

Barak Festival
NE INDIA ADVENTURE SPORTS,
ART & CULTURE PROMOTION

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

North East Integration Rally
Peace | Progress | Prosperity
2026

Registrations OPEN

www.northeastintegrationrally.in
+91 935 083 0085

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

SUBSCRIBE
₹300 / year

WhatsApp payment details : 8721838313
info@krctimes.com

PERSPECTIVE

"No technique of the mind will free you from the mind."

TMC Fields 22 Candidates in Assam

SILCHAR

The All India Trinamool Congress (TMC) has finalised a list of 22 candidates for the upcoming Assembly elections in Assam, signalling an intensified push in the state while steering clear of inducting rebels from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Addressing a press conference, Rajya Sabha MP and senior leader Sushmita Dev said the party has prioritised loyalty and organisational strength over short-term electoral gains.

"This election is not about opportunistic gains. By focusing on candidates with proven loyalty and avoiding defectors, we are building a stable and principled team for Assam," she said.

Dev noted that the strategy was shaped in consultation with party chief Mamata Banerjee and national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee, drawing lessons from past elections where frequent defections weakened party structures.

Highlighting the party's approach, she said TMC aims to position itself as a "formidable alternative" by fielding candidates in constituencies where it has built a grassroots organisational base.

These include regions across Dhemaji, Dibrugarh, the Barak Valley, and parts of Upper, Middle and Lower Assam, along with hill districts.

The party received around 80 applications from across the state, with selections guided by criteria such as organisational strength, candidate suitability, and inclusive representation.

Dev said the current list reflects a balanced mix of loyalty and community representation, aimed at offering voters a credible political alternative.

WHO SAID WHAT

From the heights of the Himalayas to the southern shores, IndianOil's supply network continues to support fuel availability across the country. With operations running across refineries, terminals, and logistics channels, supplies are being managed to meet current requirements at retail outlets nationwide. There is no need for concern or panic buying. Let's rely on verified information and continue refuelling as usual.
- Indian Oil Corp Ltd

Imphal Airport Fake ID Case: Police Probe Narrows to Document Manipulation, Organised Network Not Yet Established

IMPHAL

The investigation into the seizure of forged identification documents at Imphal Airport has entered a critical early phase, with Manipur Police indicating that the case, at present, does not point to an organised racket.

Senior officials confirmed that the probe remains ongoing and is focused on determining whether any broader network is linked to the incident. Based on preliminary findings, investigators believe the case currently centres on the manipulation of identity documents rather than a coordinated syndicate.

"From what we have understood so far, the arrested individual allegedly created a manipulated Aadhaar card using digital tools. We are yet



to identify any main accused or wider operation. At this stage, it cannot be termed a racket," a senior police official said.

According to investigators, one original Aadhaar card and a forged version were recovered during the inquiry. The airline ticket

in question had been booked using the original identity. Officials said the legitimate Aadhaar holder was in the process of cancelling the ticket when the accused allegedly generated a manipulated version of the document.

The case surfaced following a security interception at Imphal Airport on March 24, when routine verification procedures flagged discrepancies in the documents of two passengers. Authorities subsequently detained 22-year-old Alam Azad, a resident of Lilong Atoukhong Maning Leikai in Thoubal district, along with a juvenile.

A search operation led to the recovery of multiple forged identification documents, including Aadhaar cards and voter ID cards.

Investigators noted a consistent pattern across the documents: while names and personal details varied, the photographs remained identical, raising strong suspicion of identity fraud.

Police sources emphasised that the investigation is still at a nascent stage, with multiple angles under examination, including the use of digital tools for document manipulation and possible links to other similar cases.

"We are verifying all aspects, including whether more individuals are involved. The possibility of a larger network has not been ruled out, but there is no conclusive evidence at this point," officials said, adding that further details are expected as the probe progresses.

SILCHAR

Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on March 27 expressed strong confidence that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will return to power in Assam for a third consecutive term, projecting that the party will secure more than 100 seats in the upcoming Assembly elections.

Addressing a public rally at Borkhola Assembly constituency in Cachar district, Sonowal said the BJP's governance record and development initiatives have significantly strengthened public trust across the state.

"The BJP will comfortably form the government in Assam, and we are confident of winning more than 100 seats. People have seen our work and have faith in our leadership," he said.

Highlighting the party's



performance, Sonowal asserted that Assam has undergone notable transformation under BJP rule, drawing a contrast with previous governments. He said key decisions taken by the party have contributed to the state's growth and helped safeguard its identity. "Historic decisions have been taken for Assam's development. The people no longer want instability and corruption; they want progress and good governance," he added.

The Union Minister pointed to various initiatives undertaken by both the state and central governments, stating that these have reached grassroots levels and improved the quality of life for citizens.

Referring to the political landscape, Sonowal claimed that Opposition parties lack both direction and public

support, while the BJP continues to expand its organisational base across regions, including the Barak Valley.

"The response from people in places like Borkhola reflects their confidence in the BJP. We remain committed to taking Assam forward on the path of progress," he said.

Sonowal also urged party workers to intensify outreach efforts ahead of the polls, emphasising the importance of booth-level engagement with voters. The rally witnessed a significant turnout, with senior party leaders and local candidates in attendance.

The upcoming elections to the 126-member Assam Legislative Assembly are expected to see a multi-cornered contest, with the BJP-led alliance seeking to retain power and Opposition parties attempting to mount a challenge.

Nagaland Assembly Defers FNTA Bill, Sends It Back for Review Amid Legal and Policy Concerns

KOHIMA

The Nagaland Legislative Assembly on Friday referred the Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority (FNTA) Bill back to the state government for further examination, citing concerns over key provisions and pending inputs from the Centre.

The Bill, introduced a day earlier by Deputy Chief Minister Yanthung Patton, was slated for discussion and passage on March 27. However, proceedings were halted after Speaker Sharingain Longkumer informed the House of a communication from Parliamentary Affairs Minister K. G. Kenye.

Kenye conveyed that the Eastern Nagaland Legislators Union had flagged discrepancies between the provisions of the Bill and the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) signed on February 5 in New Delhi among the Centre, the state government, and the Eastern Nagaland Peoples' Organisation. According to him, certain provisions present in the MoA were missing from the Bill, leading to what he described as "contentious issues" requiring reconsideration.

He advised that the legislation should not be passed in the current session and instead be sent back to the government for detailed review.

Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio reiterated the government's commitment to equitable development in eastern Nagaland, covering the districts of Tuensang, Mon, Longleng, Kiphire, Noklak, and Shamator. He said the proposed FNTA is envisioned as a special self-governing territorial authority aimed at addressing long-standing socio-economic and administrative aspirations in the region, in line with the

MoA's proposed four-tier governance framework.

Rio added that while the state government would allocate funds based on population and geographical considerations, the Centre is expected to extend special development grants under various schemes. The proposed authority would also have the mandate to prepare annual development plans and prioritise key projects.

However, the Chief Minister highlighted significant legal and procedural hurdles. He noted that, based on legal consultations, the state Cabinet had observed that legislative powers cannot be delegated to such an authority under existing constitutional provisions through a state law.

He further informed the House that the matter has been referred to the Ministry of Home Affairs, which is currently examining the issue and has sought additional time, including the opinion of the Solicitor General of India.

Rio also pointed out that both ENPO and ENLU had urged the government to defer the Bill until all concerns were addressed and clarity was achieved regarding the MoA's provisions.

