

**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**

If the next level demands my peace as payment, I'm not paying.

**3-year-old killed, father injured in bomb explosion in Noney district**

IMPHAL



A bomb exploded in Manipur's Noney district, killing a three-year-old child on the spot and injuring his father on Saturday morning, reports said.

The incident occurred around 8:30 AM, when the father and his child were cleaning their residential area in Taolingpung village, Nongpholung Khoupum, under Noney Police Station in Noney district.

A suspected lethal bomb went off accidentally while the child was assisting his father with the cleaning.

The child died of multiple injuries on the spot, and his seriously injured father was rushed to RIMS Hospital in Imphal after receiving first aid at Khoupum Primary Health Centre, Noney.

Police and bomb experts rushed to the spot and assessed the situation.

A case has been registered for further investigation. Further details are awaited.

**WHO SAID WHAT**



**Shillong-Silchar High-Speed Corridor will connect Silchar to Mizoram, Manipur, and Tripura. This will also benefit our farmer brothers and sisters across the entire Northeast, including Assam.**  
~ Narendra Modi, PM

**Modi launches Rs 23,550 crore development projects in Assam's Silchar**  
**Congress-era boundary decisions cut off Barak Valley's sea access: Modi**

SILCHAR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday launched and laid the foundation for development projects worth around Rs 23,550 crore in Silchar in Assam, aimed at boosting connectivity, infrastructure and economic growth in the Barak Valley and the wider northeastern region.

During the visit, the prime minister performed the bhoomi puja for the 166-km Shillong-Silchar High-Speed Corridor, an access-controlled four-lane greenfield highway project estimated to cost about Rs 22,860 crore.

The corridor is expected to significantly improve road connectivity between Guwahati and Silchar, reducing travel time from around 8.5 hours to about five hours.

Modi also performed the bhoomi puja for an elevated corridor on National Highway 306 from Trunk Road near Capital Point to Rangirkhari Point



in Silchar (Phase I). The project aims to ease traffic congestion in the town and strengthen road links with neighbouring states such as Mizoram, Tripura and Manipur.

In addition, the prime minister laid the foundation stone for a new College of Agriculture at Patharkandi in Karimganj district, aimed at expanding agricultural education and research facilities in the region.

He also dedicated electrified railway sections between Badarpur and Silchar, and the Badarpur-Churaibari

railway section, projects valued at around Rs 650 crore, which are expected to facilitate faster and more environmentally sustainable train operations.

The initiatives are expected to enhance mobility, strengthen regional connectivity and create new opportunities for economic development in the Barak Valley region of Assam, officials said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday accused the Indian National Congress of neglecting the Barak Valley region for decades and said boundary decisions taken after Independence had severed its access to the sea.

Addressing a gathering during his visit to Silchar in Assam, the prime minister said the Northeast was left to its fate by previous Congress governments and that the region did not receive adequate focus on connectivity and development.

"When the country attained Independence, the boundary was drawn in

such a way that the Barak Valley's vital link to the sea was completely severed. The region, once a major trade route and industrial hub, was stripped of its strength," Modi said.

He alleged that despite ruling the country for several decades, the Congress did little to improve infrastructure and economic opportunities in the region.

The prime minister was speaking after performing the bhoomi puja for the Shillong-Silchar High-Speed Corridor, a 166-km access-controlled greenfield four-lane highway project expected to significantly improve connectivity between Meghalaya and Assam. The project, estimated to cost around Rs 22,860 crore, is expected to reduce travel time between Guwahati and Silchar from about 8.5 hours to nearly five hours, officials said.

Taking a swipe at the Congress, Modi said the scale of the project reflects the government's commitment

to developing the Northeast and questioned whether the opposition party could even conceive such large infrastructure initiatives.

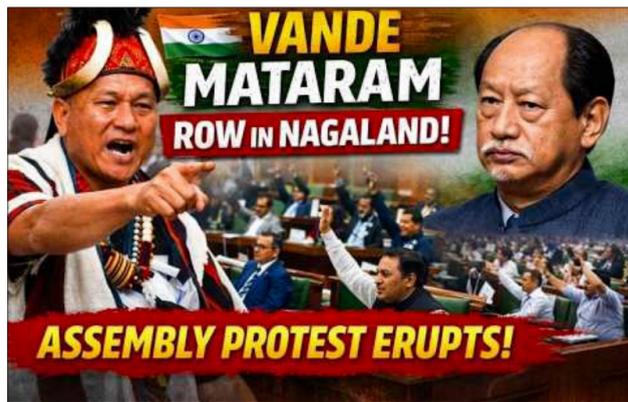
Meanwhile, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the project reflects the country's resolve to become a developed nation and emphasised that the state aims to grow in tandem with India's progress.

"India is moving forward with the resolve to become a developed nation. As India progresses, our effort is that Assam also emerges as a strong and robust state," Sarma said.

Referring to the upcoming elections in the state, the chief minister expressed confidence that the people of Assam would continue to support the leadership of Prime Minister Modi.

The corridor project is expected to strengthen regional connectivity, promote economic growth and enhance trade links across the northeastern region, officials added.

**Naga students' body to stage rally against 'mandatory' Vande Mataram directive on March 16**



KOHIMA

The Naga Students' Federation (NSF) will hold a public rally in Kohima on March 16 to protest what it termed the "compulsory imposition" of Vande Mataram following a directive issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

In a statement, the federation said the rally will begin at the Old MLA Hostel Junction in the Phoolbari area at 10 am and participants will march to Lok Bhavan.

A memorandum highlighting the concerns of the Naga people will be submitted to the President of India through the Government of Nagaland, the NSF said.

According to the students' body, the protest has been called in response to a notification issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs on January 28 directing that the revised national song be sung or played during official functions and in educational institutions.

The federation said that while the Naga people respect the national songs and symbols of all nations, making Vande Mataram mandatory raises concerns as the song contains religious and devotional imagery that may conflict with the beliefs and conscience of many people in Nagaland.

The NSF added that the Naga homeland has historically been a place where people of different religions and communities have lived together in mutual respect and peaceful coexistence.

It also asserted that educational institutions should remain spaces for learning and dignity and should not become platforms where symbolic practices are enforced against the will of students and communities.

The federation has directed its units and subordinate bodies across Naga-inhabited areas to organise peaceful demonstrations in their respective jurisdictions on the same day in solidarity with the Kohima rally.

**Manipur gov't denies LPG shortage, says adequate stock available**

IMPHAL

The Directorate of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution on Friday dismissed rumours circulating on social media about a shortage of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and petroleum products in Manipur, assuring that adequate stock is available across the state.

In a statement, the department said certain social media posts and messages were spreading misleading information about an alleged shortage, which could create unnecessary panic among consumers.

According to the department, Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) in Imphal has confirmed that there is no shortage of LPG or other petroleum products in the state.

