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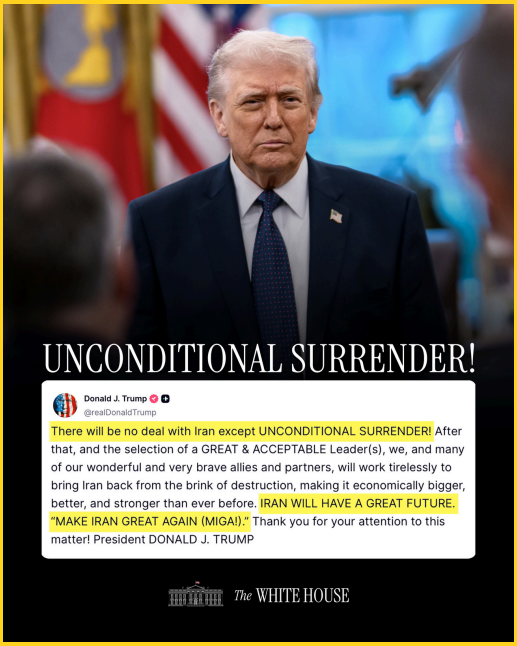
Sunday Special
8th March 2026

Will Bangladesh Move Away from Anti-India Rhetoric?



"War in the Gulf: Iran- Israel - US Conflict: Its Global Economic Consequences and India's Strategic Role"

Demand for ST Status for Meiteis Gains Attention Amid Debate on Constitutional Safeguards

A Gulf War That May Not End Quickly

NEIR Collaborates with NEZCC for Madhya Dakshini Festival 2026 in Meghalaya

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"War in the Gulf: Iran- Israel - US Conflict: Its Global Economic Consequences and India's Strategic Role"

Will Bangladesh Move Away from Anti-India Rhetoric?

From the Editor

Orienting Students to Career Road Map

The Examination for Class X and XII is over for some, and students, parents, schools and tutors are all tense to shape their respective stakes. The fierce competition with oneself to achieve good grades and to mark these exams as milestones is healthy and traditionally considered a benchmark in education.

With changing times, perspectives and curriculum are changing, and students are exposed to multiple perspectives and priorities.

One of the priority that students and parents needs to take into account is to start developing a roadmap for employment and career development. Just passing these examinations with flying colours will not guarantee a successful employment-linked career.

We all know the struggle one has to face post-education, mainly graduation, as no ready jobs are available and competition is stiff.

So parents must seek proper guidance for their wards and help chalk out a career plan with multiple options in sight.

Education in India has become a big business, and it is difficult to make the right choices when it comes to making a decision. So the children should be exposed to a proper plan of action and make decisions taking into consideration the financial status of each parent, as well as the family situation they are in.

There is a mad rush and peer pressure among the children to follow trends, and parents are subject to pressure from their children as they fail to plan. It is not always a suitable situation for a family to send their wards out of the home for studies by accepting any offer they get.

In fact a due consideration to finance, budget, potential, security, etc., needs a clear consideration, and one needs to take a judicious decision while making a decision for their children.

There should prevail an open communication between both parents along with their child, and make a poised decision without any emotional angle, but on a logical conclusion.

The children should be very clear about their goals and stick to the commitments given to their parents, as it is about their life and not their parents'. Parents can only facilitate resources, but the real work is to be done by the child.

Our education system should also encourage real-time work, career options and help students guide them in curating a path for their upcoming career. Education and academics are a must, but market readiness, skills and employability index are what will matter in the long run.

Stay Enriched.

Biswadeep Gupta
Editor-in-Chief

Scan to Connect

BDF Writes Open Letter to PM Ahead of Barak Valley Visit, Raises Key Issues

Silchar: The Barak Democratic Front (BDF) has written an open letter to the Prime Minister ahead of his proposed visit to Barak Valley on March 14, welcoming the visit while placing several long-standing demands and concerns of the region before the central government.

In the letter, the organisation extended an advance welcome to the Prime Minister for visiting Barak Valley, describing the region as the southernmost and historically significant part of Assam with a unique demographic and cultural identity

The group also pointed out that despite its importance, the valley has long suffered from neglect and biased policies, resulting in slower socio-economic development compared to other parts of the country.

The BDF expressed hope that the Prime Minister's visit would address the issue of underdevelopment and lead to the announcement of new projects and policies for the region.

The letter highlighted unemployment as one of the most pressing concerns in the valley. According to the organisation, nearly four lakh people are registered as unemployed, while the actual number may be even higher. It said many educated youths with graduate and postgraduate degrees are forced to leave the valley in search of low-paid private jobs or even drive e-rickshaws to support their families.

The organisation also raised the issue of job reservation for local youth in third and fourth grade state government posts in the valley. It noted that although the state government had earlier committed to reserving these jobs for local candidates and a legislative provision was approved by the Assembly, the decision has not yet been implemented.

The closure of major public sector enterprises in the region was another concern mentioned in the letter. The Front pointed out that industries such as the Hindustan Paper Mill at Panchgram were shut down due to negligence and policy failures. It also said that a previously announced plan to set up an industrial hub on the abandoned land of the Panchgram paper mill has not seen any progress so far.

The letter further stated that Barak Valley has abundant natural and human resources, and proper planning and investment could create employment opportunities and contribute significantly to the state's economy.

Transport and communication problems were identified as the second major hurdle to development. The organisation said road and rail connectivity with the rest of the country is frequently disrupted during the rainy season because of landslides and floods. While welcoming the proposed fast express highway connecting the valley with Barapani, the Front urged the government to expedite work on the alternative railway line between Chandranathpur and Lanka.

The group also referred to the long-pending East-West Corridor project connecting Silchar with Saurashtra, a dream project of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. It said that although the state government had earlier announced that the remaining 30-kilometre stretch in Dima Hasao district would be completed by January this year, no concrete progress has been reported.

Flooding was described as another major challenge faced by the valley almost every year. The organisation suggested that dredging of the Barak River could offer a permanent solution.

It also noted that after the devastating floods of 2022, the state government had promised to improve the drainage systems in Silchar and Karimganj towns and repair embankments along the Barak River. However, the letter claimed that only around 30 percent of the work has been completed so far.

Among other demands, the Front reiterated the long-standing demand for a bench of the Guwahati High Court in Barak Valley to reduce the difficulties faced by people who currently have to travel to Guwahati for legal matters.

The letter also raised the demand to rename Silchar Railway Station as "Bhasha Shahid Station" in memory of the eleven language martyrs who sacrificed their lives during the language movement. The organisation stated that the proposal has already received approval from the Union Home Ministry and the Railway Ministry, and only a formal communication from the state government regarding the script of the name in three languages is required to finalise the process.

Expressing hope for positive steps, the Barak Democratic Front urged the Prime Minister to consider these long-pending issues and announce measures that would help the region move towards progress and prosperity.

The letter was signed by BDF Chief Convener Pradip Dutta Roy, along with conveners Hrishikesh Dey, Joydeep Bhattacharjee (Media Cell), Ainul Hoque Majumder, Debayan Deb, Haradhan Dutta, and Khaidem Kanta Singh.

"War in the Gulf: Iran- Israel - US Conflict: Its Global Economic Consequences and India's Strategic Role"

Economic consequences belong to the entire world

The escalating confrontation involving Iran, Israel, and the United States is rapidly transforming from a regional military crisis into a potential global economic shock. Wars in the Middle East rarely remain confined to battlefields. Their consequences ripple outward through oil markets, shipping lanes, financial systems, and geopolitical alignments affecting economies across continents.

Col (Dr.) Ashwani Kumar, M-in-D, VSM (Retd)

Today, the world is witnessing not merely a military confrontation but the unfolding of a strategic crisis with the potential to reshape global energy security, economic stability, and international diplomacy. In an interconnected world, the consequences of such conflicts travel far beyond the region in which they originate.

- A Rivalry Decades in the Making
- Strategic Geography: The Energy Artery of the World.
- Oil Markets: The Immediate Shockwave
- Inflation and the Global Economic Domino Effect
- Financial Markets and Investor Behaviour
- Trade, Shipping, and Supply Chains
- The Impact on Developing Economies
- India's Strategic Role as a Stabilising Actor
- The Risk of a Wider Regional War

A Rivalry Decades in the Making

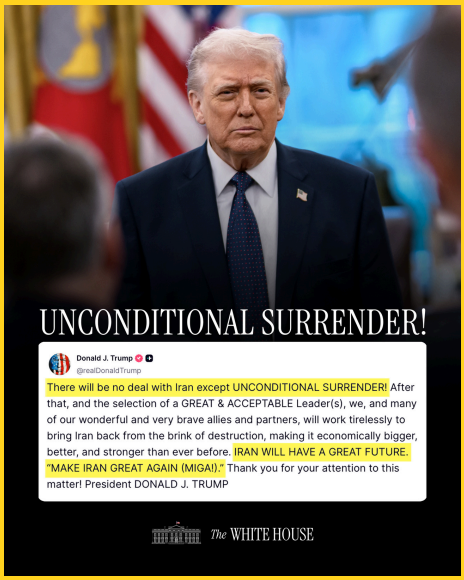
The tensions between Iran and Israel can be traced back to the Iranian Revolution of 1979. The revolution replaced Iran's pro-Western monarchy with an Islamic republic whose leadership adopted a confrontational stance toward Israel and the United States. Over the following decades, the rivalry intensified around several key issues as under:-
Iran's nuclear programme, Israel's security concerns, and Tehran's growing influence in regional conflicts through allied groups operating across Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Yemen.

The United States, as Israel's principal strategic partner and a dominant military presence in the region, has consistently supported Israel's security posture. This triangular dynamic - Iran, Israel, and the United States has therefore remained one of the most volatile fault lines in global geopolitics.
While previous confrontations often occurred indirectly through proxy conflicts, the present escalation carries the risk of direct strategic confrontation, raising concerns across the international community.

Strategic Geography: The Energy Artery of the World

The Middle East occupies a uniquely critical position in the global energy system. At the centre of this strategic geography lies the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow maritime corridor connecting the Persian Gulf with international waters. Nearly one-fifth of the world's crude oil supply passes through this narrow passage every day. Major energy exporters, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Qatar, depend on this route to deliver energy resources to global markets.
Iran's geographic proximity to this chokepoint provides it with a powerful strategic lever. Even without achieving outright military dominance, Tehran can exert considerable pressure on global markets by threatening shipping lanes or energy infrastructure.

The mere possibility of disruption in this corridor is enough to trigger anxiety in global energy markets.



Oil Markets: The Immediate Shockwave

Energy markets respond almost instantly to geopolitical tensions in the Gulf. Oil traders closely monitor developments in the region because even minor disruptions can significantly affect global supply.

When tensions escalate, insurance costs for oil tankers increase sharply, shipping companies reconsider their routes, and markets begin pricing in what analysts call a "war risk premium."
Such premiums reflect not only the possibility of actual supply disruption but also the uncertainty surrounding future developments.
History provides several examples from the oil shocks of the 1970s to the Gulf conflicts where wars in the Middle East triggered dramatic spikes in oil prices. If the present confrontation intensifies, global energy markets could again experience sharp volatility.

Rising crude oil prices affect every sector of modern economies, increasing the cost of transportation, power generation, aviation fuel, fertilizers, and industrial production.

Inflation and the Global Economic Domino Effect

Oil is the life blood of modern economic activity. When its price rises significantly, inflationary pressure spreads rapidly across national economies.
Transportation becomes more expensive, manufacturing costs rise, and food prices increase because modern agriculture depends heavily on fuel and petrochemical inputs.
For central banks already struggling to maintain price stability, a sustained rise in energy prices could complicate monetary policy. Interest rates may remain elevated, slowing investment and economic growth.
This inflationary pressure is particularly dangerous for economies already grappling with slow growth, high public debt, or fragile financial systems.

Trade, Shipping, and Supply Chains.

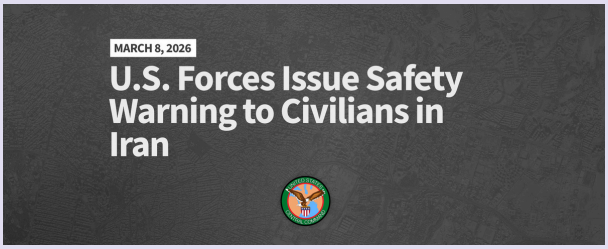
Global trade depends heavily on secure maritime transport. A conflict in the Gulf can disrupt not only oil shipments but also commercial cargo moving between Asia, Europe, and Africa.
Insurance premiums for vessels operating in the region tend to rise sharply during periods of conflict. Shipping companies may divert routes, increasing travel time and transportation costs.
Such disruptions can ripple across global supply chains, delaying manufacturing cycles and raising consumer prices worldwide.
For an already strained global trade system recovering from pandemic era disruptions, another major shock could have far reaching consequences.

