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## PERSPECTIVE

Great things happen when you distance yourself from all the negative people.

### Four Sribhumi Jail Officials Arrested for Allegedly Supplying Mobile Phones to Inmates

**SRIBHUMI**  
Four officials of the Sribhumi District Jail, including two assistant jailers and two warders, have been arrested for allegedly facilitating the supply of mobile phones and other prohibited items to inmates, officials said on Wednesday.

The accused have been identified as Rudra Deori, Subhashish Ghosh, Masid Ali Laskar and Biswajit Barua. The arrests were made on Tuesday following a months-long investigation into the recovery of contraband from the prison earlier this year.

The development has raised serious concerns about security lapses and internal monitoring mechanisms within the district jail.

Additional Superintendent of Police Trinayan Bhuyan, who oversees the district Crime Branch, said investigators examined call records, communication patterns and usage data linked to mobile phones recovered from the prison during the course of the probe.

"Several individuals were questioned during the investigation, which helped police gather the evidence required to take action against the accused," Bhuyan said. The investigation stemmed from a surprise raid conducted at the jail on February 2 under the supervision of Senior Superintendent of Police Leena Doley. During the operation, authorities recovered 29 mobile phones, chargers, SIM cards and other prohibited items from various wards of the prison. According to police sources, intelligence inputs had indicated that some inmates were maintaining regular communication with persons outside the jail and were allegedly coordinating illegal activities from within the prison premises.

### WHO SAID WHAT

**Gratitude to my Cabinet colleagues! Our efforts to work towards a Viksit Bharat will continue with greater vigour, guided by the aspirations of 140 crore Indians.**  
- Narendra Modi, PM

# Carrying Forward a Legacy, Building Barak Valley's Future: MLA Rajdeep Roy Outlines Vision for Development and Speaks on Manipur

## Dr Roy commits to taking up the issue of Imphal-Silchar air connectivity

**BISWADEEP GUPTA**



**IMPHAL:** Silchar MLA Dr. Rajdeep Roy has said that he considers it both a responsibility and a privilege to carry forward the political and social legacy of his late father, veteran BJP leader Bimolangshu Roy, whose contributions played a

crucial role in laying the foundation of the Bharatiya Janata Party not only in Barak Valley but today's North East India.

In an interview in Imphal, Dr. Roy reflected on the BJP's growth in the region, his father's enduring influence on public life, his development priorities for Barak Valley, and the ongoing situation in Manipur. Speaking about the rise of the BJP in the valley, Dr. Roy said the party's roots in the region go back several decades and were nurtured by pioneers such as his father, late Bimolangshu Roy, and late Kabindra Purkayastha.

"The rise of the BJP here is largely because of the efforts and sacrifices made by leaders like my father and Kabindra Purkayastha. My father sowed the seeds of the BJP in this region, and I am trying my level best to carry forward that legacy," he said.

Dr. Roy pointed out that Barak Valley has historically

## BJP's Sharda Devi Set for Unopposed Rajya Sabha Election



**IMPHAL**

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Adhikarimayum Sharda Devi is set to be elected unopposed to Manipur's lone Rajya Sabha seat after emerging as the sole candidate in the election process.

The scrutiny of nomination pa-

pers was completed on June 9, with Returning Officer and Manipur Legislative Assembly Secretary Rohit Sapam confirming that Sharda Devi's nomination was found valid. With no other candidate entering the fray, her election to the Upper House is now a formality.

Sharda Devi, a resident of Brahmapur New Thumbuthong in Imphal East district, filed her nomination as the BJP candidate and is poised to become only the second woman from Manipur to serve in Parliament after Kim Gangte.

Her path to the Rajya Sabha was cleared after the Congress chose not to field a candidate for the election, effectively ensuring an uncontested victory.

Once formally declared elected, Sharda Devi will also become only the second Rajya Sabha member from Manipur to secure election without a contest. The late Congress leader Abdul Salam was previously elected unopposed to the Upper House in 2014.

She will succeed BJP Rajya Sabha MP Maharaja Sanajaoba Leishemba, whose term is scheduled

to conclude on June 21. The election takes place against the backdrop of a 60-member Manipur Legislative Assembly that currently has 58 sitting members due to vacancies in the Tadubi and Thanlon constituencies.

The BJP remains the largest party in the Assembly with 36 MLAs. It is followed by the National People's Party (NPP) with six members, the Naga People's Front (NPF) with five, and the Congress with five legislators. The Kuki People's Alliance (KPA) has two MLAs, while the remaining seats are held by a Janata Dal (United) member and two Independent legislators.

Political observers view Sharda Devi's impending elevation to the Rajya Sabha as a significant milestone for women's representation in Manipur's parliamentary politics. Her election is also expected to strengthen the BJP's presence in the Upper House while adding another female voice from the Northeast to the national legislature.

The formal declaration of results is expected following the completion of the election process.

## NIA Seeks Voice Samples of Foreign Nationals in Mizoram-Myanmar Training Module Case

**NEW DELHI**

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has approached a special court in Delhi seeking permission to collect specimen voice samples of seven arrested foreign nationals, including a United States citizen and six Ukrainian nationals, in connection with an alleged Myanmar training module case being probed under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). The application was filed before Special NIA Judge Prashant Sharma at the Patiala House Courts under Section 349 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS). The agency has requested permission to obtain the voice samples through experts from the Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) to assist in the forensic examination of electronic evidence linked to the investigation. According to the NIA, the case was registered on March 13, 2026, under Section 18 of the UAPA following directions from the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Investigators allege that a group of foreign nationals entered India on tourist visas, travelled to Mizoram and later crossed into Myanmar without the required permissions. The agency claims the individuals subsequently provided training in drone warfare, drone

operations, drone assembly and anti-drone jamming technologies to ethnic armed groups engaged in conflict with Myanmar's military regime. The court has issued notices on the NIA's application. Counsel appearing for the accused accepted the notices and informed the court that responses would be filed during the next hearing. The matter has been listed for July 2. The move comes as the NIA has also sought an extension of the statutory investigation period from 90 days to 180 days under provisions of the UAPA. The agency told the court that the case involves a "deep-rooted criminal conspiracy" with both transnational and pan-India dimensions. Those arrested in the case include US national Matthew Aaron Van Dyke and six Ukrainian nationals - Hurba Petro, Slyviak Taras, Ivan Sukmanovskiy, Stefankiv Marian, Honcharuk Maksim and Kaminsky Viktor.

The NIA informed the court that the investigation is at a critical stage, with several electronic devices seized during the probe currently undergoing forensic analysis. Investigators are also examining financial transactions, tracing the source of funds and attempting to identify the wider network allegedly involved in the conspiracy.

## Sushmita Dev Resigns from TMC and Rajya Sabha, Meets Assam CM Amid BJP Speculation



**NEW DELHI**

In a significant political development, Rajya Sabha MP Sushmita Dev resigned from both the Trinamool Congress (TMC) and the Upper House of Parliament on Wednesday, becoming the second TMC parliamentarian to quit the party within a week.

Confirming her decision, Dev told reporters that her resignation extended beyond Parliament. "I have resigned not only from Rajya Sabha but from Trinamool Congress, and that is the principal thing to do," she said.

Soon after tendering her resignation, Dev met Himanta Biswa Sarma in New Delhi, triggering speculation about a possible entry into the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Neither Dev nor the BJP has officially commented on her future political plans.

In her letter to Rajya Sabha Chairman C. P. Radhakrishnan, Dev requested that her resignation be accepted with immediate effect.

Dev joined the TMC in 2021 after ending her long association with the

Congress. A former Lok Sabha MP from Silchar, she had left the Congress following her defeat in the 2019 general election. The TMC subsequently appointed her as its national spokesperson and later nominated her to the Rajya Sabha.