Officials said the oil company clarified that a temporary disruption in LPG distribution in recent days was caused by a technical issue in the Delivery Authentication Code (DAC) system at the all-India level.

The issue has since been resolved and was not related to the availability of LPG stock in the state, the department said.

IOCL has also reaffirmed that adequate stock of LPG and petroleum products (POL) is available across Manipur.

The department urged consumers not to panic or indulge in unnecessary hoarding of LPG cylinders or petroleum products, warning that such actions could lead to safety risks and accidents.

**Congress workers allege 'cash-for-ticket' in Assam candidate selection, seek probe**



GUWAHATI

Grassroots workers of the Indian National Congress in Assam have accused some senior leaders of the party's central leadership of alleged irregularities in the candidate selection process for the upcoming Assam Legislative Assembly Election, and sought an inquiry into the matter.

Party workers from the Srijangram Assembly constituency have submitted a memorandum to Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Member of Parliament and chairperson of the screening committee of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC), alleging serious irregularities in the selection of a candidate for the polls.

In the complaint, the workers alleged that two leaders of

the All India Congress Committee (AICC) - Jitendra Singh and Prithviraj Sathu - who are reportedly associated with the candidate selection process, accepted a large sum of money from a prospective candidate, identified as Nurul Islam.

The memorandum claimed that the alleged financial influence had tilted the selection process in favour of the candidate despite concerns among local party workers about his acceptability and credentials.

The workers stated that several loyal party members who have been associated with the Congress for years were overlooked, leading to resentment among grassroots cadres and supporters in the constituency.

They further warned that if the issue remains unaddressed, it could harm the party's credibility at the grassroots level and weaken its prospects in the constituency in the upcoming polls.

The signatories have urged Priyanka Gandhi Vadra to order a thorough and impartial inquiry into the allegations and ensure the selection of a qualified and acceptable candidate from the constituency.

Party insiders indicated that dissatisfaction over ticket distribution has been surfacing in several constituencies across Assam as preparations gather pace for the Assembly elections. The Congress leadership has not yet issued an official response to the allegations.

**Stakeholders welcome plan for Silchar's first five-star hotel, call for parallel infrastructure**

SILCHAR

The decision of the Government of Assam to support the establishment of Silchar's first five-star hotel has generated interest among residents and business stakeholders, though many have emphasised the need for parallel improvements in civic infrastructure.

The project, proposed by Polo Hotels Group, is expected to involve an investment of around Rs 103 crore and will feature a 100-room luxury property equipped with modern hospitality facilities.

Industry representatives said the initiative could create both direct and indirect employment opportunities across sectors such as transport, housekeeping, food supply chains, retail and other allied services.

Chief executive officer of the group Deval Tibrewalla de-



scribed Silchar as an emerging gateway city in the Northeast and said the project forms part of the company's broader expansion strategy across eastern and northeastern India.

"This project is not just about building a hotel; it is about enabling the next phase of growth for Barak Valley," Tibrewalla said, adding that the group is developing several other properties across Meghalaya, Tripura, West Bengal and Nagaland.

Welcoming the cabinet decision, Dipayan Chakraborty, MLA from Silchar, said the move could mark an important step in strengthening the region's economic prospects. He added that the Barak Valley has been receiving increased attention under the leadership of Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

Business leaders also supported the initiative. Entrepreneur and former chairperson

of the Silchar Municipal Board, Tamal Kanti Banik, said a five-star hotel would significantly enhance the city's hospitality standards and commercial profile. However, he stressed that the final site of the project should be chosen carefully with due consideration to land suitability, traffic management and urban planning.

Former president of the Silchar Food Grains Merchant Association, Asit Dutta, described the development as a positive step that could attract more high-profile businesses to the region. He also urged authorities to improve sports infrastructure and explore the development of an alternative stadium. Civic groups, however, said that investment initiatives must be supported by improved infrastructure. Haridas Dutta, general secretary of the Nagarik Swartharaksha Sangram Parishad, said the Barak

Valley still requires reliable all-weather rail and road connectivity, particularly during the monsoon season.

Residents also raised concerns about urban planning. A young professional, Riya Sen, said that with a project of such scale, authorities must ensure improvements in traffic management as well as water and power supply.

Another resident, Suman Paul, cautioned that rapid urban development could lead to higher property prices and increased living costs in the city.

The proposed project comes at a time when Silchar is gradually emerging as a strategic commercial hub linking southern Assam with neighbouring states such as Mizoram, Tripura and Manipur, with stakeholders viewing the investment as a sign of growing confidence in the region's economic potential.



VOLUME:1, ISSUE 726

## WAR- A BRAKE ON INDIA'S GROWTH?

**W**ith Iran declining American offer to surrender, the ongoing Israel / America - Iran war from last seven days has put Indian economy at cross roads with a high projected growth rate of 7.6 percent in financial year 26, driven by strong manufacturing and service sector performance. The economy has maintained a high growth rate trajectory on the one side to meet its target of Vikshit Bharat by 2047 and on the other, the war has reshaped energy flows. Middle East sources account for about 55% of India's imports, roughly half of its crude imports around 2.5-2.7 million barrels per day, come mainly from Iraq, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Kuwait. The importance of this region for Indian economy becomes emphatically clear by the fact that India in 2025 imported goods worth \$157 billion from the region while as exports to the West Asian economies stood for around \$67 billion. It is not only India but tremors of war will be noticed throughout the world by the escalation in crude prices.

It is no doubt that India at present can bear the escalation in energy prices because of its sufficient foreign exchange reserve of \$728.5 bn on Feb. 27, 2026, along with low current account deficit and inflation rate collectively can help India to mitigate the impact of rising global crude prices and ensure domestic energy security despite country's high dependence on imported crude oil as per Finance Ministry on March 7, 2026 but if the war continues it will be difficult for India to maintain a high growth rate. Prolonged disruption could spike global crude prices, raise India's oil import bill substantially, fuelling inflation in transport, goods and will push up raw material prices. The inflation will curtail savings and thereby investments. It may also increase freight and insurance costs and rerouting of ships may cost both money and time. It will translate into greater shipping costs for Indian exporters. Insurance costs have increased by more than 30% ever since the war started.

This can hit exports/imports badly. (A temporary respite to exporters has come through government charges waiver for ships bound for West Asia). Sectors like aviation, paints, tyres, chemicals and automobiles will face pressure from costlier inputs. Travel & Tourism may be affected directly due to air space disruptions in the Middle East. The price rise will influence the domestic demand.

It is worthwhile to point out that prolonged war will have an adverse impact on the Indians working in Middle East. There are 9 to 10 million Indians living and working across middle east. The highest concentration is in UAE (3.5 million) followed by Saudi Arabia (2.6 million) and a significant population in Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain. In the year 2023-24 India received approximately \$40 billion to \$51.5 billion in remittances from gulf cooperation countries. This accounts for 38% to 40% of India's total remittances (\$118.7 billion - \$135 billion), with UAE being the top source in the region.

