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PERSPECTIVE

Life is more fun when you help people succeed, instead of wishing for them to fail.

Foreign Links in Manipur Violence Resurface as Arrests Validate Earlier Warnings

OUR CORRESPONDENT
IMPHAL:When ethnic violence erupted in Manipur in May 2023, much of the early narrative focused on long-standing internal grievances between communities. The crisis was widely seen as a domestic conflict rooted in historical tensions, land disputes, and political mistrust. Amid the turmoil, former Chief Minister N. Biren Singh repeatedly raised a different and controversial claim. He argued that the unrest was not entirely internal but was being fueled and prolonged by foreign elements and cross-border networks. At the time, many critics dismissed these statements as political rhetoric or attempts to deflect attention from local administrative failures. However, recent developments have prompted a renewed discussion around those assertions. Security agencies have made several arrests that reportedly involve foreign nationals, while investigations have uncovered incidents of drone-based smuggling and alleged links between armed groups and cross-border militant networks operating along the porous Indo-Myanmar border. These revelations have added a new dimension to the understanding of the conflict. Officials say such findings suggest that the violence in Manipur cannot be explained solely through internal dynamics. Instead, they indicate that transnational actors and illegal networks may have exploited the fragile situation to intensify instability in the border state. Despite these developments, analysts stress that the crisis remains complex. Deep-rooted community mistrust, displacement, and political grievances continue to shape the conflict. Addressing these issues requires dialogue, reconciliation, and long-term policy interventions within the state.

WHO SAID WHAT

“In politics, there is no such thing as a full stop. The future awaits you as well, and your experience and contributions will forever remain an enduring part of our national life,”
Narendra Modi

22 Northeast institutions sign India-Japan academic consortium; IIT Guwahati to lead

GUWAHATI
In a major boost to international academic collaboration, 22 institutions from Northeast India have signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) to establish the Northeast India-Japan International Academic and Research Consortium. The initiative is being led by Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, which will serve as the nodal institution on the Indian side, while Gifu University will coordinate from Japan. The consortium includes leading institutions such as National Institutes of Technology (NITs), Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIITs), North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology, AIIMS Guwahati, Tezpur University, Gauhati University, Cotton University and Assam Engineering College,



among others. The LoI was signed during the Japan-NER Academia-Industry Cooperation Symposium 2026, jointly organised by IIT Gu-

Bordoloi's BJP switch clouds Congress bid of son Prateek in Margherita

Gaurav Gogoi backs Prateek as Pradyut Bordoloi's BJP switch sparks Congress turmoil

MARGHERITA/GUWAHATI
The defection of senior leader and Nagaon MP Pradyut Bordoloi to the Bharatiya Janata Party has cast uncertainty over the electoral prospects of his son, Prateek Bordoloi, who is eyeing his debut from the 83rd Margherita Legislative Assembly Constituency on an Indian National Congress ticket. Prateek Bordoloi, currently serving as Co-Chairman of the APOC Social Media and IT Cell, has been preparing for months for his maiden electoral contest, building a grassroots network and projecting himself as a young Congress face in Upper Assam.

However, his father's sudden switch to the BJP - formalised in New Delhi in the presence of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and state BJP president Dilip Saikia - has complicated the political narrative in Margherita.

The immediate fallout was visible at the local Congress Bhawan, where party workers tore down posters of the senior

Bordoloi within hours of his defection. Notably, posters of Prateek Bordoloi were left untouched, indicating an attempt by party cadres to separate the son's political journey from his father's decision.

Despite this, uncertainty persists. Party insiders said the development has created confusion among grassroots workers and voters, raising concerns over loyalty, perception, and campaign messaging. While some local leaders believe Prateek's sustained organisational work and constituency outreach may help him retain support, others fear the BJP could leverage the high-profile defection to question his credibility during the campaign. Adding to the suspense, Prateek Bordoloi's candidature has not yet been finalised. Sources said other aspirants, including Satender Prasad and Annadita Goswami, remain in contention, with the party leadership assessing the political impact of Pradyut Bordoloi's exit before taking a final call.

For Prateek Bordoloi, the next few

hours are critical. If retained, he will have to navigate a complex campaign shaped by a politically sensitive family divide. If dropped, it would mark a major setback to his electoral debut despite months of groundwork.

A decision on ticket distribution is expected later in the day, keeping Margherita at the centre of attention as the fallout of a father's political shift continues to influence a son's uncertain electoral path.

The political fallout from Pradyut Bordoloi's switch to the Bharatiya Janata Party intensified on Wednesday, with senior Congress leader Gaurav Gogoi extending support to his son Prateek Bordoloi, who now finds himself at the centre of a political storm ahead of the Assembly polls. Terming the senior Bordoloi's defection as "very unfortunate", Gogoi said the Indian National Congress had stood by him during the Lok Sabha elections and had also accommodated his family in the Assembly ticket distribution. "Despite that, he has left due to per-

sonal reasons," Gogoi said, reacting to the development.

Backing the younger Bordoloi, who is preparing to contest from Margherita, Gogoi expressed sympathy and indicated that the party would support him during the crisis. "All my sympathies are with him. I never thought he would have to face such a situation. I will call him and let him decide what he wants to do further," he said. Gogoi also framed the upcoming Assembly elections as a crucial battle for Assam's future, positioning it as a contest against Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

He claimed that various sections of society, including women, tea tribes and youth, were not in favour of Sarma returning to power, though he described Bordoloi's support for the Chief Minister as a personal decision.

On alliance prospects, Gogoi said he had spoken to Akhil Gogoi regarding a possible tie-up with the Rajgor Dal, adding that further steps would depend on their

response. Referring to a recent visit to Bordoloi's residence, Gogoi asserted that the election was not about individuals but about "freeing the state" from what he alleged as fear, corruption and divisive politics. He also raised allegations over land distribution, claiming that while many poor families were denied land pattas and faced increasing revenue burdens, large tracts were allegedly concentrated in the hands of a single family.

Maintaining that the Congress remains organisationally strong in regions such as Lakhimpur, Gogoi said the party is preparing for a tough electoral contest. "This election is important for the youth and the new generation. I have pulled up my socks to defeat Himanta Biswa Sarma," he said. With Prateek Bordoloi caught in the crosscurrents of his father's political realignment, the coming days are expected to be critical in shaping both his electoral prospects in Margherita and the Congress party's broader campaign strategy.

Air India and Air India Express begins operations from New Terminal 2 at Guwahati Airport



GUWAHATI

Air India and Air India Express have commenced all flight operations from the newly inaugurated Terminal 2 (T2) of Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport (LGBIA), Guwahati, starting from Monday.