The daughter of veteran Congress leader Santosh Mohan Dev, Sushmita Dev previously served as president of the All India Mahila Congress and was regarded as one of the prominent faces of the party in the Northeast.

Her resignation comes at a time of mounting challenges for the TMC. The development follows the recent exit of Sukhendu Sekhar Roy, who stepped down from the Rajya Sabha and the party after serving as the TMC's chief whip in the Upper House for more than a decade. Reports of internal dissent have also intensified, with a group of rebel Lok Sabha MPs reportedly exploring the possibility of forming a separate bloc and extending support to the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). In West Bengal, a faction led by Ritabrata Banerjee has also emerged amid growing divisions within the party.

In his resignation letter earlier this month, Roy cited public dissatisfaction over issues including corruption, women's safety, governance and employment, claiming that voters had increasingly turned away from the ruling party in West Bengal.

The resignation of Sushmita Dev is being viewed as another major setback for the TMC, particularly in the Northeast, where she had been one of the party's most prominent leaders and public faces.

### Tripura Prevented Nearly 10,000 Child Marriages in 2025-26, Says Minister

**AGARTALA**

Tinku Roy on Tuesday said that coordinated efforts by government agencies and community stakeholders helped prevent 9,982 child marriages across Tripura during the 2025-26 financial year. Addressing a press conference in Agartala, the Social Welfare and Social Education Minister credited the achievement to close cooperation among district administrations, police authorities, gram panchayats, child protection bodies, and other stakeholders working to curb the practice. Roy said the number of child marriages being stopped has been steadily rising due to increased awareness and intervention efforts. However, he noted that the government does not have precise data on the total number of child marriages that may have taken place during the period.

"During 2025-26, as many as 9,982 child marriages were prevented by all stakeholders in the state," Roy said, highlighting the growing effectiveness of preventive measures. Despite the progress, the minister acknowledged that child marriage remains a challenge in certain regions, particularly in the Sonamura subdivision of Sepahijala district and Kailashahar in Unakoti district.

He said organisations such as Child Welfare Committees, non-governmental organisations, and the Tripura Child Rights Commission are actively engaged in efforts to eliminate the practice and protect children's rights. The minister also outlined progress in strengthening the state's Anganwadi infrastructure. According to Roy, electricity connections have been provided to more than 3,000 Anganwadi centres out of nearly 10,000 functioning across the state. The remaining centres are expected to be electrified during the current financial year.

In a move aimed at improving early childhood education, around 100 Anganwadi centres have shifted from Bengali-medium learning materials to English-medium instruction following requests from parents and guardians.

## Rajya Sabha MP Pramod Boro Urges Centre to Address Leadership Vacuum at CIT Kokrajhar



**NEW DELHI**

Rajya Sabha MP from Assam and UPPL president Pramod Boro has raised concerns over the functioning of the Central Institute of Technology (CIT), Kokrajhar, and urged Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan to take immediate steps to ensure stable leadership at the institution.

In a letter addressed to the Union minister, Boro stressed the need for accountable, campus-based leadership at CIT Kokrajhar, warning that prolonged uncertainty in the institute's administrative structure could adversely affect its academic and institutional growth. He noted that the institute requires stable leadership to ensure timely academic and administrative decision-making while maintaining the confidence of students, faculty members and other stakeholders.

According to Boro, any extended leadership vacuum could impact academic discipline, institutional morale, administrative efficiency, research activities, campus placements, infrastructure development and the overall credibility of the institute.

The MP urged the Ministry of Education to undertake an urgent review of the existing Director-in-Charge arrangement at the institution. He also suggested that an eligible senior faculty member of the institute, including the current Registrar and Campus-in-Charge if deemed suitable, be appointed as Director-in-Charge in accordance with the provisions of the institute's Memorandum of Association (MoA) until a regular director is appointed.

Boro highlighted the strategic importance of CIT Kokrajhar as one of the premier technical institutions serving the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), Assam and the wider Northeast.

He stated that the institute has played a significant role in expanding access to technical education, promoting skill development, enhancing employability and fostering scientific temper among young people in a region that has historically had limited opportunities in technical and professional education. Expressing concern over the current administrative arrangement, Boro said the continued functioning of the institute under an interim Director-in-Charge warrants urgent review in light of the provisions laid down in the Memorandum of Association.

The Rajya Sabha member urged the Centre to take timely measures to ensure institutional stability and strengthen the functioning of CIT Kokrajhar, which he described as a key pillar of higher technical education in the Northeast.

played a significant role in the BJP's political journey in the Northeast. Recalling the party's early electoral successes, he said that in the 1991 Assembly elections, nine BJP legislators were elected from Barak Valley, marking one of the first major breakthroughs for the party in the region.

He also highlighted his father's long association with nationalist politics, stating that Bimolangshu Roy had contested elections on a Jana Sangh ticket in the late 1960s and was perhaps among the earliest elected representatives associated with the Jana Sangh in any tier of elections in the region.

"My father had a very long public career. Naturally, people look up to me and believe that I can carry forward the unfinished work he left behind. I am happy and humbled by that trust. I will try to do my level best to serve the people," Dr. Roy said. The former Member of Parliament from Silchar, who represented the constituency from 2019 to 2024, said he remains deeply committed to issues affecting the people of the Barak Valley and displaced communities who have sought refuge in India over the years. "I have always spoken about the rights of persecuted people. Whenever any problem arises, people approach me with confidence. I have spoken extensively on the Citizenship Amendment Act and related issues. I am proud to be the son of Bimolangshu Roy, and I will continue to work to fulfil his dreams and aspirations," he said. Expressing optimism about the future, Dr. Roy said another decade or more in public life would provide him with the opportunity to complete many of the goals his father had envisioned for the region.

"I believe another 10 to 15 years in public life will help me fulfil many of my father's dreams and aspirations and

complete the unfinished work that he left behind," he added.

**Five Major Priorities for Barak Valley**  
Outlining his roadmap for the development of Barak Valley, Dr. Roy identified five major priorities that he believes will transform the region's economic and social landscape.

The first and foremost priority, he said, is strengthening road connectivity within the valley as well as with neighbouring states and the rest of the country.

"Connectivity remains the key to development. We must improve road links not only within the Barak Valley but also outside it. Better connectivity will open up opportunities for trade, tourism and economic growth," he said.

Railway expansion is another area he intends to focus on. According to Dr. Roy, additional railway lines and enhanced rail infrastructure are essential for meeting the growing transportation needs of the region. "We need more railway tracks and improved railway connectivity in the Barak Valley and adjoining states. Better rail infrastructure will boost the movement of people and goods and help the region grow faster," he said. A major infrastructure project that he believes could significantly alter the development trajectory of the valley is the proposed greenfield airport. Dr. Roy stated that land acquisition for the project has already been completed and expressed hope that the airport would become a reality in the coming years.

"The greenfield airport project will be a game-changer for Barak Valley. The land acquisition process has already been completed, and once implemented, it will become one of the biggest infrastructure projects in the region," he said. Another area receiving attention is the develop-

ment of inland waterways. Dr. Roy said waterways could emerge as a cost-effective mode of transportation and significantly reduce logistics expenses. "We are expecting international carriers and cargo vessels to operate through Sribhumi and Badarpur. If goods are transported through waterways, freight costs will reduce considerably, and that will ultimately lower prices for consumers as well," he said. The fifth priority identified by the MLA is digital infrastructure and high-speed internet connectivity. According to him, universal access to 5G services across the valley is essential for the younger generation to remain connected with developments in the country and the world. "I want to see 5G connectivity across the entire valley. The next generation of students studying here should be able to keep themselves updated with the latest developments, educational resources and opportunities through high-speed internet access," he said. Apart from these larger developmental goals, Dr. Roy also stressed the need to address local civic issues affecting daily life. He said better roads, improved drainage systems and measures to prevent waterlogging should receive equal attention. "We need good roads, efficient drainage systems and proper urban planning. Open drains should be covered, and waterlogging problems should be addressed permanently. These are issues that directly affect people's quality of life," he said.