"In view of the request of the Government of India, a signatory to the MoA, and appeals from ENPO and ENLU, and to ensure the provisions are legally sound and constitutionally tenable, the Bill may be deferred and referred back to the government," he said.

Amit Shah to Lead Guwahati Roadshow, Intensify Assam Poll Campaign



GUWAHATI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah is set to arrive in Assam on March 27 to spearhead the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) campaign ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections, with a series of high-profile engagements planned across the state. Shah will land in Guwahati in the evening and participate in a roadshow in support of BJP's Guwahati Central candidate Vijay Gupta. The roadshow is scheduled to begin from Arya Vidyapeeth Playground and traverse key areas of the constituency, aiming to mobilise voter support in one of the state's most prominent urban seats. He is also expected to meet party office bearers later in the day. On March 29, Shah will continue his campaign trail in upper Assam, addressing a rally for minister Ashok Singhal at the Dheklajuli Tea Estate football field in Sonitpur district. He will then proceed to Tihu in Nalbari district, where he is slated to campaign for senior minister Chandramohan Patowary at the Chamata Higher Secondary School field, concluding his two-day visit.

The Union minister is also scheduled to return to the state on April 2 to campaign in the Barak Valley region. During that visit, he will address rallies in support of minister Krishnendu Paul in Sribhumli district and former MP Rajdeep Roy in Silchar.

Crimes Against Women Decline in Tripura in 2025, Conviction Rate Remains Low

AGARTALA

Tripura recorded 667 cases of crimes against women in 2025, marking a continued decline over the past three years, according to data tabled in the Tripura Legislative Assembly.

The figures show a drop from 724 cases in 2024 and 791 in 2023, indicating a downward trend in reported incidents. However, the data also highlights a low conviction rate, with only eight convictions secured during the year.

A total of 1,439 individuals were found involved in the registered cases,

with police arresting 182 individuals and filing charge sheets against 204. In 116 molestation cases, 58 arrests were made, while 154 persons were charge-sheeted.

The state also reported 19 dowry death cases, leading to the arrest of 31 individuals, with 29 charge-sheeted. In addition, 206 cases of cruelty against women were recorded, with 35 arrests and 477 individuals charge-sheeted in connection with these offences. Despite the decline in overall numbers, the gap between the number of accused and convictions remains significant, raising concerns about prosecution and judicial outcomes. Earlier, Chief Minister Manik Saha had pointed to an overall



out of which 426 were arrested. Charge sheets were filed against 1,072 accused persons.

A category-wise breakdown shows that 168 rape cases were registered in 2025,

all reduction in crime in the state, citing data from the National Crime Records Bureau that indicated improvements across multiple categories in recent years.

All family members cordially invite you to the
Shradha Ceremony
of
Late Simantasri Gupta
(25.01.1948 - 20.03.2026)
Om Shanti
30 MARCH 2026 (MONDAY)
Malugram Kalibari, H. No.15, Old Kalibari Road,
Silchar, Assam.
LUNCH: 12:30PM - 4:30PM
Arijit Gupta (Brother-in-Law)
Biswadeep Gupta (Son)
Souradeep Gupta (Son)
& family members
Tel: 8721838313



VOLUME:1, ISSUE 735

IRAN CONFLICT AND INDIA

History rarely announces itself. Truly consequential change arrives quietly, reshaping the world until one morning, the alert realize the old assumptions no longer apply. The question is whether a nation's institutions have kept pace.

We live in such a moment. The conflict in Iran is a mirror of a strategic shift years in the making, now undeniable. Where change once took decades, this war has compressed a generation's evolution into months. When learning lags behind this pace, the gap between assumption and reality becomes a critical vulnerability.

For India, the temptation is to observe this war as a distant laboratory, noting lessons, commissioning papers. But India is no bystander. With two nuclear-armed neighbours, a vast maritime flank, a vulnerable digital economy, and a security architecture built for a different era, India is a frontline actor. The war raises urgent, structural questions. This article offers no neat answers, but instead frames the questions honest diagnosis demands. A nation that jumps from observation to solution without confronting diagnosis risks solving for the wrong problem.

The Vanishing Aim: When Objectives Are Designed to Deceive

The oldest principle of war, the selection and maintenance of the aim, rests on a premise so basic it is rarely examined: that the belligerent has a defined political objective and that military force is deployed in its service. The Iran conflict is systematically dismantling this model. The opening moves were not armoured thrusts across frontiers but the degradation of alliances through diplomatic pressure, the exploitation of internal fissures, the erosion of national will through precision strikes on leadership, and the manipulation of energy markets. The strategic aim, insofar as it could be discerned, was the hollowing of the Iranian state's capacity to function as a coherent actor.

This is not a new idea. Kautilya understood this logic with a clarity that contemporary strategic culture has partly lost. For Kautilya, war was the last resort of a king who had exhausted prior instruments of statecraft. The preferred victory was one achieved before battle was joined, through the manipulation of adversarial alliances and the corruption of internal cohesion. The Iran conflict is recognisably Kautilyan in character. The adversary pursued strategic aim by unconventional means and left the political threshold deliberately undefined, not from confusion, but because a defined aim forecloses the option to exit.

For India, this demands a diagnostic rereading of something fundamental. Are our war aims, as currently articulated in doctrine, calibrated to an adversary whose primary objective may be the paralysis of our decision making rather than the capture of our territory? India is not Iran. Our geography, alliances, nuclear posture, and civil military culture are all distinct. But the underlying logic of aim as ambiguity is transferable.

The Dissolving Front: When the Battlefield Is Everywhere and Nowhere

For generations, war had a recognisable geography. The front absorbed the first shock. The hinterland sustained the effort from a distance. The Iran conflict is voiding that contract. The first salvo did not arrive at the border. It fell on a data centre hundreds of kilometers from any frontier; it arrived in the information environment consumed by millions before breakfast; it struck at the political leadership itself. The battlefield has stretched from the Strait of Hormuz to the corridors of power in Tehran, with no single front, no obvious point of failure, and no clear distinction between the forward edge and the strategic depth.

The instinctive response is technological: what must India buy or build to protect against these new vectors? That impulse is understandable, but it risks misreading the deeper shift. The problem is not primarily one of capability but of conception. A military establishment designed around the idea of a recognisable front may be fundamentally misstructured for this environment. India's geography offers genuine advantages, but those advantages do not make India immune to the logic of the dissolving front. The drone intrusions reported across India's western frontier are a signal worth reading carefully. The question is whether India's institutional architecture has absorbed the implication that the hinterland is now a theatre.

Deterrence, Resilience, and the Assumptions We Have Not Tested

India's strategic posture rests on deterrence. But deterrence carries embedded assumptions that deserve examination. The conventional model assumes the adversary is a clearly identifiable state, that escalation follows recognisable thresholds, and that the target of deterrence is a unified decision-making structure. The Iran conflict complicates each of these.

The relevant question for India is not whether deterrence remains valid, but whether our deterrence posture has been stress tested against these altered conditions. Resilience and deterrence are not alternatives. Resilience is what determines whether deterrence was ever real. A state that visibly fractures under a coordinated multi domain assault has surrendered the credibility on which deterrence depends. India must ask whether its national security architecture is designed to absorb that kind of strike and continue to function.

