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DIMAPUR’S
WASTE CRISIS



Dimapur, Nagaland’s commercial capital and one of the Northeast’s fastest-growing urban centres, is confronting a challenge that extends far beyond overflowing garbage bins and clogged drains. The mounting waste crisis has become a stark reminder of how urban governance can falter when civic institutions, public administration, and citizens fail to work in tandem. What is unfolding in the city is not merely a sanitation problem; it is a test of collective responsibility and administrative accountability.

Across several localities, heaps of uncollected garbage have become a familiar sight. Drains that once carried stormwater have either disappeared under encroachments or become choked with waste. During the monsoon season, the consequences are even more severe, with waterlogging, foul odours, and heightened public health risks becoming part of everyday life. Understandably, public frustration is growing, and much of it is directed at the Dimapur Municipal Council (DMC), the agency entrusted with maintaining urban sanitation.

The criticism of the DMC is not without basis. Questions have repeatedly been raised about the poor utilisation of resources meant for waste management. Vehicles and machinery acquired under government programmes, including those linked to the Swachh Bharat Mission, have failed to deliver the expected transformation in the city’s cleanliness. Allegations that equipment intended for garbage disposal was diverted for other purposes have further eroded public confidence. At the same time, there appears to be a glaring mismatch between administrative staffing and operational needs. A city struggling under mountains of waste requires sanitation workers, drivers, and field personnel-not an overabundance of desk-bound clerical staff.

Yet focusing solely on the municipal council risks ignoring an equally important reality. The garbage crisis is not the product of institutional failure alone. It is also the outcome of widespread disregard for civic responsibility. Many drains have become dumping grounds for household waste, plastic packaging, and construction debris. Encroachments on drainage channels have reduced the city’s ability to manage rainwater and waste alike. Littering remains common, despite repeated appeals and awareness campaigns.

No urban administration, however efficient, can maintain cleanliness if citizens continue to undermine basic sanitation practices. Civic sense cannot be legislated into existence; it must be cultivated through awareness, discipline, and community participation. A clean city is not created by municipal workers alone. It is built when residents recognise that every piece of litter thrown onto a street eventually returns as a public health hazard.

The consequences of this collective failure are already evident. Dimapur’s previous dumping ground became so environmentally hazardous that it had to be shut down. The replacement site now faces the risk of following the same trajectory. Communities living near the new disposal area have begun expressing concerns about pollution, contamination, and disease. Without scientific waste management systems-including segregation, recycling, composting, and environmentally sound disposal methods-the city is merely shifting its garbage problem from one location to another.

This is where the role of the wider civil administration becomes indispensable. Urban sanitation cannot be viewed as the exclusive responsibility of the municipal council. District authorities, health officials, environmental agencies, and law enforcement bodies all have a stake in ensuring that waste management systems function effectively. The challenge requires coordinated action across departments, backed by clear accountability mechanisms.

The administration must ensure that resources allocated for sanitation are used for their intended purpose. Encroachments on drains and public spaces must be addressed through firm enforcement. Public awareness campaigns need to move beyond slogans and become sustained efforts that encourage behavioural change. Schools, community organisations, business establishments, and resident groups should all be involved in creating a culture of cleanliness and environmental responsibility.

Dimapur’s waste crisis also highlights a broader urban challenge confronting many growing towns across India. Rapid expansion without adequate planning places immense pressure on civic infrastructure. When governance fails to keep pace with urbanisation, problems such as waste accumulation, drainage collapse, and environmental degradation become inevitable. The city’s current predicament should therefore serve as a warning-not only for Dimapur but for other urban centres facing similar pressures.

The path forward is clear. The DMC must prioritise sanitation as its core mandate, ensuring that machinery is functional, manpower is adequate, and waste collection is efficient. Citizens must acknowledge their role in keeping public spaces clean and cease practices that contribute to the problem. Above all, the civil administration must act as a coordinating force, bringing together different agencies to ensure that responsibility is shared rather than shifted.

Dimapur’s future cannot be secured through blame alone. The city needs a renewed partnership between government institutions and the people they serve. Clean streets, functioning drains, and a healthier environment will emerge not from isolated efforts but from collective action. The real challenge before Dimapur is not simply managing waste-it is rebuilding a culture of accountability where governance and citizenship work hand in hand.

Only then can the city reclaim not just its cleanliness, but also the dignity and quality of life that its residents deserve.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Do you know the difference between education and experience? Education is when you read the fine print; experience is what you get when you don’t.

- Pete Seeger

Before the Fast Turns Fatal:
Why India Must Respond
to Sonam Wangchuk’s Call



S. BHATTACHARYA

As Sonam Wangchuk’s hunger strike stretches into its third week, the issue at stake is no longer just one activist’s protest. It has become a test of whether a democracy can hear a peaceful voice before it is silenced by exhaustion.

By any measure, Sonam Wangchuk’s ongoing hunger strike has entered a critical phase. Nineteen days without food is not merely an act of protest; it is a profound physical and moral challenge. Medical reports indicate that the celebrated innovator, education reformer and climate activist has lost significant weight, experienced falling blood sugar levels, low blood pressure and diminishing muscle mass. The signs are worrying, and the concern among his supporters is growing.

Yet the most striking aspect of Wangchuk’s protest is not the visible deterioration of his health. It is the apparent absence of meaningful engagement with the issues he has raised.

India is often described as the world’s largest democracy. Democracies are expected to accommodate disagreement, encourage debate and create channels through which citizens can hold institutions accountable. Elections are one measure of democratic health, but they are not the only one. Equally important is the manner in which governments respond when citizens, dissatisfied with existing avenues of redress, resort to peaceful forms of protest.

