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PERSPECTIVE
When you can't find the sunshine, be the sunshine.

Ahead of TTAADC elections, Amit Shah likely to visit Tripura on February 20

AGARTALA

Union Home Minister Amit Shah is likely to visit Tripura on February 20, ahead of the upcoming elections to the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC), according to sources in the state BJP.

Highly placed party sources said Shah is expected to undertake a one-day visit to the state, a move being seen as politically significant in the run-up to the council polls.

"Although the final itinerary is yet to be officially communicated, we have learnt that Amit Shah will be arriving in Tripura on February 20," a senior BJP leader said.

During the visit, the Union Home Minister is likely to attend a government programme showcasing key development initiatives undertaken by the Centre in Tripura. He is also expected to hold a closed-door meeting with the BJP's state leadership to review organisational matters and discuss campaign strategies for the forthcoming TTAADC elections.

Party leaders said Shah's visit is expected to provide a boost to the BJP's election preparations, particularly in tribal-dominated areas that form the core of the autonomous council region. His presence is seen as an effort to energise party workers and sharpen outreach efforts ahead of the high-stakes polls.

The TTAADC elections are being closely watched, as they are expected to shape the political landscape in Tripura's tribal areas and serve as an important test for the BJP's influence in the region.

WHO SAID WHAT

SpaceX will build a system that allows anyone to travel to Moon. This will so insanely cool

~ Elon Musk, American Entrepreneur

HSLC exams begin across Assam with over 4.38 lakh candidates; minor glitches reported on Day 1

GUWAHATI

The High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) examinations began across Assam on Tuesday, with 4,38,565 candidates appearing at 1,046 examination centres statewide, officials said.

According to the State Board of School Education, Assam, a total of 1,90,243 boys and 2,48,322 girls have registered for this year's matriculation examinations. The exams will continue until February 27, after which answer scripts will be evaluated by 45 evaluation boards.

The first day of examinations concluded at 12 noon and was largely peaceful, though isolated issues were reported from Sipajhar in Darrang district and Gauripur in Dhubri district.

At the Gorukhuti Higher Secondary School examination centre in Sipajhar, question papers reportedly failed to reach the centre even after 9 am, triggering anxiety among students and teachers. Following the delay, school authorities approached the Sipajhar police station seeking immediate intervention.

A police official present at the venue said the situation was being closely monitored. "We are reviewing the matter and taking necessary steps. The question papers were on the way from the board office. If any lapse or wrongdoing is found, appropriate action will



be taken," the official said. Authorities later confirmed that the issue was resolved and the examination was conducted.

In Gauripur town of Dhubri district, a student reportedly faced difficulty due to the non-receipt of an admit card. Atifil Islam, a student of Gauripur PC Institute School, said



he had completed the registration process but did not receive his admit card in time. "I applied for registration for the examination, but I have not received my admit card yet. Because of this, I am facing serious problems," he said, expressing concern along with his parents. Education officials said the matter was under

IMPHAL

The Manipur government on Tuesday ordered a five-day suspension of internet and data services across Ukhrul district, citing concerns that social media platforms could be misused to incite unrest amid a volatile law and order situation.

According to an official order issued by the Home Department, the decision was taken after a review of the prevailing situation in the hill district and its possible linkage with the unrestricted operation of internet services. The government said there was a serious apprehension that anti-social elements could exploit social media to circulate images, posts and video messages capable of inflaming public sentiment, potentially leading to loss of life, damage to property and widespread disturbance to public tranquillity and communal harmony.

The order, dated February 10, 2026, warned that inflammatory content and false rumours could

be transmitted through social media platforms, messaging services, SMS and dongle-based internet connections, further aggravating the situation on the ground. In view of these concerns, the government decided to temporarily sus-

pend and curb internet and data services, including broadband, VPN and VSAT facilities, across the entire revenue jurisdiction of Ukhrul district.

Invoking powers under Rule 3 of the Temporary Suspension of Tele-

communication Services Rules, 2024, the Governor of Manipur ordered the suspension with effect from 11.30 am on February 10. The restrictions will remain in force for five days as a preventive and precautionary measure, the order said. All internet service providers operating in the state have been directed to ensure strict compliance with the order. The government cautioned that any violation of the suspension directive would invite legal action. Given the emergent nature of the situation, the order was issued ex parte and directed to be widely disseminated through print and electronic media for public information.

The internet shutdown follows a formal request by Ukhrul District Magistrate Ashish Das, IAS, who wrote to the Commissioner (Home), Government of Manipur, seeking immediate suspension of internet services in the district. In his communication, the district magistrate referred to recent developments that had resulted in significant disturbances, posing a

serious threat to public safety and peace. He said a temporary suspension of internet services was imperative to prevent the spread of misinformation that could further escalate tensions.

The Home Department order was signed by N. Ashok Kumar, Commissioner-cum-Secretary (Home), Government of Manipur, and copies were forwarded to senior officials, including the Director General of Police, heads of the telecom and IT departments, and nodal officers of mobile and internet service providers for immediate implementation.

Ukhrul, a sensitive hill district in Manipur, has witnessed periodic tensions in the past, with authorities often citing the role of social media in amplifying rumours during episodes of unrest. The latest shutdown once again highlights the state's reliance on internet suspensions as a law-and-order measure, even as such actions continue to draw debate over their impact on daily life, access to information and essential services.

Congress protests in Dispur, targets Assam CM over alleged asset buildup

GUWAHATI

Escalating its offensive against Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) on Tuesday staged a protest at the Manabendra Sharma complex in Dispur, accusing the BJP-led state government of failing to ensure transparency and accountability.

Raising questions over the Chief Minister's alleged accumulation of assets and recent controversial social media content linked to the ruling party, Congress leaders and workers took to the streets, demanding clarification on what they described as unexplained growth in Sarma's personal wealth after entering electoral politics.

At the centre of the protest were allegations that the Chief Minister owns large tracts of land, with demonstrators seeking answers to claims that Sarma allegedly possesses "12,000 bighas of land". The Opposition argued that the public has a right to know how such assets were acquired, particularly after Sarma became an elected representative.

Congress leaders also referred to the Chief Minister's family background, alleging that before his political career, his wife Riniki Bhuyan lived in a rented house, and questioned how the family's financial position and influence had expanded over the years.

"If the Chief Minister is a public figure, how can he allegedly possess 12,000 bighas of land? On one hand, the government claims to have distributed benefits to lakhs of people through various schemes, while on the other, common citizens are drowning in debt," Assam Mahila

Congress chief Mira Borthakur said while addressing protesters.

Some demonstrators alleged that government welfare schemes had failed to meaningfully improve the lives of ordinary families. "Whatever schemes the government announces, families cannot survive on them alone. People are burdened with debt, while the Chief Minister appears focused on acquiring property registered in the names of his wife and children," a protester claimed, also referring to unresolved grievances involving artists such as Zubeen Garg.

