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**PERSPECTIVE**  
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## Tripura University Showcases New-Age Fibre Innovation at National Event in Delhi

**AGARTALA**  
Tripura University participated in a national demonstration on "New Age Fibre" held in New Delhi on May 19, organised by the Ministry of Textiles and the National Jute Board.

The event brought together leading textile research institutes, industry representatives and experts from across the country to showcase innovations in sustainable and emerging fibre technologies.

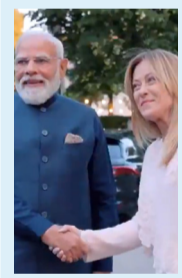
Tripura University highlighted its ongoing research and contributions in the field of eco-friendly and advanced fibre development during the demonstration.

Notably, the institution was the only university invited to present its work alongside prominent textile research institutes and industries, marking a significant achievement for the university.

In a statement shared on social media, the university said its participation reflected the institution's innovative research and contribution in the field of sustainable and emerging fibre technologies alongside leading textile research institutes and industries in the country. During the concluding address, Giriraj Singh acknowledged and appreciated the work carried out by Tripura University in the area of new-age fibre technologies. His remarks highlighted the growing national recognition of the university's research initiatives in the textile and fibre sector.

Officials said the participation is expected to further strengthen the university's role in research, innovation and sustainable development in emerging fibre technologies.

### WHO SAID WHAT



The relationship between India and Italy has now reached a decisive phase. In recent years, our ties have expanded with unprecedented momentum, evolving from a cordial friendship to a special strategic partnership founded on the values of freedom and democracy, as well as a shared vision of the future.  
- Giorgia Meloni, Prime Minister of Italy

## Protests Erupt Across Manipur Over Abduction of Six Naga Men



**IMPHAL**  
Protests erupted across several Naga-inhabited districts of Manipur on Wednesday, with demonstrators demanding the safe release of six Naga men who remain in captivity nearly a week after their alleged abduction.

A sit-in protest was organised at Tribal Market in New Checkon, Imphal East, under the aegis of the Naga Women Union. Similar demonstrations were reported from Senapati, Noney, Ukhrul, Kamjong, Churachandpur, Chandel and Tamenglong districts.

A large number of protesters gathered at the Imphal demonstration site carrying placards bearing slogans such

as "Human lives, not hostages", "Bring our people home alive", "Bring back six hostages safe", and "Don't test our patience".

Speaking at the protest, Houreilu Kamei accused the government of failing to take decisive steps to secure the release of the abducted men, who are suspected to be in the custody of a Kuki militant group.

"We are not satisfied with the manner in which the government is handling the situation despite repeated appeals for their release," she said.

Kamei further alleged that the authorities were not acting proactively and termed the lack of urgency in res-

cueing the abducted civilians as "very unfortunate".

Describing the ongoing crisis in Manipur as a "dark and melancholic phase", she said such issues should be resolved politically through dialogue.

Another protester alleged that the six men were abducted from Leilon Vaiphei village on May 13 and questioned the role of central security forces in the rescue efforts.

"The Naga men were picked up from a Kuki area by Kuki people. Why can't the security forces directly interrogate residents of Leilon Vaiphei village as part of efforts to secure their release?" she asked.

She further warned that delays in rescuing the hostages could escalate tensions and endanger the lives of those still in captivity.

According to local sources, the abduction took place following a deadly ambush at Kotlen in Kangpokpi district in which three Thadou church leaders were killed. Around 20 Naga individuals were reportedly abducted after the incident. While 14 of them have since been released, six are still missing.

## Manipur CM Assures 'All-Out Efforts' to Rescue Abducted Villagers

**IMPHAL**  
Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khecham Singh on Tuesday said the state government was making all possible efforts to ease tensions arising from the abduction of several villagers in the hill districts of the state. The Chief Minister made the remarks during a meeting with a delegation of the Liangmai Naga Council and the Liangmai Naga Women Union at the Chief Minister's Secretariat in Imphal.

The delegation urged the government to ensure the immediate rescue and release of six missing Liangmai men, including a pastor, who were allegedly abducted by unidentified armed men from Kangpokpi district on May 12.

According to officials, more than 38 people were abducted and held hostage by armed groups in Kangpokpi and Senapati districts on May 13, shortly after three church leaders were killed in an ambush in Kangpokpi district. While 31 people have reportedly been released, several others are still believed to be in captivity.

During the meeting, Liangmai community leaders reportedly told the Chief Minister that even if the six missing men

from Konsakhul village were no longer alive, their bodies should at least be returned to their families to allow them to perform the last rites.

The delegation also demanded deployment of additional police personnel in vulnerable Liangmai villages in Kangpokpi district to strengthen security. Responding to the concerns, Singh said state police and CRPF personnel were conducting combing operations in suspected areas to trace the missing persons.

Appealing for calm, the Chief Minister said the government was making "all-out efforts" to restore peace and normalcy in the affected areas and urged all communities to refrain from violence and cooperate in maintaining harmony.

Meanwhile, the apex Kuki body, Kuki Inpi Manipur, claimed that 14 members of the Kuki community were still being held hostage.

Manipur has remained gripped by ethnic violence between the Meitei and Kuki communities since May 2023. The conflict has claimed at least 260 lives and displaced thousands of people across the state.

## Assam Cracks Down on Medicine Supply Disruption Amid Nationwide Chemists' Strike



**GUWAHATI**

The Assam government has issued strict directives to ensure uninterrupted supply of essential medicines across the state amid a nationwide strike called by the All India Organisation of Chemists and Druggists (AIOCD) on Wednesday.

In a circular issued by the Office of the Drugs Controller, the state government said disruption in the availability of life-saving medicines would not be allowed under any circumstances. The move comes amid concerns that the nationwide protest by chemists and druggists could affect access to critical medicines and healthcare services.

The order referred to instructions issued by the Drugs Controller General (India) following a review meeting held on May 17. Based on those directions, the Assam government identified several cat-

egories of pharmacies and medical outlets that must remain operational during their regular business hours despite the strike call.

These include Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Kendras, AMRIT pharmacies, in-campus medical stores operating within government and private hospitals, generic medicine outlets, and pharmacies that are not affiliated with the AIOCD or its associated Assam Drug Dealers Association units.

The circular warned that any pharmacy found shutting operations in violation of the directive would face action under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940. Authorities said such violations would be treated as a serious breach of licensing conditions and could lead to suspension or cancellation of licences.

To ensure compliance, Drug Inspectors across districts have been directed to engage with local chemist associations and closely monitor the situation. Officials have also been instructed to ensure that an adequate number of pharmacies remain functional in every locality even if some establishments participate in the strike.

The state administration has additionally asked district authorities and police to coordinate closely to provide protection to pharmacies continuing operations and prevent any coercion, obstruction or disruption during the shutdown period.

District administrations have also been directed to publicise lists of operational pharmacies and share contact details of concerned officials to help residents access medicines during emergencies.

The Assam government said the measures were aimed at safeguarding uninterrupted healthcare services and preventing inconvenience to patients dependent on regular medication and emergency pharmaceutical support.

## Indian Oil Assures Adequate LPG and Fuel Supply in Manipur

**IMPHAL**

Indian Oil Corporation Limited assured the public that there is no shortage of LPG, petrol or diesel in Manipur and urged consumers not to panic or engage in unnecessary hoarding.

In a press release issued from the company's AOD State Office in Imphal, Indian Oil said regular supply of fuel is being maintained across the state.

The company appealed to consumers not to purchase petrol or diesel in loose containers, jerrycans or barrels, warning against panic buying amid concerns over fuel availability. The statement also advised Indane customers to avoid panic booking or stockpiling of LPG cylinders and to rely only on official sources of information.