Wangchuk has chosen one of the most powerful traditions of non-violent resistance available in the Indian political imagination: the hunger strike. By joining the protest at Jantar Mantar over alleged irregularities in the NEET examination process and demanding accountability from those responsible, he has sought to draw national attention to concerns affecting millions of students and families.

Whether one agrees with every demand he has raised is ultimately secondary. The more pressing issue is whether a peaceful protest of this magnitude deserves a serious response.

A Tradition Rooted in Moral Pressure
India’s political history is inseparable from the idea of non-violent resistance. Hunger strikes occupy a unique place within that tradition because they do not rely on coercion or force. Instead, they depend on moral persuasion. The protester places his or her own well-being at risk to communicate the urgency of a cause.

From Mahatma Gandhi’s fasts during the freedom struggle to numerous movements in independent India, hunger strikes have served as a reminder that democratic politics is not only about power but also about conscience.

That is why Wangchuk’s protest carries symbolic significance far beyond the immediate controversy surrounding examination governance. It raises a broader question: how should a democratic society respond when an individual with substantial public credibility believes that all other avenues have failed?

The answer need not be agreement. Governments are not obligated to concede every demand made by protesters. But they are expected to engage, explain, listen and communicate. Silence, particularly prolonged silence, risks creating the impression that peaceful dissent is less effective than confrontation.

The Weight of a Familiar Name
For many Indians, Sonam Wangchuk is more than an activist. He is a symbol of innovation, education and creative problem-solving.

His work in alternative education and sustainable development inspired the character of Phunsukh Wangdu in the blockbuster film 3 Idiots. Through that fictional character, millions of young Indians were encouraged to question rote learning, think independently and pursue knowledge with curiosity rather than fear.

The irony is difficult to ignore. The man whose ideas inspired a generation to challenge outdated systems is now using his own body to challenge what he perceives as institutional failures. The same public that celebrated the fictional hero’s rebellion against flawed educational practices now watches the real-life inspiration behind that character struggle to attract sustained national attention.

Students invest enormous emotional, intellectual and financial resources in preparing for these assessments. They do so because they believe that merit, effort and honesty will determine outcomes.

When questions arise about transparency or accountability, public confidence suffers.

This is why the debate extends beyond one activist and one government ministry. It touches upon the broader relationship between citizens and institutions. Public trust is difficult to build and easy to lose. Addressing concerns openly and transparently is often the most effective way to preserve that trust.

Even those who disagree with Wangchuk’s demands can acknowledge the importance of maintaining confidence in systems that shape the futures of millions of young people.

The Cost of Silence

Perhaps the most troubling aspect of the current situation is the growing gap between public concern and official engagement.

Numerous writers, actors, academics, activists and public figures have appealed to Wangchuk to end his fast. Their concerns are understandable. No one wants to witness irreversible damage to his health.

Yet Wangchuk’s response has been consistent. Rather than asking him to stop protesting, he argues, people should ask why the government has not responded adequately to the issues he has raised.

Whether one agrees with that position or not, it highlights an important principle: responsibility in a democracy does not rest solely with protesters. It also rests with institutions that possess the authority and capacity to engage.

Dialogue does not signify weakness. On the contrary, it is one of the defining strengths of democratic governance. Governments routinely negotiate with stakeholders, explain policies and address public concerns. Such engagement can reduce tensions, clarify misunderstandings and strengthen public confidence.

The absence of dialogue, however, often creates space for frustration, mistrust and polarisation.



For millions of Indian students, competitive examinations are not merely tests. They represent years of preparation, family sacrifices and aspirations for a better future. Trust in these systems is therefore essential. Any perception that fairness has been compromised can have consequences far beyond a single examination cycle.

A Test for Democratic Culture
The significance of Wangchuk’s fast therefore extends beyond the immediate controversy.

It poses a larger question about the kind of democratic culture India wishes to cultivate.

Can peaceful dissent still command attention in an era dominated by social

media outrage and political polarisation? Can moral persuasion still influence public discourse? Are institutions willing to engage with critics before situations escalate into crises?

These questions matter because the health of a democracy is measured not only by how it rewards supporters but also by how it responds to critics.

Peaceful protest is one of the most valuable safeguards available to citizens. It provides a non-violent means of expressing dissatisfaction and seeking accountability. When such protests are ignored, the message received by many citizens is deeply troubling: that moderation and restraint may be less effective than confrontation.

No democracy benefits from that perception.

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

As per orders of Hon’ble High Court and on expert medical advise due to the deteriorating health condition of Sh. Sonam Wangchuk, he has been shifted to the hospital for essential medical care. While complying with the orders of Hon’ble High Court the protestors tried to create obstruction, in which slight commotion ensued, however police took maximum restrain and undertook the exercise safely.

We request the protestors at Jantar Mantar to peacefully vacate the place at the earliest.
~ DCP New Delhi



Beyond Agreement and Disagreement

It is entirely possible to disagree with Wangchuk’s demands and still defend his right to be heard.

Democratic engagement does not require consensus. It requires willingness to listen.

The issue before the country is therefore not whether every citizen supports the hunger strike. Nor is it whether every demand should be accepted.

The issue is whether a respected citizen should have to place his health at grave risk before institutions acknowledge his concerns.

As Wangchuk’s fast continues, the danger is that public attention may fade while his physical condition worsens. News cycles move quickly. Social media trends change by the hour. But the consequences of prolonged starvation are not governed by headlines.

A weakening body cannot wait indefinitely for a response.

The Question Before India
Sonam Wangchuk’s hunger strike has already become more than a protest. It is a mirror reflecting the state of public dialogue in contemporary India.

The challenge before the nation is not merely to decide whether his demands are justified. It is to determine whether peaceful dissent still occupies a meaningful place within democratic life.

A society is ultimately judged not by how loudly it celebrates its heroes, but

by how attentively it listens when those heroes raise uncomfortable questions.