The fuel to fire was added by disruptions by Iran in the state of Homruz through which nearly 20% of global oil flows and over 40% of India's crude imports transit. India now has only 25-50 days of crude oil supply, apart from some Russian oil in transit. Qatar the world's largest Liquefied Natural Gas exporter has shut down production after Iranian attack and the devastation will take it not less than one month to start production again. The decision to stop production in one stroke switched off 20% of the world Liquefied Natural Gas supply. This has escalated Gas prices in Europe by 54%. India imports 40% of its imported Liquefied Natural Gas from Qatar. Out of the total Liquefied Natural Gas in India about 28% is used for the production of Urea. Piped Natural Gas is used for Kitchen and Compressed Natural Gas is used for Cars. It is also used for fuelling power plants and industries. India imports 60% of Liquefied Natural Gas from West Asia. Cuts in gas supplies to fertiliser and power companies can reduce output in these sectors in the near term, weighing on growth rate of the country as agriculture and manufacturing are important sectors of Indian economy.

The repercussions of escalated oil price and interrupted gas supplies are reverberating through the markets. The rupee closed at 91.75 against the dollar on March 6, 2026, down by 15 paise from the previous close of 91.6. After pressure from higher crude oil prices and foreign fund outflow. The stock markets are facing a rude shock due to the deteriorating geo political situation in West Asia. The Sensex was down by nearly 1100 on Friday. The index closed below 79K mark for the first time since April 2025. The investment atmosphere is getting vitiated by withdrawals of foreign investors. Morgan Stanley has turned cautious on Asian equities, including India, amid concerns that the conflict in the Middle East could disrupt supply chains if oil flows through the Strait of Hormuz fail to recover. According to the Bloomberg report, global investors are pulling money out of emerging Asia's major markets. Since the war began, foreign investors have pulled about \$1.3 billion from India.

The pertinent question is whether India can maintain its high growth rate with the escalation in insurance premiums and disruption in supply chain. Will the manufacturing sector slow down? will the war open new opportunities for investors in the defence sector? will the war generate inflationary pressure in the economy and lower the domestic demand for goods? Will it lead to withdrawal of investments from India? Can Russia fulfil our energy requirements? Is dependence on Russia justified? Will it increase India's current account deficit? Will it heat up inflation in the economy? India enjoys good relations with both Israel/America and Iran. It shares critical strategic, economic and geopolitical interests with Iran. These interests are primarily focussed on regional connectivity, energy security and stability in Afghanistan. The key areas of operation include the development of Chabahar port to bypass Pakistan, the international north south transport corridor (INSTC) to central Asia and maintaining bilateral trade despite American sanctions on Iran. India has a special strategic partnership with Israel driven by mutual interests in defence, technology and security. India is a top buyer of Israeli arms and both countries collaborate on AI, cyber security and agriculture to enhance security and economic growth. India US relations in 2026 are defined by a comprehensive strategic partnership focused on counterbalancing China in the Indo Pacific, accelerating defence technology and economic cooperation and securing supply chains. Key interests include defence coproduction, AI/semi-conductor collaboration and expanded trade. India has officially maintained a neutral stance in the regional disruption, wants immediate de-escalation, dialogue and diplomacy regarding the conflict. It has expressed anxiety over regional stability. While avoiding condemnation of actions against Iran to protect its large diaspora in the gulf and energy interests, India has strongly denied allegations of supporting the military action or providing port access to America. It will be prudent for India at this juncture of its economic growth to mediate between the concerned parties to have stability in middle east. India is having comfortable relations with all the concerned countries and world has accepted leader in Modi.

# WAR IN IRAN INDIA'S RESPONSE



DR. D.K. GIRI

The coordinated attack on Iran by USA and Israel is raging on with fire and smoke engulfing the Gulf countries. Along with Ukraine, another ongoing war since 2022, war in Iran will deeply impact the world, certainly the countries in Asia and in the Middle-East. India's stares at the fallouts of the war with heavy political and economic consequences. As the war continues unabated, at the time of writing, India's responses need to be analysed and adapted for its own good.

How did the war on Iran start? Was it a function of whims of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, said to be a hawkish leader and the American President Donald Trump who is unpredictable and fickle-minded. That is hardly so. War on Iran was in the offing since 1990s after the decimation of Saddam Hussain in Iraq. With the decline of Iraq, which challenges American hegemony in the Middle-East, Iran wore the mantle of resistance to Israel-American axis in the Gulf region.

Furthermore, after the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran sought to assume the leadership of the Muslim world. Iran vowed to cripple Israel with thousand cuts and eliminate its existence. Iran did so by sponsoring terrorist activities through Hezbollah, Hamas and Houthis. Premised Tehran adopted and advocated was the response to displacement of Palestinians from their legitimate land. Israel illegally occupied Palestine territories and has been progressively divesting the Palestinians of their land, livelihoods and security.

Under these circumstances, Israel realized that its existence was contingent upon dismantling Iran's current theocratic and cruel regime. Iranians have suffered from authoritarianism and obscurantism of the regime for 47 years. Many observers may say that it is Iran's internal affair. But a regime that is oppressive violating human rights will tend to be disruptive and diabolic in its external dealings. No one realized it more than Israelis.

America maintained a kind of hegemonic influence in the Middle-East with active support of Israel. As the state of Israel was threatened and wounded by Iran, Donald Trump made it America's objective to invade Iran to make it compliant with American's interests. The trigger for the attack was provided by the botched-up negotiations on Iran's nuclear programme. Iran had come around the position that it will forgo the idea of making a nuclear bomb but will reserve its right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purpose, which is called PNE - Peaceful Nuclear Energy in disarmament lexicon.

Negotiations on nuclearisation of Iran were still on when Israel and America jointly attacked Iran calling it a preemptive strike. Whether such an attack had international sanction,

aligned with International Law is another discussion. For now, we should realize that the rule-based order is given a go bye and international affairs are driven by national interest and unilateral action; be it in Ukraine or in Iran. In Ukraine's invasion, Russian President called it a 'Special Military Operation' and in Iran, USA says it is a preemptive strike. From a normative point of view, both are violations of international law, sovereignty of a country, rule-based world order etc.

Talking of India's responses, we have to engage in a discussion on imperatives of India's foreign policy. Over time, with regime changes, the drivers of India's foreign policy also have changed. I am deliberately referring to response in plural. Because foreign policy has been the government's domain, it is usually based on a political consensus, but of late, in view of fierce competitive electoral politics, the opposition parties are making loud noise on foreign policy issues while taking on the government. In case of Iran war, the public is also excited, coming on the streets and is engaged in a debate about how India should respond. This is mainly because Iran is an Islamic country although Shia sect, and the supreme leader of the Iran was killed within hours of America-Israel bombardment the country. Indian Muslims came out in protest against the murder of Ayatollah Khamenei. India had a close relation with Iran, not only in oil imports, but investment in either country, notably Government of India building the ambitious Chabahar Port as gateway to Central Asia. New Delhi could have remained neutral as always, mourning the death of Khamenei, calling out military strikes, and reiterating the need of diplomacy and dialogue. But Prime Minister Narendra Modi had chosen his side barely 48 hours before the

Israel-American aircrafts began bombing Iran.

