

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

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

# KRC TIMES

STAY ENRICHED

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

Registrations  
**OPEN**

www.northeastintegrationrally.in  
+91 935 083 0085

VOLUME:1, ISSUE 682 | SILCHAR THURSDAY, JANUARY 22, 2026. EAST AND NE INDIA EDITION | e-mail: krctimes@gmail.com , www.krctimes.com

Get all the latest and updated news of today in the evening. For subscribing to this e-paper contact at -8721838313

**SUBSCRIBE**  
₹300 / year

WhatsApp payment details : 8721838313  
info@krctimes.com

## PERSPECTIVE

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

## Manipur police arrest nephew for murder of 76-year-old woman

IMPHAL

Manipur police on Friday arrested a 23-year-old man in connection with the murder of 76-year-old Oinam Thoibi Devi, also known as Ibendhou, inside her bedroom at Singjamei Oinam Thingel in Imphal West district. The crime occurred on Tuesday, officials said.

The suspect, later identified as Surendrajit Oinam, is the nephew of the deceased and reportedly confessed to the killing. Sources indicated that Surendrajit had a close association with Oinam Thoibi Devi. He was produced before a Duty Magistrate on Friday and remanded in police custody until January 30. The post-mortem was conducted at the RIMS morgue in the presence of an Executive Magistrate, with full video documentation. The deceased's body was claimed by the Joint Action Committee Against Brutal Killing of Oinam (Ningol) Thoibi alias Pishakcha. Police confirmed that the investigation is ongoing, and authorities are working to determine whether any other individuals were involved in the crime, with the aim of bringing all responsible parties to justice.



**"Before yesterday, the number stood at 68. However, yesterday itself, that figure did not hit 69, but jumped straight to 70, once during his opening statement at the White House press conference, and later during the Q&A session,"**

Jairam Ramesh  
Congress leader

## Protests Erupt, Indo-Myanmar Sugnu Road Blocked Over Meitei Man's Death

IMPHAL

Tension flared up in parts of Manipur on Thursday after residents of Kakching Khunou blocked the strategically important Indo-Myanmar Sugnu Road, protesting the alleged abduction and killing of a Meitei civilian in Churachandpur district.

The blockade was staged following reports of the killing of Mayanglambam Rishikanta Singh (31), a resident of Kakching Khunou Uchan Makhong Leikai in Kakching district. Protesters condemned what the victim's family described as a "brutal killing" and demanded justice, along with enhanced security for civilians amid the prolonged ethnic unrest in the state.

Local residents said the road was blocked soon after news of the incident spread. The agitators alleged that suspected Kuki militants were involved in the killing and warned that protests could intensify if those responsible were not identified and brought to book. Organisers of the blockade also announced plans to convene a public meeting to decide the future course of action.

According to a complaint lodged by the family, Rishikanta Singh was allegedly abducted on the evening of January 21 and later killed in Churachandpur district. He was the son of M. Tombi Singh and the husband of Chingnu Haokip (38), a resident of Tuibou (Tuibuang) village in Churachandpur.



ng (Tuibuang) village in Churachandpur.

Family members said the couple had been living together in Churachandpur since December 19, 2025, after Rishikanta returned from Nepal, where he had been working. They claimed they were first alerted to the incident after coming across a disturbing video purportedly showing his killing, which later circulated widely on social media.

The family said they subsequently received a phone call from Rishikanta's wife, who informed them that he had been abducted and killed by armed assailants. A family member told the media that Rishikanta had married a Kuki woman and had remained in regular contact with his family prior to the outbreak of ethnic violence in Manipur. "After the crisis began, communication became irregular," the family member said.

As per the account shared by Chingnu Haokip, three unidentified armed men allegedly arrived at their residence around 6:30 pm on January 21 and forcibly abducted Rishikanta. She reportedly tried to resist but was overpowered. According to her statement, the couple was taken in a four-wheeler to a secluded location, where she was later pushed out of the vehicle. Rishikanta was allegedly taken towards a nearby hill area and shot dead.

"We strongly suspect the involvement of Kuki militants in the cold-blooded killing of my brother," a family member said, adding that the wife claimed she was unable to identify the attackers.

The complaint further stated that the family received telephonic confirmation of the abduction and killing from Chingnu Haokip at around 1:45 am on January 22. A formal case has been registered at Waikhong Police Station, seeking a thorough investigation and stringent action against those involved.

Police officials confirmed that an FIR has been registered and an investigation is underway to establish the sequence of events and identify the perpetrators. Authorities have appealed to the public to maintain calm and refrain from actions that could further escalate tensions as the probe continues.

## Peace meeting in Kokrajhar reviews recent violence; ministers urge calm as situation stabilises



KOKRAJHAR

A high-level peace meeting was held on January 21 at the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) Assembly Auditorium in Kokrajhar to review the recent outbreak of violence in the district and assess the prevailing law and order situation.

The meeting was chaired by Assam Cabinet Minister Jayanta Malla Barua and attended by Cabinet Minister Charan Boro, BTC Chief Executive Member Hagrama Mohilary, local MLA Lawrence Islary, along with representatives of student bodies and social organisations. Participants appealed to residents to maintain peace and communal harmony, urging all sections of society to refrain from actions that could further escalate tensions. Emphasis was laid on unity and cooperation to help restore normalcy in the district. Addressing the media after the meeting, Barua said the situation in Kokrajhar was currently under control. "Due to some misunderstanding, an unfortunate situation erupted. The Chief Minister is closely monitoring

all developments," he said, adding that he would personally visit the families of those who lost their lives in the incident. Barua also said security arrangements across the district had been strengthened to ensure law and order. Authorities, meanwhile, urged citizens to remain calm and cooperate with the administration. According to officials, the unrest began on January 19 following a violent clash between two groups, which resulted in the death of a youth and triggered protests in several parts of the district.

Police identified the deceased as Sunil Murmu and Sikhna Jwhlwao Bismit. Officials said Sikhna Jwhlwao Bismit was killed during the initial clash, while Sunil Murmu sustained injuries during the protests that followed and later succumbed.

Tensions escalated as protests turned violent, leading to incidents of arson, road blockades and clashes with security personnel. Police resorted to baton charges and tear gas to disperse the crowd, during which several people, including security personnel, were injured.

## Assam Congress alleges voter deletions via e-KYC in electoral roll revision

GUWAHATI

The Assam Congress on Thursday intensified its criticism of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), alleging a "systematic attempt" to remove voters' names through the ongoing Special Revision (SR) of electoral rolls using the e-KYC process.

Speaking at a press conference in Ghoramara, Assam Mahila Congress president Mira Borthakur claimed that nearly 6,000 voters in the Dispur Assembly constituency were being targeted under the pretext of electronic verification.

"The Election Commission and the BJP are trying to remove names in the name of e-KYC verification. In Dispur constituency, very tactically, around 6,000 people's names are being targeted," Borthakur said.

She alleged that fair-price shop operators in areas including Hatigaon, Ghoramara, Sijubari, and Dakshingao were being harassed and pressured to facilitate the e-KYC process, despite having no official mandate to conduct such verifications.

"First, names will be removed through e-KYC, and later the same names will be deleted from the voter list," she claimed.

Borthakur also accused the Election Commission of acting in tandem with the BJP, asserting that repeated complaints had failed to prompt corrective action. "The Election Commission is working like a BJP morcha. No matter how many complaints are submitted, they do not have the courage to act against them," she alleged.

## Seven Manipur insurgent groups call for 18-hour shutdown to boycott Republic Day

IMPHAL

Seven underground outfits in Manipur have announced an 18-hour shutdown from 12:00 PM on January 25 to 6:00 PM on January 26, urging the public to stay indoors and refrain from participating in Republic Day celebrations.

The call was issued by the Coordination Committee (CorCom), the apex body representing six banned insurgent groups in the state. In a statement, CorCom described India's Republic Day as a "colonial reconsolidation day" for Manipur (Kangleipak), urging citizens to avoid activities associated with the national observance.

Separately, the outlawed Socialist Revolutionary Party (SOREPA), Kangleipak, announced a total bandh in the state from 5:00 AM to 5:00

PM on January 26. In a press release, SOREPA's publicity secretary MC Yaiphabi stated the group would support all shutdowns, boycotts, and general strikes called across Western South East Asia (WESEA), Kashmir, Khalistan, and Manipur on the same day.

Authorities clarified that emergency services including fire stations, water supply departments, medical services, media houses, and religious or ritual ceremonies will remain exempt from the shutdown.

These proscribed groups continue to protest the merger of the erstwhile independent Manipur into the Indian Union, a union formalised in 1949. The call for a boycott reflects ongoing demands for recognition of Manipur's historical sovereignty and local grievances related to statehood and autonomy.