As the days pass and Wangchuk’s health continues to deteriorate, the central question grows more urgent.

Not whether he can endure another day without food.

But whether India can afford another day without a conversation.

Minister Kaushik Rai reviews market management, proposed four-lane road project and healthcare services in Silchar

SILCHAR
Minister for Food and Public distribution Housing and urban affairs, Consumer Affairs and Cooperation, Kaushik Rai on Friday undertook a series of inspections and review meetings in Silchar to assess market management, road infrastructure, healthcare services and other public service-related issues. During the daylong programme, the Minister interacted with traders, reviewed ongoing and proposed development initiatives, and chaired an important administrative meeting at the District Commissioner's Office.

The Minister began the day with a visit to Fatak Bazar where he held discussions with representatives of the Silchar Foodgrains Merchants' Association and the Fatak Bazar Committee. The meeting focused on the overall condition of the market, issues faced by traders, civic amenities, sanitation, traffic management and other matters relating



ing to public convenience. Discussions were also held on measures to make the market more organised, clean and citizen friendly through coordinated efforts involving the administration, traders and other stakeholders.

The programme was attended by District Commissioner, Cachar, Rahul Kumar Gupta, IAS, Superintendent of Police, Cachar, Sanjeev Kumar Saikia, APS, Director, Municipal Administration, Tonkeshwar Das, ACS, Commissioner, Silchar Municipal Corporation

, Ankur Das, IAS, President of the Silchar Foodgrains Merchants' Association, Pranab Paul Chowdhury and other distinguished members of the business community.

Following the market visit, the Minister, accompanied by District Commissioner Rahul Kumar Gupta, IAS, Superintendent of Police Sanjeev Kumar Saikia, APS, officials of the Silchar Public Works (Roads) Division and representatives of Jhandu Construction carried out a joint site inspection of the proposed four-lane road from Silchar Medical College and Hospital (SMCH) to Birbal Bazar.

During the inspection, the proposed alignment of the four-lane road was examined and various technical and site-specific issues relating to the project were reviewed in detail. The Minister held discussions with the concerned departmental officials and representatives of the executing agency regarding construction planning and project implementation. Necessary directions were issued to ensure timely commencement of the work and expeditious execution of the project.

It's noteworthy to mention here that the proposed four-lane road is expected to significantly improve connectivity between Silchar Medical College and Hospital and the city.

The Minister thereafter visited Silchar Medical College and Hospital (SMCH) to review healthcare services, patient amenities and hospital administration. He held discussions with the concerned authorities and reviewed measures for further improving healthcare delivery and public convenience within the hospital campus.

During the review, the Minister directed the removal of commercial vehicles and private ambulances from inside the hospital premises to facilitate smooth movement of emergency services.

Later in the afternoon, The Minister also participated in a review meeting on the progress and implementation of various developmental projects being undertaken by the Silchar Municipal Corporation. The meeting reviewed the status of ongoing projects, their timely execution and measures required to further improve civic infrastructure and public services in the city.

Detailed discussions were held on enhancing the quality of municipal services, strengthening urban infrastructure, improving cleanliness, solid waste management and sanitation, as well as issues relating to drinking water supply, drainage and road development. Minister Kaushik Rai also directed the officials to take various measures required for the convenience and welfare of the citizens and directed the concerned departments to ensure effective implementation of the projects within the stipulated timelines.

He also instructed the authorities to install proper directional signages at different locations across the hospital campus for the convenience of patients and visitors.

Directions were also issued for earmarking dedicated parking spaces for vehicles belonging to attendants of admitted patients. The Minister also reviewed the existing biomedical waste disposal mechanism and instructed the authorities to establish an efficient Biomedical Waste (BMW) Management System to ensure scientific disposal of biomedical waste generated by the hospital.

The review meeting at SMCH was attended by District Commissioner, Rahul Kumar Gupta, IAS, Superintendent of Police, Sanjeev Kumar Saikia, APS, Principal, Silchar Medical College, Dr. Bhaskar Gupta, Superintendent, SMCH, Dr. Bikash Sandilya and other senior officials.

Assam BJP Steps Up Attack on Akhil Gogoi, Seeks Clarification on Alleged GST Irregularities at Kaziranga Orchid Park

GUWAHATI
The Assam BJP on Friday intensified its offensive against Rajior Dal chief and Sivasagar MLA Akhil Gogoi, demanding a clear response to allegations of Goods and Services Tax (GST) evasion and financial irregularities linked to the Kaziranga Orchid and Biodiversity Park. Addressing a press conference at the party's state headquarters, BJP spokesperson Kamal Kumar Medhi alleged that Gogoi had failed to provide a direct answer to charges raised by Assam Finance Minister Jayanta Malla Baruah during the recent Assembly session. According to Medhi, Gogoi had attempted to divert attention from the central issues instead of addressing the allegations surrounding the park's financial management.

The BJP claimed that the Kaziranga Orchid and Biodiversity Park generates annual revenue of approximately 10-12 crore, including 7-8 crore collected through entry fees. Based on these figures, the party alleged that nearly 1.5 crore in GST should have been paid annually and claimed that GST liabilities amounting to 12-15 crore may have accumulated over the past eight years. The ruling party also alleged that revenue generated from evening cultural programmes had not been properly reflected in the annual accounts maintained by the cooperative society managing the park. Further raising questions over the park's finances, BJP leaders alleged that entry fee collections were deposited into personal bank accounts of employees and sought an explanation regarding the handling of such transactions.

Medhi challenged Gogoi to publicly disclose the total number of visitors to the park over the last eight years and make available daily financial records, which the BJP claimed were regularly submitted to him.

Coal-Laden Truck Stranded, Massive Traffic Snarl Hits Haflong-Silchar Highway



HAFLONG

Vehicular movement along the Haflong-Silchar stretch of National Highway 27 was severely disrupted on Friday after a coal-laden truck became stranded at Dolaichung under Harangajao Police Station in Assam's Dima Hasao district.