Optimistic About Peace Returning to Manipur  
Commenting on the situation in Manipur, Dr. Roy expressed hope that peace and normalcy would gradually return to the state despite the challenges witnessed over the past few years. Describing the developments as unfortunate, he said that several aspects of the crisis had been misrepresented or exaggerated, leading to misunderstand-

ings and further tensions.

"Whatever has happened in Manipur is unfortunate. At the same time, many things have been blown out of proportion and several false narratives have also been circulated. As a result, peace and harmony have suffered," he said. However, he maintained that the situation would improve with time and sustained efforts by all stakeholders.

"With the passage of time, things will settle down. The Government of India has taken proactive measures, and efforts are being made at multiple levels to restore normalcy," he said. Dr. Roy said he was hopeful that civil society initiatives and dialogue would contribute significantly to reconciliation and confidence-building among communities. "We are looking forward to greater participation from civil society in the peace process. We are hopeful that peace and harmony will prevail in the coming days," he said.

On the question of elections in Manipur, he said democratic processes would resume whenever conditions become conducive. "We are hopeful that elections will be held as and when it becomes feasible. The BJP government is trying its best to ensure stability and create an environment where democratic processes can move forward smoothly," he remarked. Concluding his remarks, Dr. Roy described the people of Manipur as peace-loving and resilient. "The people of Manipur are peace-loving people. They are wonderful people. I am hopeful that the state will overcome its present challenges and move towards a brighter future," he said. Dr. Roy has also committed to taking up the issue of Imphal-Silchar air connectivity, which is now being discontinued and believes that Barak Valley can play a vital role in Barak-Manipur's socio-economic development.



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## MANAGING GLOBAL SHOCKS

**A**s geopolitical tensions continue to escalate across West Asia, New Delhi finds itself confronted with a convergence of economic pressures that demands both urgent resolve and long-term strategic thinking. The Gulf is not a distant partner for India; it is an economic lifeline. Qatar, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and other Gulf Cooperation Council nations are not simply trade partners – they are the primary source of India's energy imports, the backbone of its petrochemical supply chains, and the home of over nine million Indian workers whose remittances sustain millions of families at home. The stakes, therefore, could not



be higher.

Petroleum is not merely a fuel; it is a raw material. Fertilisers, plastics, polymers, synthetic fibres, paints – the building blocks of modern industry – are largely petrochemical by-products. The Gulf nations house the world's largest and most competitive production facilities for these essential commodities. A disruption in supply, or even a sustained rise in prices, does not merely affect fuel pumps; it percolates through agriculture, manufacturing, packaging, and construction, inflating costs across the entire economy. Compounding the situation is the disruption to maritime trade routes. The Red Sea and the Strait of Hormuz carry an enormous share of India's seaborne commerce. Escalating conflict in the region has already forced significant rerouting of cargo vessels, driving up freight rates and extending delivery timelines. Indian exporters – particularly those in textiles, engineering goods, and pharmaceuticals – are finding their competitive margins squeezed by spiralling logistics costs. This is not merely an import problem; it is an export crisis too.

Simultaneously, the strengthening of the US dollar against the rupee is amplifying the pain. The combination of higher energy costs, dearer imports, and a weakening currency creates a fiscal environment of genuine difficulty. Add to this the withdrawal of Foreign Direct Investment and Foreign Institutional Investment as global risk appetite contracts amid geopolitical uncertainty, and it becomes clear that India faces challenges on multiple economic fronts simultaneously.

Against this sobering backdrop, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent calls for energy conservation and reduced import dependence are strategic necessities. His exhortations to citizens to use public transport, embrace carpooling, adopt electric vehicles, reduce fuel consumption, and buy indigenous products reflect a coherent national philosophy: that India's economic resilience must be built from the ground up, household by household, as much as from the top down through policy. Every litre of fuel saved is a contribution to the national foreign exchange reserve at a time when every dollar counts. The country's strategic petroleum reserves, supply-chain preparedness, and diversified sourcing arrangements have thus far insulated consumers from a shortfall. Public behaviour on a large scale can significantly impact macroeconomic indicators in a nation of this size and diversity. Conservation is not austerity born of desperation; it is prudence born of foresight. The crisis has also provided an opportunity for India to accelerate its pivot towards energy independence. Investments in solar capacity, nuclear energy, green hydrogen, and the PM Surya Ghar rooftop solar programme were already under way, but the current situation lends them fresh urgency. The lessons of this crisis must be absorbed into long-term policy, ensuring that future shocks find India less exposed and more self-reliant.

Simultaneously, enhanced measures to deepen financial markets, improve the ease of doing business, and attract both FDI and FII will be essential in the months ahead. India's fundamentals remain strong – the economy is projected to grow at 7.7 per cent in FY 2025-26, a rate that most nations would envy. India has weathered storms before. The 1991 balance of payments crisis, the 2008 global financial meltdown, and the devastating economic contraction of the COVID-19 pandemic all tested the country's resilience. The institutional memory of those crises, and the structural reforms they prompted, have left India better equipped today.

Yet the present moment calls for neither complacency nor panic but for disciplined vigilance. The conflict shows no immediate signs of abating. The Prime Minister is taking a proactive approach at the highest policy levels. The Economic Advisory Council's focused review of contingency measures is a reassuring signal of institutional preparedness. The storm clouds over the Gulf demand India's full attention. The response must be measured, strategic, and – above all – collective.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

The secret of getting ahead is getting started."

— Mark Twain

# CAMOUFLAGE OF “COCKROACHES”



SHIBAN KHAIBRI

Without mincing words, real transformation of our country has started tangibly since 2014, many an eyebrow raising over it in awe or in scorn notwithstanding. With the cooperation and the intrinsic will of the people, feeling such a positive change, the process is expected to get going with full gusto despite all sorts of impediments from forces within inimical to such a change coupled with the active support to such forces from what we call deep state tool kit, foreign 'forces' social media, Sororian blessings and the like. Now, from foreign lands and by persons settled and quite well off in these foreign countries, floating on social media something like Cockroaches' Party demonstrates the intentions of such promoters. We cannot take it any serious on the face of it except as it all is claimed to be a satirical "movement" online. It can, however, at best be termed as a well designed camouflage to spread mistrust, confusion, frustration, negativity, insecurity and even inciting sentiments among the Gen Z of the population. It could graduate into hate and once hate is sown, it finds several ways of catharsis. Let the relevant data of how best our young human resources are doing not be made a mention of as that would never satisfy those who are bent upon painting everything bleak and, therefore, exploiting the situation under the alibi of unemployment, inflation etc. That does not mean that enough is not required in the country to address the problems of unemployment, better education, healthcare and prices under control. A comparison with other countries, mostly advanced, of how the country was moving ahead despite many challenges, will reveal that things are moving fast in the right direction.

The period from 2014 till date witnessed not a single scam, no financial scandal, no malpractices, no kickbacks etc., instead, a good quantum of fakes in various forms were detected – fake NGOs, fake companies, fake ration cards, fake LPG connections, fake MGNERGA cards, fake students and fake teachers. The list is long. Cockroaches chosen for any dreamt "movement" can best be termed as a cheap entertainment but it is said that lot many entertainers have been found to be insecure because it is the perfect camouflage for insecurity. We could also feel that choosing the cockroach for whatever purpose, reflects the choice of people with prosaic tastes and blurred vision – what about the issue of hygiene by promoters – since cockroaches are associated with dampness and filth of bathrooms and lavatories where they breed and grow and multiply fast. They are clumsy, diseases ridden and filth dwelling insects. Cockroaches and lizards are vehicles of uncleanness, poverty and shame. Lizards used here is intentional as, with the ever plummeting standard of politicking in this country by most of the opposition parties and incessantly targeting an innocent but strong hardworking honest PM, lizards too could be used in the near future for drawing scornful, deriding, mischievous and perverted analogies. Analogy of snakes has already been made by a Congress leader while addressing an election rally in Assam last month. With the graph of "followers" of cockroaches' gang reported to have increased during the first three days, the bubble has burst with a big bang within the next three and now it is nowhere. Hence a three day bubble. Such an ephemerality of a new disruptive experiment, read movement, evokes pity.