The Cost Exchange and the Intelligence Gap

The Iran conflict has exposed two structural vulnerabilities that are individually serious and, in combination, strategically corrosive. The first is economic. A Shahed series drone costing roughly fifty thousand dollars forces the deployment of interceptors worth many times that figure. Across hundreds of engagements, this cost asymmetry bends the strategic calculus against the defender. Nations that rely on exquisite, high-end platforms without building affordable mass risk being tactically sophisticated but strategically exhausted.

India's efforts toward joint operational architecture represent genuine progress. But the architecture must be layered, combining high end interceptors for critical threats with affordable kinetic options for mass attrition scenarios. The second vulnerability is intelligence. The Iran conflict has underlined that intelligence dominance, the seamless synthesis of cyber, electronic, space, and human intelligence into a single actionable stream, matters more than raw firepower. India's agencies possess genuine capabilities, but the system has historically operated in silos, with interagency friction that remains unresolved.

Industry, Training, and the Peacetime Illusion

Ukraine established, and Iran is reinforcing, a principle that peacetime procurement culture tends to obscure: industrial production capacity is combat power expressed in slow motion. Aatmanirbharta, self-reliance, is an operational necessity, not merely an economic aspiration. But self-reliance in peacetime procurement is not the same as industrial resilience under wartime stress. The deeper question for India's defence manufacturing corridors is whether they are hardened, geographically dispersed, and capable of sustained output under conditions of deliberate interference.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The past is never dead. It's not even past." — William Faulkner

HOW CONGRESS TRANSFORMED ITSELF INTO A PERIPHERAL POLITICAL PARTY



ASHWANI KUMAR CHHURGOO

The Election Commission of India announced the dates for elections in five states on 15 March 2026. Accordingly, the elections will be held in the month of April and the results of all the five states will be declared on 4 May, 2026. Simultaneously, a number of opinion polls have also emerged about the latest political situation in regard to the electoral scenario in these states. What is noteworthy in these opinion polls is the sliding graph of the Congress party. In three states, the party has practically become a peripheral party from its position of the mainstream party only some decades ago. This situation coupled with the results of the Rajya Sabha biennial elections on 16 March speaks a lot about the status of the Congress on ground.

In three states like West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, the Congress stands reduced to a party on the sidelines. In Tamil Nadu it is dependent on DMK while in Kerala it has to go with the alliance called UDF. In Assam though it is the primary opposition party but the opinion polls bring it further down the radar this time. The actual results will be known only on 4 May 2026 but one can gauge the emerging situation particularly in context of the Congress party which was a premier political party in all these states some decades back which are going to the polls in the month of April this year. An analysis is required to know the reasons for such a scenario about the Congress party particularly when the downward graph of the party is not sudden but gradual.

Congress as on date has completed 140 years of its formation. It was the foremost & top-ranking political party of India when India achieved freedom from the Britishers in India. A perception was created after 1947 that the Congress was the only organisation that fought for the freedom of the country and the rest were just an appendage to the mainstream struggle. This perception was also constructed by the Congress (INC) and its echo-system to work as a covering fire to the division of the country into two dominions and the role of the Congress in the division of the country. For a long time, Congress was successful in carrying this perception to

the people at large particularly during the Nehru-Indira era.

Congress used its power and influence and guided the Ministry of Education and I&B to take this perception to the common people at large and specifically to the younger generations undergoing studies in schools and colleges. Leftist-progressive elements along with the pseudo-secular echo-system helped the Congress regime to percolate this false perception down the line. A wrong narrative about the ancient past and the medieval history was created and spread throughout for a long time. The nationalist and civilizational aspects were deliberately and consciously put aside and relegated to negligible canvasses of history.

The INC, taking advantage of its role in the freedom struggle and the consequent transfer of power from the Britishers to it, made sure that it remained in power at the centre and in the states permanently. It was successful in its endeavor up to 1967 when for the first time the then opposition gathered mass and assumed power in a number of states by winning the state elections. It was for the first time in 1977, consequent upon the declaration of elections during the Emergency period, that the Congress was defeated convincingly and the opposition assumed power at the Centre under the banner of Janta Party.

Congress under Indira Gandhi bounced back in 1980 consequent upon the division in Janta Party and thus it won the midterm elections. From 1980 to 1989, Congress remained in power but started losing most of its control on its traditional vote bank due to various reasons. Rajiv Gandhi who took over from his mother, Indira Gandhi, after her brutal murder by her own security guards in 1984, became the Prime Minister of India immediately after her death. From 1981 to 1984 India passed through a very tumultuous period due to terrorism in Punjab and its impact on the rest of India. Cross-border terrorism ruined Punjab and it became a big centre of anti-national and terrorist activities. It all happened due to the wrong policies of the Congress government at the centre.

Later on when the things went out of hands, the Central government under the Congress was forced to go for Operation

Bluestar on the Darbar Sahib, Amritsar-Punjab. Thereafter two police actions were also taken inside the Golden Temple by the end of 1980s. During the 1980s, Ramjanambhumi movement spread throughout the length and breadth of the country and it surely impacted the minds of a large segment of the population in the country. The Bofors scam created hell for the Congress both politically and electorally. It lost the elections held in November 1989 after having won them in 1984 with a sweeping majority of 415 seats in the Lok Sabha consequent upon the murder of Indira Gandhi.

The Congress could never recover from the situation of 1989 though it formed the government again at the centre in 1991, 2004 and 2009 as a leading partner of a coalition of several political parties. Terrorism in Kashmir and the ethnic cleansing of the Hindu minorities from Kashmir valley also played their part in making people aware about the wrong policies of the Congress government. In 1991, it formed a minority-coalition government at the centre for the first time after 1947 under the leadership of veteran Narsimha Rao. Its vote share also came down significantly at a national level and it lost elections in all big states in a period of ten years during the 1980s and 1990s. From a whopping 40-45% + vote share for the Congress party throughout, it came down below 30%. Janta Dal, BJP and the Left parties started gaining at the expense of Congress party.

BJP being the cadre based party with a solid ideological background consolidated its gains after 1989 and emerged as a formidable opposition party of the nation in 1991. It further strengthened its vote share and took it beyond 20% at the national level. Then Congress lost its major bastions like UP, Bihar, MP, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and TN wherefrom 50% of the Lok Sabha seats were/are elected. With this development, its vote share got further reduced eventually and it started losing grip on its most traditional and trusted vote banks in the Hindu community. However, it did everything to save its minority vote bank at the cost of losing state elections one by one.

The parallel political activity on behalf of the other political parties gave its biggest benefit to the BJP in the 1990s and it was able to form the coalition governments three times from 1996 to 2004. While BJP increased its vote share to around 25% at the national level, it also came very close to the percentage vote share of the Congress party. The year 2009 brought Congress back to the Centre stage for the second successive term but an overwhelming saga of its involvement in the scams came to the light to its detriment. The coalition government of Manmohan Singh was considered as the most corrupt government of the modern times for which the Congress party had to pay from its nose electorally.

The year 2014 saw a massive wave against the Congress government and it lost the general elections. Narendra Modi as the national leader of the BJP swept the elections and created history by forming the BJP government at the centre on its own. However, the BJP took all its allies along with and called its government as the NDA-BJP government. While the Congress came down to a record low with 44 seats in the Lok Sabha, the Leftists also lost their ground at the national level and got alarmingly reduced at the hustings. This situation got further strengthened in 2019 general elections in which the Congress vote share fell below 20% and the BJP vote share went beyond 35% at the national level. This was considered a paradigm shift in the minds of the electorate of the country.