The truck reportedly developed problems while traversing the highway, leading to a complete traffic bottleneck and bringing movement along the crucial route to a standstill.

Hundreds of vehicles, including passenger buses, private cars and goods carriers, were left stranded on both sides of the highway as long queues stretched for several

kilometres. Commuters faced prolonged delays, with many remaining stuck on the road for hours.

The Haflong-Silchar corridor serves as a vital transport link connecting the hill district of Dima Hasao with the Barak Valley region, and any disruption on the route often has a cascading impact on passenger and freight movement. Officials said efforts were being initiated to remove the stranded vehicle and restore normal traffic flow. However, no immediate timeline was available for clearing the congestion.

Authorities have advised motorists to avoid the route, if possible, or be prepared for significant delays until the highway is fully reopened.

The incident once again highlights the vulnerability of key transportation corridors in the hill district, where the breakdown of a single heavy vehicle can lead to major disruptions in traffic movement.

Tripura Calls for India-Bangladesh Cooperation to Tackle Recurring Flooding in Border Towns

AGARTALA

Tripura Public Works Department and Health Secretary Kiran Gitte has said that recurring flooding in Agartala and several border towns cannot be resolved through state-level interventions alone, stressing the need for coordinated action between India and Bangladesh to achieve a long-term solution. Addressing a brainstorming session on waterlogging in Agartala on Thursday, Gitte noted that many of the state's drainage channels ultimately flow into Bangladesh, where inadequate downstream drainage often causes water to back up during periods of heavy rainfall.

He explained that water from channels such as Kalapania and Katakhal enters Bangladesh, but poor drainage infrastructure across the border frequently results in flooding in low-lying areas of Tripura.

"The problem affects not only Agartala but also border towns such as Kailashahar and Belonia.



A joint action plan involving both countries can provide a sustainable solution," Gitte said.

The official stated that Bangladesh authorities have shown interest in addressing the issue through discussions held under the Joint River Commission framework and during interactions between district-level officials on both sides of the border.

He suggested that funding for cross-border drainage and flood-management projects could be mobilised either through the Government of India or the Bangladesh government, depending on the nature and location of the proposed works. Drawing parallels with the India-funded Agartala-Akhaura railway project, Gitte

said the growing connectivity between the two countries through road, rail and inland waterways demonstrates the potential for similar cooperation in flood management and water-resource planning. As part of efforts to address the problem scientifically, the National Institute of Hydrology (NIH), Roorkee, has been tasked with conducting a comprehensive study of Agartala's chronic waterlogging issues and recommending long-term mitigation measures.

Gitte also highlighted the importance of strengthening the remaining 650-metre stretch of the northern embankment of the Howrah River. He said the project could substantially reduce flooding in several parts of Agartala once families currently residing along the embankment are rehabilitated. According to him, the reinforced embankment would help safeguard a large urban stretch extending from Maharaj Ganja Bazar to the City Centre area from floodwaters during periods of

heavy rainfall.

However, he cautioned that strengthening the northern embankment could increase hydraulic pressure on the southern bank of the river, creating new challenges that would require careful engineering and planning.

The secretary further outlined plans to improve Agartala's drinking water supply through greater utilisation of surface water from the Gomati and other rivers. He noted that the city, which has a resident population of around six lakh and an additional floating population of nearly two lakh people every day, currently meets only 70 to 80 per cent of its drinking water demand through existing infrastructure.

The remarks come amid increasing concerns over urban flooding in Tripura's major towns, with officials exploring both domestic and cross-border solutions to address the recurring problem and build climate-resilient infrastructure for the future.

Tripura CM Completes Online Self-Enumeration for Census 2027, Urges Public Participation



AGARTALA

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Friday completed the online self-enumeration process for the upcoming Census 2027, urging citizens to actively participate in the nationwide exercise and contribute to accurate data collection for future development planning.

The Chief Minister carried out the self-registration process from

his official residence and described the census as a critical instrument for governance, policymaking and socio-economic development.

"Census is not merely a statistical exercise but one of the key foundations for planning and implementing various developmental initiatives," Saha said after completing the online process.

He noted that the self-enumeration facility has been introduced to

make Census 2027 more accessible, transparent and technology-driven, allowing citizens to submit their information digitally with greater convenience and accuracy.

According to the Chief Minister, reliable census data plays a crucial role in formulating public policies, allocating resources and designing welfare programmes that address the needs of different sections of society.

Highlighting the importance of the exercise, Saha appealed to residents across Tripura to participate actively in the self-enumeration process to ensure comprehensive and accurate demographic data.

He said broad public participation would help create a stronger database for planning infrastructure, healthcare, education, employment and other development initiatives in the years ahead.

The online self-enumeration

initiative forms part of the Centre's efforts to modernise the Census process through the use of digital technology, improve efficiency in data collection and encourage greater citizen involvement.

Census 2027 will be India's first fully digital census exercise, with provisions for citizens to self-enumerate online before the commencement of field verification by enumerators. The exercise is expected to provide critical demographic, social and economic data that will guide policy decisions and development planning at both the national and state levels.

Officials believe the introduction of digital self-enumeration will enhance accuracy, reduce processing time and make the census exercise more citizen-friendly while strengthening the country's statistical framework for future governance.

Arunachal Cabinet Approves Rs7,834 Crore Reform Package, Unveils Major Push for Infrastructure, Education and Employment

ITANAGAR

In one of the most significant policy decisions in recent years, the Arunachal Pradesh Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Pema Khandu, has approved a comprehensive reform and investment package worth 7,834 crore aimed at accelerating infrastructure development, improving education, modernising power systems, promoting entrepreneurship and enhancing governance across the state. The decisions were taken during a Cabinet meeting that cleared a series of flagship initiatives covering roads, rural connectivity, power infrastructure, human capital development and ease-of-doing-business reforms.