Coinciding with this, "Tamasha" was the clarion call given by AAP supremo Kejriwal to the NEET students,

"Why do not you stand up, if Gen Z in Bangladesh and Nepal can change their governments, why can't you, this country is yours". No doubt, NEET students suffered and the repeated paper leaks need to be checked with a heavy hand and accountability fixed but the concerned Neta is more interested in changing the present government just like it happened in our neighbouring two small countries where arson, loot and violence and loss of human lives occurred and not for any concern for the students. That is the tragedy and raises questions on the fate of democracy and rule of the constitution in this country, should such leaders wield power to rule this country. Needless to mention, how many leaders from how many political parties frantically keep expecting that the virus of the Bangladesh and Nepal violence as a means to change governments could spread here too but it can never happen. Here too, Gen Z plays its part but in a different way. Just see how millions – men, women, young and old – of Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, Boomers 2 and 1, all participated in West Bengal peacefully, democratically and lawfully but forcefully to change a government that had not delivered as expected during its three terms. Without any violence, intimidation, coercion, threat or allurements, a revolution took place recently in Bengal which will go down in history as an epoch making event for our vibrant democracy to be remembered for decades and decades.

However, Gen Z like "force" is still their last hope, admittedly – the last one – of a desired redemption and "political rehabilitation" till some new political connotation is invented – to rise and come on streets to "save democracy" and to "protect the constitution". It is not difficult to decipher this worn out and overused stereotype rhetoric of "saving democracy and constitution", both getting strengthened like never before, however, it only means to unseat and remove as soon as possible, the democratically and constitutionally elected Prime Minister of the country – Narendra Modi – who is elected to the constitutionally highest executive post of the country for the third consecutive term. He appears to them, just like a super batsman who is not bowled out by any of the Yorkers, bouncers, spin or fastest delivery, nor hit wicket and not

run out. The dilemma, therefore, is how to declare him as "out". Gen Z is seen as their saviours. Modi's detractors, haters, baseless fault finders and not necessarily the critiques and self styled aspirants for the coveted seat, shiver with fear over the prospects and rather possibility of a "fourth term" too for Modi Ji – then what? A glimpse or a cursory peep into that actually happening lies in the 2027 outcome of the UP Assembly elections. Let us wait and see.

Recently, Rahul Gandhi announced with resolution that Modi government would "collapse" within the next year, exactly in the same way as he had said it in early 2024, "take it from me, Modi is not going to be the PM in May 2024, we have done what we had to in this context". What does he mean and by saying so publicly? On the contrary, a senior advocate and RS member Kapil Sibal feels "ashamed to live in a country this is what happens and the party in power uses all means to destroy the foundations of democracy." Well, the noted advocate has right to express himself as he feels but a few questions, very pertinent and cardinal ones, arise. When 5 lakh original inhabitants of Kashmir – The Kashmiri Pandits – were persecuted and forcibly hounded out of Kashmir, preceded and followed by killings, arson, rapes, massacres and the like and such exodus and genocide (akin to) are pointing fingers towards all those leaders and intellectuals and Human Rights champions and Rudaaalis (professional mourners) over their criminal silence. Mr. Sibal did not feel ashamed then, why? For the last 36 years these persecuted people have not settled back and politicians and legal luminaries like Kapil Sibal may kindly share their role and contribution in causing some amelioration of their plight and providing justice to them.

When after 2021 in West Bengal, massive violence and targeting innocent people mostly Hindus took place, thousands had to migrate to "safer" places, no one felt ashamed to live in this country, why?

When MP Murmu's head was struck by a stone making him bleed profusely, no one felt ashamed. When JP Nadda's cavalcade was attacked, no one felt ashamed. When last year, Murshidabad witnessed attacks on Hindus forcing many to leave, no one was ashamed.



In Gaziabad, one 17 year innocent boy Surya Chauhan was recently mercilessly butchered, In Uttam Nagar Delhi a 26 year old Tarun Kumar was killed on Holi this year but no one from so many so called secular leaders of their parties expressed being ashamed to live in this country. They did not even condemn such killings not to speak of conducting political tourism outside the victims' houses. Shocking, this one sided traffic for vote bank and feeling "ashamed" to live in this country.

However, in this country, where non violence has always been upheld, physically assaulting anyone should be condemned but selective, choosy, cleverly picked instances alone should not be the criteria of either criticism or feeling ashamed to live in this country.

### DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

- Ram Mandir was built.
- Article 370 was abrogated.
- World-class infrastructure expanded.
- India's voice grew stronger globally.

**These transformations did not happen because they were trending on social media. They happened because of unwavering dedication, decisive leadership and the resolve to build a #ViksitBharat.**

### #12YearsOfSeva

A nation is not built by hashtags and trends

# 14 Kuki Hostages Released After 27 Days, Marking Breakthrough in Manipur Crisis

IMPHAL

In a significant development towards easing tensions between Naga and Kuki communities in Manipur, 14 Kuki hostages were released on Tuesday after spending 27 days in Naga custody, bringing a major breakthrough in the prolonged hostage crisis that has gripped parts of the state.

The release was facilitated by the United Naga Council (UNC) in the presence of district administration officials, police personnel and security forces, who oversaw the handover process.

Speaking to reporters following the release, UNC president Ng Lorho said the decision was taken after extensive consultations with stakeholders and was guided by humanitarian principles.

"In consultation with all stakeholders,



the United Naga Council facilitated the safe release of the 14 Kuki hostages and handed them over to the district administration, police and security forces before the public," Lorho said.

He stated that the move reflected the Naga community's commitment to human rights, humanitarian values and established norms governing conflicts.

According to Lorho, the UNC's decision was influenced by assurances from both the Union and Manipur governments regarding efforts to trace and determine the status of six missing Naga individuals. Appeals from church bodies, tribal organisations and civil society groups across the North-east also played a crucial role in the decision-making process.

"Nagas are a cultured people. We uphold international law and respect human rights," Lorho said.

He acknowledged the intervention of several organisations, including the Council of Naga Baptist Churches, the Nagaland Baptist Church Council, various Christian bodies, tribal hohos and civil society groups. He also expressed appreciation for the humanitarian appeal made by Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma.

Lorho further revealed that the Manipur government had assured Naga leaders that efforts were underway to ascertain the fate of the six missing Nagas within a specified timeframe.

The release follows weeks of appeals from religious organisations, tribal bodies, community leaders and political figures calling for a peaceful and humanitarian res-

olution to the crisis.

Among those released was Paotinkai Chongloi of Kokhita village, who described the treatment of the hostages during their detention as humane and respectful.

"We have learned a great lesson from our Naga brothers. They have been extraordinary to us," Chongloi said.

He said the hostages were provided food, clothing, blankets and other essential items throughout their 27-day detention. He also appealed for a reciprocal humanitarian gesture regarding the missing Naga individuals.

"I appeal to you to also learn from their kindness and wisdom and release the six Naga hostages unconditionally and on humanitarian grounds," he said.

The crisis began after six Naga individuals went missing in the Senapati-Kangpok-

pi region, prompting widespread concern among Naga organisations and demands for their safe return. In the aftermath, 14 Kuki individuals came under the custody of Naga volunteers and civil society groups, further straining relations between the two communities.

While the release of the Kuki hostages has been welcomed as an important confidence-building measure and a step towards de-escalation, uncertainty continues over the whereabouts of the six missing Naga individuals, whose fate remains unknown.