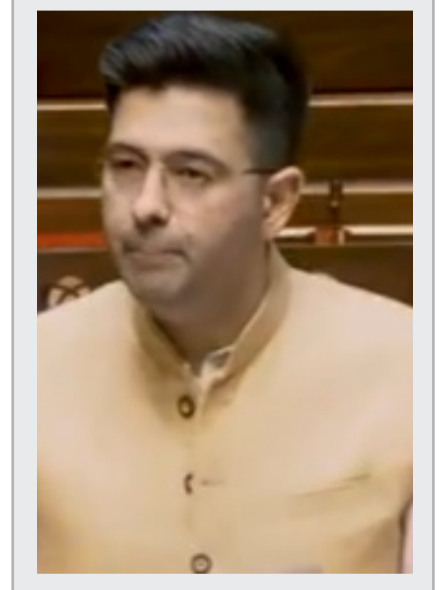
Though Congress gained somewhat in 2024 alongwith the other opposition

parties, however, it couldn't create any hurdles to the BJP-NDA to form their government at the Centre for the third consecutive time. In addition to this, the Congress lost power in almost all the states of India barring three states ie Karnataka, HP and Telangana. Its policies in the fields of economy, defence, foreign relations, education, foreign affairs and home were considered disastrous for the

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

Traffic has turned our metro cities into giant parking lots with people trapped inside them. In Bengaluru, Pune, Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi and Chennai, on average a commuter spends 100 to 168 hours a year stuck in traffic . Not commuting. Just sitting. Every hour lost is an hour India cannot get back. Productivity lost, fuel wasted, air polluted, quality of life damaged. I stood up in Parliament and demanded a National Urban Decongestion Mission for our big metro cities with better public transport, smarter traffic management and a scientific parking policy. We are not stuck in traffic. We are stuck because of it. And if India wants its economy in the fast lane, our cities need to start moving.

~ Raghav Chadha, MP (RS), National Spokesperson, AAP



nation in the long run and the voters of the country punished it for its policies and programmes on the ground. The BJP successfully accused it of policy paralysis.

Besides this, the Congress party was stung by the leadership crisis and the organisational issues as well over the last one and a half decades. It continuously haunted/haunts the party directly and indirectly. It has also brought the party's prestige down in the eyes of the public at large. The irresponsible attitude of its leader Rahul Gandhi both inside and outside the parliament has severely damaged the party both from the inside as well as the outside. The Congress party lost 95 elections since 2014 and it might touch a century after the results of the 5 state elections due in April this year.

There is a loss of credibility that acutely plagues the Congress as on date. Its leadership is not seen as a serious one. It keeps itself busy in accusing institutions of constitutional importance for one reason or the other and also the constitutional authorities without any sort of remorse or accountability. Rahul Gandhi, whom people call the leader of propaganda (LoP), and his coterie have sought an apology a number of times before the courts of law for their irresponsible public comments and statements about people and institutions. It seems unlikely that they would mend their ways so soon. Thus Congress's suffering and fading credibility in the eyes of the common people will remain unabated. (The author is a senior BJP and KP leader)



Nagaland CM Neiphiu Rio Presents Rs 337 Crore Deficit Budget, Focuses on Fiscal Discipline and Reforms

KOHIMA

Neiphiu Rio on Thursday presented a deficit budget of Rs 337.04 crore for 2026-27 in the Nagaland Legislative Assembly, outlining a strategy centred on fiscal consolidation, revenue mobilisation and targeted development.

Presenting the budget during the second phase of the Assembly's eighth session, Rio-who also holds the finance portfolio-said that while the estimates indicate a net surplus of Rs 74.77 crore for the year, the state is expected to end the fiscal with a deficit due to a negative opening balance of Rs 411.81 crore.

The Chief Minister noted an improvement in the state's financial position, stating that

the closing deficit for 2025-26 is now projected at Rs 411.81 crore, significantly lower than the earlier estimate of Rs 843.21 crore.

For 2026-27, the budget pegs gross receipts at Rs 22,507.10 crore and total expenditure at Rs 22,127.33 crore, reflecting a cautious approach to balancing spending with available resources.

Rio expressed concern over the revised tax devolution formula proposed by the Finance Commission, which is set to reduce Nagaland's share in central taxes from 0.569 per cent to 0.481 per cent. This change is expected to lower the state's projected receipts to Rs 7,341 crore in 2026-27, compared to Rs 8,684 crore under the previous framework.

He also flagged the impact of the discontinuation of post-devolution revenue deficit grants, noting that the state has sought continued financial support from the Centre. Referring to a recent meeting with Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Rio said Nagaland has requested grants-in-aid to bridge the anticipated fiscal gap and protect its unique constitutional provisions.

Highlighting structural challenges, the Chief Minister pointed to concerns raised by successive finance commissions over high revenue expenditure, particularly on salaries. He reiterated the government's commitment to rationalising expenditure, enhancing internal revenue generation and

maintaining fiscal discipline without compromising development goals.

The budget also introduces several reform-oriented initiatives. For the first time, Nagaland will adopt a Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)-linked framework, alongside a gender budget statement and outcome-based budgeting. These measures aim to strengthen transparency, accountability and results-driven governance through a "whole-of-government" approach.

The proposals, Rio said, are designed to ensure financial stability while advancing inclusive growth and administrative efficiency across the state.



Sonowal Targets Congress Over 'Infiltration', Says Assam Polls Key to Protect Indigenous Rights

GUWAHATI

Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on March 26 sharpened his attack on the Indian National Congress, alleging that the party facilitated the settlement of "infiltrators" from Bangladesh during its tenure in Assam and distributed land to them.

Speaking in the run-up to the Assembly elections, Sonowal framed the polls as critical to safeguarding the interests of indigenous communities in the state. He claimed that successive Congress governments had allowed illegal entrants to settle in Assam, a charge the party has consistently denied.

The senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader said that over the past decade, authorities have cleared more than 1.5 lakh bighas of land from alleged illegal encroachment, describing it as part of the government's efforts to reclaim land for rightful inhabitants.

Sonowal further asserted that illegal infiltrators continue to reside in several districts and stressed the need for their identification and removal, along with the recovery of land they are accused of occupying.

Reiterating his party's position, he said the BJP remains committed to ensuring the "security, existence and self-respect" of the people of Assam, placing the issue of alleged infiltration at the centre of its electoral narrative ahead of the polls.

ZPM Women's Wing Moves Police Over 'Defamatory' Post Against MLA Ahead of Aizawl Civic Polls



AIZAWL

The women's wing of the ruling Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) has filed a police complaint over an alleged defamatory social media post targeting party MLA Baryl Vannehsangi, amid heightened campaigning for the upcoming civic polls in Mizoram.

The complaint was lodged on March 26 at the Cyber Crime Police Station in Aizawl against an individual accused of uploading objectionable content on Facebook. According to the complaint, the accused shared two images of the legislator in a group along with a

caption that the party claims was intended to malign her reputation.

The development comes in the run-up to the elections to the 19-member Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC), scheduled for April 21, with political activity intensifying across the state capital.

A ZPM functionary said the party has taken serious note of the incident, terming the post an attack on the dignity of a woman public representative. The party has called for stringent legal action, urging authorities to identify and prosecute the accused for allegedly spreading false and defamatory content.

Vannehsangi, 32, had emerged as one of the youngest legislators in the Mizoram Legislative Assembly after her election in 2023. A former television presenter and radio jockey, she first entered public office through the AMC polls in 2021 on a ZPM ticket, before rising within the party ranks.

