



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

One of the hardest tasks for the human mind is convincing yourself that you no longer care.

WWII-Era Unexploded Bomb Recovered and Safely Destroyed in Manipur's Thoubal

IMPHAL
A World War II-era bomb was discovered in Manipur's Thoubal district and later safely detonated by security personnel, officials said on Wednesday.

The rusted explosive shell was unearthed on Tuesday afternoon during earth excavation work for the construction of a retaining wall at Heirok Part-II, Tonal Makhong Leikai, in Thoubal. The discovery was reported around 4 pm by local residents, who alerted authorities immediately. A team from the Manipur Police Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad, accompanied by a sniffer dog, rushed to the site upon receiving the information. After assessing the situation, the team carefully retrieved the unexploded ordnance and transported it to a secure location in Heirok.

The explosive device, believed to date back to World War II, was safely detonated later in the afternoon following standard safety protocols. No injuries or damage were reported during the operation.

Manipur was a key theatre of military operations during the Second World War. Fierce battles were fought in the region in 1944 between Allied forces and the Japanese Army, which was supported by the Indian National Army (INA) led by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. Over the years, unexploded wartime ordnance and other military remnants have periodically surfaced in parts of Manipur and neighbouring Nagaland, underscoring the enduring legacy of the conflict in the region. Authorities have urged residents to immediately inform the police if they come across any suspicious or explosive-looking objects during construction or excavation work.

WHO SAID WHAT



You can just take a picture of your medical data or upload the file to get a second opinion from Grok ~ Elon Musk, American Entrepreneur

GUWAHATI

The Election Commission of India on Wednesday, February 18, announced the schedule for the upcoming biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha, with polling in Assam slated for March 16.

The electoral exercise will cover 37 seats across 10 states that are set to fall vacant in April 2026 as sitting members complete their six-year terms. Apart from Assam, elections will be held in Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Telangana.

Three Seats Up for Election in Assam

In Assam, three seats in the Upper House are due for renewal. The terms of Rameswar Teli, Bhubaneswar Kalita and Ajit Kumar Bhuyan are scheduled to end in April, necessitating the biennial poll.

Voting in Assam will be conducted on March 16 between



9:00 am and 4:00 pm. Counting of votes will begin at 5:00 pm the same day. The Commission has indicated that the entire election process will be completed by March 20.

Key Dates Announced
According to the official notification, the timeline for the Assam election is as follows:
Issue of Notification: February 26

Last Date for Filing Nominations: March 5
Scrutiny of Nominations: March 6
Last Date for Withdrawal: March 9
Date of Poll: March 16 (9:00 am - 4:00 pm)
Counting of Votes: March 16 (5:00 pm onwards)
Completion of Election Process: March 20
Indirect Election Through MLAs
Rajya Sabha elections are conducted through an indirect system. Elected Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) cast their votes under the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote. The strength of political parties in the respective state assemblies plays a decisive role in determining the outcome.

Strict Voting Protocol in Place
In its press note, the Commission reiterated strict adherence to voting procedures. Only integrated violet colour sketch pens of pre-fixed specifications, supplied by the Returning Officer, will be permitted for marking preferences on ballot papers. The use of any other pen has been expressly prohibited to ensure uniformity and prevent invalidation of votes.

The Commission has also directed the appointment of observers and the implementation of necessary measures to guarantee a free and fair electoral process.

With 37 seats across politically significant states going to polls, the biennial elections are expected to have implications for the composition and numerical balance in the Upper House. In Assam, party positions within the Legislative Assembly will determine how the three seats are distributed when voting takes place next month.

NSCN-IM Alleges Centre Backing Plan for Separate 'Kuki State' Amid Manipur Unrest



IMPHAL
The National Socialist Council of Nagalim (Isak-Muivah) (NSCN-IM) has alleged that the Centre is pursuing a "master plan" to create a separate "Kuki state" or "Kuki homeland," claiming that ongoing inter-community tensions in Manipur and Nagaland are being used as justification for such a move.

In a statement issued on Tuesday by its External Publicity Wing (EPW), the outfit linked the continuing clashes between Meiteis and Kukis in Manipur, as well as disputes involving Naga groups, to what it described as a broader geopolitical design of the Indian government.

The NSCN-IM alleged that the current unrest represents a phase of "Indian-state terrorism" and reflects hegemonic ambitions aimed at redrawing territorial and political boundaries in the region.

Allegations Over Suspension of Operations Pact

The outfit further claimed that violence attributed to Kuki militant groups follows a deliberate pattern and alleged that some of these groups are trained and armed under the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement with the government.

According to the NSCN-IM, narratives surrounding recent incidents portray Kukis as victims while "others" are labeled as perpetrators, a framing it said serves a hidden political agenda.

In the statement, the group alleged that inter-community clashes, infrastructure projects such as the construction of the "German Road/Tiger Road" in Naga-inhabited areas, incidents of arson in Ukhrul district, and reported attacks on Nagas in Nagaland are being used as pretexts to legitimise the creation of a separate territorial entity for Kukis.

The NSCN-IM also alleged that New Delhi's strategy involves fragmenting what it describes as "Nagalim" territory by fostering divisions among Naga groups and pursuing a proxy conflict through Kuki organisations operating under the SoO framework.

In a further claim, the outfit alleged that certain Kuki armed groups have extended activities beyond Indian territory into Myanmar, describing them as part of a larger cross-border agenda linked to the idea of a Kuki homeland.

Additionally, the NSCN-IM reiterated historical assertions that Kuki communities were brought from the Chin Hills-present-day Myanmar-during British rule and settled in Naga areas as a buffer.

No Official Response Yet
There was no immediate response from the Centre or state authorities to the allegations at the time of reporting.

The statement comes amid continued tensions in parts of Manipur and neighbouring areas, where ethnic and territorial issues remain sensitive. Security agencies have maintained that measures are being taken to restore stability and ensure law and order across affected districts.

