Across much of early medieval India, sacred spaces were viewed as inviolable by convention, not by force. This assumption collapsed when confronted by an adversary who saw symbolism as a weapon.

History repeatedly shows that faith survives longest when defended by discipline. The absence of a permanent garrison at Somnath was not irreverence, it was strategic misjudgement.

Misreading the Enemy. Mahmud of Ghazni was not merely a raider. His actions were ideological, political, and psychological. Chroniclers record that he sought legitimacy in the Islamic world through high-profile victories over prominent Hindu shrines.

Indian rulers, however, treated each raid as a discrete event, not recognising a long-term campaign.

A soldier is trained to study doctrine, not just damage. Somnath fell because Mahmud's intent was misunderstood, he was countered tactically, not strategically.

After 1025 AD: Repeated Destruction and Reconstruction. Somnath was rebuilt and destroyed

Somnath fell once because a civilisation failed to think and act as one. That failure must remain historical. Its lesson must remain alive.

Contemporary Strategic Reflection. The remark attributed to National Security Advisor Mr Ajit Doval on the need to be capable of "avenging Somnath" must be understood in its correct strategic context. It is not a call for vengeance rooted in grievance, but a reminder that a civilisation which forgets its vulnerabilities invites their repetition. In professional security doctrine, such language underscores the necessity of preparedness, deterrence, and unity of command, precisely what Somnath lacked in 1025 AD. To "avenge" Somnath today is therefore to ensure that India never again allows its sacred, strategic, or civilisational symbols to stand undefended or unanticipated.

### 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**



ipated. It is a call to convert historical loss into institutional strength, so that faith is protected by foresight, and history is not allowed to repeat itself through neglect.

Author's Note.

The author is a former Army officer and curative historian who goes deep into detail to uncover facts. This article is written from the perspective of a professional soldier for whom history is not nostalgia, but instruction. The intent is not to assign blame across centuries, but to examine how strategic failures shape civilisational outcomes. Somnath Temple is viewed here as a historical and strategic case study, not merely a religious episode, so that past errors may inform present and future thinking.

Note: Selected Historical References (Indicative)

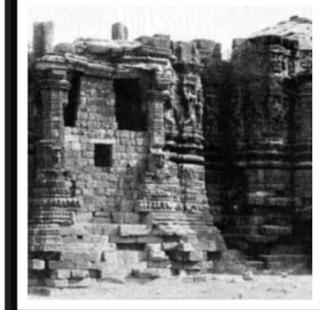
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Temple is also a reminder of how civilisations falter not suddenly, but through a series of avoidable omissions.

The essential question is not emotional, but analytical.

Could Somnath Temple have been saved when it was first attacked in 1025 AD?

To answer this, one must look beyond devotion and destruction, and examine decisions, dates, and doctrine.

A Civilisational Landmark: Somnath Before 1025 AD.

Historical records, both Indian and foreign, agree that Somnath Temple was among the most prominent temples of early medieval India. References to Somnath appear in ancient texts such as the Skanda Purana, while Arab chroniclers later described it as one of the wealthiest and most revered shrines of the subcontinent.

By the 9th - 10th century AD, Somnath was:

- A major pilgrimage centre
- An economic hub linked to maritime trade routes
- A powerful civilisational symbol visible to traders, travellers, and invaders alike.

Its fame was not accidental, and neither was the attention it attracted.

The Invasion of Mahmud of Ghazni: 1025 AD.

Mahmud of Ghazni (998 - 1030 AD) launched at least 17 recorded raids into the Indian subcontinent. Somnath was not his

confederation of kings emerged to counter repeated incursions from the north-west. Each ruler viewed Mahmud's raids as episodic threats rather than a sustained strategic campaign.

Military history is unambiguous on this point: fragmented commands invite defeat.

Mahmud of Ghazni faced brave resistance in pockets, but never a unified front. Somnath fell not because Indians lacked warriors, but because they lacked a civilisation-wide command structure.

Absence of Strategic Depth and Intelligence Foresight.

By the time Mahmud attacked Somnath in 1025 AD, he had already raided Indian territories repeatedly - Mathura (1018 AD), Kannauj (1019 AD), Thanesar, and other centres.

Patterns were visible: Fast-moving cavalry Targeting of symbolic cities, withdrawal after plunder, Repeated return, Yet these lessons were never institutionalised.

There was no layered defence from the Khyber and Bolan passes, no intelligence network to track enemy movement, and no forward deployment to delay or degrade Mahmud's forces before they reached Gujarat.

Defence began at Somnath itself, at the last line.

multiple times: 1299 AD - Attacked during Alauddin Khilji's campaigns.

1375 AD - Temple again damaged.

1706 AD - Destroyed under Aurangzeb.

Each destruction demonstrated resilience. Each destruction revealed recurring vulnerabilities.

1951 AD: Reconstruction and Reflection.

After Independence, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel championed Somnath's reconstruction. When Dr Rajendra Prasad inaugurated the temple in 1951, he described it as a symbol of India's eternal spirit.

Yet rebuilding stone is easier than rebuilding doctrine.

Lessons That Still Matter.