Indian Oil further encouraged customers to continue using digital booking facilities for LPG refills through missed calls, SMS, IVRS, WhatsApp, mobile applications and online payment platforms.

The press release was issued by Rajkumar Mohan Singh, the State Level Coordinator of the Oil Industry in Manipur.

The clarification comes amid growing public concern over fuel availability in the state, with authorities seeking to prevent panic buying and ensure smooth distribution of petroleum products.

## Assam Govt Imposes Penalties on Officials Over Pension Delays



**GUWAHATI**

The Assam government has introduced a strict accountability mechanism to ensure timely disbursement of pensions to retired government employees, including financial penalties against officials responsible for delays in processing cases. The move follows a fresh notification issued by the Administrative Reforms, Training, Pension and Public Grievances Department aimed at strengthening monitoring of pending pension cases through digital platforms and enforcing accountability at multiple administrative levels.

Announcing the decision, Himanta Biswa Sarma said the new framework was intended to safeguard the dignity and rights of retired government employees.

"Our retired employees have contributed richly to Assam's progress. It is their right to receive timely pension. To achieve this, we're enforcing an accountability framework, which also imposes a penalty on those responsible for delays. Our pensioners deserve respect and dignity," the Chief Minister said in a social media post.

According to the notification, penalties will be imposed on Heads of Offices (HOOs) where pension

cases are found to be unduly delayed in violation of prescribed standard operating procedures and timelines.

Officials said a list of delayed pension cases would be generated every month through the Kritagya portal and circulated among Heads of Offices, District Commissioners and senior departmental secretaries for review and necessary action.

Under the new provisions, financial recovery will be made at the rate of Rs 250 per day, subject to a maximum penalty of Rs 5,000, from officials found responsible for delays at different stages of pension processing.

The government has directed that the recovery amount be deducted directly from salary bills through the FinAssam portal and reflected in the subsequent month's salary statements.

Drawing and Disbursing Officers (DDOs) have been assigned responsibility for implementing the recovery mechanism and submitting records of deductions to the department concerned.

Officials said the latest order builds upon earlier pension processing guidelines issued in 2003, which had directed departments to initiate pension formalities well before retirement and avoid administrative lapses causing delays.

The notification stated that all departments, directorates and subordinate offices must ensure strict compliance with prescribed timelines to avoid penalties. The order has come into effect immediately.

## IIT Guwahati Develops Advanced Coating Technology to Enhance Green Hydrogen Production

**GUWAHATI**

Researchers at Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati have developed a new coating technology that could significantly improve the efficiency and durability of solar-powered green hydrogen production systems, marking a major step toward cleaner and more sustainable energy generation.

The study, published in the international journal *Small*, was led by Uttam Manna and Mohammad Qureshi from the Department of Chemistry at IIT Guwahati, along with researchers Hrisikesh Sarma, Alpina Sahu, Anshika Chaudhary, Sumanta Sarkar, Sourav Mandal and Lingaraj Sahoo.

Green hydrogen is widely regarded as one of the cleanest fuels of the future because it is produced by splitting water into hydrogen and oxygen using sunlight without emitting greenhouse gases. However, conventional solar-driven water-splitting systems face major challenges that affect long-term efficiency and stability.

One of the primary issues is that catalytic layers coated on electrodes tend to peel off over time, reducing the durability of the system. Another challenge arises from gas bubbles sticking to electrode surfaces during the reaction process, blocking active sites and slowing hydrogen gener-



tion. To overcome these limitations, the IIT Guwahati team developed a special composite coating designed to both protect the catalyst layer and repel gas bubbles from the electrode surface.

The researchers combined graphitic carbon nitride - a sunlight-responsive photocatalyst - with a bubble-repellent hydrogel coating on porous nickel foam. Un-

like conventional systems where catalysts are merely layered on surfaces, the team embedded the catalyst directly within the coating structure.

According to the researchers, this approach created a larger active reaction surface while also preventing the catalyst from peeling away during operation.

Experimental results showed that the new coating achieved 51 per cent higher

hydrogen production and 44 per cent higher oxygen production compared to conventional systems. Explaining the significance of the innovation, Uttam Manna said the bubble-repellent coating increased the rate at which gas bubbles detached from the electrode surface, allowing the water-splitting process to continue more efficiently.

"This strategy is broadly applicable, and many other catalysts may be explored in the future to further advance green hydrogen production," he said.

The technology is expected to have applications in next-generation clean energy systems, renewable energy storage and large-scale solar-to-fuel conversion technologies.

Mohammad Qureshi said the next phase of research would focus on improving the coating with advanced photocatalysts and scaling up the system for practical solar hydrogen production devices.

The research received support from the Anusandhan National Research Foundation, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati and the Ministry of Education.

Scientists believe the breakthrough could contribute significantly to global efforts aimed at achieving carbon neutrality and reducing dependence on fossil fuels.

## Meghalaya Begins Preparations for 2026 Electoral Roll Revision

**SHILLONG**

Preparations have begun in Meghalaya's East Khasi Hills for the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls for 2026, with authorities briefing political parties on timelines, verification procedures and the appointment of booth-level agents ahead of the exercise.

East Khasi Hills, one of the major districts under the Phase-III revision process, currently has 17 Assembly constituencies and 1,021 polling stations.

Officials said booth-level officers (BLOs) will conduct house-to-house verification from June 30 to July 29 as part of the revision exercise.

The draft electoral roll is scheduled to be published on August 5, while the period for filing claims and objections will remain open until September 4. The final electoral roll will be published on October 7.

According to officials, the 2005 electoral roll will serve as

the "legacy roll" for reference during the revision process in line with guidelines issued by the Election Commission of India.

Field verification will form a key component of the exercise, with Electoral Registration Officers supervising scrutiny and implementation across constituencies.

Political parties have also been asked to appoint booth-level agents for every polling station to ensure transparency during verification and the processing of claims and objections.

The district administration will additionally seek the cooperation of local Dorbar Shnongs to create awareness regarding visits by booth-level officers and hearings related to corrections in voter lists.

Officials said active public participation and timely verification would be crucial to maintaining accurate and inclusive electoral rolls ahead of future elections.



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## RESTORING INDIA – CANADA RELATIONS

K N PANDITA

For decades India – Canada relations continued to be friendly and normal. However, under the leadership of ex-Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, bilateral relations soured owing to the partisan policy of Trudeau who had come under the influence of Canada-based Sikh extremist groups. They had become actively involved in Canadian politics.

Trudeau Government accused India of contriving the murder of a Khalistani extremist Hardeep Singh Nijar whom India wanted for involvement in various crimes but had fled to Canada. India repudiated the charge and said that Trudeau government was not only sheltering the criminals among Khalistanis who flee India and seek asylum in Canada, but was also prompting the Khalistanis to carry out anti – India propaganda in Canada. As a result relations between the two countries fell to nadir and even diplomatic level of bilateral relations was badly affected.

In March last, Premier Carney paid his maiden visit to India where he held constructive talks with his Indian counterpart. The talks were broad based and comprehensive. It was hailed by both sides as resetting of bilateral relations that had suffered a setback under Canada's former premier's policies.

The Canadian Khalistanis were sidelined in the election in which the Liberals led by Carney emerged with landslide victory. This was the first shock to the anti-India Khalistani Diaspora in Canada. As premier Carney tightened his grip on the affairs of the state, the anti – Indian Khalistanis in Canada began to realise that their game of garnering support of the Canadian government to their nefarious designs had come to an end.