## Centre committed to holistic development of Northeast, says Union Minister B L Verma

KOHIMA

Union Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Social Justice and Empowerment, B L Verma, on Wednesday reaffirmed the Centre's commitment to the comprehensive development of the Northeast, stating that the region has witnessed visible and measurable transformation over the past decade.

Emphasising progress in infrastructure, social welfare delivery and healthcare, Verma said the changes seen since 2014 reflect the Union government's focused approach towards integrating the Northeast into India's broader growth trajectory.

The Union Minister is currently on a two-day visit to Nagaland, during which he conducted on-ground inspections of several centrally sponsored schemes in Chumoukedima district. His visit included reviews of fair-price shops operating under the public distribution system, Anganwadi centres aimed at strengthening child nutrition and maternal healthcare, and the Centre for Disease Control and Cancer Treatment at the Christian Institute of Health Sciences and Research (CIHSR), a key healthcare facility serving the region.

Following a review meeting on the implementation of central projects, Verma told reporters that the transformation of Nagaland since



2014 is "self-evident." He highlighted significant improvements in road connectivity, healthcare infrastructure and welfare service delivery, noting that these developments have enhanced access to essential services for the people.

The Minister said the Centre remains firmly focused on ensuring inclusive and sustainable development across the Northeast, with particular attention to remote and border areas. He added that strengthening institutional capacity and accelerating project execution would continue to be priorities to ensure that the benefits of development reach the grassroots.

Officials said Verma's visit forms part of the Centre's broader strategy to closely monitor flagship programmes in the Northeast and reinforce its long-term vision for the region's economic, social and infrastructural advancement.

## Indian Army conducts joint counter-drone capsule in Assam ahead of Republic Day 2026

TINSUKIA

As part of heightened security arrangements ahead of Republic Day 2026, the Indian Army conducted a Joint Counter-Drone Capsule at Tinsukia to strengthen preparedness against emerging drone-based threats.

The training was conducted by the Red Shield Gunners under the aegis of Spear Corps, with active participation from personnel of Assam Police, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL).

The capsule aimed to enhance awareness, response mechanisms, and coordination among participating agencies to address the evolving challenges posed by drone misuse. Practical demonstrations and structured interactions formed part of the training, enabling participants to develop a common understanding of procedures and response protocols.

The exercise significantly enhanced operational readiness and inter-agency coordination, thereby strengthening collective security preparedness through a whole-of-nation



approach. Such joint efforts underscore the importance of synergy between military and civil stakeholders in ensuring robust security arrangements during major national events.

Earlier, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Upenra Dwivedi on Thursday extended New Year greetings to the nation and hailed India's decision action under Operation Sindoor,

saying the "operation continues even today. "In an X post by the ADG PI-Indian Army, General Upenra Dwivedi noted that the army is undergoing a decade of transformation, stating "jointness, self-reliance, and innovation" as the pillars of India's defence strategy.

He called for indigenous technologies and new ideas to make the Army future-ready.

The COAS said, "On the auspicious occasion of New Year 2026, on behalf of the Indian Army, I extend my heartfelt greetings to all fellow citizens. May this New Year bring happiness, good health, and prosperity to you and your families.

The Indian Army is ensuring the security of the nation with utmost vigilance and determination.

"Last year, the enemy's nefarious designs were given a befitting reply through firm and decisive action under Operation Sindoor, and this operation continues even today. Along with vigilance on the borders, the Army has played a vital role in national progress through rapid response during disasters within the country and nation-building efforts," he said.

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

**INVITATION**  
You are cordially invited

to the Barak Festival & NEIR Fest of the  
North East Integration Rally 2026 — an initiative celebrating  
unity, culture, and the vibrant spirit of Northeast India.

In Collaboration with  
**S.S. College, Hailakandi**

**DATE** 📅 January 23, 2026  
**TIME** 🕒 12:00 PM-1:30 PM  
**VENUE** 📍 S.S. College  
Hailakandi, Assam, India

Rsvp **KRC Foundation: +91-8721838313**  
**+91- 9401929722**

www.northeastintegrationrally.in



VOLUME:1, ISSUE 682

## RISE OF NATIONALISM AND DECLINE OF SEPARATISM

**A**nation is not merely a collection of geographical boundaries. It is a living construct shaped by shared history, cultural continuity, constitutional values, collective consciousness, and aspirations for a common future. When a nation achieves clarity about its identity, sovereignty, and unity, its policies inevitably reflect that clarity. In recent years, India has demonstrated such resolve with increasing consistency—most notably in its approach toward Jammu & Kashmir, a region long marked by political ambiguity, exceptionalism, and ideological contestation.

Recent developments in the region indicate a profound shift not only in policy and governance but also in political discourse and symbolic representation. Among these developments is the decision by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq—historically associated with the Hurriyat Conference—to remove the designation “Hurriyat Chairman” from his verified X (formerly Twitter) profile. While, at first glance, this may appear to be a minor or personal digital adjustment, within the framework of contemporary political communication such acts carry deeper significance. Public self-identification on social media has become an extension of political legitimacy and ideological positioning. Consequently, the withdrawal of an explicitly separatist title from a public platform reflects an implicit acknowledgment of a transformed political environment—one in which separatist symbolism no longer enjoys the legitimacy, resonance, or strategic utility it once did.

These developments point toward a broader political, ideological, and psychological transition underway in Jammu & Kashmir. They compel a fundamental inquiry: has nationalism in contemporary India remained merely one political option among many, or has it evolved into an unavoidable structural necessity? This article examines that question by tracing the historical roots of separatist discourse, analyzing the impact of constitutional and policy reforms, and evaluating the emerging reality in which nationalism increasingly functions as the primary framework of political legitimacy in New India.

Jammu & Kashmir: Historical Context and Political Complexity

The political trajectory of Jammu & Kashmir has been shaped by the circumstances surrounding India's independence and partition in 1947. Pakistan-sponsored aggression, a hastily negotiated ceasefire, international mediation, and a series of internal political accommodations produced a prolonged condition of uncertainty. Unlike other regions integrated into the Indian Union, Jammu & Kashmir evolved within a framework of constitutional exceptionalism.

This exceptional status, though initially conceived as transitional, gradually institutionalized political ambiguity. Over time, it contributed to administrative opacity, weakened accountability, and fostered a perception of separatism. Rather than resolving political anxieties, this framework deepened alienation and enabled the growth of narratives that questioned India's sovereignty over the region.

Special Provisions and the Construction of Separatist Discourse

Constitutional provisions described as “temporary” were steadily transformed into permanent political instruments. These provisions reshaped governance and political culture in several adverse ways. Equal access to education, healthcare, and employment remained limited. Democratic competition became increasingly dynastic, while corruption flourished under the shield of political exceptionalism.

More significantly, these provisions provided ideological legitimacy to separatist forces.

The notion of a “special status” was repeatedly employed to argue for political distance from the Indian constitutional framework. Within this environment, separatist organizations projected themselves as authentic representatives of popular will, despite lacking democratic accountability or mass electoral endorsement.

Separatist Politics and Democratic Contradictions

Separatist discourse consistently invoked the language of democracy, human rights, and self-determination. However, a closer examination of its operational methods reveals deep contradictions. Violence was normalized as a political tool, terrorism was reframed as resistance, and civil unrest was encouraged through street-level mobilization, particularly among youth.

The ordinary citizen—whose daily concerns centered on education, livelihood, and security—found little representation within this framework. Dissenting voices were marginalized, and alternative political aspirations were often silenced. Consequently, separatist politics functioned less as a democratic movement and more as a closed ideological ecosystem resistant to reform or accountability.

Decisive Leadership and the Shift in Policy Orientation

A discernible transformation in India's national political approach became evident after 2014. Governance priorities shifted decisively from appeasement toward resolution, from instability toward institutional order, and from strategic ambiguity toward policy clarity.

This recalibration was particularly consequential in the context of Jammu & Kashmir. The state's approach moved away from crisis management toward structural correction. Policy decisions were framed not merely to contain unrest but to address its ideological and administrative roots. This period marked the beginning of a broader redefinition of political legitimacy in the region.

The constitutional reforms of 2019 represented a watershed moment in the political history of Jammu & Kashmir. Their significance extended far beyond legal restructuring. By dismantling the psychological divide between “special” and “separate,” these reforms asserted the principle of constitutional equality and reaffirmed the primacy of national sovereignty.

The reforms weakened the ideological foundations of separatism by removing the legal ambiguities that sustained it. For the first time in decades, the constitutional framework offered clarity rather than compromise, and integration rather than exception.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

“One of the deep secrets of life is that all that is really worth doing is what we do for others.”  
—Lewis Carroll

# NORTHEAST INDIA'S TOURISM, INDUSTRY NEED GLOBAL PUSH: US-INDIA DIALOGUE



JAYANTA DEBNATH

While acknowledging these opportunities, most participants stressed that the expansion of trade and connectivity, especially for Tripura, depends significantly on the early restoration of normal law and order conditions in neighbouring Bangladesh. Several speakers underlined the need for timely diplomatic engagement by India and the United States to ensure regional stability, which is critical for cross-border commerce and investment confidence.

