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PERSPECTIVE

Sitting alone, our mind can go into the past and create hell or imagine a future which is beautiful. Heaven and hell aren't a place; they are created in our minds. - Harsh Goenka, Chairman, RPG Enterprises

Fresh Arson Attacks in Manipur's Kamjong Trigger Kuki-Naga Blame Game

IMPHAL

Fresh violence broke out in Manipur's Kamjong district on Wednesday after multiple villages along the Indo-Myanmar border were reportedly set on fire, prompting Kuki and Naga organisations to trade allegations over responsibility for the attacks and raising fresh concerns over security in the sensitive frontier region. According to local reports, Phaimol, a Kuki-majority village, and Kongkan Thana and Shangkalok, two Tangkhul Naga villages, were among the settlements affected by the latest incidents of arson. Several houses were reportedly destroyed in the fires, though the exact extent of the damage and details of any casualties remained unclear. Authorities had not issued an official assessment of the situation by the time of reporting, and independent verification of the claims made by the rival groups was not immediately possible. The incidents have intensified tensions in an area that has witnessed periodic ethnic and security-related disturbances owing to its proximity to the Indo-Myanmar border and the presence of multiple armed groups operating in the region. In a statement issued on Wednesday, the Kuki Inpi Manipur (KIM) alleged that Phaimol village was attacked by cadres of the National Socialist Council of Nagalim-Isak-Muivah (NSCN-IM) with the support of the Shanni Nationalities Army (SNA), an armed group based in neighbouring Myanmar. The organisation claimed that the attackers crossed into Indian territory during the early hours of the day before carrying out the arson attack on the village. KIM also raised questions over the security situation in the area, alleging that personnel of the Assam Rifles, who had been stationed in the vicinity to protect the village, had vacated their post only a day before the incident.

WHO SAID WHAT

In discussions with Prime Minister Modi, centering on urgent issues including economic security and energy security, we will aim to deepen the strategic cooperative relationship between Japan and India in light of the current international situation, promote mutually complementary cooperation, and further strengthen the Japan-India "Special Strategic Global Partnership." - Sanae Takaichi, PM, Japan

Gauhati High Court Upholds Foreigner Declaration, Rules Citizenship Not Proven Despite Multiple Documents

GUWAHATI

The Gauhati High Court has upheld an order of a Foreigners Tribunal declaring an Assam resident a foreigner, ruling that the individual failed to legally establish his Indian citizenship despite producing 15 documents and oral testimony in support of his claim. A Division Bench comprising Justices Kalyan Rai Surana and Shamima Jahan dismissed the petition challenging the Tribunal's decision, observing that the evidence presented was either legally inadmissible or insufficient to prove citizenship under the law. The court reiterated that under Section 9 of the Foreigners Act, 1946, the burden of proving Indian citizenship rests on the person whose nationality is under question. It held that the petitioner had failed to discharge that burden. According to court records, the petitioner, a daily wage labourer born in 1988 and residing in rented accommodation near Guwahati, had sought to establish his Indian citizenship through a series of documentary records. These included extracts of the 1951 National Register of Citizens (NRC) containing the names of his father and grandparents, electoral rolls from different years, a land deed executed by his grandfather



in 1973, a school certificate, a Permanent Account Number (PAN) card and an Elector's Photo Identity Card (EPIC). His father also appeared before the Tribunal and testified regarding the family's lineage. However, both the Foreigners Tribunal and the High Court found that the documents failed to establish a legally acceptable linkage between the petitioner and the ancestors through whom he claimed citizenship. One of the key documents relied

Northeast Becomes Key Hub of India-Japan Strategic, Economic Cooperation

GUWAHATI, JUL 2

Northeast India is increasingly emerging as a vital pillar of the growing India-Japan partnership, with the region assuming greater significance in strategic, economic and connectivity initiatives that align with New Delhi's Act East Policy and Tokyo's vision of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific. Japanese policymakers have repeatedly highlighted the Northeast as a region where the shared geopolitical and developmental objectives of the two countries intersect, positioning it as a gateway connecting South Asia with Southeast Asia. Japan's State Minister for Foreign Affairs Iwao Horii had underscored the importance of the region while addressing the Kizuna Conclave in Shillong in February this year. "Northeast India is a region where India's Act East Policy, promoted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Japan's vision of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific are put into practice," Horii had said. The focus on the Northeast was



further reaffirmed during the 18th Japan-India Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue held in January this year, when External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and his Japanese counterpart Toshimitsu Motegi discussed measures to strengthen connectivity in Northeast India and adjoining regions. The two sides also reviewed the progress of the India-Japan Act East Forum, which has emerged as an important platform for advancing collaborative projects in the region. The growing importance attached to the Northeast has been reflected in

a series of high-level visits and engagements involving Japanese leaders and representatives of Northeastern states over the past two years. In February 2026, Horii visited Assam and Meghalaya, where he held meetings with the chief ministers of the two states, participated in the India-Japan Intellectual Conclave and visited the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Guwahati. Earlier, in May 2025, then Speaker of Japan's House of Representatives Fukushima Nukaga visited Assam and interacted with state leaders. During the visit, he toured IIT Guwahati and the semiconductor assembly and testing facility being developed by Tata Electronics. In December 2025, a delegation from Japan's Kagawa Prefecture led by Vice Governor Oyama Satoshi visited Manipur and New Delhi to explore cooperation in human resource development, with a particular focus on nursing care, hospitality and workforce mobility. Several Northeastern states have

also stepped up direct engagement with Japanese institutions and prefectural governments through agreements covering skill development, employment generation, tourism and technology transfer. During a visit to Japan in April this year, Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding aimed at creating skill development and employment opportunities for 5,000 youths from the state over the next five years. Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu visited Japan in October 2025 and held discussions on cultural exchanges and tourism promotion. Proposals examined during the visit included the development of a Sakura avenue in Arunachal Pradesh and the establishment of sister-city relationships between Nagano and Tawang, Kanazawa and Ziro, and Kobe and Itanagar. Assam has also expanded its engagement with Japan. During a visit to the country in January 2025, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma

witnessed the signing of an agreement aimed at facilitating skill development and overseas employment opportunities for 20,000 youths from the state over a five-year period. Nagaland, meanwhile, has sought collaboration in agriculture, workforce development and the creative economy. During a visit to Japan in July 2025, the state's leadership signed an agreement with Kochi Prefecture and Japan's ARMS organisation to promote agricultural technology transfer and capacity-building initiatives. The state also leveraged its participation in World Expo 2025 Osaka to engage with Japanese stakeholders in animation, design and other creative industries. At the institutional level, the India-Japan Act East Forum remains the principal mechanism driving cooperation in the Northeast. Established in December 2017, the forum coordinates development projects that support India's Act East Policy and Japan's Indo-Pacific strategy.