Borthakur also targeted individuals close to the Chief Minister, alleging that he was receiving "misguided advice" from his political associates. "I have repeatedly warned the Chief Minister that if he keeps such company, he will continue to be misled. The people surrounding him are opportunists," she said.

The Congress also reacted sharply to a controversial video allegedly circulated from a BJP-linked social media handle, purportedly showing the Chief Minister firing a gun at close range. Party leaders described the content as "dangerous", "undemocratic" and "deeply disturbing", alleging that it set a troubling precedent.

Earlier in the day, the Congress lodged a formal complaint at Dispur Police Station against the BJP, accusing the party of circulating a communally provocative, AI-generated video from the BJP Assam unit's official account on a microblogging platform.

The BJP and the Chief Minister have not issued an immediate response to the allegations raised during the protest.

Meghalaya coal mine blast toll climbs to 30; High Court seeks report in 10 days, warns of independent probe

SHILLONG

The death toll in the coal mine blast in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills district rose to 30 on Tuesday after two more injured workers succumbed to their injuries while undergoing treatment at a hospital in Assam, officials said.

The two victims, identified as Ramchandra Baishnab and Nimaruddin, were residents of Katigorah in Assam's Cachar district and were being treated at Silchar Medical College and Hospital (SMCH). "Two persons injured in the coal mine blast died at SMCH on Monday night," a health department official said.

A day earlier, another injured worker, Raju Tamang (34), had died of severe burn injuries at the North Eastern Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health and Medical Sciences (NEIGRIHMS) in Shillong. Sources said rescue operations at the blast site were called off on Monday evening after the recovery of bodies, bringing the search phase of the operation to an end. Meanwhile, the Meghalaya High Court on Monday expressed serious concern over rampant illegal coal mining in East Jaintia Hills while hearing a suo motu public interest litigation related to the incident. The court warned that accountability would be fixed for continued violations and lapses in enforcement.

A division bench comprising Justice H. S. Thangkhiew and Justice W. Diengdoh directed the state government to submit a detailed report within 10 days on action taken against illegal rat-hole mining in the district. The report is to include details of seizures, arrests made and other enforcement measures.

The bench also asked the government to include information on an earlier incident on January 14, 2026, at Thangsko, where a labourer from Assam had died, noting that the latest blast pointed to repeated violations and the continuation of illegal mining activities at the same location.

Union Budget 2026-27 to boost skills, tourism and MSMEs in Nagaland: Kriti Vardhan Singh

KOHIMA

Nagaland is poised to benefit from targeted investments in education, skill development, tourism and small enterprises under the Union Budget 2026-27, Union Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change and External Affairs Kriti Vardhan Singh said on Monday.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP office in Kohima, Singh said the Budget places emphasis on strengthening professional and skill-based institutions in the state through the establishment of facilities across Tier-1 and Tier-3 categories. He said the initiative is aimed at building local capacity and improving employment opportunities for the youth of Nagaland.

Highlighting the role of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), the minister said the sector would be central to the state's economic empowerment. MSMEs are expected to drive exports, generate employment and support regional development, particularly in smaller and emerging markets such as Nagaland, he added.

Tourism has also been identified as a key focus area for Nagaland and the wider North-East region. Singh said the Budget proposes the development of five major tourism destinations across the North-East, along with a Buddhist Circuit connecting several states in the region. He added that a pilot programme to train 10,000

tourist guides nationwide would further support ecotourism and heritage-based tourism.

Placing the Budget in a broader global context, Singh said the Union Budget 2026-27 reflects the realities of an increasingly multi-polar world, where regional priorities are gaining importance. He said the proposals seek to maintain steady economic growth while strengthening cooperation with like-minded governments.

On trade and security, the minister said proposed Free Trade Agreements would focus on expanding market access while gradually moving towards technology-driven border management systems.

Singh noted that the Budget is anchored around the three 'Kartavyas' outlined by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman - accelerating economic growth, building human capacity and ensuring inclusive development. He said special emphasis has been placed on youth empowerment through measures promoting self-employment and addressing the aspirations of young people.

He further said proposals such as the development of industrial corridors would strengthen infrastructure and support long-term growth. Expressing confidence in the Budget's vision, Singh said the Union Budget 2026-27 would help ensure balanced and inclusive development, with states like Nagaland playing a more active role in India's growth trajectory.

Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma moves court, seeks Rs 500 crore damages from Congress leaders

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday announced that he has initiated defamation proceedings seeking Rs 500 crore in damages against senior Congress leaders Jitendra Singh, Bhupesh Baghel and Gaurav Gogoi, accusing them of making "false, malicious and defamatory" allegations against him at a press conference earlier in the day. In a public statement issued on February 10, Sarma said he has decided to pursue both civil and criminal defamation cases, asserting that the allegations were baseless and deliberately aimed at damaging his personal and political reputation. He said the legal action would formally commence from February 9, 2026. "Today, I have filed a defamation case seeking Rs 500 crore in damages against Congress leaders Jitendra Singh, Bhupesh Baghel and Gaurav Gogoi for making false, malicious and defamatory allegations against me through a press conference," the Chief Minister said. He added that the statements crossed the limits of

acceptable political discourse and warranted a strong legal response. Sarma further said that, apart from the three leaders named in the civil suit, he is also initiating criminal defamation proceedings against Congress leader Debabrata Saikia and others associated with the press conference. According to the Chief Minister, the remarks were made with the intention of misleading the public and tarnishing his image at a politically sensitive time. Maintaining that he has always been open to political criticism, Sarma said he would not tolerate what he described as a coordinated campaign of lies and character assassination. He said those making the allegations would now be required to substantiate their claims before a court of law.

The Congress party, which has intensified its attack on the Chief Minister in recent weeks, is yet to issue an official response to the defamation suit. However, party leaders have consistently maintained that their statements form part of legitimate political scrutiny.



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BUDGET & COMMON MAN

The annual Union Budget has failed to generate excitement among ordinary citizens; their main concern is a potential increase in prices. In contrast, those in the higher social strata pay close attention to what advantages they might gain for their businesses in the coming financial year.

Note some basic facts: the top 10% owning 65% of India's wealth and the top 1% about 40% while the bottom half owning just 6.4%. "Four out of five Indians subsist on less than Rs 200 per day but one subsists on less than Rs 100 a day. Net household financial savings are at a five-decade low of 5.2% while household debt is sharply up to 41% from 35% in 2019," as per opposition Congress recent report on the economy.

During her budget presentation, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman identified three primary kartavyas (duties) for the government: accelerating and sustaining economic growth, addressing aspirations of people, and building capacities by ensuring equitable access to resources for all families, communities, sectors, and regions. While these objectives were articulated in broad terms, a closer look at the budget offered few targeted measures for the common citizen, small-scale farmers, or traders, with a clear emphasis placed on bolstering manufacturing and industrial sectors.