Community leaders and civil society groups have expressed hope that Tuesday's development will pave the way for further dialogue and humanitarian efforts aimed at resolving the remaining issues and restoring trust between the affected communities.

## Zubeen Garg Case: Accused Shyamkanu Mahanta Engages New Counsel as Bail Proceedings Continue



Shyamkanu Mahanta, one of the accused in the case related to the death of Assamese singer Zubeen Garg, has appointed a new legal representative as court proceedings in the matter continue.

According to reports, advocate Gaurab Chakraborty has been engaged to represent Mahanta and is expected to appear on his behalf in upcoming hearings connected to the case.

The development comes shortly after the Gauhati High Court rejected Mahanta's bail petition on May 29. The case stems from investigations linked to the death of the noted singer in Singapore on September 19, 2025.

Meanwhile, proceedings regarding the bail applications of four other accused have also progressed. The Fast Track Court has completed hearings on their pleas after considering submissions from both the prosecution and defence.

Following the conclusion of arguments, the court reserved its order on the bail applications, with a decision expected in the coming days.

Legal observers note that Mahanta's decision to appoint new counsel comes at a crucial stage of the proceedings, as multiple bail petitions await judicial determination and the investigation continues to attract public attention.

With the Fast Track Court's ruling on the pending bail pleas awaited, further developments in the case are expected in the near future.

## Haflong College Students Launch Three-Day Gate Lock Protest Over Assam University Result Anomalies

HAFLONG

Students of Haflong Government College have launched a three-day protest by locking the college gates, intensifying their agitation against alleged discrepancies in the results of the Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUGP) odd semester examinations conducted by Assam University. The protest, led by student bodies on the campus, is aimed at pressing the university administration to address concerns related to examination results, including demands for re-evaluation of answer scripts, greater transparency in the assessment process and the prompt resolution of withheld and disputed results. According to student representatives, a memorandum outlining their grievances had earlier been submitted to the Vice-Chancellor of Assam University through the Deputy Commissioner of Dima Hasao district. However, they claimed that despite setting a deadline for a response, the university has yet to provide any satisfactory assurance regarding the issues raised.

The agitating students alleged

that numerous candidates have been adversely affected by what they describe as irregularities in the evaluation process, creating uncertainty over their academic future and progression. As part of the ongoing agitation, students have locked the college gates for three days and warned that the protest could escalate if their demands remain unaddressed.

Student leaders stated on Monday that if Assam University fails to respond within the stipulated period, a larger democratic movement would be launched at the university headquarters in Silchar. They said students from Haflong are prepared to travel to the university campus to intensify their campaign and seek immediate intervention from the authorities. The protesters maintained that their movement is not directed against the institution but is focused on safeguarding the academic interests of hundreds of students affected by the disputed results. They urged the university administration to take corrective measures and ensure a fair and transparent resolution of the matter.

## EU Backs Assam's Rise as Manufacturing Hub, Launches Blue Valley Cluster to Boost Local Value Creation

GUWAHATI

European Union Ambassador to India Hervé Delphin on Tuesday underscored the EU's commitment to building long-term industrial and innovation partnerships in Assam, asserting that Europe's objective is not merely to source raw materials from the state but to help create a complete value chain that generates growth, jobs and investment locally.

Speaking at the launch of the Blue Valley Cluster in Guwahati, Delphin said the initiative represents a new phase in EU-Assam cooperation, aimed at integrating the state's biodiversity-based industries with global markets while ensuring value addition takes place within Assam itself.

"Our vision is not to come here, procure products and ship them elsewhere. We want to build a comprehensive ecosystem that brings together research, innovation, skill development, investment, production, marketing and international market access," the ambassador said.

The Blue Valley Cluster, a joint

initiative of the Assam Government and the European Union, will focus initially on the flavours, fragrances and AYUSH sectors, leveraging Assam's rich biodiversity and natural resources to create globally competitive products and industries.

Delphin noted that for decades, much of Assam's natural wealth-including medicinal plants, aromatic resources and forest-based products-has been integrated into supply chains where the greatest economic value was generated outside the region. The new initiative, he said, seeks to reverse that trend by promoting local processing, innovation and enterprise development.

"The objective is to create value within Assam while connecting local businesses and entrepreneurs to international opportunities," he said.

Leading a high-level European Union delegation to Assam, Delphin described the visit as a reflection of the EU's growing engagement with Northeast India and its commitment to advancing the priorities outlined in the EU-India Joint Com-

prehensive Strategic Agenda.

He highlighted Assam's combination of natural resources, skilled human capital and openness to innovation as key factors attracting European interest and investment.

"Assam is no longer at the periphery of India's geography. It is steadily moving towards the centre of India's economic growth story," Delphin said. "As India and the European Union deepen their strategic partnership, Assam is emerging as a destination where many of these opportunities can be realised."

The ambassador also cited ongoing cooperation projects as evidence of the strengthening relationship between Assam and the European Union. These include EU support for the CITIIS 2.0 urban development initiative in Guwahati and collaboration on the Barak River Basin Management Action Plan.

"From supporting CITIIS 2.0 in Guwahati to the Barak River Basin Management Action Plan, our collaboration with Assam has delivered tangible results. We are now taking this partnership to the next

level by accelerating investment and industrial cooperation that can benefit the entire Northeast region," he said.

While the Blue Valley Cluster's immediate focus remains on biodiversity-linked industries, Delphin indicated that European investors are increasingly looking at Assam as a destination for emerging sectors such as renewable energy, digital technologies, advanced manufacturing and electronics.

Referring to a recent visit to the Tata Electronics semiconductor facility at Jagiroad, he said the project demonstrates the rapid transformation of Assam's industrial landscape and the growing potential for high-value manufacturing in the state.

According to Delphin, the Blue Valley Cluster should be viewed not as a standalone initiative but as the beginning of a broader strategic partnership aimed at positioning Assam as a centre for innovation, sustainable industrial growth and international investment.

## SC's Mandatory TET Ruling Raises Uncertainty for Thousands of Teachers in Tripura

AGARTALA

A recent Supreme Court judgment making the Teachers Eligibility Test (TET) a compulsory qualification for teachers covered under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, has sparked concern among thousands of teachers across Tripura, with education authorities assessing the potential impact of the ruling.

The verdict is expected to affect a substantial number of teachers serving in government, government-aided and private schools in the state, particularly those engaged in teaching children between the ages of six and fourteen years, the category covered under the RTE Act.

According to sources in the Education Department, nearly 8,000 teachers working in government and aided schools alone may fall within the ambit of the Supreme Court's directions. The figure could rise

further once teachers employed in private educational institutions are included in the assessment.

Officials said the affected category includes educators from both the Elementary and Secondary Education sectors. The department has begun collecting data from schools across the state to determine the exact number of teachers who have not yet qualified the TET examination and may be required to do so within the timeframe prescribed by the court. The Supreme Court, while disposing of a batch of review petitions concerning teacher eligibility norms, ruled that qualifying the Teachers Eligibility Test is an essential requirement for teachers covered under the RTE framework. The court has granted time until September 1, 2028, for eligible teachers to obtain the qualification.

The ruling is likely to have implications for teachers recruited during

various phases over the past three decades. Among those potentially affected are science teachers appointed in 1996 and 1997, assistant teachers recruited in 2003 and 2007, and another batch of science teachers appointed in 2012. However, the judgment also provides relief to certain categories of educators. Teachers above 55 years of age and those with less than five years remaining before retirement are reportedly exempt from the requirement to qualify the TET.

Despite the exemption, the verdict has generated anxiety among many serving teachers who are below the age threshold and have yet to clear the eligibility examination. Several educators are now awaiting detailed guidelines on how the court's directions will be implemented and what the implications may be for their future service conditions.