Hundreds of Vehicles Stranded as Traffic Gridlock Worsens on Lumding-Haflong Highway Stretch



LUMDING

Hundreds of commercial vehicles have remained stranded for the past several days along the Lumding-Haflong stretch of National Highway-27, as deteriorating road conditions and delays in ongoing construction and repair works continue to trigger severe traffic congestion on one of Assam's most important transport corridors. The prolonged disruption has caused significant hardship for truck drivers, transport operators and passengers, while also raising concerns over the movement of emergency services in the region. According to reports, the unfinished and damaged sections of the highway, particularly between Jatinga and Harangajao in Dima Hasao district, have led to recurring traffic bottlenecks, with long queues of trucks and other vehicles stretching across several kilometres. Transporters said many vehicles have been forced to remain stationary for extended periods, with some drivers reportedly stranded for hours and, in certain cases, days while waiting for traffic movement to resume. The congestion has severely affected the transportation of goods, disrupting supply chains and causing delays in the delivery of essential commodities and

commercial cargo. Passenger vehicles have also been caught in the gridlock, adding to the difficulties faced by commuters travelling between the Barak Valley and other parts of the state. Residents and travellers expressed concern that ambulances, fire service vehicles and other emergency response units have also reportedly been affected by the traffic jams, potentially hampering the delivery of critical services during emergencies. Local residents alleged that despite repeated instances of severe congestion and several road accidents linked to the poor condition of the highway, effective long-term measures have yet to be implemented to address the recurring problem. They claimed that the administrations of both Hojai and Dima Hasao districts have been unable to provide a lasting solution to the traffic crisis, which has become a frequent occurrence along the route. Drivers operating on the highway said the damaged stretches have made travel increasingly difficult and unsafe, particularly during adverse weather conditions. They noted that ongoing delays in completing repair and construction work have further worsened the situation and increased operational costs for transporters. Industry stakeholders warned that prolonged disruptions on the route could have wider economic implications, given the highway's importance for trade and commerce in the region. National Highway-27 serves as a critical road link connecting Lumding with Haflong and Silchar, facilitating the movement of passengers and goods between the Brahmaputra Valley, the hill districts and the Barak Valley.

Assam Budget Session to Begin July 6, Full State Budget Scheduled for July 10

GUWAHATI

The Assam Legislative Assembly's Budget Session will commence on July 6, with the state government's full Budget for the financial year 2026-27 set to be presented on July 10, according to the provisional business calendar issued by the Assembly Secretariat. Finance Minister Jayanta Malla Baruah will table the Annual Financial Statement, outlining the government's revenue and expenditure estimates for the current financial year. The budget is expected to provide a detailed roadmap for the state's development priorities and fiscal strategy following the recently concluded Assembly elections. The session is scheduled to continue until July 31 and will comprise 16 sittings, during which legislators are expected to deliberate on key financial proposals, government policies and legislative business. The upcoming budget assumes particular significance as it will be the first full-fledged financial statement of the Himanta Biswa Sarma-led government after securing a second consecutive term in office. Earlier this year, ahead of the Assembly elections, the state government had presented a vote-on-account budget to meet essential expenditure requirements until a full budget could be placed before the House. On February 17, then Finance Minister Ajanta Neog presented an interim budget with an outlay of ₹62,294.78 crore, enabling the government to continue routine spending and ongoing programmes during the election period. The full budget presentation comes in the wake of the National Democratic Alliance's decisive electoral victory in the Assembly polls. The alliance secured 102 seats in the 126-member House, providing the government with a strong mandate for a second term.

SMCH Principal Questioned as Silchar Spa Investigation Widens



SILCHAR

The investigation into alleged illegal activities linked to two spa centres in Silchar has widened, with Cachar Police questioning the principal of Silchar Medical College and Hospital (SMCH), Dr. Bhaskar Gupta, as part of the ongoing probe. Police sources said Dr. Gupta was called for questioning after investigators examined ownership and tenancy records related to premises used by one of the spa centres operating inside a shopping mall in the town. Investigators suspect that a room allegedly owned by the SMCH principal had been rented out to one of the establishments that came under police scrutiny during a recent raid. The development follows a late-night operation conducted by Cachar Police on Friday, during which raids were carried out at two spa centres in Silchar. During

the operation, 28 women were detained in connection with allegations of prostitution and other suspected illegal activities. As investigators sought to determine the ownership structure and rental arrangements of the premises, Dr. Gupta and his wife were summoned to the office of the Superintendent of Police, Cachar, where they were questioned for nearly one-and-a-half hours, sources said. Police have not disclosed the details of the questioning and have so far not filed any formal charges against Dr. Gupta or any member of his family. Officials stressed that the inquiry remains at a preliminary stage and that all aspects of the case are being examined. Sources familiar with the investigation said police are also looking into whether any other influential individuals had direct or indirect connections with the establishments currently under scrutiny. Investigators are reportedly reviewing documentation and financial records related to the operation of the spa centres. Senior police officials have urged the public to refrain from drawing conclusions while the investigation is in progress. They emphasized that the questioning of individuals does not imply culpability and that findings will be made public only after the probe is completed. The raids have generated considerable attention in Silchar, with law enforcement agencies continuing to gather evidence and verify information related to the ownership, management and functioning of the spa centres. Further action, police said, will depend on the outcome of the ongoing investigation.

Supreme Court Clears Way for Manipur Panchayat Polls by October 16

NEW DELHI/IMPHAL

The Supreme Court on Thursday upheld the extension granted for conducting panchayat elections in Manipur, dismissing a challenge to the Manipur High Court's order that allows the electoral process to be completed by October 16, 2026. A partial working day Bench comprising Justices N. Kotswar Singh and N. V. Anjaria declined to interfere with the High Court's decision, finding no grounds to entertain the appeal filed by Pheiraojram Heramani and others against the revised election schedule. With the dismissal of the plea, the deadline fixed by the High Court for holding the sixth general panchayat elections in the state remains in force. During the proceedings, Solicitor General Tuskar Mehra, appearing on behalf of the Manipur government, informed the apex court that the state was obligated to comply with the directions issued by the High Court. He submitted that failure to conduct the elections within the prescribed timeframe could expose the authorities to contempt proceedings. Taking note of the submission,

the Supreme Court chose not to intervene and dismissed the appeal, effectively endorsing the High Court's timeline for the conduct of local body elections. The Manipur High Court had, on May 19, extended the deadline for the panchayat polls, citing the exceptional circumstances prevailing in the state. The court took into account the continuing law-and-order challenges as well as the imposition of President's Rule since February 2025 while granting additional time for the electoral exercise. The High Court order was passed by a Bench comprising Chief Justice M. Sundar and Justice A. Ganeswar Sharma. Besides extending the timeline, the court also cleared the path for implementing a three-tier Panchayati Raj system in the state in accordance with recent legislative amendments. The extension followed a review petition filed by the Manipur government seeking reconsideration of an earlier High Court directive issued in August 2025. In that order, the court had instructed the authorities to hold panchayat elections within six months.

DECISIVE WAR AGAINST DRUGS



India stands at a watershed moment in its long and difficult struggle against drug trafficking and abuse. The 10th apex-level meeting of the NCORD has sent an unambiguous signal: the nation's resolve to combat the narcotics menace is not merely administrative routine but a strategic imperative of the highest order. The statistics alone are staggering - seizure of synthetic drugs has risen from 26 lakh kilograms during 2004-2014 to 1.18 crore kilograms between 2014 and 2026, a near fourfold increase. While this figure reflects the commendable vigilance of enforcement agencies, it equally confirms a disturbing truth: the scale of drug smuggling into and across India has grown enormously. The battle is far from over.