Police have yet to issue an official statement on the complaint or confirm any action taken in the case.

Assam BJP Chief Slams Congress, Calls 'Natun Bor Asom' Slogan a "Dangerous Conspiracy"

GUWAHATI

Dilip Saikia, president of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Assam, on Thursday launched a sharp attack on the Indian National Congress, alleging that its slogan "Natun Bor Asom" (New Greater Assam) represents a "dangerous conspiracy" that could undermine the rights of indigenous communities.

Addressing a press conference at the party headquarters, Saikia claimed that the Congress' vision seeks to prioritise the interests of certain groups-particularly those referred to as "Miyas"-over indigenous populations. The term "Miya," historically used as a pejorative for Bengali-speaking Muslims in Assam, has in recent years also been reclaimed by sections of the community as a marker of identity.

Saikia asserted that the BJP remains committed to safeguarding Assam's demographic and cultural integrity, adding that such efforts



would continue into the future. He described the Congress slogan as unacceptable in its current form and said it would be "corrected" if the BJP returns to power after the 2026 Assembly elections.

Accusing the Congress of engaging in divisive politics, Saikia alleged that the party is attempting to construct a counter-narra-

tive against measures undertaken by the BJP-led government. These include initiatives targeting child marriage, population control policies, and action against illegal infiltration.

Invoking the legacy of Sukaphaa, Saikia argued that the Congress had failed to show due respect to Assam's histori-

cal figures, suggesting that such slogans would not have emerged otherwise. He framed the political choice before voters as one between a BJP-led model of "secure and balanced development" and an alternative that, according to him, risks altering the state's social balance.

The BJP leader also criticised the Congress' role during the updating of the National Register of Citizens (NRC), alleging that the party did not take adequate steps to address infiltration concerns, resulting in what he described as an incomplete process. He noted that the BJP has approached the Supreme Court of India seeking re-verification of the final NRC draft.

On the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), Saikia reiterated that it remains a core commitment of the BJP, emphasising that the legislation is aimed at protecting the rights of indigenous communities and ensuring long-term stability in the state.

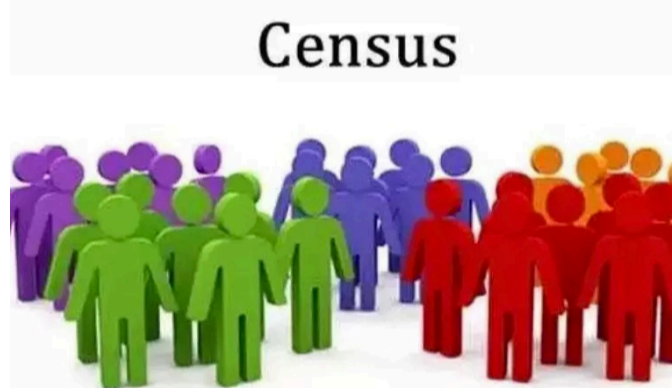
Manipur to Proceed with Census 2027 House-Listing in September Despite Calls for Delay

IMPHAL

The Government of Manipur has confirmed that house-listing operations for the Census of India 2027 will be conducted in the state from September 1 to September 30, 2026, despite growing public demands for deferment.

The announcement follows the republication of an official notification aligning with the schedule set by the Ministry of Home Affairs. As per the plan, preparatory enumeration activities in Manipur will take place between August 17 and August 31, 2026, ahead of the full-scale house-to-house exercise.

The decision comes amid rising concerns among sections of the public over issues such as identification of illegal immigrants and the possible implementation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in the



state. Several groups have called for postponement of the census until these concerns are addressed.

According to the Centre's notification (S.O. 99(E), dated January 7, 2026), issued by the Office of the Registrar General of India, the

national house-listing phase will be conducted between April 1 and September 30, 2026, across all states and Union Territories. The directive has been issued under provisions of the Census Act, 1948 and the Census Rules, 1990, superseding an earlier

2020 notification.

A key feature of the upcoming census is the introduction of a self-enumeration option, allowing residents to submit their details digitally or offline during a 15-day window prior to the official enumeration period. Authorities say this step is intended to streamline data collection and offer greater flexibility to citizens.

While the broader timeline remains uniform nationwide, individual states and Union Territories have been given the flexibility to select their own 30-day window within the April-September period for conducting house-listing operations.

Despite the official schedule, the move to proceed in Manipur has sparked debate, with stakeholders continuing to press for a delay citing the state's unique demographic and political sensitivities.

Himanta Biswa Sarma Hits Out at Gaurav Gogoi Over Barpeta Medical College Renaming Row



GUWAHATI/BARPETA

Himanta Biswa Sarma launched a sharp attack on Gaurav Gogoi over the latter's promise to rename Barpeta Medical College, remarking that the Congress leader would need "seven births" to match the BJP government's work.

Sarma asserted that the institution's name reflects its geographical identity rather than any individual, dismissing Gogoi's pledge to revert it to the name of Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed. "He would need to be born seven times to match what we have done," the Chief Minister said during campaign rallies.

The remarks came after Gogoi, while campaigning in Mandia on March 25, promised to restore the earlier name of the medical college if voted to power. Responding during Vijay Sankalp rallies in Sarthebari (Barpeta district) and Bajali, Sarma criticised the proposal and defended the current naming.

Campaigning for alliance candidate Deepak Kumar Das, Sarma also highlighted the strength of the BJP-AGP alliance, likening it to a popular

and inseparable combination. He used the platform to intensify his broader criticism of the Indian National Congress, accusing it of reshaping Assam's cultural narrative.

Referring to the legacy of Srimanta Sankardev, Sarma alleged that Congress was attempting to redefine the idea of "Bor Asom" by selectively invoking historical figures such as Ajan Fakir while sidelining others like Madhavdev. He further claimed that such narratives were being used to justify the inclusion of "Bangladeshis" in the state's socio-political framework.

The Chief Minister also outlined the government's ongoing crackdown on encroachments, stating that around 1.5 lakh bighas of land have already been cleared out of an estimated 50 lakh bighas under illegal occupation. He added that eviction drives would continue, with plans to reclaim nearly 5 lakh bighas and redistribute land to economically weaker sections.

Sarma said the BJP's upcoming manifesto, or 'Sankalp Patra', will include 31 key commitments aimed at presenting a renewed development vision for Assam.

300 women-led polling stations, riverine booths along Brahmaputra highlight Dibrugarh's inclusive election push



DIBRUGARH

Dibrugarh Deputy Commissioner Bikram Kairi on Wednesday stated that all preparations are in place for voting on April 9 across the district's six assembly constituencies here, and the administration has made special logistical arrangements to facilitate smooth access to these booths for

Quest!

A person who looks good from behind = "Talkodgenic"

the Assam polls scheduled to be held in one phase.

Bikram Kairi stated, "A total of 1,322 polling stations have been set up across the district. Among them, five are located in riverine areas, where polling teams will travel through the Brahmaputra River to ensure that voters in remote locations can cast their votes within their own villages. The administration has made special logistical arrangements to facilitate smooth access to these booths."

In a strong push towards women's empowerment, 300 polling stations will be entirely managed by women staff, marking a significant increase compared to previous elections. Officials say that during training

sessions, women personnel showed remarkable enthusiasm, reflecting growing participation and confidence.