Had Somnath been defended with unity, intelligence foresight, and strategic depth, Indian history might have evolved differently. Deterrence might have replaced repetition. Confidence might have replaced caution.

Civilisations do not fall when temples fall.

They fall when they fail to learn in time. A Contemporary Soldier's Reflection.

Somnath today does not accuse history, it educates it. Its lesson is timeless. Faith inspires, but strategy preserves. Unity of command, accurate threat perception, and forward defence are not modern inventions, they are ancient necessities rediscovered too late.

# Congress 'allergic' to Assam's growth, state now central to India's progress: PM Modi in Guwahati

GUWAHATI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a sharp attack on the Congress, accusing it of being "allergic to Assam's growth and recognition," while asserting that the state has emerged as one of the fastest-developing regions in the country and a key pillar of India's overall growth story.

Addressing public gatherings in Guwahati, including a grand Bodo folk dance event, Modi said Assam's progress is no longer on the margins but firmly integrated into national development. He alleged that the Congress has consistently opposed major milestones in the state's journey towards growth and recognition.

Citing specific examples, the Prime Minister said the Congress had objected to conferring the Bharat Ratna on cultural icon Dr Bhupen Hazarika and opposed the establishment of a semiconductor industry in Assam. These, he said, reflected a mindset that worked against the state's aspira-

tions. "Assam is among the fastest-developing states in the country today. Its progress is now an inseparable part of India's growth story," Modi said, crediting the BJP-led governments at the Centre and in the state for accelerating infrastructure development, industrial expansion and connectivity.

Praising Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's leadership, Modi said the present state government is "cleansing the sins of the Congress era" by reconnecting both people and places across Assam. He alleged that for decades, large parts of the state-particularly the Bodoland region-were deliberately kept isolated under Congress rule.

Referring to land-related actions by the state administration, the Prime Minister said the Sarma government is clearing land encroached upon by "lakhs of infiltrators," accusing the Congress of previously encouraging illegal infiltration and turning it into a vote bank. "The Congress ensured infiltration and instability. We are ensuring development, security and dignity," he said.

Highlighting the Bodo Peace Accord, Modi described it as a historic turning point that ended years of violence and unrest, paving the way for peace, education and development. "The sound of gunshots in Assam has been replaced by the sound of musical instruments," he said, underlining the transition from conflict to cultural celebration. The Prime Minister also lauded the large-scale 'Bagurumba Dwhou' performance, describing it as more than a cultural event. "It is not just a celebration, it is a mark of deep respect for the Bodo community and its rich heritage," he said.

Modi reiterated that peace, cultural pride and development are now advancing together in Assam, contrasting it with what he described as years of division and stagnation under the Congress. He said the Centre and the state government remain committed to sustaining Assam's growth momentum, ensuring that its benefits reach tribal communities, youth and all sections of society.



## Ajmal takes swipe at Akhil Gogoi, predicts political end for Rajiv Dal and Gaurav Gogoi



BONGAIGAON

All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) chief Badruddin Ajmal on Friday triggered controversy with sharp remarks against Rajiv Dal president and Sivasagar MLA Akhil Gogoi, referring to him as "mad" and dismissing his political statements.

Ajmal made the comments while responding to media queries on the sidelines of an inauguration ceremony of an educational institution at Balapara in the Jogighopa area of Bongaigaon district.

"When it is already so late at night, you people have come to ask about a mad person," Ajmal said when asked to react to Akhil Gogoi's recent statements. He went on to mock the Rajiv Dal leader, adding that a mad person can say anything, and made a sarcastic comparison by remarking that "a goat can eat anything."

Escalating his attack, the AIUDF chief claimed that Akhil Gogoi, along with Congress leader Gaurav Gogoi, would be politically "finished" in the current political phase, suggesting that neither their parties nor their leadership would have a future.

The remarks were made on the sidelines of the programme, which was attended by local political leaders, educators, and members of the public. Ajmal's comments are expected to add to the growing political heat in Assam as parties and leaders trade sharp words ahead of key political battles.

## Dzukou Search Ends Without Clue to Missing Tourist from Tripura

KRC TIMES NEWS DESK

KOHIMA: The Southern Angami Youth Organisation (SAYO) has said it has failed to trace Pranab Das, a domestic tourist from Tripura, despite a large search and rescue effort in and around Dzukou Valley.

In a press release, SAYO said Das, a resident of Srinagar district in West Tripura, went missing on January 4. However, the matter was reported to the organisation only on January 13.

After receiving the information, SAYO found that Das was last seen on January 4 at the Dzukou Ticketing Counter in Viswema, which confirmed his entry into the trekking route. There was no record of his arrival at the Dzukou Valley Base Camp.

Following this, a joint search and rescue operation was launched. More than 200 volunteers took part in the operation, including police teams from South Police Station and Khuzama Police Station, offi-

cials of the Nagaland State Disaster Management Authority (NSDMA), members of the Southern Angami Tour Guide Council (SATGC), and volunteers from Southern Angami villages.

According to SAYO, the teams searched all possible trekking routes leading to Dzukou Valley and also combed the valley area. Drone-assisted searches were also carried out with expert support. The search operation continued from January 13 to January 16 and was joined by Das's father, uncle, and brother.