The dual threat posed by narcotics - the destruction of India's youth and the funneling of illicit profits into terrorism - constitutes what may rightly be called narco-terrorism, one of the most insidious dangers facing contemporary India. Drug cartels do not merely peddle addiction; they bankroll insurgency, sustain naxalism, and corrode the social fabric of communities already burdened by poverty and unemployment. The revenue generated from narcotics trafficking is not spent on luxury; it is invested in weapons, propaganda, and violence. To allow the drug trade to flourish is, therefore, not merely a public health failure - it is a threat to national security of the gravest magnitude.

Home Minister Shah's three-pronged doctrine - detect, disrupt, and destroy - is clear, unambiguous, and operationally sound. It represents a shift from reactive policing to proactive network dismantlement. By targeting not just individual peddlers but entire supply chains, the approach seeks to hollow out the infrastructure of drug cartels from within. Crucially, this strategy is complemented by a compassionate distinction between the trafficker and the victim. The addict is not a criminal to be punished but a patient to be healed. Rehabilitation must be treated as seriously as enforcement, and it is encouraging that this principle now appears embedded within the national framework.

The next three years, as the Home Minister himself has acknowledged, will be decisive. Nowhere is this truer than in India's border states and Union Territories, particularly Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir, where the drug menace intersects dangerously with cross-border terrorism. In this context, the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir's declaration of a 100-day war on narcotics deserves special recognition. This initiative, combining public participation, police action, and political will, has already yielded encouraging results on the ground. J&K is demonstrating that when governance, law enforcement, and civil society align, tangible progress is possible. The territory is emerging not merely as a front in the war against drugs but as a model for rehabilitation and recovery efforts across the country.

Yet there remain significant structural challenges that must be urgently addressed. Traffickers are no longer operating in the shadows of back alleys; they are exploiting e-commerce platforms, drones, darknet marketplaces, and even telehealth services to move narcotics with alarming sophistication. Law enforcement must be equipped in terms of technology, training, and inter-agency coordination to meet this evolving threat. The centre's decision to revisit the NDPS Act to plug loopholes exploited by syndicates is long overdue and must be pursued with urgency. The Supreme Court's directive to establish special courts for expedited conviction of drug offenders is equally vital; justice delayed in narcotics cases is, quite literally, lives lost. The expansion of Narcotics Control Bureau offices across the country, the development of a three-year vision document for 2026-2029, and the real-time intelligence-sharing portals being developed under NCB are all steps in the right direction. But mechanisms alone cannot deliver results. The quality of implementation, the rigour of review, and the accountability of institutions will determine whether these measures translate into genuine, measurable outcomes.

A drug-free India is not a slogan. It is a civilisational necessity in the country's present scenario. The youth who fall prey to addiction today are the engineers, teachers, and farmers, literate as well as illiterate, whom India will need tomorrow. Every kilogramme of narcotics destroyed is not merely a statistic - it is a future reclaimed. The battle demands the collective will of Governments, communities, families, and individuals. With strategy, resolve, and unity of purpose, India can - and must - prevail.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

It's hard to beat a person who never gives up. - Babe Ruth

CONFESSIONAL POWER-SHARING IN LEBANON: STABILITY AND STRAIN IN TIMES OF WAR



LT GEN BHOPINDER SINGH (RETD)

As Israel once again escalates military action in Lebanon, the country's distinctive confessional system often described in political science terms as a form of consociational governance is being stress-tested in real time for its ability to preserve internal cohesion under extreme external pressure. This system is built on structured power-sharing among Lebanon's main religious communities (approximately 30-35% Shi'a, 25-30% Sunni, 30-35% Christian, and around 5% Druze), rather than on a purely individual, secular, or party-based model of citizenship. It emerged from the belief that in a deeply plural society with a history of violent fragmentation, political stability is more likely to be achieved through guaranteed communal representation than through majoritarian democracy.

The foundations of this arrangement lie in the 1943 National Pact, an unwritten agreement reached at the moment of independence, and later restructured and formalised after the civil war by the 1989 Taif Agreement. These two settlements attempted to manage Lebanon's internal diversity while preventing any single community from dominating the state. Under this system, the presidency is reserved for a Maronite Christian, the premiership for a Sunni Muslim, and the speakership of parliament for a Shi'a Muslim. Parliamentary representation and senior civil service positions are also distributed along confessional lines, creating a deeply institutionalised balance of sectarian power. While this arrangement was designed as a mechanism for coexistence, it also entrenched religious identity as the primary lens of political life. Historically, Lebanon's diversity has often been accompanied by competition and conflict rather than harmony. Communal tensions have periodically escalated into violence, most notably during the civil war from 1975 to 1990, when competing militias fragmented authority and the central state effectively collapsed. During this period, political loyalty was frequently organised around sectarian armed groups rather than national institutions, and alliances shifted rapidly depending on military necessity and external backing. This fragmentation created opportunities for foreign powers to intervene through local proxies, transforming Lebanon into a theatre of overlapping regional and international rivalries.

Indeed, Lebanon's geography has made it particularly vulnerable to external entanglement. Situated at the crossroads of the Israeli-Palestinian and Syrian theatres, it has repeatedly absorbed the spillover effects of regional wars, refugee flows, and cross-border military operations. Over time, Lebanon became less an isolated national arena and more a node within a broader regional system of conflict. External actors, including Syria, Israel, Iran, the United States, France, and various Arab states, have all at different moments supported or opposed specific Lebanese factions, often deepening internal divisions rather than resolving them.

The historical roots of this external involvement stretch back further. Under Ottoman rule, communal governance structures were already in place, with religious communities granted a degree of autonomy in managing personal status laws and internal affairs. The French Mandate (1920-1943) later

reinforced these sectarian identities by institutionalising communal representation while simultaneously expanding the territorial scope of Lebanon through the creation of "Greater Lebanon." This expansion increased religious diversity and made sectarian balancing more complex. After independence, Lebanon quickly became enmeshed in Cold War alignments and regional ideological struggles, with domestic factions receiving varying degrees of support from global and regional powers.

During the civil war (1975-1990), these dynamics intensified dramatically. Several Lebanese factions, including the Maronite-dominated Lebanese Forces and the South Lebanon Army, at various points received support from Israel. These relationships were not uniform or ideologically consistent but rather tactical and situational, shaped by the shifting logic of survival and military advantage. From Israel's perspective, these alliances served strategic objectives: countering Palestinian armed groups operating in Lebanon, creating a buffer zone in the south to protect its northern frontier, and limiting Syrian influence in Lebanese affairs. In return, allied militias received training, weapons, logistical support, and territorial backing. However, these arrangements were inherently unstable, reflecting the fragmented and transactional nature of wartime politics rather than durable alignments.

Over time, the relative importance of different external actors has shifted significantly. Israel's role in Lebanon has become more episodic and security-focused rather than structurally embedded in domestic political competition. The Syrian presence, once dominant after the civil war, formally ended with the withdrawal of Syrian forces in 2005. Palestinian armed factions, which were a major factor in the early stages of the civil war, have also become far less influential militarily within Lebanon, largely confined to refugee camps under tighter Lebanese state control. In contrast, Iran's influence has grown primarily through its relationship with Hezbollah, which has become the most powerful non-state armed actor in the country.