Discussions during the dialogue repeatedly returned to the need for attracting both domestic and foreign capital to the Northeast, while simultaneously prioritising local entrepreneurship and indigenous initiatives. Participants from different Northeastern states pointed out that there is no shortage of development schemes under the Government of India led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. However, they raised serious concerns about the practical difficulties faced by new entrepreneurs in accessing these schemes due to procedural hurdles and administrative bottlenecks.

Infrastructure development also emerged as a key concern. While central government projects for road construction, railway expansion, and connectivity have been initiated across the region, representatives from several states complained about

the Government of India and state governments directly engage with people from the Northeastern states to listen to their ground-level problems and aspirations.

Addressing the gathering, US Consul General Kathy Giles Diaz emphasised the strategic importance of Eastern and Northeastern India in the Indo-Pacific vision. She reiterated the United States commitment to a free, open, and prosperous Indo-Pacific, highlighting the role of the Quad—India, the US, Japan, and Australia, in strengthening infrastructure, clean energy, supply chains, and maritime security.

She noted that improved ports, railways, inland waterways, roads, and digital corridors could integrate the Northeast more effectively into global markets, while reducing dependence on fragile or adversarial supply chains. Referring to her recent visits to Kolkata and Haldia ports, the Consul General underlined the importance of maritime security for uninterrupted trade and regional stability.

The session was moderated by Nilanjan Ghosh, Vice President, Development Studies, ORF and Project Director, along with Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhury, Senior Fellow, Neighborhood Studies Initiative, ORF. The inaugural session also featured virtual presentations by Abigail Bard, Quad Team Coordina-

tor, and Jeffrey Wang, Quad Team Lead and Political Officer from the US State Department, who provided deeper insights into America's strategic vision for the Indo-Pacific and the centrality of maritime security. The dialogue concluded with a shared understanding that meaningful development of the Northeast requires not just policy frameworks, but faster implementation, regional stability, global visibility, and continuous engagement with local stakeholders, so that the region's enormous potential can finally translate into sustainable growth.

### DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

**“Regarding the four plants that started pilot production in the semiconductor sector, one of them will start commercial production by the last week of February. Reflecting on the nation's progress, he shared, “This is a matter of great pride for the country, and it is the result of the Prime Minister's focused execution, demonstrating how, after 60 years, India has finally made a significant mark in the semiconductor industry.” He further added, Rare earths are a very complex value chain, involving contributions from many countries around the world. India has entered into several collaborations in this complex value chain. There are collaborations with the US, Europe, Germany, Japan, South Korea, and Singapore. These collaborations aim to create an ecosystem that ensures India's continued growth.” Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw also stressed that India is poised to become the world's third-largest economy in the next few years, driven by a decade of “well thought-through” structural changes and focused execution.**

Ashwini Vaishnaw  
Union Minister



Journalists, business leaders, and policy stakeholders from Tripura and other Northeastern states unanimously agreed that the Northeast does not suffer from a lack of potential in tourism, industry, or trade, but from a shortage of strong political will and effective national and international promotion. This consensus emerged during the US Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific: North Eastern Dialogue, Kolkata Chapter, jointly organised by the US Consulate General Kolkata and the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) at the American Center, Kolkata.

The dialogue, which brought together around 30 invited participants from across the Northeastern region, served as a national-level pre-dissemination consultation ahead of a larger policy dialogue scheduled in New Delhi in March. The event focused on advancing US-India cooperation under the Indo-Pacific framework, with special emphasis on connectivity, trade, supply-chain resilience, and regional development.

Representing Tripura in person were Jayanta Debnath, Editor of Tripurainfo.com journalist and independent researcher Debaraj Deb, Anup Kumar Ray, President of the Tripura Chamber of Commerce, and Tushar Kanti Chakraborty, Secretary of the Tripura Merchant Association. All four highlighted Tripura's vast but underutilised potential in tourism development, bamboo-based industries, rubber production, natural gas, and cross-border trade with

the slow pace of implementation, which continues to hinder economic growth and investor interest.

Another strong recommendation from the floor was the need for more such consultative dialogues, where

tor, and Jeffrey Wang, Quad Team Lead and Political Officer from the US State Department, who provided deeper insights into America's strategic vision for the Indo-Pacific and the centrality of maritime security. The



## Nagaland's youth caught between joblessness and addiction: A crisis demanding urgent action

KOHIMA

Nagaland is facing a growing social challenge as rising unemployment among its youth converges with an alarming increase in drug abuse, threatening to turn the state's demographic advantage into a long-term crisis. A young and educated population, rich in talent and cultural capital, is struggling to find opportunities in an economy that has failed to absorb its expanding workforce.

For thousands of young people, unemployment has become the first point of frustration. Each year, educated youths complete school and higher education with expectations of meaningful work, only to encounter limited options. Government jobs remain the most sought after, but vacancies are few and competition intense. The private sector is underdeveloped, industrial activity is minimal, and entrepreneurship continues to face hurdles such as lack of capital, inadequate training and weak infrastructure. As a result, a large section of the youth remains idle, uncertain and increasingly disillusioned. The impact of prolonged unemployment goes far beyond loss of income. It erodes self-worth,



fuels anxiety and affects mental health. While many young people migrate to cities such as Guwahati, Delhi, Bengaluru and Mumbai in search of work, others remain in the state, trapped in a cycle of waiting and disappointment. For some migrants, relocation brings exposure and income, but for many it also results in exploitation, discrimination, job insecurity and poor living conditions. It is within this climate of frustration and illness that drug abuse has taken deeper root. Once considered a peripheral issue, substance abuse has emerged as a serious social problem in Nagaland, particularly among adolescents and young adults. What often begins as curiosity, peer pressure or an attempt to escape

stress gradually turns into addiction. Easy availability of drugs, limited recreational spaces and weak enforcement have further aggravated the situation.

Families and communities are increasingly bearing the consequences, ranging from health crises and school dropouts to broken homes and rising crime. The situation is especially troubling because unemployment and drug abuse are not isolated problems; they reinforce each other in a destructive cycle. Joblessness creates frustration and vulnerability, pushing some youths towards substance use. Addiction, in turn, destroys health, discipline and employability, making it even harder for individuals to escape unemployment.

Nagaland's untapped potential in sports, music, arts and other creative fields highlights what is at stake. Engaging young people in constructive and productive activities can act as a strong deterrent against both idleness and addiction. However, inadequate infrastructure, lack of sustained funding and limited institutional support continue to discourage many talented youths from pursuing these paths professionally.

While unemployment remains the larger structural challenge shaping the state's future, drug abuse has become its most visible and devastating outcome. Addressing one without tackling the other is unlikely to bring lasting results.

Experts and community leaders stress that the crisis demands a coordinated response—creating meaningful employment opportunities, strengthening skill development and entrepreneurship, expanding community support systems, and intensifying efforts to dismantle drug networks while improving access to rehabilitation and awareness programmes. Equally important is ensuring that the voices of young people are heard and reflected in policy decisions. Nagaland's youth do not lack talent or resilience. What they lack are opportunities, direction and sustained support. Addressing unemployment and drug abuse together is not merely a policy challenge, but a moral imperative to safeguard the state's future and prevent an entire generation from slipping through the cracks.

## Tripura Congress stages protest in Agartala over alleged attack on Shankaracharya

AGARTALA

The Tripura Pradesh Congress on Tuesday staged a protest march in Agartala, condemning the alleged attack on Jagatguru Shankaracharya and other monks by the Uttar Pradesh police administration.

The demonstration was held at the Orient Chowmuni area, where Congress workers burned effigies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath as a mark of protest. Senior Congress leader and Tripura MLA Sudip Roy Barman led the march and addressed the media. Questioning the Uttar Pradesh government's stand on protecting religious traditions, Barman alleged that those responsible for the incident could not project themselves as custodians of religion. "Those involved in this incident cannot claim to be protectors of traditional religion. This has exposed them as hypocrites and political dealers," he said.

The Congress MLA also launched a sharp attack on the central government

and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), alleging that several ancient temples had been damaged or destroyed under the present regime. He claimed that a 1,300-1,400-year-old Ram temple in Delhi had been demolished and that idols of Lord Ram and Lord Hanuman were dragged using bulldozers. Barman further alleged damage to religious structures in Kashi, including the destruction of a Shivaling and an idol of Lord Ganesha. "Even Aurangzeb did not destroy so many temples," he said, accusing the government of allowing large-scale destruction of religious heritage over the past 11 years. Continuing his criticism, Barman alleged that the ruling dispensation was misleading the public. "In the last 11 years, this government has turned some fools into blind devotees and blind devotees into fools. This is how they want to rule the country," he claimed.