Financial Markets and Investor Behaviour

Financial markets typically react to war with heightened volatility. Investors tend to shift their capital toward safer assets such as the US dollar, gold, and government bonds.
Equity markets often experience turbulence as companies anticipate rising operational costs, disrupted trade routes, and uncertain economic conditions.
Energy companies may benefit from higher oil prices, but industries dependent on fuel, such as aviation, shipping, logistics, and heavy manufacturing, may face mounting cost pressures.
This uneven impact creates instability across financial markets and can weaken global economic confidence.

The Impact on Developing Economies

Developing economies are particularly vulnerable to oil price shocks because many rely heavily on imported energy.
For India, which imports a significant portion of its crude oil, rising global prices could increase inflation, widen the current account deficit, and put pressure on government finances.
Higher fuel prices also affect transportation costs, agricultural production, and household expenditure.
Similar challenges confront many economies across Asia and Africa, where energy imports constitute a large share of national spending.



India's Strategic Role as a Stabilising Actor

Amid this turbulent geopolitical landscape, India occupies a unique diplomatic position. Unlike many powers directly involved in the confrontation, India maintains working relationships with all key stakeholders in the region.
New Delhi has historically maintained cordial relations with Iran, while simultaneously strengthening strategic ties with Israel and maintaining a long standing partnership with the United States.
This balanced diplomatic posture provides India with the credibility to act as a bridge between competing interests.
India also has strong economic and strategic stakes in regional stability. The development of the Chabahar Port in Iran, for instance, represents a key element of India's connectivity strategy linking South Asia with Central Asia and beyond.

Furthermore, millions of Indian citizens live and work in the Gulf region, making stability there not only a strategic concern but also a humanitarian priority. Given its civilizational diplomacy, economic influence, and credibility among diverse partners, India could potentially play a constructive role in encouraging dialogue, reducing tensions, and supporting international diplomatic initiatives aimed at preventing escalation.

In an increasingly multipolar world, India's voice carries growing weight in global forums and diplomatic negotiations.

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The Risk of a Wider Regional War

Perhaps the most serious concern is the possibility of the conflict expanding beyond the immediate participants. The Middle East is an intricate network of alliances, rivalries, and proxy actors.
If regional militias or allied states become directly involved, the confrontation could widen into a broader regional war. Such an escalation would threaten global energy markets, disrupt international trade routes, and create geopolitical instability on a scale not witnessed in decades.

To sum up, the confrontation involving Iran, Israel, and the United States is far more than a regional dispute. It is a geopolitical event capable of reshaping global energy markets, financial stability, and international diplomacy.
In today's interconnected world, missiles launched in the Middle East can influence fuel prices in Asia, inflation in Europe, and stock markets in America.
Preventing further escalation, therefore requires not only military restraint but also diplomatic engagement by responsible global actors.
Countries like India, with credibility across competing camps, may play a constructive role in encouraging dialogue and stability. In an era defined by complex geopolitical tensions, diplomacy and strategic balance remain the most powerful tools for preserving peace.
Ultimately, while wars may begin in specific regions, their economic consequences belong to the entire world.

An explosion erupts following strikes near Azadi Tower in Tehran

Saurabh Kumar Chaliha's 'Ayurekha' Showcased at the 50th Anniversary Celebration of Aikyatan

Prantik Deka

In 1976, the visionary writer, journalist and playwright Pabitra Kumar Deka founded Aikyatan, which has evolved into a prominent cultural haven in Guwahati. Today, this cornerstone of Guwahati's cultural scene celebrates its 50th anniversary, having stood the test of time with resilience and grace. Since its inception, Aikyatan has played a pivotal role in shaping the cultural framework of Assam. Even in the absence of its founder, Pabitra Kumar Deka, its impactful contributions continue to thrive in a revitalised form, thanks to the endeavours of his sons, cine-journalist Prantik Deka and filmmaker Prodyut Kumar Deka, alongside a vibrant community of ardent cultural aficionados. This year, as Aikyatan marks its Golden Jubilee, a festive spirit permeates the atmosphere. The future appears to be bright, encouraging fans and enthusiasts to eagerly anticipate what lies ahead.

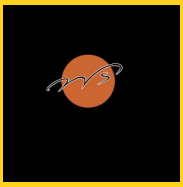
During this momentous occasion of the Golden Jubilee celebration, Aikyatan showcased 'Ayurekha', the sole one-act play written by Saurabh Kumar Chaliha, the artisan of Assamese short stories. This performance took place on the evenings of February 13th and 14th at the New Art Players Auditorium in Guwahati, a venue filled with enthusiasm as it featured two consecutive evening shows of the play.

In the contemporary scientific era, playwright Saurabh Kumar Chaliha adeptly utilises satire to highlight the lingering influence of traditional beliefs, particularly those surrounding palmistry and the interpretation of life lines. This practice still captivates many, even with modern scientific insights. Through his sharp wit and clever dialogues, Chaliha invites audiences to reconsider the validity of such superstitions. The play demonstrates that individuals who adhere to superstitious beliefs continue to subscribe to the notion that their destinies are preordained by the characteristics of their palm lines. This perspective underscores the irrationality of permitting such beliefs to govern one's life decisions. The play serves as both a critique of superstition and a call to embrace rational thought, fostering an environment where constructive discussions can thrive. Both days' performances of the play were a captivating experience for the audience, enlivening the stage with their engaging and immersive storytelling.

Under the perceptive direction of Pradyut Kumar Deka, the play's potential was vividly expressed. The audience found themselves enveloped in an atmosphere of quiet admiration during both evenings of the performance. The performers, through their impeccable portrayals, effectively realised Deka's intricate directorial vision on stage. The seamless performances by Anupam Arindam Goswami, Atonu Kashyap, Rakesh Ranjan Das and Amal Chakraborty significantly enhanced the enjoyment of the play. Furthermore, the music composed by Rahul Das, along with Pona Kalita's lighting and Sanku Baruah's fitting makeup design, contributed to a harmonious flow throughout the entire performance.

Prior to the performance of the play, the audience was entranced by the mime artistry of Moinul Haque, an integral figure of Aikyatan and a recipient of the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award. The portrayals of Assamese social life, conveyed through mime, held the audience's attention on both evenings. The engaging vignettes, which illustrated various aspects of Assamese social life, elicited both laughter and contemplation, earning enthusiastic applause from the audience at the New Art Players Auditorium.

A Gulf War That May Not End Quickly



WAARI SINGBUL NETWORK

Imphal: The killing of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, in coordinated U.S.–Israeli strikes has pushed an already volatile region into open confrontation. What some in Washington may have viewed as a decisive blow now appears to have triggered a far more uncertain and dangerous phase. The assumption seemed simple: remove the head, and the body weakens. Yet Iran's immediate and calibrated retaliation has confounded that logic. Far from collapsing, Tehran has signalled endurance. And endurance, in West Asian geopolitics, often outlasts firepower.

For those of us in Manipur, this may appear distant theatre. But wars in the Gulf rarely remain confined to maps and military briefings. They travel through oil prices, inflation charts, and the everyday cost of living.

Residential buildings near Doha

At the heart of the crisis lies the Strait of Hormuz—a narrow maritime corridor through which nearly a fifth of the world's oil supply passes. Even limited disruption there can send crude prices soaring past $100 a barrel. Markets react not only to blockades, but to risk. A single missile strike, a tanker seizure, or mined waters can tighten insurance premiums and choke shipping lanes.

If oil sustains above triple digits, the consequences are predictable. Inflation rises globally. Central banks delay interest rate cuts. Emerging economies, already strained, face renewed capital outflows. Supply chains—never fully restored since the pandemic—come under fresh pressure.

U.S. Air Force

The larger question, however, is whether this conflict will be brief or prolonged. There are reasons to believe it may endure.

Iran's political structure is not dependent on one individual alone. Power is diffused through the Revolutionary Guard, clerical institutions, and entrenched security networks. The removal of a supreme leader, rather than creating vacuum, can consolidate resolve. History in the region has shown that external strikes often harden ideological systems rather than dissolve them.

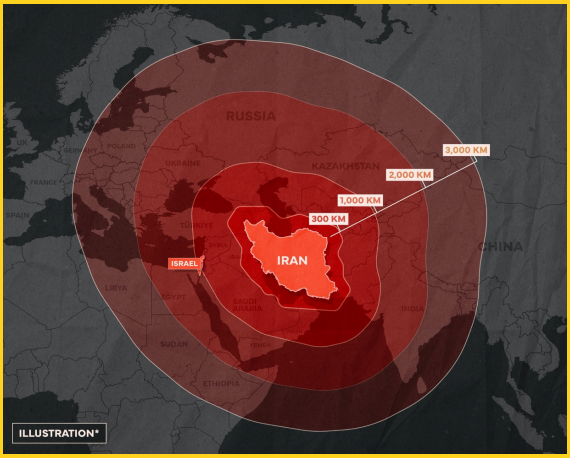
Moreover, Iran's military doctrine is asymmetrical. It does not require air superiority to sustain pressure. Its missile arsenal, drone capabilities, cyber reach, and regional proxies allow it to calibrate retaliation over months or years. U.S. bases across the Gulf remain within range. Escalation need not be dramatic; it can be incremental and persistent.

This is where the geopolitical shadow lengthens. Both China and Russia have condemned the strikes. Public diplomacy is one layer. Quiet cooperation is another. Intelligence sharing, satellite data, electronic countermeasures, and technical inputs—none of these require formal alliances to alter the balance.

For China, the stakes are economic. Discounted Iranian crude has long fed its industrial machine. Any American attempt to reshape Tehran's leadership or tighten oversight over Hormuz directly affects Beijing's energy security. For Russia, higher oil prices strengthen its own fiscal position. A United States absorbed in Gulf tensions also eases pressure elsewhere.

What, then, is Washington's ultimate objective? Officially, the strikes aim to dismantle missile and nuclear threats. Yet critics point to a broader strategic design. With Venezuelan oil constrained and Iran destabilised, American leverage over two major sanctioned suppliers increases. Control over energy chokepoints need not be absolute; influence alone can shape global price dynamics.

If a weakened or reoriented Iran emerges, oversight of Hormuz becomes not just a regional concern but a global instrument. In an era defined by competition with China, energy leverage carries strategic weight.
For India, the fallout would be immediate. The country imports the majority of its crude. Every sustained $10 rise in oil prices chips away at growth, weakens the rupee, and fuels inflation. Fertilizer costs climb. Transport expenses rise. Aviation and manufacturing margins narrow.
In states like Manipur, where goods travel long distances before reaching local markets, higher fuel costs are not abstract macroeconomic figures. They are visible in LPG cylinder prices, in freight charges, and in the strain on rural households. The ripple effects travel swiftly from global chokepoints to village kitchens.



New Delhi now faces a delicate diplomatic balancing act. Strategic partnership with Washington must coexist with pragmatic engagement in West Asia. Maintaining autonomy in a polarised environment will require careful navigation.
The United Arab Emirates, too, stands at a crossroads. While elevated oil prices may temporarily boost revenues, sustained instability threatens aviation hubs, maritime trade, and investor confidence—the very pillars of its diversification model. Missile alerts are hardly conducive to financial optimism. Many have started fleeing from the emirates for safety.

5 MAR 2026
Foreign Secretary Shri Vikram Misri visited the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran and signed the condolence book, on behalf of the people and the Government of India, on the demise of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Syed Ali Khamenei.

Luxury Hotels in Dubai hit

Ultimately, the danger lies not in a swift war but in a lingering one. Decapitation strategies have rarely delivered tidy outcomes in the Middle East. They often replace certainty with drawn-out contestation.

If Iran sustains asymmetric retaliation, if China and Russia deepen quiet support, and if Washington doubles down rather than recalibrates, the region may slide into a prolonged standoff. Energy markets will remain volatile. Alliances will shift. Global inflation pressures will persist.

From the hills of Manipur, one learns that conflict seldom unfolds according to the scripts drafted in distant capitals. It lingers. It reshapes societies slowly. And it leaves ordinary citizens paying for decisions made far away. The Gulf may seem distant from Imphal. But when oil burns there, its heat travels.