'I Am a Bigger Leader in Assam': Himanta Shrugs Off Priyanka Gandhi's Guwahati Visit



GUWAHATI
Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on February 17 dismissed the political significance of Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's proposed visit to Guwahati, questioning whether it would have any meaningful impact on the state's electoral landscape.

Responding to questions from reporters, Sarma remarked, "Why? Is she going to vote here?" - a statement aimed at underscoring what he described as the primacy of local leadership in Assam politics.

The Chief Minister asserted that leaders rooted in the state wield greater influence among voters than national figures visiting during campaign periods. "I am a bigger leader. Bhupen Borah is a bigger leader. Dilip Saikia is a bigger leader as far as Assam is concerned," he said, referring to senior political figures in the state.

Sarma's comments come at a time of intensified political mobilisation in Assam, with both the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Indian National Congress stepping up outreach efforts ahead of upcoming electoral contests.

The exchange reflects sharpening rhetoric between the ruling BJP and the opposition Congress as both parties seek to consolidate support across constituencies in the run-up to the polls.

Congress Has No Grassroots Base Left in Assam: Sonowal

GUWAHATI
Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on February 17 dismissed the possibility of the Congress returning to power in Assam, describing the party as "exhausted" and lacking support at the grassroots level.

The former Chief Minister of Assam said the political climate in the state and across the Northeast has undergone a significant transformation over the past decade under the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government at the Centre.

Sonowal asserted that the region is currently among the most peaceful in the country and has witnessed accelerated development in recent years.

"Under the NDA government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the past 11 years have brought peace and progress to the Northeast and Assam," he said.

He maintained that infrastructure expansion, improved connectivity and welfare measures have contributed to a stable environment conducive to growth.

Responding to questions about the potential challenge from the Indian National Congress in the upcoming Assam Assembly elections-particularly after the appointment of Priyanka Gandhi Vadra as the party's in-charge-Sonowal said the opposition lacks organisational depth on the ground. "The Congress is now exhausted. It does not have any support at the grassroots level. It is merely making statements with the help of the media. The party is not committed to society or the country. It has no real dedication or

commitment," he said.

The Union Minister also flagged illegal immigration as a major issue in Assam, stating that the government has consistently taken steps to address the matter.

He claimed that communities across social groups-including Scheduled Tribes (STs), Scheduled Castes (SCs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs)-feel secure under the BJP-led dispensation in the state.

"Through the NDA government in Assam, the party has ensured protection of land, property, dignity and heritage," Sonowal said.

Highlighting the aspirations of young people in the region, he said students and youth in the Northeast have confidence that expanded opportunities for employment and growth will continue under BJP rule.

"People have great trust and confidence in Prime Minister Modi. They believe that whatever he promises, he delivers," he added.

On the recently presented Union Budget, Sonowal said it prioritises youth, farmers, the poor and women, describing them as the pillars of society. Strengthening these sections, he argued, would accelerate India's development trajectory.

He further alleged that during previous Congress-led governments at the Centre, India did not receive adequate respect on global platforms. Referring to recent trade agreements and economic initiatives, Sonowal claimed the Congress is "frustrated" over its inability to secure similar outcomes during its tenure.

Orunodoi, NFSA Could Put Rs.10,860-Crore Annual Strain on Assam's Finances: State Finance Commission

GUWAHATI

The Seventh Assam State Finance Commission has cautioned that two flagship welfare initiatives of the state government - Orunodoi and the National Food Security Act (NFSA) - could exert significant pressure on Assam's finances, particularly amid a declining share of Central tax devolution.

In its latest report, the Commission warned that the combined annual financial burden of the two schemes could reach ₹10,860 crore, raising concerns about long-term fiscal sustainability.

In its latest report, the Commission warned that the combined annual financial burden of the two schemes could reach ₹10,860 crore, raising concerns about long-term fiscal sustainability.

The third edition of the Orunodoi scheme is expected to cover 37.2 lakh beneficiaries, with each receiving ₹1,250 per month. According to the Commission's assessment, this translates into an annual outgo of ₹5,580 crore.

While acknowledging that the schemes are "laudable" and designed to support vulnerable sections, the panel expressed concern over funding modalities. "The schemes are no doubt laudable, albeit they touch a small segment of the needy population. More importantly, such a huge outgo annually will have disastrous effect on State finances since Government of Assam is silent about the modalities of funding it," the report



noted.

Under the NFSA, the Government of Assam proposes to issue ration cards to 19,92,167 beneficiaries, entitling them to free food grains every month. These cardholders would also be eligible for free treatment under the Ayushman

Bharat scheme.

The Commission pegged the annual financial implication of the NFSA initiative at ₹5,280 crore - approximately ₹40 crore per month.

It further observed that the state plans to integrate the Orunodoi scheme

with the ration card programme, taking the combined annual financial impact to a substantial ₹10,860 crore.

The report also highlighted a structural issue affecting Assam's fiscal position - the gradual decline in its percentage share of the divisible pool of Central taxes as recommended by successive Central Finance Commissions.

Assam's share has fallen from 4.12 per cent in the first report of the IX Finance Commission to 3.128 per cent in the second report of the XV Finance Commission. The Commission said this steady reduction has adversely affected the flow of funds from the Centre. "For instance, a drop of mere 0.1 per cent in the percentage share entails revenue sacrifice of about ₹758 crore," the report stated, underlining the magnitude of the impact.

The Commission's observations come at a time when the state government continues to expand welfare coverage while also committing resources to infrastructure and development projects.

The report suggests that without clearly articulated funding mechanisms and prudent fiscal management, the cumulative burden of large-scale welfare schemes - combined with shrinking Central transfers - could strain Assam's financial stability in the coming years.

Om Shanti

Lt. Biswajit Gupta
SHRADHANJALI

All family members, friends and well wishers fondly remembers you on 4th Death Anniversary

18 FEBRUARY 2022

Smt. Simantarsi Gupta & family members

Malugram Kalibari, H. No.15, Old Kalibari Road, Silchar, Assam. Tel: 8721838313

APSC Cancels CCE 2024 Results Over Quota Allocation Error; CM Sarma Denies Irregularities



GUWAHATI

The Assam Public Service Commis-

sion (APSC) has cancelled the Combined Competitive Examination (CCE) 2024 results after their

declaration, with Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma attributing the move to a technical error in the reservation allocation.