This evolution raises a recurring and politically sensitive question: why does Lebanon not simply disarm Hezbollah and thereby remove Israel's primary stated security concern? The answer lies in a complex interplay of internal political fragmentation, security dilemmas, and regional geopolitics. For many Lebanese actors, the idea of

forcibly disarming Hezbollah is seen as potentially more destabilising than maintaining the current arrangement. There is widespread concern that such a move could trigger internal conflict, given Hezbollah's significant military capabilities and its deep integration into parts of Lebanese society and politics.

Hezbollah's own rationale for maintaining its armed wing is rooted in its identity as a "resistance" movement formed during the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon in the early 1980s, an occupation that ended in 2000. This historical experience remains central to its political narrative and legitimacy. The organisation argues that its independent military capability is necessary to defend Lebanese sovereignty and prevent future occupation or large-scale incursions. It also situates itself within a broader regional framework often described as the "axis of resistance," aligned primarily with Iran, and justifies its continued armament by referencing ongoing border disputes, such as the Shebaa Farms area, as well as periodic escalations along the southern frontier.

At the societal level, these positions are reinforced by Lebanon's deeply embedded sectarian identities. Political allegiance is often shaped not only by domestic considerations but also by transnational linkages and perceived external guarantors. Many Shi'a communities maintain strong political and strategic ties to Iran through Hezbollah, while other Lebanese communities often look to Arab Gulf states, Western powers, or alternative regional actors for political, financial, or diplomatic support. These external relationships are not merely ideological but also reflect historical patterns of patronage and security dependence. As a result, Lebanon's internal divisions are closely intertwined with broader regional rivalries, making consensus on national security strategy extremely difficult to achieve.

Despite these deep fractures, the confessional system has nonetheless provided Lebanon with a degree of institutional continuity during repeated crises, including the current escalation with Israel. By distributing power among religious communities under the framework consolidated by the Taif Agreement, it has helped prevent any

single group from fully capturing the state even during moments of intense political or military pressure. This has allowed key institutions, including the Lebanese Armed Forces and core civilian ministries, to continue operating even in the face of economic collapse, political paralysis, and external conflict. In this sense, the system functions less as a model of efficient governance and more as a mechanism of crisis management in a deeply divided society.

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However, this stability comes at a cost. The same arrangements that help prevent collapse also make it difficult to form unified national policies, particularly in matters of war and peace. The coexistence of a formal state monopoly on force and a powerful non-state armed actor creates an enduring structural tension at the heart of Lebanese sovereignty. As a result, Lebanon often finds itself simultaneously stable enough to avoid disintegration, yet fragmented enough to struggle with coherent decision-making in moments of external confrontation. Ultimately, the current crisis with Israel underscores a central paradox of Lebanon's political system. In a society marked by deep sectarian divisions and a history of violent conflict, consociational power-sharing has functioned as a crucial stabilising framework that prevents domination and preserves institutional continuity. Yet the same framework also limits the state's ability to act as a unified strategic actor, particularly in the realm of security policy. Lebanon's experience thus illustrates both the resilience and the structural constraints of confessional governance: it can help hold a fragile state together under pressure, but it cannot easily resolve the fundamental tensions that define its political order. (The author is former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands & Puducherry)

Centre Assures Full Support After Flood Assessment in Arunachal Pradesh

IMPHAL

A sit-in protest was held at Changanggei Community Hall in Imphal West district with participants demanding justice for six Liangmai Naga civilians who were allegedly abducted and killed.

The demonstration was organised under the banner of the Justice for the Six Sons of Koubru Joint Committee (J6SKUC) and drew support from several civil society organisations, including the Joint Tribes Council, All Manipur United Clubs' Organisation, Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity, Changanggei Apunba Club, Langdai Khangsunaha and RIFPCO Manipur.

Following the sit-in, protesters formed a human chain and raised slogans demanding accountability and legal

action against those responsible for the killings.

According to organisers, J6SKUC was constituted under the aegis of the Joint Tribes Council to pursue justice for the victims through peaceful and democratic means. The committee is coordinated by Chingdinliu Panmei, State President of Rongmei Naga Luphwam, Manipur.

Addressing the gathering, committee representatives said the movement was not aimed against any particular community but sought impartial enforcement of the law, prosecution of the perpetrators and restoration of public confidence in the justice system.

The committee submitted five key demands to the government, including the immediate arrest and prosecution of all individuals allegedly involved in the kill-



ings, withdrawal of the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement, declaration of the Kuki National Front- Presidential as a terrorist organisation, removal of Manipur Deputy Chief Minister Nemcha Kipgen, and eviction of what it described as illegal settlements established on government and protected land.

Protesters carried placards with messages such as "Arrest the Named Killers, Prosecute the Guilty," "End SoO, End the Proxy War," and "Protect Our Land, Uphold the Law."

The committee appealed to both the Government of India and the Government of Manipur to address its demands and said the campaign would continue through peaceful democratic means until justice is delivered for the six victims.

Court Recognises Garima Saikia Garg as Legal Heir to Zubeen Garg's Estate



GUWAHATI

In a significant judicial ruling, the Kamrup (Metropolitan) District Judge's Court has issued a legal heir certificate in favour of Garima Saikia Garg, the wife of renowned Assamese singer Zubeen Garg.

The court's order formally establishes Garima Saikia Garg as the lawful successor to the late singer's estate, granting her the authority to manage and exercise legal rights over his assets in accordance with prevailing succession laws.

As part of the directive, the court instructed the concerned authorities to update records of properties owned by Zubeen Garg in the name of Garima Saikia Garg. The legal heir certificate authorises her to undertake matters related to the ownership, administration, transfer and management of the properties through due legal process.

The ruling effectively concludes the succession proceedings relating to Zubeen Garg's estate before the Kamrup (Metropolitan) District Judge's Court, providing legal clarity over the inheritance and administration of his assets.

The development is expected to facilitate the smooth transfer and management of the singer's properties and associated legal interests under the framework of applicable laws.

Tripura hosts workshop to strengthen cybersecurity framework for State data

AGARTALA

As part of the Government of India's efforts to strengthen cybersecurity preparedness across States and Union Territories, the Directorate of Information Technology, Government of Tripura, in collaboration with the National e-Governance Division (NeGD) under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), organised a State-level workshop on "Strengthening Cyber Security Frameworks for State Data" at Pragna Bhavan in Agartala.

The workshop showcased Tripura's progress in digital governance under the Digital India initiative and focused on strengthening cyber resilience, protecting citizen data and securing the State's digital infrastructure.

Under the leadership of Chief Minister Manik Saha and the guidance of Information Technology Minister Pranajit Singha Roy, Tripura has emerged as one of the leading digital governance performers in the North-East. The

State has implemented e-Office up to the Gram Panchayat level, becoming the first State in the country to achieve such extensive paperless governance coverage.

Other major initiatives include the modernisation of the Tripura State Data Centre (TSDC), the establishment of the Tripura Security Operations Centre (TSOC), expansion of SWAN and HSWAN connectivity, implementation of BharatNet across rural areas and the rollout of several citizen-centric digital platforms and Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) initiatives.