"Despite exhaustive efforts, the operation did not yield any positive result," the organisation stated.

SAYO also expressed concern over repeated such incidents and reminded tourists about the safety rules for trekking to Dzukou Valley. It said that as per the guidelines in force since October 1, 2025, it is mandatory for all national and international tourists to hire a local tour guide while trekking to the valley.

## Hagrama Mohilary urges PM Modi to fast-track pending Bodo Accord commitments



GUWAHATI

Bodoland People's Front (BPF) president Hagrama Mohilary on January 17 appealed to Prime

Minister Narendra Modi to expedite the implementation of the remaining commitments under the 2003 Bodo Accord and the 2020 Bodo Peace Agreement, asserting

that full execution of the accords is crucial for lasting peace and inclusive development in the Bodoland region.

Addressing a large public gathering at the Sarusajai Sports Complex during the "Bagurumba Dwhou 2026" cultural programme, Mohilary thanked Prime Minister Modi and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for giving national visibility to Bodo culture and traditions.

"Dear Prime Minister sir, kindly implement the remaining clauses of the Bodo Peace Accord. Full delivery of these promises is vital for sustainable peace, development, and the empowerment of the Bodo community in Bodoland," Mohilary said, drawing applause from the audience.

Describing the occasion as historic, the BPF chief said it was an honour to share the stage with the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister at Sarusajai, a venue he said symbolises cultural unity and pride. He also lauded the participation of over 10,000 Dwhou

performers who took part in the grand Bagurumba dance presentation.

"Standing here at Sarusajai Stadium alongside our talented Dwhou performers, I was deeply moved. Their rhythmic movements beautifully reflect the essence of Bodo heritage, culture, and resilience. Their energy reminds us of our rich cultural roots and our collective strength," Mohilary said.

He reiterated that the pending provisions of the 2003 accord and the 2020 peace agreement are not only central to maintaining peace in the region but are also key to accelerating economic growth, infrastructure development, and social empowerment across Bodoland.

The programme was attended by senior political leaders, community representatives, and thousands of people, marking a significant cultural and political moment for the Bodo community and the wider cultural landscape of Assam.

## Assam igniting startup revolution, committed to strengthening ecosystem: Himanta Biswa Sarma

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday reaffirmed the state government's commitment to building a strong and vibrant startup ecosystem, asserting that innovation and entrepreneurship are key to shaping India's future.

Marking National Startup Day, Sarma said Assam is focused on empowering young entrepreneurs by providing the right support, opportunities and an enabling environment that encourages innovation and impact-driven ventures.

"In Assam, we remain committed to nurturing a vibrant startup ecosystem, enabling young entrepreneurs with the right support, opportunities and an environment to innovate and grow," the Chief



Minister said in a post on X.

Highlighting the progress

made so far, Sarma said 615 startups have been incubated under

the Northeast Entrepreneurship and Startup Training (NEST) programme through the Assam Startup initiative since 2021.

He also noted that the state has set up a Rs 200-crore Assam Venture Capital Fund to provide financial backing to emerging startups and help them scale their ideas into sustainable businesses.

In addition, the Chief Minister said the Chief Minister's Atmanirbhar Assam Abhijan (CMAAA) is supporting thousands of young entrepreneurs across the state by offering institutional support and resources.

Sarma said the government's startup-focused policies are aimed at igniting a startup revolution in Assam, empowering youth to innovate, generate employment and contribute meaningfully to the state's economic growth.

## Pradyot Kishore Manikya honours Chakma community head at royal palace



AGARTALA

Tipra Motha Party (TMP) founder and royal scion Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma on Friday honoured the Chakma community's pradhan samapajati (community head) with a silver coin and a ceremonial sword at the royal palace, in a symbolic gesture recognising traditional authority and indigenous customs.

The honour was conferred following the election of the new Chakma community head during a community conference held on December 27 and 28. In keeping with long-standing Chakma traditions, newly elected community leaders customarily visit the royal palace to seek blessings and formal recognition.

Speaking on the occasion, Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma said it was an honour to welcome the Chakma delegation and acknowledge the community's enduring cultural practices. He noted that the royal household has traditionally played a role in recognising community leadership, reinforcing respect for indigenous in-

stitutions and continuity of customs in the state.

The Chakma community head said discussions with the TMP supremo focused on key issues such as education, preservation of traditional language and culture, and the overall development of the Chakma community in Tripura. He added that Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma offered suggestions and assured cooperation in addressing concerns raised by the community.

Later in the day, the community head also attended a programme in Herma area of Sepahijala district, where he felicitated community leaders and took part in cultural interactions.

Political observers view the engagement between the Tipra Motha leadership and the Chakma community as significant, particularly in the context of indigenous representation and cohesion within the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC). The current tenure of the Chakma community council is scheduled to end on April 18 this year.

## MoS Tokhan Sahu reviews MoHUA schemes in Manipur, stresses timely execution and Centre-state coordination

IMPHAL

Union Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs Tokhan Sahu on Saturday chaired a state-level review meeting in Imphal to assess the progress of urban development schemes being implemented under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), along with a departmental review of projects executed by the Central Public Works Department (CPWD), Housing and Urban Development Corporation Limited (HUDCO) and National Buildings Construction Corporation (NBCC).