The move marks a significant milestone in strengthening air connectivity to and from the Northeast.

The first Air India flight to arrive at the new terminal was AI 879 from Delhi, which touched down earlier today. Its return service, AI 880 to Delhi, became Air India's inaugural departure from T2.

Marking the occasion, Air India added a touch of Assam's rich culture for guests travelling on the inaugural flight AI 879. Passengers were served narikolaru on board, and the first check-in guest was honoured with a traditional Assamese gamusa, celebrating the airline's commitment to connecting cultures and communities.

Air India Express also marked its first operation from the new terminal with flight IX 1517 from Kolkata, which was the airline's first arrival at T2.

The flight's onwards leg to Imphal became Air India Express's maiden departure from the new facility. Air India currently operates two daily return flights between Delhi and Guwahati, while Air India Express connects Guwahati with 17 daily flights to Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Dibrugarh, Dimapur, Hyderabad, Imphal, Jaipur, and Kolkata.

The ground teams of both Air India and Air India Express are fully geared to welcome guests at the new terminal and provide seamless support and assistance.

The LGBIA airport connects 21 domestic destinations and three international routes, including Bangkok, Paris and Singapore, and currently handles more than 130 aircraft traffic movements (ATMs) daily. The additional capacity is expected to strengthen Guwahati's role as a regional hub linking the North-East with mainland India and Southeast Asia.

Designed by internationally acclaimed Indian architect Nuru Karim, the terminal draws inspiration from Assam's kopou phool (foxtail orchid) and incorporates more than 140 metric tonnes (MT) of bamboo. Architectural references to Assam's bholuka bamboo craftsmanship and the bamboo-based structural traditions associated with the Apatani tribe of Arunachal Pradesh reflect the wider cultural fabric of the North-East.

The design received the International Architecture Award 2025 for integrating regional identity with contemporary infrastructure.

The airport is operated by AAHL through its subsidiary Guwahati International Airport Limited (GIAL). AAHL also manages airports in Thiruvananthapuram, Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, Lucknow, Jaipur, Ahmedabad and Mangaluru.

HSLC results in Assam likely before Rongali Bihu as evaluation nears completion

GUWAHATI

The Assam State School Education Board is set to declare the HSLC examination results ahead of schedule this year, with officials indicating that the outcome may be announced before Rongali Bihu. With over 4.38 lakh candidates appearing - the highest in the Board's history - evaluation work is progressing at a rapid pace across the state. Authorities said nearly 95 per cent of the answer scripts have already been assessed, raising expectations of an early result declaration compared to last year, when results were announced on April 11. ASSEB Controller of Examinations Nayan Jyoti Sarma said the Board is working on a compressed timeline to ensure students have sufficient time to pursue higher studies. "Despite the large number of candidates, evaluation is almost complete. We are aiming to declare the results much earlier this year so that students can apply for higher education institutions across the country without delay," Sarma said. A total of 45 evaluation centres have been engaged in the process, operating on a fast-track schedule to complete the remaining assessment and initiate result processing. Sources within the Board indicated that the results are likely to be declared by the end of March, although the timeline may extend to early April if required. The HSLC examinations were conducted from February 10 to 27 across 1,046 centres statewide.

Officials noted that several procedural steps are still pending before the final declaration. Among these, verification of absentee candidates remains one of the most complex tasks, involving scrutiny of students who missed one or more subjects or were entirely absent.

Priyanka Gandhi terms Bordoloi's exit 'unfortunate', flags ticket dispute ahead of Assam polls



NEW DELHI/GUWAHATI

Senior Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Wednesday described the resignation of Assam MP Pradyut Bordoloi as "very unfortunate", suggesting that discontent over ticket allocation for the upcoming Assembly elections may have led to his departure.

Speaking to reporters, Priyanka Gandhi said the party regretted not being able to engage with Bordoloi before his decision. "It is very unfortunate. I think he was upset over one ticket allocation, and we wish we had a chance to have a conversation about it," she said.

Bordoloi, a long-time member of the Indian National Congress, stepped down citing sustained neglect and internal dissatisfaction within the par-

ty. In a statement, he termed the move a difficult break from his longstanding association, alleging that he felt sidelined despite years of service.

The development comes amid internal churn within the Assam Congress, with Bordoloi's exit adding to recent setbacks. His resignation also gains significance as the party has fielded his son, Prateek Bordoloi, from the Margherita Assembly constituency - a decision that has drawn attention in light of the senior leader's grievances over ticket distribution.

The political ramifications are unfolding at a crucial juncture, with Assam heading into a high-stakes electoral contest. As per the Election Commission of India, polling for all 126 Assembly constituencies will be held in a single phase on April 9, with counting scheduled for May 4. While the Bharatiya Janata Party is aiming for a third consecutive term in the state, the Congress faces the dual challenge of managing internal dissent and strengthening its campaign on the ground.

Bordoloi's exit is being seen as a significant setback for the Congress in Assam, raising concerns over organisational cohesion as the party prepares for a decisive electoral battle.

Assam polls: 95 'critical' booths identified in Cachar; security stepped up

SILCHAR

The district administration in Cachar has identified 95 polling stations as "critical" ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections, ramping up security and surveillance measures to ensure a smooth electoral process, officials said on Tuesday.

District Commissioner and District Election Officer Aayush Garg said the classification was based on past electoral data and security assessments.

"Out of 1,732 polling stations in the district, 95 have been identified as critical. Of these, 35 were flagged due to unusually high voter turnout exceeding 90 per cent and skewed voting patterns favouring a single candidate," he said.

The remaining 60 polling stations have been categorised as sensitive based on inputs from police and intelligence agencies.

Garg said 12 companies of the Central Armed Police Forces have already been deployed, with additional forces to be requisitioned if

required. In a logistical shift, polling personnel across all seven Assembly constituencies in the district will be dispatched simultaneously two days before polling, replacing the earlier phased deployment system to allow better on-ground preparedness.

The administration is also targeting a higher voter turnout than the 81 per cent recorded in 2021. "We aim to increase turnout by 2-3 per cent, with a focus on first-time voters aged 18 and above, and target an overall turnout of around 85 per cent," Garg said.

In areas with connectivity constraints, 18 polling stations will be monitored through CCTV surveillance.

As part of efforts to promote gender inclusivity, nearly 400 polling stations will be managed entirely by women personnel.

Authorities have also deployed dedicated monitoring teams comprising police and civil officials to track and act against misinformation and provocative content during the election period.