Stakeholders anticipated more definitive announcements on key issues such as comprehensive electrification and affordable housing initiatives. The impact on employment generation remains to be seen as the year progresses. Nonetheless, commendable steps have been taken to promote skill development, support the electronics and IT textiles industries, and enhance value addition in agriculture.

The government has allocated Rs 10,000 crore each for an SME growth fund and container manufacturing over five years. Other initiatives include textile expansion, upgradation, and programmes for weavers and artisans, along with mega textile parks to boost value addition. These efforts aim to create jobs for engineers and skilled technicians, though their impact will only be clear in the next fiscal year.

There has, however, been an emphasis on infrastructure development which includes establishing seven high-speed rail corridors with an allocation of Rs 5000 crore over five years – benefitting mainly the southern states and Maharashtra – and a freight corridor from Dankuni to Surat as well as developing industrial corridors in some cities in Odisha. But the question is why are there just industrial corridors in one state?

In a move at attracting private investment, the capital expenditure outlay has been pegged at Rs 12.2 lakh crore in FY27 against Rs 11.2 lakh crore in the current fiscal with heightened focus on Tier-II and Tier-III cities and temple towns with an outlay which is welcome. But as per reports of 15th Finance Commission, which will end in March, Rs 8000 crore allotted for a performance-based challenge fund to develop eight new cities has remained unutilized in the last five years. Will the government fulfil the promised allocation and ensure states utilize the funds judiciously?

Technology is being prioritised, with AI and robotics highlighted. The second phase of semiconductor manufacturing will receive Rs 10,000 crore, while electronics manufacturing under PLI gets Rs 40,000 crore and new high-tech tool rooms aim to boost capital goods. Mobile phone production increased 146%. Proposed rare earth corridors in southern India and Odisha target import substitution and may generate jobs for engineers and computer scientists.

A five-year Rs 10,000 crore programme has been allocated to the biopharma sector under Biopharma SHAKTI to develop India into a global manufacturing hub. Additionally, a NIMHANS-II in Ranchi focused on mental health and trauma care is proposed, though more centers could be considered. The government's emphasis remains on Ayurveda, with three national institutes and upgraded pharmacies proposed, alongside plans to export Ayurveda products.

In the health sector, while reducing the prices of 17 cancer drugs and easing import restrictions for rare disease treatments, alongside promoting medical tourism, provide some benefits, these measures do not sufficiently address the needs of lower-income segments, who lack access to an adequate healthcare system and must often travel significant distances for specialised care. In a densely populated country such as India, rural and underdeveloped districts require targeted attention, and question remains whether 50-100 specialty hospitals would be established within the next three to five years. Furthermore, the Health Mission's allocation of Rs 39,390 crore towards strengthening primary healthcare, maternal and child health services, and disease control programmes remains significantly below actual requirements.

Although the budget allocation of Rs 1.06 lakh crore represents a 10% increase over the revised estimates for the current financial year, it may appear optimistic. However, it raises questions about whether this amount is truly sufficient to meet the needs of disadvantaged and marginalised groups who lack access to affordable healthcare. As anticipated, the PM Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission was allotted over Rs 64,000 crore.

In the education sector, the plan to establish five university townships in industrial hubs, each with universities, colleges, and skill centres, is notable. While a girls' hostel is proposed in every district, including a college alongside it would have been beneficial. The initiatives for data centre hubs and vocational training are positive steps. Since education is on the concurrent list, the Centre is responsible for providing quality educational facilities in select districts to support disadvantaged students. However, there has been no announcement of increased research grants for universities, and an 8% rise in funding to Rs 1.39 lakh crore for 2025-26 appears insufficient considering market inflation.

Regarding agriculture, the finance minister announced measures aimed at increasing farmers' income, including targeted support for high-value crops in coastal regions and the North-East, with a particular focus on coconuts, sandalwood, cashew, and cocoa. An allocation of Rs 350 crore has been made for this initiative. The importance of fisheries and animal husbandry was also highlighted, given their contribution of 38% to agriculture's gross value added; these sectors are expected to be further developed, although the impact may not extend to small fishery owners.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Innovation is about turning risk into opportunity. ~ Narayan Murthy

Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand and the Weight of Responsibility in Troubled Times

LEADING MANIPUR THROUGH COMPLEX CHALLENGES OF GOVERNANCE, CULTURE, AND PUBLIC TRUST



SANJOO THANGJAM

Yumnam Khemchand's assumption of office as the Chief Minister of Manipur comes at one of the most critical and defining junctures in the State's contemporary history. Manipur today stands at a crossroads marked by deep social fragmentation, prolonged political fatigue, economic uncertainty, institutional stress and a profound yearning for peace and stability. Years of conflict, mistrust and interrupted governance have left visible scars on society. To take charge of governance at such a moment is not merely a political elevation or a ceremonial transition of power; it is an immense moral, administrative, and historical responsibility.

The office he now occupies carries the weight of a wounded State. Expectations are high, patience is thin, and public confidence has been severely tested. In such an environment, leadership is judged not by intent or rhetoric, but by the ability to steady institutions, reassure communities, and act decisively without aggravating existing fault lines. The present moment demands statesmanship rather than routine politics, and courage tempered by restraint rather than impulsive assertion.

Khemchand's elevation to the top executive position was neither accidental nor sudden. It is the outcome of decades of public engagement, organisational experience and sustained navigation of complex social and political terrains. His political journey has unfolded gradually, shaped by exposure to governance at different levels and by long-standing involvement in public life. Becoming Chief Minister at this juncture is not an easy honour; it is a test of leadership under pressure where every decision carries consequences far beyond political arithmetic or party advantage.

Manipur's crisis is not singular in nature. It is layered and multidimensional, involving questions of identity, governance, security, economy, and trust. Any Chief Minister stepping into office today inherits a legacy of unresolved grievances and competing narratives. The challenge before Khemchand is therefore not simply administrative efficiency but the capacity to listen across divides, to act with fairness and to signal clearly that governance will be guided by constitutional values rather than expediency or factional pressure.

Among colleagues and observers, Khemchand is often described as a leader who balances accessibility with discipline. His public conduct reflects a measured blend of firmness and approachability,

a quality that becomes particularly relevant in a society strained by mistrust and polarisation. In times of prolonged crisis, the distance between leaders and the people often widens, breeding suspicion and alienation. For Manipur, the challenge ahead is not governance in its routine sense, but leadership capable of healing, reassuring, and rebuilding confidence among citizens who have endured uncertainty, displacement, and fear.

Leadership in such times also demands emotional intelligence. The Chief Minister must be seen as firm without being rigid, empathetic without appearing weak, and decisive without appearing reckless. These are delicate balances that cannot be achieved through policy announcements alone. They require consistency of conduct, restraint in speech, and a visible commitment to fairness across communities and institutions.

Beyond politics, Khemchand's background reflects sustained engagement with discipline and self-development. His long association with Taekwondo, both as a practitioner and mentor has been widely acknowledged. He has received international recognition in Traditional Taekwondo, reflecting years of perseverance, ethical training and respect for structure and hierarchy. Such discipline-oriented training carries relevance beyond sports. It nurtures patience, self-control, respect for process, and the ability to withstand pressure—qualities indispensable to public leadership in turbulent times.