The workshop was inaugurated by Chief Secretary Jitendra Kumar Sinha in the presence of Director General of Police Anurag, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests R.K. Samal, Director of Information Technology Jeya Ragul Geshan B, senior government officials, representatives of NeGD, cybersecurity experts and members of the New Generation Innovation Network (NGIN).

Imphal East Completes 100% Digitisation of Electoral Enumeration Forms Under SIR 2026



IMPHAL

Imphal East district has achieved full digitisation of Enumeration Forms under the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of Electoral Rolls, 2026, completing a key stage in the ongoing voter list revision exercise ahead of the publication of draft electoral rolls.

According to a statement issued by the Office of the District Election Officer and Deputy Commissioner, all Enumeration Forms collected

during the enumeration phase have been digitised, including those classified as uncollectible. The exercise was conducted between May 30 and June 28, during which Booth Level Officers (BLOs) carried out door-to-door visits for the distribution, collection and verification of forms.

The revision process covered all ten Assembly constituencies in Imphal East district—Khundrakpam, Heingang, Khurai, Kshetrigao, Thongju, Keirao, Andro, Lamlai, Yaikul and Wangkhei.

Officials said the exercise encompassed 3,31,602 electors across 432 polling stations. Of the 3,30,338 Enumeration Forms distributed, 3,14,893 were successfully digitised. A total of 16,709 forms were categorised as uncollectible due to factors such as the death of electors, inability to trace voters, prolonged absence, permanent relocation, prior enrolment in other electoral rolls and other valid reasons.

The District Election Office announced that the draft electoral roll will be published on July 5, 2026. Following its publication, electors and stakeholders will be able to submit claims and objections between July 5 and August 4.

The scrutiny and disposal of claims and objections will continue until September 2, after which the final electoral roll is scheduled to be published on September 6, 2026.

As part of the revision process, a meeting on the rationalisation of polling stations was held on June 15. The meeting was attended by Electoral Registration Officers (EROs),

Assistant Electoral Registration Officers (AEROs), officials from the Zonal Education Office and representatives of recognised national and state political parties.

Election authorities said the Special Intensive Revision aims to ensure the accuracy and integrity of electoral rolls by updating voter records and removing ineligible entries while facilitating the inclusion of all eligible citizens.

Reaffirming the guiding principle of the exercise, officials stated that the objective is to ensure that "no eligible citizen is left out and no ineligible person is included" in the electoral roll.

The administration also reiterated that every Indian citizen who has attained the age of 18 years on the qualifying date and is not otherwise disqualified under law is entitled to be registered as a voter. The completion of digitisation in Imphal East is expected to streamline the next stages of electoral roll revision and strengthen the accuracy of voter records ahead of future elections.

Manipur CSOs to Take NRC Updation Demand to Delhi Ahead of Census Exercise

IMPHAL

Representatives of the civil society coalition 14 CSOs Kangleipak are set to visit New Delhi on July 5 to press for the updation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) before the commencement of the forthcoming Census exercise.

The announcement was made by convenor Shanta Nahakpam after a meeting with the Governor of Manipur at Raj Bhavan on Tuesday. The organisations have also invited members of the public to submit data, suggestions and other relevant information ahead of the delegation's visit to the national capital.

Addressing reporters after the meeting, Nahakpam said the proposed visit is part of a broader campaign launched by the coalition to advocate for NRC updation before the Census is undertaken

in the state.

According to him, the organisations recently organised a mass rally and public convention during which several resolutions were adopted in support of the demand. Following those programmes, representatives of the coalition met the Chief Minister and the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs to raise the issue.

The delegation's latest engagement with the Governor focused on what it described as the need to update the NRC prior to the Census process. Nahakpam said the discussions lasted for more than an hour, during which the representatives outlined their concerns and rationale behind the demand.

He stated that the delegation emphasised the importance of addressing demographic issues and identifying illegal immigrants before the Census is conducted,

arguing that such measures are necessary to safeguard the interests of indigenous communities. The group also urged that constitutional and legal benefits should not be extended to individuals residing in the country unlawfully.

During the meeting, the organisations further sought the revival of the State Population Commission and requested representation from Manipur in the recently constituted high-level committee on demographic change established by the Government of India.

Nahakpam said the Delhi delegation plans to meet senior central government officials, including the Union Home Secretary and the Registrar General of India, as well as members of the high-level committee on demographic change, to formally present their demands and concerns.

According to the convenor, the

Governor assured the delegation of support in facilitating meetings with the relevant authorities and expressed willingness to assist efforts aimed at finding an amicable solution to the issues raised.

The coalition has meanwhile appealed to citizens to contribute information, documents and suggestions related to NRC updation before the delegation departs for New Delhi. Inputs can be submitted through designated offices of the participating organisations.

The proposed visit comes amid continuing discussions in Manipur over demographic concerns, population data and the conduct of future Census-related exercises, with several civil society groups calling for updated population records and stronger verification mechanisms before the nationwide enumeration process begins.

Assam Begins Electoral Roll Revision for Mising Autonomous Council Elections

GUWAHATI

The Assam State Election Commission (ASEC) has formally launched the process of preparing electoral rolls for the upcoming elections to the Mising Autonomous Council, setting August 17 as the date for publication of the final voter list.

In a notification issued on June 30, the Commission directed District Commissioners concerned to undertake the preparation and publication of electoral rolls in accordance with the provisions of the Mising Autonomous Council (Election) Rules, 2005.

The voter lists will be compiled using the Assembly Electoral Roll published by the Election Commission of India on February 10, 2026. January 1, 2026, has been fixed as the qualifying date for determining voter eligibility.

As part of the exercise, Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) will prepare constituency-wise draft electoral rolls by segregating relevant portions of the Assembly electoral roll based on polling stations falling within the newly delimited constituencies of the Mising Autonomous Council. The process will also include the receipt and disposal of claims, objections and correction requests before the final publication of the rolls.

According to the schedule released by the Commission,

preliminary activities, including data collection and verification, will be carried out between June 30 and July 5. Data entry and constituency mapping are scheduled from July 6 to July 12.

Preparation of constituency-wise electoral rolls will take place between July 13 and July 21, with the draft electoral rolls set to be published on July 22 for public scrutiny.

The Commission has fixed August 6 as the deadline for filing claims and objections. All such applications are to be disposed of by August 13, paving the way for the publication of the final electoral rolls on August 17.

Officials said Electoral Registration Officers and Assistant Electoral Registration Officers for all constituencies of the Mising Autonomous Council have already been appointed through a separate order issued on June 29 to facilitate the electoral roll revision process.

The roll preparation exercise comes in the wake of the delimitation of Mising Autonomous Council constituencies, which was notified by the Assam Government's Department of Tribal Affairs (Plain) in January 2025. The exercise is expected to lay the groundwork for the conduct of the council's next general elections, ensuring that electoral records are updated in accordance with the revised constituency boundaries.

Gaurav Gogoi Seeks Petrol, Diesel Price Cut Amid Decline in Global Crude Oil Rates

GUWAHATI

Assam Congress president Gaurav Gogoi urged state-run oil marketing companies to reduce petrol and diesel prices, arguing that declining international crude oil prices and easing tensions in West Asia warrant immediate relief for consumers.