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GEN Z TRIUMPHS IN NEPAL

During the last six months, there have been two political movements and subsequent elections in India's immediate neighbourhood, which might have an impact on India's regional aspirations and impact.

These two movement and elections happened in Bangladesh and Nepal. Both were led by the young voters of the two countries, anxious for a change in the political leadership of their countries. But the results in both have been different. Let's analyse the reasons for the same.

Nepal's political landscape appears poised for a major transformation as Balendra Shah, widely known as Balen Shah, emerged as the sole contender for the country's prime ministership following the latest general elections. The 35-year-old Kathmandu mayor and former rapper represents a new generation of leadership challenging the dominance of traditional political elites. His rise has energised young voters and highlighted growing demand for political reform and transparent governance in the Himalayan nation.

In Nepal, the results are exactly the opposite of what happened in Bangladesh, where, despite a student-led revolution toppling the incumbent government, the principal opposition party in the previous regime returned to power in the elections that followed. The newly formed student-led party, the National Citizen Party, failed to make an impact.

Preliminary trends from Nepal's recent general elections showed a strong performance by the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP). Shah himself won in the Jhapa-5 constituency against veteran leader and former prime minister KP Sharma Oli of the Communist Party of Nepal (UML).

If the trend continues, Shah could become one of the youngest prime ministers in Nepal's history, marking a dramatic shift from a political establishment largely dominated by leaders in their 60s and 70s.

Shah's prime ministerial campaign began with a culturally symbolic speech in Janakpur, the capital of Madhesh Province and traditionally regarded as the birthplace of Goddess Sita. He opened his address with "Sarvapatham, Mata Janaki ke pranaam," and delivered the speech in Maithili, one of Nepal's widely spoken languages.

The choice of location and language was significant. Few national leaders in Nepal have launched a major political campaign in Maithili, which is widely spoken across the Madhesh region and India's Mithila belt. The move signalled outreach to Madhesi communities, which have historically sought greater political representation.

Before entering public life, Shah gained popularity as a rapper who used hip-hop music to raise awareness about corruption, governance failures and social inequality. His music resonated strongly with urban youth.

In 2022, Shah shocked Nepal's political establishment by winning the Kathmandu mayoral election as an independent candidate, defeating nominees from major parties. During his tenure, he focused on addressing the capital's waste management crisis, removing illegal encroachments on public land, improving traffic management, restoring heritage sites and developing public parks.

Born on April 27, 1990, in Naradevi, Kathmandu, Shah's family traces its roots to Mahottari district in Madhesh Province. He is associated with the Madhesi community, which forms nearly one-third of Nepal's population and shares strong cultural links with neighbouring regions of India.

Shah resigned as Kathmandu mayor in January 2026 to contest the national elections under the Rastriya Swatantra Party after reaching an agreement with party chairman Rabi Lamichhane. His campaign has emphasised youth empowerment, anti-corruption reforms, transparent governance and strengthening Nepal's federal system-issues that have resonated strongly with Gen Z and millennial voters seeking political change.

Similar Goals, Different Outcomes

The protests in Bangladesh and Nepal, countries that are separated by the narrow Siliguri Corridor, had the same goal - replacing the existing system.

While the uprising in Bangladesh was set in motion by forces like the Jamaat-backed Chhatra Shibir, with a more politically stated goal of removing the incumbent from power, the one in Nepal was more organic, with a focus on overthrowing the system. This allowed leaders like Balen Shah, 35, to emerge as genuine alternatives to the existing political parties.

The students' movement in Bangladesh, on the other hand, could not create a leader who was acceptable to the people of the country. The movement was more focused on removing Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, and could not offer an alternative to the people.

With the toppling of the Hasina government in Bangladesh, former prime minister Khaleda Zia's son Tarique Rahman emerged as the only credible alternative, even though he was a product of the existing political system. Having been in political exile and out of the country for 17 years, Tarique Rahman offered fresh ideas, a new approach and, more importantly, a clear vision of Bangladesh's future.

Rahman's "I have a plan" speech set the ball rolling for his party, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), to talk about what it intended to do for citizens.

This approach worked, making him appear to be a more pragmatic choice than the students' groups who had joined forces with the Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, a fringe player in electoral politics. Rahman's inclusive politics and outreach to minorities also played a role in his popularity.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

A mind is like a parachute. It doesn't work if it is not open. - Frank Zappa

UPBEAT MAMTA, KEJRIWAL POSE CHALLENGE TO RAHUL



ANIL ANAND

On verge of completing two-years in existence and that too a smooth one with leading partner Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) far below the 272 simple majority- mark in Lok Sabha, if it is an ode to the managerial skills of the Narendra Modi-Amit Shah duo, equally it speaks volumes about the tattered I.N.D.I.A bloc of the opposition parties. More so, it's pivot Congress groping in dark and unwilling to refurbish itself despite organizational failures all around.

A united and cohesive front could have created psychological pressure, if not capable to break the BJP-led NDA combine, to create insecurity in the saffron party camp which is thriving with only 240 MPs. Question arises why the I.N.D.I.A bloc's disinterest on this count?

While the I.N.D.I.A combine leaders seemed in no mood to break bread, busy ploughing their lonely furrows guided by their inflated egos, to take benefit of Mr Modi's weakened Lok Sabha strength, on the contrary he has been able to further strengthen his position by plotting a coup of sorts in the key ally Janata Dal-u camp in Bihar. By cornering the party supremo and chief minister Nitish Kumar and "convincing" him to settle for a Rajya Sabha berth in lieu chief ministership, the Modi-Shah camp has reduced the central dispensation's vulnerability.

They have thrown a gauntlet, afresh, at the I.N.D.I.A combine particularly its core the Congress which is the only national party in the opposition camp with pan-India presence. While the regional players such as Trinamool Congress chief and West Bengal chief minister Mamta Banerjee, Aam Aadmi Party (though not part of the combine) supremo, Arvind Kejriwal and DMK chief M K Stalin are content strengthening their respective state-level turfs, the Congress, plagued by a faction ridden organizational set up and showing no hurry to sew the loose ends, is simply looking the other way round for reasons best known to its top brass. No one in the camp seems to be interested to pick up the gauntlet.

Independently they are waging their respective battles against the Centre (read Modi-Shah)- Ms Mamta in the poll bound West Bengal has definitely been one up over the duo, Mr Stalin also gearing up for Tamil Nadu assembly elections later this year has been successfully countering every move of the BJP to unsettle DMK-led alliance and buoyed by a recent lower court verdict giving him reprieve in the alleged excise-scam, Mr Kejriwal has started flexing his muscles even after having lost his Delhi turf, his mainstay and banking heavily on Punjab where he is running the government by proxy.