In a political culture often criticised for impulsiveness and performative aggression, discipline assumes particular importance. The ethos of martial arts emphasises restraint as much as strength, control as much as action. If internalised meaningfully, such training can shape a leadership style that prioritises deliberation over reaction and long-term stability over short-term political gain.

Khemchand has also experienced the realities of entrepreneurship. In his earlier years, he was associated with a business venture at Paona Bazar known as Sang Rock, which became well known for contemporary fashion, music culture, and a youthful aesthetic that stood apart from conventional retail of its time. The enterprise was not merely a commercial activity but a cultural space that resonated with a generation seeking expression and identity in a rapidly changing urban environment.

Along with close family members, the venture engaged with the everyday challenges of trade, workforce management, financial uncertainty, and survival in a competitive urban economy. This exposure to grassroots economic realities offers a perspective often absent in purely career-driven political trajectories. It brings familiarity with the anxieties of small businesses, the fragility of livelihoods, and the impact of instability on ordinary economic life.

His interest in music and contemporary culture was not ornamental or performative, but an extension of how he connected with people across generations. Such engagement matters in a State where youth alienation and frustration remain pressing concerns. A leader who understands cultural currents is better positioned to engage meaningfully with younger citizens not merely as subjects of policy but as stakeholders in the State's future.

In public discourse, Khemchand has occasionally been subjected to mockery for his willingness to dance at public events. Such criticism, however, overlooks the cultural and social context from which he comes. Participation in dance, music and performance has long been an integral part of Manipuri public life and political culture. From local community gatherings to national platforms, cultural expression has often served as a bridge between leaders and the people, softening hierarchies and fostering familiarity rather than distance.

In Manipur, dance is not entertainment alone; it is heritage, identity, and social expression. To participate publicly in cultural performance is often an act of affirmation rather than frivolity. When leaders engage in such practices, they reaffirm shared traditions and signal belonging, reflecting a leadership style that is comfortable in the public gaze and rooted in cultural confidence. It conveys an ease with people, an openness to proximity, and a confidence that does not rely on constant insulation from the public.

Even global leaders, including former US President Barack Obama have participated in cultural performances during public engagements in India and elsewhere. Such moments are commonly interpreted as gestures of respect and openness. Seen in this light, Khemchand's participation in dance is not a lapse in seriousness but an expression of simplicity, accessibility, and trust in the people he serves.

It also quietly reflects a disposition that does not seek excessive separation through layers of security, but one that values presence and connection in public spaces. Far from diminishing authority, such moments humanise leadership, reduce fear-driven distance, and strengthen the emotional bond between leadership and the people.

The Chief Minister is known to the author through extended family association and prior professional interaction, during which he has consistently maintained professional distance and decorum. Such conduct reflects an understanding of boundaries, roles, and institutional propriety. His disciplined public conduct is reinforced by personal influences rooted in the judiciary, law enforcement, and cultural pursuits, alongside his own training as a Taekwondo master.

As Chief Minister, expectations from him are understandably high. People are not seeking rhetoric, symbolism, or carefully worded assurances. They are seeking stability, fairness, and visible action. Governance in the present moment demands clarity of intent, inclusiveness, and the courage to take difficult decisions without inflaming divisions. It requires the ability to resist pressure from competing interests while remaining accountable to democratic principles.

The task before him is formidable. It includes restoring faith in institutions, protecting democratic space, ensuring the safety and dignity of citizens, and rebuilding administrative credibility. Governance must reach the last mile without discrimination or fear. Law must be seen to operate independently and impartially. Relief, rehabilitation, and reconciliation must be pursued with sincerity rather than optics.

What Manipur requires

today is not merely administrative efficiency, but moral authority anchored in action. The Latin phrase *facta non verba*—deeds, not words—captures the essence of what the present dispensation must embody. Words have long exhausted their value in the State. Only credible, consistent, and transparent action can restore trust.

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

Maxim Gorky once wrote something chillingly relevant even today in this world: There are three kinds of thieves. The ordinary thief steals money or food to survive. The political thief steals your future, dreams, work, rights, education, reputation and even your taxes. The religious thief steals your reason, free thought, joy, health and humanity. The difference? Ordinary thieves choose you. Political and religious thieves are chosen by you. Ordinary thieves go to jail. Political and religious thieves are protected by law and police. Read that again.

~ Harsh Goenka, Chairman, RPG Enterprises



Leadership in such times will inevitably be judged harshly. History will not be generous to indecision, nor forgiving of moral compromise. Yet it will acknowledge sincerity, courage, and the willingness to act in the larger public interest. The measure of success will not lie solely in political survival or electoral outcomes, but in whether Manipur emerges more stable, more humane, and more hopeful than it is today.

It is hoped that Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand will rise to this historic challenge with restraint, wisdom, and resolve. May dialogue prevail over division, justice over expediency, and compassion over indifference. The people of Manipur deserve governance that restores dignity and confidence, not merely order.

May the Almighty God guide him in every decision and responsibility he carries on behalf of the people of Manipur.

Sairang-Silchar Train Service Flagged Off, New Facilities Opened at Guwahati Station

OUR CORRESPONDENT

SILCHAR: Rail connectivity between Mizoram and Assam received a major push on Monday with the flagging off of the new Sairang-Silchar train service. The service was formally launched by Union Minister for Railways Ashwini Vaishnaw through video conferencing.

On the same occasion, new passenger facilities at Guwahati railway station were also inaugurated, aimed at improving comfort and convenience for travellers.

The new train service is expected to ease travel between Mizoram and southern Assam and strengthen economic and social ties between the two states.

Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma attended the programme,



along with Assam Minister Kaushik Rai, Silchar MP Parimal Suklabaidya, Raja Sabha MP Kanad

Purkayastha, Silchar MLA Dipayan Chakraborty, and other officials and dignitaries.

Speakers highlighted that improved rail infrastructure will boost trade,

people-to-people contact in the North-east. The initiative is part of the ongoing effort to expand railway

connectivity in the region and bring remote areas closer to the national network.



Tripura to expand rabies awareness, build shelter homes and ABC centres for stray animals: CM

AGARTALA

Tripura Chief Minister Dr Manik Saha on Friday stressed the need to raise awareness among students, teachers and the general public about rabies and accidents caused by stray animals, even as the state government moves ahead with the construction of shelter homes and Animal Birth Control (ABC) centres across Tripura. Addressing a meeting organised by the Animal Resources Development Department at the Secretariat conference hall, the Chief Minister said shelter homes for stray animals are being set up in 20 Nagar Panchayat areas, while ABC centres are under construction in the Agartala Municipal Corporation area, Dharmanagar Municipal Council and six other districts.