Speaking to reporters on Tuesday following a Cabinet meeting and ahead of the presentation of the Vote on Account Budget 2026-27 in the State Assembly, Sarma described the issue as a "small" discrepancy in the reservation list.

"Moran and Motok communities were supposed to get two reserved seats each. However, APSC erroneously allotted four seats only to the Motok community," he said. The Chief Minister rejected allegations of corruption or deliberate irregularity, assuring candidates that the merit list would remain unchanged once the error is rectified.

"The results will remain the same, and the final list will be released soon

after the correction. There is no issue of corruption. Our duty is to ensure justice for the small indigenous communities affected," Sarma added.

The CCE 2024 results, announced on Monday, had recommended 288 candidates for appointment to the Assam Civil Service (ACS), Assam Police Service (APS) and allied services. However, the list was withdrawn within hours of being uploaded, triggering confusion and concern among aspirants. APSC Secretary Chandana Mahanta later confirmed that the results were cancelled after detecting an error in the reservation notification and said a corrected list would be issued shortly. The reservation dispute centres on posts earmarked for the Moran and Motok communities under the 27 per cent OBC/MOBC quota. In October 2023, the Assam Cabinet had approved one post each for the Mo-

ran and Motok communities in ACS Junior Grade and APS Junior Grade recruitments for the next five CCE cycles. According to the Chief Minister, the allocation error led to two seats meant for the Moran community being omitted, while four seats were mistakenly assigned to the Motok community. The abrupt cancellation sparked protests in Lakshmi Nagar in Sivasagar, where students and activists affiliated with the Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) and the Satra Mukti Sangram Samiti (SMSS) demanded accountability.

KMSS general secretary Bidyut Saikia criticised the handling of the results, stating that thousands of candidates had invested years of preparation for the 288 advertised posts.

"When the results were finally uploaded, selected candidates and their families celebrated. But within

an hour, APSC cancelled it citing a technical error. How is this fair recruitment?" Saikia asked, calling for a thorough inquiry into the lapse.

He further alleged that two seats meant for the Moran community were left out in the process, intensifying concerns over administrative oversight. The Chief Minister maintained that the correction process is underway and that no candidate's merit position will be altered due to the rectification of the reservation matrix.

Officials indicated that the revised results would be released once the allocation is aligned with the Cabinet-approved quota framework.

The episode has once again put the spotlight on recruitment transparency in Assam, with aspirants seeking greater clarity and accountability in high-stakes examinations conducted by the state's premier recruiting body.

Census 2027 Preparations Gather Pace as District-Level Training Begins in Senapati

SENAPATI

Preparations for Census 2027 have gained momentum in Manipur with the launch of a three-day district-level training programme on House Listing and Housing Census (HLO) in Senapati district. The training commenced at the Conference Hall of the Deputy Commissioner's Office in Senapati and is aimed at equipping officials with the skills and procedural clarity required for accurate and efficient data collection during the nationwide enumeration exercise.

The programme is being conducted under the supervision of the Principal Census Officer, Senapati, and jointly organised by the Directorate of Census Operations, Manipur and the district administration.

Addressing the participants, Deputy Commissioner and Principal Census Officer Mamoni Doley, IAS, underscored the critical importance of the census as a foundational exercise for governance and policy planning. She recalled that the 16th Census, initially scheduled for 2021, had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, making the upcoming Census 2027 particularly significant. Doley stressed the need for close coordination among Sub-Divisional Officers and census staff to ensure seamless execution of the exercise across the district. She highlighted that meticulous planning, clear communication, and strict adherence to guidelines would be key to maintaining data accuracy and credibility. Officials from the Directorate of Census Operations, Manipur are leading the sessions, which cover a comprehensive range of topics. These include an overview of Census 2027, roles and responsibilities of census functionaries, legal provisions governing the census process, fund management protocols, manpower planning, publicity strategies, and core census procedures and definitions.

Fresh Blow to Insurgency: Two PLA Cadres Held, Arms and Grenades Seized in Manipur Sweep

IMPHAL

In a coordinated counter-insurgency push, security forces arrested two active members of the proscribed People's Liberation Army (PLA) and recovered a cache of arms and explosives during operations carried out across Imphal East and Imphal West districts on February 17.

Officials described the crackdown as part of intensified efforts to dismantle insurgent networks attempting to regroup in vulnerable pockets of the state.

According to official sources, a self-styled private of the PLA's RPF wing, identified as Athokpam Manaot Meitei alias Tamanao alias Malem alias Amujao (42), was arrested from Sawbung in Imphal East district. He is a resident of Chana Mayai Leikai under Lamlai Police Station limits.

Security personnel acted on specific intelligence inputs before launching the operation that led to his capture. Authori-

ties are currently interrogating the accused to ascertain his role within the outfit and possible links to recent activities in the region.

In another operation on the same day, security forces arrested a self-styled lieutenant of the PLA, Ningthoujam Ibungocha alias Sathouba Meitei (38), from Yaingangpokpi Bazar under Yaingangpokpi Police Station in Imphal East district.

Preliminary investigations suggest that he was actively involved in extortion-related activities. A mobile phone along with a SIM card was seized from his possession. Officials said digital evidence retrieved from the device could provide crucial leads about the outfit's operational network.

In a parallel development, a substantial cache of weapons and explosives was recovered from an area along Ngairangbam Tanoukhul Road towards Longa Koireng under Patsoi Police Station in Imphal West district.

Meghalaya Detects 658 Illegal Bangladeshi Nationals Since 2021; 194 Deported, Says Dy CM

SHILLONG

Meghalaya has detected 658 illegal Bangladeshi nationals since 2021, of whom 194 have been deported after completing their sentences, Deputy Chief Minister Prestone Tynsong informed the Assembly on Tuesday.