With a dual focus on last-mile connectivity in challenging riverine regions and enhancing women-led participation, the district administration aims to ensure a smooth, inclusive and efficient polling process in Dibrugarh.

Meanwhile, on Wednesday, with Assam set to go to polls on April 9, the Election Commission of India (ECI) held an online review and training session for District Election Officers (DEOs), Superintendents of Police (SPs), SSPs, Commanding Officers (COs), and other senior state officials to assess poll preparedness. According to a

press note issued by the ECI, Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, during the review visit of Assam on February 18, had underlined that the elections in Assam shall be conducted in a violence-free, intimidation-free, and inducement-free manner so that every elector can vote without fear or favour in a festive atmosphere. Senior officers of the Commission reviewed the preparedness of the district administration and law and order machinery for the general elections to the Legislative Assembly of Assam, the press note said.

The senior officers held a detailed review with the DEOs, SPs, and COs of the state on every aspect of election planning, ensuring AMF at all polling stations, EVM management, logistics, training of election staff, seizures, law and order, voter awareness and outreach activities.

District Election Officers (DEOs) were also directed to ensure distribution of Voter Information Slips (VIS) to all electors at least 5 days before the day of poll. They were also instructed to ensure that Voter Guides are provided to each household. CEO Assam informed that in addition to these, Braille-enabled VIS will also be issued for the benefit of visually impaired voters, the note said.

Provision of adequate safety equipment and rescue measures was emphasised in view of the numerous riverine polling stations in Assam, the press note added. The polling for all 126 Assembly constituencies will be held in a single phase on April 9, while the counting of votes is scheduled for May 4, the Election Commission of India announced.

Register @

KRC PLACEMENTS

APPLY NOW

Send your resume for a free profiling session at e-mail: seforsuccess@gmail.com

Registration **FREE**

A division of **KRC Foundation**

"Connecting the unconnected"

For more information schedule an online appointment

Jaishankar in France for G7 meet; Hormuz tensions, Ukraine war dominate agenda



NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar arrived in France on Thursday to participate in the G7 Foreign Ministers' meeting, with escalating tensions in West Asia and disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz expected to dominate deliberations alongside the ongoing Ukraine conflict. The two-day meeting, being held at Abbaye des Vaux-de-Cernay on March 26-27, comes at the invitation of Jean-Noël Barrot. India, though not a G7 member, has been invited as a partner country by France, which currently holds the presidency of the grouping.

Foreign ministers from the G7 nations, the United States, Canada, Germany, Italy, France, Japan and the United Kingdom, are attending, along with representatives from the European Union and partner countries including Saudi Arabia, Brazil and South Korea.

A key focus of the meeting will be the worsening crisis in West Asia, particularly tensions involving Iran and the effective blockade of the Strait

of Hormuz, a vital maritime corridor that handles nearly a fifth of global oil and LNG shipments.

"The situation in the Strait of Hormuz has serious implications for global energy markets and supply chains, especially for major import-dependent economies," officials familiar with the agenda said.

The disruption has already driven up global energy prices, raising concerns over fuel security in countries like India. A dedicated session is expected to examine diplomatic options to de-escalate tensions, restore shipping flows and ensure uninterrupted energy supplies. Discussions are also likely to touch upon Iran's nuclear and missile programmes.

India has stepped up diplomatic outreach in recent weeks to stabilise the region. New Delhi has flagged risks to both fuel and fertiliser security if the crisis persists. "Ensuring stability in energy corridors remains a critical priority for India," a senior official said. Beyond West Asia, the ministers will

deliberate on the ongoing war in Ukraine, reconstruction efforts, maritime security and reforms in global governance, issues seen as part of the broader run-up to the G7 Leaders' Summit scheduled in June. Diplomatic sources indicated that participants are seeking clarity from US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Washington's approach to the Iran crisis and its broader regional strategy.

European nations, meanwhile, are expected to reiterate support for Ukraine and stress the need to sustain pressure on Russia, amid concerns that Kyiv could be pushed towards an unfavourable settlement. On the sidelines of the meeting, Jaishankar is expected to hold bilateral talks with several counterparts to advance India's strategic and economic interests. French officials said the discussions will help set the tone for the upcoming G7 Leaders' Summit, as the grouping grapples with deepening global divisions even while attempting to coordinate responses to economic and security challenges.

India bears 20 pc of global disease burden but accounts for just 1 pc of health spending: Experts

NEW DELHI:

India carries 20% of the global disease burden but accounts for only 1% of global health spending, experts said here on Wednesday, highlighting that a vast "missing middle" of around 430 million people remains outside effective healthcare coverage.

Out-of-pocket spending accounts for 44% of health expenditure in India, among the highest globally.

While 60% of Indians are covered by some form of insurance, only 20% have private insurance, with the remaining 40% covered through government schemes.

Highlighting the "missing middle", experts said 430 million Indians remain outside effective coverage, too affluent for public schemes yet unable to afford private insurance.

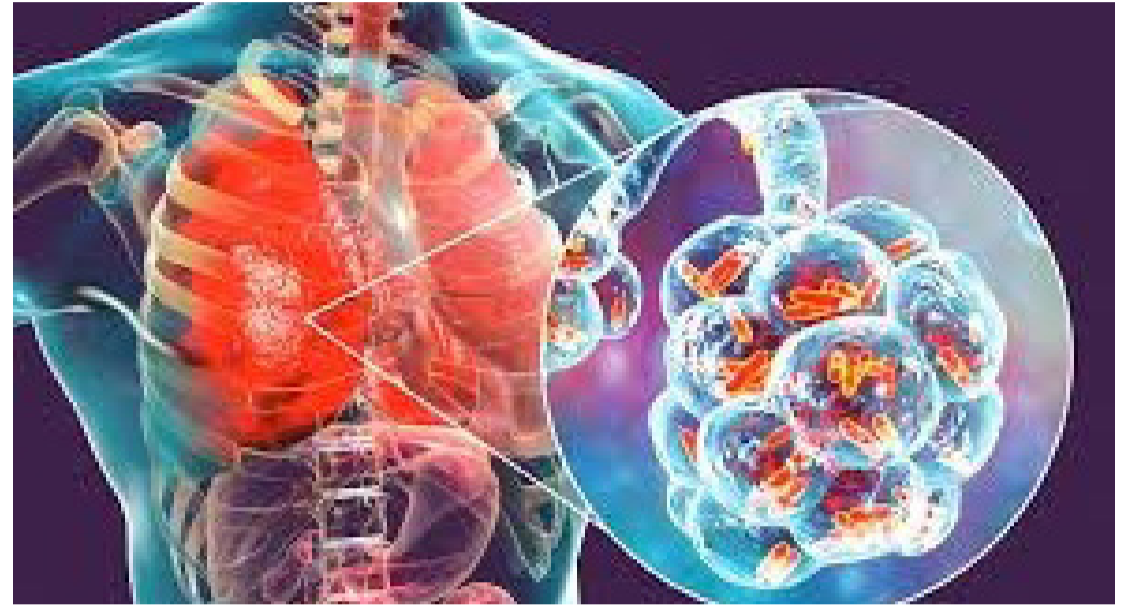
Experts also pointed out that India has 0.9 doctors, 1.8 nurses, and 1.6 beds per 1,000 people, and would require 1 million doctors, 3.5 million nurses, and 1.45 million additional beds by 2035.

Non-communicable diseases are growing at a CAGR of 2-9%, with onset occurring 10-15 years earlier than global averages.