Dr Saha underscored the importance of educating people about the behaviour of stray dogs and other animals, preventive measures, and basic first aid to minimise the risk of animal-borne diseases such as rabies. "Awareness is key to reducing accidents and disease transmission. People must know how to respond safely when encountering stray animals," he said. He said the state government is actively engaged in rescuing stray animals and providing them with proper shelter. "Several initiatives have been taken to ensure that stray animals are protected from accidents and harm, while also safeguarding public health," the Chief Minister added.

During the meeting, Dr Saha also emphasised the vaccination of domestic animals as a critical step in preventing the spread of infectious diseases. He directed officials to ensure that adequate public information is disseminated before implementing any stray animal management programmes.

"Arrest me if needed, ready to go to jail": Himanta rejects Owaisi's charges over deleted video

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday dismissed allegations levelled by AIMIM chief and Lok Sabha MP Asaduddin Owaisi over a controversial video circulated on social media, saying he had no knowledge of the clip and was prepared to face any legal action.

The row erupted after Owaisi accused the BJP of sharing a video through its Assam social media handle that he claimed portrayed the Chief Minister as targeting Muslims. Terming the content "deeply objectionable," the AIMIM leader announced that his party would file a police complaint and seek registration of a case against Sarma, alleging that the video promoted hatred against Muslims and their religion.

Owaisi said such content had no place in a democratic society and warned against the normalisation of communal

rhetoric. Although the video was later taken down, it continued to circulate on various social media platforms, he alleged.

Responding to reports of legal action, Sarma rejected the accusations and said he was unaware of any such video. "If he has filed a case against me, arrest me. I have no objection. I am ready to go to jail. I do not know anything about any video," the Chief Minister said.

At the same time, Sarma reiterated his political position on illegal immigration, making a distinction between his stance and the allegations raised by Owaisi. "I stand by my words. I am against Bangladeshi infiltrators and I will continue to be against them," he said.

The exchange marks the latest escalation in a growing war of words between opposition leaders and the Assam Chief Minister, with the controversy now potentially moving into the legal domain.

Manipur CM assures Kuki-Zo community of safe travel as NH-137A road project is flagged off

IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Monday assured members of the Kuki-Zo community that the state government would take full responsibility for their safety while travelling to Imphal, including access to medical treatment, amid ongoing efforts to restore normalcy and improve connectivity.

The assurance was given during the flag-off of the project titled "Strengthening of existing pavement from km 0.00 to km 15.35 and km 30.00 to km 45.00 of NH-137A (Imphal-Kakching Lamkhai section)" at Langthal Lep Makha Leikai in Imphal West district. The project has been sanctioned by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), Government of India.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister said the government would ensure the security of all Kuki-Zo individuals



travelling to Imphal and would not allow any harm to come to them. He reiterated that the state would take full responsibility for those visiting the capital for medical or other essential purposes.

Singh expressed confidence that the highway strengthening work would be completed within the stipulated timeframe and stressed the need to maintain quality standards. He directed

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Khuraijam Loken Singh welcomed the commencement of the long-pending NH-137A project and credited the Chief Minister for initiating the work. He appealed to the public to cooperate and refrain from disrupting development activities.

Loken said the new government would accord top priority to the resettlement of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the restoration of lasting peace in the state, calling for support from all sections of society.

The flag-off programme, organised by the Public Works Department, Government of Manipur, was attended by Minister Konthoujam Govindas Singh, MLAs, Chief Secretary Dr Puneet Kumar Goel, Commissioner to the Chief Minister N Ashok Kumar, Imphal West Deputy Commissioner Mayanglam Rajkumar, Chief Engineer PWD Chongtham Biswachandra Singh, and other senior officials.

Gaurav Gogoi accuses Assam CM of 'inciting genocide', seeks suo motu police action

GUWAHATI

Assam Congress president Gaurav Gogoi on Monday accused Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma of "inciting genocide" against Muslims and called on the police to take suo motu cognisance of the matter, citing a video allegedly shared and later deleted by the state BJP on social media.

Addressing a press conference, Gogoi referred to a video clip that briefly appeared on X, purportedly showing the Chief Minister aiming a rifle and firing at two individuals-one wearing a skull cap and the other sporting a beard-accompanied by the caption "point-blank shot".

"The Assam Chief Minister is inciting genocide against Muslims through his videos," Gogoi alleged. "The police must take suo motu cognisance of the Chief Minister



targeting a particular community and circulating such vicious content on social media."

The allegations come amid a sustained political confrontation between Gogoi and Sarma, with the Chief Minister repeatedly claiming

that the Congress leader and his family have links with Pakistan. Gogoi denied the allegations and said he is exploring legal options after his minor children were dragged into the controversy.

Seeking to clarify his position,

Gogoi said his wife had travelled to Pakistan for professional reasons in 2013 and that he accompanied her during a 10-day visit in December that year. He also raised questions over the functioning of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) constituted to probe the alleged links.

"The SIT never questioned me about my 2013 visit to Pakistan," Gogoi said. "The Chief Minister sat on the SIT report for six months because it has nothing to substantiate his allegations of my Pakistan links." Gogoi maintained that the issue went beyond personal political attacks and involved the conduct expected of a constitutional authority. He stressed that law enforcement agencies must act when content directly or symbolically targets a specific community, warning that such messaging could further inflame communal tensions in the state.

Dragging children into politics 'deeply disturbing', says Gogoi as row with Assam CM escalates

GUWAHATI

Assam Pradesh Congress Committee president and Lok Sabha MP Gaurav Gogoi on Monday strongly criticised Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for allegedly dragging his minor children into an ongoing political controversy, calling the move "unacceptable" and "deeply disturbing".

Addressing a press conference, Gogoi said references to his five-year-old and nine-year-old children had lowered the standards of political discourse in Assam. He asserted that political battles must remain limited to elected representatives and should never involve children.

"I am ready to face any attack directed at me, but I will not remain silent if my children, family members, Congress workers or ordinary citizens are targeted," Gogoi said, warning that he would pursue the matter "to the very end" if such personal attacks continued.

Taking a sharp swipe at the Chief Minister, Gogoi alleged that Sarma had crossed a red line by invoking his children in public remarks. "We also know about his children; everyone knows it. But we choose not to disclose such information," he said. "What is being said has brought shame to Assam," Gogoi added, questioning the intent behind what he described as the spread of false and irresponsible claims.

The Congress leader cautioned the Chief Minister against escalating personal matters for political mileage and warned of serious consequences if the practice continued. "Don't force me into a situation where I have to respond," he said.

Gogoi also urged the Supreme Court to take suo motu cognisance of the issue, arguing that dragging minors into political disputes was not only unethical but damaging to the state's democratic culture.

Speaking about his family, Gogoi said his wife is independent and is fully taking care of their children. Drawing a personal parallel, he said he himself was largely raised by his mother and stressed that his children would be free to take their own decisions once they turned 18.