Barring Mr Stalin with whom senior Congress leader and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi has a comfort level with DMK-Congress having arrived at an understanding over distribution of seats in Tamil Nadu, both Ms Mamta Banerjee and Mr Kejriwal have made their intentions known after some recent developments favouring them.

Their common intention seemed the I.N.D.I.A bloc leadership thereby posing a direct challenge to Mr Gandhi.

Mrs Banerjee, whose image of a street fighter has not diminished either with age or after having become chief minister, has been fighting Mr Modi move by move on the issue of Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls particularly in the states governed by non-BJP governments. His prime targets are West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, all three presently ruled by opposition parties or alliances. She even went to the extent of appearing in person before the Supreme Court to argue the SIR related case while having opened a front against the Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.

No doubt, Mr Gandhi is the only leader at the national level who, despite persistent personal attacks and vicious propaganda by the BJP and its IT cell, has literally taken the bull by the horn. He has been upfront in launching a direct attack against Mr Modi mostly on issues related to governance, attempts to silence the opposition, using all means, and the communal credo being pursued by the saffron party as a political weapon.

However, he is different from both Ms Banerjee and Mr Kejriwal and which puts the two at an advantageous position. Both have strong organisations to back them up unlike Mr Gandhi who is content with pursuing solo acts without realizing that every such acts needed organizational backup to send the message across to the public.

Ms Banerjee's recent declaration that she will see removal of Modi government and embark on a nationwide tour after "winning" the West Bengal assembly elections, and Mr Kejriwal showing similar intention after a lower court in Delhi gave him and Manish Sisodia, a former deputy chief minister, should have alerted and alerted Mr Gandhi and his advisors, if any. Unfortunately, there are no such indications with indecisive-ruling supreme.

Under the prevailing circumstanc-

es Ms Banerjee is a legitimate claimant for I.N.D.I.A leadership. It is on account of the fact that she has been more forthcoming, with clarity, on matters political with her never-say-die spirit holding her aloft. Definitely, Mr Gandhi too has such a spirit but his plans and strategies lack clarity which at times have been weakening this spirit to the advantage of the ilks of Ms Banerjee and Mr Kejriwal.

While both of them are in total control of their respective party organisations which have been backing their leaders and delivering at crucial times, this cannot be said either of Mr Gandhi and particularly Congress as an organization both at the AICC and state/Union Territories levels. As a result, an impression is gaining ground he is unable to muster courage to take on the old-guard many of whom are still demanding their pound of flesh, while others already accommodated at high places have hardly shown any will to substantially contribute and redouble Mr Gandhi's fight-back efforts.

Similarly, many of the PCC chiefs, including Delhi, are either non-performers or have not come up to the party high-command's expectations. Nevertheless, the high command (read Rahul Gandhi) has been ignoring this vital aspect.

Rampant factionalism, at times fanned by the quarters concerned in the AICC, wrong selection of PCC presidents and the resultant weakening of the organization, had led to Congress missing the chance, repeatedly, to corner Mr Kejriwal in his stronghold Delhi. Owing to this neglect, deliberate or otherwise, the party lost its ground and has been pushed to the margins by ceding all space to either AAP or the BJP.

This paradoxical situation prevailing in the Congress is posing a grave challenge to the party's claim to be the I.N.D.I.A leader. The party should prepare for a scenario to remain as the combine flag-bearer in case of NDA partners such as Telegu Desam

Party, led by N Chandrababu Naidu, part ways at any given point in time. How to remain in contention for this top slot while keeping in mind that Naidu-Mamta-Kejriwal- Stalin combined together will not look favourably towards the Congress? This should be Mr Gandhi's concern and the key to success lies in taking tough decisions enroute strengthening the organization at all levels.

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

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~ Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, Union Minister for Communications & DoNER



Manipur Assembly passes Rs 1,258 crore budget for seven departments; CM tables fiscal policy statements

IMPHAL

The Manipur Legislative Assembly passed a budget of Rs 1,258.86 crore for seven departments for the financial year 2026-27, with Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh tabling key fiscal policy documents in the House.

On the concluding day of the session, the Chief Minister presented the Medium Term Fiscal Policy Statement, Fiscal Policy Strategy Statement and Macro Economic Framework Statement.

Major allocations include Rs 711.16 crore for Public Health Engineering and Rs 439.80 crore for Municipal Administration, Housing and Urban Development. Other



departments covered in the budget include Vigilance, State Excise, Fire Protection, Sales Tax and Home Guards.

Replying to queries, the Chief Minister informed that development works under Pukhao Gram Panchayat are being undertaken with assistance from the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development under the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF), with a sanctioned amount of Rs 8 crore.

Deputy Chief Minister Losii Dikho said land clearance of 1.30 hectares at Yumnam Patlou was granted to Keystone Infra Pvt Ltd under provisions of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change for road improvement

works. He also informed the House that action against illegal poppy cultivation has been carried out across 10 districts, leading to the arrest of 81 persons and registration of 44 FIRs.

Addressing urban infrastructure, Khemchand Singh said drainage construction is underway in Imphal to tackle waterlogging and a proposal of Rs 33 crore has been submitted to the Union DoNER Ministry for waste management.

The Chief Minister said around 27,000 houses will be constructed under urban housing schemes, adding that ownership must be registered in the name of a woman to avail benefits.

On drinking water supply, Dikho said efforts are being made to ensure regular supply under the Jal Jeevan Mission, with several projects underway, though some delays have occurred due to contractor-related issues.

The Chief Minister also informed that the Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Department has handled 222 cases over the past five years, with 23 FIRs registered and 11 cases under trial.

Fire Services Minister Konthoujam Govindas Singh said steps are being taken to establish fire sub-stations in every constituency, with five already operational.

The House was later adjourned sine die.

Assam Governor, CM Congratulate Devabrat Das and Sahaisuli Brahma on Sahitya Akademi Award 2025



KRC TIMES NEWS DESK

GUWAHATI: Assam Governor Laxman Prasad Acharya and Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma on March 16 congratulated authors Devabrat Das and Sahaisuli Brahma after they were conferred the Sahitya Akademi Award 2025.

Devabrat Das received the honour for his Assamese novel Kori Khelar Shadhu, while Sahaisuli Brahma was recognised for her Bodo novel Dwnngwi Lama Mwnse Gathon. The awards were announced by the Sahitya Akademi as part of its annual list of 24 awardees.

Congratulating the writers, Governor Acharya said their achievements have brought immense pride to Assam and highlighted the state's rich literary heritage.