Speaking at the NATHEALTH 12th Annual Aarogya Bharat Summit 2026, Ameera Shah, President, NATHEALTH, and Promoter and Executive Chairperson, Metropolis Healthcare Ltd, said, "Despite our progress, nearly 44% of health expenditure in India still comes directly from the patient's pocket, and over 400 million people, the 'Missing Middle' remain without effective coverage."

"By expanding private insurance penetration and leveraging digital health infrastructure, we can reduce the financial shock of medical emergencies for millions of families. Our goal is to ensure that world-class diagnostics and treatment are not just available, but are also affordable and accessible to every segment of society," she said.

Dr Sangita Reddy, President-Elect, NATHEALTH, and Joint Managing Director, Apollo Hospitals, said, "India has already demonstrated a unique global advantage: the ability to deliver



world-class clinical outcomes at nearly one-fifth of global costs. However, to sustain this 'Indian model' of high-value healthcare, we must evolve our financing architecture."

"The next phase of our growth depends on how effectively we expand insurance penetration and encourage innovative funding models that support preventive care."

The NATHEALTH thought leadership report provides a practical roadmap to move from a fragmented system to an interoperable financing ecosystem, ensuring that India remains the world's most compelling destination for affordable, high-quality healthcare."

At the event, Praxis Global Alliance, in collaboration with NATHEALTH, which represents small and medium hospitals and nursing homes, also released the 'India Health Financing Position Paper 2026', which examines the evolving landscape of healthcare financing in India and outlines pathways to strengthen the financial architecture supporting the country's healthcare system.

Aryaman Tandon, Managing Partner and Co-Founder at Praxis

Global Alliance, a management consulting and advisory services firm, said, "India stands at a defining moment in its healthcare journey. We have built a cost-competitive, technology-enabled, and clinically sophisticated delivery ecosystem, but its potential is constrained by a financing architecture that remains fragmented, under-penetrated, and insufficiently aligned with outcomes."

"With approximately 430 million Indians outside or ineligible for public coverage and out-of-pocket expenditure at nearly half of all health spending, the human and economic cost of inaction is immense. This report lays out a sequenced, evidence-based reform agenda that can move India from a system built around sickness to one designed for wellness and from fragmented risk pools to a universal, interoperable financing ecosystem. The opportunity is significant: a US\$700 billion healthcare market by 2030, generating millions of quality jobs and positioning India as one of the world's most compelling healthcare destinations," he said.

Experts said India's healthcare ecosystem has expanded significantly over the past two decades, supported by grow-

ing infrastructure, stronger domestic manufacturing, and increased private sector participation.

However, rising incomes, shifting disease patterns, and higher healthcare utilisation are creating new demands on the system.

As India aspires to become one of the world's largest economies, the healthcare sector must evolve in parallel, not only in scale but also in the sophistication of its financing frameworks, they added.

The report notes that while India's healthcare sector could approach US\$700 billion by 2030, the financing architecture supporting this growth remains fragmented and under-penetrated, with out-of-pocket spending still accounting for a large share of healthcare expenditure.

Drawing on industry data, global benchmarks, and stakeholder consultations, the paper highlights both India's strong healthcare foundations and the need to strengthen financing frameworks, insurance coverage, and infrastructure to support long-term system sustainability.

INTERNATIONAL

'Better get serious...there is no turning back': Trump warns Iran amid West Asia conflict

WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump warned Iran on Thursday to engage in talks to end the West Asia war "before it is too late", after Tehran publicly spurned US overtures to resolve the nearly four-week conflict.

Trump's warning came as Israel said it had killed the commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards' navy, calling him "directly responsible" for throttling the vital Strait of Hormuz shipping lane since the war's outbreak.

Hopes for a negotiated end to the US-Israeli war with Iran, which has engulfed much of the region, rose after Washington was said to have put a peace plan to Tehran, only for the Islamic republic to deny the sides were speaking.

But Pakistan's top diplomat confirmed Thursday Islamabad was indeed facilitating "US-Iran indirect talks" by relaying messages - and that a 15-point American plan was being "deliberated upon" by Tehran.

"They better get serious soon, before it is too late, because once that happens, there is NO TURNING BACK, and it won't be pretty!" Trump warned on social media, saying Iran had been "militarily obliterated, with zero chance of a comeback".

Iran's top diplomat flatly denied Wednesday "negotiations" were engaged with Trump's administration - but did concede messages were being exchanged through "friendly countries".

"At present, our policy is the continuation of resistance", Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on state TV.

Islamabad has been touted as a go-between given its longstanding ties with both neighbouring Iran and the United States, as well as its network of regional contacts.

Posting on X, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said "brotherly countries" Turkey, Egypt and others, were also supporting the process - while the



Gulf Cooperation Council said it wanted to be involved in any talks.

Under near-daily bombardment since February 28, Iran was hit by a new wave of Israeli strikes on Thursday - one of which Israel said had killed the Guards' navy commander, Alireza Tangsiri, and several senior officers.

Defence Minister Israel Katz called Tangsiri "directly responsible for the terrorist operation of mining and blocking the Strait of Hormuz to shipping."

Elsewhere, the Israeli army was conducting what it called "wide-scale" strikes targeting Iranian infrastructure.

Local media reported attacks in the central cities of Isfahan and Shiraz, in Bandar Abbas in the south and Tabriz

in the northwest - but also Mashhad and Birjand, towards the Afghan border in an area largely spared until now.

Iran, in turn, kept up retaliatory attacks on Israel, where medics said six people were lightly wounded by missile attacks.

Fresh violence also flared in the Gulf, with two people killed by debris from an Iranian ballistic missile intercepted near Abu Dhabi, while Saudi Arabia said it shot down at least 18 drones, and Kuwait reported a new missile and drone attack.

Iran has targeted Gulf nations it accuses of serving as launchpads for US strikes, including hits on energy sites and other civilian infrastructure that

threaten lasting damage to the global economy.

World Trade Organization chief Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala warned Thursday the global trading system was experiencing the "worst disruptions in the past 80 years."

"We cannot deny the scale of the problems confronting the world today," she told the WTO's ministerial conference.

Crude prices have fallen since last week, but the divergent messages on talks saw oil prices rise and equities mixed Thursday.

Trump has accused Tehran officials of covering up ongoing talks for fear of becoming assassination targets, following the killing of supreme leader Ali Khamenei.

The White House has declined to identify the "top person" it is speaking with in Iran - beyond saying it is not the late leader's son and successor, Mojtaba Khamenei, who is believed to be injured and has not been seen since ascending to the role.

"With few exceptions, all of the surviving regime leaders insist on using Iran's strategic advantages to deter the US from attacking Iran at any time in the future," wrote the Soufan Center think tank in a briefing note.

To avenge Khamenei's killing, pro-Iran Hezbollah began firing rockets into Israel on March 2, drawing Lebanon into the war.

As the fighting showed little sign of stopping, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the military had "created a genuine security zone" in southern Lebanon, where an Israeli soldier was killed in the fighting on Thursday.

Hezbollah meanwhile launched a new volley of missiles early Thursday at military sites in central Israel, after its chief Naim Qassem said negotiations with Israel would amount to "surrender".

Eastern wisdom, Global South focus: Chinese envoy calls for deeper India ties



NEW DELHI

Invoking "Eastern wisdom" and the shared responsibility of the Global South, Chinese Ambassador to India Xu Feihong on Thursday called for deeper cooperation between India and China, positioning the relationship as critical to shaping a more balanced global order.