Questions have also arisen regarding teachers working under

the Samagra Shiksha programme. Since these educators are not regular government employees and function under a separate administrative framework, uncertainty remains over whether the Supreme Court's directions will apply to them in the same manner. The development has triggered discussions among various teachers' and employees' organisations in the state, including groups affiliated with different political and professional bodies. While reports indicate that teacher organisations in several states have sought clarification or reconsideration from the Centre on issues arising from the judgment, no major protest movement has yet emerged in Tripura.

With thousands of teachers potentially affected, attention is now focused on the state government's response and the measures it may adopt to facilitate compliance with the new eligibility requirements.

## Sikkim Renews Water Security Push, Signs Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0 MoU with Centre



NEW DELHI

Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang on Tuesday participated in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Exchange Ceremony under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) 2.0 between the Government of Sikkim and the Ministry of Jal Shakti, reaffirming the Himalayan state's commitment to providing sustainable and equitable access to safe drinking water.

The MoU exchange ceremony was held in New Delhi in the presence of Union Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil, senior officials of the Ministry of Jal Shakti, the National Jal Jeevan Mission, and representatives of the Government of Sikkim. Addressing the gathering, Tamang expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Ministry of Jal Shakti for the successful implementation of the Jal Jeevan Mission across the country. He said the flagship programme had transformed rural water supply infrastructure and significantly improved access to safe drinking water for millions of households, including those in Sikkim.

The Chief Minister highlighted the Centre's support in helping the state address the unique challenges of building and maintaining water supply systems in its mountainous terrain. He noted that Sikkim's difficult geography requires specialised planning, advanced engineering solutions and substantial investment to ensure reliable drinking water connectivity in remote and scattered habitations.

Reiterating the state government's commitment to the objectives of Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0, Tamang stressed the importance

of ensuring sustainability of water sources, strengthening water quality monitoring systems, protecting natural resources and maintaining long-term water infrastructure. He said these priorities are particularly critical for a fragile Himalayan ecosystem where environmental conservation and water security are closely interconnected.

During his address, the Chief Minister also appealed to the Ministry of Jal Shakti to extend central financial assistance for retrofitting and capacity augmentation projects that were approved or initiated before the notification of the Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0 guidelines. He said the state had undertaken several such projects under earlier policy frameworks and invested considerable resources with the expectation of continued central support.

According to Tamang, sustained financial assistance for these ongoing initiatives would further strengthen Sikkim's water infrastructure network and help the state achieve the long-term goals envisaged under the mission. The programme was attended by the Secretary of the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, the Mission Director of the National Jal Jeevan Mission, the Secretary of Sikkim's Rural Development Department and other senior officials from both the Centre and the state government.

The MoU exchange marks a significant step in the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0, which seeks to enhance drinking water security, improve service delivery standards and promote sustainable water management practices across India.

## 'Stand With HER' Campaign in Dimapur Unites Civil Society in Call for Child Safety and Gender Justice

DIMAPUR

A large-scale public awareness programme titled "Stand With HER" was held at the Town Hall in Dimapur on Tuesday, bringing together civil society organisations, government representatives, women's groups, student bodies, legal experts and citizens to advocate for the protection of women and children and to demand justice for survivors of sexual violence.

Organised jointly by the Nagaland NGOs Forum (NNF) and the Nagaland Schools Alliance, the programme was held against the backdrop of growing public concern over recent cases of sexual abuse involving minors in the state. The event was chaired by Vitono Haralu (Gugu), while Pastor Kenei Kiso of Life Square Church delivered the invocation. In his opening address, Nagaland NGOs Forum President Dr. Andrew Ahotu Sema underscored the need for collective action to safeguard children and ensure accountability for offenders.

The programme brought together a wide range of stakeholders, including Nagaland Director General of Police Rupin Sharma, Advisor to the Chief Minister and Chairman of the



Investment and Development Authority of Nagaland (IDAN) Abu Metha, Central Naga Tribe Council President Hukheye Yepthomi, legal professionals, child rights advocates, leaders of women's organisations and student representatives.

Speaking at the event, Abu Metha described the initiative as a united

call for justice, courage and social change. He stressed that fear, silence, stigma and shame should never be allowed to shield perpetrators, while victims continue to endure suffering.

"Every child deserves to grow up in safety, dignity and hope, with the freedom to dream, aspire and achieve," Metha said, urging citizens

Quest!

The only impossible journey is the one you never begin

## CID team visits Mamata's Kalighat residence in alleged MLAs' forged signatures probe



### KOLKATA

A 17-member team of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of West Bengal Police on Tuesday visited TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee's Kalighat residence-cum-office as part of its investigation into the alleged forged signatures of MLAs in the controversy surrounding the election of Sovandeb Chattopadhyay as Leader of the Opposition in the Trinamool legislature party in the West Bengal Assembly.

Officials of the state investigating agency, accompanied by personnel from Kalighat police station and a large contingent of women police personnel, arrived at the premises at 30B Harish Chatterjee Street around noon. Mamata, who was in Delhi to attend an INDIA bloc meeting to chalk out a nationwide strategy against the BJP, was expected to return to Kolkata on Tuesday. However, it was not immediately known whether she had returned.

According to CID officials present at the spot, the visit was based on a reply submitted by Trinamool Congress national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee to an earlier notice issued by the agency.

"In his response, Abhishek Banerjee stated that signatures of MLAs were collected at the party's central office at 30B Harish Chatterjee Street. Based on that statement, we have come here as part of the investigation," a CID officer said. Initially, the investigating team was prevented from entering the premises, leading to a brief standoff with security personnel posted at the complex.

TMC leader and former MP Subhasish Chakraborty said the party had objected to the search in the absence of Abhishek Banerjee. "We have not allowed the CID to enter the premises in the absence of Abhishek Banerjee. Once he comes, the CID can come and search the house," Chakraborty told reporters. Meanwhile, Abhishek Banerjee, who has been served multiple notices by the CID over the past 10 days, is scheduled to appear before investigators at the state police headquarters, Bhabani Bhavan, in Kolkata later on Tuesday. Abhishek, who had travelled to Delhi on Saturday to attend the INDIA bloc meeting, had not yet returned to Kolkata.

The CID had issued notices to Abhishek Banerjee to examine his alleged links to the signa-

ture forgery case. The agency's latest move comes days after it sought information related to the alleged forging of legislators' signatures on a proposal submitted to the Assembly Speaker seeking recognition of the Leader of the Opposition.

The controversy erupted after a proposal sent to the Speaker seeking recognition of senior TMC MLA Sovandeb Chattopadhyay as Leader of the Opposition allegedly contained forged signatures of several legislators, leading to the registration of an FIR and a CID probe.

The case has unfolded amid an unprecedented split within the TMC. The crisis began with a dispute over the selection of the Leader of the Opposition after the Assembly elections and escalated when 58 of the party's 80 MLAs backed expelled MLA Ritabrata Banerjee for the post instead of the leadership's nominee, Sovandeb Chattopadhyay.

Last week, the rebel camp took control of the legislature party, elected Ritabrata Banerjee as Leader of the Opposition and secured recognition from the Assembly Speaker, resulting in the first split in the TMC since its formation in 1996.

Financial inclusion is another key achievement the government cites.

# Modi govt's 12 years: Empowering women, youth, farmers and poor

### NEW DELHI

Marking 12 years of the Narendra Modi-led dispensation, the central government on Tuesday released a series of booklets showcasing its various key achievements and initiatives. One such publication, titled "From Empowerment to Prosperity," spotlights efforts undertaken to empower women, youth, farmers and marginalised communities, identifying them as the four foundational pillars of a developed India.

According to the booklet, Prime Minister Modi's vision for a developed India rests on four foundational pillars collectively termed "GYAN"—Garib (Poor), Yuva Shakti (Youth), Annadata (Farmers), and Nari Shakti (Women).