Remember, Modi had made a stand-alone visit to Israel two days before the attack. During the visit, India-Israel alliance was spelt out in no uncertain terms. One could not call those terms as diplomatic hyperboles. They were real. Netanyahu addressed Modi as brother not just a friend. Modi called Israel the fatherland as India is called a motherland. After such declarations of kinship and affinity, was there any room or scope for GOI to condemn the attack on Iran or officially mourn the death of its supreme leader. After a week or so, the Foreign Secretary went to Iranian embassy in Delhi to sign the register. That is a routine act.

The question is whether responses from India are in its national interest? I will take only that parameter, as talking of ethics and rules is like quoting scriptures to the devil. New Delhi will have to give up certain shibboleths in its foreign policy, like Vasudhaiva Kutumbam (the world is a family) and an ethical approach to foreign policy and so on. It should focus more on capacity and deterrence, and above all, protection of its national interests. India's interests lie in staying with the democratic world, the United States, Europe and Israel. Admittedly, Donald Trump's second term has been a matter of concern for India. But New Delhi can rely on Trump's propensity for changing his views at any time without any pretext.

On the other hand, those in India crying for Ayatollah Khamenei should remember the cruel persecution of his opponents and suppression of women that his regime unleashed for over 47 years. There are Iranian women shelter in India who share their harrowing experiences. There are multitudes in Iran heaving a sign of relief at the end of such a brutal regime. Iran has just

installed Khamenei's son as the next leader without any popular consent. We have to see how his leadership plays out and how long it lasts. At any rate, in the name of sovereignty, trampling human rights should be a matter of international concern and solidarity. Whatever be the hidden agenda of Americans, such as controlling the Iranian oil after capturing Venezuela, releasing Iranian control of Strait of Hormuz, choking Chinese oil imports etc., the regime change in Iran should be good for Iranians and their neighbours. New Delhi, finally, has played its cards well in India's national interest.

### DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

**If a girl misses school because there are no sanitary pads, no water and no privacy, it is not her personal problem. It is our collective failure. We live in a country where alcohol and cigarettes are sold openly, but sanitary pads are still wrapped in newspaper as if they must be hidden. Somewhere along the way, society turned a biological fact into a social taboo. A matter of science has been turned into a matter of silence. Menstrual hygiene is not charity. It is not a favour. It is not a side issue. It is a matter of health, education and equality. Above all, it is a matter of dignity.**

**Raised this issue in Parliament today because it affects over 35 crore women and girls in India. A nation cannot call itself truly progressive if millions of girls still face fear, shame and silence for something so basic. The real test of progress is simple. The day every girl in India can go to school, live with dignity and speak about this without stigma, that will be the day we can truly say our society has moved forward - Raghav Chadha, MP, (RS) National Spokesperson AAP**



### QUOTE OF THE DAY

**"How could they see anything but the shadows if they were never allowed to move their heads?" - Plato**

# Tripura attracts Rs.3,800 crore investment; GST collection crosses Rs. 994 crore, says Governor

AGARTALA,

Indrasena Reddy Nallu on Friday said Tripura has attracted investments worth around ₹3,800 crore, while the state's GST collection has crossed ₹994 crore, reflecting improving economic activity and tax compliance.

Addressing the first day of the ninth session of the 13th Tripura Legislative Assembly, the governor said more than 120 investors have shown interest in the state, with 87 memorandums of understanding (MoUs) signed across sectors including education, tourism, health-care and information technology.

He said the investment proposals were facilitated through the Destination Tripura Business Conclave 2025 held in Agartala.

The governor also highlighted



the state's tax performance, noting that during the 2025-26 financial year up to October 2025, GST revenue stood at ₹994.23 crore, while VAT collection reached ₹281.40 crore, excise duty ₹271.48 crore and

professional tax ₹26.85 crore. According to him, the figures indicate stronger economic activity

and improved tax compliance in the state. Nallu said the government has approved the Tripura Women Entrepreneurship Policy 2025 to improve market access and credit support for women entrepreneurs.

He also said the state has enacted the Tripura Jan Vishwas Act aimed at promoting trust-based governance.

Highlighting progress in education, the governor said Tripura was declared a fully literate state on June 23, 2025, becoming the third state in the country to achieve the milestone with a literacy rate of 95.6 per cent under the ULLAS Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram, aligned with the goals of the National Education Policy 2020.

He added that the state has also received national recognition for

its renewable energy initiatives and was awarded the best performing state for installing the highest number of solar pumps under the PM-KUSUM.

The governor further said the government plans to upgrade Women's College in Agartala into a women's university and convert the Tripura Institute of Technology into a state technical university.

Three new competitive examination centres are also planned in Agartala, Udaipur and Ambassa, he said.

According to the governor, the state currently manages a road network of about 10,617 km, including state highways, district roads, urban roads and rural roads, to strengthen connectivity and infrastructure across Tripura.

## Meghalaya CM seeks unity after Garo Hills unrest, assures resolution of ST certificate issue

TURA

Conrad K. Sangma on Friday called for unity and peace among communities in the Garo Hills region and assured that the issue related to Scheduled Tribe (ST) certificates linked to the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council polls would be resolved.

Addressing party leaders and supporters in Tura, the chief minister said the ruling National People's Party (NPP) remains committed to serving the people and would address concerns related to the ST certificate row that recently triggered unrest in the region.

"The NPP will resolve the ST certificate issue and continue to serve the people with dedication and commitment," Sangma said, urging party workers to remain united and strengthen the organisation.

The chief minister appealed for peace and harmony following the recent violence that left two people dead and led to tensions across parts of the Garo Hills. "At this moment, we must come together as one and promote unity and brotherhood," he said. Sangma also lauded the police, district administration and other officials for maintaining law and order during the unrest and thanked residents of Tura for helping restore normalcy. "The people of Tura came together to clear debris and restore the town. This unity reflects the strength and resilience of our people," he said, also acknowledging the role of religious leaders and community organisations in appealing for calm. Security has since been tightened in the town and authorities are continuing to monitor the situation, officials said. Two persons were killed in police firing at Chibinang in West Garo Hills early Tuesday during clashes that erupted amid protests by sections of the Garo community over the filing of nominations by non-Garo candidates for the council polls.

## Mizoram CM calls for reconciliation, accountability at Chapchar Kut finale

AIZAWL

Lalduhoma on Friday urged people to uphold reconciliation and personal responsibility as key values of Mizo society while addressing the concluding ceremony of the spring festival Chapchar Kut in Aizawl.