He also criticised organisations such as the RSS and the Bajrang Dal, alleging that they benefited from and helped sustain the current government.

## BLO flags alleged misuse of Form 7, voter list revision draws scrutiny in Assam's Sribhumi

SRIBHUMI

Serious concerns have been raised over the integrity of the ongoing voter list revision process in Assam's Sribhumi district after a Booth Level Officer (BLO) flagged alleged misuse of Form 7, the prescribed mechanism for deletion of names from electoral rolls.

The disclosure was made by Chumna Rahman Choudhury, a primary school teacher at Choudhurbazar Primary School who is currently discharging duties as a BLO. She alleged that multiple complaints seeking deletion of voters' names are being submitted through questionable means, often without the knowledge or consent of the individuals concerned.

According to Choudhury, several such applications carry signatures that appear to be partly printed and partly handwritten, raising serious doubts about their authenticity. She further claimed that in many instances, the voters in whose names the complaints were filed were completely unaware that representations had been made to remove their names from the electoral rolls.

Flagging the potential fallout of such practices, Choudhury warned that the alleged misuse of Form 7 could have far-reaching consequences for the electoral process. She cautioned that BLOs acting on dubious complaints could face public anger and backlash, as voters whose names are deleted may hold election officials personally responsible.

Her remarks, which have circulated widely on social media, have triggered strong reactions across Sribhumi district. Political observers, civil society members, and local residents have expressed concern over the credibility and transparency of the voter list revision exercise.

## Guwahati Asian Film Festival begins second edition with films from 10 countries

GUWAHATI

The second edition of the Guwahati Asian Film Festival (GAFF) opened on Wednesday, January 22, reaffirming the Northeast's growing role as a hub for Asian cinema with a curated line-up of 26 regional, national and international films from 10 countries.

The festival opened with Sunday, an Uzbek film directed by Shokir Kholikov, setting the tone for a programme that blends acclaimed international works with diverse Indian narratives. The opening day also featured the India premiere of Japanese film S, directed by Masahiro Ota, along with An Evening Ballad by Bishal Swargiary, screened under the Indian Showcase (non-competition) section.

GAFF Festival Director (honorary) Monita Borgohain said the second edition has been expanded following the encouraging response to the inaugural festival. "GAFF 2026 promises to be bigger and better, continuing its celebration of the rich diversity of Asian cinema, with more filmmakers from outside the region joining the event," she said.

Over the next four days, the festi-

val will screen films from Vietnam, Mongolia, Uzbekistan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Japan, Myanmar, Iran, Kazakhstan and China. A wide range of Indian films will also be showcased across multiple languages, including Marathi, Bajjika, Malayalam, Hindi, Tulu, Nepali, Assamese, Karbi, Bodo, Mising, Manipuri and Bengali, highlighting the breadth of regional and national cinematic expression.

In addition to film screenings, GAFF 2026 will host masterclasses, panel discussions and interactive sessions with filmmakers, critics and industry professionals from India and other Asian countries. Organisers said the final selection was curated from over 200 submissions, including 90 entries from outside India.

Organised by Trending Now Media with support from the National Film Development Corporation and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, GAFF has positioned itself as the only Asian film festival of its kind in the Northeast, carving a distinct place in India's cultural landscape by bringing Asian cinema to the region.

## At Davos, Himanta Biswa Sarma calls for new export markets for Assam tea amid global uncertainty

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on January 22 said India's tea industry must diversify its export destinations as geopolitical tensions disrupt traditional markets, even as the state pitches itself as a major destination for technology and manufacturing investments at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos.

Speaking on the sidelines of the global summit, Sarma noted that Russia and Iran have historically been among the largest buyers of Assam tea, but ongoing geopolitical developments have complicated trade. "Russia and Iran were our traditional markets. But because of the geopolitical situation, things are getting a little difficult," he said, adding that the disruption was likely to be temporary.

Highlighting the global appeal of Assam tea, the Chief Minister remarked that "Russian people like Assam's tea," describing it as a



long-standing strength of the industry. At the same time, he stressed the urgency of expanding into newer markets. Sarma said proposed free trade agreements with the United Kingdom and the European Union had come "at the right time for the Indian tea industry" and could open up fresh opportunities for exporters.

Beyond tea, Sarma used the Davos platform to project Assam as an emerging hub for semiconductor manufacturing and advanced technology. Over the past three days, he

held meetings with leading global players across the semiconductor ecosystem, including IBM, Synopsys and Qualcomm. "Right from IBM, I think we met all the global players of the semiconductor ecosystem... We have met several global players in the last three days," he said.

A separate meeting was held with IBM Vice President Gary Cohn to explore collaboration in skill development, artificial intelligence adoption and related initiatives. Sarma said IBM is expected to send a delegation to Assam soon to assess opportunities on the ground.

The Chief Minister also met Tata Group chairman N Chandrababuram, underscoring the group's growing footprint in Assam. He said Tata's presence in the state had acted as a catalyst for wider investor interest. "There is a lot of interest in Assam due to the involvement of the TATA group, which is attracting the invest-

mentors," he added.

One of the key engagements at Davos was a roundtable discussion with senior executives from global semiconductor companies, including Synopsys, Qualcomm, Analog Devices, Thermo Fisher, Honeywell and Henkel. Discussions focused on expanding semiconductor manufacturing in Assam and strengthening diversified supply chains, with Sarma noting strong interest in partnerships.

Reflecting on India's broader investment landscape, Sarma said the country had moved beyond a growth model dominated by a handful of states. "Earlier, when it came to India, people knew only four or five states. But today, when states like Assam come and represent, then I think we talk about the whole of India," he said, describing it as a "whole of nation" approach to economic development.

## ICAMSE 2026 inaugurated at Manipur Technical University, brings focus on interdisciplinary research

IMPHAL

The International Conference on Advanced Multidisciplinary Sciences and Engineering (ICAMSE 2026) was inaugurated on January 21 at Manipur Technical University (MTU), Imphal, marking the start of a three-day academic conclave aimed at promoting interdisciplinary research, innovation and collaboration.

Organised by the Department of Basic Sciences, Manipur Technical University, the conference is being held from January 21 to 23 and has drawn participation from academicians, scientists and researchers from India and abroad.

The inaugural session was attended by several eminent personalities, including Prof. Madan Mohan Tripathi, Director General of the National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT), Government of India; Prof. G. Singaiah, Vice-Chancellor of Birangana Sati Sadhani Rajkij Vishwavidyalaya,

Assam; Dr. Sanabam Sujen Singh, Extension Officer (Seismology), North Eastern Council Secretariat; Dr. Sandip Rashmikant Oza, former ISRO scientist and group director; Prof. Manoj Kumar Bhat, DBT Distinguished Scientist and former Director of BRIC-NCCS, Pune; Prof. Miroslav Mladjen Novakovic of the University of Belgrade, Serbia; Prof. Y. Rohen Singh of Manipur University; and Prof. W. Chandrababu Singh, Vice-Chancellor of Manipur Technical University, who presided over the programme. Addressing the gathering, Prof. Tripathi shared insights from his long association with electronics and information technology, recalling his tenure as Project Director General at the National Informatics Centre under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. He described ICAMSE 2026 as an important platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration, and highlighted the growing role of emerging technologies such as arti-

ficial intelligence, semiconductors, the Internet of Things and cybersecurity in driving inclusive and sustainable development. Emphasising digital skilling and research aligned with real-world challenges, he encouraged students and researchers to contribute to nation-building through innovation.

Presiding over the event, Prof. Chandrababu Singh outlined MTU's vision for a need-based and globally oriented academic and research ecosystem. He spoke about key initiatives, including the implementation of the university's research and development policy, efforts towards internationalisation through collaborations such as a memorandum of understanding with Swansea University for a proposed twinning degree programme, and the introduction of an adjunct faculty scheme to engage international experts.

He also announced the establishment of a publication division with plans to launch a research journal, the

integration of multidisciplinary education across engineering, sciences, humanities and social sciences, and the opening of new departments in Biosciences, Pharmaceutical Sciences and Biomedical Engineering.

Highlighting the response to the conference, the Vice-Chancellor said over 140 research papers had been submitted, reflecting strong interest in multidisciplinary and holistic research. He welcomed delegates from across the country and overseas, expressing confidence that the conference would foster collaboration, learning and academic excellence.

As part of the inaugural programme, a compilation of conference abstracts was released and a plenary talk was delivered. Faculty members, officials, staff and students of Manipur Technical University and NIELIT attended the opening ceremony of the international conference.

## Assam University celebrates 33rd Foundation Day; former Air Force Chief urges youth to build 'Vikshit Bharat'

SILCHAR

Assam University marked its 33rd Foundation Day on January 21 with a series of academic and ceremonial events, during which former Air Chief Marshal Arup Raha urged students to play an active role in realising the vision of a 'Vikshit Bharat' by 2047.