5E for SUCCESS

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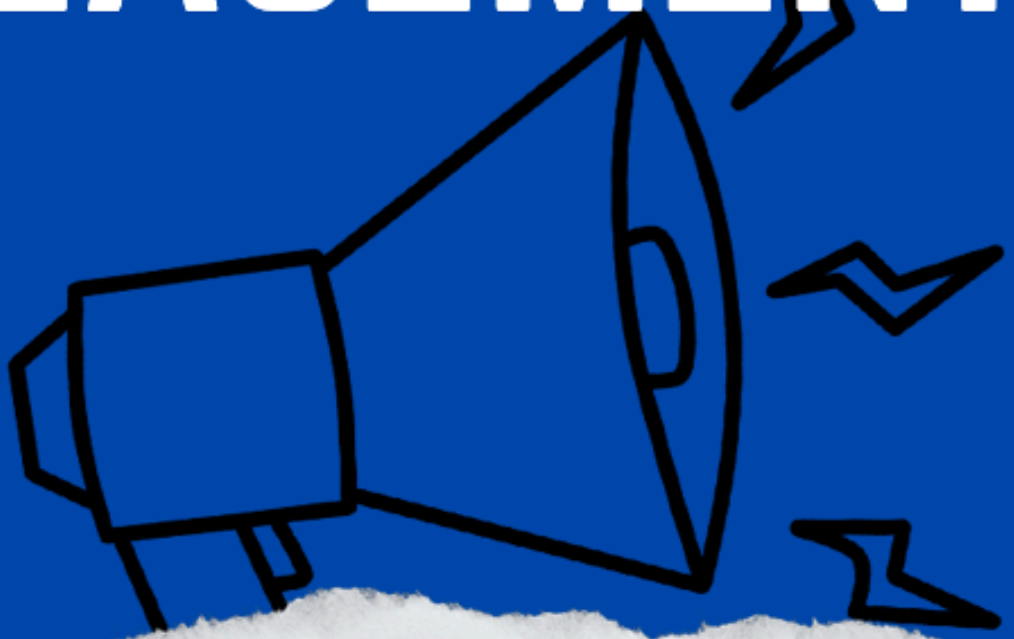

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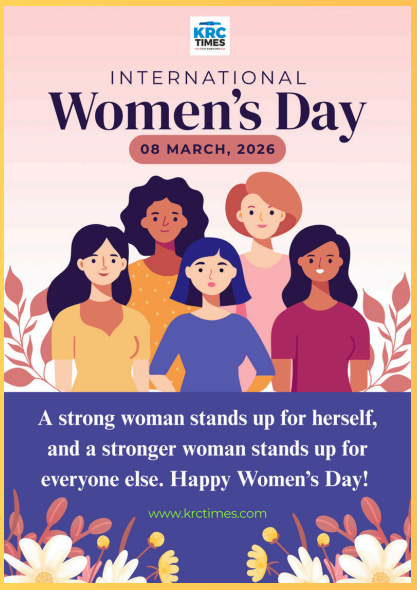
NABARD organises Celebration of International Women's Day

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), in collaboration with the Assam State Rural Livelihood Mission (ASRLM), celebrated International Women's Day 2026 at Srimanta Sankardeva Kalakshetra, Guwahati, on 08 March 2026 (Sunday) with the theme "Give to Gain: Celebrating the International Year of the Woman Farmer."
The programme highlighted the vital role played by women farmers in strengthening rural livelihoods and promoting sustainable agriculture in the State.

Keerthi Jalli, IAS, Commissioner, Panchayati & Rural Development, Govt of Assam, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. The event also witnessed the presence of Kuntal Moni Sarma Bordoloi, State Mission Director, ASRLM and Prabhas Bose, Chief General Manager, State Bank of India, among other dignitaries.

Loken Das, Chief General Manager, NABARD Assam Regional Office, in his welcome address, highlighted that the celebration of International Women's Day 2026 assumes special significance as it coincides with the International Year of the Woman Farmer, recognising the invaluable contribution of women farmers in strengthening the State's rural economy and food systems.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Guest Keerthi Jalli, IAS, appreciated the role of women farmers, women-led Self Help Groups (SHGs), and women-led collectives in transforming rural livelihoods and contributing to agricultural growth. She emphasised the need for continued institutional support, access to credit, technology and markets to further empower women farmers in the State.



As part of the celebration of the International Year of the Woman Farmer, NABARD felicitated Joymoti Self Help Group of Darrang District, the first SHG in the State to be credit-linked with a bank. In addition, 19 women farmers and members of women-led Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) were honoured for their outstanding contributions in agriculture and allied activities.

The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from women farmers, SHG members, representatives from banks, government departments, and development institutions.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by Evan T. Munsong, Deputy General Manager, NABARD.

NEIR Collaborates with NEZCC for Madhya Dakshini Festival 2026 in Meghalaya

The Madhy Dakshini Festival culminated successfully at Umiam in Meghalaya, following their performances in Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh, at the College of Postgraduate Studies in Agricultural Sciences (CPGS-AS). Students, faculty and family members enjoyed a mesmerising performance by eighty-six artists from Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Chhattisgarh.

The festival will be hosted by Dr. Prashanna Gogoi, Director, NEZCC, Dimapur and recipient of the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, whose distinguished contribution to Northeastern performing arts has been widely recognised at the international level.

North East Integration Rally and KRC Foundation collaborated with NEZCC along with Ri Bhoi College, Nongpoh and Central Agricultural University, Imphal to organise the two events held on 5th & 6th March in Meghalaya

A key highlight of the evening will be the choreographic cultural presentation “Kala Sangini” – a confluence of dance traditions of South-Central India with live music, curated by Smt. Astha M. Karlekar, Director, SCZCC, Nagpur. The presentation will feature folk, traditional & tribal art forms from Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telangana, Karnataka and Chhattisgarh performed by acclaimed cultural troupes.
The festival will also showcase the rich indigenous cultural heritage of Arunachal Pradesh through performances by the Tai Khamti, Singpho and Adi tribes.

Madhya Dakshini Festival 2026 in Ri Bhoi College

Madhya Dakshini Festival 2026 in CPGS-AS

India's Political Scenario: Issues that matter

This week saw a mix of domestic political maneuvers, security concerns, and international diplomacy shaping India's landscape. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) continued to consolidate its position amid speculation over leadership transitions in key states, while opposition parties like Congress ramped up criticism on foreign policy and governance issues. Regional conflicts in West Asia influenced India's strategic responses, and upcoming state elections loomed large.

Here are the key issues currently rocking India:

Bihar Politics and Leadership Transition:
Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar filed his nomination for the Rajya Sabha on March 5, sparking debates about his potential exit from state politics and the future of his Janata Dal (United) party. This move, supported by Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP President Nitin Nabin, is seen as strengthening the BJP's dominance in Bihar and potentially across northern India. Analysts suggest it could lead to his son or a BJP ally taking over as Deputy CM, further eroding regional allies' influence.
Social media discussions highlighted implications for alliances, with the BJP potentially controlling 16 chief ministers across 28 states.

West Bengal Controversy:
A political row erupted on March 7 when President Droupadi Murmu expressed disappointment over arrangements or issues related to a Santal conclave (tribal gathering) in the state. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee responded by accusing the President of "playing politics," leading to sharp exchanges between the TMC and BJP-led central government.

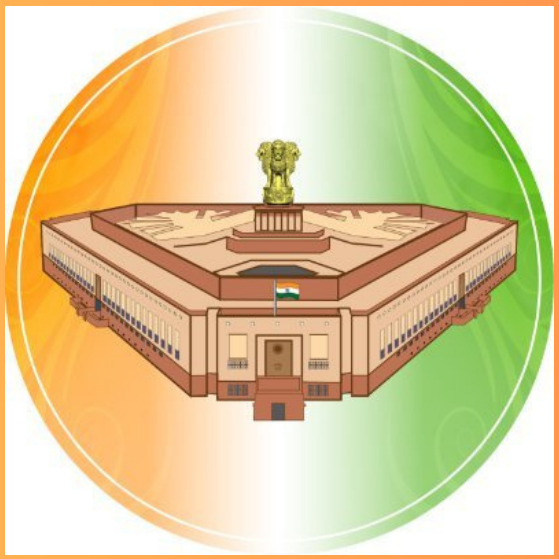
Ongoing Naxalism Eradication Push: Union Home Minister Amit Shah repeatedly reaffirmed the government's commitment to eliminating Left-Wing Extremism (Naxalism/Maoism) by March 31, 2026. He highlighted progress in affected states and described it as entering a "new chapter of development" free from violence.

Other Notes: Preparations continued for upcoming state assembly elections in 2026 (e.g., Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal, Assam, and Puducherry, scheduled for March-May in some cases), though no major campaign events dominated this specific week. Left parties like CPI(M) planned escalations (e.g., a Delhi March later in March) against central policies on labor codes and trade deals.

Parliamentary and National Developments

The second part of the Budget Session of Parliament was set to resume on March 9 (just after this period), with high drama anticipated. Key items included:

- Debate and potential vote on a motion to remove Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.
- A three-line whip was issued by both the BJP and the Congress to ensure MP attendance.
- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar is scheduled to address the Lok Sabha on March 9 regarding India's stance on the West Asia conflict, following Opposition criticism of the government's perceived "silence."



Broader Context Influencing Politics

The week saw indirect political ripples from the West Asia crisis (US-Israel strikes on Iran, Iranian responses, and regional escalations including Pakistan-Afghanistan tensions). This led to:

- Discussions on stranded Indians and potential Navy escorts for ships in the Persian Gulf.
- PM Modi chairing Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) meetings.
- Opposition critiques of the government's handling and calls for clearer diplomatic positioning.

Overall, the period reflected a BJP-led central government pushing internal security deadlines (Naxalism eradication) and development narratives, while facing Opposition pushback in states like West Bengal and in Parliament. Bihar's unfolding transition added intrigue to NDA alliances. No single massive nationwide political event dominated, but tensions built toward the Budget Session's stormy start.

Other Flashpoints:

Incidents like hoax bomb threats in Gujarat and toxic gas leaks in Maharashtra reflect security lapses that Opposition could exploit. Yogi Adityanath's swift action in a stabbing case exemplifies the "Yogi model" of law enforcement, appealing to BJP's base but drawing human rights scrutiny

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2 Long-Distance Trains Get New Stoppage at Patharkandi Railway Station

Patharkandi: In a major boost to rail connectivity in the region, Train No. 13173/13174 Sealdah–Sabroom Kanchanjungha Express and Train No. 12503/12504 Agartala–SMVT Bengaluru Humsafar Express have been granted a new stoppage at Patharkandi Railway Station.

The trains were formally flagged off from the station on Saturday, marking a significant moment for the residents of Patharkandi and nearby areas. The new stoppage is expected to improve travel convenience and strengthen connectivity between the region and major cities.

Local leaders and residents welcomed the development, stating that the move would benefit passengers, traders, students and the local community by improving accessibility and creating new opportunities for economic and social growth.

Gratitude was expressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his leadership and focus on strengthening railway infrastructure across the Northeast.

Thanks were also conveyed to Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw for supporting the long-standing demand for the stoppage and for taking steps to enhance railway connectivity.

Appreciation was also extended to Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for his continued efforts to improve infrastructure and connectivity in Barak Valley and other parts of the state.

Residents expressed hope that the new stoppage will make travel easier and contribute to the overall development of the region.

Demand for ST Status for Meiteis Gains Attention Amid Debate on Constitutional Safeguards

Rajkumar

The demand for constitutional protection for the Meitei community in Manipur has again come into focus, with supporters arguing that the community lacks safeguards enjoyed by other indigenous groups in the state.
According to those raising the issue, the Manipur Merger Agreement of 1949 mainly dealt with the transfer of administrative powers from the Maharaja of Manipur to the Government of India and did not grant any special constitutional status to the state. They say the agreement lost further relevance after the introduction of Articles 363 and 363A of the Constitution, which also abolished the privy purse paid to the former ruler from December 28, 1971.

Supporters of the demand point out that the special constitutional provision related to Manipur is contained in Article 371C. Under this provision, the Manipur Legislative Assembly (Hill Areas Committee) Order, 1972 restricts the state assembly from taking up any scheduled matter concerning hill areas without the consent of the Hill Areas Committee.

The First Schedule of the 1972 order defines hill areas as covering about 92 percent of Manipur's total land area. In addition, the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Act, 1971 created autonomous districts in the hill regions with powers to frame laws for local administration. These laws are implemented along with the Manipur (Village Authorities in Hill Areas) Act, 1956.