Clarifying the purpose of the press conference, Gogoi said it was not meant as political posturing but as a stand to protect the dignity of Assam's people and the media. "Dragging children into political attacks has embarrassed the state and is unbecoming of someone holding the office of Chief Minister," he said.

"I am not addressing this press conference merely to react to the Chief Minister's statements, but to uphold respect for the media and the people of Assam. I am in politics to raise the issues of Assam. Let the people decide," Gogoi added.

Assam Begins Grant of Land Ownership Rights to Tea Garden Workers, Ending Decades of Insecurity

GUWAHATI

The Assam government on Monday formally launched the process of granting land ownership rights to tea garden workers, calling it a landmark intervention aimed at ending decades of land insecurity faced by one of the state's most vulnerable communities.

The rollout was inaugurated at Dinjoy Tea Estate in Dibrugarh district with the distribution of settlement application forms under the Assam Fixation of Ceiling on Land Holdings (Amendment) Act, 2025. Addressing a gathering at the event, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said nearly 800 tea plantation workers witnessed the start of the long-awaited process.

The Chief Minister said the State Assembly had recently amended the land ceiling law to allow ownership rights over house sites and land occupied by workers living in labour lines-areas that were earlier legally owned by tea estate managements. With the amendment now in force, the government has moved to implement the decision on the ground.

Under the initiative, application forms are being distributed to workers residing in labour lines or occupying houses built on such land. The forms seek details including



the beneficiary's name, the extent of land under occupation and basic demographic information. Sarma urged workers to cooperate fully with officials to ensure the process proceeds smoothly and without delay.

Alongside the distribution of forms, the government has launched a large-scale land survey across tea estates. Surveys have already been completed in 103 tea gardens, while work is set to begin in another 250 estates from Monday. The exercise is expected to eventually cover around 800 tea estates across Assam.

Highlighting the historical marginalisation of tea garden workers, Sarma said that despite nearly 200 years of the tea industry in the state, workers had remained without legal rights over the land they lived on. He said families often lived under the constant

fear of eviction, forcing children to drop out of school to work in order to safeguard their homes. With the new policy, he said, tea workers would no longer have to live under such uncertainty.

The government aims to issue land patas to at least a section of tea garden workers before the 2026 Assembly elections, although Sarma acknowledged that the complete exercise would take time. With nearly 10 lakh tea workers in the state and an estimated five lakh families eligible for land rights, the process is expected to take six to seven months.

To facilitate implementation, four-member committees have been constituted in each tea estate to assist workers in filling out application forms. The Chief Minister cautioned that lack of cooperation at the lo-

cal level could slow down the process.

Sarma also noted that some tea estate owners had voluntarily relinquished labour line land even before the amendment came into effect, citing Dinjoy Tea Estate as an example. In a significant relief to workers, he said tea garden residents would no longer require a no-objection certificate from estate managements to build houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY).

As part of the initiative, the government plans to geo-tag all houses in tea garden areas and, where feasible, provide housing assistance of Rs 1.6 lakh per unit under PMAY. Families with damaged houses will receive repair assistance, while those without houses will be eligible for new ones. In addition, financial aid of Rs 1 lakh per family for house repair and maintenance has been announced, along with access to Aadhaar cards, ration cards, subsidised food grains and other welfare schemes.

Sarma said tea garden workers had been demanding land rights for decades, but no previous government had taken a decisive step. With the amendment of the land ceiling law, labour line land has now been brought under government jurisdiction, enabling the process of conferring ownership rights to begin.

The move, however, has drawn legal resistance from tea planters. Tea estate owners have approached the Gauhati High Court challenging the Assam Labour Line Land Allotment Act, arguing that it infringes on property rights and was enacted without adequate consultation. The matter is currently pending before the court.

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ED issues fresh summons to Anil Ambani, wife in money laundering case



NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has issued fresh summons to Reliance Group chairman Anil Ambani and his wife Tina Ambani to appear for questioning in a money laundering case next week, officials said on Tuesday.

Tina Ambani, 68, a former actor, was asked to depose by the federal agency here on Monday but she skipped appearance. Officials said she has now been asked to depose on February 17 followed by Anil Ambani, 66, on February 18. Their statements will be recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) once they depose, the officials said.

A response from the Reliance Group on these summons is awaited. Anil

Ambani was questioned by the ED once last year as part of these investigations linked to multiple Reliance Group companies and their bank loans. It is understood that Tina Ambani has been called for questioning with regard to a money trail linked to the purchase of a luxury condominium in New York's Manhattan. The ED had recently arrested former RCOM (Reliance Communication) president Punit Garg in this case. The New York property was "fraudulently" sold in 2023 during the corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP) of RCOM by Garg, the ED had claimed in a statement earlier.

It is understood that RCOM informed this stock exchange about this "fraudulent" sale in 2025. "The sale proceeds of USD

8.3 million (about Rs 69.55 crore in 2023) were remitted from the USA under the guise of a sham investment arrangement with a Dubai-based entity controlled by a Pakistan-linked individual, without the knowledge or consent of the Resolution Professional (RP)," the agency has claimed. The ED recently also constituted a special investigation team (SIT) to probe multiple cases of alleged bank fraud and linked financial irregularities against the Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group (ADAG) on the directions of the Supreme Court.

It has attached assets worth Rs 12,000 crore as part of this probe and has filed three complaints called ECIRs (Enforcement Case Information Reports) against Reliance Group companies.

'Parliament a faint shadow...': Congress invokes Nehru amid plan to move no-confidence motion against Speaker

NEW DELHI

Amid the standoff between Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and opposition MPs, Congress on Tuesday invoked former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and cited a December 1954 discussion in the House over a non-confidence motion against the Speaker and remarked that the Parliament has become a "faint shadow of its former self."

The party's remarks come amid the Opposition decision to move a resolution seeking the removal of Speaker Om Birla from office.

In apparent comparison to the recent events in Parliament, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh cited an interaction between Nehru and then Deputy Speaker in 1954, and wrote in a post on X, "The Parliament that Nehru built by sitting, speaking, listening, and accommodating is now a pale shadow of its former self."

Ramesh shared an exchange between Nehru and the Deputy Speaker during a debate on the resolution to remove the Speaker.

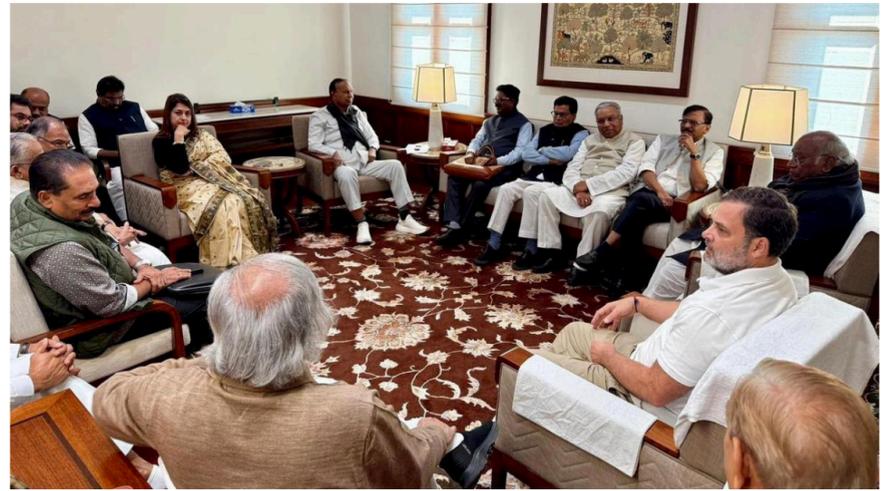
"On the afternoon of December 18, 1954, the Lok Sabha took up a Resolution moved by the Opposition for the removal of the Speaker (GV Mavalankar)," the post read.