Chief Minister Sarma also extended his greetings, noting that the recognition reflects the strength and diversity of literature from Assam and its growing presence at the national level.

BJP To Contest 89 Seats In Assam Assembly Polls, Leaves 37 For Allies



KRC TIMES NEWS DESK

GUWAHATI: The Himanta Biswa Sarma-led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will contest 89 of the 126 seats in the upcoming Assam Leg-

islative Assembly Election 2026, leaving the remaining 37 seats for its alliance partners.

Speaking to reporters in Guwahati on Tuesday, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the party will allocate 26 seats to its ally Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and 11 seats to the Bodoland People's Front (BPF).

He said the BJP's state election committee has already discussed the candidate list and the seat-sharing arrangement with its allies. The final list of candidates will be announced after a meeting of the party's central parliamentary board. "The central parliamentary committee will meet on Wednesday evening. After that meeting, we will release the list either the same evening or on Thursday morning," Sarma said.

Voting for all 126 constituencies in Assam will be held on April 9, while counting of votes will take place on May 4. The BJP has been in power in the state since 2016.

NDA finalises Assam seat-sharing: AGP to contest 26, BPF 11; BJP list likely on March 19

GUWAHATI

The seat-sharing arrangement among NDA allies in Assam has been largely finalised, with the Asom Gana Parishad set to contest around 26 Assembly seats and the Bodoland People's Front about 11, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Tuesday.

Speaking after discussions in New Delhi, Sarma said the alliance framework under the NDA has been sealed and preliminary talks on candidate selection have been completed.

He said the BJP's Central Parliamentary Board is scheduled to meet on Wednesday evening, following which the party is expected to release its candidate list either late that night or on the morning of March 19.

Indicating a shift in candidate selection strategy, the Chief Minister said the BJP



would field a mix of fresh faces, women candidates and representatives from diverse communities and tribes, with increased representation for

young.

Sarma also said that except for seats allocated to AGP and BPF, the BJP will announce its candidates in a

single consolidated list.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister made remarks regarding Pradyut Bordoloi, stating that while there has been no formal communication, the BJP would welcome him if he chooses to join the party.

"I believe there is no need for him to stay in Congress. It's right for him to join BJP and I welcome him," Sarma said, adding that the party would accommodate him in the Assembly polls if he joins.

The comments come amid reported internal tensions within the Congress over ticket allocation, particularly in Lahorighat, where Bordoloi had expressed dissatisfaction over candidate selection.

With the NDA finalising its electoral strategy and the Opposition facing internal challenges, the political contest in Assam is expected to intensify ahead of the Assembly elections.

Income Tax Dept sets up 24x7 control room in Assam to curb black money ahead of Assembly polls

GUWAHATI

The Income Tax Department has set up a 24x7 control room in Assam to monitor and curb the use of black money in the upcoming Legislative Assembly Elections 2026. The initiative has been undertaken by the Directorate of Income Tax (Investigation), North Eastern Region, Guwahati, as part of its efforts to assist the Election Commission of India in ensuring free and fair elections scheduled to be held on April 9, 2026.

As per the release, strict vigil will be maintained during the Model Code of Conduct period on the movement of unaccounted cash, bullion, precious metals and other valuables suspected to be used for electoral purposes across the state.

To facilitate public participation, the department has opera-

tionalised a round-the-clock control room at Aayakar Bhawan, Christian Basti, GS Road in Guwahati. Citizens can report credible information related to suspicious movement or distribution of cash and valuables through dedicated mobile, WhatsApp, landline numbers and email.

The department has assured that informants are not required to disclose their identity, and all information shared will be kept strictly confidential. However, it emphasised that inputs must be credible and actionable.

"The Control Room is functional until the completion of the election process," the release stated, urging citizens to actively contribute towards maintaining transparency and integrity in the electoral process.

The move is part of a broader effort to strengthen democratic

values and prevent the misuse of unaccounted money during elections.

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Sunday announced the schedule for Assembly elections in four states-- Assam, West Bengal, Kerala and Tamil Nadu-- along with the Union Territory of Puducherry.

According to the schedule, Assam and Kerala will vote in a single phase on April 9. Polling in West Bengal will be conducted in two phases on April 23 and April 29, while Tamil Nadu will go to the polls on April 23. Voting in Puducherry will also take place on April 9. The counting of votes for all four states and Puducherry will be held on May 4, the ECI announced.

Overall, the elections will cover 824 Assembly constituencies with a total electorate of about

17.4 crore voters. Nearly 2.19 lakh polling stations will be set up, and around 25 lakh personnel will be deployed to conduct the elections.

The terms of the current assemblies are set to end on different dates: May 20 in Assam, May 7 in West Bengal, May 10 in Tamil Nadu, May 23 in Kerala, and June 15 in Puducherry. He added that any seat-sharing arrangement involving the UPPL would have to be negotiated with the Bodoland People's Front (BPF) rather than the BJP.

"The seat-sharing talks with UPPL will have to be over those 11 seats with the BPF, as there is no scope for further discussion with the BJP," Sarma had said.

With the Chief Minister ruling out a direct BJP-UPPL alliance, political equations in the BTR are expected to shift as parties prepare for the April 9 Assembly polls.

UPPL names 7 candidates in first list; Pramod Boro from Tamulpur



KOKRAJHAR

The United People's Party Liberal on Tuesday released its first list of candidates for the upcoming Assembly elections in Assam, naming nominees for seven constituencies.

The party, which plans to contest 15 seats, announced the first set of candidates at a press conference in Kokrajhar.

UPPL president Pramod Boro will contest from Tamulpur, while Aninda Basumatary has been fielded from Gossaigaon. Raju Kumar Narzary will contest from Dotma and Nerson Boro from Bhergaon.

Former ABSU president Dipen Boro has been nominated from Udalguri, while three-time MLA Kamalsing Narzary will contest from Bijni. Sitting Kokrajhar MLA Lawrence Isary has been renominated.

UPPL general secretary Raju Kumar Narzary expressed con-

fidence in the party's prospects, stating that the candidates represent grassroots leadership and local aspirations.

The party said candidates for the remaining constituencies will be announced in due course. Meanwhile, the Election Commission of India has ordered the transfer and posting of several IAS officers as District Election Officers (DEOs) in the state ahead of the polls.

According to the directive, P Uday Praveen has been posted in Kokrajhar, Srishti Singh in Majuli, Kimnei Chansan in Baksa, Madhusudan Nath in Chirang and Jay Vikash in Udalguri.