All tribes residing in the hill areas are recognised as Scheduled Tribes under Article 342 of the Constitution. Because of this status, their land is protected under Section 158 of the Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reforms Act, 1960, which prevents the sale of tribal land to non-tribal people.

Those advocating for Meitei inclusion in the Scheduled Tribe list argue that the community does not enjoy similar protections despite being indigenous to the region. They claim that land holdings of Meiteis have reduced over time and now account for only a small portion of the state's total land area.

They also cite demographic data indicating that the Meitei population in Manipur has declined from about 56.2 percent in 1881 to around 44.9 percent in 2011. Supporters say the community's fertility rate and population growth are lower compared to other groups in the state.

On these grounds, proponents of the demand argue that granting Scheduled Tribe status to the Meitei community would provide constitutional safeguards and help preserve their identity and land rights. Some have also suggested that if the community receives ST status, the entire state could potentially be brought under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

The issue remains sensitive and continues to be debated among different communities and political groups in Manipur.

NEIR: Road Ahead...

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NEIR: Connect...

As Gupta noted, "This isn't just about driving across states. We want to start a chain reaction—a movement that builds understanding, preparedness, and unity."

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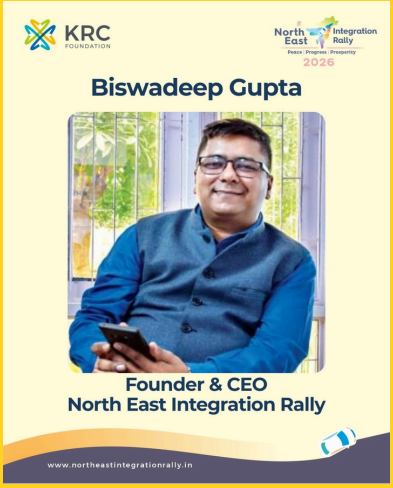

Post-rally, NEIR leaves a legacy of community whitepapers, photo documentaries, cross-cultural networks, and inspired change agents.
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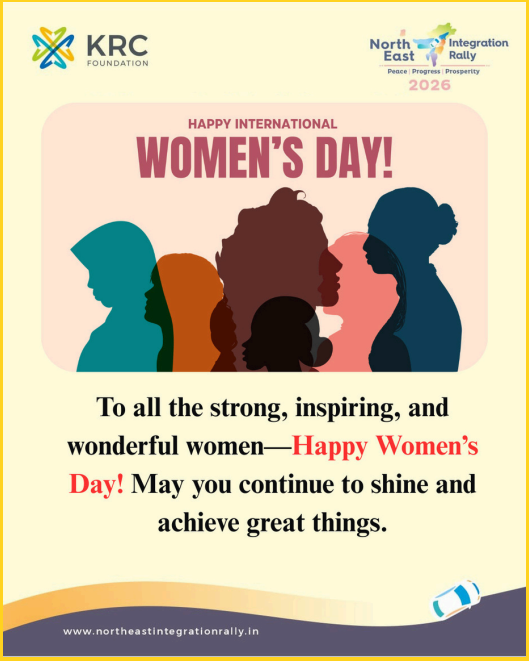

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Five-Star Hotel Project in Silchar; Polo Hotels Group to Develop First Luxury Property in Barak Valley

KRC TIMES News Desk

SILCHAR: In a major boost to hospitality infrastructure in Southern Assam, the Assam Cabinet has approved the development of Silchar's first five-star hotel, to be built by Polo Hotels Group with an investment of approximately ₹103 crore. The announcement marks a significant step towards strengthening the tourism, business, and events ecosystem of the Barak Valley.
Announcing the decision, Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma, Chief Minister of Assam, said, "Today, our cabinet has given a go-ahead to construct a Five-Star hotel in Silchar, to Polo Hotels Group. The Polo Hotels Group will be spending around 103 crore rupees on this project. This is going to be the first five-star hotel in Silchar."

The project will introduce international-standard luxury hospitality infrastructure to the Barak Valley for the first time, positioning Silchar, the commercial and administrative hub of Southern Assam, to host high-value travel, corporate engagements, and large-scale events.

International-Standard Hospitality Infrastructure
The proposed luxury hotel will feature 100 premium rooms and suites, designed to meet global hospitality benchmarks while reflecting the cultural character of the Barak Valley.
Key facilities will include multiple speciality restaurants and bars, a resort-style swimming pool, a full-service spa and wellness centre, a modern fitness facility, and state-of-the-art banquet and conference infrastructure capable of hosting corporate summits, exhibitions, weddings, and government events.

Industry analysts note that India's hospitality sector has witnessed a strong rebound in recent years. According to tourism estimates, India recorded more than 2.3 billion domestic tourist visits in 2023, while demand for MICE tourism (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) has expanded rapidly across emerging regional cities.

Expansion Strategy of Polo Hotels Group

The Silchar project forms part of an ambitious expansion plan by Polo Hotels Group, one of Northeast India's most established hospitality brands.
Alongside the Silchar development, the Group is currently building 10 additional hotels across Meghalaya, Tripura, West Bengal, and Nagaland, significantly expanding its footprint across Eastern and Northeastern India. This pipeline of projects is expected to position the company among the largest hospitality operators headquartered in Northeast India, reinforcing its long-term commitment to developing world-class tourism and hospitality infrastructure across the region.

Economic Impact and Employment

Hospitality infrastructure projects of this scale generate significant multiplier effects across local economies. Industry estimates suggest that each hotel room can generate around 2 direct jobs, along with additional employment across sectors such as food supply chains, transportation, event management, and local services. The Silchar project is therefore expected to create substantial direct and indirect employment opportunities, while supporting local businesses, producers, and service providers across the Barak Valley.

Strengthening Tourism and Business Travel

Once operational, the hotel is expected to establish a new benchmark for luxury hospitality in Southern Assam, enabling Silchar to host national-level conferences, policy meetings, corporate gatherings, and destination events that were previously constrained by the lack of premium accommodation facilities.
The development also reflects a broader shift in India's hospitality landscape, where emerging regional cities are increasingly becoming the next frontier for tourism and business travel infrastructure.

Deval Tibrewalla, Chief Executive Officer of Polo Hotels Group, said, "Silchar is one of the most important gateway cities in Northeast India, and requires hospitality infrastructure required to support its growing economic and institutional importance. This project is not just about building a hotel; it is about enabling the next phase of growth for the Barak Valley. As a company rooted in the Northeast, we see it as our responsibility to bring world-class experiences to emerging cities and unlock their full potential. The Silchar hotel, along with our expanding pipeline across the region, reflects our long-term commitment to building the largest and most trusted hospitality platform in Northeast India."

Political History of Struggles and Movements at Sreemangal in Bangladesh

Sangram Datta

In the political history of Bengal, Sreemangal holds a unique place. This region, surrounded by the greenery of tea gardens, is known not only for its natural beauty but also for its long tradition of struggle, sacrifice, movements, and martyrdom. From the anti-British movement to the Language Movement, from farmers' and workers' rights movements to the Liberation War of Bangladesh — the people of Sreemangal have shown remarkable courage, patriotism, and sacrifice in every chapter of history.

The present Sreemangal Upazila, formerly part of the greater Sylhet district (now Sylhet Division), is located in the famous tea-growing region of Moulvibazar district. Sreemangal is widely known not only within the country but also internationally for its communication network and commercial activities.

It is located about 50 miles southwest of Sylhet city center and 13 miles from Moulvibazar district headquarters, near the border of Tripura state of India. Situated in the eastern part of Bangladesh, this region carries centuries of historical heritage and glory, developing continuously over time. Sreemangal is beautifully located at the foothills of hills, decorated with tea gardens, forest resources, and attractive tourist spots including waterfalls and scenic natural landscapes

During the Liberation War, Sreemangal was known as a control and communication center in the Sylhet region. Throughout history, Sreemangal has been associated with various rights movements, including the Indian independence movement, tea laborers' movements, and the 1928 peasant movement where attacks were carried out against British police forces. In the Balishira hill movement, two farmers sacrificed their lives for the protection of farmers' rights. In tea labor movements, workers such as Basanta, Banshiganj, and many known and unknown laborers contributed through their struggles and sacrifices, keeping the spirit of resistance alive to this day.

Sreemangal in the Anti-British Movement

From the dawn of the 20th century into the 21st century, the freedom-loving men and women, youth, elderly, children, and adolescents of Sreemangal have continued to play an unforgettable role in historical movements. During the Indian independence struggle, especially following the 1905 Partition of Bengal movement, people were inspired by nationalism and patriotic sacrifice. A strong public movement emerged across Bengal demanding the boycott of foreign goods, including foreign clothing, and encouraging the use of indigenous products. The movement spread rapidly across remote areas of Bengal.

The freedom-loving leaders and people of Sreemangal began boycotting British cotton textiles and started wearing local handloom and khadi clothing. They built strong public opinion in favor of boycotting foreign products. Local leaders of this movement included Phani Dutta Panini (Bhojpur), Girija Choudhury (Bhojpur), Jatindra Mohan Datta (Noagaon), Sharada Das Tarafdar (Noagaon), Pramath Deb (Noagaon), Nagen Ghosh (Singbij), Suresh Som (Uttarsur), Yogesh Chatterjee (Sreemangal town), Jiten Pal (Rupashpur), Barada Kanta Sen (Sreemangal town), Mahendra Sharma (Tikiria), Surya Mani Deb (Ramnagar), Bipin Das (Uttarsur), Jatin Deb (Sreemangal town), Master Gour Gobinda Deb (Bharauura), Dijendra Bhattacharjee (Sreemangal town), Manmohan Bhattacharjee (Baulashi), Laku Dutta Chowdhury (Bhunobir), Lila Dutta Chowdhury (Bhunbir), Nikunja Bihari Goswami (Kalapur), Hriday Deb (Bharauura), Amar Dutta (Bhairav Bazar), Jashoda Gobinda Goswami (Kalapur), Indra Hom Chowdhury (Rupashpur), Mohammad Yunus Uddin (Patrikul), Nagendra Dhar (Sreemangal town), and others.

In 1911, the Partition of Bengal was annulled. In the following years, the movement slowed down. In 1920, the Non-Cooperation Movement created strong revolutionary momentum across the region.

In 1919, at the Lahore Congress session, the Congress adopted a resolution in favor of complete independence. At that time, Parash Lal Shom, a member of the Assam Legislative Assembly from the Sreemangal area and residing in Kolkata, resigned from his membership following Congress directives.

When the British government called for re-election, his younger brother, Advocate Eresh Lal Shom, became a candidate. Local political activists mainly Congress protested and symbolically supported an independent candidate named Chirtan Horizon, a local cobbler from Moulvibazar, who was elected.

In 1922, during the nationwide Non-Cooperation and Khilafat movements, mass meetings, arrests, and repression increased. Prominent anti-British leaders spread across the country to strengthen the movement.
During this time, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, Srimati Basanti Devi, and Maulana Mohammad Ali arrived at Sreemangal railway station to join the Khilafat movement in Moulvibazar. Students of Sreemangal welcomed them with floral garlands. The conference was held on 15 March 1921.

In 1928, Jatin Das, a revolutionary freedom fighter, died after a 63-day hunger strike in Lahore Central Jail. A mourning meeting was held at the Marwari Kali Bari (now Barowari Kali Bari) on Doctor Post Office Road in Sreemangal. The event was organized by Yogesh Chatterjee and Satish Shom.

In 1929, Dr. Surya Mani Deb and Jitendra Nath Pal Chowdhury of the Jugantar revolutionary group were arrested for political activities.

In 1930, the Sreemangal Thana Congress Committee was formed with Nalini Gupta as president and Suresh Som as secretary. In 1932, under the Anushilan revolutionary group, Sitesh Som was appointed president and Yogesh Chatterjee was appointed secretary of the Sreemangal branch.

During the Salt Movement, Sitesh Shom participated and was injured in a police lathi charge in Noakhali.

The British police wearing red turbans destroyed the Sreemangal Congress office. During this time, young revolutionary leader Surya Mani Deb along with Mukund Chakraborty (Tikiria), Mahendra Sharma (Tikiria), Manmohan Bhattacharjee (Baulashi), famous politician Laku Dutta Chowdhury (Bhunobir), his sister revolutionary leader Lila Dutta (Bhunobir), Rohini Das (Baulashi), Sharada De (Nischintapur), and Sitesh Shom (Uttarsur) were arrested. Jitendra Pal Chowdhury and another student were beaten by British police. At this time, Khird Bihari Deb Chowdhury of Sreemangal town joined the Indian National Congress and led the anti-British movement.