Addressing the gathering as Chancellor of the university, Raha spoke about India's rising stature as an emerging global power and called upon the youth to contribute meaningfully to nation-building. While noting that Assam University is relatively young, he said its achievements over the years had been noteworthy and congratulated the university community for its steady academic and institutional progress.

The Foundation Day celebrations began with the hoisting of the national flag at the Netaji Subhas Stage ground by Chancellor Raha, in the presence of Vice-Chancellor Prof. Rajive Mohan Pant and chief guest, former Army Chief Manoj Mukund Naravane. Floral tributes were later paid at the Language Martyrs' Memorial.

Vice-Chancellor Prof. Pant

highlighted the university's growth in education, research and infrastructure, stating that more than 500 research papers were published in the past year and several innovative projects had been registered for patents. He added that the institution has achieved numerous milestones over its 32-year journey.

Chief guest Manoj Mukund Naravane extended greetings to the university fraternity and said the Northeast holds a special place in his heart. Recalling an earlier visit to Mizoram via Silchar, he reflected on the visible transformation the town has undergone over the years. As part of the programme, the Celebration Committee felicitated Professor Shibashis Biswas, Vice-Chancellor of the Difu campus, along with the distinguished guests. A mobile planetarium, an extended guest house building and a sundial at Nakshatra Batika were also formally inaugurated on the occasion. Registrar Pradosh Kiran Nath, Finance Officer Shubhadip Dhar, Controller of Examinations Suprabir Dutta Roy and Prof. Sudipta Roy, Chairman of the Celebration Committee, were among those present at the event.

## MIZORAM BETS BIG ON TOURISM ECONOMY: Rs 395 crore infra pipeline, 145% growth & sports tourism push to drive state GDP

AIZAWL

Mizoram continues to strengthen its tourism-led growth model, driven by improved connectivity, sustained infrastructure investments and destination-centric events. With tourism emerging as a key economic pillar, the state is leveraging its natural assets, cultural capital and community participation to build a resilient tourist economy.

The inauguration of the Bairabi-Sairang railway line in September 2025 has significantly enhanced accessibility, enabling higher tourist movement into the state.

Mizoram recorded an impressive 145.54 per cent growth in tourist arrivals between 2023 and 2024, reflecting strong market momentum. The state is experiencing a higher rate in the current year, with an already higher number in sight, even before the final calculations.

With rail connectivity now operational, this upward trend is expected to accelerate further.

"This is not just about increasing tourist numbers - it is about reshaping Mizoram's economic future through tourism,"

Quest!

Just believe in yourself

said Lalnghinglova Hmar, Mizoram Minister for Sports and Tourism.

"Our vision is to build Mizoram as a premium experiential destination where nature, culture and community come together. Tourism will be a growth engine for rural livelihoods, youth employment and global visibility. Connectivity has opened the door; now we are walking through it with purpose," the Minister said.

He further said that, to drive longer, immersive stays, Mizoram Tourism has rolled out the Mizoram Tourism Events & Festival Calendar 2026, launched on December 15, 2025.

The calendar curates major festivals, cultural showcases and sporting events across all seasons, enabling travellers to plan visits in advance and experience the state beyond short stopovers.

From Chapchar Kut and the Anthurium Festival to the Mizoram Travel Fest and winter celebrations, the calendar is designed to ensure year-round tourism, boosting local businesses and community participation.

"Events are our strategic tourism magnets," said R. Lalroding, Director, Tourism Department, Mizoram.

"The Tourism Calendar 2026 is a market-driven tool. We studied travel trends and curated experiences that encourage visitors to stay longer, explore deeper, and

"Our vision is to build Mizoram as a premium experiential destination where nature, culture and community come together. Tourism will be a growth engine for rural livelihoods, youth employment and global visibility. Connectivity has opened the door; now we are walking through it with purpose,".

spend locally. Our goal is to move from seasonal tourism to a year-round tourism economy," she said.

Backed by strong public investment, Mizoram is currently executing projects worth Rs 395.04 crore under central and externally aided schemes. These include eco-resorts, ropeways, heritage centres, pilgrimage circuits, convention infrastructure and farm tourism roads under flagship programmes such as Swadesh.

Parallely, the state's Bana Kaih (Hand-holding) Scheme is empowering tourism entrepreneurs across homestays, transport

services, catering, travel operations and souvenir businesses. Under a special package, 100 rural homestays will be developed over the next two years, placing communities at the heart of Mizoram's tourism growth.

"Infrastructure is only meaningful when it creates livelihoods. Every ropeway, eco-resort and homestay is designed to generate local employment and retain tourism revenue within villages," the Director said.

A key pillar of Mizoram's destination strategy is the Aizawl International Half Marathon (AIHM) 2026, which is scheduled for February 14, 2026, at Rajiv Gandhi Stadium.

After a successful debut in 2025 with 1,500 runners, the second edition is expected to attract around 5,000 national and international participants, further strengthening Aizawl's presence on India's sports tourism map.

"AIHM is designed as a destination event, not just a race," said Captain Rahul Bali, MD, Innovations India and Curator, AIHM.

"Our team is executing a national outreach strategy, route optimisation, athlete engagement programmes and digital campaigns to make AIHM a benchmark sporting event in Northeast India. Every runner becomes a brand ambassador for Mizoram," he further said.

## BLO is foundational pillar for electoral democracy: CEC Gyanesh Kumar



NEW DELHI

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar on Wednesday emphasised that the Booth Level Officer (BLO) serves as the foundational pillar of India's electoral democracy.

He addressed the inaugural session of the Indian International Conference on Democracy and Election Management 2026 (IICDEM-2026) at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi.

Speaking at the event, CEC took delegates through India's electoral journey, explaining how Indian elections have become the largest democratic exercise on the planet.

"Each polling booth in India has roughly 970 electors, and the responsibility of the electors, and ensuring that all eligible electors are included in the electoral roll, is vested with the Booth Level Officers (BLOs). A BLO is the foundational pillar for the electoral democracy in India," CEC said.

"Last year's Lok Sabha elections saw more than 640 million people exercise their franchise across more than a

million polling stations, with roughly two crore people involved in this exercise," he added.

According to the Constitution, Indian elections are divided into two broad segments, preparation of electoral rolls and the conduct of elections. Kumar stressed that pure electoral rolls, including every eligible elector as per law, are essential to strengthening democracy.

Citing Bihar's recent elections as an example of electoral efficiency, the CEC noted that "Bihar went into elections recently. The first step was the purification of electoral rolls, including eligible electors. With the efficiency of the Booth Level Officers, the Electoral Registration Officers, and the Chief Election Officer of Bihar, out of 75 million electors, the number of appeals were zero. Amidst tight public scrutiny and the watch of all citizens in Bihar and across the country, the electoral rolls were finalised, and then the elections were held," CEC explained.

IICDEM-2026 marks the largest conference of its kind ever hosted by India in

democracy and election management. Nearly 100 delegates from around 70 countries are participating in the three-day conference, which commenced today.

The conference was attended by nearly 1,000 persons, including delegates from 42 Election Management Bodies (EMBs), Ambassadors and High Commissioners of 27 countries, experts from over 70 national institutions, senior ECI officers, and 36 Chief Electoral Officers from across India.

Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi also addressed the gathering. Sandhu emphasised that "at the heart of every election is a citizen, believing that their choice will be respected," while Joshi highlighted how IICDEM-2026 brings together diverse perspectives on electoral processes.

DG IICDEM Rakesh Verma explained that the theme for India's chairship, "democracy for an inclusive, peaceful, resilient and sustainable world", reflects a comprehensive understanding of democracy's role in the 21st century.

## Amit Shah hails Gita Press as 'indispensable' pillar of Indian culture, Sanatan Dharma

DEHRADUN

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday delivered a powerful tribute to the esteemed Gita Press, describing it as an "indispensable institution" for anyone who values Indian culture and follows Sanatan Dharma.

Speaking at an event in Rishikesh after the release of the centenary edition of Gita Press's monthly magazine Kalyan, Shah underscored the organisation's crucial role in safeguarding and propagating India's spiritual heritage for nearly a century.

"No person in India or the world who has expectations from Sanatan Dharma, who looks towards Indian culture for solutions to the world's problems, and who loves this land can possibly remain unaware of Gita Press," Shah said, emphasising its national significance.

The Home Minister linked the cultural resurgence sweeping the country to the trajectory set by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership and cited several milestones as evidence of this renewed national vigour.

"After 550 years, a towering temple of Lord Ram has been built in Ayodhya," Shah said, drawing applause. He added that the restoration of historic sites reaffirmed national pride. "The Kashi Vishwanath Corridor, destroyed by Aurangzeb, sends a message to the entire world that the power of faith is far greater than those who seek to destroy it," he said.

In a major announcement, Shah said the Government of India will observe the entire upcoming year as Somnath Swabhiman Varsh (Somnath



Self-Respect Year), marking 1,000 years since the destruction of the revered Somnath Temple.