The Commission directed the Assam government to implement the postings immediately and submit a compliance report, while stating that transferred officers should not be assigned election-related duties until the completion of the poll process.

Rupam to host All-India Bengali one-act play contest from March 21

OUR CORRESPONDENT

SILCHAR: Cultural organisation Rupam will organise the 45th Naresh Chandra Pal Memorial All-India Bengali One-Act Play Competition, 2026 at Banga Bhavan in Silchar. Programmes will be held every day from 3 pm.

The event will be inaugurated on March 21 by Niranjan Roy, Vice-Chancellor of Gurucharan University, Silchar.

Details of the multi-day programme were shared at a press conference held at Rupam's office in Nazirpatty on Wednesday. Those present included Rupam general secretary Nikhil Paul, joint secretaries Nilanjan Paul and Kajal Karmakar, cultural organiser Bhaskar Das, president Dr Bibhas Deb, Rajkumar Paul and publicity secretary Uttam Sarkar.

A colourful cultural procession featuring 38 troupes will be taken out on March 19 at 4 pm as part of the celebrations.

Speaking at the press meet, Dr

Quest!

A Canadian university has built a "Puppy Room" in its campus, where students can go and play with puppies to relieve stress and tension.



Bibhas Deb said the event has an estimated budget of around Rs 17 lakh. Cultural organiser Bhaskar Das noted that arranging funds is always a challenge, but members and well-wishers of Rupam have extended strong support.

He thanked both members and non-members for contributing financially to the event. The organisers also said that there will be no entry fee for the programmes.

A souvenir will be released on March 21 by Prof Roy. On the same day, a book written by playwright Chitrabhanu Bhowmik will also be released.

To mark World Poetry Day, a special programme will be jointly organised by Rupam on March 21 at 5 pm. The inaugural session will feature five poets from Kolkata, with Debanjan Mukherjee coordinating the event.

Several eminent personalities will be felicitated during the programme. The judges for the competition will be Subhash Das from Agartala, Prof Biswatosh Choudhury from Silchar and Jayashree Bhattacharjee from Kolkata.

On March 29, a theatre discussion will be held from 10 am, followed by a cultural programme, felicitation ceremony and prize distribution from 5.30 pm.

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"Connecting the unconnected"

Nearly 3 lakh girls aged 14 years have been vaccinated under HPV Vaccination Campaign Nationwide: Officials



this is more than a campaign, it is a collective movement towards a healthier, cancer-free future for our daughters.

Earlier, on March 1, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a nationwide HPV vaccination campaign and development projects worth Rs 16,680 crore in Rajasthan's Ajmer.

Addressing a large public rally after the event, PM Modi said the BJP's double-engine government in Rajasthan has completed two years, and the state is now advancing on a new path of development.

The Prime Minister called the HPV vaccination campaign an important step towards empowering the women of the country.

Today, from this land of brave women, I have got the opportunity to launch an important campaign for the daughters of the entire country. The HPV vaccination campaign has been launched in Ajmer. This campaign is an important step towards empowering the women of the country," PM Modi said.

The promises of development with which the BJP government came to serve you are being fulfilled with great speed. And today is the day to accelerate this very campaign of development," he said.

Highlighting the significance of the occasion, the Prime Minister added, "Just a short while ago, the BJP's double-engine government in Rajasthan completed two years. I am pleased that today, Rajasthan is advancing on a new path of development.

"Health authorities are actively working in coordination with schools, local bodies, and healthcare workers to ensure smooth access to the vaccine. Parents and guardians are urged to support and encourage eligible girls to get vaccinated at the earliest," said officials.

communities about the importance of early protection.

The campaign has been strategically rolled out during the academic period, and while examinations are currently underway in many regions, the response has remained strong. With the conclusion of the exam season approaching, the momentum of the vaccination drive is expected to accelerate significantly, enabling wider coverage and ensuring that more girls benefit from this life-saving intervention.

"The official also said that

NEW DELHI

In a powerful step towards safeguarding the health and future of young girls, several states, including Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Odisha, and Mizoram, are leading from the front in the nationwide HPV vaccination campaign.

Within just a fortnight of its launch, nearly 3 lakh girls aged 14 years have already been vaccinated, marking an encouraging start to this critical public health initiative, a health ministry official informed.

According to experts Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine plays a vital role in preventing cervical cancer, one of the most common cancers affecting women. The enthusiastic participation seen so far reflects growing awareness among parents, schools, and

Jail ordeal a "huge horror story" says Sonam Wangchuk, hopes for continued dialogue with Govt

NEW DELHI

Ladakh-based climate activist Sonam Wangchuk recounted his nearly six-month ordeal in Jodhpur Central Jail as a "huge horror story," highlighting the challenges his wife, Gitanjali J Angmo, faced in seeking legal recourse.

Wangchuk was released from Jodhpur Central Jail after nearly six months in detention, following the government's revocation of his detention under the National Security Act (NSA) on Saturday.

He expressed hope that dialogue with the authorities will continue and emphasised that further action would only be necessary if talks fail.

Addressing a press conference in the national capital, Wangchuk said, "I was waiting to come out (of the jail) either as we win in the court or after 12 months. I was very well prepared to spend 12 months and come out and share the horror stories of all the wrongs that happened to me and to her (Sonam Wangchuk's wife, Gitanjali J Angmo). Right from how abruptly from my home I was, you know, bundled up and thrown into this jail, without any opportunity even to call my family or my lawyers for days, more than a week. Or of her, who could not even meet journalists to voice her anguish with heavy security positioning around the campus and how she slipped out into Delhi to knock on the doors of the court and how for two or three weeks there was a kind of cat and mouse chase on the streets of Delhi with her cars followed by people in cars and motorcycles. It was all a filmy scene."

"It was a huge horror story of how it was made so difficult to send anything to my lawyers. Otherwise, it was great. The jail, the staff, and the people there were very upright and very kind despite keeping to their laws and disciplines and so on. I'm happy that I won't have to go into those things... But now with this hand extended from



the government, I'm spared from having to do any of those. I really hope that the dialogue process will go on. And only if they fail and we are compelled to again, appeal in other ways will we need to share those," he said.

Wangchuk welcomed the government's gesture to initiate meaningful dialogue, calling it a "win-win" for Ladakh, the causes he represents, and even the authorities.

"I feel wonderful today after these two days of regaining my voice and refurling my little wings and reorienting myself... I'm a little greedy person. A win was not enough for me. I was always looking for a win-win. A win would be just Sonam Wangchuk's win. What good is Sonam Wangchuk winning if Ladakh and the Himalayas and the causes he represents do not win? Therefore, we were looking for a win-win for the causes," Wangchuk

said. He emphasised that his struggle was not only for personal justice but also to ensure broader gains for environmental and regional causes, and expressed hope that the process would guide future use of laws like the National Security Act.