A major portion of the package has been allocated to four flagship Chief Minister's Comprehensive Schemes for the 2026-29 period.

The Cabinet approved 72,334 crore for the second phase of the Chief Minister's Comprehensive State Road Development Plan (CMCSRDP) to improve connectivity in district headquarters, sub-divisional headquarters and the Capital Complex. The government also directed departments to complete all pending projects under Phase-I by March 2027.

To strengthen connectivity in remote areas, the Cabinet sanctioned 2,000 crore under the Chief

Minister's Comprehensive State Rural Road Development Programme (CMCSRDP). The programme will focus on constructing all-weather roads and bridges in villages that remain outside the coverage of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY).

In the power sector, 2,000 crore has been earmarked for the Chief Minister's Comprehensive State Power Development Programme (CMCSPDP). The initiative aims to modernise electricity infrastructure, improve distribution efficiency and reduce Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses to 18 per cent by March 2029. The Cabinet also approved 71,500 crore for the second phase of Mission Shikshit Arunachal (2026-29). The education mission follows an investment of 73,12.5 crore during the 2023-26 period and will focus on bridging infrastructure gaps in schools, strengthening teacher training programmes and improving learning outcomes through better monitoring and evaluation systems. Among the key governance reforms approved was the launch of AI-powered E-HRMS 2.0, a digital human resource management platform for government employees designed to improve administrative efficiency and service delivery.

Centre Likely to Push FCRA Amendment Bill in Monsoon Session Amid Strong Opposition from Meghalaya

GUWAHATI

The Centre is expected to take up the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026 during the Monsoon Session of Parliament beginning July 20, despite sustained opposition from the Meghalaya government, church bodies and civil society organisations that fear the proposed changes could adversely affect institutions funded through foreign contributions.

The Bill, introduced in the Lok Sabha on March 25 by Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai, was initially scheduled for consideration earlier this year but was deferred following protests by Opposition parties.

At the heart of the controversy is a provision that seeks to empower a designated authority to take temporary and subsequently permanent control of the foreign contributions and assets of organisations whose FCRA registrations are cancelled, surrendered or allowed to lapse.

Under the proposed amendments, assets such as schools, hospitals, land and other properties created wholly or partly with foreign funding could be transferred to government agencies or disposed of, with the proceeds deposited into the Consolidated Fund of India.

The proposal has generated considerable concern in Meghalaya, where



Christian organisations play a central role in providing education, healthcare and social welfare services, particularly in rural and remote areas. Christians constitute nearly three-fourths of the state's population, and church-run institutions have long supplemented government efforts in delivering essential services.

In a bid to convey the state's concerns, Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma led a delegation of church leaders to New Delhi on July 5 for discussions with Union Home Minister Amit Shah. The delegation included representatives of the Presbyterian Church of India, the North East India Christian Council, the Catholic Archdiocese of Shillong and the Garo Baptist Convention.

During the meeting, Sangma urged the Centre to ensure that any amendments to the FCRA framework do not undermine institutions that have historically contributed to the state's development. He emphasised the need for legislation that takes into account Meghalaya's unique social and institutional realities.

Church leaders who attended the meeting later described the discussions as constructive. According to them, the Union Home Minister assured the delegation that the concerns raised would be examined carefully and that further consultations with stakeholders would be undertaken before moving ahead. They also noted an assurance that any new provisions would not be applied retrospectively.

Despite these assurances, opposition to the proposed legislation has remained strong.

The Khasi Jaintia Christian Leaders Forum (KJCLF) has urged the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly to adopt a resolution calling for the withdrawal of the proposed Bill and the FCRA Amendment Rules, 2026, citing concerns over the future of welfare institutions dependent on foreign funding. The appeal follows a similar resolution passed by the Kerala Assembly earlier this month.

KJCLF secretary Rev. Edwin H. Kharkongor warned that the proposed amendments could significantly affect organisations working in areas where government services remain limited, particularly in sectors such as education, healthcare and community development. He also called on other northeastern states to collectively voice their concerns.

Significantly, reservations over the Bill have also emerged from within the

ruling BJP in Meghalaya. Senior BJP legislator Alexander Laloo Hek has advocated wider consultations, arguing that the amendments could impact charitable and non-profit organisations engaged in public welfare activities.

Opposition parties, including the Congress and the Voice of the People Party (VPP), have also criticised the proposed law, contending that it could increase government control over educational, healthcare and community institutions established through foreign assistance.

Civil society groups have echoed these concerns, arguing that the Bill goes beyond regulating foreign contributions and may affect the autonomy of organisations that have traditionally functioned independently while serving public interests.

The Union government, however, has defended the proposed amendments, stating that they are intended to plug legal loopholes, strengthen oversight mechanisms and prevent the misuse of foreign contributions. Officials have maintained that genuine organisations engaged in lawful welfare activities have nothing to fear from the new provisions.

As Parliament prepares for the Monsoon Session, the debate over the proposed FCRA amendments is likely to intensify, particularly in Meghalaya and other northeastern states where church-run institutions play a significant role in social development.

The outcome could have far-reaching implications for thousands of students, patients and beneficiaries who depend on educational institutions, healthcare facilities and welfare programmes operated by organisations receiving foreign contributions.

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PM Modi flags off India’s first hydrogen-powered train from Haryana



CHANDUGARH

Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off India’s first hydrogen-powered train connecting Jind and Sonapat from the Jind railway station, marking a major milestone in the country’s push towards clean and sustainable rail transport.

India joined a select group of countries, such as Germany, Japan, China and the US that are exploring the use of hydrogen for cleaner rail transportation. Modi also laid the foundation stone for various development projects worth Rs 15,000 crore in Haryana.