Replying to a call-attention notice moved by Voice of the People Party (VPP) legislator Heaving Stone Kharpran, Tynsong said that from 2021 till February 3, 2026, the identified foreign nationals were prosecuted under relevant legal provisions.

"From 2021 till February 3, 2026, a total of 658 illegal Bangladeshi nationals were detected in the state and prosecuted under relevant legal provisions," he said.

During the same period, 194 individuals were deported after serving their sentences and securing the necessary travel permits from the Bangladesh Embassy.

Outlining the government's strategy, Tynsong said Megha-



laya has put in place a "comprehensive and multi-layered anti-infiltration mechanism" to curb illegal migration across vulnerable stretches of the inter-state and Indo-Bangladesh border. The state government has established 18 anti-infiltration checkpoints and gates at strategic locations, along with a land customs station to bolster surveillance and enforcement. In addition, anti-infiltration special squads have been de-

ployed across all districts.

"The squads regularly conduct anti-infiltration drives, surprise naka checks and patrolling in vulnerable areas in close coordination with the labour department, village defence parties and local authorities," the Deputy Chief Minister said.

Tynsong informed the House that 11 district-level task forces have been constituted to identify and deport illegal foreign nationals.

"These sustained measures have resulted in significant detections and enforcement outcomes," he said.

A state-level committee has also been formed to identify and deport foreigners who have overstayed their permitted duration and to ensure coordination among various enforcement agencies.

The Deputy Chief Minister noted that the Meghalaya Resident Safety and Security Act has been operationalised in parts of East Khasi Hills district to regu-

late the entry and stay of outsiders.

Authorities are also invoking provisions of the Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025, the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and guidelines issued by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs to deal with infiltration cases.

Tynsong appealed to civil society organisations and citizens to cooperate with law enforcement agencies.

"The government appeals to all organisations and citizens to cooperate with the authorities and allow verification to be carried out through lawful means," he said, stressing that while firm action will continue against illegal migrants, genuine Indian citizens must not be harassed in the process.

With border vigilance intensified and institutional mechanisms strengthened, the state government signalled that enforcement against illegal infiltration will remain a priority in the coming months.

Zubeen Garg Death Case: Wife Seeks Fast-Track Court as Trial Faces Repeated Delays

GUWAHATI

The trial in the death case of Assamese music icon Zubeen Garg has yet to commence formally, with his wife Garima Saikia Garg and the prosecution expressing concern over what they described as "unnecessary delays" caused by repeated petitions filed by the accused.

Addressing reporters on Monday outside the Kamrup Metropolitan District and Sessions Court, Garima Saikia Garg, accompanied by senior Public Prosecutor Ziaul Kamar, urged authorities to expedite proceedings by constituting a fast-track court.

"The proceedings are being unnecessarily delayed. We have requested a fast-track court for day-to-day hearings, but it hasn't been established yet. I appeal to the authorities to act on this," she said.

According to the prosecution, regular hearings in the case have not begun as multiple applications

filed by the accused are still pending before the court.

"The regular hearings have not started. The accused are employing tactics to delay the process by filing repeated petitions," Kamar told reporters, adding that the trial can proceed only after these applications are disposed of.

The court has scheduled the next hearing for March 2.

Zubeen Garg died on September 19 last year while swimming near Lazarus Island in Singapore, where he had travelled to attend the 4th North East India Festival (NEIF). While Singapore's Coroner Court concluded that the singer's death was accidental — stating that he had consumed a substantial amount of alcohol and drowned after refusing to wear a life vest — the Assam government treated the case as a murder investigation. Subsequently, seven individuals were arrested in connec-

tion with the case.

Those currently in custody include NEIF organiser Shyamkanu Mahanta, Garg's manager Siddharth Sharma, band members Shekhar Jyoti Goswami and Amrit Prabha Mahanta, his cousin and Assam Police DSP Sandipan Garg, and personal security officers Nandeswar Bora and Prabin Baishya.

Shyamkanu Mahanta is the younger brother of former Assam DGP Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta, who later served as Chief Information Commissioner of the Assam State Information Commission. Another elder brother, Nani Gopal Mahanta, is Vice-Chancellor of Gauhati University and had earlier advised Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on education matters.

Several petitions have been filed by the accused seeking various forms of relief. Shyamkanu Mahanta has moved the court to unfreeze his

bank accounts. Siddharth Sharma has sought access to proceedings of Singapore's Coroner Court and requested discharge from certain charges. Shekhar Jyoti Goswami has filed a similar plea seeking relief from specific sections invoked against him.

The prosecution maintains that these repeated legal applications have stalled the commencement of regular trial proceedings.

The Assam Cabinet had earlier appointed a five-member team of Special Public Prosecutors to handle the case, with Ziaul Kamar leading the prosecution. Senior advocate Brojendra Mohan Chaudhuri has been appointed as an additional prosecutor, while Kishor Dutta, Pranjal Dutta and Vikash Jammur are serving as assistant prosecutors.

As legal arguments continue over preliminary petitions, the victim's family has reiterated its demand for swift justice.

PHH Beneficiaries Entitled to RTI Fee Waiver: Manipur Information Commission in Landmark Order



KRC TIMES NEWS DESK

IMPHAL: In a major ruling that may impact thousands of poor families, the Manipur Information Commission has settled a long running confusion between the Right to Information Act and the National Food Security Act on fee exemption.

The order came on February 16 in Complaint Case No. 15 of 2025 filed by Asem Roshan Singh against the SPIO-cum-BDO of Wangoi.

At the centre of the case was a gap in law. The RTI Act gives full fee exemption to people holding Below Poverty Line cards. But after the Food Security Act came into force, BPL cards were replaced with Priority Household and Antyodaya Anna Yojana categories. Since BPL cards are no longer issued, many PHH families were being asked to pay RTI fees. This blocked access to information.

The Commission has now ruled that PHH beneficiaries are the present legal successors of the old BPL

category. It said the shift from BPL to PHH under the food law was only a change in system, not removal of poverty status.