"Somnath was destroyed 16 times and rebuilt 16 times. Those who destroyed it have all vanished, but the eternal flag of Somnath still flies high today," he asserted, highlighting the resilience of the Hindu faith.

The minister also listed other cultural recoveries, including the abrogation of Article 370, the construction of the Mahakaleshwar Corridor, and the revival of the Kedarnath shrine. He noted that work is underway

to revive over 35 pilgrimage sites across the country, along with the repatriation of more than 642 stolen idols.

Turning his focus back to Gita Press, Shah paid tribute to its founder, Hanuman Prasad Poddar, noting that for nearly 103 years he had strengthened the foundations of Sanatan Dharma.

"Poddar Ji renounced everything and dedicated his entire life to Gita Press," Shah said. "Through Gita Press, he instilled unwavering faith and reverence for Indian culture in the hearts of individuals and families."

Shah stressed that Gita

Press operates not for profit but for nation-building. He lauded the Kalyan magazine, saying it has served as a spiritual compass and kept "the lamp of Indian culture burning through every crisis."

Concluding his address, Shah highlighted the depth of the literature disseminated by the publication. "In its 1932 issue, Kalyan presented Lord Shri Krishna as a great personality - a politician, a philosopher and the destroyer of all evil," he said.

Earlier in the day, the Home Minister visited the Lakshminarayan Temple and offered prayers to Maa Ganga.

## INTERNATIONAL

### Trump backs down on Greenland and cancels tariff threat after NATO agrees to future Arctic deal

DAVOS

President Donald Trump on Wednesday scrapped the tariffs that he threatened to impose on eight European nations to press for U.S. control over Greenland, pulling a dramatic reversal shortly after insisting he wanted to get the island "including right, title and ownership."

In a post on his social media site, Trump said he had agreed with the head of NATO on a "framework of a future deal" on Arctic security, potentially defusing tension that had far-reaching geopolitical implications.

He said "additional discussions" on Greenland were being held concerning the Golden Dome missile defense program, a multilayered, \$175 billion system that for the first time will put U.S. weapons in space.

Trump offered few details, saying they were still being worked out. But one idea NATO members have discussed as part of a compromise with Trump was that Denmark and the alliance would work with the U.S. to build more U.S. military bases on Greenland. That's according to a European official familiar with the matter but not authorized to comment publicly. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said it was not immediately clear if that idea was included in the framework Trump announced. The president has threatened tariffs before only to back away. In April, after first saying he would slap massive import levies on nations from around the world, which prompted a sharp negative market reaction, Trump eased off.

But his change of heart this time came only after he used his speech at the World Economic Forum in the Swiss Alps to focus on Greenland and threatened to upend NATO, an alliance that has been among the globe's most unshakable since the early days of the Cold War.



In his address, Trump said he was asking for territory that was "cold and poorly located" and that the U.S. had effectively saved Europe during World War II while declaring of NATO: "It's a very small ask compared to what we have given them for many, many decades."

"We probably won't get anything unless I decide to use excessive strength and force, where we would be frankly unstoppable. But I won't do that, OK?" Trump said.

But Trump has also said repeatedly that, while the U.S. will defend NATO, he wasn't convinced the alliance will backup Washington, if needed, and suggested that was at least part of the reason for his aggressive stance toward Greenland. That prompted NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, in a post-speech event with Trump, to say that the alliance would stand with the U.S. if it is attacked. "You can be assured, absolutely," Rutte said. A short time later came Trump's post canceling the tariffs.

Danish Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen said he welcomed Trump ruling out taking "Greenland by force" and pausing "the trade war with Europe."

"Now, let's sit down and find out

how we can address the American security concerns in the Arctic while respecting the red lines of the Kingdom of Denmark," he said in a statement.

Trump argues that the U.S. needs Greenland for national security and to counter threats from Russia and China in the Arctic region, despite America already having a large military base there. He threatened to impose steep U.S. import taxes on Denmark and seven other allies unless they negotiate a transfer of the semi-autonomous territory.

The tariffs were to have started at 10% next month and climb to 25% in June. Trump often tries to increase pressure on the other side when he believes it can lead to a favorable agreement. His threats at Davos appeared on the verge of rupturing NATO, which was founded by leading European nations, the U.S. and Canada to counter the Soviet Union.

The alliance's other members were steadfast in saying Greenland is not for sale and cannot be wrested from Denmark, while angrily rejecting Trump's promised tariffs.

A Danish government official told The Associated Press after Trump's speech that Copenhagen was ready to discuss U.S. security concerns. But

the official, who was not authorized to comment publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity, underscored the government's position that "red lines" — namely Denmark's sovereignty — must be respected.

It was not immediately clear how Trump's canceling of tariffs might change such calculations.

In the meantime, Greenland's government responded by telling its citizens to be prepared. It has published a handbook in English and Greenlandic on what to do in a crisis that urges residents to ensure they have sufficient food, water, fuel and supplies at home to survive for five days. "We just went to the grocery store and bought the supplies," said Tony Jakobsen in Greenland's capital Nuuk said, showing off the contents of bags that included candles, snacks and toilet paper. Jakobsen said he thought Trump's rhetoric towards Greenland was "just threats... but it's better to be ready than not ready."

Before backing down, Trump had urged Denmark and the rest of NATO to stand aside, adding an ominous warning. "We want a piece of ice for world protection, and they won't give it," Trump said. "You can say yes, and we will be very appreciative. Or you can say no, and we will remember."

He also called for opening "immediate negotiations" for the U.S. to acquire Greenland. In subsequent comments to reporters, he declined to name a price that might be paid, saying only, "There's a bigger price, and that's the price of safety and security and national security and international security." His arrival in Davos was delayed after a minor electrical problem on Air Force One forced a return to Washington to switch aircraft. As Trump's motorcade headed down a narrow road to the speech site, onlookers — including some skiers — lined the route, some making obscene gestures.

## Campaigning starts for Bangladesh's first national election after Hasina's ouster

DHAKA

Campaigning began Thursday for Bangladesh's first national elections since the 2024 uprising that ousted longtime Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The major political parties held campaign rallies in the capital, Dhaka, and elsewhere ahead of Feb. 12 election, which is seen as the most consequential in Bangladesh's history as it follows Hasina's ouster and is being held under an interim government with voters also deciding on proposed political reforms.

The interim government led by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus has pledged to hold a free and fair election, but questions were raised after his administration banned Hasina's former ruling Awami League party. The Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party have historically dominated the country's electorate.

There are also concerns about the country's law and order situation, but the government says they will keep the voting peaceful.

Yunus assumed office three days after Hasina left the country for India on Aug. 5, 2024, following the deaths of hundreds of protesters and others in a violent crackdown.

With the Awami League excluded from the election, a 10-party alliance led by Jamaat-e-Islami, an Islamist party, is seeking to expand its influence. Jamaat-e-Islami has long faced criticism from secular groups who say its positions challenge Bangladesh's secular foundations. A new party formed by student leaders of the uprising, the National Citizen Party, or NCP, is also part of the alliance.

Head of Bangladesh's interim government Muhammad Yunus, center, with Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami party leader Ameer Shafiqur Rahman, inaugurate the July Uprising



Memorial Museum, once the official residence of Bangladesh's ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2026.

Tarique Rahman, BNP chairman and the son of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, is widely seen as a leading contender for prime minister. His party has drawn strong support rooted in the political legacy of his mother, who died last month. Rahman returned to Bangladesh last month after 17 years in exile in the United Kingdom.

Rahman is launching his campaign in the northwestern city of Sylhet with an address to a rally later Thursday and is scheduled to visit several other districts in the coming days.

The election will also include a referendum on a national charter, with the interim government seeking campaigning for voters to support what it describes as a new political course built

on reforms. The charter was signed last year by 25 of the country's 52 registered political parties. The Awami League opposed the idea and several other parties declined to sign the document.

The July National Charter, named after the uprising that began in July 2024 and led to the fall of Hasina, is currently nonbinding, but the supporters of the charter say a referendum is needed to make it legally binding and a part of the constitution. Only Parliament can change the constitution in Bangladesh.

The interim government says the charter would bring more checks and balances to avoid authoritarian administrations, including by giving the presidency more authority to balance what had been a powerful prime minister position. It also proposes term limits for legislators, and measures to prevent conflicts of interest, money laundering and corruption.

## Assam Steps Onto the Global Stage: From Regional Periphery to Investment Contender

For decades, Assam has existed on the margins of India's economic imagination. Renowned for its tea gardens, mighty rivers and cultural diversity, the state has more often been associated with narratives of insurgency, floods, migration pressures and developmental lag than with opportunity and ambition. That long-standing perception, however, is undergoing a deliberate and data-backed transformation. Assam's appearance at the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting in Davos in January 2026 marked a defining moment in this shift - one that signalled the state's intent to move from the periphery of national growth to the centre of global economic conversations.

When Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma presented Assam before global investors and policymakers at Davos, it was not merely a symbolic debut. It was the first time the state articulated its economic story on one of the world's most influential platforms, backed by measurable progress, sector-specific strategies and a long-term vision of inclusive growth. In doing so, Assam sought to redefine how it is perceived - not as a region catching up, but as one ready to compete, collaborate and contribute to global value chains.

Growth anchored in numbers, not rhetoric

Assam's pitch at Davos drew credibility from hard economic data. Over the past five years, the state has consistently recorded annual GDP growth rates in the range of 11-13 per cent, outpacing the national average. Its Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) expanded from approximately ₹3.4 lakh crore in 2020 to over ₹5 lakh crore in 2025 - a significant jump that reflects a combination of industrial diversification, expansion of the services sector and targeted public investment in infrastructure.

Equally significant has been the state's improving fiscal position. Assam's own tax revenue has crossed ₹25,000 crore annually, providing the government with greater autonomy to fund capital expenditure and social development simultaneously. Improved fiscal discipline has allowed the state to increase spending on roads, bridges, power and education without compromising macroeconomic stability. This financial maturity formed the backbone of Assam's global outreach, reassuring investors that the state has the institutional capacity to sustain large-scale projects.

A focused investment roadmap  
At Davos, Assam did not present a generic investment pitch. Instead, it outlined a clear roadmap centred on sectors where the state's natural advantages intersect with global investment trends.

Renewable energy emerged as a cornerstone of this strategy. Assam has an estimated renewable potential of nearly 10,000 MW across hydroelectric and solar sources. Projects worth around ₹12,000 crore are already under



various stages of implementation, while the state is seeking to attract an additional ₹25,000-₹30,000 crore from international energy firms. Solar parks, small hydro projects and pumped storage initiatives are being positioned as long-term assets aligned with global decarbonisation goals.

Another pillar of Assam's global pitch was semiconductors and electronics manufacturing. The proposed greenfield semiconductor facility at Jagiroad, with an investment size of around ₹27,000 crore, represents a strategic leap for the state. Expected to generate over 27,000 direct and indirect jobs, the project places Assam within India's broader ambition of building a resilient semiconductor ecosystem. For a region traditionally absent from high-technology manufacturing, this marks a fundamental shift in industrial identity.

Assam also highlighted the potential of its bamboo-based bioeconomy. With nearly 10 lakh hectares of commercially viable bamboo - among the largest concentrations in the world - the state is exploring its conversion into methanol, biofuels and industrial materials. Investment targets of around ₹5,000 crore over the next three years aim to turn bamboo into a driver of rural industrialisation, linking sustainability with livelihoods.

In tourism and hospitality, Assam positioned itself as a destination where ecology, culture and infrastructure converge. With Kaziranga and Manas national parks, the river island of Majuli and a growing circuit of eco-tourism destinations, the state is targeting ₹10,000 crore in tourism infrastructure investment. The sector has the potential to generate over 50,000 direct and indirect jobs, particularly benefiting local communities through hospitality, transport and cultural enterprises.

Building on domestic momentum  
Assam's Davos outreach did not begin in isolation. It built upon the momentum generated by the Advantage Assam 2.0 Investment and Infrastructure Summit held in 2025, which secured memoranda of understanding worth nearly ₹5 lakh crore. Importantly, around ₹3 lakh crore of these commitments are already moving into various stages of implementation.

These include major road expansion projects in North Assam, new hydroelectric plants, industrial parks and the establishment of a dedicated skill development univer-

sity with the capacity to train over 5,000 youths annually. Such progress has helped address a common scepticism surrounding investment summits - that MoUs often remain on paper. By showcasing projects already under execution, Assam strengthened its case that it can convert intent into outcomes.

Geostrategic relevance and demographic advantage

Davos also provided Assam an opportunity to articulate its geostrategic significance. As India's gateway to the Northeast and Southeast Asia, the state occupies a critical logistical position. The Brahmaputra river, expanding national highway networks and inland waterways offer multi-modal connectivity that can support trade, manufacturing and cross-border commerce.

This strategic location is complemented by a demographic advantage. Over the next five years, nearly three million young people are expected to enter Assam's workforce. For investors, this represents a sizeable labour pool that can be integrated into manufacturing, energy and service sectors - provided skilling and employment pathways are aligned. Assam's leadership used this narrative to present the state as both resource-rich and human-capital ready.

Aligning with global investment priorities

Assam's sectoral focus reflects a conscious alignment with global capital flows. Renewable energy, semiconductors and sustainable tourism are among the most sought-after investment domains worldwide, driven by climate commitments, supply-chain diversification and changing consumer preferences. By positioning itself in these spaces, Assam demonstrated strategic foresight - connecting local strengths such as natural resources and geography with global technological and environmental priorities.

Crucially, the state framed its growth story within the language of sustainability. Bamboo-based industries, green energy projects and eco-tourism were presented not merely as revenue generators, but as pathways to balanced development that minimise ecological costs while maximising social returns.

Inclusive growth as a central theme  
Beyond infrastructure and industry, Assam's Davos narrative emphasised inclusion. Workforce development programmes aim to train nearly 50,000 professionals

annually across renewable energy, electronics, manufacturing and IT sectors. Startup incubation centres in Guwahati and Silchar are projected to nurture around 1,000 viable ventures over the next three years, creating a pipeline of local entrepreneurship.

This focus reflects an understanding that growth measured only in investment volumes can deepen inequality if not accompanied by skills, jobs and local participation. Assam's leadership sought to underline that its development model aims to uplift communities, not just attract capital.

The implementation challenge

Yet, Davos also cast a spotlight on Assam's most critical challenge: execution. Global forums generate visibility, but their real value lies in on-ground delivery. National experience suggests that only 60-70 per cent of large MoUs translate into fully operational projects. For Assam, the credibility of its global debut will depend on whether factories become functional, energy projects come online, tourism circuits are completed and employment materialises at scale.

This places a premium on governance, institutional coordination and regulatory efficiency. Without sustained follow-through, the promise of Davos risks remaining symbolic rather than transformative.

Rewriting Assam's narrative

Symbolism, however, still matters. For years, Assam's image has been shaped by crises and constraints. Davos offered a counter-narrative - of a state capable of long-term planning, policy innovation and confident global engagement. The discourse shifted from marginalisation to possibility, from dependency to strategic agency.

Assam's economic ambitions are undeniably bold. By 2030, the state aims to double its GSDP, create over 200,000 new jobs across manufacturing, energy and tourism, and establish itself as a regional hub for high-technology investment. Achieving these targets would not only transform Assam's economy, but also reduce regional disparities and strengthen India's eastern growth corridor.

From global ??? to local impact

Ultimately, the true test of Assam's Davos moment will not be measured in speeches or Alpine photographs. It will be measured in villages and towns across the state - in whether young people find meaningful employment, whether infrastructure upgrades reach rural areas, and whether growth becomes resilient and inclusive.

Assam's entry onto the global stage is a milestone, not a destination. It represents ambition grounded in data, optimism tempered by responsibility, and a recognition that global engagement must translate into local prosperity.

By combining strategic sectoral focus, fiscal discipline, human capital investment and infrastructural expansion, Assam has signalled that it is ready to move from the margins to the mainstream of India's growth story. Davos was both a declaration of intent and a blueprint for the coming decade. The real victory will lie in converting that intent into sustained, equitable and visible transformation - ensuring that Assam's global moment delivers lasting benefits at home.

### SPACE FOR YOU ONLY

Rs. 150/- per day

#### PLACEMENT

Fresher, job seekers can register with KRC Placements. Send resume to - 5eforsuccess@gmail.com To source candidates, organisation can contact KRC Placements at info@krccfoundation.org For Details Visit: <https://bit.ly/krccplacements> Apply here: <https://bit.ly/KRCPlacementForm>

#### VOLUNTEERS REGISTERS @ NEIR 2026

We are looking for volunteers across NE & West Bengal Interested candidates (College students, youths) can register at [https://northeastintegrationrally.in/Volunteer\\_Registration.aspx](https://northeastintegrationrally.in/Volunteer_Registration.aspx), send an email: [neintegrationrally@gmail.com](mailto:neintegrationrally@gmail.com)

#### BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Business establishments, educational institutions, individual service providers etc. can enlist themselves or advertise their products or services at the most reasonable cost in InfoCom Diary. Send your details to [InfoComSolutions@krccfoundation.org](mailto:InfoComSolutions@krccfoundation.org) Submit Here: <https://bit.ly/InfoComDiaryForm>