Addressing the public gathering after the flagging off of the train, Modi said, “If we take a look at the history of railways, we find that the hallmark of 19th-century railways was the steam engine. The 20th century’s hallmark became diesel- and electricity-powered trains, and now the 21st-century railway is hydrogen-powered.”

“Today, Jind has become a picture of the BJP-NDA’s model of good governance. Over the past few years, the entire state of Haryana has embarked on a new path of development. Today’s programme is infusing new energy into this mission of the BJP’s ‘double-engine’ government,” he said.

Calling the launch of the

hydrogen-powered train a historic milestone, Modi said the project had secured Jind and Haryana a permanent place in India’s railway history.

“Today, the name of Jind and Haryana has been etched into the pages of history. From here, the country has received its first hydrogen train. Just as we remember that India’s first train ran between Bombay and Thane, the names of Jind, Sonapat and Haryana will now be remembered whenever hydrogen trains are discussed,” he said.

He said that nearly 99 per cent of India’s railway network has been electrified over the past 12 years.

Modi mentioned the conflict in the Gulf region and the Strait of Hormuz and its impact on India’s crucial imports. “Had this situation arisen before 2014, our railways would have been completely paralysed,” he said, adding that a large part of the Indian Railways’ fleet used to run on diesel. Recalling his long association with the region, Modi said that visiting Jind brought back memories from the early days of his organisational work. “For me, coming to Jind is like opening a window to old memories. Several decades ago, I first came to Jind for organisational work, and the affection and love you all gave me then is something I have

not forgotten to this day.”

During the event, PM Modi also handed over symbolic keys to beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin and said Jind was becoming a picture of the NDA’s governance through the Centre’s development initiatives.

Modi promised athletes all possible facilities, saying India is preparing to host the 2030 Commonwealth Games and also aspires to host the Olympic Games in 2036.

Modi also struck an emotional chord with the audience when he remarked that while the city’s famous ghee and ghevar have remained unchanged over the years, its attitude (tevar) has transformed.

“I have visited Jind for years. Jind’s ghee and ghevar haven’t changed, but its tevar has changed,” he said, drawing applause from the gathering.

By saying Jind’s “tevar” has changed, Modi suggested that the region has embraced a forward-looking approach, backing growth, modernisation and improved connectivity while preserving its cultural identity.

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw described the launch as a historic technological milestone, saying India now possesses the complete technology required to develop hydrogen-powered trains. Modi also inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for development projects worth around Rs 14,700 crore in Jind in the presence of Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini and Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. Among the key projects, he dedicated to the nation and laid the foundation stone for National Highway projects worth over Rs 12,470 crore in Haryana.

Sonam Wangchuk ‘shifted’ to hospital from protest site; wife says no treatment without her consent

CJP FOUNDER ABHIJEET DIPKE STARTS INDEFINITE HUNGER STRIKE; JULY 20 MARCH TO ‘PROCEED AS PLANNED’



NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police on Saturday morning cracked down on the protesters at Jantar Mantar and “forcefully took away” activist Sonam Wangchuk from the protest site.

Wangchuk has been on a hunger strike for the past 20 days demanding the resignation of the education minister over the alleged NEET paper leak.

Wangchuk’s wife, Gitanjali J Angmo, said he was shifted to the Safdarjung Hospital, and asserted that no medical treatment should be administered to the activist without her consent.

“He is at Safdarjung Hospital. I forbid them from administering anything without my consent. No treatment should start without my consent. I hold everybody accountable if anything happens,” Angmo told.

Questioning the decision to hospitalise him, she claimed Wangchuk appeared fine on Friday.

“Yesterday, he was doing fine. There was no need to bring him to the hospital. It’s my right under Article 32. Without my consent and my doctor’s consent, nothing can be administered,” she said.

In a statement, Delhi Police said Wangchuk was shifted for “essential

medical care” following expert medical advice and in compliance with the high court’s orders.

According to a report, police landed at Jantar Mantar early on Saturday morning and shifted Wangchuk to a government hospital despite resistance from the part of Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) activists who have been spearheading protests against Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (New Delhi) Sachin Sharma told PTI that Wangchuk was hospitalised in accordance with the Delhi High Court’s directions after his health worsened and is receiving the required medical intervention under medical supervision.

Some protesters tried to obstruct the exercise, leading to a brief commotion, but police personnel exercised maximum restraint and completed the operation successfully, it added.

The police also appealed to the protesters to end their agitation, saying they should peacefully vacate the protest site at the earliest.

The Delhi Police reportedly arrived at the site in plain clothes. An ambulance was also present. They covered the stage with bedsheets and allegedly forcefully removed Sonam Wangchuk to a hospital.

Soon after the police action, Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) founder Abhijeet Dipke alleged that the protesters were subjected to a police crackdown.

“I have been beaten up and put under detention by Delhi Police,” Dipke said in a post on X.

In another post, he alleged that the police were beating protesters and forcibly taking Wangchuk away.

Wangchuk has been on an indefinite hunger strike since June 28 in support of the CJP-led protest over alleged irregularities in the NEET examination and the reported deaths of students linked to the controversy.

His health had shown a steady decline over the past three weeks.

Doctors said he had lost nearly 9.5 kg since the beginning of the hunger strike, while his blood pressure and

blood sugar levels had remained under close monitoring.

The Delhi High Court has been monitoring the medical condition of Wangchuk and has directed that his health be regularly assessed and that appropriate medical intervention be provided if required.

On Friday night, Wangchuk had said he was still determined to continue the fast despite his worsening condition, claiming he had “lost 20 per cent of my body” during the 20-day hunger strike.

“Governments have fallen over the price of onions. ‘I have lost 20 per cent of my body. It is time for this government to listen to the voice of the youth,’ he had said in a video message, while reiterating his support for the students’ movement.