"Now, with the recent extension of hands by the government to build trust, as they have said, and to facilitate meaningful constructive dialogue. This is a great thing because this way Ladakh will also win, and our cause will also win. So it will be truly a win-win. It will be a win-win-win also, because the government will come out looking better and our image in the world will be a little better and it will be even better win-win-win, if the Court also records a judgment in this case apart from revocation of the order itself so that it guides future executives and future policy makers about how to use and specially how not to use such laws

as National Security Act," he said.

"As I said, they have offered constructive, meaningful dialogue. This is all that we were struggling for: to start a dialogue. We had to struggle so much, walk from Leh to Delhi, go on anshans, go to jail, to exactly get that. If you see all the movements in Ladakh, they are appealing for starting the talks and dialogue process. Even yesterday's rallies that I watched from here, the demand was to resume talks... The people are appealing to the government to please come to the discussion table and start a constructive dialogue. Now that the government also says, let's start a meaningful, constructive dialogue, and build trust," he said.

Wangchuk was taken into custody on September 26, 2025, two days after protests in Leh demanding statehood for Ladakh and its inclusion under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

INTERNATIONAL

At least 400 killed, around 250 injured in Pakistani airstrike on Kabul hospital

KABUL

Afghanistan accused Pakistan of killing at least 400 people in an airstrike on a drug rehabilitation hospital in the Afghan capital late Monday. It marked a dramatic escalation of a conflict that began late last month and has seen repeated cross-border clashes as well as airstrikes inside Afghanistan. International calls for a ceasefire have gone unheeded.

Pakistan dismissed the accusation that it had hit a hospital, saying its strikes, which were also conducted in eastern Afghanistan, did not hit any civilian sites.

Afghanistan's deputy government spokesperson Hamdullah Fitrat, in a post on X, said the airstrike had hit the hospital in Kabul at about 9 p.m. local time, destroying large sections of the 2,000-bed facility. He said the death toll had "so far" reached 400 people, while about 250 people had been reported injured.

Local television stations posted footage on X showing security forces using flashlights as they carried out casualties while firefighters struggled to extinguish flames among the ruins of a building. Fitrat said rescue teams were working to control the fire and recover the bodies.

The strike came hours after Afghan officials said the two sides exchanged fire along their common border, killing four people in Afghanistan, as the deadliest fighting between the neighbors in years entered a third week.

Afghan government spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid condemned the strike on X, accusing Pakistan of "targeting hospitals and civilian sites to perpetrate horrors." In a post before the death toll rose into the hundreds, he said those killed and injured were patients at the hospital.

"We strongly condemn this crime and consider such an act to be against all accepted principles and a crime against humanity," he posted.



Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's spokesperson, Mosharraf Zaidi, dismissed the allegations as baseless, saying no hospital was targeted in Kabul.

Pakistan's Information Minister Attaullah Tarar posted on X in the early hours Tuesday that the Pakistani military had "carried out precision airstrikes" targeting military installations in Kabul and the eastern province of Nangarhar. He said "technical support infrastructure and ammunition storage facilities" at two locations in Kabul were destroyed. "All targeting has been done with precision only at those infrastructures which are being used by Afghan Taliban regime to support its multiple terror proxies," he wrote. Pakistan's Ministry of Information said earlier that Mujahid's claim was "false and misleading" and aimed at stirring sentiment and cover what it described as "illegitimate support for cross-border terrorism." It said Pakistan's targeting was "precise and carefully undertaken to ensure

no collateral damage is inflicted."

The strike came hours after the U.N. Security Council called on Afghanistan's Taliban rulers to immediately step up efforts to combat terrorism. Pakistan accuses Kabul of harboring militant groups, particularly the Pakistani Taliban, which it says carry out attacks inside Pakistan.

The Security Council resolution, adopted unanimously, didn't refer specifically to attacks carried out in Pakistan but condemns "in the strongest terms all terrorist activity including terrorist attacks." The resolution also extends the U.N. political mission in Afghanistan, UNAMA, for three months.

Pakistan's government accuses Afghanistan of providing safe haven to the Pakistani Taliban, which is designated as a terrorist organization by the United States, as well as to outlawed Baloch separatist groups and other militants who frequently target Pakistani security forces and civilians across the country. Kabul denies the charge.

The fighting — the most severe between the two neighbors — began in late February after Afghanistan launched cross-border attacks in response to Pakistani airstrikes inside Afghanistan that Kabul said killed civilians. The clashes disrupted a ceasefire brokered by Qatar in October after earlier fighting killed dozens of soldiers, civilians and suspected militants.

Pakistan has declared it is in "open war" with Afghanistan. The conflict has alarmed the international community, particularly as the area is one where other militant organizations, including al-Qaida and the Islamic State group, still have a presence and have been trying to resurface.

On Sunday, Tarar said the military has killed 684 Afghan Taliban forces, a claim rejected by Afghanistan, which says casualties are far lower. Afghanistan's Defense Ministry and other officials have said Afghanistan has killed more than 100 Pakistani soldiers.

Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari said Afghanistan's Taliban administration crossed a "red line" by deploying drones that injured several civilians in Pakistan last week.

Responding to those attacks, Pakistan's air force over the weekend struck equipment storage sites and "technical support infrastructure" in Afghanistan's southern Kandahar Province, saying it was being used for attacks inside Pakistan. Kabul said Pakistan hit two locations, including an empty security site and a drug rehabilitation center that sustained minor damage.

In Kabul, Afghanistan's administrative Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Salam Hanafi said defending sovereignty is the duty of all citizens. Speaking during a meeting with political analysts and media figures, Hanafi expressed regret over civilian casualties in recent Pakistani attacks, saying the war was imposed on Afghanistan.

Top US counterterrorism official resigns over Trump's war, says Iran posed 'no imminent threat'

WASHINGTON

Joe Kent, the director of the United States' National Counterterrorism Center, announced his resignation on Tuesday, saying he "cannot in good conscience" back the Trump administration's war in Iran.

Kent is the first senior US official to resign from the Trump administration to protest the war against Iran.

Announcing his resignation via X, Kent wrote that Iran "posed no imminent threat to our nation, and it is clear that we started this war due to pressure from Israel and its powerful American lobby."

"Until June of 2025, you understood that the wars in the Middle East were a trap that robbed America of the precious lives of our patriots and depleted the wealth and prosperity of our nation," Kent said in his letter to Trump.