The week-long celebrations ended at Lammual Ground under the theme "Zo Nun Ze Mawi: Inremna" (Mizo Ethics: Reconciliation), drawing a large gathering that included Governor V. K. Singh and state Art and Culture Minister C. Lalsawivunga.

Addressing the gathering at the "Kut Pa" (Father of the festival), Lalduhoma said reconciliation has long been central to Mizo identity.

"True reconciliation is rooted in the courage to take responsibility. In our failings, rather than blaming others, the strength to say 'it is my fault' brings genuine healing and peace to society," he said.

The chief minister called on citizens to reflect on the message

of the festival and emphasised that accountability should guide both public and personal conduct.

He also referred to increasing hostility in political discourse and urged people to preserve traditional Mizo values of dialogue and unity.

Lalduhoma cautioned young people about toxic behaviour on social media and criticised protest practices such as burning effigies, saying such acts are alien to Mizo culture. "Even when our ancestors disagreed in councils of elders, they maintained a spirit of reconciliation through traditional mechanisms. We may debate fiercely in governance, but we must never lose the ability to sit together as kin once discussions end," he said. Festivities for the festival began across Mizoram on March 9 and featured cultural and heritage programmes, including exhibitions on handloom, textiles and handicrafts, food processing displays, food courts and a flower show.

## Congress finalises 95% of Assam Assembly poll candidates, list likely on today: Gaurav Gogoi



GUWAHATI

The Indian National Congress has finalised candidates for about 95 per cent of seats for the

upcoming 2026 Assam Legislative Assembly election, and the first list is likely to be released on March 14, state party chief Gaurav Gogoi said on Friday.

The announcement came after a meeting of the party's Congress Central Election Committee (CEC), chaired by Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and party president Mallikarjun Kharge, held on Thursday.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Gogoi said most constituencies had already been discussed and approved by the party leadership.

"We have discussed about 95 per cent of the seats of Assam. The list may come tomorrow. We will soon discuss the remaining seats also," he said.

Party leaders said consultations on the remaining constituencies will continue before the final list is made public.

Meanwhile, the party received a boost earlier this week when Jayanta Khaound, for-

mer national finance secretary of the Asom Gana Parishad, joined the Congress along with several other leaders.

Khaound was formally inducted into the party at the Congress headquarters in the presence of senior leaders including AICC general secretary and Assam in-charge Jitendra Singh Alwar, D. K. Shivakumar, and AICC national secretary Manoj Chauhan.

Welcoming the new entrant, Gogoi said the induction of leaders with grassroots support reflected "growing public discontent in Assam" against the leadership of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

He also claimed that a "rising wave of political change" was emerging in the state ahead of the Assembly elections.

## Security, encroachment concerns along Assam border raised in Nagaland Assembly

KOHIMA

Concerns over security, alleged encroachments and administrative challenges in the disputed areas along the Assam-Nagaland border were raised in the Nagaland Legislative Assembly during discussions on Thursday.

Raising the issue during Question Hour, Achumbemo Kikon of the Naga People's Front said border areas remain vulnerable, particularly the Ralan sector in Wokha district, which shares around 105 km of boundary with Assam. He told the House that frequent tensions and skirmishes occur between residents of the two states in the border belt, requiring local representatives to devote considerable time to resolving such disputes.

Referring to the 1972 interim

agreement between the two states, Kikon said Nagaland had withdrawn its police outposts from the disputed belt under the arrangement. However, he alleged that instead of reducing its presence, Assam had expanded its establishments in the region.

Responding to the issue, Deputy Chief Minister Yanthungo Patton, who holds the Home and Border Affairs portfolio, said that before the 1972 agreement, Nagaland had five police outposts in the disputed areas while Assam had 13.

Following the agreement, Nagaland withdrew its five outposts, but Assam did not dismantle its establishments and has since increased them, he claimed, adding that Assam currently has 63 permanent police outposts along the disputed area belt.

Kikon also raised concerns

about the role of neutral forces deployed in the region, alleging that they were not maintaining neutrality in certain situations and that local residents were facing difficulties in carrying out economic activities in the border areas. He cited instances where infrastructure and business initiatives by local residents - including a petrol pump set up by Naga entrepreneurs in the Ralan sector - allegedly faced obstruction. The MLA urged the government to strengthen administrative presence in the disputed areas to safeguard the interests of Nagaland residents living in the border belt.

Replying to queries on the status of the Tchungjanphen and Lio Longchum/Longayim police outposts located along the border, Patton informed the House that a temporary police outpost has been set up at Tchungjanphen, where one company of the Indian Reserve Battalion has been deployed.

Minister for Parliamentary Affairs K. G. Kenye said the Assam-Nagaland boundary dispute has remained unresolved for decades despite efforts by successive governments.

He said the state government is aware of the hardships faced by residents in the border areas, particularly regarding access to essential services such as electricity, and assured that steps would be explored to extend power supply to affected villages despite logistical challenges.

Public Health Engineering Minister Jacob Zhimomi also stressed the need to address mapping and jurisdiction issues affecting development programmes in the border areas.

## Security, encroachment concerns along Assam border raised in Nagaland Assembly

KOHIMA

Concerns over security, alleged encroachments and administrative challenges in the disputed areas along the Assam-Nagaland border were raised in the Nagaland Legislative Assembly during discussions on Thursday.

Raising the issue during Question Hour, Achumbemo Kikon of the Naga People's Front said border areas remain vulnerable, particularly the Ralan sector in Wokha district, which shares around 105 km of boundary with Assam.

He told the House that frequent tensions and skirmishes occur between residents of the two states in the border belt, requiring local representatives to devote considerable time to resolving such disputes.

Referring to the 1972 interim agreement between the two states, Kikon said Nagaland had withdrawn its police outposts from the disputed belt under the arrangement. However, he alleged that instead of reducing its presence, Assam had expanded its establishments in the region.

Responding to the issue, Deputy Chief Minister Yanthungo Patton, who holds the Home and Border Affairs portfolio, said that before the 1972 agreement, Nagaland had five police outposts in the disputed areas while Assam had 13.

Following the agreement, Nagaland withdrew its five outposts, but Assam did not dismantle its establishments and has since increased them, he claimed, adding that Assam currently has 63 permanent police outposts along the disputed area belt.

Kikon also raised concerns about the role of neutral forces

deployed in the region, alleging that they were not maintaining neutrality in certain situations and that local residents were facing difficulties in carrying out economic activities in the border areas.

He cited instances where infrastructure and business initiatives by local residents - including a petrol pump set up by Naga entrepreneurs in the Ralan sector - allegedly faced obstruction.

The MLA urged the government to strengthen administrative presence in the disputed areas to safeguard the interests of Nagaland residents living in the border belt.

Replying to queries on the status of the Tchungjanphen and Lio Longchum/Longayim police outposts located along the border, Patton informed the House that a temporary police outpost has been set up at Tchungjanphen, where one company of the Indian Reserve Battalion has been deployed.