Sonam Wangchuk is weak due to prolonged fasting and dehydration but is currently stable, Safdarjung Hospital said on Saturday.

“Mr Sonam Wangchuk is weak due to prolonged fasting and dehydration. Although he is currently stable, he requires continuous observation, monitoring and treatment to restore his body parameters,” the hospital said in a statement.

Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) founder Abhijeet Dipke on Saturday announced an indefinite hunger strike, hours after the Delhi Police “forcefully took away” activist Sonam Wangchuk from the protest site in Jantar Mantar.

“Abhijeet Dipke sits on an indefinite hunger strike. The ‘Chalo Sansad’ march on 20 July will proceed as planned,” the CJP said in a post on X.

In a separate post from his account, Abhijeet said, “I am starting an indefinite hunger strike beginning right now”.

The development comes after the Delhi Police on Saturday morning cracked down on the protesters at Jantar Mantar and shifted Sonam Wangchuk to the Safdarjung Hospital.

In a statement, Delhi Police said Wangchuk was shifted for “essential medical care” following expert medical advice and in compliance with the high court’s orders.

The police also appealed to the protesters to end their agitation, saying they should peacefully vacate the protest site at the earliest.

Soon after the police action, Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) founder Abhijeet Dipke alleged that the protesters were subjected to a police crackdown.

“I have been beaten up and put under detention by Delhi Police,” Dipke said in a post on X.

Dipke claimed that police personnel arrived at the protest site early in the morning and removed Wangchuk by force.

“At 7 am, when I stepped out to freshen up, police goons arrived here. They dragged Sonam Sir away while hurling abuse at him. A 60-year-old man, who had been on a hunger strike for 20 days and hadn’t eaten a thing was forcibly dragged away by the Delhi Police.

“We have no idea where they have taken him. When I received the news and was on my way to Jantar Mantar from my friend’s house, the police assaulted me as well. These aren’t police officers; they are RSS goons. I had returned to my country from abroad; am I a criminal? They are goons-not police, but RSS goons,” he told reporters.

Meanwhile, Cockroach Janata Party Chief Spokesperson Saurav Das also claimed that police had detained Dipke and were removing Wangchuk from the protest site.

“The Delhi Police has stopped Abhijeet Dipke where he was staying. People are telling me that Sonam Wangchuk is being picked up from the protest site. Students are being lathicharged,” he wrote on X.

Wangchuk had been on an indefinite hunger strike since June 28 in support of the CJP-led protest over alleged irregularities in the NEET examination and the reported deaths of students linked to the controversy.

Dipke’s announcement came amid continued protests at Jantar Mantar, with AISA activists Neha, Aameen and Manish also carrying on with their hunger strike after Wangchuk’s hospitalisation.

INTERNATIONAL

Europe’s early heat wave led to a spike in deaths, may have killed over 10,000

LONDON

Heat that hit Europe exceptionally early and hard this year appears to have led to a spike in deaths, with well over 10,000 more people dying at the height of the heat wave than would normally have been expected, according to figures that are still emerging across the continent.

Measures of what researchers call “excess mortality” — the difference between the normally expected number of deaths and the actual number — spiked in late June, when parts of Europe experienced record temperatures. Experts caution that it takes a while for a full picture to emerge, and that many heat-related deaths will never formally be recorded as such. For example, a heart attack, which can be triggered by extreme heat exposure, especially in people who are older or have underlying health issues, may be listed on a death certificate simply as a heart attack.

It’s an alarming start to the summer. Several heat waves have killed thousands of people in the past few years in Europe. Still, 2003 stands as the deadliest year in Europe for heat, with about 70,000 deaths. The frequency and intensity of heat waves are supercharged by climate change, which comes from the burning of fuels like coal, oil and gas.

The EuroMOMO mortality monitoring hub, which receives data from two dozen countries, gave an estimate of 14,260 for excess mortality from all causes in the week ending June 28, more than 12,000 of those deaths being among people age 65 and older. That’s out of a total 84,583 deaths that week. Figures in the preceding and following weeks were far lower.

Lasse Vestergaard of Denmark’s Statens Serum Institut, which coordinates EuroMOMO, said that “we attribute this to the heat wave affecting quite



a lot of countries in Europe, and we do that because there is no other obvious explanation that could explain such a high excess mortality happening at the moment.”

Such a high excess in a single week is “highly unusual,” he added. EuroMOMO doesn’t give absolute numbers for individual countries, but found the highest rates of excess in France, Belgium and Germany.

Nations that bore the brunt of the heat have issued their own estimates — which don’t always follow the same methodology or timelines. Here is a snapshot of heat-related deaths being reported by various countries.

Germany
Germany’s disease control center, the Robert Koch Institute, directly attributed 6,830 deaths to heat this year through early July, 6,470 of them among people 65 and older. Temperatures in Germany late last month hit their highest levels since

records began, peaking with a measurement of 41.7 degrees Celsius (107.06 Fahrenheit) on June 28, according to the German Weather Service.

United Kingdom
Britain’s Met Office, the national weather agency, said that 2,700 people are believed to have died from heat-related causes during heat waves in England and Wales in May and June. Of those deaths, it says that about 550 occurred in late May and about 2,200 in late June. This year brought national heat records for May of 35.1 Celsius (95.18 Fahrenheit) and for June of more than 37 Celsius (98.6 Fahrenheit).

France
France’s public health authority said there were at least 2,000 more deaths in the week of June 22-28 than the previous week, when temperatures were already climbing. France recorded its hottest-ever days on June 24 and 25, when the Météo France weather service said the national thermal indicator

— an average of daily temperatures measured at 30 weather stations — hit 30 Celsius (86 Fahrenheit). More than 40% of France saw peak temperatures of above 40 Celsius (104 Fahrenheit).