Empowering these groups has been key to advancing inclusive development and ensuring broader participation in India's growth story, the booklet says.

A major focus of the booklet is women's empowerment. The government spotlights measures such as the abolition of Triple Talaq, greater participation of women in the armed forces, sports, entrepreneurship and research as steps towards women's empowerment. The government's commitment to implementing 33 per cent reservation for women is also a major point included in the booklet.

The focus on "Women-led Development" has become a cornerstone of policymaking, the government says. It emphasises the role of women in shaping India's future.

Among the flagship initiatives highlighted is the PM Ujjwala Yojana. Under this scheme, nearly 11 crore households have received LPG connections. This is how traditional kitchens have been transformed into smoke-free spaces.

The scheme has contributed to improved health outcomes, reduced respiratory illnesses, enhanced productivity and greater environmental protection, according to the booklet.

Financial inclusion is another key achievement the government cites.



Through the PM Jan Dhan Yojana, crores of women have been brought into the formal banking system. Direct transfer of government benefits has been enabled. Financial security has been strengthened through the Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile framework.

The report underlines the role of more than 91 lakh Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in promoting rural livelihoods and entrepreneurship. These groups have helped women become economically self-reliant. Moreover, they have contributed to local development through initiatives such as Krishi Sakhi and Bima Sakhi programmes.

Significantly, women entrepreneurs have benefited from loans under the PM Mudra Yojana. Apart from this, over 10 crore rural women have been empowered through self-help group networks.

The booklet identifies India's youth population as a critical force behind the country's development aspirations.

It credits the National Education Policy and skill development initiatives for creating new opportunities

for young Indians. From startups and unicorns to innovation, technology and space exploration, the publication highlights the growing role of youth in shaping India's future.

Quoting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call of "Yahi Samay Hai, Sahi Samay Hai, Bharat Ka Anmol Samay Hai," the booklet presents young Indians as the driving force behind the vision of a Viksit Bharat.

The empowerment of farmers is a key pillar of the government's vision for an Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

Ensuring a Minimum Support Price (MSP) at 1.5 times production costs is one of the major steps the government has taken. Moreover, strengthening agricultural infrastructure through the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund and expanding market access through the e-NAM digital platform are also key areas where the government has moved forward significantly.

It also highlights direct financial assistance under the PM-KISAN scheme, including support for women farmers, reduced dependence on infor-

mal borrowing, and easier agricultural operations.

It notes that India's growing agricultural exports and the global recognition of millets, or Shri Anna, have strengthened the country's position in international agricultural markets.

A significant portion of the booklet focuses on welfare programmes aimed at marginalised communities.

The government's approach has been guided by the principle of "Priority to the Underprivileged." It claims that access to basic amenities, financial inclusion and targeted welfare interventions have helped improve living standards. It has also helped bring historically disadvantaged groups into the mainstream of development.

Increased budgetary support for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and greater participation of these communities in education, employment, and entrepreneurship, are also major steps.

Maternal and child healthcare feature prominently in the government's empowerment narrative. The booklet states that more than 7.3 crore pregnant women have received health check-ups under the PM Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan, enabling early detection of high-risk pregnancies and contributing to reductions in maternal and infant mortality.

Pregnant women have received financial assistance of over Rs 20,000 crore under the PM Matru Vandana Yojana. The publication also notes that over 17 crore women workers are registered on the e-Shram portal, helping connect them with welfare schemes and social security benefits while strengthening their participation in the formal economy.

The last twelve years have marked a significant chapter in empowering the poor, women, youth and farmers. Guided by the principle of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas," the booklet describes India's development journey as a people-centric movement in which every citizen is a stakeholder, it says.

## INTERNATIONAL

# Tensions escalate in PoK as Pakistani forces fire tear gas on protestors



### JAMMU AND KASHMIR (POK)

Tensions remain high in Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoK) as Pakistani security forces reportedly fired tear gas at protestors after renewed clashes with members of the Joint Awami Action Committee.

The clampdown in PoK came amid a planned protest rally by the Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) for subsidised flour and electricity.

The JAAC was outlawed on Friday by authorities, citing concerns over public order and security.

Meanwhile, a shutdown strike continues across the region amid escalating unrest. The situation has further deteriorated following a communications blackout imposed after violent clashes between protestors and

Pakistani security forces in Rawalakot and Muzaffarabad left several people dead.

The condition remains grim in parts of Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir as anti-Pakistan protests drew in hundreds of protestors who took to the streets, and shutdowns continue in cities such as Bhimbar and Kotli.

The recent development comes after over 20 people were reportedly killed in police action on protestors in several parts of PoK.

The crackdown by Pakistani authorities on civilians has drawn in global condemnation.

More than 50 members of the British Parliament have written to UK Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper expressing concern over reports of a

communications blackout, arrests, and escalating tensions in PoK.

In a letter sent to the UK Foreign Office on June 6, Bradford East MP Imran Hussain, who is also the chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Kashmir, highlighted reports from the region of internet and mobile service disruptions, restrictions on communications, and growing unrest.

In the letter, the parliamentarians said they had been contacted by numerous British Kashmiris who were unable to establish contact with relatives in PoJK.

The signatories expressed concern over reports of arrests, including those of British nationals, and the reported breakdown of dialogue between authorities and representatives of the JAAC.

They noted that restrictions on communications in an already sensitive political environment risk increasing uncertainty and further escalating tensions.

Meanwhile, protestors on Tuesday staged a demonstration in front of the Pakistani Consulate in Bradford and accused the Pakistani authorities of using excessive force against civilians participating in demonstrations across PoK.

Organisers, many of them from the Kashmiri diaspora, claimed that several civilians were killed and injured during the firing by Pakistani security forces, particularly in Rawalakot, where protests have intensified since June 5.

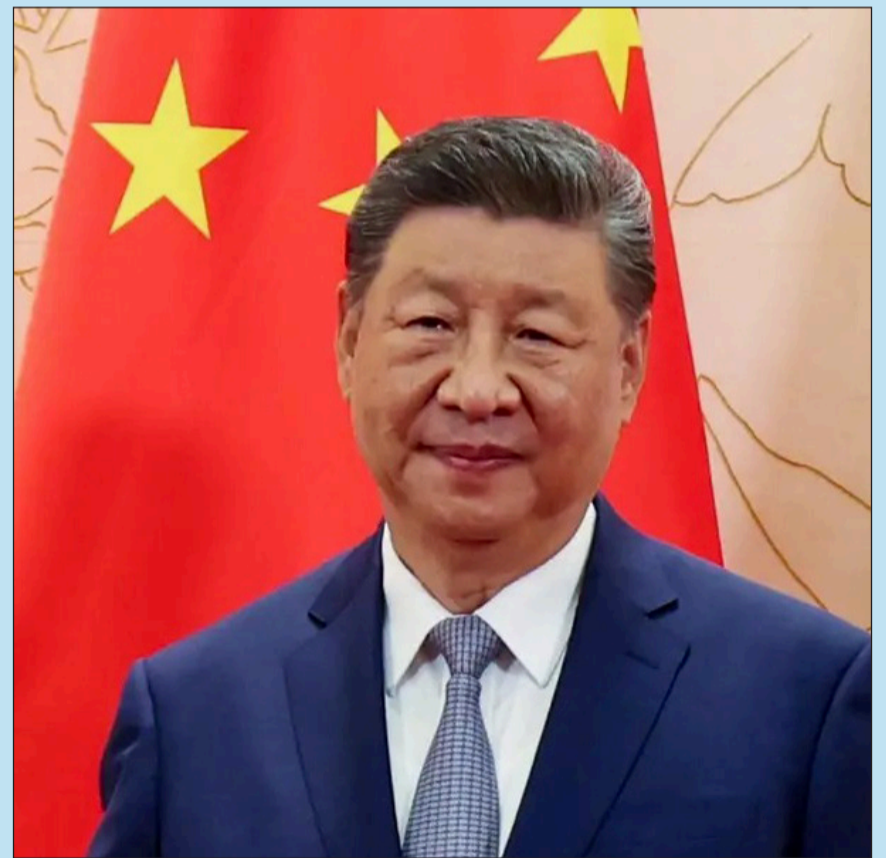
Former Director General of Police of Jammu & Kashmir, Shesh Paul Vaid, strongly condemned the violence in PoJK, accusing Pakistani security forces of using excessive force against civilians and peaceful protestors.