The order clearly states that asking RTI fees from certified PHH beneficiaries is not legally valid. It also warned that such demands defeat the spirit of the RTI law and weaken citizens' rights.

The Commission further noted that confusing official communications can discourage poor citizens from using the RTI Act.

Calling the decision significant, the Commission said welfare changes under one law cannot take away rights given under another.

The ruling will now serve as guidance for all Public Information Officers in Manipur while dealing with RTI applications from PHH and AAY families. The complainant thanked the State Chief Information Commissioner for what he described as a clear and citizen friendly interpretation of the law.

Numaligarh 2G Ethanol Plant Eyes 30,000 Bamboo Farmers; Rs 2.4 Crore Paid Directly to Growers

NUMALIGARH

Assam's push into next-generation bio-fuels is gathering pace, with Assam Bio Ethanol Pvt Ltd (ABEPL) targeting partnerships with over 30,000 bamboo farmers in the next three years to secure raw material for its second-generation ethanol facility at Numaligarh. The plant, located in Golaghat district, is the world's only operational second-generation bioethanol unit using bamboo as feedstock, setting it apart from conventional first-generation ethanol plants that rely on food crops such as sugarcane or maize.

ABEPL Chief Executive Officer Rupiyoti Hazarika said the unit is currently in its start-up phase and is expected to stabilise within a week before moving to full-scale commercial production.

"During the trial run, we produced fuel-grade ethanol with 99.7 per cent purity. The normal benchmark is 99.5 per cent," he said.

Spread across 43 acres, the plant requires approximately five lakh metric tonnes per annum (MTPA) of green bamboo to achieve its installed ethanol production capacity.

Beyond ethanol, the facility is de-



signed to produce 19,000 tonnes of furfural, 11,000 tonnes of acetic acid, 32,000 tonnes of liquid carbon dioxide, and generate 25 megawatts of green power annually.

To ensure sustained raw material supply, the company plans to develop bamboo plantations across 12,500 hectares over the next three years, using around 60 lakh saplings.

"So far, we have registered more than 4,200 farmers for bamboo sourcing. Our target is to reach over 30,000 farmers within a 300-kilometre sourcing radius," Hazarika said.

The company has already disbursed ₹2.4 crore directly into farmers' bank accounts for bamboo procurement,

eliminating middlemen in the process.

"We are sourcing green bamboo from 16 districts in Assam, four districts in Arunachal Pradesh, five in Nagaland and one in Meghalaya," he added.

Currently, bamboo cultivation is underway on 300 hectares of land with registered farmers. ABEPL has distributed one lakh saplings free of cost, with a significant portion going to institutional players such as tea estates.

With the government permitting up to five per cent of tea garden land to be used for non-tea purposes, several tea estate owners have expressed interest in bamboo cultivation.

"We are identifying barren and un-

used land for bamboo cultivation. We are not encouraging the conversion of agricultural land," Hazarika emphasised. For ethanol production, bamboo is chopped into 25 mm chips before processing. Although the Northeast hosts multiple bamboo species, the plant does not require any specific variety for fuel production.

In the first phase, ABEPL has identified 24 bamboo chipping units across four districts. Agreements have been signed with eight units, and four have already begun supplying bamboo chips.

The plant operates as a zero-waste facility, utilising every part of the bamboo to maximise value addition. Officials estimate that the project could inject nearly ₹200 crore annually into the rural economy through farmer engagement, transport, and ancillary services.

ABEPL is a joint venture promoted by state-run Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL), Finland-based Fortum 3 BV, and Chempolis Oy.

The ₹4,930-crore project, with an installed production capacity of 49,000 tonnes per annum, was inaugurated in September 2025 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

With commercial operations set to scale up, the Numaligarh ethanol plant is expected to play a pivotal role in strengthening India's biofuel blending targets while simultaneously creating a large bamboo-based rural economy across the Northeast.

Quest!

A "Mouse potato" is someone who spends a lot of time at a computer.

Register

@

5E SUCCESS

KRC PLACEMENTS

APPLY NOW

Send your resume for a free profiling session at

e-mail: seforsuccess@gmail.com

Registration FREE

A division of KRC Foundation

"Connecting the unconnected"

for more information schedule an online appointment

Bihar government signs MoUs worth Rs 468 crore at AI Impact Summit



NEW DELHI

The Government of Bihar on Tuesday signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) worth Rs 468 crore at the world's largest India AI Impact Summit and Expo 2026.

The agreements were signed with several major technology companies as well as with the Indian Institute of Technology Patna (IIT Patna).

At the summit, innovators from Bihar engaged with leading global companies associated with artificial intelligence.

According to an official statement, "To promote innovation, incubation and employment, Bihar has signed MoU of Rs. 60 crore for setting up Bihar AI CoE and 250 Crore for setting up a research park at IIT Patna. For setting up the Bihar AI coe, Tiger Analytics will be Industry Partner and IIT Patna will be Academic Partner".

Under the Bihar GCC Policy 2026 and Bihar IT Policy 2024, the state government also signed MoUs with notable GCC and IT units, including Red Cyber (Rs 103 crore), GrowQR (Rs 30 crore) and CIP (Rs 25 crore), among others.

Chief Secretary Pratyay Amrit, who attended the occasion, said, "This move is

expected to create over 10,000 new job opportunities in the field of emerging technologies. Additionally, more than 50,000 youth will receive skill development training through AI-linked programs".

The five-day summit shall witness participation from CEOs of more than 100 technology companies and representatives from over 135 countries.

Bihar is exploring opportunities to integrate artificial intelligence into governance and ensure more effective implementation of government schemes.

It is worth noting that the Government of Bihar recently approved the Bihar Global Capacity Centre (GCC) Policy 2026 and the Bihar Semiconductor Policy 2026 to position the State as a global technology hub for eastern and northeastern India.

Bihar's Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary inaugurated the Bihar State Pavilion at the India AI Impact Summit & Expo 2026, held at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi.

The Union Minister of Panchayati Raj and Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Rajiv Ranjan Singh, was the Chief Guest on the occasion.