The meeting, held at the Old Secretariat, focused on the implementation status of key centrally sponsored flagship programmes in Manipur. Officials briefed the minister on progress under Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U) 2.0, which targets garbage-free cities and improved public hygiene. The review covered solid waste management, used water management and public toilet projects across urban areas.

On Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U), officials informed that only the Beneficiary-Led Construction (BLC) component is being implemented in the state. Delays in PMAY-U 1.0, launched in June 2015, were attributed to high construction costs impacting beneficiary contributions, challenges in updating the Management Informa-



tion System (MIS), and the requirement to integrate fund disbursement portals under the SNA SPARSH framework. PMAY-U 2.0, launched in September 2024, will be implemented over a five-year period.

The review also covered Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM), which concluded in 2024. Officials reported the formation of 3,535 self-help groups, skill training provided to 10,734 individuals, job placement for 9,666 beneficiaries, and bank linkage support to SHGs and individuals. Over 20,000 street vendors have been identified under the mission, with nearly 14,000 certificates of vending issued.

Following the conclusion of DAY-NULM, Deendayal Jan Aajeevika Yojana-Shehari (DJAY-S) has been rolled out. So far, 21 SHGs have been formed, bank accounts opened and revolving funds released. Verification camps for SHGs and area-level federations have also been conducted at the local level.

Officials said the PM Street Vendor's Atmanirbhar Nidhi (PM-SVANidhi) scheme is being implemented to provide collateral-free loans to street vendors, although inadequate market infrastructure has affected uptake at later stages.

Under the Imphal Smart City Mission, 21 projects have been completed while four are ongoing. Authorities cited prolonged se-

curity challenges and recurring floods over consecutive years as major reasons for delays and sought an extension of the project timeline until September 2026.

The Town Planning Department presented an overview of AMRUT 2.0, which aims to make cities water-secure. Twenty-seven towns across six districts have been selected, with 66 projects approved, including water supply schemes, rejuvenation of water bodies, oxygen parks and rainwater harvesting initiatives. Tree plantation drives and women-led environmental projects are also being undertaken under the AMRUT Mitra sub-scheme.

Addressing the meeting, Sahu said the Prime Minister has transformed the development outlook for the North-East and emphasised the importance of close coordination between the Centre and the state. While terming the overall progress satisfactory, he urged officials to clearly flag challenges affecting implementation and submit written inputs on schemes requiring special attention. He also said proposals could be placed before the Centre to resolve delays under PMAY-U 1.0, noting that PMAY-U 2.0 has already commenced.

Senior officials from the state government, Municipal Administration, Housing and Urban Development Department, Imphal Smart City Mission, Town Planning Department, PHED, CPWD, HUDCO and NBCC attended the meeting. Later in the day, the Union Minister visited the Nongpok Torban Development Project under the Smart City Mission and held discussions on the future roadmap for urban development in Manipur.

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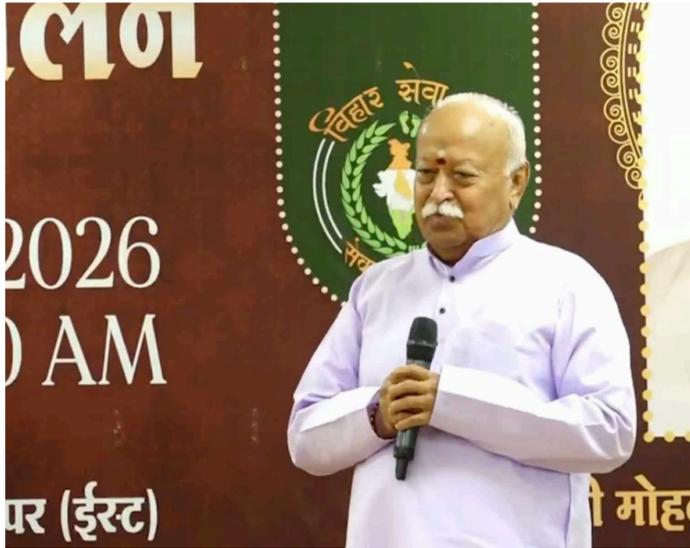
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“Dharma is guiding force within all of us,” says RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat



## MUMBAI

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Chief Mohan Bhagwat on Sunday said that Dharma is the driving force behind all existence and also governs the entire universe.

Addressing the event, ‘Vihar Sevak Urja Milan’, the RSS chief also reminded us that humans perform God’s work but are not God.

“Those who abide by the truth on which religion is based are called saints. Therefore, it is the duty of all of us to ensure the respect and protection of saints. That is why the country’s Prime Minister also says that I hesitate to say ‘no’ to saints. We should always keep in mind that we are doing the work of God, but we are not God,” Bhagwat said.

Bhagwat further stated that Dharma guides all existence like fire burns and water flows, and as long as it steers India, the nation will remain a “Vishwaguru”.

He further added that “Dharma is the guiding force within all of us. If we journey in the ‘vehicle’ steered by Dharma, we are protected from ‘accident’. Dharma governs the entire universe. While a state may be secular, no living or non-living entity can exist without its inherent Dharma, just as fire has its Dharma to burn and water has its Dharma to flow. As long as Dharma drives Bharat, it will continue to be Vishwaguru.”