In March, premier Carney paid a two day visit to India during which he held crucial talks with his Indian counterpart. These talks ushered in a new phase in Indo-Canadian relations and dispelled the dark clouds of doubts and suspicions that had overcast the entire spectrum of relationship.

The highlights of the high level talks were as follows:

\* PM Modi and PM Carney agreed to fast-track negotiations towards a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), with the aim to conclude talks by the end of the year. They also set an ambitious target of boosting bilateral trade to around \$50bn by 2030.

\* In a major announcement, Canadian company Cameco signed a long-term deal to supply uranium to India. The leaders also outlined new frameworks for cooperation on critical minerals, clean energy and AI.

\* With a large number of Indian students studying in Canada, education featured prominently in the talks. Both governments announced plans to expand academic partnerships ease exchanges for students and researchers and strengthen mutual recognition of qualifications.

\* The two countries will also re-launch a structured defence dialogue and step up maritime and broader security cooperation, underlining a strategic convergence which, analysts point out, extends well beyond trade.

\* The leaders described the talks as the beginning of a "new phase" in ties following a period of diplomatic strain, emphasizing shared interests in energy security, resilient supply chains and stability in an increasingly uncertain global order. It appears that Canada under premier Carney has a better understanding of the necessity of improving Indo – Canadian relations in the context of unfolding of a new and unprecedented political scenario on the globe. Recently, on May 1, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) placed before the Canadian parliament a report in which it acknowledged that Khalistani extremism was a national security threat. It drew a distinction between lawful political advocacies for Khalistan as against violent extremism which had become the instrument of state policy under Justin Trudeau. Indian Ministry of External Affairs told reporters at a weekly media briefing that CSIS report confirmed that Canada – based Khalistani extremist groups posed a national security threat not only to India but to Canada itself. This is precisely what the Indian EAM had been telling the ex-Premier of Canada. "Canada's worst terrorist incident was caused by those spouting radical Khalistani positions from their shores," said Christopher Blackburn, a London-based security analyst, referring to the 1985 bombing of Air India flight 182 also highlighted in the CSIS report.

The attack, carried out by Sikh extremists, killed 329 people including 288 Canadian citizens. Blackburn commented as this; "For a neutral observer, it's been strange watching the Canadian reluctance to confront this. Khalistan is probably more of a Canadian national security problem than an Indian one."

Moving away from the sordid story of strained relations in recent past, observers hint at further improvements to bilateral relations, particularly as Prime Minister Mark Carney has pursued a broader diplomatic and economic reset with India. Since early this year, Canadian premier has sought to boost trade and secure energy partnerships, including through a uranium supply deal.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney finalized a landmark CAD 2.6 billion uranium supply agreement during their bilateral talks in New Delhi. The 10-year contract will provide India with 22 million pounds of uranium ore from 2027 to 2035 to fuel its civil nuclear energy program. Key details of the agreement stipulate that the uranium will be sourced through Canadian supplier Cameco. PM Modi hailed the pact as a "landmark deal" and described it as a massive step in expanding long-term strategic energy partnerships to establish a clean and reliable power. Alongside the raw uranium supply, both leaders agreed to actively collaborate on cutting-edge nuclear technology, specifically focusing on the development of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) and advanced reactors. A breakthrough in India's power research has been hailed as a defining moment for the country's energy programme and a step towards self-reliance. Earlier this month, Indian scientist revealed they had achieved criticality, a state of self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction, at the Kalpakkam prototype fast breeder reactor (PFBR) in Tamil Nadu state. The uranium deal represents a major reset in India-Canada diplomatic and economic ties. In addition to the civil nuclear agreement, PM Modi and PM Carney announced Trade Goals: Both sides committed to finalizing the long-pending Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) to boost bilateral trade toward a \$50 billion target by 2030. Critical Minerals: India and Canada signed an MoU focused on critical minerals, which aims to build more resilient supply chains for clean technology and advanced manufacturing. The broad-based and comprehensive bilateral agreement encompassing crucial areas of economy and security is essentially the outcome of patient, positive and futuristic diplomacy shown by both sides after true fashion of resolving issues through positive diplomacy. India and Canada, both are strong and viable democracies.

There is a mention of India also in the report of the CSIS as a country allegedly engaged in foreign interference and espionage in Canada, alongside China, Russia, Iran and Pakistan – activities, described as largely centering on the intimidation and harassment of Diaspora members on Canadian soil. Canada has a large Diasporas of India, Pakistan and Iran. But the spokesman of the Indian MEA, Mr. Jaiswal said, "We categorically reject such baseless imputations."

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

Be miserable. Or motivate yourself. Whatever has to be done, it's always your choice. - Wayne Dyer

# TRUMP-XI BEIJING SUMMIT SIGNALS A FRAGILE RESET IN US-CHINA RELATIONS



ASAD MIRZA

US President Donald Trump's high-stakes visit to Beijing for talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping has triggered global attention amid worsening geopolitical rivalries, trade tensions and security concerns. While both leaders projected optimism and called for a "new vision" in bilateral ties, deep strategic mistrust remains over Taiwan, technology, military competition and the future balance of global power.

In one of the most closely watched diplomatic events of the year, US President Donald Trump arrived in Beijing this week for extensive talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping, marking the first major bilateral summit between the two powers since Trump returned to the White House earlier this year.

The visit comes at a time when relations between Washington and Beijing remain strained by disputes over trade, Taiwan, military activity in the Indo-Pacific, artificial intelligence, sanctions, and global supply chains. Yet despite these tensions, both sides attempted to project an atmosphere of cautious optimism, with Chinese and American officials speaking of the need for "constructive strategic stability" and a "new chapter" in bilateral relations.

The symbolism surrounding Trump's arrival in Beijing was unmistakable. Chinese state media highlighted elaborate ceremonial welcomes and repeated references to mutual respect and coexistence between great powers. President Xi Jinping reportedly told Trump that China and the United States must avoid confrontation and work toward a stable framework for long-term engagement. Chinese media described the summit as an effort to create a "new vision" for bilateral ties based on strategic balance and managed competition.

One of the most discussed moments of the summit came when Xi reportedly referred to the concept of the "Thucydides Trap" during his discussions with Trump. The term, popularised by political scientist Graham Allison, describes the historical tendency for conflict between a rising power and an established hegemon. By invoking the concept, Xi appeared to warn against allowing strategic rivalry to push the two nations toward direct confrontation.

Chinese analysts interpreted the reference as an attempt to frame Beijing as a responsible global actor seeking coexistence rather than conflict. American observers, however, viewed it as a subtle reminder that China considers itself an equal power deserving recognition in a multipolar international order.

Trump, known for his unpredictable diplomacy and transactional style, struck a relatively conciliatory tone during the opening stages of the summit. He praised Xi as a "strong leader" and suggested that both coun-

tries could achieve "historic economic cooperation" if disputes were handled pragmatically. At the same time, he reiterated that Washington would continue to protect American strategic interests, especially in the Indo-Pacific region.

The summit agenda covered an unusually broad range of issues, from tariffs and trade deficits to Taiwan, Iran, artificial intelligence, military communication channels and climate cooperation. Officials from both countries confirmed that discussions included mechanisms to reduce the risk of accidental military escalation in the South China Sea and around Taiwan.

Taiwan remains perhaps the most dangerous flashpoint in US-China relations. Beijing regards Taiwan as a breakaway province and has repeatedly warned Washington against expanding military or political ties with Taipei. The United States, while officially adhering to the "One China" policy, continues to provide military assistance to Taiwan and strengthen its Indo-Pacific alliances.