In 1938, revolutionary Congress leader Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose visited Sreemangal and delivered a mass speech at New Bazar. He was served refreshments at the Sreemangal Dak Bungalow. Additionally, in 1936, 1938, 1945, and 1946, Congress leader Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru visited Sreemangal four times and delivered important speeches regarding the anti-British movement and referendum issues.

In September 1939, after the outbreak of the Second World War, the anti-British movement intensified in Sreemangal. During this time, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (Mahatma Gandhi) launched the "Quit India Movement" against British rule. However, the British government attempted to suppress the movement. Some revolutionary leaders, losing faith in the policy of non-violence, spread across different regions and continued the struggle. Many activists joined armed revolutionary activities targeting British officials.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah left Congress and joined the Muslim League. After being under house arrest for a long time, Subhas Chandra Bose secretly left India and went to Japan to organize the Azad Hind Fauj (Indian National Army) to fight for India's freedom.

During World War II, Azad Hind Fauj launched several attacks and bombings in parts of India. The army advanced up to Imphal in Manipur but could not capture Delhi's Red Fort due to shortages of food and weapons. After Japan and the Axis powers were defeated, Subhas Chandra Bose disappeared. During this time, supporters of Azad Hind Fauj and some armed youth in Sreemangal joined the movement.

In 1940, after the Lahore Resolution was proposed by Sher-e-Bangla A.K. Fazlul Huq, Muslim League politics expanded across India. The Sreemangal Thana Muslim League Committee was formed with Mohammad Israil as president and Abdus Sobhan Chowdhury as secretary.

In Moulvibazar's Rajnagar, a women's revolutionary organization called Shree Sangha was established during the 1930s under the leadership of revolutionary woman leader Lila Nag. Members of this organization carried out anti-British activities in various places and later found safe shelter in Sreemangal. Manmohan Bhattacharjee was one of the leaders of this organization.

In 1945, at the invitation of Muslim League leadership, Assam Chief Minister Sir Syed Muhammad Saadullah delivered a speech at a public meeting in Motiganj Bazar, Sreemangal, chaired by Mohammad Israil.

In 1946, Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy and Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan conducted election campaigns and delivered speeches at a large public meeting at the Eidgah ground on Hobiganj Road, Sreemangal, chaired by Dewan Abdul Basit.

In the 1946 election, Jibon Santal, representing the tea labor community and nominated by the Congress, was elected as a member of the Assam Provincial Assembly from this region. In 1947, Barrister Jogendra Nath Mandal from Barishal visited various areas of greater Sylhet and urged lower-caste Hindus to vote in favor of Pakistan during the referendum. As a result, most lower-caste Hindu voters supported Pakistan.

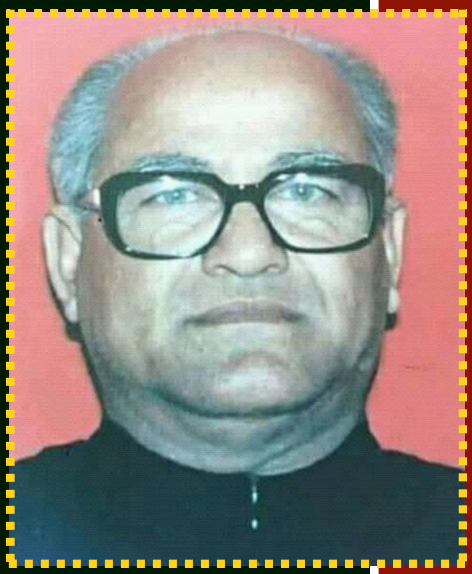
In the referendum, 239,619 votes were cast in favor of Pakistan, while 184,041 votes were cast in favor of joining India. The Muslim League secured 55,578 more votes, resulting in Sylhet and Sreemangal becoming part of East Pakistan.Political History of Sreemangal During the Pakistan Period

Based on the two-nation theory, the Indian subcontinent was divided, resulting in the creation of two independent states — India and Pakistan. Pakistan gained independence on 14 August 1947, while India became independent on 15 August 1947.

The state of Pakistan was founded on a communal basis as the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. In contrast, India maintained its secular character. Although Pakistan's founder, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, declared after the creation of Pakistan that the country would not belong only to Muslims and that Hindus, Buddhists, and Christians would enjoy equal rights, this principle was not fully reflected in the constitution. Non-Muslim communities were often treated as second-class citizens.

Even under strong communal politics, justice was not fully ensured for many citizens, including Muslims. The ruling elite of Pakistan, dominated largely by wealthy and influential groups from Punjab, began showing discriminatory attitudes toward Bengali-speaking people of East Pakistan from the very beginning. Due to this linguistic and economic discrimination, politically conscious Bengalis gradually began protesting.

After the creation of Pakistan, Bengali intellectuals and political leaders demanded recognition of Bengali as a state language. The movement united people from all religious communities — Hindu, Muslim, Christian, and Buddhist — under a common political cause.The roots of the Bengali language movement can be traced back to the early 20th century during British India when debates arose regarding the official language of India. At that time, elite Hindu and Congress leaders supported Hindi, while Muslim League leaders favored Urdu. In protest, Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah delivered a paper at a meeting in Shantiniketan, Kolkata, in 1920, arguing that Bengali should be the common language of the majority of the population. Prominent political leader Prafulla Kumar Sarkar supported this demand.In 1937, Maulana Akram Khan, editor of the newspaper Azad, wrote editorials supporting the Bengali language.



After the creation of Pakistan, efforts to establish Bengali as a state language intensified. Writers and intellectuals such as Abul Mansur, poet Fakhrul Ahmed, and Dr. Shahidullah wrote in favor of Bengali. Professor Abul Kashem took initiatives in September 1947 to ignite the Language Movement.

Noted lawyer and politician Dhirendranath Dutta of Comilla submitted a proposal at the Pakistan Constituent Assembly meeting in Karachi on 23 February 1948. He demanded that Bengali be included alongside Urdu and English as a state language, arguing that the majority of Pakistan's population spoke Bengali. However, the proposal was rejected, and Urdu was declared the state language on 11 March 1948.

When Dhirendranath Dutta returned to Dhaka, he was warmly welcomed by students at the airport, which marked the beginning of a more organized language movement.

In March 1948, Pakistan's founder Muhammad Ali Jinnah visited Dhaka and declared in a public meeting that Urdu would be the only state language. Students immediately protested by shouting slogans opposing the decision. This protest later led to the formation of the All-Party State Language Action Committee.

In April 1948, the use of Bengali was approved for official activities in the provincial government of East Bengal.

From 1948 to 1951, Language Movement Day was observed annually in East Pakistan under the leadership of the Action Committee. Students of Victoria High School in Sreemangal played a leading role in these observances. Local political leaders and citizens supported student rallies and meetings.

Student leaders such as Rasendra Datta (also known as Rasendra Datta Chowdhury), Biraj Kusum Chowdhury, Jogendra Datta, Shyamal Sengupta, Hitendra Gupta, Achyut Kumar Deb, Akhil Chandra Dhar, Dr. Fazlul Haque, Md. Mosaddar Ali, and Syed Matiur Rahman led demonstrations. They were supported by leaders such as Md. Israil Mia of the Muslim League, Communist Party leader Sri Surya Mani Deb, businessman Ajit Chowdhury, Khird Bihari Deb Chowdhury and Bimol Jyoti Chowdhury.
After Jinnah's death in 1948, Khawaja Nazimuddin became Governor General but did little to address Bengali language demands.

On 27 November 1949, DUCSU leaders submitted a memorandum to Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan demanding recognition of Bengali as a state language. As demands were ignored, students intensified protests. This eventually led to the historic events of 21 February 1952, when police fired on protesting students in Dhaka, killing Rafiq, Jabbar, Salam, Barkat, and many others.

Students across the country launched protests in response, and Sreemangal's students played an active role. Large demonstrations and poster campaigns were organized throughout Sreemangal with slogans demanding justice and recognition of Bengali as a state language.
Mass rallies were held at the Sreemangal Municipality ground, where Syed Matiur Rahman presided. Leaders including Md. Shahjahan, Rasendra Datta, Akhil Chandra Dhar, Sajjadur Rahman, and Sri Balai Bhattacharjee spoke at the rally demanding punishment for those responsible for the killings.

In 1954, the United Front won the provincial elections in East Bengal, largely based on language movement sentiment. The Muslim League suffered a major defeat. Karamat Ali of Vanugach, Kamalganj, won a large majority in this election. Jibon Santal was also elected as MLA from a reserved minority constituency in this region. Prominent leaders such as Sher-e-Bangla Fazlul Huq, Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Professor Muzaffar Ahmed, Neerad Nag, Syed Ashraf, Mohammad Toha, and Dhirendranath Dutta were elected.

In 1956, the Pakistani government was forced to recognize Bengali as a state language due to popular pressure.
In 1957, when Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani formed the National Awami Party (NAP), many young political activists from Sreemangal joined the party. NAP emerged as a strong political force against the Muslim League.

In 1963, during the Balishira peasant rights movement in Sreemangal, protestors seized six rifles from police forces. Two people, Salik (19) and Ganu (80), were killed in police firing. The movement eventually forced the government to make concessions. The movement was led by NAP leaders Rasendra Datta, Md. Shahjahan Mia, Member Md. Abdul Rahim of Tikiria, Abdus Khalik, Abdus Haque, and Chan Mia Mahaldar.
Public protests against police repression continued in Sreemangal with rallies and demonstrations.

In 1965, during the presidential election, committees were formed to support Fatema Jinnah. Leaders such as Dr. Md. Abdul Ali and NAP leader Rasendra Dutta served in the election committee.

In 1966, when the Six-Point Movement was launched by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, he was arrested multiple times and later imprisoned in the Agartala Conspiracy Case. NAP leaders also supported the Six-Point and Eleven-Point movements.

In 1968, Sreemangal Thana Chhatra League was established under the leadership of M.A. Rahim.On 13 December 1968, a joint rally of Chhatra League, Chhatra Union, and NAP was held in New Bazar, Sreemangal, demanding the reopening of the Ittefaq newspaper printing press.

To honor the martyrs of the Language Movement and local martyrs Salik and Ganu, Sreemangal's first Shaheed Minar was established in 1969 near the municipal town committee ground through the efforts of local political and student leaders despite strong opposition from the Muslim League. This Shaheed Minar later became the central Shaheed Minar of Sreemangal.

In January 1969, the All-Party Student Action Committee and Democratic Action Committee (DAC) were formed in Sreemangal, leading mass protests.

After his release from the Agartala Conspiracy Case in 1969, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman visited Sreemangal and stayed at Dr. Md. Abdul Ali's residence on Ramakrishna Mission Road. Later, local Awami League committees were formed under the leadership of Mohammad Ilyas and Altafur Rahman Chowdhury.

On 6 April 1970, Pakistani authorities arrested NAP leader Rasendra Datta, Mohammad Shahjahan Mia, Chhatra League leader M.A. Rahim, and S.A. Mujib under martial law act on charge of breaching Pakistan (That is also known as Joybangla Case) and sent them to Moulvibazar Jail. But Public pressure forced their release.

In the 1970 elections, Mohammad Ilyas and Md. Altafur Rahman Chowdhury were elected to the national and provincial assemblies respectively on the Awami League ticket.
When the Pakistani regime delayed power transfer despite Bengali electoral victory, public protests intensified, eventually leading to the Bangladesh Liberation War.

The Great Liberation War of 1971

On 1 March 1971, at 1:00 p.m as soon as Pakistan President Yahya Khan's speech was broadcast over the radio, a protest procession began from the Sreemangal municipality office led by NAP leaders Rasendra Datta, Md. Shahjahan Mia, and Sayed Muijur Rahman. Within moments, the entire town became vibrant with marches led by Awami League, NAP, and their student organizations—many of whom had previously been active in the Six-Point and Eleven-Point movements.

Thousands of students and citizens joined the procession. Among those who led and participated were Khird Bihari Deb Chowdhury, Rajendra Das, Gopal Sen, Dhirendra Datta Panu, Hirendra Datta Chowdhury (Subhash), Dr.Fazlul Haque, Md. Abdur Rahim, Saiyeed Mujibur Rahman, Dilip Kumar Roy, Md. Abdul Latif, Md. Abdul Haque, Hiralal Hazra, Mohammad Fateh Ali, Muhit Bhattacharjee, Radhakanta Tanti, Biresh Deb, Babla Deb Chowdhury, Abdul Qaiyum Tarafdar, Satya Bhowmik, Mamun Chowdhury, Awami League leaders Mohammad Ilyas and Md. Altafur Rahman Chowdhury, Dr. Md. Abdul Ali, Dr. Rama Ranjan Deb, Mohammad Arju Mia, Monir Mia, Ataur Rahman, M.A. Rahim, S.A. Mujib, Mohammad Ismail Hossain, Mohammad Abdul Mannan, and many others.
The air echoed with slogans such as "Joy Bangla," "Bangladesh, a new nation in the world," and demands for an end to military rule and implementation of the Six- and Eleven-Point programs. After the procession, a massive public gathering was held at the municipal field where leaders of NAP and Awami League addressed the crowd. From that day forward, daily marches and protest activities spread across markets, tea gardens, and villages.