#### STUDENTS' INTERNSHIP

Students can apply for a three-months internship with KRC Foundation. During the internship the student can get an opportunity to work on a live project. On successful completion the student is awarded a certificate. Apply to 5E for Success: [5eforsuccess@gmail.com](mailto:5eforsuccess@gmail.com) For Details Visit: <https://bit.ly/krccstudentinternship> or [www.krccfoundation.org/products-services/training-development-5e-for-success/internship](http://www.krccfoundation.org/products-services/training-development-5e-for-success/internship)

#### NE INDIA WRITING STAR CONTEST

Participate in NE India Writing Star Contest and get your writings published. Eligibility: From Class VI onwards. Each participant receives a digital participation certificate. Send articles at: [info@krccfoundation.org](mailto:info@krccfoundation.org) For Details Visit: <https://bit.ly/NEIndiaWritingStarContest> [www.krccfoundation.org/campaigns-csr/ne-india-writing-star-contest](http://www.krccfoundation.org/campaigns-csr/ne-india-writing-star-contest)

#### CONNECT@ KRC TIMES



#### KRC TIMES

To engage with KRC TIMES, please use the following e-mails and WhatsApp Nos: For News: [krctimes@gmail.com](mailto:krctimes@gmail.com) / WP: 8721838313 For Advertisement: [info@krccfoundation.org](mailto:info@krccfoundation.org) / WP: 9330830083 For Subscription: [krctimes@gmail.com](mailto:krctimes@gmail.com) / WP: 8721838313 Editor: [biswadeep.gupta@krccfoundation.org](mailto:biswadeep.gupta@krccfoundation.org) / WP: 8721838313

**Brain VISION**  
KRC Shaping Careers For a Successful Tomorrow

Life shrinks or expands according to one's courage.

# WHY NORTHEAST INDIA MATTERS MORE THAN WE THINK



**N**ortheast India is often talked about as a far corner of the country. A place seen from far away. Many people know little about it. Some only know the names of states. Some know nothing at all. This is unfair. The Northeast is not a side note. It is a core part of India's past, present, and future.

The region has eight states. Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim. Each one is different. Different land. Different people. Different stories. Yet they are tied together by history, culture, and shared struggles.

First, geography. The Northeast is India's gateway to Southeast Asia. It shares borders with Bhutan, China, Myanmar, and Bangladesh. This makes it very important. Not just for maps. But for trade, travel, and security. Roads, railways, and rivers here connect India to the larger Asian world. If India wants to look east, the Northeast is the door.

Rivers shape this land. The Brahmaputra is not just a river. It is life. It feeds farms. It carries boats. It shapes towns and villages. It also brings floods. People here live with nature closely. They respect it. They fear it too. This deep bond with land is something modern India can learn from.

The Northeast is rich in natural resources. Oil, gas, coal, limestone, forests, and water. But more than that, it has clean air, green hills, and vast biodiversity. Rare plants. Rare animals. Some found nowhere else in the world. In a time of climate worry, this region matters a lot. It can teach balance. How to live without destroying everything.

Culture is another big strength. The Northeast is one of the most diverse parts of India. Hundreds of tribes. Many languages. Many faiths. Music, dance, food, dress. All unique. Yet there is harmony in daily life. People grow up respecting difference. This is real unity. Not forced. Not loud.

Festivals here are not just events.

They are living traditions. Bihu in Assam. Hornbill in Nagaland. Losar in Sikkim. Chapchar Kut in Mizoram. These festivals show joy, history, and community. They remind us that India is not one colour. It is many colours together.

The region also has a strong sporting spirit. Football fields fill up in small towns. Boxing rings produce champions. Archery, weightlifting, athletics. The Northeast has given India many national and international players. Sports here are not luxury. They are part of life.

But the story is not only bright. The Northeast has faced neglect for decades. Poor roads. Slow development. Limited jobs. Long conflicts. Many young people feel left out of the national dream. This pain is real. It must be acknowledged.

Insurgency and unrest did not come from nowhere. They grew from broken promises and lack of trust. In recent years, things are changing. Peace talks. New projects. Better links. More attention. But trust takes time. Development must be honest.

Not just big announcements.

Education is growing. Universities, institutes, and schools are coming up. Young writers, filmmakers, musicians, and entrepreneurs are rising. They tell their own stories now. On their own terms.

This is important. The Northeast does not want sympathy. It wants respect and space.

The region also plays a key role in India's Act East Policy. Trade with ASEAN countries depends on strong Northeast connectivity. Border towns can become hubs of business and culture. This can change local lives. If done carefully.

Most of all, the Northeast matters because of its people. Warm, resilient, proud. They carry heavy histories but still smile easily. They protect identity while welcoming others. This balance is rare.

India cannot be complete without the Northeast. Not in spirit. Not in strength. Not in future plans. The region is not distant. It is central. We just need to look again. Look closer. And listen better.



## 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.  
 Schools, Colleges, University Department, Individual & Group Competition.



**11 JAN**  
**Adventure Sports**  
 Trekking & Canoe, Obstacle Navigation, Sport Climbing, Disaster Management Technique, Water Sports.  
[www.krcfoundation.org](http://www.krcfoundation.org)



**11 JAN**  
**Barak Valley Conclave**  
 Potential Issues and Challenges of Barak Valley by different stakeholders.  
 Includes: MOU, and 20 general discussion session for development, awareness, awareness, awareness, and awareness.  
 Participation through invitation only. Different rewards are provided.



**12 JAN**  
**River-Climate Conclave**  
 Climate change will influence on Climate Change, pollution and river flooding. The Conclave will focus on the importance, technical and protection of River Barak. Training & Geography competitive and certification. River Barak, Climate Change.

**JAN'25**  
**Online Global Fest**  
 All can participate online and send a video clip on Poems, Songs, and Dance. Present in Assamese, Bengali, English, Hindi & Manipuri. Last Date: 31st December 2024.



**BROADCAST PARTNER**



**REGISTER HERE**

Contact: [info@krcfoundation.org](mailto:info@krcfoundation.org)  
 WP: 0721300019



**10 JAN**  
**Media Conclave**  
 Media Conclave: Media Conclave, Workshops, and the Fund, Talks and Conferences are part of the 'Barak Festival 2025'. Theme: 'One for All, All for One'.  
 Media Conclave: Media Conclave, Workshops, and the Fund, Talks and Conferences are part of the 'Barak Festival 2025'. Theme: 'One for All, All for One'.  
 Media Conclave: Media Conclave, Workshops, and the Fund, Talks and Conferences are part of the 'Barak Festival 2025'. Theme: 'One for All, All for One'.



**PAINTING CARNIVAL**  
**NE CULTURAL FEST**  
**E-SPORTS**

**FILM FESTIVAL | EXHIBITION**  
 BOOK CLUB | AWARDS | BOOK | NEW BARRAK | RECORDS

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

**10 JAN**  
**Media Conclave**  
 Media Conclave: Media Conclave, Workshops, and the Fund, Talks and Conferences are part of the 'Barak Festival 2025'. Theme: 'One for All, All for One'.  
 Media Conclave: Media Conclave, Workshops, and the Fund, Talks and Conferences are part of the 'Barak Festival 2025'. Theme: 'One for All, All for One'.



**PAINTING CARNIVAL**  
**NE CULTURAL FEST**  
**E-SPORTS**

**FILM FESTIVAL | EXHIBITION**  
 BOOK CLUB | AWARDS | BOOK | NEW BARRAK | RECORDS

**10-12 JAN**  
**Science Studio**  
 Real a glimpse of Science to its new heights. Class VI-XI | Teachers | Seniors, Administrators | Parents.  
**Raw science out of textbooks into real-life experiences of students.**

**DEC'24-JAN'25**  
**Photography**  
 Online Photography Contest: River Barak | NE India | Art & Culture of NE | NE Culture.  
 Real-Time Photography Contest of 'Barak Festival 2025'.



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

Contact: [info@krcfoundation.org](mailto:info@krcfoundation.org)  
 WP: 0721300019

**10-12 JAN**  
**E-Sports**  
 Full featured tournaments | CASH PRIZES | Trophy



**11 JAN**  
**film festival**  
 Award-Giving Ceremony | Film from Mizoram. Short Films from Barak Valley, NE India, W's. Media Talk | Exhibitions | Meet & Greet.



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

Contact: [info@krcfoundation.org](mailto:info@krcfoundation.org)  
 WP: 0721300019

**10-12 JAN**  
**Book Bank**  
 #NoLike Campaign | Book Bank | e-books | reuse | recycle

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

**Painting Carnival**  
 Water Colour painting and Draw-Paint Campaign

**10-12 JAN**  
**Book Bank**  
 #NoLike Campaign | Book Bank | e-books | reuse | recycle

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

**Painting Carnival**  
 Water Colour painting and Draw-Paint Campaign



**STUDENT INTERNSHIP**  
 Discover valuable experience and learn more about the industry.

**applies**

- Outreach Executive
- Event Management
- Programme Coordinator

**APPLY NOW** | WP: 0721300019 | [www.krcfoundation.org](http://www.krcfoundation.org)