Reports emerging from Beijing suggest that Xi strongly reiterated China's "red lines" on Taiwan, while Trump sought assurances that military tensions in the Taiwan Strait would not escalate into direct confrontation. No major breakthrough was announced, but both sides reportedly agreed to maintain military communication channels to avoid unintended conflict.

Economic issues also dominated the summit. Trump's previous presidency was defined in part by a fierce trade war with China, including tariffs targeting hundreds of billions of dollars in goods. Since his return to office, concerns have grown over renewed economic confrontation between the world's two largest economies.

However, business leaders accompanying Trump to Beijing appeared encouraged by Xi's assurances that "China's door will only open wider." Chinese officials used meetings with global CEOs to emphasise China's continued commitment to foreign investment, manufacturing cooperation and market access. Beijing is clearly seeking to reassure international investors at a time when its economy faces slowing growth, demographic pressures and growing Western scrutiny.

For Washington, the challenge is more complicated. Trump faces domestic political pressure to appear tough on China while simultaneously recognising the economic risks of prolonged confrontation. American companies remain deeply dependent on Chinese manufacturing networks despite efforts to diversify supply chains.

The summit also took place against the backdrop of rising global instability, particularly in West Asia. Iran and the Strait of Hormuz emerged as a major subject during the discussions, especially given China's dependence on Gulf energy supplies and America's military presence in the region.

China has increasingly positioned itself as a diplomatic actor in West

Asia, balancing ties with Iran, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. Beijing reportedly urged restraint in the Gulf and emphasised the need for diplomatic solutions rather than military escalation. Trump, meanwhile, is believed to have pressed Xi on China's continuing economic engagement with Tehran.

The broader strategic context of the summit reflects a changing international order. For decades, the United States functioned as the dominant global power with unmatched economic and military influence. China's dramatic rise over the past three decades has altered that equation, creating what many analysts describe as the defining geopolitical rivalry of the twenty-first century.

Interestingly, Trump himself appeared to acknowledge aspects of this changing balance. During remarks in Beijing, he reportedly criticised the Biden administration's handling of US-China relations and suggested that Washington's global influence had weakened in recent years. Chinese media highlighted these comments as evidence of American recognition of China's growing international stature.

Still, the atmosphere of cordiality during the summit should not obscure the structural tensions shaping bilateral relations. Deep mistrust persists on both sides. Washington accuses Beijing of unfair trade practices, intellectual property theft, cyber espionage and aggressive military behaviour in the Indo-Pacific. China, meanwhile, views American alliances and military deployments in Asia as part of a broader strategy of containment.

Technology competition has become another major battlefield. Artificial intelligence, semiconductors, quantum computing and telecommunications are now central to strategic rivalry between the two powers. American export restrictions on advanced semiconductor technologies remain a major source of tension, while China continues investing heavily in technological self-reliance.

The military dimension of the rivalry is equally significant. The United States continues strengthening partnerships with Japan, Australia, South Korea and the Philippines while expanding security cooperation under frameworks such as AUKUS and the Quad. China sees many of these arrangements as attempts to constrain its rise.

Despite these differences, both Washington and Beijing recognise the catastrophic consequences of direct conflict. Economic interdependence between the two countries remains enormous, and global markets remain highly sensitive to signs of instability between them. Even limited military confrontation over Taiwan or the South China Sea could trigger worldwide economic disruption.

The implications of the summit extend beyond Washington and Beijing. Many countries are closely watching how the evolving US-China relation-

ship may reshape global alliances and economic networks. In India, strategic analysts expressed concern that a potential thaw between Trump and Xi could complicate New Delhi's geopolitical positioning.

Over the past several years, India has emerged as a major strategic partner for the United States in the Indo-Pacific. Defence cooperation, technology partnerships and joint efforts to counterbalance China have significantly strengthened India-US ties. However, some Indian observers worry that Trump's transactional diplomacy could result in sudden recalibrations

### DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

**Zubeen was, is, and will always remain my favourite!**

**Today, at Zubeen Kshetra, I paid my tributes to Assam's eternal heartthrob and reviewed the progress of the development work underway, an effort that will stand as a fitting tribute to his enduring legacy.**

**I have always maintained that there should be no politics in the name of Zubeen. As promised, after the dust of the elections settled, I visited the site today purely as a tribute to someone who, for us, is evergreen - never a political issue, but an emotion that lives in every heart.**

~ Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, CM Assam



if Washington prioritises economic accommodation with Beijing.

At the same time, India is unlikely to abandon its strategic autonomy. New Delhi continues balancing engagement with the United States, Russia and regional powers while maintaining its own long-term competition with China along the Himalayan border and across the Indian Ocean region.

The Beijing summit therefore represents not a resolution of US-China rivalry but an attempt to manage it more carefully. Both Trump and Xi appear to understand that uncontrolled escalation would damage not only their own countries but also the global economy and international stability.

Whether this temporary diplomatic warmth can survive future crises remains uncertain. Taiwan, trade disputes, technological competition and military rivalry continue to pose serious risks. Yet the summit demonstrated that even amid intense geopolitical competition, Washington and Beijing still recognise the necessity of dialogue.

In an increasingly fragmented world order, that recognition alone may prove to be one of the summit's most significant outcomes.

# Assam's Proposed UCC Triggers Debate Over Minority Rights, Tribal Exemptions

GUWAHATI

The Assam government's decision to introduce a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill during the Assembly session beginning May 26 has triggered widespread debate, with legal experts, minority organisations and political observers questioning whether the proposed legislation would disproportionately impact Muslim and Christian communities while exempting tribal groups.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced after the first Cabinet meeting of the new government that Assam would frame its own version of the UCC. If enacted, Assam would join Uttarakhand and Goa in implementing a state-level civil code framework.

However, the draft legislation has not yet been made public, leading to speculation over its provisions and the communi-

ties likely to fall within its scope.

The government has already indicated that tribal communities, particularly those residing in Sixth Schedule areas such as the Bodoland Territorial Region, Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao, may remain exempt from the proposed law.

Senior Gauhati High Court advocate Abdul Rejjak Bhuyan questioned the idea of a "uniform" code if entire communities were excluded.

"If tribal groups are kept outside the law, then how can it be called a Uniform Civil Code? It becomes selective in nature," Bhuyan said.

He alleged that the move appeared to focus largely on religious minorities, particularly Muslims, and stressed that personal laws are closely tied to constitutionally protected cultural and religious rights.

Bhuyan, however, said a detailed legal

assessment would only be possible after the draft Bill is officially released.

According to the 2011 Census, Muslims constitute 34.22 per cent of Assam's population, Christians 3.74 per cent, while Hindus form the majority at 61.47 per cent.

The issue of demographic change has long remained politically sensitive in districts such as Dhubri, Barpeta, Goalpara, Morigaon, Nagaon, Karimganj, Hailakandi, Bongaigaon and Darrang, where Muslim populations are significant.

At the same time, some Hindu nationalist organisations have raised concerns over the spread of Christianity in tribal and rural regions. In 2024, the RSS-backed Janajati Dharma Sanskriti Suraksha Mancha demanded the withdrawal of Scheduled Tribe status from those converting to Christianity or Islam.

Since assuming office, Himanta Biswa Sarma has frequently adopted positions

aligned with the BJP's Hindutva politics. His government has conducted eviction drives in several minority-dominated areas and taken action against alleged illegal religious structures.

The Assam Healing (Prevention of Evil) Practices Act, enacted in 2024 to curb fraudulent healing practices and unscientific medical claims, had also drawn criticism from sections of the Christian community following the arrest of several Christian leaders in different cases.