Earlier, while attending the Sanatan Culture Festival in Vrindavan, Mathura, the

RSS chief vouched for unity among the Hindu community, saying that there should be no discrimination of any kind.

Bhagwat said that the world might view divisions within the Hindu community by caste, creed, sect, and language, but they are all one.

“There should be no discrimination of any kind... We consider the society in which we live as one; we believe the entire Hindu society is one, yet the world sees many divisions within it, such as language, caste, sect, and community... For as many types of Hindus as the world recognises, I have friends from each of those types visiting each other, eating and drinking together, standing by in joy and sorrow, treating them as friends...” he said.

“Necessary to remove infiltrators”: PM Modi calls TMC “ruthless”, alleges “loot” of Centre’s funds for Bengal

## MALDA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a scathing attack against Trinamool Congress (TMC), alleging non-implementation of the Centre’s welfare schemes, while expressing confidence in the BJP’s victory in the upcoming West Bengal Assembly elections.

Addressing a public meeting in West Bengal’s Malda, PM Modi called the TMC “insensitive and ruthless” and alleged that they “loot” the funds sent by the Centre.

Citing examples of developed countries, he also called for removing illegal immigrants from the state.

The Prime Minister said, “I want every poor household in Bengal to have its own permanent home. Those who are entitled should receive a free ration. I want the full benefits of the welfare schemes started by the Central Government for the poor to reach you. But this is not happening. The TMC government here is extremely insensitive and ruthless. The money that the Central Government sends for the poor is being looted by TMC leaders.”

“A very big challenge in front of Bengal is that of infiltration. You see, there are developed and prosperous countries in the world, which have no shortage of money, and they are removing infiltrators from their places. It is also very necessary to remove infiltrators from West Bengal,” PM Modi added.

While the Prime Minister did not name any country, the United States, under Donald Trump, is actively working to remove illegal immigrants from the country. Washington, DC, recently announced a pause in the issuance of immigrant visas to nationals of 75 countries, including Pakistan, citing concerns about potential misuse of public welfare benefits.

Further, PM Modi cited the BJP’s



victories in Odisha, Tripura, Assam and Bihar to claim that Eastern India is choosing them over parties that practise “divisive politics.”

He said, “For decades, eastern India was held captive by those who practised divisive politics. The BJP has freed these states from their clutches. Odisha has formed a BJP government for the first time. Tripura has trusted the BJP for many years. In the recent elections in Assam, it has shown its trust in the BJP. And Bihar

has chosen the BJP-NDA government once again.”

“Now it’s Bengal’s turn for good governance. That’s why, after the victory in the Bihar elections, I said that with the blessings of Maa Ganga, the river of development will now flow in Bengal as well, and the BJP will make this happen,” he added.

Politics in West Bengal has heated up with the exchange of remarks between the TMC and the BJP as the state is set to undergo Assembly

Elections later this year.

Earlier today, PM Modi flagged off India’s first Vande Bharat sleeper train from Malda in West Bengal. The Vande Bharat Express will operate on the Howrah-Guwahati (Kamakhya) route.

The Prime Minister is set to visit Assam afterwards. In Assam, he will participate in the historic cultural event celebrating the rich heritage of the Bodo community called the ‘Bagurumba Dhwon 2026’.

## INTERNATIONAL

‘Greenland is not for sale’: Thousands march against Trump’s takeover threats

## NUUK

Thousands of Greenlanders carefully marched across snow and ice to take a stand against U.S. President Donald Trump on Saturday. They held signs of protest, waved their national flag and chanted “Greenland is not for sale” in support of their own self-governance in the face of increasing threats of an American takeover.

Just as they finished their trek from the small downtown of Greenland’s capital city Nuuk to the U.S. Consulate, the news broke: Trump, from his home in Florida, announced he will charge a 10% import tax starting in February on goods from eight European countries over their opposition to U.S. control of Greenland.

“I thought this day couldn’t get any worse but it just did,” Malik Dollerup-Scheibel said after The Associated Press told him about Trump’s announcement. “It just shows he has no remorse for any kind of human being now.”

Trump has long said he thinks the U.S. should own the strategically located and mineral-rich island, which is a self-governing territory of Greenland. Trump intensified his calls a day after the military operation to oust former Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro earlier this month.

Dollerup-Scheibel, a 21-year-old Greenlandic, and Greenland Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen were among what others described as the island’s biggest protest, drawing nearly a quarter of Nuuk’s population. Others held rallies and solidarity marches across the Danish realm, including in Copenhagen, as well as in the capital of the Inuit-governed territory of Nunavut in Canada’s far north.

“This is important for the whole world,” Danish protester Elise Riechie said as she held Danish and Greenlandic flags in Copenhagen. “There are many small countries. None of them are for sale.”

In Nuuk, Greenlanders of all



ages listened to traditional songs as they walked to the consulate. Marie Pedersen, a 47-year-old Greenlandic, said it was important to bring her children to the rally “to show them that they’re allowed to speak up.”

“We want to keep our own country and our own culture, and our family safe,” she said.