"The situation in PoJK is extremely serious. Many people have been killed and several others have been injured due to indiscriminate firing. According to reports, Pakistan Rangers, the Pakistan Army, and local police have opened fire, resulting in multiple casualties," Vaid said.

He asserted that the ongoing unrest has exposed Pakistan's "false narrative" on Jammu and Kashmir, arguing that the people of PoJK themselves are now challenging Islamabad's policies.

"The firing on peaceful protestors is similar to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre," Vaid said, claiming that citizens demanding their rights were met with bullets instead of dialogue. He further said that Pakistan has never genuinely cared for the welfare of Kashmiris and has repeatedly used force to suppress dissent.

## Beijing says 'firmly opposed' to US blacklist of Chinese companies



### BEIJING

Beijing said on Tuesday it "firmly opposed" the US blacklisting of Chinese companies after Washington added tech giants Alibaba and Baidu to a list of firms it says are aiding the Chinese military.

The Pentagon update on Monday came months after it released, and then quickly withdrew, an earlier version of the list without explanation.

"China has consistently and firmly opposed the United States' generalisation of the concept of national security... and its unreasonable suppression of Chinese companies," foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian told a news briefing.

Lin urged Washington to "correct its erroneous practices", warning that

Beijing will "take necessary measures to firmly safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies".

The new list includes 80 companies and their subsidiaries, and is largely similar to the version momentarily published in February, although two memory chipmakers were reinstated after having been removed at the time.

The re-added companies are ChangXin Memory Technologies and Yangtze Memory Technologies.

The Pentagon's release marks the latest test of relations between the world's two top economies, whose leaders met in Beijing last month for a highly anticipated summit.

That meeting saw President Donald Trump

and Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping seek to stabilise bilateral relations.

Trump has invited Xi to pay a reciprocal visit to Washington in September.

The companies targeted in the US Defense Department's latest list include some of China's top tech giants involved in artificial intelligence, including Alibaba, Baidu and Tencent. Tencent had already been designated in the blacklist.

Alibaba called its inclusion "a mistake", while Baidu said on social media "there is no credible justification" for adding it to the list.

The determinations have few immediate legal implications for many of the companies, although it is seen as a move that could precede more punitive measures.

## Battlefield Earns International Competition Spot at MIFF 2026



**BISWADEEP GUPTA**

**IMPHAL**

Manipuri documentary film Battlefield has achieved a significant international recognition after being nominated for screening in the International Competition section of the 19th Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF) 2026, one of the world's most prestigious festivals dedicated to non-feature films.

The festival is scheduled to be held in Mumbai from June 15 to 21, 2026. Directed by Borun Thokchom, Battlefield will compete in the feature-length documentary category alongside acclaimed documentary films from different parts of the world.

The nomination comes after the film's successful world premiere at the 56th International Film Festival of India (IFFI), further strengthening its journey on the global festival circuit.

Produced by Manjoy Lourembam, Dr. Radhesyam Oinam, and Viswamithra Universals, the documentary's selection is being viewed as a major achievement for Manipuri cinema and the broader film fraternity of

the Northeast. Expressing his happiness over the development, director Borun Thokchom said the nomination is a proud moment not only for the film but also for the state of Manipur and its filmmaking community. Established in 1990 and held biennially, the Mumbai International Film Festival is South Asia's oldest and largest festival dedicated to non-feature films.



राष्ट्रीय फिल्म विकास निगम लि.  
**NFDC** 50 **NMIC** **mtai**  
cinemas of india National Museum of Indian Cinema national film archive of india

प्रकाश मगदूम  
प्रबंध निदेशक  
Prakash Magdum  
Managing Director

No.-2/IC/MIFF-2026/NFDC Dated: 06<sup>th</sup> June, 2026

Dear Mr. Borun Thokchom,

I am happy to inform you that your film "BATTLEFIELD" has been selected in the International Competition Section, in the Documentary category for 19th MIFF-2026.

You are requested to send the final screener of film in the following formats on the official transfer link as provided below for the DCP and an online downloadable link as a backup MP4/MOV file (without watermark), immediately so as to reach us on or before the deadline of 08<sup>th</sup> June, 2026:-

Format for Final Screening	Unencrypted DCP in 2K (JPEG 2000) embedded with English subtitles & 2K/1080p MP4/MOV embedded with English subtitles as a backup
	Link to upload DCP:- <a href="https://cincom.transfernow.net/en/push?utm_content=BAZ9YUk8">https://cincom.transfernow.net/en/push?utm_content=BAZ9YUk8</a>

Note:- No other format will be accepted for final screening in the competition section. No watermark should be available on both the formats.

Your film "BATTLEFIELD" will be screened on 20th June 2026 at 03:55 PM in Audi 1, FD-NFDC Complex, Pedder Road, Mumbai.

The Festival Directorate is pleased to invite you to the 19<sup>th</sup> MIFF. One person from the film i.e., the director/ representative of the film is invited with to & fro air-tickets (economy) and 3 nights of accommodation during the festival. It is requested to kindly convey your travel plan positively by filling the attached Annexure-1 along with your ID proof, latest by 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2026 at [miff.india@nfdcindia.com](mailto:miff.india@nfdcindia.com) to enable us to book your air ticket and hotel accommodation. Kindly register yourself as a delegate using the following link <https://my.miff.in/participants/mumbai/delegate/> and share the registration details with us for approval at our back end. For any further assistance or clarifications, please contact Mr. A. K. Maharaja, Head of Festival Programming - Competitive Section and Coordinator, 19th MIFF, at +91-9832799077/akmaharaja@nfdcindia.com / miff.india@nfdcindia.com. I am sure your participation would enrich the 19th MIFF, 2026.

Please keep the selection of your film confidential until the results are published on the MIFF Portal.

With best wishes,  
  
(Prakash Magdum)

Mr. Borun Thokchom,  
Director,  
BATTLEFIELD,  
International Competition Section- Documentary Category

राष्ट्रीय फिल्म विकास निगम लिमिटेड (भारत सरकार का उद्यम)  
एनएफडीसी-एफडीसी कॉम्प्लेक्स, 24, डॉ. गोपालराव देशमुख मार्ग, मुंबई - 400 026  
National Film Development Corporation Limited (A Government of India Enterprise)  
NFDC-FD Complex, 24, Dr. Gopalrao Deshmukh Marg, Mumbai - 400 026  
CIN - U92100MH1975GOI02294 I GSTIN - 27AAACN3540R1Z3  
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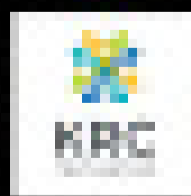


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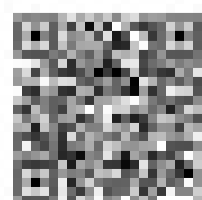


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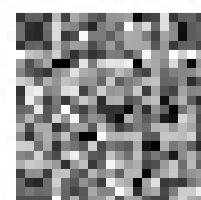


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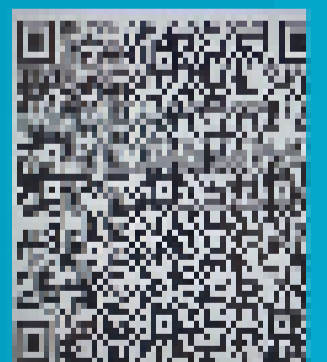
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