Spain
An estimated 937 deaths in Spain in June were attributed to excess heat, according to the Carlos III Health Institute, an official Spanish monitoring agency. Last month was Spain’s second-hottest June on record, with temperatures 3.2 Celsius (5.8 Fahrenheit) above the monthly normal average, according to the AEMET weather agency. A five-day heat wave saw temperatures regularly surpass 40 Celsius (104 Fahrenheit), AEMET said.

Belgium
There were 1,747 deaths above what would usually be expected during the heat wave that ran from June 18 to July 1, according to Sciensano, Belgium’s public health institute. It said that “a certain excess mortality is expected during heat waves, as during waves of cold weather and flu epidemics. Nevertheless, the heatwave of June 2026 is distinguished by its exceptional breadth.”

At the peak of the heat wave, there was a measurement of 35.5 Celsius (95.9 Fahrenheit) on June 26, the IRM weather institute said.

Netherlands
An initial estimate of excess death figures from the June heat wave found that the Netherlands had 480 more deaths than expected, according to the public health service. Increased mortality was particularly notable in eastern and southern areas, where the temperatures were the highest. The country saw its highest temperature ever for June, with the Dutch weather service registering 36.8 degrees Celsius (98.24 Fahrenheit). That’s more than a degree Celsius (1.8F) higher than the previous record, set in 1947.

A huge landslide in southwest China buries homes and force more than 1,000 to evacuate



BEIJING

A landslide in the southwestern Chinese city of Chongqing buried residential buildings, forced more than 1,100 residents to evacuate and trapped an undetermined number of people, state media reported.

State broadcaster CCTV said at least 10 people were rescued from the debris, and that search and rescue operations were ongoing.

CCTV said the landslide occurred at around 9:08 a.m. in Chongqing’s Pengshui County. Massive amounts of rocks and soil washed downslope, burying more than 10 residen-

tial buildings.

Images by CCTV showed part of a mountainside collapsing onto a residential area. Several buildings were located next to the collapse site, while rescue crews combed through the debris. Rescue efforts were hindered by the unstable terrain and the ongoing risk of another landslide, according to the broadcaster.

Photos showed large slabs of rock sliding beside buildings into a waterway below. Two buildings that looked about five and 15 stories high were damaged but still standing.

The rain-triggered landslide occurred near a section of the Wujiang River,

which cuts through karst mountains peppered with small towns and terraces.

Authorities said they sent more than 8,000 disaster-relief items to Chongqing, including tents, folding beds and family emergency kits.

Several power poles were buried, disrupting power supplies. Authorities said water, electricity and gas supplies were suspended within a 1-kilometer (0.6-mile) radius of the affected area to prevent further disruptions.

Pengshui County is located in the southeast part of Chongqing, bordering the provinces of Hubei and Guizhou.

London Festival Showcases the Rich Cultural Heritage of Northeast India, Draws Over 500 Participants



KRC TIMES NEWS DESK

LONDON: Members of the Northeast Indian diaspora in the United Kingdom came together to celebrate the rich cultural heritage of the region at the United Colours of North East India Festival 2026, held at the Indian Gymkhana Club in London on July 11.

Organised by North East Indians in UK (NEI-UK) with support from Pradyot Bikram Manikya Debbarma, head of Tripura's erstwhile royal family, the volunteer-driven festival brought together communities from all eight Northeastern states of India in a vibrant celebration of unity, identity and cultural diversity. The event featured authentic regional cuisine, folk music, live performances, traditional handloom and handicrafts, cultural exhibitions and community activities. It offered visitors an opportunity to experience the unique traditions of Northeast India while strengthening ties within the diaspora.

"We are bringing a piece of our unique heritage, living history and soul to the world by turning our ancestral traditions into a bridge for cross-cultural learning and understanding," said Susan Nonsieg from Meghalaya, one of the festival participants.

Speaking about the vision behind the initiative, Thoiba Thoudam of Manipur said the organisers wanted to create a global platform that would connect people from Northeast India

and friends of the region. "It was our desire to bring people from the Northeast and around the world together to celebrate the richness, diversity and beauty of the region through food, folk songs, music, handloom displays and much more," he said.

Organisers said the festival also aimed to address the limited awareness and common misconceptions about Northeast India among international audiences. They expressed hope that the event would encourage greater understanding of the region's geography, history, communities and cultural traditions. Apart from showcasing culture, the festival also served as a networking platform for professionals, entrepreneurs, artists, students and families from the Northeast living across the UK. According to the organisers, such gatherings help build stronger community ties, encourage collaboration and foster a greater sense of belonging among members of the diaspora.

The organisers described the event as the first of its kind in London to celebrate all eight Northeastern states on such a large scale. More than 500 people attended the festival, reflecting the growing visibility, unity and pride of the Northeast Indian community in the United Kingdom.

A major highlight of the event was the enthusiastic participation of second-generation members of the diaspora. Many young people born or raised in the UK experienced, for the first time, the diverse traditions, music, arts, handloom and authentic cuisines of all eight Northeastern states under one roof. Organisers said it was especially encouraging to see younger generations embracing their roots, adding that preserving and promoting the rich cultural identity of Northeast India would depend on them carrying the legacy forward in the years ahead.



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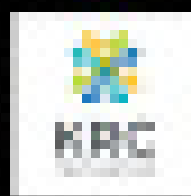


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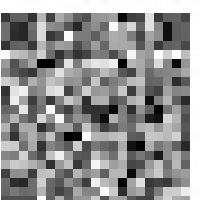


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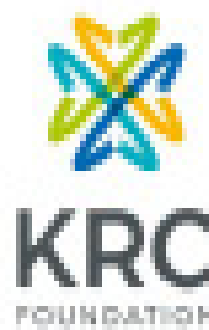
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