Minister for Parliamentary Affairs K. G. Kenye said the Assam-Nagaland boundary dispute has remained unresolved for decades despite efforts by successive governments.

He said the state government is aware of the hardships faced by residents in the border areas, particularly regarding access to essential services such as electricity, and assured that steps would be explored to extend power supply to affected villages despite logistical challenges.

Public Health Engineering Minister Jacob Zhimomi also stressed the need to address mapping and jurisdiction issues affecting development programmes in the border areas.

## PM Modi launched road, rail projects worth over 4,500 crore for BTC region



GUWAHATI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday launched and laid the foundation stones for a series of infrastructure and connectivity projects worth over ₹4,500 crore for the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) region and other parts

Quest!

1 out of every 100 people are psychopaths and they look just like everybody else.

of Assam, officials said.

The prime minister joined the programme through video conferencing from Guwahati, as he could not travel to Kokrajhar, where the projects are mainly centred.

Among the major initiatives, Modi launched Assam Mala 3.0, a road infrastructure scheme worth more than ₹3,200 crore aimed at improving connectivity across the state.

Officials said the initiative will involve the construction of over 900 km of roads to strengthen links between national highways and rural road net-

works while enhancing inter-state connectivity.

The prime minister also launched six road infrastructure projects in the BTC region with an investment of around ₹1,100 crore. These include the construction of four flyovers and two bridges to ease traffic congestion and improve connectivity in Kokrajhar district.

The flyovers will come up at B.K. Road-Gossaigaon Chariali, Balajan Tiniali, Debargaon Junction and Titaguri, officials said, adding that the two bridges will further strengthen road connectivity in the region.

In the rail sector, Modi laid the foundation stone of a ₹255-crore Periodic Overhauling (POH) workshop at Bashbari in Kokrajhar district. The facility is expected to strengthen railway maintenance infrastructure while generating employment in the region.

The prime minister also flagged off three new train services to enhance connectivity between the Northeast and other parts of the country - the Kamakhya-Charlapalli Amrit Bharat Express, the Guwahati-New Jalpaiguri Express, and the Narangi-Agartala Express.

Addressing the gathering virtually, Modi praised the Bodo community for preserving its cultural heritage and said the region has entered a new phase of peace and development.

"These projects will improve facilities for the people and promote trade,

tourism and connectivity," he said, adding that Bodoland is progressing steadily on the path of peace and development.

Highlighting recent initiatives in the region, Modi said several commitments made earlier had been fulfilled, including granting associate official language status to the Bodo language and providing a special development package worth ₹1,500 crore.

He also noted that Kokrajhar Medical College has become operational, while another medical college is being developed in Tamulpur.

About 10,000 former militants who had laid down arms have also been provided opportunities to contribute to the region's development, the prime minister said.

Speaking at the event, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the Assam Mala scheme would significantly improve road connectivity in the state. He said projects worth around ₹3,258 crore under the scheme are being taken up, with nearly 70 roads set to be developed, many of them in the BTC region.

Sarma also said work has been initiated on a proposed railway line between Gelephu and Kokrajhar to further strengthen regional connectivity.

The upcoming POH workshop at Bashbari is expected to help develop the region into a logistics hub while generating employment opportunities for local youth, he added.

**5E for SUCCESS**

KRC PLACEMENTS

Registration FREE

A division of KRC Foundation  
*"Connecting the unconnected"*

APPLY NOW

Send your resume for a free profiling session at e-mail: [Seforsuccess@gmail.com](mailto:Seforsuccess@gmail.com)

for more information schedule an online appointment

## Four buses with Indian students depart from Iran, one reaches Armenia late night



NEW DELHI

Despair gave way to much relief on Thursday morning among Indian medical students stuck in Qom and Urmia cities in Iran after they received messages from FlyDubai confirming their scheduled flight tickets to India via Dubai. Many had received messages a day earlier that their tickets were cancelled, upsetting them and their parents back in India enormously. The students had been pleading to be brought back to India since Feb 28.

Accompanied by Indian Embassy officials, three buses packed with students from these two cities departed to Armenia while a fourth bus with students from Shiraz University is on its way to Azerbaijan via Qom.

"Students from Urmia University of Medical

Sciences have reached Armenia on Thursday night. They are in hotels there now," Mohammad Momin Khan, National Representative of the All India Medical Students Association told this reporter. A good number of students from Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences and Iran University of Medical Sciences in Teheran, who were staying at hotels in Qom, are near the border of Iran and Armenia. "They are awaiting clearance from immigration" he said.

Out of 86 Indian medical students studying at Shiraz University, 48 students have departed towards Azerbaijan via Qom. "These students will stay in Qom for a few days before proceeding to the Azerbaijan border," Dr

Khan said.

The first batch of students will reach Mumbai airport on March 14 while the majority of students will reach Delhi on March 15. The latter will go by bus to Jammu & Kashmir Students who left Iran today figured among the 1,000-plus students who were stuck in Iran after the US-Israel strikes on the country began due to their university exams which were cancelled later.

Khan added, "On 11 March, many students received distressing messages stating that their flights from Armenia had been cancelled, creating panic among those preparing to leave. However, they got information early on Thursday that the flights will take off as scheduled. At present, only the flights scheduled for 17 March is still showing as cancelled."

## Economic Stabilisation Fund to help govt respond to global challenges: Nirmala Sitharaman

NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday said the Rs 1 lakh crore Economic Stabilization Fund will help in dealing with the impact of an unanticipated crisis like the ongoing conflict in West Asia.

Replying to a debate on the second batch of supplementary demands for grants in the Lok Sabha, Sitharaman lashed out at the Opposition for disrupting the House proceedings and said instead of standing together in the interest of the nation and giving confidence to the people, they are taking "irresponsible positions".

Opposition members trooped into the well of Lok Sabha, shouting slogans throughout the minister's reply to the debate. Later, the supplementary demands for grants entailing an additional outgo of Rs 2.01 lakh crore were approved by the House by a voice vote.

"It is ironic that even while I am speaking about how the Government is preparing itself to face unexpected events, including supply chain disruptions and issues related to LPG, the Opposition is not willing to listen to the reply. Instead, they prefer to pursue their own agenda," she said.

The second batch of supplementary demands for grants provides for inter-account transfers of Rs 1 lakh crore for the creation of an Economic Stabilization Fund. As per the document, the net cash outgo towards this fund will be Rs 57,381.84 crore, and the remaining amount will come from savings.

Sitharaman said the government has strengthened its macro-economic framework, which has helped India to absorb the economic shocks of various natures without deviating from the fiscal consolidation roadmap.

"The Economic Stabilization Fund will provide fiscal headroom to allow India to respond to global headwinds such as the recent crisis, unanticipated supply chain



disruptions, unexpected shocks to sub-sectors in Indian economy and any other event that may have significant fiscal implications. So in anticipation of what cannot be anticipated, we are coming up with Economic Stabilization Fund," she said.