Her 9-year-old daughter, Alaska, crafted her own “Greenland is not for sale” sign. The girl said her teachers have addressed the controversy and taught them about NATO at school.

“They tell us how to stand up if you’re being bullied by another country or something,” she said.

Meanwhile, Tom Olsen, a police officer in Nuuk, said Saturday’s protest was the biggest he’s ever seen

there. Vance to meet Danish and Greenlandic officials in Washington as locals say Greenland is not for sale

Trump says anything less than having Greenland in the United States’ hands is ‘unacceptable’

“I hope it can show him that we stand together in Europe,” he said. “We are not going down without a fight.”

Tillie Martinussen, a former member of Greenland’s parliament, said she hopes the Trump administration will “abandon this crazy idea.”

“They started out as sort of touting themselves as our friends and allies, that they wanted to make Greenland better for us than the

Danes would,” she said as others chanted in the background. “And now they’re just plain out threatening us.”

She added that the push to preserve NATO and Greenland’s autonomy were more important than facing tariffs, though she added that she was not dismissing the potential economic impact.

“This is a fight for freedom,” she said. “It’s for NATO, it’s for everything the Western Hemisphere has been fighting for since World War II.”

But when the AP asked Louise Lennert Olsen what she would say to Trump, the 40-year-old Greenlandic nurse instead said she wanted to give a message to the American people.

## KAMPALA

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni won his seventh term with 71.65% of the vote, according to official results Saturday, in an election marred by a days-long internet shutdown and rigging claims by his youthful challenger, who rejected the outcome and called for peaceful protests.

The musician-turned-politician best known as Bobi Wine took 24.72% of the vote, the final results showed. Wine, whose real name is Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, has condemned what he described as an unfair electoral process and alleged abductions of his polling agents before voting had even started in parts of the East African country. He said he rejected the “fake” results and urged Ugandans to peacefully protest until the “rightful results are announced.”

Wine said he had to escape to avoid arrest by security forces who stormed his house Friday night. Police spokesperson Kitumba Rusoke said Wine was “not under arrest” and was free to leave his house, but there was “controlled access” for others trying to go into the property to prevent people from using the premises to incite violence.

Electoral officials face questions about the failure of biometric voter identification machines on Thursday that caused delays in the start of voting in urban areas—including the capital, Kampala—that are opposition strongholds.

After the machines failed, in a blow to pro-democracy activists who have long demanded their use to curb rigging, polling officials used hard-copy registers of voters.

The failure of the machines is likely to be the basis for any legal challenges to the official result.

Wine has not said whether he would launch a legal challenge with the courts, which previously have refused opposition efforts to nullify Museveni’s victories while recommending electoral reforms.

Museveni said he agreed with the electoral commis-

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni secures seventh term as opposition rejects results



sion’s plan to revert to paper records of voters after the biometric machines failed, but Wine alleged fraud, claiming that there was “massive ballot stuffing” and that his party’s polling agents were abducted to give an unfair advantage to the ruling party.

The head of the observer mission for the African Union, former Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan, told journalists Saturday that the mission did not find “any evidence of ballot stuffing” in the polling stations the team observed. He urged electoral authorities to test biometric machines in advance to prevent the failures and delays witnessed on election day.

But some local observers were more critical, calling the failure of biometric machines a red flag. In addition, the election climate was characterised by “fear and tension among the electorate, and some people just chose not to participate in the process,” said Livingstone Sewanyana, head of the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative, a civic group in Kampala.

Voter turnout stood at 52%, the lowest since the country’s return in 2006 to multi-party politics.

Museveni, 81, has stayed in power over the years by rewriting the rules. The last legal obstacles to his rule—term limits and age restrictions—have been removed from the constitution, and some of Museveni’s possible rivals have

been jailed or sidelined. He has not said when he will retire and has no rivals in the upper ranks of his party.

Veteran opposition figure Kizza Besigye, a four-time presidential candidate, remains in prison after he faced treason charges he says are politically motivated.

Yusuf Serunkuma, an academic and columnist for the local Observer newspaper, told The Associated Press on Saturday that Wine “didn’t stand a chance” against the authoritarian Museveni, who appoints the electoral commission. “He has quite successfully emasculated the opposition,” Serunkuma said of Museveni.

Even with Wine’s challenge, Museveni faced “one of the weakest oppositions” in recent times, in part because opposition figures are not united while the president is the undisputed leader of his party and enjoys authority over the armed forces, Serunkuma said.

To implement the internet shutdown, which remained in force from Tuesday to late Saturday, the Uganda Communications Commission directed internet service providers to suspend access over an unspecified threat to national security.

The service providers obliged, even though the directive lacked legal weight without a declaration of a state of emergency. The shutdown devastated a range of businesses, from sports betting shops to Uber drivers.

## DELICIOUS NORTHEAST INDIAN FOOD



onions, and mild spices. Sometimes blood is added, giving it a dark color and deep taste. It may sound unusual, but it is full of warmth and tradition. It is often cooked during gatherings and festivals.

Mizoram offers clean and calm flavors. Bai is a common dish. It is a boiled stew of vegetables, often with bamboo shoot and fermented pork fat. There is no heavy spice. Sometimes a little soda is added to soften vegetables. Bai is usually eaten with rice and a simple chutney. It reflects the Mizo way of life. Simple, neat, and close to nature.