The programme was conducted under the chairmanship of the Union Minister for Textiles, Giriraj Singh.

Minister of Information Technology, Government of Bihar, Shreyasi Singh, Industry Minister Dilip Kumar Jaiswal and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Kumar Jha were also present.

Other attendees included Pratyay Amrit, Chief Secretary, Government of Bihar; B. Rajender, Additional Chief Secretary, GAD; Kundan Kumar, Secretary, Industries; Abhay Kumar Singh, Secretary, DIT; Saurabh Yadav, Director of Agriculture; Prof. Pritam Kumar, IIT Patna; and Prof. T. N. Singh, Director, IIT Patna.

Later, Pratyay Amrit stated, "To develop Bihar as the technology hub of northeastern India, the state government has undertaken several major initiatives. These include the announcement of a 'Mega AI Core of Engineering' under the Bihar AI Mission, signing of agreements with industry partners and academic partners, signing of investment intent letters with leading investors, unveiling of state policies, launch of the Bihar GCC Policy 2026 and Bihar Semiconductor Policy 2026, and the establishment of a Research Park at IIT Patna, among others".

As India emerges as a global agenda-setter in the field of artificial intelligence, Bihar is steadily establishing itself as a technology hub in northeastern India. The introduction of the Bihar GCC Policy, Semiconductor Policy and IT Policy has significantly heightened interest among global technology companies in the state.

India, France elevate ties to 'special global strategic partnership'



NEW DELHI/MUMBAI

India and France elevated their ties to a "special global strategic partnership" with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron vowing to significantly ramp up bilateral cooperation in

hours after the French leader landed in the city on a three-day India visit.

The two leaders also virtually inaugurated an assembly line in Karnataka's Vemagal to build Airbus H125 helicopters. Modi hosted Macron for wide-ranging talks in Mumbai,

hours after the French leader landed in the city on a three-day India visit.

"India and France share a very special relationship. France is one of India's oldest strategic partners. And together with President Macron, we have given this strategic part-

nership unprecedented depth and energy," the prime minister said in his media statement.

"On the basis of this same trust and shared vision, today we are establishing our relationship as a 'Special Global Strategic Partnership,'" he said.

Modi also made a reference to the H-125 helicopter assembly line.

"We take pride in the fact that, together, India and France will manufacture in India the world's only helicopter capable of flying to the heights of Mount Everest and export it to the entire world," he said.

"The year 2026 is a turning point in the relations between India and Europe. Just a few days ago, we signed the largest and most ambitious Free Trade Agreement in India's history with the European Union," he said.

The prime minister described India-France relationship as a force for global stability.

"The world is passing through a phase of uncertainty today. In such an environment, the India-France partnership is a force for global stability," he said.

In his remarks, Macron said India is one of France's most trusted partners.

"From Rafale jets to submarines, we are expanding defence cooperation," he said.

"Both our countries firmly believe in rule of law, and it has been demonstrated in past few years," he noted.

Macron said India and France will continue to cooperate to combat terrorism.

INTERNATIONAL

The She vote in Bangladesh and how it has placed the victorious BNP on notice

DHAKA

Women in Bangladesh follow a distinct colour code on national red-letter days. On Poila Baisakh, 15 April, the lal paar shada shari—white with a red border—is donned to usher in the Bengali New Year. On Bijoy Dibas, December 16, marking the 1971 surrender of the Pakistan Army in Dhaka, the palette turns green. On February 21, black is worn as homage to those killed in Dhaka in 1952 for seeking national language status for Bengali as well as Urdu.

Today, too, has its own special colour: bright yellow in a range of hues. Across Bangladesh, women in sunshine sarees, flowers woven into their hair, are celebrating basanta utsav, the advent of spring. They are also celebrating the verdict in the just-concluded election. The fact that the BNP has won a landslide victory with 212 seats and the Jamaat-e-Islami was held at 77 is, for many women, a big relief.

"Though I am traditionally an Awami League voter, I voted BNP this time," said a 42-year-old woman in Dhaka's upmarket Banani who works in the social sector. "Anything to keep the Jamaat out. Because of them I had packed away my track suits and sleeveless blouses. Now I can use them again. This is not frivolous. The Jamaat had cast a long shadow on women."

Ordinary women who ventured out in trousers instead of traditional attire were heckled, even assaulted, for the way they dressed. Often, the hecklers were women supporters of the Jamaat. Daily-wage earners were equally alarmed when the Jamaat manifesto proposed women work five hours during maternity instead of eight. For women paid by the hour, fewer hours meant one thing: lower wages.

In its manifesto, the Jamaat promised to increase the representation of



women in the cabinet if elected to power. Ironically, the Jamaat did not field a single woman candidate and was possibly the only political party in Bangladesh to have that distinction.

Though Bangladesh has produced two powerful women prime ministers in its political history, the representation and participation of women in Bangladesh politics is poor.

Of 12.7 crore voters, nearly half are women and male voters outnumber them by just 20-odd lakh. And yet the number of women who contested the elections this time was a mere 85 out of over 2034 candidates. The number who won was a shocking seven. Of the winners, six belong to the BNP. The seventh is an independent who was earlier with the BNP but walked out after she was

denied a ticket. Granular data on women's turnout and voting pattern is awaited, but they had queued up in conspicuously large numbers at the polling stations on February 12 and may have had a significant role in keeping the Jamaat-e-Islami to 77 seats.

Besides the women's vote, another reason for the BNP's strong performance could be the secret vote of staunch Awami Leaguers, particularly women, who went out and voted in numbers for the BNP—not because they switched loyalty but to keep the Jamaat out.

No one would speak on the record. But a 37-year-old male Dhaka resident whose family is traditionally pro-Awami League said he was stunned when a number of his "tufis and mamis and

a variety of aunts" went and voted for the BNP.

"I did not go to vote. But my aunts took a very firm and considered decision to vote BNP. They said it would be a kalanka—a disgrace—if their non-participation in the election enabled the Jamaat come to power," he said.