Addressing reporters, Gogoi said recent developments in the region had contributed to a fall in global crude oil prices and questioned why the benefit had not been passed on to motorists despite reductions in other petroleum products.

"The prices of LPG have been reduced, but petrol and diesel rates remain unchanged. Earlier, fuel price increases were attributed to the conflict involving Iran and Israel. If that situation has eased and crude prices are falling, petrol and diesel prices should also be reduced immediately," he said. The Congress leader further questioned why public sector oil marketing companies had not revised fuel prices downward and alleged that consumers were being denied the benefits of lower international oil costs. Gogoi, who also serves as the Deputy Leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha, asked



Nayara Energy reduced petrol prices by ₹5 per litre and diesel prices by ₹3 per litre across its network of more than 7,000 fuel stations, becoming the first fuel retailer in over two years to lower pump prices.

However, the country's three major state-owned fuel retailers—Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation

and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited—have not announced any changes to retail petrol and diesel prices.

The issue of fuel pricing remains politically sensitive, with opposition parties frequently calling for reductions whenever international crude prices soften. Industry observers note that retail fuel prices are influenced by a combination of factors, including global crude prices, exchange rates, taxes and the pricing strategies of oil marketing companies. Gogoi's demand adds to the growing debate over whether the recent decline in global oil prices should translate into lower fuel costs for consumers across the country.

why oil marketing companies were continuing to maintain existing fuel prices despite changes in global market conditions. His remarks came on a day when prices of several petroleum products were revised downward following a decline in international oil prices. Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) prices were reduced by

around ₹5 per litre, marking the first cut since rates had risen during the recent period of heightened tensions in West Asia. Public sector oil companies also announced a reduction of up to ₹183.50 in the price of commercial LPG cylinders weighing 19 kilograms, the first such decrease this year. In a separate development,

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Those displaced by Partition were 'warriors of struggle', says RSS chief Bhagwat



NEW DELHI

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat said those who came to India after the 1947 Partition were not "refugees" but "warriors of struggle" who sacrificed everything out of love for the country and their faith.

Addressing the 75th Foundation Day programme of the Sindhu Education Society in Nagpur, Bhagwat said people who migrated from the newly created Pakistan chose India despite leaving behind their homes, businesses and wealth built over generations.

"They were not refugees, though they were displaced, it was a wrong term used for them at that time. They were warriors (sangharshrath

yodha) who struggled out of love for their motherland, out of love for their faith. They lost a battle, not because of their own faults alone. We, all of us, lost that battle to keep India united.

But what did they choose? They did not choose a career, they did not choose wealth. They chose the country, they chose their faith (dharma)," Bhagwat said. He said those who crossed over after Partition consciously chose to live in Bharat, where they could practise their religion without fear. Speaking on resilience, he said adversity should be met with determination rather than despair.

"One should not become helpless before circumstances or fate. A person who makes

efforts (to come out of difficult times) is the one who ultimately succeeds, while the one who runs away from difficulties has already accepted defeat," he said.

Bhagwat also stressed that education should go beyond preparing students for employment and focus on building character and values.

He said value-based education helps individuals distinguish between right and wrong and is shaped not only by textbooks but also by teachers' conduct and the values they impart.

The ultimate purpose of education, he added, is to nurture good human beings committed to the welfare of society.

A terrorist is a terrorist': India urges united global action against terror at UN

NEW DELHI

India has urged the international community to reject double standards in combating terrorism, asserting that there can be no justification for terror "irrespective of any grievance, political cause or strategic calculation."

Addressing the UN General Assembly during the adoption of the Ninth Review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (GCTS) on Wednesday, India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Harish Parvathaneni, called for collective action to eliminate the "murderous ideology" driving terrorism.

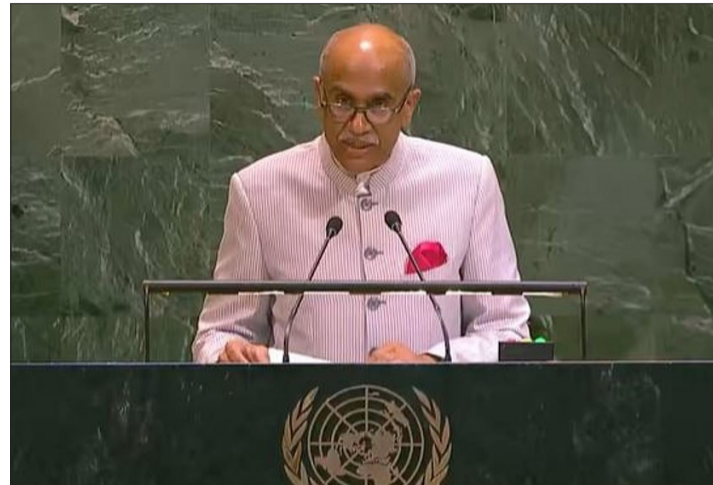
"India has been a victim of cross-border terrorism for decades. Our people have paid the price of terrorism in lives lost, families scarred, and societies shattered. This experience has shaped India's approach: there can be no justification for terrorism," Parvathaneni said.

"Irrespective of any grievance, political cause or strategic calculation, terrorism in all its forms and manifestations must be condemned unequivocally," he added. Stressing the need for accountability, Parvathaneni said perpetrators, organisers, financiers and sponsors of terrorism must be brought to justice, with member states extending full cooperation.

"A terrorist is a terrorist!! We must work hand in hand to root out the murderous ideology without finding any grievance to justify terrorism," he said.

India also cautioned against politicising counter-terrorism efforts.

"Counter-terrorism should not be hollowed out by false equivalences or politicised narratives. We must address the conditions conducive to the spread of terror-



ism, but we must never confuse context with justification. We must uphold human rights and the rule of law, but we must also recognise that the first human right is the right to life, and terrorism is the most direct assault on this human right," Parvathaneni said.

On terror financing, India stressed that disrupting financial networks must remain central to global counter-terrorism efforts. "The international community must improve financial intelligence sharing, strengthen implementation of Financial Action Task Force standards, and ensure that no jurisdiction remains a safe conduit for terror financing," he said.

India also flagged the growing misuse of emerging technologies by terrorist groups, expressing disappointment that the latest GCTS review failed to reach consensus on preventing terrorists from exploiting such technologies.

"It is disheartening that negotiations of this review of the GCTS were not able to reach an acceptable landing point on the crucial

issue of ensuring that terrorists are denied the technological tools for their nefarious acts," Parvathaneni said.

The envoy noted that the latest review comes 20 years after member states adopted the GCTS, reaffirming that terrorism is a global threat requiring international cooperation.

Recalling that India had proposed the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) even before the GCTS was adopted in 2006, Parvathaneni said the absence of a universally accepted legal framework continues to hamper collective efforts.

"This legal instrument is essential to close normative gaps, strengthen prosecution and extradition, and deny terrorists and their sponsors access to safe havens, funds and arms," he said.

"Nearly three decades of delay have hindered our collective efforts to combat terrorism. The time has come to demonstrate political will to conclude the CCIT," he added.

Highlighting India's contribu-

tions to global counter-terrorism initiatives, Parvathaneni referred to the Delhi Declaration on countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes and the No Money for Terror Conferences.