She also said that the additional expenditure will not impact the fiscal deficit for the financial year 2025-26, which will remain within the Revised Estimates (RE).

In the RE of 2025-26, the fiscal deficit has been estimated at par with the Budget Estimates of 2025-26 at 4.4 per cent of GDP.

Rejecting the opposition charge that bringing supplementary demands for grants shows "poor budgeting" by the government, Sitharaman said the argument is based on "flawed logic" and asked whether the government should not have brought the Economic Stabilization Fund in times of unforeseen challenges.

"Does the Opposition want the government not to make any pro-

vision for a developing emergency situation?" the minister asked.

She said that when the world is facing a crisis, it is necessary for all political parties to rise above party lines and support the government in dealing with the challenges coming from abroad.

"We must come together for the benefit of the country and speak in a way that gives hope and confidence to the people... It is unfortunate that some in the Opposition believe that their only role is to come into the Well of the House and shout slogans," Sitharaman said.

The minister said Rs 95,000 crore has been allocated under the VB-G RAM G scheme for 2026-27. Besides, the second batch of supplementary demands for grants provides Rs 30,000 crore to clear the MGNREGA dues up to March 31, 2026.

The second batch of supplementary demands for grants provides for spending a gross of Rs 2.81 lakh crore extra in the current fiscal year. With additional receipts of

Rs 80,000 crore estimated in the supplementary, the net additional cash spending will be Rs 2.01 lakh crore.

It includes grants for spending towards setting up an Economic Stabilisation Fund of Rs 1 lakh crore. Also, Parliament's nod has been sought for an extra spending of Rs 19,230 crore towards fertilisers' subsidy and Rs 23,641 crore for subsidies under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY). Other major expenditure heads include Rs 41,822 crore for the defence ministry.

Sitharaman said there will be no shortage of fertilisers for farmers, and adequate provision has been made in the supplementary demands for grants.

In the Revised Estimates for the current fiscal year, the government had cut total expenditure to Rs 49.65 lakh crore, from Rs 50.65 lakh crore in the BE.

Till January, the government had spent Rs 36.90 lakh crore, according to Controller General of Accounts (CGA) data.

## INTERNATIONAL

### Congressional Democrats say Trump tariffs will cost US households more than \$2,500 this year

WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump is scrambling to replace the revenue the federal government lost when the Supreme Court struck down his biggest and boldest tariffs last month.

If the effort succeeds, congressional Democrats warn in a study out Friday, the administration's import taxes will cost American households an average of \$2,512 in 2026, up 44% from \$1,745 in tariff costs last year.

And this at a time when US consumers are already angry over the high cost of living and the war with Iran is pushing up energy prices.

"Despite a Supreme Court ruling that much of Trump's tariff agenda is illegal, the Trump administration refuses to provide relief for families," said Sen. Maggie Hassan of New Hampshire, the top Democrat on the Joint Economic Committee.

"As American families continue to struggle with high costs, the President keeps choosing to institute new tariffs that will push prices even higher."

Calling the study "phony," White House spokesman Kush Desai said "President Trump will continue using tariffs to renegotiate broken trade deals, lower drug prices, and secure trillions in investments for the American people."

Trump last year invoked the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act to impose double-digit tariffs on almost every country on Earth.

But the US Supreme Court ruled on Feb. 20 that the law did not give the president the authority to levy tariffs. The government now must provide refunds — expected to come to around \$175 billion — to the importers who paid the IEEPA tariffs now declared illegal.

The administration has moved quickly to impose new tariffs, and



Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has said that that new levies "will result in virtually unchanged tariff revenue in 2026."

Trump has already announced a 10% tariff, invoking Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974, and may raise it to 15%. But those levies can only last 150 days unless Congress agrees to extend them. And the Section 122 tariffs are also being challenged in court.

A sturdier option is Section 301 of the same 1974 trade law, which authorizes the president to impose tariffs and other sanctions on countries engaged in "unjustifiable," "unreasonable" or "discriminatory" trade practices. Trump, accusing China of using unfair tactics to gain an advantage in high tech industries, used Section 301 to impose tariffs on Chinese imports in his first term, and they withstood legal challenges.

On Wednesday, US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer, announced a sweeping Section 301 investigation into whether 16 US trading partners, including China and the European Union, are overproducing goods, flooding the world with their products and hurting American

manufacturers.

"The United States will no longer sacrifice its industrial base to other countries that may be exporting their problems with excess capacity and production to us," Greer said in a statement. The probe is widely expected to end in a new round of hefty tariffs.

"The fact that they launched 301 investigations is not surprising," said trade lawyer Ryan Majerus, a partner at King & Spalding and a former US trade official. "We all knew that's what they were going to pivot to. The challenge is that this is way more sprawling than anyone expected."

"That is because so many countries were targeted and because the inquiry — whether countries have excess industrial capacity and are overproducing goods — "can be framed pretty broadly."

The administration is rolling out another Section 301 investigation into banning imported goods made by forced labor.

Greer told reporters Wednesday that additional Section 301 investigations could cover issues such as

digital services taxes, pharmaceutical drug pricing and ocean pollution.

The administration is also expected to make more use of Section 232 of Trade Expansion Act of 1962, which allows the president to impose tariffs on goods deemed to be threats to national security after an investigation by the Commerce Department. The US already has Section 232 tariffs on steel, aluminum, autos and auto parts and other products.

The report from Democrats on the Joint Economic Committee finds that the new tariffs will increase the burden on American households this year. That is partly because the tariff revenue would be collected for the full year; Trump needed time to impose tariffs in 2025 and occasionally suspended them.

The Democrats also assume that American households will absorb 100% of the tariff cost. They cite a Congressional Budget Office report concluding that importers can pass along 70% of the tariff costs to consumers.

But the tariffs also allow domestic producers to raise prices — because of less competition from imports and increased demand for their tariff-free products. Combined, passed-along costs from importers and higher prices from domestic companies effectively mean that consumers end up footing the entire US tariff bill, according to CBO.

The Trump administration's new tariff push comes as the war in Iran pushes up the price of gasoline and other commodities in the runup to November's midterm elections.

"If the affordability and other political issues really start to become cumbersome, that certainly can impact all this," Majerus said.

"What the world's going to look like two months from now is going to be very different from what it is now."

## Myanmar's military boosts air power as it recaptures a key town in northern Mandalay



BANGKOK

Myanmar's military has commissioned new combat aircraft to boost its air capacities, state media reported on Friday, as the army steps up efforts to regain territory from resistance forces in the country's civil war.

The state-run Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper did not specify the number or types of the newly commissioned aircraft, but photos released by the military suggest it received four jet fighters, including two Russian-made Su-30 aircraft widely used for bombing and combat missions.

It was the sixth time the military had commissioned new aircraft since it seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021, triggering armed resistance across the country.