On 3 March, when Pakistani forces opened fire in Sylhet, killing a protester, anger spread rapidly among the people.On 7 March, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivered his historic speech, which inspired the non-cooperation movement and intensified resistance across the country.

On 23 March, under the leadership of the local Chhatra League and Chhatra Union, the Pakistani flag was lowered in Sreemangal and replaced with the red-green flag of independent Bangladesh. Leaders included M.A. Rahim, Ekram Hossain Chowdhury, Biraj Sen Tarun, Moin Uddin, and Syed Muijur Rahman.

On 24 March, a Punjabi SDPO from Moulvibazar arrived and re-hoisted the Pakistani flag. The following day, protestors surrounded the police station. In front of the authorities, local leaders lowered the Pakistani flag again and raised the flag of Bangladesh.

On the night of 27 March, the Officer-in-Charge of Sreemangal Police Station, Sirajul Islam, handed over stored firearms to resistance fighters. Barricades were set up on highways, and trees were felled to block the advance of Pakistani troops. Leaders including Saidyed Mujibur Rahman, Rasendra Datta, Mohammad Shahjahan Mia, and student activists organized resistance efforts with workers and farmers.Elected representatives Mohammad Ilyas and Md. Altafur Rahman Chowdhury went into hiding in the Balishira tea garden area to plan the war effort. Local residents prepared for possible attacks by gathering bricks, stones, and other materials for defense.

On 28 March, a five-member Action Committee was formed to coordinate resistance efforts, with Farid Ahmed Chowdhury as convener and Dr. Abdul Ali, Muhibur Rahman, Kamalesh Bhattacharjee, and Saiyed Mujibur Rahman as members.

Members of the Ansar force including Captain M.A. Musabbir and Captain Matlab, along with local leaders, collected arms from villages and tea garden managers and formed organized freedom fighter squads. Weapons were distributed to trained volunteers.

On 29 March, Pakistani troops hiding near Bhairab Bazar suddenly opened fire on a procession, killing a man named Harmuz Mia.

On 30 March, Pakistani forces in Moulvibazar sent two fire brigade vehicles toward Sreemangal under the pretext of extinguishing a fire. Suspecting military involvement, local youths stopped one vehicle and questioned its crew, while the other managed to escape. That night, Pakistani forces withdrew from Moulvibazar toward Sylhet. Meanwhile, students and young activists assembled at Victoria High School field for drills and parades, creating the impression of strong organized resistance.
On 31 March, Constituent Assembly member Manik Chowdhury arrived in Sreemangal and issued directives on behalf of the emerging independent Bangladesh authority to maintain law and order. Retired Colonel Abdur Rab, Dr. Abdul Ali, Mohammad Ismail Hossain, and other local leaders gathered EPR members and volunteers to prepare for the Liberation War.
Thus, Sreemangal actively participated in the early resistance that ultimately became part of the nationwide Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971.

News broadcast by Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra (Independent Bengal Radio Station)
and various international radio stations continually reported the indiscriminate atrocities and mass killings carried out by the Pakistani army, along with the armed resistance of the Bengali people.
During this time, Ansar Commander Manik Chowdhury and Mukit Laskar began training enthusiastic young volunteers at the field of Sreemangal Victoria High School.

On 1 April, Commandant Manik Chowdhury and Major C.R. Dutta jointly arrived in Sreemangal from Habiganj. With a large resistance force, they advanced toward Moulvibazar to confront the Pakistani army. Major C.R. Dutta, along with Mujahid Captain M.A. Musabbir, organized and gathered Mujahid fighters. Among them, Mukit Laskar of Sreemangal and Mohammad Anis, a rickshaw puller, were later killed by Pakistani forces on the Sylhet battlefield.

On 2 April, this force took position at the Moulvibazar Tourist Guest House.

It is to be mentioned here that from 27 March, the Sreemangal Municipal Office functioned as the control room for coordinating the Liberation War in greater Sylhet.
Until 28 April, freedom fighters engaged in fierce resistance and kept the flag of independent Bangladesh flying high in Sreemangal. During this period, the Commander-in-Chief of the Liberation War, General M.A.G. Osmani, and Brigadier Pandey visited Sreemangal twice.
By 6 April, the situation worsened. Pakistani forces strengthened their position at Sylhet Airport, turning the region into a full-scale war zone. From the liberated areas of Teliapara and the Sreemangal control room, local leaders began sending batches of freedom fighters into armed combat. During this time, the courageous Captain Aziz was seriously wounded in battle at Rashidpur in Sylhet, and several freedom fighters were martyred. Pakistani forces established positions by land and air, transforming the entire Sylhet region into an active battlefield.

In the Battle of Shalutikor, freedom fighter Siraj Mia was captured and brutally beaten. Believed to be dead, he survived by remaining motionless and later escaped despite severe injuries.
To prevent the Pakistani army from obtaining food and fuel, all petrol from pumps in Sreemangal was transported to the Barmachhara training camp. Locks of food warehouses were broken, and rice and wheat were taken to Liberation camps. In Moulvibazar, the National Bank vault was reportedly blown open, and funds were seized by leaders supporting the Liberation War. The LSD warehouse in Sreemangal was opened, allowing the public to collect food.

On 28 April at 10 a.m., Major Kazi Nuruzzaman arrived in Sreemangal. By then, the war situation had significantly deteriorated. The environment was tense. Thousands of men, women, and children fled across the border into India to save their lives. Meanwhile, certain anti-independence elements took advantage of the chaos to carry out looting and oppression.
Two Pakistani military aircraft then conducted bombing raids over Sreemangal for nearly half an hour. The factory of Majdihi Tea Garden and the ration shop and residence of Mudabbir Hossain were destroyed. A woman was killed in the bombing, and Mudabbir Hossain and a carpenter were injured. Gouranga Mallik and a rickshaw puller also lost their lives.

On 30 April, Pakistani forces entered Sreemangal for the first time and began widespread killings. Aghor Bhattacharjee, Chief Assistant of Mirzapur Tea Garden, was summoned, tortured, and killed beside the Dhaka–Sylhet highway in Bhunabir Union. Mustafa Alam of Narayancharra Tea Garden and his son-in-law were murdered. Tea labor leader Paban Tanti of Rajghat and Shambhu Singh of Phuskuri Tea Garden were also killed.
In one of the most tragic incidents, 45 tea workers from Bhanugach Tea Garden were lined up near a bridge beside Sreemangal Government College and shot dead. Their names remain preserved in local memory as martyrs of the Liberation War.

From May onward, Pakistani forces carried out extensive looting, arson, sexual violence, and repression throughout Sreemangal. Station Road, Moulvibazar Road, and College Road were set ablaze and reduced to ruins. BBC journalist Mark Tully later reported on the destruction he witnessed.
During the war, Pakistani officers including Captain Tarek Syed and Captain Selim (at the Dak Bungalow), Major Ershad (at the WAPDA Rest House), and Lt. Col. Yamin Bhatt (at the Sindur Khan EPR Camp) operated in tea gardens and rural areas, carrying out severe repression.
Homes of wealthy mainly Hindu families and Awami League leaders involved in the Liberation struggle were looted and burned. Collaborators seized properties of pro-independence citizens. A Peace Committee was formed under the leadership of local Muslim League leader and municipal chairman Dewan Abdur Rashid, who assisted the Pakistani forces.

In the city's Purvasha residential area, eight youths were shot dead with the assistance of local Razakars (Collaborators). Similar killings took place in tea gardens, where workers were targeted. Shankar Debnath lost his life while supplying food to freedom fighters.

In October, a group of freedom fighters took shelter at the home of Gangesh Deb Roy in Bhunabir, planning an operation at Bilash Bridge. On their way, freedom fighter Samir Som was captured and later killed in Sreemangal town. Others, including Moinuddin, Shambhu Nayek, and Arjan Poddar, were also captured and shot.

Pakistani forces used the Sreemangal WAPDA Guest House as their headquarters and established an entertainment center there. Based on reports from collaborators, freedom fighters, intellectuals, and political activists were detained, tortured, and interrogated. Many were later executed near the BDR camp at sites that became known as mass killing grounds along the Bhurvuria stream. Numerous remains were discovered in these areas after the war.

After eight months of struggle, on 4 December 1971, Sreemangal was liberated with the assistance of the Indian Army and the Mukti Bahini. Sreemangal fell under Sector 4 of the Liberation War, commanded by Major Chittaranjan Dutta (C.R. Dutta).
Through immense sacrifice, courage, and resilience, Sreemangal secured its place in the proud and painful history of Bangladesh's Liberation War.

Conclusion

The political history of Sreemangal stands as a shining testament to struggle, sacrifice, and courage. From the anti-British movements to the Language Movement, from the fight to protect the rights of farmers and workers to the autonomy movement and the Great Liberation War, the people of Sreemangal repeatedly proved that they would never bow to injustice.
This history is not merely a memory of the past; it is a source of inspiration for future generations. The sacrifices of every martyr, every committed leader, and every ordinary citizen have enriched our national consciousness. Their contributions and dedication will remain eternally remembered in the history of Bengal.

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History in making as governments draft a legally binding Treaty for rights of older persons

Bobby Ramakant

This is indeed a historic first when governments come together to draft a legally binding possible treaty to protect the human rights of older persons. The first ever historic Inter Governmental Working Group (IGWG) meeting to protect the rights of older persons was held recently. IGWG was created by the UN Human Rights Council in April 2025 and given the mandate to draft a legally binding UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.

"It has taken older persons, with support from the not-so-old ones, over two decades of advocacy and efforts to reach this point where governments are convening to draft a legally binding possible treaty to age with rights. The process follows the recognition that existing international human rights treaties do not specifically address the human rights of older peoples, leaving them vulnerable to violations, particularly regarding access to care, social protection, and in humanitarian crises," said Shobha Shukla, who was among the registered delegates for IGWG as part of those with lived experience as well as representing Development Justice for Older Persons (DJ4OP) campaign.

Well, better late than never. The Convention is expected to protect the rights of older persons, recognise the valuable economic and social contributions older persons make and provide a comprehensive and coherent framework for a world free from ageism and age discrimination.

While opening the IGWG meet, Nada Al-Nashif, UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, who, like Shobha, is a senior citizen herself, said that "meaningful participation is essential. Older persons themselves - in all their diversity, including older women, older persons with disabilities, those belonging to indigenous peoples, minorities and rural communities - must be actively engaged in this process. Civil society organisations, national human rights institutions and independent experts bring indispensable experience, data and insight. An inclusive and transparent process will strengthen both the legitimacy and the quality of the outcome."

"We are living in an age of ageing with a fast growing number of older people. Life expectancy has increased significantly in most settings, over the past years. Japan has nearly 100,000 people aged 100 or older - the highest in the world, with women comprising roughly 88% of this population. By 2050 the population of persons above 60 years of age is projected to grow to 2.1 billion (nearly one fifth of the total global population)," said Shobha.

Longevity is one of humanity's greatest achievements. Yet the promise of longer life is too often accompanied by persistent gaps in the protection of human rights.

Ageism lurks

Instead of celebrating older age we fear it and ageism fuels this fear.

What is ageism? "Ageism is one big elephant in the room. It includes harmful norms, stereotypes, narratives and tropes against older persons. It affects women more than men; less educated more than better educated. To be a gender diverse person or a woman or one with disability and to be elderly is double trouble in many countries including India, more so if you stand up against ageism and do not fit into the norm. Subtle nuances of ageism abound in every nook and corner and lurk where you least expect them - homes, society at large, workplace, industry, healthcare facilities, media... the list is endless," said Shobha Shukla, while speaking in SHE & Rights session organised by Global Center for Health Diplomacy and Inclusion (CeHDI), Fos Feminista, Women's Rights Caucus, Women Deliver Conference 2026, International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW) and partners.