Allen Brooks, spokesperson for the United Christian Forum of Northeast, said the government had so far indicated that the proposed UCC would primarily address issues such as polygamy, child marriage, inheritance rights and compulsory registration of marriages and live-in relationships.

"It has been said that religious rituals and faith practices will not be touched,"

Brooks said.

He noted that Christians in Assam may experience the impact differently depending on whether they belong to tribal or non-tribal communities.

Brooks added that certain aspects of a common civil code - such as equal inheritance rights for women and legal clarity in marriage-related matters - may be welcomed by reform-oriented groups. However, he said conservative church groups and tribal Christian communities remain concerned about possible erosion of customary traditions relating to marriage, inheritance and family structures.

"Some denominations treat marriage as sacred and indissoluble. If divorce laws become easier under a common code, naturally there will be concern," he said.

Political analyst Prasenjit Biswas said Assam's social diversity makes the issue especially sensitive.

"Any such law must take into account the distinct marriage and family practices of minority communities. Otherwise, it may create serious constitutional and social complications," Biswas said.

At present, matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance and family disputes among Muslims are governed by the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act.

If a UCC is implemented, these matters could come under a common legal framework applicable to all non-exempt communities, potentially introducing standardised rules on marriage registration, divorce procedures, inheritance, maintenance and adoption.

Practices such as polygamy, which remain legally permissible under Muslim personal law though not widely practised, may face a complete ban under the proposed framework.

## Meghalaya High Court Defers Hearing on Plea to Cancel Sonam Raghuvanshi's Bail

SHILLONG

The Meghalaya High Court on Monday deferred hearing on a petition filed by the prosecution seeking cancellation of bail granted to Sonam Raghuvanshi in the high-profile honeymoon murder case.

During the hearing, defence counsel informed the court that they were prepared to proceed with the matter. However, the prosecution sought additional time to present detailed arguments, following which the court adjourned the hearing to Wednesday.

Sonam Raghuvanshi was granted bail last month by a court in Shillong, which had cited procedural irregularities in her arrest records. The court had observed alleged lapses in informing her about the grounds of arrest and inconsistencies in the legal sections mentioned in official investigation documents.

Challenging the bail order, Meghalaya Police approached the High Court seeking cancellation of the relief granted to the accused.

The case pertains to the murder of Raja Raghuvanshi, an Indore-based businessman who was allegedly killed during his honeymoon trip to Sohra in May 2025.

Investigators have alleged that Sonam conspired with her alleged partner Raj Kushwaha and three others - Vishal Singh Chauhan, Akash Rajput and Anand Kurmi - to execute the murder near Wei Sawdong Falls.

While Sonam is currently out on bail, the remaining four accused continue to remain in judicial custody. Their bail applications have reportedly been rejected twice by the trial court in Shillong.

The trial in the case is currently underway, with the prosecution having already begun examining witnesses before the court.

## Centre Reviews Northeast Water Management, Brahmaputra Rehabilitation Strategies

NEW DELHI

The Union Ministry of Jal Shakti reviewed a series of water management and rehabilitation initiatives in the Northeast, including studies on sustainable irrigation development in Assam, the economic impact of Brahmaputra water diversion, and climate-based resource management strategies in the region.

The review took place during the sixth meeting of the Governing Body of the North Eastern Regional Institute of Water and Land Management, an institute functioning under the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation.

Chairing the meeting, Union Jal Shakti Minister C. R. Patil stressed the need for scientific water management practices and enhanced institutional capacity to address emerging environmental and resource-related challenges in the Northeast.

According to an official state-

ment, the minister underscored the importance of greater state participation and capacity-building initiatives to strengthen sustainable water and land management systems across the region.

Patil also reiterated the Centre's commitment to expanding NERWALM's role as a centre of excellence in water and land management research and training.

Among the major proposals discussed during the meeting was the establishment of an Irrigation Field Laboratory and Demonstration Farm aimed at improving research, field demonstrations, and the dissemination of advanced irrigation technologies suited to the Northeast. The governing body further deliberated on measures to strengthen academic and research activities, including scholarship support for M.Tech and Ph.D students, faculty development programmes, and the expansion of climate- and GIS-based applications in water resources management.

## Church Leaders, Naga Bodies Intensify Peace Push for Hostage Release in Manipur



IMPHAL

Amid escalating tensions in violence-hit Manipur, church leaders and Naga civil society organisations have stepped up efforts to secure the release of hostages and restore calm in the conflict-affected hill districts.

A delegation comprising senior representatives of leading Baptist organisations held a coordination meeting with Naga bodies in Senapati district and jointly appealed for the immediate and unconditional release of civilians held hostage amid the ongoing ethnic unrest.

The 10-member delegation included members from the Manipur Baptist Convention, Council of Baptist Churches in North East India, Asia Pacific Baptist Federation and Baptist World Alliance.

During the meeting in Senapati, the church delegation interacted with the United Naga Council, Naga People's Organisation and several other civil society groups to discuss measures aimed at de-escalating tensions between communities.

In a joint appeal addressed to the United Naga Council and Kuki Inpi Manipur, the church leaders urged the immediate release of

hostages, stating that the continued detention of innocent civilians was deepening fear, mistrust and insecurity among communities already affected by prolonged violence.

Calling for restraint, dialogue and reconciliation, the delegation appealed to all stakeholders to reject violence and cooperate in restoring peace and normalcy across the state.

The peace initiative comes against the backdrop of heightened tensions following the killing of three church leaders on May 13 near Zero Point between Kotlen and Kotzim in Kangpokpi district. The incident further aggravated the fragile security situation in the hill areas.

On Monday, Yumnam Khemchand Singh lauded the role being played by church leaders in addressing the hostage crisis and attempting to defuse tensions triggered by the recent killings.

A separate meeting was also held at the Manipur Secretari-

at, where representatives of the Council of Baptist Churches in North East India and Manipur Baptist Convention met the Chief Minister in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister Losii Dikho to discuss ongoing peace-building efforts among tribal communities.

Officials said the church leaders have volunteered to act as mediators and will function through two separate teams - one engaging with stakeholders in Kangpokpi district and another working with groups in Senapati district.

The delegation also visited the families of the three slain church leaders in Kangpokpi to offer condolences. The state government has assured ex-gratia assistance to the bereaved families.

Church leaders are expected to continue consultations with Kuki church organisations and Naga civil society groups in the coming days as part of efforts to facilitate the release of hostages and ease tensions on humanitarian grounds.

## Nishikant Dubey Targets Congress Over Assam Language Movement, Revives 1961 Silchar Firing Debate

NEW DELHI

Nishikant Dubey launched a fresh attack on the Congress, accusing former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and the then Congress-led Assam government of attempting to "divide" Assam during the language movement of the 1960s.

In a post on X, the BJP MP alleged that the Congress leadership had tried to create divisions between Assamese and Bengali-speaking communities at a time when the state was also facing the looming threat of Chinese aggression.

Calling it a "dark chapter" in Congress history, Dubey referred to the police firing on May 19, 1961, in Silchar's Barak Valley, where 11 Bengali language protesters were killed during demonstrations demanding official recognition of Bengali in the region.

Dubey alleged that the Congress



government had imposed Assamese as a compulsory language for

education, administration and government employment in 1960, triggering widespread protests among Bengali-speaking residents of Barak Valley.

"On May 19, 1961, in Assam's Barak Valley, police firing on the Bengali-speaking community killed 11 people on the spot and injured thousands," Dubey wrote, claiming that repeated appeals made to Nehru before the incident went unanswered. The BJP leader further accused the Congress of pursuing policies aimed at weakening Assam socially and politically. He also referred to language-related agitations witnessed across different parts of India during the 1960s, including protests in Tamil Nadu.