"Early in this administration, high-ranking Israeli officials and influential members of the American media deployed a misinformation campaign that wholly undermined your America First platform and sowed pro-war sentiments to encourage a war with Iran," he said.

"This echo chamber was used to deceive you into believing that Iran posed an imminent threat to the United States, and that should you strike now, there was a clear path to a swift victory," he said.

"This was a lie and is the same tactic the Israelis used to draw us into the disastrous Iraq war that cost our nation the lives of thousands of our best men and women," Kent said. "I cannot support sending the next generation off



to fight and die in a war that serves no benefit to the American people nor justifies the cost of American lives," he added.

(L-R) Joe Kent, Director of the US National Counterterrorism Center and US President Donald Trump.

Trump team applying pressure on media: Tell the war's story the way we see it. Kent, a former political candidate with connections to right-wing extremists, was confirmed to his post last July on a 52-44 vote. As head of the National Counterterrorism Center, Kent was in charge of an agency tasked with analyzing and detecting terrorist threats.

Before entering US President Donald Trump's administration, Kent ran two unsuccessful campaigns for Congress in Washington state. He also served in the military, seeing 11 deployments as a Green Beret, followed by work at the CIA.

Democrats strongly opposed Kent's confirmation, pointing to his past ties to far-right figures and conspiracy theories. During his 2022 congressional campaign, Kent paid Graham Jorgensen, a member of the far-right military group the Proud Boys, for consulting work. He also worked closely with Joey Gibson, the founder of the Christian nationalist group Patriot Prayer, and attracted support from a variety of far-right figures.

During his Senate confirmation hearing, Kent also refused to distance himself from a conspiracy theory that federal agents instigated the Jan. 6, 2021, attack at the Capitol, as well as false claims that Trump, a Republican, won the 2020 election over Democrat Joe Biden. Democrats grilled Kent on his participation in a group chat on Signal that was used by Trump's national security team to discuss sensitive military plans.

When the Legislature Falls Silent: Manipur's Crisis and the Constitutional Failure of Representation



NILA KONSAM

Manipur today is not merely facing unrest. It is confronting a deep constitutional crisis—one that tests the very purpose of democratic institutions under the Constitution of India.

What is unfolding in the state can no longer be reduced to routine "law and order" challenges. Allegations of narco-terrorism, cross-border infiltration, and demographic anxieties have intensified mistrust. Large tracts of agricultural land remain abandoned due to insecurity, eroding livelihoods. Entire communities face restrictions on movement. Access to healthcare, in practice, has become exclusionary for some. Thousands continue to languish in makeshift relief camps, unable to return to their homes. Ethnic polarisation simmers, unresolved and increasingly entrenched.

These are not isolated administrative lapses. They strike at the core of constitutional guarantees—equality before law, freedom of movement, and the State's obligation to ensure life with dignity.

In such circumstances, the role of the Legislative Assembly becomes paramount.

An MLA, within the constitutional framework, is not a contractor, not a patron, and certainly not a dispenser of personal charity. The Constitution envisages a legislator as a lawmaker, a guardian of public finance, and—most critically—a watchdog over the executive. The Assembly is meant to be the arena where crises are confronted, governments are questioned, and accountability is enforced. These principles are embedded in the logic of the Westminster system that India has adopted.

And yet, across seven sessions of the 12th Manipur Legislative Assembly, these existential

issues have not received the seriousness, depth, or continuity they demand.

This silence is not procedural. It is constitutional.

When legislators do not rigorously question the executive, when debates do not reflect the gravity of ground realities, and when oversight mechanisms are underutilised, the architecture of accountability begins to erode. A legislature that does not actively engage in moments of crisis ceases to function as intended.

The consequences are visible across Manipur.

A humanitarian crisis persists without structured legislative intervention. Economic disruption deepens without coherent policy scrutiny. Administrative actions go insufficiently examined. Most dangerously, public faith in institutions begins to fray.

What makes this failure more troubling is the distortion of public discourse. Even as the state confronts profound challenges, narratives continue to celebrate MLAs for minor development works, project inaugurations, or claims—sometimes explicit—that public works were executed "from personal funds." Such portrayals are not harmless exaggerations. They fundamentally misrepresent governance.

Public money is not private charity. Development works are funded by the exchequer, authorised through legislative processes, and executed by the executive. To project them as personal achievements is to blur the line between public office and private patronage, fostering a feudal imagination of democracy where elected representatives appear as benefactors and citizens as recipients.

This inversion of roles carries a cost. It shifts incentives away from legislative performance toward visible, localised interventions. It weakens scrutiny, dilutes accountability, and fragments governance into piecemeal actions driven by political visibility rather than systemic need.

And yet, within this broader si-

lence, there have been important—if limited—assertions of constitutional responsibility.

It was encouraging to see Shri Ranjit Singh raise critical concerns on the floor of the House. His intervention on the collapse of law and order following the killing near Kakching directly addressed the State's fundamental obligation to protect life and maintain order. His red-flagging of anomalies in public health insurance schemes such as the Chief Minister-gi Hakshegi Tengbang (CMHT) and the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) pointed to deeper concerns of transparency and delivery.

Similarly, Shri Okram Ibobi Singh highlighted the subdued representation from legislators of hill districts—many of whom sit on the treasury

benches. In a state defined by ethnic and geographic complexity, such muted participation raises serious questions about whether all sections are being meaningfully represented within the legislative process.

Notably, the Chief Minister's response appeared measured and receptive, suggesting that space for constructive engagement within the Assembly still exists.

These moments matter. They demonstrate that the legislature has not entirely abdicated its role. They show that when MLAs choose to act within their constitutional mandate—raising questions, scrutinising schemes, and articulating concerns—the Assembly can still function as an instrument of accountability.

But they also underscore a deeper truth:

Isolated interventions cannot substitute for sustained legislative engagement.

Manipur's crisis is systemic, not episodic. It demands continuous debate, rigorous oversight, and collective responsibility. A few voices, however significant, cannot carry the burden of an entire institution.

The framers of the Constitution of India did not design legislatures to be spectators in times of crisis. They envisioned them as the central forum where power is questioned and responsibility enforced.

When that forum falls silent, the crisis ceases to be merely administrative or political. It becomes constitutional.

Manipur today stands at that threshold. It does not lack constitutional tools.

It does not lack institutional mechanisms.

What it risks lacking is the consistent will to use them.

The question, therefore, is no longer about the scale of the crisis.

It is about the response of those constitutionally entrusted to confront it.

Will the legislature rise to its role—or remain a silent witness?

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