He criticised the omission of the Delhi Declaration from the review, saying it "reflects the unfortunate situation of how this Assembly is held hostage to petty bean counting! It is doubly unfortunate when the international community continues to tolerate this behaviour."

Reiterating India's stand against religious hatred, Parvathaneni said the country condemns all acts motivated by prejudice against any faith or identity. "As this is the United Nations, a multilateral forum of universal membership, our lens too should be universal. While we condemn all acts motivated by Islamophobia, Christianophobia and antisemitism, this august body must acknowledge that such phobias extend to other faiths as well," he said.

Concluding his remarks, Parvathaneni underlined that meaningful global cooperation remains the key to defeating terrorism.

"Only if we have the political will to counter it in all its manifestations; Only if there are no double standards; Only if there is no distinction between good or bad terrorists."

"Only if there is transparency and objectivity in the way sanctions regimes function to secure listings of genuine and evidence-based objective listing proposals; Only if exclusivist frameworks, new terminologies and false priorities are thwarted, could the menace of terrorism be successfully combatted by us together," he said.

INTERNATIONAL

Over 100 politicians, former diplomats from India and Pakistan write to Modi, Sharif to restore ties



NEW DELHI

Over 100 prominent politicians, former diplomats and civil society members from India and Pakistan have jointly appealed to Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Shehbaz Sharif to restore diplomatic engagement and normalise relations between the two neighbours.

The appeal comes amid continued strains in bilateral ties and calls on both governments to resume dialogue, reopen trade and transport links, and expand people-to-people exchanges.

The open letter was signed by 116 people — 61 from India and 55 from Pakistan — including former Jammu

and Kashmir chief ministers Farooq Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti, former Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) chief AS Dulat, Rajya Sabha MP Manoj Jha, former Pakistan diplomat Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, moderate separatist leader Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, former Union minister Mani Shankar Aiyar and former Pakistan foreign minister Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri.

Coordinated by OP Shah, chairman of the Centre for Peace and Progress, the letter, dated 30 June, urged the two governments to take "meaningful and sustained steps towards restoring peace, normalcy, dialogue and cooperation in South Asia". It said "sustained engagement

and dialogue remain the only viable path to resolving differences".

The signatories called for the restoration of full diplomatic relations, including the reinstatement of high commissioners, the resumption of normal visa services and the revival of a comprehensive bilateral dialogue covering all outstanding issues.

They also urged discussions on Jammu and Kashmir, including revisiting the framework negotiated between 2004 and 2007, alongside steps towards demilitarisation and de-escalation while addressing the "legitimate security concerns" of both countries.

The letter called for the reopening

of trade channels, the restoration of normal commercial relations, the revival of the Most Favoured Nation or an equivalent non-discriminatory trade arrangement, and the reopening of the Attari-Wagah land border.

It also sought the resumption of the Delhi-Lahore bus service, the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service, the Samjhauta Express and the Thar Express, as well as the opening of the Kargil-Skardu route and the reopening of airspace for commercial flights.

The appeal further called for reopening the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor, opening Sharada Peeth to pilgrims, easing travel restrictions, expanding exchanges among students, journalists, artists and business people, and lifting restrictions on media outlets and digital platforms.

"The future of South Asia should be shaped not by division and conflict, but by peace, prosperity and shared progress," the letter said.

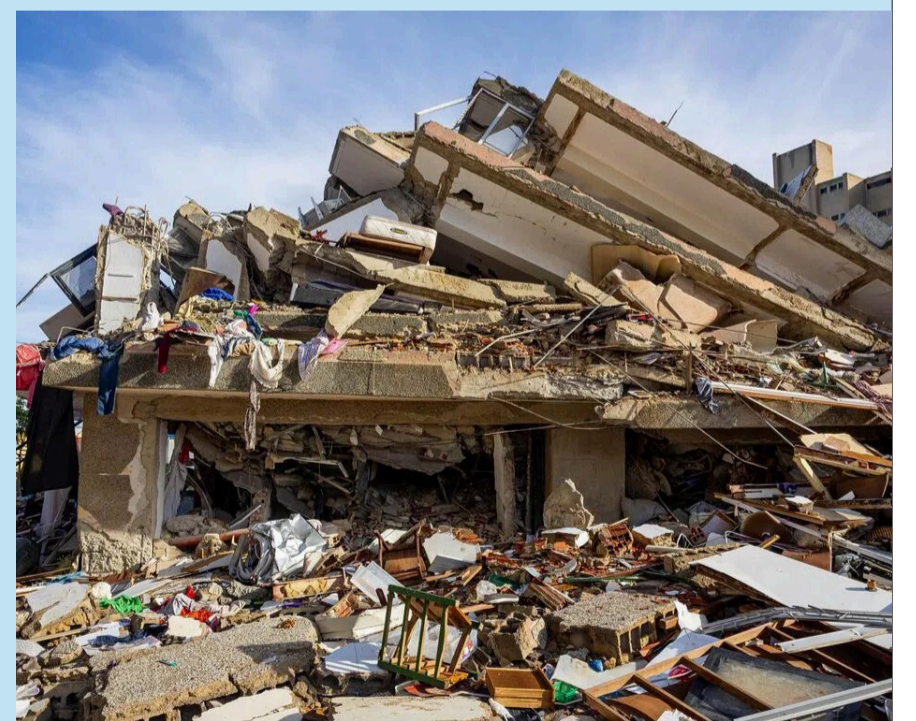
It added that the appeal was "not an endorsement of any political position" but a call to place the welfare and aspirations of nearly two billion people "above conflict, confrontation and division".

The signatories noted that India and Pakistan together are home to nearly one-fifth of the world's population, with a large proportion of their citizens being young.

They wrote that continued hostility deprives millions of young people of opportunities, prosperity and a secure future.

The letter concluded by urging both governments to choose engagement over isolation, dialogue over hostility and cooperation over confrontation.

Rescue of trapped Venezuelan underway one week after quakes



CATIA LA MAR

Hundreds of rescuers were working late Wednesday to save a 43-year-old Venezuelan man who has survived for a week under the ruins of a seven-story building, an AFP reporter witnessed.

Hernan Gil, a 43-year-old security guard, is trapped inside his booth under the building where he worked in Catia La Mar, a coastal area almost entirely razed to the ground in the June 24 twin earthquakes, magnitude 7.2 and 7.5.

Rescue teams from seven countries -- Venezuela, Chile, the United States, Portugal, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Mexico -- have been working around-the-clock over the past three days to reach him.

By late Wednesday they were almost one meter from his position, rescuers told.

Chile's fire service published an Instagram video of Gil inside his chamber, moving his head to look at the camera. He was wearing a face mask and his right eye was bloodshot.

"This is truly a miracle," Gil's wife Gusbimar Gonzalez told AFP.

"I'm completely amazed because it's the first time I've seen so many countries come together like this to save a single person," she said. News of the rescue bid came at the end of a day in which hope of finding more survivors had faded, seven days after the catastrophic earthquakes, which killed almost 2,300 people and have left thousands more unaccounted for.

As firefighters drew near him, others were monitoring the movements of a neighboring building, which is in danger of collapsing.