Dubey's remarks came a day after he accused Jawaharlal Nehru of being responsible for the arrest of Syama Prasad Mukherjee in Jammu and Kashmir in 1953 and alleged a subsequent "cover-up"

following Mukherjee's death in custody.

Earlier in April, Union Home Minister Amit Shah had also criticised the Nehru-Gandhi family during a rally in Assam, alleging that they "never had good feelings for Assam".

Referring to the Sino-Indian War, Shah claimed that Nehru had effectively abandoned Assam during the Chinese aggression. "No one can seize even an inch of Assam's land. This is India's Assam," he had said.

The Union Home Minister also highlighted the BJP government's role in signing multiple peace accords in Assam and accused the Congress of opposing development initiatives, including the proposed campus of Indian Institute of Management at Palashbari.

The Congress has not yet issued an official response to Dubey's latest remarks.

## Nagaland Pushes for Child Protection Laws Aligned With Naga Customary Practices

KOHIMA

Nagaland Social Welfare Secretary Liawabang Jamir on Tuesday stressed the need to implement child protection and adoption laws in a way that remains legally sound while respecting Naga customary traditions and community-based systems of care.

Speaking at the State Consultative Meet on the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, the Juvenile Justice Model Rules, 2016, and Adoption Regulations, 2022 in Kohima, Jamir said the framework must be "legally airtight, yet distinctively Naga".

The consultation was organised under Mission Vatsalya by the Department of Social Welfare and attended by representatives of Child Welfare Committees, Juvenile Justice Boards, Child Care Institutions run by both government and NGOs, along with police officials, district administrations, health departments, media representatives and members of the Nagaland State Commission for Protection of Child Rights.

Jamir said that while the Juvenile Justice Act and Adoption Regulations provide a progressive legal framework,



their success in Nagaland would depend on how effectively they adapt to the state's unique realities, including customary laws, village governance systems and geographical challenges.

He pointed out that the formal legal structure often assumes the availability of digital connectivity, standardised policing systems and institutional care facilities, whereas many remote parts of Nagaland continue to face significant

digital gaps and rely heavily on customary adoption systems rooted in clan and village traditions.

"What makes Nagaland unique within the Indian Union is the constitutional recognition granted under Article 371A, which safeguards Naga customary laws, social practices and traditional institutions," Jamir said.

He noted that families, clans, village councils, churches and tribal bodies

have historically played a central role in protecting vulnerable children in Naga society. However, he cautioned that informal customary adoptions can leave children legally exposed in matters related to identity, inheritance, education and welfare entitlements.

"Our task is not to dilute the law, nor to disregard our customs, but to implement these provisions in a manner that is practical, culturally sensitive and responsive to the realities of Nagaland," he said.

Calling for stronger coordination among institutions, Jamir urged the Social Welfare Department, judiciary, police, medical fraternity, district administrations and tribal organisations to work collectively to bridge the gap between statutory mandates and ground realities.

Tosheli Zhimomi said the consultation was aimed at strengthening child protection systems and improving coordination among departments and stakeholders.

Senior Consultant at the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Jumaidd Ull Islam, said Nagaland was the first state to begin consultations on proposed amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act and related regulations.

He added that the Centre was seeking suggestions from states to make the child protection and adoption framework more effective, practical and responsive to local realities.



AGARTALA

Tripura Power Minister Ratan Lal Nath on Tuesday said the state government will introduce portable transformers and mobile towers as emergency measures to minimise disruption of essential services during disasters and crisis situations.

Speaking to reporters after a high-level meeting chaired by Chief Minister Manik Saha, Nath said the government was working on deploying mobile power and communication units to ensure uninterrupted services during emergencies.

"Sometimes transformers become non-functional and repairs take considerable time. In such cases, mobile transformer units will be deployed to maintain uninterrupted power supply. Similarly, landslides during the rainy season often damage mobile tow-

ers, and repairs can take between 21 and 30 days. Mobile tower units will act as a stop-gap arrangement while restoration work is underway," Nath said. The minister also announced that drones would be introduced from June for detecting power faults and checking electricity pilferage.

"It has been decided that drones will be used to identify faults and detect power theft, locally known as hook line. This will help streamline services," he added. Nath further said the Power Department was planning to strengthen electricity generation capacity through multiple energy sources. He informed that the revival of the Dumbur hydro-power project in Gomati district had been discussed during the meeting.

The government is also planning to introduce small-scale hydro-kinetic power projects to enhance electricity generation.

"In the Maharani area, we have already planned a similar project," the minister said.

Highlighting progress in the renewable energy sector, Nath said the department had achieved significant milestones under the PM-KUSUM and PM-DeVINE schemes.

He credited the Tripura Renewable Energy Development Agency for expanding electricity access to geographically isolated and remote areas of the state.

According to Nath, Chief Minister Manik Saha expressed satisfaction with the initiatives and functioning of the Power Department during the review meeting.

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## India could save Rs 7 lakh crore through simultaneous polls, says JPC chief



He added that concerns relating to constitutional principles had been addressed during consultations. "Six former chief justices of India told the committee that there is no violation of any kind regarding the federal structure, basic structure, or fundamental rights," he said.

Chaudhary said that the Kovind committee submitted an extensive report of nearly 18,000 pages, which was accepted by the government and recommended synchronised Lok Sabha and Assembly elections. The report also proposed holding panchayat and municipal elections within 100 days of the national and State polls.

"This reform would minimise the cycle of continuous elections and allow governments to dedicate more time and resources to governance, development, poverty alleviation, education, healthcare, and overall national progress," he said.

Earlier, on arrival in Ahmedabad, Chaudhary said the proposal had found support in reports by the Law Commission and policy papers of NITI Aayog, as well as a Parliamentary Standing Committee comprising members from different political parties. The panel has previously visited Maharashtra, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab and Karnataka as part of its consultations.

"Our endeavour is to listen to everyone and take all viewpoints into account. When we submit our recommendations to Parliament, our primary objective will be to ensure that a broad consensus has emerged among all stakeholders," Chaudhary added.

### NEW DELHI

India could save nearly Rs 7 lakh crore and potentially boost GDP by 1.6 per cent if elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies are held simultaneously, Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) chairman P.P. Chaudhary said on Tuesday, making a case for the proposed 'One Nation, One Election' framework.

Chaudhary, who heads the 41-member parliamentary panel examining the proposal, was speaking after a meeting with Gujarat government officials in Gandhinagar's GIFT City during the committee's three-day visit to the State.

The JPC, constituted to scrutinise the Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, held discussions with senior bureaucrats, including Chief Secretary M.K. Das, BJP representatives, and secretaries of various departments.

Following the meeting, Chaudhary said the State government had offered detailed inputs on aspects that had not been examined earlier.

"We have instructed them to prepare a comprehensive report, which can subsequently be followed as a role model by

other state governments across India so that they submit their reports in that format," he said.

The report, he said, should assess the likely impact of simultaneous elections on sectors including industry, labour migration, employment, GST collections, tourism, education, and the broader economy.

"A comprehensive report should be submitted by the chief secretary for further consideration and action. Today's discussions were extremely positive and constructive," Chaudhary said.

Highlighting the economic rationale behind the proposal, he said, "Economists also said that this could increase GDP by 1.6 per cent. If simultaneous elections are held, the country could save Rs 7 lakh crore. That money could be used for infrastructure, welfare of the poor, education, healthcare, and other public welfare works."