Across the region, cooking styles remain basic. Steaming, boiling, roasting, and smoking are common. Oil is used less. Spices are few. The idea is to let the main ingredient speak. Fish tastes like fish. Greens taste like greens. Meat keeps its natural flavor.

Meat is important in many

filling without being heavy. It is food that keeps people strong in tough weather and rough land.

Today, this food is slowly getting attention outside the region. More people are curious. More kitchens are opening. Yet, the real taste still lives in homes, in village kitchens, in smoky huts, and near flowing rivers.

Northeast Indian food is not just about taste. It is about patience, survival, and respect for land. It is food that listens more than it speaks. And once you learn to listen, it stays with you for a long time.

Food from Northeast India keeps things clean and light. Most dishes are boiled, steamed, or smoked. Oil is used very little. Cooking is slow and careful. The aim is not to hide the food, but to respect it. Vegetables stay fresh in taste. Meat stays natural and strong. This style makes the food easy to digest and good for the body.

**F**ood from Northeast India speaks in a soft voice. It does not shout with heavy spices or thick oil. It feels close to the land. Close to forests, rivers, hills, and small farms. Each meal tells a story of balance, care, and respect for nature.

The region has eight states, and each one has its own taste. Yet, they share a common soul. Rice is the heart of most meals. It comes plain, sticky, or lightly flavored. Rice is eaten with vegetables, fish, meat, or just a simple chutney. Food here is not rushed. It is slow, warm, and honest.

One striking thing about Northeast food is the use of fresh ingredients. People cook what grows around them. Local greens, herbs, roots, and shoots are common. Bamboo shoot is a favorite. It comes fresh or fermented. It adds a sharp, earthy taste. Fermentation is important here. It keeps food for long and adds deep flavor.

In Nagaland, Axone or Akhuni is well known. It is fermented soybean. Its smell is strong, but the taste is rich and comforting. It is often cooked with pork or vegetables. Smoked pork is another pride of Naga kitchens. Meat is smoked over firewood and kept for days. When cooked, it has a deep, smoky taste that stays long on the tongue.

Manipur has its own special fermented item called Ngari. It is fermented fish. It is used in small amounts but gives big flavour. One famous dish is Iromba. It is a mash of boiled vegetables, often with bamboo shoot and Ngari. It is spicy, sharp, and full of character. It is usually eaten with rice and sometimes with fried fish.

Assamese food is gentle and soothing. Masor Tenga is a classic dish. It is a light fish curry with a sour taste. The sourness comes from tomatoes,



lemon, or elephant apple. It is cooked with very little oil. It feels light on the stomach and fresh on the palate. Assam also loves herbs like coriander, mustard greens, and local leaves that grow near water.

Meghalaya brings simple comfort food. Jadoh is a popular dish among the Khasi people. It is rice cooked with pork,

states. Pork is loved widely. Fish is common near rivers. Chicken is eaten often. Beef is also part of food culture in some areas.

Nothing is wasted. Every part is used with care.

Northeast Indian food is also healthy. Less oil, more greens, and fermented items help digestion. Meals are balanced and

The flavors are bold but balanced. Sour tastes come from bamboo shoot, fermented fish, lemon, or local fruits. Spice is sharp, not heavy.

Pungent smells from fermented items like axone or ngari add depth. Nothing is extra. Every taste has a role. Together, they create food that feels alive and real.



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## NEIR Activities at St. Joseph College (A), Jakhama Stress Skills, Discipline, and Self-Reliance



### JAKHAMA, NAGALAND:

An engaging NEIR programme was held at St. Joseph College (Autonomous), Jakhama, where students and faculty gathered to hear a strong and honest talk on life, skills, and work. The session left many students thinking about their future and the choices they make every day.

Rajat, while speaking at the programme, heaped praise on Biswadeep Gupta, Managing Trustee and CEO of KRC Times. He described Gupta as a man of vision who believes deeply in knowledge, discipline, and hard work.

Addressing the students, Biswadeep Gupta shared his own life journey in a simple and direct way. "I grew up in Dimapur. I studied in KV Dimapur. I have been travelling all along my life," he said. He told students that travel teaches you more than books alone. It opens your mind and helps you understand people and work.

A major part of his speech focused on discipline. He said discipline is not a choice. It is a need. Valuing time, he stressed, is the base of success. "Once time is lost, it cannot be returned," he said. He urged students to respect time from a young age, as habits formed now stay for life.

Gupta also spoke about mistakes. He said accepting mistakes is the first step to growth and development. Knowing where you went wrong helps you become better. Hiding mistakes only slows you down.

He then spoke about the KRC Foundation and its work. The Foundation focuses on media, communication, and other skill-based areas. He explained how students



and young people can benefit from it. KRC Times, he said, publishes a daily e-paper. All participants of the programme will get a one-year free subscription of KRC Times.

He encouraged everyone to read a newspaper daily. "Reading a newspaper is a very, very good idea," he said. It builds knowledge, improves language, and keeps you aware. He add-

Talking about life balance, Gupta said we must balance our personal, private, and professional lives. Ignoring one can disturb the other two. Knowledge, he said, is important, but skills decide employment. "Employment will happen because of your skills," he said. Education today is a platform, not a guarantee. Skills are a must for employability.