The BNP may have also benefited from the floating electorate called "fleeing" or "sceptic" voters in Bangladesh, which accounts for around 15 per cent of votes. Not ideologically committed to any political party, they chose BNP this time since they did not have the Awami League option. Those who did not wish to waste their vote chose BNP as it is a "known devil" that the Awami League has defeated in the past. The Jamaat in power is an unknown quantity.

The Daily Star, a popular English newspaper in Dhaka, carried a "message" to the newly-elected government from Naziba Basher, well-known actor, dancer and a journalist at the paper. It was a message—poignant but steely—from a woman voter to the new party in power.

"On one side stood a politics that openly imagines a future where women shrink, where our public lives are conditional, negotiated, permitted in moderation. On the other side stood a party whose history carries the smell of muscle, patronage and street power, a past heavy with intimidation and extortion..."

"Many of us voted against fear more than for ideology. We voted to prevent our lives from being negotiated in the theological committees. We voted so our ambitions would not require permission slips..." she wrote.

"You were not handed a mandate of love. You were handed a probationary contract. And women were central to that contract."

Bangladesh's women have put the new government on notice.

Khamenei says US 'will not succeed' in destroying Iran as talks start



TEHRAN

Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said Tuesday that US President Donald Trump would not succeed in destroying the Islamic republic, as talks between the two countries began in Geneva.

"In one of his recent speeches, the US president said that for 47 years America has not succeeded in destroying the Islamic republic... I tell you: you will not succeed either," said Khamenei in a speech. The remarks came as Tehran and Washington kicked off a second round of talks on Tuesday in Geneva.

The first round was held earlier in February, after earlier talks collapsed during last year's Iran-Israel war.

The latest talks come after Washington deployed an aircraft carrier group to the Gulf following Iran's

deadly crackdown last month on anti-government protests, which were triggered by economic hardship.

During his speech, Khamenei warned that the US warship deployed in the Gulf could be sunk.

"We constantly hear that they (the United States) have sent a warship toward Iran. A warship is certainly a dangerous weapon, but even more dangerous is the weapon capable of sinking it," he said. Khamenei expressed scepticism over the outcome of the negotiations with the US.

"If there are to be negotiations—because there is no real room for negotiation—determining the outcome of the negotiations in advance is a mistake and madness," he said, referring to the US calls on Iran to abandon its nuclear programme.

During Iran's 12-day war with Israel in June, the

United States joined briefly with strikes on key Iranian nuclear facilities.

Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium, which had reached 60 per cent purity before the war, remain among the key sticking points between Tehran and Washington.

The US has repeatedly called for zero enrichment and has sought to address Iran's ballistic missile programme and its support for militant groups in the region -- issues which Israel has pushed to include in the talks.

Iran has however said its right to enrich uranium was non-negotiable and insisted that the talks be focused only on the nuclear issue.

"The statements of the American president, at times threatening and at times dictating what should and should not be done, reveal a desire to dominate the Iranian nation," said Khamenei.

Decibels of Democracy to Watts of Progress: A Needonomics Vision for Renewable Energy in Indian Parliament

PROF M.M.GOEL

Needonomics School of Thought, rooted in the philosophy of optimizing resources for human welfare, presents an unconventional yet thought-provoking proposition: harnessing the “noise energy” generated in the Parliament of India for renewable power creation. What is often dismissed as disorder, disruption, or democratic dissonance can, through the lens of Needonomics, be reframed as an untapped resource. The decibels of democracy, if scientifically channelled, can indeed be converted into watts of progress.

Democracy’s Soundscape: From Disorder to Resource

Indian parliamentary proceedings are globally known not only for their vibrant debates but also for frequent disruptions, slogan-shouting, desk-thumping, and high-volume exchanges between treasury benches and the opposition. While such expressions are defended as democratic rights, they often impede legislative productivity, delay policy decisions, and burden the exchequer.

Needonomics does not merely criticize this phenomenon—it seeks to transform it. If noise is inevitable, why not make it productive? Sound, after all, is energy. Modern acoustic science confirms that high decibel levels can be converted into electrical energy through technologies such as piezoelectric sensors and acoustic energy harvesters.

Thus, what appears as wasted parliamentary turbulence could become a micro-renewable energy source.

Science Behind Noise Energy Harvesting

Sound travels as mechanical waves. When these waves strike specialized materials—such as piezoelectric crystals—they create



mechanical stress, generating electric charge. Globally, experimental projects have already converted traffic noise, airport sound, and industrial vibrations into usable electricity.

Applying this innovation to parliamentary settings is conceptually feasible because:

Debates often exceed 85–100 decibels during peak disruptions.

Enclosed chambers amplify sound intensity.

Sessions run for long hours across the year.

Even if the harvested power is modest, the symbolic value would be immense—democracy literally powering development.

Needonomics Perspective: Waste to Welfare

Needonomics emphasizes need-based optimization of all resources—material, moral, intellectual, and environmental. Noise energy harvesting aligns perfectly with this framework:

Resource Efficiency: Converts non-productive sound into productive power.

Behavioral Reflection: Makes lawmakers conscious that even their noise has measurable consequences.

Symbolic Accountability: Transforms disruption into contribution.

In this model, every slogan raised and every desk struck contributes—however minutely—to national energy needs.

Consensus Deficit vs Salary Consensus

A paradox of parliamentary functioning is that consensus is rare on many pressing national issues—economic reforms, social justice measures, environmental policies, or governance accountability. Yet, remarkable unity often emerges when matters concern enhancement of salaries, allowances, and privileges of parliamentarians.

This contrast raises ethical questions:

Are elected representatives always faithful to the developmental mandate of voters?

Does political polarization selectively dissolve in matters of personal gain?

Can democratic energy be better aligned with public welfare priorities?

Needonomics does not indict individuals; it critiques systemic misalignment between mandate and motivation.

Energy for Viksit Bharat

India’s aspiration to become a Viksit Bharat requires multi-dimensional energy security:

Renewable expansion

Behavioral conservation

Technological innovation

Institutional accountability

Noise-to-energy systems in Parliament would not significantly power cities—but they would power national consciousness.