Word 'retired' reeks of ageism

"At the workplace, there is the age-related archaic retirement system – the word 'retired' itself reeks of ageism. One does not retire (except perhaps when she/he/they is perpetually bedridden) as long as one lives. Yes, we do change our path and move in new directions. Instead, there must be support systems in place to ensure that older persons can make a choice with dignity and rights if they want to work or not, and age with rights," said Shobha Shukla.

"Ageism directly impacts health seeking behaviour of older people. Research suggests that people with more negative views on ageing experience poorer health. Attributing many diseases and disabilities to old age is largely ageism. Features of our homes and outside environment (like safe and user friendly access to utilities) are important contributory factors in maintaining health and independence as we age," she added.

"Also, it is erroneously felt that limited healthcare resources are better spent on younger persons. Elderly women are care givers by default for other family members and yet their healthcare needs are often brushed aside and dubbed a drain on family resources," rightly said Shobha.

Age with rights

Health promotion must include disease prevention (both non-communicable diseases and communicable or infectious diseases) in every age group, and not just the elderly. Many age related diseases and disabilities are often preventable, or their severity can be reduced, if healthy living and active ageing is promoted for every age. "We have to address population ageing with a lifecycle approach," said Shobha Shukla.

"When it comes to sexual health, less said is better. The elderly are generally absent from the discourses around sexual health and rights. In many societies, there seems to be a cultural taboo around the sexual health needs of the elderly. Many find it difficult to accept sexual health and rights of all peoples - all through their lifecycle, which includes older persons too. This becomes even more critically important when it comes to older women, older women with disabilities, older gender diverse people, and older indigenous peoples. All of us have the right to bodily autonomy irrespective of our age," rightly emphasised Shobha Shukla.

For many older people, these challenges are compounded by intersecting forms of stigma as well as intersectional discrimination, including on the basis of gender, disability, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status.

Diversity, equity and inclusion principle

"Older persons are as diverse as other populations, including in terms of sexual and gender orientations, expressions and identities; social and economic backgrounds; cultural backgrounds; skills and competencies; desires and ambitions; aspirations; hopes and dreams. So, we have to keep those marginalised among older persons in the centre of the response – this includes older women, older indigenous peoples, older gender diverse persons and people with disabilities," said Shobha Shukla.

"The elderly should speak up, not lose their self-confidence, be positive, be as independent as they can be, not feel ashamed to take help from others, eat healthy and exercise. We need to unlearn and re-learn how to live life fully. Remember that age is just a number. We only have one-shot of life! Age gracefully!" she added.

The establishment of the IGWG by the UN Human Rights Council represents a decisive step forward. Its first session has opened a new chapter in a collective effort to address the conceptual and normative gaps in the international human rights framework as it relates to older persons.

However, as the UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Nada Al-Nashif, has rightly remarked, "A legally binding instrument will not, by itself, resolve all the challenges older persons face. Its effectiveness will depend on political will, adequate resources, strong institutions, and sustained societal transformation".

But a legally binding treaty can definitely accelerate progress towards preparing all countries for population ageing, which is already a growing reality. Let us hope that this possible legally-binding UN treaty affirms the agency of older persons and safeguards their autonomy across all areas of life - and all through their lifecycle.

"We, the elderly, are not asking for mercy. We are asking for our long-overdue rights. We need to be recognised - not as burdens, but as rights holders and as vital contributors to families, communities, economies and public life. We do not need shelter homes, but the right to live a fulfilling life. Ageism and gender inequality have to end with us," rightly said Shobha.

Age is no barrier to learning, but ageism is a big obstacle

"Age can be no barrier to learning. But ageism is a huge barrier, and so is gender inequality. Failure to address ageism and do away with age-related harmful stereotypes, social norms and narratives, fuels shame or self-stigma, which often results in negative self-worth, addictions, ill-health, and self-harm. Rooting out ageism will help older people live with dignity," said Shobha Shukla.

The way forward

Older persons want to lead a meaningful life and require support mechanisms, including social and financial security, to continue to function positively. They need affordable and comfortable public transport, safe spaces for physical activities, and easily accessible healthcare, says Shobha.

"We need strong laws to stop all forms of harassment faced by the elderly and make commuting, workspaces, working hours, nature of work, health services, social security support systems, friendly for them if governments truly walk the talk on active ageing and against ageism," she added.

Stella Rica Khongsni, Leimapokpam Ghanapyari Devi and Tenzing Choden Sherpa Crowned 22nd Sunsilk Mega Miss North East 2026

Guwahati; March 5, 2026: In a glittering celebration of confidence, culture, and contemporary elegance, Stella Rica Khongsni from Meghalaya, Leimapokpam Ghanapyari Devi from Manipur, and Tenzing Choden Sherpa from Sikkim were crowned winners of the 22nd Sunsilk Mega Miss North East 2026 at a spectacular Grand Finale held in Guwahati. In keeping with the pageant's progressive format, the three winners will share equal honours and responsibilities as titleholders.

The 22nd edition followed an extensive eight-state audition process conducted both on-ground and online, drawing participation from hundreds of young women across the Northeast. Following a rigorous selection process, the shortlisted finalists underwent an intensive grooming and mentorship programme in Guwahati, culminating in a high-voltage finale that evaluated contestants on poise, intelligence, personality, confidence, and stage presence.

Conceptualised by fashion entrepreneur Abhijeet Singha, the pageant is produced by Mega Entertainment and marketed by Mega Activation, continuing its longstanding vision of empowering women from the region and "Taking India to the World Stage."

*Congratulating the winners, Abhijeet Singha said, "**Twenty-two years of Sunsilk Mega Miss North East is a testament to the resilience, ambition, and global readiness of young women from our region. Stella, Ghanapyari, and Tenzing represent not just beauty, but strength of character and cultural pride. Over the years, our winners have carried the Northeast to international platforms with distinction, and I am confident that this year's titleholders will embrace the global opportunities ahead and continue that legacy**."*

The newly crowned winners will receive professional representation, advanced grooming, brand endorsements, public relations advisory, and national-level exposure. They will also be considered for international pageant representation and global fashion platforms, reinforcing the pageant's established track record of enabling contestants to compete at prestigious international competitions and modelling circuits abroad.
As the Title Sponsor, Sunsilk celebrated the individuality and confidence of the winners, the event was further supported by Furniture Partner Nilkamal, Beverage Partner Coca-Cola, and Fashion Partner Trends. The pageant was also supported under the Incredible India banner, spotlighting the cultural richness and global potential of the Northeast.

*In addition to the main titles, several special awards were presented recognising individual excellence across distinct categories. **Phurpa Drema** from Arunachal Pradesh was honoured as **Incredible India Mega Miss Tourism 2026**, celebrating her potential to represent the region's cultural and tourism identity on wider platforms. **Sarah Malsawmtlungi** from Mizoram received the **Nilkamal Miss Popular** title, reflecting strong public support and engagement. **Tenzing Choden Sherpa** from Sikkim was awarded **Coca-Cola Miss Refreshing Beauty**, acknowledging her vibrant presence and charisma, and **Sanu Kumari** from Assam was conferred the **Sunsilk Sway Icon** title for her distinctive style and confident stage appeal. These recognitions further highlighted the diversity of talent showcased at the 22nd Sunsilk Mega Miss North East 2026 Grand Finale.*

The Grand Finale brought together fashion, performance, and celebration of regional diversity, reaffirming Sunsilk Mega Miss North East as one of the most influential women-centric platforms in the region. With the crowning of Stella Rica Khongsni, Leimapokpam Ghanapyari Devi, and Tenzing Choden Sherpa, the 22nd edition marks another significant milestone in the journey of a platform that continues to inspire young women from the Northeast to aspire, achieve, and represent India on the world stage.

₹3.25 Crore Heroin Seized on Silchar-Kalain Road, Five Arreste

Silchar: In a major success against drug trafficking, Cachar Police seized 538 grams of heroin worth around ₹3.25 crore during an operation on the Silchar–Kalain Road. Five suspected drug peddlers were arrested in connection with the seizure.

Police sources said the operation was carried out based on specific information. The contraband was recovered during a search, and the accused were taken into custody for further investigation

Chief Minister Assam @CMOfficeAssam · 22h

Acting on pinpoint intelligence, @cacharpolice intercepted two vehicles on the Silchar-Kalain Road today, seizing 538g of Heroin worth ₹3.25 Cr and apprehending 5 peddlers.

HCM Dr @himantabiswa has lauded the team for their clinical execution, reaffirming that Assam's fight against drugs will continue with zero compromise until our state is drug-free.

Assam Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma commended the Cachar Police for their strong action against the drug network. He praised the team for their continued efforts to curb the illegal drug trade in the state.

The Pillars of Hindustani Society award to Brown Nongmaithem

Biswadeep Gupta

Imphal : Renowned Senior Journalist Brown Nongmaithem, Special Correspondent of New Observer Post and the Chief Bureau of News Portal Indian Observer Post from Manipur, North East India, has been awarded the prestigious award "The Pillars of Hindustani Society" for his fairness and balanced reporting from the conflict zone Manipur in Journalism for the year 2025-2026 by the Trans Asian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TACCI) and Trans Asian Chamber & Indo Mongolian Chamber (IMCCI) Mumbai during their joint Anniversary Celebrations event to mark 27th Anniversary of TACCI and 32nd Anniversary of IMCCI held at the Ball Room of Royal Mumbai Yacht Club, Gateway of India.

Assamese film Moi Eti Nixhasor (Koduwa, the Nightbird) has reached a new cinematic milestone by winning the prestigious Award of Excellence Special Mention at the Accolade Global Film Competition. This rare distinction places the film among the top 10 entries in the entire competition, a feat reserved for projects that set the highest standards for artistry and technical brilliance.

He was among the 33 awardees who have been awarded this prestigious award "The Pillars of Hindustani Society" from around the world under 33 different categories.

The awards were presented to recognize individuals (both men and women), who have made outstanding, genuine and remarkable contributions to Indian society across various fields ofarts, culture and professionalism.

Brown Nongmaithem as aNational Journalist, has been contributing News of the state, Manipur for the last 25 years in news platforms like The News File , The Sunday Indian (Magazine) and News Observer Post as well as Indian Observer Post published both in Hindi and English. In Sunday Indian his stories were published in fourteen Indian languages.

This was the first-ever award for Brown Nongmaithem in his entire profession.
The awards were designed to honour individuals on merit without expecting favours in return to recognise their role in strengthening societies, it said.
The award ceremony was attended by H.E Mariano Agustain Caucino, Ambassador of Argentina and Justice Shreehari Daawara (Rtd) as Chief Guest in the award felicitation and other dignitaries as Guests of Honour.

He began his journalism career at The Imphal Free Press Manipur.

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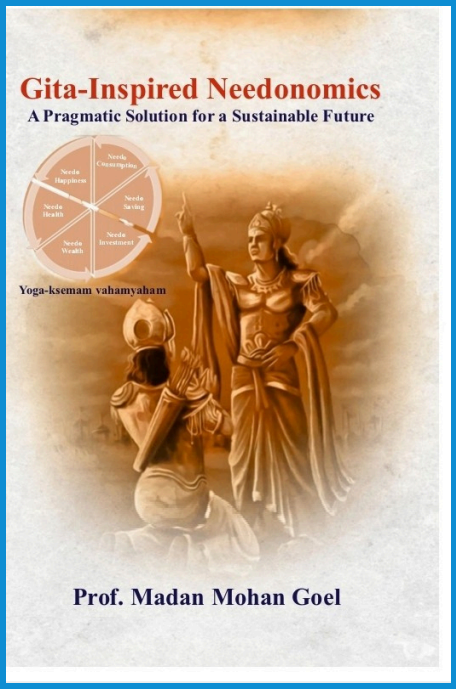
Gita-Inspired Needonomics: A Pragmatic Solution for a Sustainable Future



Biswadeep Gupta

The latest work of Prof. Madan Mohan Goel , Gita-Inspired Needonomics: A Pragmatic Solution for a Sustainable Future is a timely and thought-provoking contribution to contemporary economic discourse. At a moment when the global economy is grappling with climate crises, widening inequality, resource depletion, and pervasive consumerism, this book offers a refreshing alternative rooted in ethical, sustainable, and value-based living. As the propounder of the Needonomics School of Thought (NST), Prof. Goel presents an integrative framework that draws deeply from the Bhagavad Gita while engaging with modern economic realities. The outcome is a compelling intellectual blend—at once philosophical, practical, and visionary.