Ramesh went on to share the transcript of the interaction: "Deputy Speaker: The House will now take up the Resolution."

"Nehru: Sir, may I make a submission to the House? You were pleased to allot two hours for this discussion.

Deputy Speaker: Yes, from 3.30 PM to 5.30 PM.

Nehru: Normally, you do adopt some kind of proportion, but I should like to submit that in this particular case, more time should be allowed to the Opposition than to the Government Benches. We do



not wish to take too much time, and I hope hon. Members on this side will not take too much time of the House in their speeches. Naturally, we will have to say something, which we will do. But I would submit for your consideration that the Opposition should have more time."

He pointed out that in the First Lok Sabha, the Indian National Congress held 364 of the 489 seats.

"And this was the approach of the then Prime Minister when there was not even a recognised Leader of the Opposition. The Parliament that Nehru built up day-after-day by sitting, speaking, listening, and accommodating is now a pale shadow of its former self," Ramesh said.

The post comes amid heightened tensions between the Speaker and the Opposition, which is planning to move a no-confidence motion, days

after he accused some Congress MPs of plotting an "unforeseen act" against Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the Parliament.

The decision was taken at a meeting of INDIA bloc leaders, chaired by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, on Monday morning. The bloc also decided to take part in the Budget discussion.

The Congress has reportedly collected 106 MPs' signatures for the motion. However, it has been learnt that the Trinamool Congress did not attend the meeting.

The move to seek Birla's removal stems from the disallowing of Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi and other opposition leaders from speaking during the Motion of Thanks to the President's address, as well as the suspension of eight MPs. Opposition leaders had earlier

warned that, with no conciliatory steps from the government, protests would escalate over the denial of Rahul Gandhi's chance to speak in the House, potentially derailing debates on the Union Budget 2026-27.

Opposition parties, led by the Congress has been protesting inside and outside the Parliament against the Speaker refusing to allow Rahul Gandhi to speak on former Army Chief General MM Naravane's unpublished 'memoir', in which he makes some statements involving PM Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in connection with the 2020 India-China standoff.

Eight Congress MPs were suspended by the Speaker on February 3, amid continuous protests demanding to let the LoP speak on the issue.

INTERNATIONAL

India, US aim to seal interim trade pact in coming weeks with view to BTA: White House fact sheet

NEW YORK

The United States and India plan to finalise an interim trade agreement in the coming weeks as they work towards a mutually beneficial Bilateral Trade Agreement, according to the White House.

Negotiations will continue on outstanding areas including services and investment, labour and government procurement.

The update follows a joint statement in which both countries announced the framework for an interim agreement on reciprocal and mutually beneficial trade, with the White House issuing a fact sheet titled "The United States and India Announce Historic Trade Deal (Interim Agreement)."

The fact sheet highlights key terms of the agreement, including India's commitment to eliminate or reduce tariffs on all US industrial goods and a wide range of US food and agricultural products.

These include dried distillers' grains, red sorghum, tree nuts, and fresh and processed fruit, as well as certain pulses, soybean oil, wine and spirits. India has also committed to buy more American products, including more than \$500 billion worth of US energy, information and communication technology, agricultural, coal and other products.

On the 'Prosperous Path Forward', the fact sheet said that US President Donald Trump continues to advance the interests of the American people, enhancing market access for American exporters and lowering tariff and non-tariff barriers to protect our economic and national security.

"India has maintained some of the highest tariffs on the United States of any major world economy, with tariffs as high as an average of 37 per cent for agricultural goods



and more than 100 per cent on certain autos. India also has a history of imposing highly protectionist non-tariff barriers that have banned and prohibited many US exports to India," the fact sheet said.

"In the coming weeks, the United States and India will promptly implement this framework and work toward finalising the Interim Agreement with a view to concluding a mutually beneficial BTA to lock in benefits for American workers and businesses," it said.

In this photo from Feb. 13, 2025, US President Donald Trump, right, speaks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a news conference in the East Room of the White House, in Washington.

Fine print of India-US interim trade framework: The section that's India's real win

The announcement provides a "tangible path forward" with India that underscores the President's dedication to realising balanced, reciprocal trade with an important

trading partner. Further, it added that in line with the roadmap set out in the terms of reference for the BTA, the United States and India will "continue negotiations to address the remaining tariff barriers, additional non-tariff barriers, technical barriers to trade, customs and trade facilitation, good regulatory practices, trade remedies, services and investment, intellectual property, labour, environment, government procurement, and trade-distorting or unfair practices of state-owned enterprises." It said India will address non-tariff barriers that affect bilateral trade in priority areas.

The United States and India will negotiate rules of origin that ensure that the agreed benefits accrue predominantly to the United States and India.

In this photo from Feb. 13, 2025, US President Donald Trump, right, speaks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a news conference in the East Room of

the White House, in Washington.

India will remove its digital services taxes and committed to negotiate a robust set of bilateral digital trade rules that address discriminatory or burdensome practices and other barriers to digital trade, including rules that prohibit the imposition of customs duties on electronic transmissions.

The United States and India committed to strengthening economic security alignment to enhance supply chain resilience and innovation through complementary actions to address non-market policies of third parties as well as cooperating on inbound and outbound investment reviews and export controls, it said adding that the two countries will significantly increase bilateral trade in technology products and expand joint technology cooperation. It noted that last Friday, Trump announced the trade deal with India that will open up the country's market of over 1.4 billion people to American products. The joint statement follows a call between Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi last week, "in which the leaders reached a framework for an Interim Agreement on reciprocal trade and reaffirmed their commitment to broader US-India Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) negotiations." It noted that Trump agreed to remove the additional 25% tariff on imports from India in "recognition of India's commitment to stop purchasing" Russian oil.

Accordingly, the President signed an Executive Order last Friday removing that additional 25% tariff. "Given India's willingness to align with the United States to confront systemic imbalances in the bilateral trade relationship and shared national security challenges, the United States will lower the Reciprocal Tariff on India from 25% to 18%."

Drought leaves people hungry in Kenya as their livestock die



KAMPALA

Drought conditions have left over 2 million people facing hunger in parts of Kenya, with cattle-keeping communities in the northeast the hardest hit, according to the United Nations and others.