Imagine:

Parliament lighting partly powered by its own debates.

Display meters showing “Energy Generated Today by Democratic Discourse.”

Public dashboards linking legislative productivity with energy output.

Such symbolism would inspire citizens to rethink waste—whether of sound, time, food, or resources.

From Disruption to Discipline

The proposal also carries a subtle moral nudge. If lawmakers know that excessive noise is being measured, recorded, and converted, it may produce behavioral moderation.

Three outcomes are possible:

Reduced Disruptions – Awareness may encourage restraint.

Responsible Expression – Quality debates over loud protests.

Productive Symbolism – If noise occurs, it still contributes.

Thus, technology becomes both an energy generator and a democratic mirror.

Policy and Implementation Possibilities

To operationalize this vision,

pilot initiatives could be explored:

Installation of acoustic panels beneath desks.

Piezoelectric flooring in aisles.

Sound-capture domes in central chambers.

Integration with solar rooftop systems.

Energy generated could power:

Parliamentary lighting

Digital display boards

Committee rooms

Visitor galleries

Even partial substitution of conventional electricity would signal commitment to sustainability.

Educational and Civic Value

Beyond energy, the initiative would carry pedagogical power:

Students visiting Parliament would witness innovation.

Citizens would see accountability translated into action.

Media narratives would shift from “noise as nuisance” to “noise as resource.”

Democracy would be seen not merely as argumentative—but regenerative.

Ethical Reflection: Mandate and Mindfulness

Needonomics ultimately invites deeper introspection.

Electoral mandates are sacred public trusts. When parliamentary time is lost to disorder, national development loses momentum.

If disruptions must occur, let them at least illuminate Parliament—literally and metaphorically.

The transformation of noise into energy becomes a metaphor for transforming conflict into consensus, rhetoric into reform, and mandate into measurable progress.

Conclusion:

The idea of converting parliamentary noise into renewable energy may appear symbolic, even utopian. Yet history shows that transformative innovations often begin as imaginative provocations.

Needonomics urges policymakers to think beyond conventional resource frameworks:

Waste can be wealth.

Disruption can be development.

Decibels can become watts.

In channeling the soundscape of democracy into the power grid of progress, India would send a powerful message to the world—that even its disagreements generate energy for nation-building.

From the echoes of debate can emerge the electricity of development.

From the noise of Parliament can glow the light of Viksit Bharat.



mechanical stress, generating electric charge. Globally, experimental projects have already converted traffic noise, airport sound, and industrial vibrations into usable electricity.

Applying this innovation to parliamentary settings is conceptually feasible because:

Debates often exceed 85–100 decibels during peak disruptions.

Enclosed chambers amplify sound intensity.

Sessions run for long hours across the year.

Even if the harvested power is modest, the symbolic value would be immense—democracy literally powering development.

Needonomics Perspective: Waste to Welfare

Needonomics emphasizes need-based optimization of all resources—material, moral, intellectual, and environmental. Noise energy harvesting aligns perfectly with this framework:

Resource Efficiency: Converts non-productive sound into productive power.

Behavioral Reflection: Makes lawmakers conscious that even their noise has measurable consequences.

Symbolic Accountability: Transforms disruption into contribution.

In this model, every slogan raised and every desk struck contributes—however minutely—to national energy needs.

Consensus Deficit vs Salary Consensus

A paradox of parliamentary functioning is that consensus is rare on many pressing national issues—economic reforms, social justice measures, environmental policies, or governance accountability. Yet, remarkable unity often emerges when matters concern enhancement of salaries, allowances, and privileges of parliamentarians.

This contrast raises ethical questions:

Are elected representatives always faithful to the developmental mandate of voters?

Does political polarization selectively dissolve in matters of personal gain?

Can democratic energy be better aligned with public welfare priorities?

Needonomics does not indict individuals; it critiques systemic misalignment between mandate and motivation.

Energy for Viksit Bharat

India’s aspiration to become a Viksit Bharat requires multi-dimensional energy security:

Renewable expansion

Behavioral conservation

Technological innovation

Institutional accountability

Noise-to-energy systems in Parliament would not significantly power cities—but they would power national consciousness.

Imagine:

Parliament lighting partly powered by its own debates.

Display meters showing “Energy Generated Today by Democratic Discourse.”

Public dashboards linking legislative productivity with energy output.

Such symbolism would inspire citizens to rethink waste—whether of sound, time, food, or resources.

From Disruption to Discipline

The proposal also carries a subtle moral nudge. If lawmakers know that excessive noise is being measured, recorded, and converted, it may produce behavioral moderation.

Three outcomes are possible:

Reduced Disruptions – Awareness may encourage restraint.

Responsible Expression – Quality debates over loud protests.

Productive Symbolism – If noise occurs, it still contributes.

Thus, technology becomes both an energy generator and a democratic mirror.

Policy and Implementation Possibilities

To operationalize this vision,

Om Shanti

Lt. Basanti Kar

SHRADHANJALI

All family members, friends and well wishers fondly remembers you on 2nd Death Anniversary

18 FEBRUARY 2022

Smt. Simantasri Gupta & family members

Nabadarsho, Birati, Kolkata. WB.
Tel; 8721838313

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@krcfoundation.org For Details Visit: https://bit.ly/krcplacements 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, send an email: 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 InfoCom Solutions at: infocom.krc@gmail.com 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 For Details Visit: https://bit.ly/krcstudentinternship or www.krcfoundation.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 certificates. Send articles at: info@krcfoundation.org For Details Visit: https://bit.ly/NEIndiaWritingStarContest www.krcfoundation.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: krcetimes@gmail.com /WP: 8721838313 For Advertisement: info@krcfoundation.org / WP: 9330830083 For Subscription: krcetimes@gmail.com / WP: 8721838313 Editor: biswadeep.gupta@gmail.com / WP: 8721838313

Brain VISION

KRC Shaping Careers For a Successful Tomorrow

A millionaire once said that if you sit at a table, make sure you talk about God, growth, business, dreams, and money, NOT people