A Value-Based Alternative to Greedonomics

The central thesis of the book challenges the dominant paradigm of Greedonomics—an economic mindset driven by excessive accumulation, limitless wants, and the exploitation of people and the planet. Prof. Goel posits that the world's current crises—climate change, economic volatility, social disorder, and moral erosion—arise from systems that have normalized greed. In response, he proposes Needonomics, an economics of needs rather than wants, which emphasizes sufficiency, balance, ethical conduct, and sustainable development.

Grounded in the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita, Needonomics seeks to align human aspirations and economic activities with righteous duty (swadharma), moderation, and harmony. It emphasizes "simplicity without deprivation," advocating a middle path where consumption, production, governance, and development are guided by what is necessary, just, and sustainable.

Structure and Scope: A Comprehensive Framework

The book is divided into six sections, comprising twenty-six well-curated chapters that systematically explore the philosophical foundations, sectoral applications, and policy implications of Needonomics.

Section 1: Foundations of Needonomics

This section lays the conceptual groundwork by connecting Gita's eternal wisdom with the modern relevance of Needonomics. Prof. Goel reinterprets wealth, welfare, and human purpose through a lens that counters materialism. The chapter on Greedonomics critiques the growth-at-any-cost model, while the SWOC analysis offers an honest evaluation of Needonomics—its potential, limitations, opportunities, and challenges.

Section 2: Consumer and Market Perspectives

The chapters here are particularly useful for understanding how Needonomics can recalibrate the behavior of stakeholders across market systems. With concepts such as "Needo-Consumption" and ethical supply chains, the author shows how consumers, producers, distributors, and traders can adopt need-based decisions to restore balance in global markets. The analysis is grounded in real-world insights and provides policy-relevant recommendations for ethical and equitable trade.

Section 3: Governance and Policy

Prof. Goel extends the NST framework to governance structures, arguing for "Needo-Governance" that is transparent, efficient, and rooted in public welfare. Chapters on the knowledge-based economy, the 16th Finance Commission, Indian Systems of Medicine, and global institutions like the IMF and World Bank demonstrate how Needonomics can enrich both national and international policymaking. This section makes a strong case for integrating ethical values into public policy and global economic governance.

Section 4: Sector-Specific Implications

This section is one of the book's strengths, as it operationalizes Needonomics in specific sectors—agriculture, manufacturing, and services. By offering practical pathways for food security, labor-intensive growth, and service-sector ethics, the author illustrates the versatility of Needonomics. The chapter on teachers and researchers is a valuable addition, urging academic stakeholders to shift from careerism to purpose-driven scholarship.

Section 5: Needonomics and Indian Thought

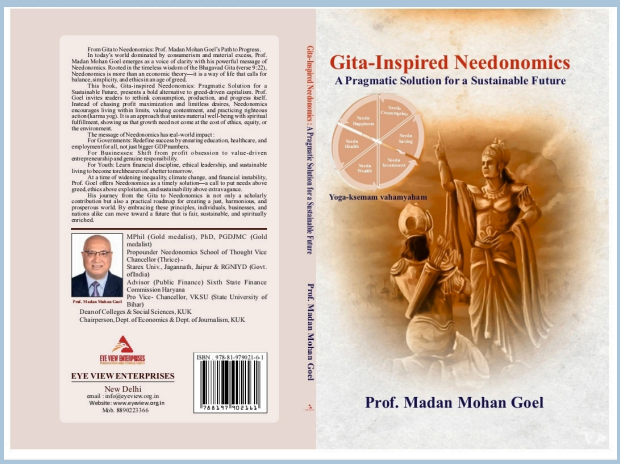
Prof. Goel bridges Needonomics with the economic philosophies of prominent Indian thinkers such as Dattopant Thengdi, Kautilya, Deendayal Upadhyaya, and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. These comparative analyses not only enrich the theoretical depth of Needonomics but also demonstrate its coherence with India's civilizational heritage. The synergy between Arthashastra's statecraft and the Gita's spiritual guidance is particularly illuminating.

Section 6: Future Vision and Roadmap

The concluding section outlines a transformative vision for Viksit Bharat @ 2047, integrating Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), national priorities, and the ethical foundations of Needonomics. The comparison with Schumacher's Small is Beautiful and Dr. J.K. Mehta's wantlessness expands the philosophical breadth of the text. The roadmap offered is ambitious yet grounded in ethical realism, reflecting Goel's conviction that India can be a lighthouse nation for sustainable global development.

Relevance to India and the World

At a time when India aspires to reach developed-nation status by 2047, Gita-Inspired Needonomics offers a value-oriented blueprint for holistic progress. The framework resonates with India's cultural ethos while addressing global concerns such as climate change, sustainable agriculture, ethical markets, and equitable finance. The book also positions Needonomics as a potential contribution to global economic thought, inviting economists worldwide to reconsider models built solely on GDP growth and profit maximization.



A Blend of Philosophy, Economics, and Practical Ethics

What sets this book apart is its ability to connect the transcendental wisdom of the Bhagavad Gita with contemporary economic challenges. Prof. Goel does not merely reinterpret scripture; he transforms its teachings into actionable principles for consumers, producers, policymakers, and academicians. His approach is normative yet pragmatic, philosophical yet empirical. The book's emphasis on balance—between growth and ecology, consumption and restraint, rights and duties—mirrors the Gita's own ethos of equanimity.

Strengths of the Book

- While comprehensive, the book could stimulate future research in:
- Quantitative models based on Needonomics principles
- Comparative international case studies
- Integration with behavioural economics
- Tools to measure Needo-Happiness or Needo-Efficiency

These are natural extensions that scholars may build upon.

Conclusion

Gita-Inspired Needonomics: A Pragmatic Solution for a Sustainable Future is a significant intellectual contribution from Prof. Madan Mohan Goel. It challenges mainstream economic thought and offers a refreshing, ethical, and sustainable alternative rooted in India's timeless wisdom. The book is indispensable for policymakers, economists, educators, students, and socially conscious citizens seeking a balanced path between material progress and moral responsibility. In a world dominated by excess and exploitation, Prof. Goel's Needonomics shines as a guiding light—inviting humanity to rethink prosperity, redefine progress, and rebuild the future with integrity, balance, and compassion.

Prof. Madan Mohan Goel
Propounder Needonomics &
Former Vice-Chancellor

Will Bangladesh Move Away from Anti-India Rhetoric?

Pradip Dutta Roy

Welfare that Respects People, Not Just Supports Them

After the formation of the new government in Bangladesh, it is being hoped that relations with India will once again become as friendly as before. Before the government was formed, the caretaker administration led by Mohammad Yunus, which emerged from the July movement, had even threatened to isolate or occupy India's northeastern region. On social media, there were repeated threats about capturing the "Chicken's Neck" or the Siliguri Corridor to sever communication with India's Northeast. Yunus himself reportedly stated before Chinese representatives that India's northeastern region is dependent on Bangladesh and that with some effort it could even be incorporated into Bangladesh. Following such threats from Bangladesh, India significantly strengthened security in the Chicken's Neck region.

However, those who issued such immature threats were shown in the recent election to lack real support. Turning a powerful country like India into an enemy ultimately benefits no one—Pakistan stands as a clear example of this. By continuously opposing India, that country has reduced itself to near bankruptcy. Mohammad Yunus, it is alleged, was attempting to push Bangladesh toward a similar fate. But the people of Bangladesh, by defeating Yunus and those forces in the election, have stepped forward to protect their country.

Opinion

Since the Awami League was banned from contesting, the only democratic political party, the BNP, contested the election and returned to power. After assuming office, the new government has distanced itself from anti-India rhetoric and expressed interest in restoring the earlier friendly relationship with India. Those who frequently blamed India now appear cornered. Many democracy-loving people in Bangladesh understand that maintaining good relations with India brings benefits rather than harm. Having a powerful country like India as a friendly neighbor would make hostile forces think many times before destabilizing Bangladesh.

After the change in power, the law-and-order situation in Bangladesh has reportedly improved. The chaotic conditions seen some time ago are now beginning to change. Upon assuming power, BNP leader Tarique Rahman clearly stated that the rule of law would prevail and that no disorder would be tolerated. Steps harmful to the state, whether in the name of religion or other issues, would be suppressed. Although the army chief Waker-uz-Zaman, considered close to Sheikh Hasina, was retained, extensive reshuffles were made in other military positions to prevent any possibility of rebellion or unrest. Tarique has begun taking steps to re-establish democratic processes in the country. Many actions taken by the temporary government under Yunus have been banned. Charges of treason have reportedly been brought against Yunus. Tarique has even reopened the closed offices of the Awami League, which had been banned during the Yunus period, in order to strengthen democratic space within the country. At first glance, his actions appear aimed at repairing the damage caused during the Yunus era and putting Bangladesh back on the path of development.

India has consistently demonstrated a neighbourly attitude toward maintaining goo relations with Bangladesh. After the death of BNP leader Khaleda Zia, Prime Minister Narendra Modi sent condolences and expres respect toward her son, Tarique Rahman, alo with a desire to normalise political relations. After the election, Prime Minister Modi was invited to attend Tarique's swearing-in ceremony. Though he did not attend persona he sent Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar to represent India, signalling goodwill. India conveyed that it remains positive about restoring normal bilateral relations.

Following the formation of the new government, Bangladesh's Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman met with India's High Commissioner Pranay Verma. The message conveyed from India reportedly created a sen of reassurance within Bangladesh's new government, especially since relations had suffered during the Yunus-led interim government when anti-India sentiments were encouraged. However, most people in Bangladesh favor maintaining good relations with India. That is why, in the election, they supported a political party that understands bilateral relations and global politics. The leaders of the July movement and Jamaat did not receive strong support from the public, though Jamaat won a few seats for other possible reasons. In any case, that remains Bangladesh's internal matter.

Many actions during Yunus's tenure were illegal

Most Bangladeshis are not in favor of conflict with India. They prefer to strengthen bilateral ties and move forward together in development. Since coming to power, Tarique has emphasized normalizing relations with India rather than fostering pro-Pakistan sentiments. His initiatives appear to be paving the way for improved India-Bangladesh harmony. The long-suspended Kolkata–Agartala Maitree Bus service through Bangladesh has resumed, sending a strong message of renewed friendship.

After the new government took office, Bangladesh's President Mohammed Shahabuddin stated that many actions during Yunus's tenure were illegal and that the country had been run without properly informing him. He alleged that Yunus's main objective was personal gain. In response, Jamaat leader Shafiqur Rahman criticized the president, accusing him of withholding information about Sheikh Hasina's resignation in August 2024. This has sparked conflict between Jamaat and the president. Shahabuddin also claimed that Yunus had attempted to remove him from office because he had been appointed during the Awami League government.

Yunus's actions, according to the article, harmed Bangladesh significantly. Nearly three million people reportedly became unemployed, and many more fell below the poverty line. The country's financial condition deteriorated, and food prices soared, causing hardship for ordinary people. However, some improvements are now reportedly visible.

There were also reports of attacks on cultural organisations, newspapers, and harassment of artists during Yunus's tenure, creating an atmosphere of uncertainty in literary and cultural circles. Upon assuming office, Tarique declared that no division in the name of religion, language, or culture would be tolerated. He inaugurated the Ekushey Cultural Fair and emphasised inclusivity and equal rights for all.

Now that a responsible political government is in power, there is hope that bilateral agreements and joint projects initiated during Sheikh Hasina's tenure will resume. These include Maitree train and bus services and cross-border connectivity projects. During Hasina's time, Bangladesh had allowed transit routes for India's northeastern states. Plans to develop railway connectivity through Bangladesh had progressed significantly before stalling under Yunus. Under the BNP government, these projects may regain momentum. However, change cannot happen overnight, and Tarique does not possess a magic wand to transform everything instantly. Gradually, joint projects may move forward again.

The deeper the bilateral relationship between India and Bangladesh, the more Bangladesh stands to benefit—politically, socially, economically, and in terms of security. Maintaining friendly relations with India is a wise course of action. Childish threats and rhetoric by a few individuals do not reflect the true will of the Bangladeshi people.

The views expressed are personal
The author is a former student leader and an advocate at the Gauhati High Court

₹3.25 Crore Heroin Seized on Silchar–Kalain Road, Five Arreste

Our Correspondent

Silchar: In a major success against drug trafficking, Cachar Police seized 538 grams of heroin worth around ₹3.25 crore during an operation on the Silchar–Kalain Road. Five suspected drug peddlers were arrested in connection with the seizure.

Police sources said the operation was carried out based on specific information. The contraband was recovered during a search, and the accused were taken into custody for further investigation.

Meanwhile, Assam Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma commended the Cachar Police for their strong action against the drug network. He praised the team for their continued efforts to curb the illegal drug trade in the state.

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