Russia and China are major supporters and arms suppliers of Myanmar's military government. Western nations have imposed sanctions including the prohibition of arms sales.

The newspaper cited Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, head of Myanmar's ruling military government, as saying

that the air force needs to be strong to "protect the state interest effectively."

He added the air force had demonstrated its capabilities in previous anti-insurgency and counterterrorism operations as well as missions to repel external aggression, according to the report.

The military government has lost large swaths of the country to pro-democracy People's Defense Forces and ethnic armed groups. It has intensified efforts to retake territory and scored several battlefield gains, and its airstrikes have often caused civilian casualties.

In this photo provided by the Myanmar Military True News Information Team, newly commissioned aircraft are seen at an airbase in Meiktila township in the Mandalay region, Myanmar, Thursday, March 12, 2026.

With international law at a 'breaking point', a tiny country goes after Myanmar's junta on its own

The opposition National Unity Government, or NUG, which coordinates resistance to military rule, and the Karen National Union, an ethnic armed group fighting the army, said in separate statements on Monday that

about 30 to 40 people were killed when the military used drones, jet fighters and artillery during a ground offensive in villages in the lower-central Bago region between March 5 to March 7.

The powerful Arakan Army ethnic militia, based in western Rakhine state, said on Wednesday that 116 captured army soldiers, including officers held in a detention camp in Ann township, were killed when eight military aircraft carried out aerial attacks on Sunday.

The military has not mentioned any attack in Bago and Rakhine. The reports could not be independently confirmed.

Nay Phone Latt, a spokesperson for the NUG, told the AP that the commissioning of new aircraft is intended to enhance continued airstrikes on civilian areas. He said the military was "targeting civilians and continuing to carry out mass killings. It is important for the international community not to turn a blind eye to this reality."

The Global New Light of Myanmar also said in a separate report that the military has regained control of the ancient town of Tagaung in northern Mandalay after a weeklong offensive.

Tagaung, located about 170 kilometers (105 miles) north of Mandalay, the country's second-largest city, had been under the control of forces aligned with the NUG since August 2024. The recapture of Tagaung, the last NUG-controlled town in Mandalay Region, marked the latest setback for opposition groups fighting the military.

Nay Phone Latt said resistance forces withdrew from the town after the military launched an offensive using large numbers of troops and heavy weapons, but they still maintain positions in areas outside it.

## Delhi Government Signs MoU with IIT Madras for Pilot Study on Photocatalytic “Smog-Eating” Surfaces to Combat Air Pollution

### INNOVATIVE DEPLOYMENT EXPLORED ON ROADS, BUILDINGS, PAVEMENTS, AND PANELS TO BREAK DOWN POLLUTANTS UNDER SUNLIGHT



DELHI / CHENNAI

In a landmark initiative under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Chief Minister Smt. Rekha Gupta, the Government of NCT of Delhi today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) to launch a comprehensive pilot study on photocatalytic “smog-eating” surfaces.

Titled “Comprehensive Study on the Effectiveness of Photocatalytic Smog-Eating Surfaces, Specifically Utilizing Titanium Dioxide (TiO) or Similar Safe Photocatalysts for Abatement of Air Pollution in Delhi,” the project targets key pollutants like Nitrogen Dioxide (NO) and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) that fuel urban smog.

The MoU signing ceremony was graced by Hon'ble Minister Shri Manjinder Singh Sirsa, alongside Prof. Somnath C. Roy from IIT Madras's Department of Physics, who serves as Principal Investigator. Senior officials from the Department of Environment and Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) were also present.

The MoU was exchanged in the presence of Hon'ble Minister Shri Manjinder Singh Sirsa by Prof. CS Shankar Ram, Associate Dean (Industrial Consultancy and Sponsored Research), IIT Madras, and Prof Somnath Chanda Roy, Department of Physics, IIT Madras, and Mr. Ramesh Bidhuri, Secretary (Environment) and Mr. Anand Tiwari, Spl. Secretary (Environment), Government of Delhi.

“Through this IIT Madras study, we aim to find the best, long-lasting, and affordable ways to put ‘smog-eating’ coatings on roads, buildings, and city surfaces. It can work in our favour if the study can provide evidence based findings that such coatings or materials can cut NO & other pollutants,” Hon'ble Minister Shri Manjinder Singh Sirsa emphasised in the discussion.

Shri Sirsa further added, “Delhi's population is growing with urbanisation from nearby areas, expanding our infrastructure rapidly. Our focus, under the leadership of Hon'ble CM Smt. Rekha Gupta, remains on achieving cleaner air for the people, without blanket bans. Therefore, we must use science to shield our air, to protect our weather and health without halting this vital growth.”

Some friends aren't really friends... They're family.



Photocatalytic materials like TiO activate under sunlight to trigger reactions that convert harmful pollutants into benign compounds. The six-month study will assess optimal integration methods, including mixing into concrete and asphalt, surface coatings on infrastructure, and innovative panels on rooftops or streetlights.

The study will also investigate the development and deployment of photocatalytic pollutant-removal panels made using Titanium Dioxide, based materials. These panels may potentially be installed on rooftops, similar to solar panels, or mounted on street-light poles to enable pollutant removal directly from the ambient air.

“We are working diligently to support innovators, as seen in our innovation challenge that has now reached its trial run phase, this study exemplifies that commitment,” Shri Sirsa highlighted. Prof. Somnath C. Roy highlighted

ed the rigorous approach: “The study will begin with lab testing in a smog chamber at IIT Madras to precisely measure pollutant abatement. Following this, our team will conduct real-time field assessments in Delhi's urban environment on surfaces like concrete, asphalt, metal panels, glass, and roads to evaluate durability and efficiency under actual conditions.”

This science-driven effort aligns with Delhi Government's multi-pronged strategy to enhance air quality, complementing road dust control and other measures. Subject to the study's findings, the government aims to explore deploying these solutions during peak smog months this year, paving the way for scalable, cost-effective urban interventions.

Hon'ble Minister Shri Sirsa reiterated: “Delhi demands bold, innovative scientific solutions to tackle air pollution, this collaboration with IIT Madras will deliver actionable insights for cleaner air across our city.”

## SPACE FOR YOU ONLY

Rs. 150/- per day

### PLACEMENT

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

### VOLUNTEERS REGISTERS @ NEIR 2026

We are looking for volunteers across NE & West Bengal Interested candidates (College students, youths) can register at https://northeastintegrationrally.in/Volunteer\_Registration.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 InfoCom Solutions at: info@krccfoundation.org Submit Here: https://bit.ly/InfoComDiaryForm

### STUDENTS' INTERNSHIP

Students can apply for a three-months internship with KRC Foundation. During the internship the student can get an opportunity to work on a live project. On successful completion the student is awarded a certificate. Apply to 5E for Success: 5eforsuccess@gmail.com 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 certificates. 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@gmail.com / 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