Referring to the Centre's push for electoral reform, Chaudhary said, "Prime Minister Modi's vision is that election reforms should benefit the nation. He constituted a committee under the leadership of Ram Nath Kovind. In its report, this committee also recommended simultaneous elections."

## Mahoba horror: NEET aspirant abducted, tortured, gang-raped in captivity for 16 days



### LUCKNOW

A 25-year-old NEET aspirant staying in Mahoba district in the Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh was allegedly abducted, drugged, tortured, and gang-raped for 16 days in captivity before being rescued by police from Prayagraj on May 16.

According to police sources, the victim was allegedly abducted on April 30 while returning from a

library. While three accused have been arrested, efforts are underway to apprehend others involved in the case.

According to Mahoba ASP Vandana Singh, the victim's mother filed a missing person complaint on May 1.

Sources claimed that, following the intervention of higher authorities, a case was registered against the accused, Mohit Srivas, Ankit Srivas, and Santram on May 7.

After the complaint filed by the victim's mother, Mahoba police formed four teams to trace the victim and tracked her to Prayagraj, where she was rescued in a police operation on May 16.

Police authorities said the victim belongs to Chhattarpur district in Madhya Pradesh and had been preparing for NEET in Mahoba. She had been staying in a rented room there.

According to police sources, the

three accused allegedly abducted the victim, drugged her in a car, and repeatedly assaulted her. They also allegedly clicked photographs and recorded videos of her.

Police authorities said her body bore cigarette burn marks and knife injuries.

According to the complaint submitted by her mother, the victim was returning to her room from Vedansh Library, located near the bypass road in Mahoba, when some car-borne individuals allegedly dragged her into a vehicle and drove away.

The complaint further stated that the same individuals had allegedly harassed the victim in November 2024, following which a case was registered against them in Chhattarpur, Madhya Pradesh. The accused had allegedly threatened the victim with abduction and gang rape at the time.

According to the victim's statement, she was injected with sedatives in the car after being abducted by Mohit Srivas and Ankit Srivas, who belonged to her village in Madhya Pradesh.

In her statement recorded before the court, the victim alleged that the accused took her to Prayagraj on May 13 and forced her into marriage with Mohit. She alleged that they sexually assaulted her, tied her abdomen, inflicted knife injuries on her hand, and burned her with cigarette butts. When she resisted, they allegedly threatened to kill her brother.

She also said she missed her NEET examination while being held captive.

According to ASP Vandana Singh, the victim was produced before the court for the recording of her statement, based on which more names have surfaced in the case.

"So far, three accused have been arrested, and they will soon be produced before the court. Four police teams have been formed to arrest others involved in the crime, and an investigation into the incident is underway," the ASP said.

## INTERNATIONAL

## Board of Peace will ask the UN Security Council to press Hamas to disarm



### GENEVA

The body overseeing the US-brokered ceasefire in Gaza will ask the United Nations Security Council to press the Hamas militant group to disarm, according to a report seen by The Associated Press on Tuesday.

The report by the Board of Peace, an international body set up by US President Donald Trump and tasked with overseeing the fragile ceasefire between Hamas and Israel, is expected to be discussed by the Security Council on Thursday when it meets on the situation in the Middle East.

"At this stage, the principal obstacle to full implementation (of the ceasefire) remains Hamas' refusal to accept verified decommissioning, relinquish coercive control, and permit a genuine civilian transition in Gaza," the report said.

Hamas in a statement rejected the report and said it contains "fallacies." A diplomat familiar with the report confirmed its authenticity, speaking

on condition of anonymity because it has not been made public.

Trump's 20-point ceasefire plan calls on Hamas to surrender its weapons and destroy its vast network of tunnels. It also envisions Israeli forces withdrawing from Gaza, the arrival of a new technocratic Palestinian government, deployment of an international security force and the rebuilding of the battered Palestinian enclave after more than two years of war. Last week, the head of the Board of Peace, former U.N. Mideast envoy Nickolay Mladenov, acknowledged that the truce had stalled since taking effect in October, saying the deadlock over disarming Hamas had paralyzed progress.

"Reconstruction cannot commence where weapons have not been laid down," the board's report to the Security Council says. "The critical variable — the single factor that unlocks every other element of the plan — is the conclusion of an agreement on the Roadmap for the full implementation of the plan that includes

full decommissioning by Hamas and all armed groups in Gaza."

The Palestinian militant group, which led the Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel that sparked the war in Gaza, has accused Israel of failing to meet its obligations under the first phase of the ceasefire and has sought to link any demilitarization to Israeli troop pullbacks. Israel's military has expanded its control of Gaza since the truce took effect and now controls some 60% of the territory.

The new report calls on the Security Council to "reiterate publicly, clearly and consistently that the decommissioning of weapons in Gaza is not merely a requirement (of the UN's resolution to end the war) but critical for reconstruction to begin, for a time-bound Israeli forces withdrawal, and for a credible pathway to Palestinian self-determination and statehood to be pursued."

The Security Council endorsed the Board of Peace in a resolution in November.

Hamas said the report "contains a number of fallacies that absolve the occupying government of its responsibilities for the daily violations of the ceasefire agreement in Gaza."

The group said the report ignored Israel's "failure to uphold the majority of its commitments" in the ceasefire deal, including the continued restrictions on crossings into the Palestinian territory and preventing the entry of material and equipment needed to repair basic infrastructure and shelter for the largely displaced population.

"The report's adoption of the occupation's conditions regarding disarmament is a dubious attempt to muddy the waters and derail the ceasefire agreement," Hamas said in a statement. It called on the Security Council and Mladenov to compel Israel to fulfill its commitments under the ceasefire deal's first phase, "foremost among them the cessation of the daily aggression against our Palestinian people in Gaza." The report noted near-daily ceasefire violations, "some of which are serious, and their human consequences — civilians killed, families living in fear, and continued impediments to humanitarian access — cannot be minimized." Israel's military still carries out airstrikes in Gaza despite the ceasefire and has pushed deeper into the territory, where it now controls more than it was granted under the ceasefire agreement. Living conditions are dire, with most of the territory's 2 million people living in tent camps lacking basic services.

Mladenov last week said his office is addressing violations by both sides on a daily basis. But he repeatedly cited the disarmament issue as a central sticking point, saying Hamas' obligation to give up its arsenal is "not negotiable" and that progress on all other issues was being held up.

## Iran army warns will 'open new fronts' against US if attacks resume



### TEHRAN

Iran's army warned on Tuesday it would "open new fronts" against the United States if it resumes attacks, after President Donald Trump said he had held off launching a new offensive in hopes of striking a deal.

"If the enemy is foolish enough to fall into the Zionist trap again and launches new aggression against our beloved Iran, we will open new fronts against it, with new equipment, and new methods," said army spokesman Mohammad Akraminia, according to Iran's ISNA news agency.

Washington and Tehran have been swapping proposals in an effort to end the Middle East war, which broke out on February 28. The two sides have held a single round of talks so far amid a fragile ceasefire in place since April 8. In a post on his Truth Social

platform, Trump said the leaders of Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates had asked him "to hold off on our planned Military attack of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which was scheduled for tomorrow, in that serious negotiations are now taking place".

But Trump added he had instructed the US military to be "prepared to go forward with a full, large scale assault of Iran, on a moment's notice, in the event that an acceptable Deal is not reached".

On Tuesday, Iranian army spokesman Akraminia said his country had used the ceasefire as an opportunity "to strengthen its combat capabilities", without elaborating.

According to ISNA, he also reiterated that Iran maintains control over the strategic Strait of Hormuz, which it has closed and wants to charge ships to traverse.