Working since Monday, the rescuers shored up the building's foundations

with wood and iron to prevent the listing structure from completely collapsing further. "Throughout the operation, they gave Gil water to keep him hydrated and installed a tube through which they supplied him with air.

The men advanced along two routes simultaneously to reach Gil.

"This is a rather complicated structure to access," Cristian Vera, the leader of the Chilean rescue team told AFP.

He said that the existence of "very large pillars" meant "it wasn't easy to reach the exact spot where the victim was located."

An initial plan to construct a 60-by-60-centimeter tunnel was discarded on Tuesday when the building shifted slightly.

"We had to develop a new work plan to try to enter through a different route than the one we had used until last night," Vera explained.

The Death of Neighbourhood Store | Why Meghalaya is opposing 10-min delivery apps



NIBIR DEKA (EXRCEPTS TAKEN FROM NIBIR DEKA, SOCIAL MEDIA)

Meghalaya has done something that the rest of India will soon have to debate. The Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council has refused trading licences to quick-commerce companies, choosing instead to protect more than 4,000 local grocery stores.

The internet is divided. Some call it anti-business. Others call it protecting livelihoods.

I think both sides are right.

This morning, it was pouring in Guwahati.

Instead of putting on my slippers and walking to Kalita Store for bread and



counts landed at my doorstep. The sandwich was ready.

Courtesy of a young boy riding through the rain for a modest income, and my mother waiting in the kitchen.

Halfway through breakfast, a thought crossed my mind. Kalita Store, you've finally met your match.

How does one neighbourhood shop compete with a company that is happy to lose money on every delivery? It doesn't.

Because this isn't really a battle between two grocery stores. It is a battle between your neighbourhood uncle and a spreadsheet in a venture capital office. One knows your father's name. The other knows your purchase history.

The groceries are merely an excuse. The real business is your attention, your habits and eventually your loyalty.

America watched its mom-and-pop stores slowly disappear under the weight of big retail. We are watching the Tier 2 city version unfold in real time.

The old saying, "aku nohole gella maal

scientists, IIM graduates and algorithms that already know what you'll buy before you do.

And yet, I cannot bring myself to hate these apps.

I've seen boys from Narengi pay for college through delivery jobs. I've seen students earn their first income because someone wanted bread in ten minutes. In towns where private jobs barely exist, these bikes have become employment of fices on two wheels.

That is what makes this debate so uncomfortable. One person's convenience is another person's livelihood. One person's discount is another person's business closing down.

But somewhere in all this efficiency, I fear we are losing something far more

valuable than a grocery store.

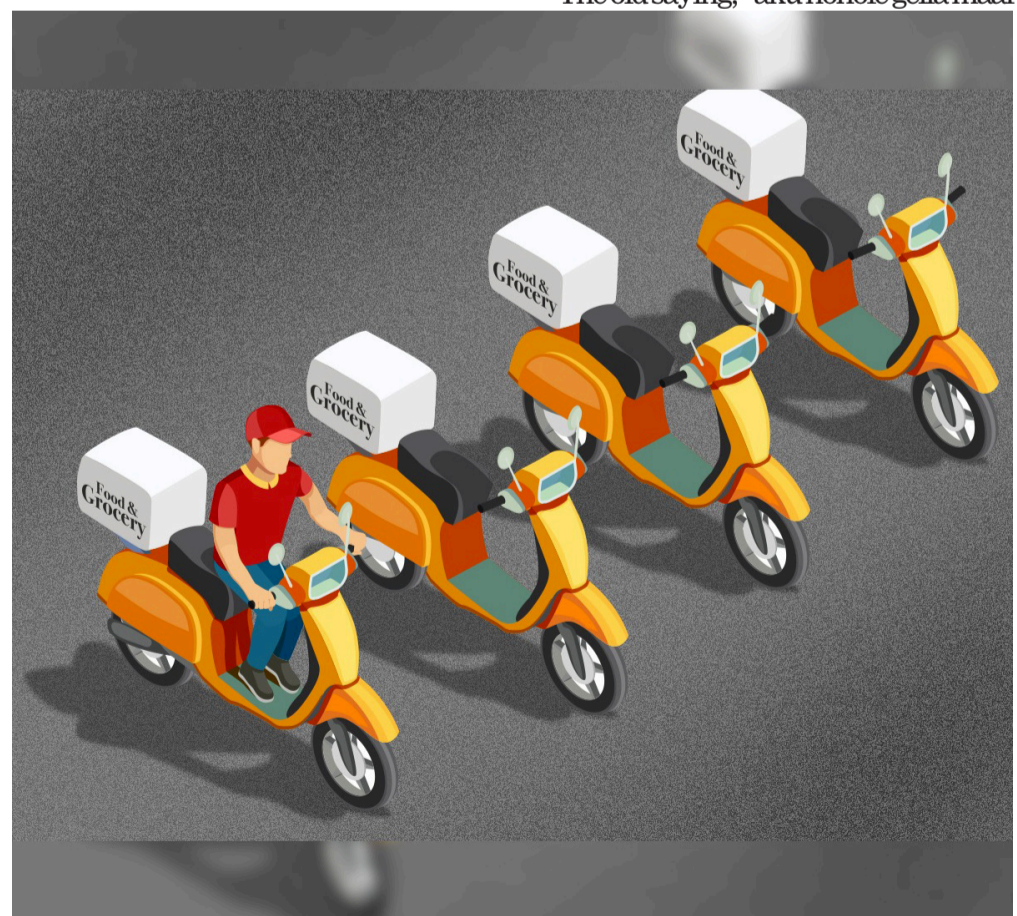
We are losing the human pause. The shopkeeper who knew my father. The uncle who quietly said, "Pay later."

The conversation that began with bread and somehow ended with cricket, politics and the weather. The recommendation, "Fruit & Nut lobo... Silk Nai", to growing older and telling them "Classic Mild rakhok".

An app doesn't recommend because it knows you. It recommends because it knows your data.

Perhaps Meghalaya isn't merely protecting grocery stores. Perhaps it is trying to protect the last remaining spaces where commerce still feels human.

Yours truly,
A loyal 10-minute delivery app user.



eggs, I lazily opened a 10-minute delivery app.

Ten minutes later, bread, eggs and a few surprise dis-

or dukan khuli dim," once meant that if life didn't work out, you could always open a departmental store and make an honest living. Today, that sentence belongs in a museum. If you decide to open a grocery shop selling Sona Shakti rice tomorrow, you aren't competing with another Barman Store. You're competing with billions in venture capital, data

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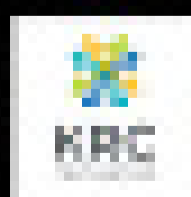


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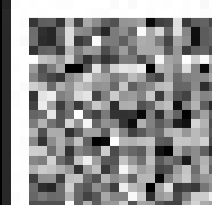


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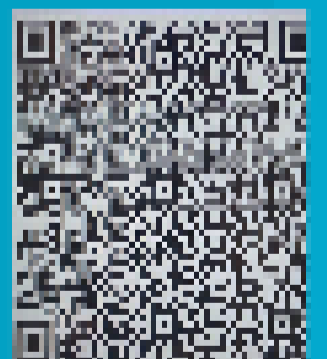
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- Anne Frank

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