Addressing the 4th China-India Youth Dialogue, Xu said both countries must work together to safeguard the interests of developing nations and resist divisive geopolitical narratives.

"China and India should strengthen communication and coordination, jointly safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of developing countries and lead the Global South towards greater development," he said.

"We should carry forward the Eastern wisdom of peaceful coexistence and mutual learning and prevent the world from reverting to the law of the jungle."

Highlighting the simultaneous rise of the two Asian

powers, Xu said their development success stories were rooted in domestic effort while benefiting from global cooperation. He described both nations as being at a "critical stage of development and national rejuvenation."

"We should achieve development through our own efforts while actively pursuing mutually beneficial cooperation and supporting each other's success," he said.

The envoy underlined the role of young people in driving the next phase of engagement, particularly in frontier sectors such as artificial intelligence, the digital economy and green technology.

He said China's recent technological advances, including humanoid robotics and AI video models, have drawn global attention, while India has made AI a national priority. "Chinese and Indian youth should deepen exchanges and cooperation in emerging fields such as artificial intelligence, digital economy and green technology," Xu said.

He also pointed to growing cultural linkages, noting that Chinese digital content ranging from online games to web series and literature has found an audience among Indian youth, alongside consumer trends reflecting evolving cross-cultural influence.

Referring to recent interactions between Xi Jinping and Narendra Modi, Xu said bilateral ties have seen "a new level of improvement", with positive momentum in exchanges and cooperation. At the same time, he pushed back against narratives framing the relationship as adversarial.

"China and India are neighbours that cannot be moved apart. It should be the right choice for both sides to be good neighbours, friends and partners," he said, adding that "some people deliberately amplify our differences" and promote a "so-called China threat".

"Young people should think independently and step out of the information cocoon," he said.

Saptagram (Satgaon) and the Sri Basudeb Temple A FORGOTTEN LEGACY OF NEARLY FIVE CENTURIES



the Bhunabir M.E. School at his residence, aiming to promote English education among local children. The institution operated until 1915 and was later reorganized as Dasharath High School.

During the 1965 Indo-Pak war, most members of the Datta Chowdhury zamindar family left behind their vast properties and migrated to regions such as Kamalpur in Tripura, Supriyakandi in Sribhumi district (Previously Karimganj) in Assam, and Kolkata in West Bengal.

It is reported that much of their valuable abandoned land was later illegally occupied and recorded under other names through corrupt practices involving certain land officials.

Among the last generation of the zamindar family, Bhunabir Datta Chowdhury passed away in Bangladesh, while Pramod Datta Chowdhury (Rabi) died in Silchar, India, during the 1990s. Many descendants of the family subsequently migrated abroad.

Other known members of the lineage include Bishwajit Datta Chowdhury (Tutu) and his children, currently residing in Kamalpur, Tripura; Dip Datta Chowdhury and Bobby Datta Chowdhury, sons of the late Swapan Datta Chowdhury; and the children of Birendra Kishore Datta Chowdhury of Suprakandi in Karimganj district, Assam, who are now settled in Guwahati.

One notable descendant, Indira Datta Chowdhury, passed away on 21 November 2020 at the Purbaasha Residential Area of Srimangal. She was the wife of Rasendra Datta Chowdhury, a pioneering figure of left-wing politics in Srimangal and the greater Sylhet region, a veteran journalist, and an elected Chairman of the Srimangal Union Parishad during the 1980s. Rasendra Datta Chowdhury's contributions to political movements, progressive journalism, and local governance remain a significant chapter in the region's modern history.

However, no confirmed information is currently available regarding the present whereabouts of the descendants of Binod Bihari Datta Chowdhury and Mrityunjoy Datta Chowdhury.

At present, the former zamindar residence is occupied by the family of a local resident, Sunil Deb. Notably, annual religious festivals and regular worship continue to be observed at the ancient Sri Basudeb Temple, ensuring the continuity of the area's cultural and spiritual traditions. Thus, Saptagram and the Sri Basudeb Temple represent far more than mere archaeological remnants or architectural relics. They embody a living legacy of nearly five centuries—one that persists despite neglect, limited institutional research, and insufficient preservation. The silent bricks of the temple and the enduring memory of the local people together affirm that Saptagram remains a dignified, if understated, presence on the historical map of Srimangal.

SANGRAM DATTA:

Among the ancient settlements of greater Srimangal, Saptagram—historically known as Satgaon—stands as a site of singular historical significance. Surrounded by forests, low hills, and wetlands, this once-prosperous locality served for centuries as an important center of political authority, social life, and cultural exchange. The area is situated under Sreemangal Police Station of the former South Sihat Sub-Division, now within Moulvibazar District, Bangladesh.

The history of Saptagram is inseparably linked with the celebrated medieval physician Chakrapani Datta and his illustrious lineage, the Datta family, whose influence shaped the region for generations. Chakrapani Datta, the renowned author of the classical Ayurvedic treatise Chakradatta, rose to prominence in the 13th century when Gour Govinda, the ruler of Sylhet, was afflicted with a grave and seemingly incurable abdominal illness. At the earnest appeal of the queen, Chakrapani Datta arrived in Sylhet and successfully treated the king, restoring him to health.

In 1284 CE, the aged physician returned to Sylhet accompanied by his three sons—Umapati, Mahipati, and Mukunda. Reluctant to settle permanently in a land distant from the sacred Ganges, Chakrapani Datta eventually returned to his homeland, leaving behind his sons Mahipati and Mukunda, who chose to remain.

King Gour Govinda granted Mahipati the territory of Dakshin Shur and Mukunda the region known as Goya. Dakshin Shur was an extensive tract of land, bounded by the Barak River to the north, hills to the east, west, and south, and the Tripura kingdom to the south. Mahipati established his residence on the western edge of Hail Haor and named the settlement Saptagram, commemorating his ancestral homeland. The present-day village of Saptagram thus stands as a surviving descendant of the ancient Dakshin Shur.

During the rule of Kalyan Datta, a successor of Mahipati, Saptagram came under the control of the Tripura kingdom. Although Kalyan Datta continued as a feudatory ruler, the family endured prolonged political conflict and power struggles. Several villages founded in the names of his sons still exist today, serving as living historical markers of that turbulent era.

A particularly influential figure of the Datta lineage was Sribatsa Datta, who actively supported Nawab Hussain Shah of Gour during his military campaign against Tripura. Following Tripura's defeat, the Nawab rewarded Sribatsa Datta with control over the parganas of Bhanugachh, Chhaychhiri, Ita, Pachaun, and Putijuri, and conferred upon him the honorary title "Datta Khan." His elder brother, Bhaba Datta, was popularly known as "Baro Datta Khan."

A new chapter in Saptagram's history

SPACE FOR YOU ONLY

Rs. 150/- per day

PLACEMENT

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

VOLUNTEERS REGISTERS @ NEIR 2026

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

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

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

STUDENTS' INTERNSHIP

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

NE INDIA WRITING STAR CONTEST

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

CONNECT@ KRC TIMES



KRC TIMES

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

At Brain Vision Classes, We Provide What You Don't get in your Study Books...

[Know More](#)

Career building tools developed by:
www.krccfoundation.org
<https://bit.ly/KRCBrainVision>

info@krccfoundation.org
+91-8721838313

Brain VISION

When you talk, you're repeating what you already know - but if you listen, you may learn something new.