"The only way for the

enemy is to respect the Iranian nation and observe the legitimate rights of the Islamic republic," he said.

On Monday, Iran said it had responded to a new US proposal, adding that diplomatic exchanges were continuing despite Iranian media reports describing Washington's demands as excessive.

The day before, Iran's Fars news agency said Washington had presented a five-point list, which included a demand for Iran to keep only one nuclear site in operation and transfer its stockpile of highly enriched uranium to the United States.

The US had refused to release "even 25 percent" of Iran's assets frozen abroad or pay any reparations for war damage, Fars added.

The report said the US had also made clear it would only cease hostilities when Tehran engages in formal peace negotiations.

## REVOLUTIONARY ULLASKAR DUTTA A Fearless Revolutionary of Bengal's Armed Freedom Movement



SANGRAM DATTA:

Revolutionary Ullaskar Dutta was one of the early armed revolutionaries of the Indian independence movement who risked his life fighting British imperialism. He was an expert bomb-maker and used the pseudonym "Abhiram." His famous statement was:

"I do not want any help from any Government."

### Birth and Family Background

Ullaskar Dutta was born on 16 April 1885 in Baghbari of Kalikaccha village under Saraik Upazila of present-day Brahmanbaria District in Bangladesh, then part of British India. He was born into a wealthy, educated, and aristocratic family.

His father, Dr. Dwijadas Dutta, was the first Indian Principal of the Shibpur Engineering College in Howrah.

Kalikaccha village was widely known during British rule as a highly educated village and a center of anti-British revolutionary activities. Many notable personalities hailed from this village, including freedom fighters, political leaders, lawyers, scholars, engineers, artists, and academics. Among them were Akhil Chandra Nandi, Rabintra Mohan Nag, Ananda Chandra Nandi, communist leader Amitabh Nandi, Advocate Jagat Chandra Nandi, Advocate Narendra Chandra Dutta—the founder of Comilla Banking Corporation—Advocate Apurba Kanchan Nandi, and Mahim Chandra Bhattacharya.

The village also produced engineer Tapabrata Chakraborty, after whom a street named "Tapabrata Street" exists in Baltimore, USA. Other distinguished personalities from Kalikaccha include Professor Dr. Kalipada Sen, education researcher Sheikh Shahbaz Riyad, Prabodh Chakraborty—the builder of Agartala Airport, Dr. Mahendra Chandra Nandi known as the "Tolstoy of Bengal," Kailash Singha, Biraj Mohan Dev (Bagha Biraj), former Tripura Governor Tathagata Roy, former Deputy Speaker of the Tripura Legislative Assembly Pabitra Kar, former Kolkata University Chemistry Professor Dr. Sunil Kumar Talapatra, senior advocate of Tripura High Court Shankar Kumar Dev, and National Award-winning artist Prabhat Chandra Sen.

The famous Bengali writer Nirad C. Chaudhuri also had his maternal family home in Kalikaccha.

Ullaskar Dutta's younger brother was Advocate Bijoy Kar Dutta. Bijoy Kar Dutta's daughter married Flight Lieutenant Pranab Kumar Nandi Majumdar, son of educationist Jogendranath Nandi of Bejura village in Madhabpur Thana under Habiganj district in present Bangladesh.

### Student Life and Revolutionary Activities

After passing the Entrance Examination in 1903, Ullaskar Dutta enrolled at Presidency College in Kolkata. An English professor named Rus-

sell frequently insulted Bengalis. Enraged by these racist remarks, Ullaskar attacked Professor Russell and was expelled from the college.

Following his expulsion, his anger against British rule intensified, and he gradually became involved in revolutionary politics.

He joined the revolutionary organization Jugantar and began making bombs himself, gaining recognition as a skilled explosives expert.

On 1 May 1908, revolutionary Prafulla Chaki was killed while attempting a bombing operation, and Ullaskar Dutta was seriously injured. Bombs manufactured by Ullaskar Dutta were later used by Khudiram Bose and Hemchandra Das in the attack on Magistrate Kingsford.

On 2 May 1908, police arrested Ullaskar Dutta along with many members of the Jugantar group.

### Alipore Bomb Case and Cellular Jail

In 1909, Ullaskar Dutta and Barindra Kumar Ghosh were sentenced to death in the famous Alipore Bomb Case. Later, their sentences were commuted.

During his imprisonment in the notorious Cellular Jail of the Andaman Islands, Ullaskar Dutta was subjected to severe torture and forced labor. He had to work at grinding mustard seeds, making bricks under the scorching sun, cutting trees, and performing other exhausting tasks.

If he refused to work, he was brutally punished, often tied up with both hands stretched apart. Continuous torture and inhuman labor destroyed his physical and mental health. He suffered from convulsions and gradually lost mental stability.

Around 1914, he was admitted to a mental hospital in Madras presently Chennai.

### Release and Later Political Life

In 1920, Ullaskar Dutta was released from the Madras Mental Hospital. However, due to his deteriorated physical and mental condition, he could no longer actively participate in revolutionary politics.

Until 1930, he had to report weekly at Saraik Police Station.

In 1931, he was arrested again and imprisoned for eighteen months. Partition of India and Personal Life

After the Partition of India in 1947, Ullaskar Dutta returned to his birthplace, Kalikaccha village in Brahmanbaria of East Pakistan. The Government of West Bengal arranged financial assistance, housing, food, and medical treatment for him. Even when West Bengal Chief Minister Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy requested him to stay in Kolkata, Ullaskar Dutta rejected all offers. He could not accept the partition of India.

In 1948, at the age of 63, he married Leela Rani Pal, the widowed daughter of renowned Congress leader and orator Bipin Chandra Pal of Pail village in Habiganj subdivision in East Pakistan. Leela Rani Pal suffered from partial paralysis, and several of her fingers were permanently bent. Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy personally arranged for her medical treatment.

Migration to India and Final Years



In 1958, disturbed by the political situation in Pakistan, Ullaskar Dutta left behind his vast ancestral property in Kalikaccha and moved to Kolkata in India. Later, he settled in Silchar of Assam, where he spent the rest of his life.

While living in Silchar, both the Government of India and the Government of Assam offered him financial support and rehabilitation facilities as a freedom fighter. He firmly rejected all such assistance and declared:

"I do not want any help from any Government."

His wife Leela Devi died in 1962.

On 17 May 1965, revolutionary freedom fighter Ullaskar Dutta passed away in Silchar, Assam. His death cast a shadow of grief across Silchar and many parts of India.

Indian President Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, West Bengal Chief Minister Prafulla Chandra Sen, Assam Chief Minister Bimala Prasad Chaliha, and Member of Parliament Jyotsna Dutta ex-

pressed deep condolences upon his death.

Books Written by Ullaskar Dutta  
Two books named Dvipantarar Katha and Amar Kara Jiban were written on him.

Memorials and Recognition  
A road in Alipore, Kolkata, has been named "Ullaskar Dutta Smarani" in his honor.

A road in Silchar also bears his name. Silchar city has a statue and memorial plaque dedicated to him, and an educational institution named "Biplabi Ullaskar Vidyabhavan" has been established there. However, in his own district of Brahmanbaria, there is still no major memorial commemorating him. Local residents believe that his ancestral home in Kalikaccha village, popularly known as Baghbari, should be preserved and transformed into a museum with the assistance of the Department of Archaeology. Ullaskar Dutta and Khudiram Bose were close relatives. The partition of India in the name of independence was never acceptable to him.

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### STUDENTS' INTERNSHIP

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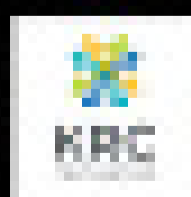


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