He shared that the KRC Foundation has helped provide jobs to nearly 5,000 people in this region. He also spoke about his own learning process. "The Foundation website was developed by me, despite me not being a website professional," he said. The message was clear. You can learn anything if you are willing.

The Foundation, he said, aims to provide knowledge on how to be employable. This is where KRC Times plays a key role. It connects people to information, ideas, and opportunities.

Gupta also shed light on entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship. He said an entrepreneurial mindset is needed even for professionals. Without it, you cannot grow. Today, he said, there is manpower everywhere, but entrepreneurs are few. Professionals, he added, are hugely respected by entrepreneurs when they show skill, honesty, and initiative.

He spoke strongly against unemployment. "Being unemployed is a curse," he said. He urged students to prepare for jobs seriously. Do not remain dependent after graduation. No work is bad, he reminded. Depending on parents even for mobile recharges is not healthy.

His message was firm but caring. Prepare yourself. Build skills. Respect time. Read daily. Be independent.

The session ended with loud applause and quiet reflection. For many students at St. Joseph College, the words spoken that day were not just advice. They were a wake-up call.

ed that KRC Times is available on smartphones. You do not have to wait for the morning. News is in your hands, anytime.



## BARAK FESTIVAL

JANUARY 10-12, 2025

ACTIVITY PROGRAM



**10 JAN**

### NE Cultural Fest

Any Form of Art and Cultural showcase can be showcased here.  
The Top performances will be invited to perform in the Main Event.  
School, College, University Department, Individual & Group Competition.





**11 JAN**

### Adventure Sports

Trekking & Canoe, Obstacle Navigation, Sport Climbing, Disaster Management Techniques, Water Sports.  
www.krcfoundation.org

Barak Festival  
**2025**  
**BARAK VALLEY CONCLAVE**

10th January, 2025 | Theme: Silchar  
**POTENTIAL, ISSUES & CHALLENGES**

REGISTER NOW

www.krcfoundation.org | 0721330019

**11 JAN**

### Barak Valley Conclave

Potential, Issues and Challenges of Barak Valley to be discussed by stakeholders.  
Industry, NGOs, and Government officials invited for panel discussion, awareness, sports, entertainment, and awareness programs. Participation through invitation only. Different rewards are provided.



## BARAK FESTIVAL

JANUARY 10-12, 2025

ACTIVITY PROGRAM

KRC FOUNDATION  
**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

State leaders will deliberate on Climate Change, pollution and river flooding. The Conclave will focus on the importance, treatment and protection of River Barak. Training & Geography competition and exhibition on River Barak, Climate Change.

**11 JAN**

### 5E For Success Conclave

The 4th 5E For Success Conclave is going to be held on the theme: "From School to Campus to Corporate". Schools, Educational Institutions and corporate houses can join the Conclave as sponsors.  
Quiz and Group Discussion for Barak valley Schools & College Extension, School, Public Speaking (College). In an online event, former students of NE India Schools and Colleges can participate.

**10 JAN**

### Media Conclave

Media Conclave (Webinars, Seminars, and the Panel Talks and Conferences) are part of the "Barak Festival 2025". Theme: "One for All, All for One".  
Webinars on various subjects, seminars, panel & corporate talks, seminars, panel, speakers, webinars.

**10 JAN**

### Media Conclave

Media Conclave (Webinars, Seminars, and the Panel Talks and Conferences) are part of the "Barak Festival 2025". Theme: "One for All, All for One".  
Webinars on various subjects, seminars, panel & corporate talks, seminars, panel, speakers, webinars.

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Barak Festival 2025



BROADCAST PARTNER

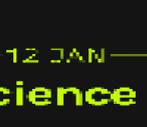


REGISTER HERE

CONTACT: 0721330019 | info@krcfoundation.org

## Barak Festival

Adventure Sports, Art & Culture Promotion



## BARAK FESTIVAL

JANUARY 10-12, 2025

ACTIVITY PROGRAM

**10-12 JAN**

### Science Studio

Use a glimpse of Science to arts through projects. Class VI-XI | Teachers | Parents | Administrators | Parents.  
Raw science into real-life experiences of students.

**10-12 JAN**

### E-Sports

FIFA Football | DOTA 2 | CASH PRIZES | Trophy

**10-12 JAN**

### Book Bank

Anti-Book Campaign Book Bank at Silchar, Assam | Online

**10-12 JAN**

### Book Club

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

**10-12 JAN**

### Painting Carnival

Water Color and other Paints | River Campaign

**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 (Best movie) | Film from Mizoram  
Short Films from Barak Valley, NE India, W's  
Media Talk | Exhibitions | Meet & Greet

www.krcfoundation.org

Barak Festival 2025



BROADCAST PARTNER



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## Barak Festival

Band Night | 10 JAN  
Musical Night | 11 JAN

**5E SUCCESS**

## STUDENT INTERNSHIP

Discover valuable experience and learn more about the Industry.

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- Outreach Executive
- Event Management
- Programme Coordinator



APPLY NOW

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