In recent weeks, images of emaciated livestock in the arid area near the Somali border have shocked many in a region that reels from the effects of climate change.

In recent years, rainy seasons have become shorter for some communities, exposing them to drought. Normally, animals are the first to die.

The livestock losses echo what happened between 2020 and 2023, when millions of animals died in the region that extends from Kenya into parts of Ethiopia and Somalia. At the time, a famine predicted for Somalia was averted by a surge in international aid.

Four consecutive wet seasons have failed in parts of the Horn of Africa, which juts into the Indian Ocean.

The wet season from October to December was one of the driest ever recorded, according to the U.N. health agency. Because the rains

were brief, parts of eastern Kenya were the driest they have been during that season since 1981.

Some 10 counties in Kenya are experiencing drought conditions, according to the National Drought Management Authority.

The northeastern county of Mandera, bordering Somalia, has reached the "alarm" classification, which means critical water shortages have led to the death of livestock and the wasting of children.

The suffering extends into Somalia, Tanzania and even Uganda, where many are threatened by similar weather patterns and water shortages, the World Health Organization said in late January.

In southern Somalia, an assessment by the Islamic Relief aid group found "shocking food shortages as families flee the region's worsening drought."

In Somalia, long vulnerable to drought conditions, over 3 million people have left their homes, seeking shelter in camps for the internally displaced.

But support is not enough, with 70% of the

internally displaced in the city of Baidoa surviving on one meal a day or less, Islamic Relief said in a statement, adding that children in the camps are "showing visible signs of malnutrition and wasting."

Experts say much of what's happening is due to climate change.

The Indian Ocean has become warmer, feeding some of the more destructive tropical storms in recent years. At the same time, drought conditions have become longer, more intense and more severe.

All of that is devastating for Africans whose economic mainstay is rain-fed agriculture, making them vulnerable to extreme weather. Many farmers say increasing temperatures deny livestock pasture and kill their crops.

Africa is particularly vulnerable to extreme weather events because it is less equipped to prepare for natural disasters. Despite contributing only 3% to 4% of global emissions, according to the U.N., the continent is one of the most exposed to the effects of climate change.

IIT Guwahati Powers Green Push with ICICI Foundation Support



GUWAHATI

IIT Guwahati has taken a strong step towards clean energy and climate care. The institute has partnered with ICICI Foundation to strengthen its green campus plan. Under this tie-up, a 2 Megawatt solar power system will be supported on the campus.

The move shows how top education spaces can lead by example. It also reflects a growing push to mix learning with responsibility towards nature.

The solar project will help IIT Guwahati cut its use of conventional power. It will also lower carbon emissions in the long run. Once fully operational, the solar setup is expected to meet a major share of the campus electricity needs.

Officials said the initiative fits well with India's larger renewable energy



goals. At the COP26 climate summit, India committed to expanding non-fossil fuel energy and reducing carbon intensity. Projects like this help turn those promises into action on the ground.

For IIT Guwahati, sustainability has been a long-term focus. The campus already follows green building norms, water conservation practices, and waste management systems. The new solar installation adds strength to this effort.

The ICICI Foundation, known for its work in education, health, and environment, is supporting the project as part of its climate and sustainability drive. The foundation believes clean energy access is key for future-ready institutions.

"This partnership is not just about power generation. It is about shaping mindsets," said a senior official associated with the initiative. "When students study and live in a green campus, sustainability becomes a habit, not just a lesson."

The project also aligns with several United Nations

SDG 7, which focuses on affordable and clean energy, and SDG 9, which promotes resilient infrastructure and innovation. It also supports SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities, and SDG 13 on climate action.

Experts say campuses are ideal spaces for renewable energy projects. They have large open areas, steady power demand, and young minds eager to learn from real-world examples. A working solar plant on campus can double as a learning tool for students and researchers. Students at IIT Guwahati have welcomed the move. Many see it as a sign that institutions must act, not just talk, on climate change. Research scholars also feel it will open doors for more studies in clean energy and smart grids.

Beyond energy savings, the project sends a strong message. It shows how public institutions and private foundations can work together for common goals. It also highlights the Northeast's growing role in India's green transition.

As climate challenges grow sharper, such partnerships are becoming more important. IIT Guwahati's solar push stands as a reminder that change begins where ideas are shaped.

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Beyond Borders Within: A Rally for Unity in the Northeast



Peace does not always mean silence. It does not always mean that there is no chaos or violence. Sometimes, peace begins with talking, listening, and understanding each other. This idea is at the heart of the North East Integration Rally 2026, an initiative that has drawn attention and respect from across the country.

The rally began on January 4 in Kolkata and is organised by the KRC Foundations, led by its Managing Trustee and CEO Biswadeep Gupta. From the very beginning, the aim of the rally has been clear. It seeks to bring together the people of the Northeast, a region that is home to around 200 different communities, each with its own language, culture, history, and identity. The Northeast has often been misunderstood or seen only through the lens of conflict and unrest. The North East Integration Rally tries to change this view. It believes that real integration is not forced. It grows slowly through dialogue, shared spaces, and mutual respect.

One of the strongest points of the rally is its method. Instead of loud

political speeches, the focus is on dialogues, group discussions, meetings, seminars, and conventions. Alongside these serious conversations, the rally also celebrates culture. Music, songs, dances, and cultural performances play a key role. These forms of expression allow people to connect at a human level, beyond politics or ideology.

Participants from different states of the Northeast have shared their stories, concerns, and hopes. Many said that for the first time, they felt heard outside their own region. Cultural items from different communities were performed side by side, showing how diversity can exist without conflict.

The success of the rally is being seen as proof that such an approach works. Large participation, positive feedback, and growing interest from social groups and institutions show that people are ready for a different kind of leadership and dialogue. Observers have called the rally a rare platform where unity is not preached, but practiced.

During the course of the rally, Biswadeep Gupta made a strong and clear appeal, especially to elders and community leaders. He advised them to stop practicing di-

visive politics. According to him, constant political fighting has only weakened communities from within. Instead, he urged leaders to focus on job creation, skill development, and employment opportunities for the youth.

Gupta stressed that unemployment and lack of opportunity are major reasons behind unrest. If young people are given work, dignity, and a future, many social problems will reduce on their own. He also appealed to communities to stop fighting among themselves and to work together for shared growth. His message found support among many participants. Several speakers agreed that the future of the Northeast depends not on old

rivalries, but on cooperation and economic progress. The rally, they said, should be seen as a starting point, not an end.

The North East Integration Rally 2026 stands as an example of how peace-building can be done differently. It shows that unity does not erase identity. Instead, it respects every identity while building a larger bond. Through conversation, culture, and collective thinking, the rally has opened a new path.

As the rally continues its journey, many hope that its message will travel further than its route. In a time when divisions are easy and loud, this quiet effort at integration feels both necessary and powerful.



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12 JAN
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JAN'25
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10 JAN
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