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PERSPECTIVE

The more homework that a child receives, the more likely that child is to suffer from depression.

Three Detained as Manipur Intensifies Probe into Deadly Ukhrul Ambush

IMPHAL Security forces have detained three individuals during an intelligence-based operation launched to identify and apprehend those responsible for the July 6 ambush on an Assam Rifles convoy in Manipur's Ukhrul district, even as residents voiced concerns over heightened security activity in the area.

The operation is being carried out in the TM Kasom, Litan and Sikibung areas of Ukhrul district, according to a statement issued by Manipur Police on Tuesday.

"An intelligence-based operation has been launched in the areas to arrest the perpetrators of the ambush on security forces in Ukhrul district on July 6, 2026. Three persons have been detained," the police statement said.

The crackdown follows the deadly attack at Nungshang Kong along National Highway-202 on July 6, where suspected militants ambushed an Assam Rifles convoy, killing Warrant Officer Balwant Singh and Rifleman C.M. Singh of the 40 Assam Rifles.

As security operations intensified, residents of Thawai and TM Kasom issued a public appeal seeking clarity from the civil administration, state government and security agencies regarding the increased deployment of personnel and the movement of Army helicopters over the last day.

Local residents said the lack of official communication had triggered anxiety among villagers, particularly women, children and elderly residents.

While acknowledging the role of security forces in maintaining law and order, community members said there was no publicly available evidence linking the local Tangkhul community to the July 6 attack. They urged authorities to explain the scope and objectives of the ongoing operation, outline safeguards for civilians and provide regular updates to prevent misinformation and fear.

WHO SAID WHAT



With less than four years left to deliver the #SDGs, giving up is not an option. Progress is possible when we choose hope over cynicism, action over paralysis, and partnership over division. We are #BetterTogether, and together, we can make the final push for people and planet. #HLPF2026

~ Annalena Baerbock, President of the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly

Aging Grid and Rising Demand Strain Assam's Power Network; Rs 4,000-Crore Upgrade Underway

GUWAHATI

Rapidly growing electricity demand and aging transmission infrastructure are placing increasing pressure on Assam's power network, with officials warning that several key transmission corridors have become major bottlenecks affecting supply reliability across the state.

Power demand in Assam has surged to nearly 2,800 MW during peak hours this season. Despite adequate availability of electricity from generating stations and the Inter-State Transmission System (ISTS), consumers in several areas continue to experience outages and supply disruptions.

According to official sources, Assam's transmission network is approaching its operational limits due to sustained growth in electricity consumption and the aging condition of critical infrastructure.

"The present transmission network in Assam is approaching its operational limits due to sustained load growth and aging infrastructure. Critical 132 kV transmission corridors are increasingly susceptible to thermal overloading, volt-



age instability and contingency-related constraints," officials said.

They added that inadequate transformer capacity at several grid substations has further reduced operational flexibility and constrained the system's ability to handle rising demand.

Several strategically important 132

kV transmission lines, including the Bornagar-Dhaligaon, Sonabeel-Depota, Sonabeel-Ghoramari, Ghoramari-Depota, Nalbari-Rangia, Nalbari-Barpeta and Barpeta-Dhaligaon corridors, are now more than three decades old and continue to serve as the backbone of Lower Assam's power transmission network. Offi-

cials noted that these lines play a crucial role in evacuating and transmitting electricity to large parts of the region but are increasingly operating under significant stress. The aging infrastructure has led to deterioration of conductors, tower hardware and other components, resulting in reduced current-carrying capacity, higher transmission losses and increased vulnerability to breakdowns.

"These transmission assets constitute major evacuation and interconnection corridors supplying the Lower Assam distribution network. Owing to aging conductors, deterioration of tower hardware, reduced conductor tensile strength, increased line losses and limited current-carrying capability, these lines frequently experience congestion during seasonal and peak-demand conditions," sources said.

The situation becomes particularly challenging during summer evenings and periods of high agricultural power consumption, when demand spikes place additional pressure on the network. Officials said system operators are often compelled to resort to load management measures, including load-shed-

ding, to prevent thermal overloading and voltage instability.

Such interventions, they noted, affect the quality and reliability of power supply despite sufficient electricity being available from generation sources.

Another concern is the limited capacity of older conductors compared to modern High Temperature Low Sag (HTLS) conductors. As a result, several transmission corridors reach their thermal limits before actual consumer demand can be fully met.

The aging network has also contributed to higher rates of forced outages caused by conductor snapping, insulator flashovers, hardware failures and deterioration of transmission towers.

In addition, officials identified capacity constraints at the Samaguri Grid Substation and Salakati BTPS Grid Substation, where existing transformers are struggling to keep pace with growing demand.

The inadequate transformation capacity at these facilities has become a bottleneck for power evacuation to downstream substations, limiting the effective utilisation of available generation and

transmission resources.

The consequences include difficulty in meeting peak demand, poor voltage regulation in rural and semi-urban areas, more frequent planned and unplanned outages and increased operational costs associated with contingency management.

Officials warned that unless the transmission system is strengthened through augmentation, reconductoring and capacity enhancement, the reliability of electricity supply will continue to face challenges.

To address these issues, the state government has launched a series of infrastructure projects aimed at modernising the transmission network.

A senior government official said power sector projects worth more than Rs 4,000 crore, including initiatives supported by the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), are currently under implementation.

"These upgrade works take time. Once completed, they are expected to significantly reduce the existing constraints and improve overall system reliability," the official said.



STAY ENRICHED

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Assam's 60% DA Hike to Add Rs 49.82 Crore Monthly Burden; State Debt Rises to Rs 1.62 Lakh Crore

GUWAHATI

The Assam government will incur an additional expenditure of Rs 49.82 crore every month following the enhancement of Dearness Allowance (DA) and Dearness Relief (DR) to 60 per cent for state government employees and pensioners, the Legislative Assembly was informed .

Replying to a question raised by Congress MLA Jakir Hussain Sikdar, Finance Minister Jayanta Malla Baruah said the revised DA and DR rates came into effect from June 2026 and were paid along with June salaries and pensions disbursed in July.

The Finance Department had issued the notification for the increase on June 16.

According to the minister, the revision will lead to an additional monthly financial burden of Rs 49.82 crore under salary and pension expenditure.

Responding to queries on why the enhanced DA was not implemented from January in line with the Centre, Baruah said decisions regarding salary revisions and employee benefits are taken by the state



government based on recommendations of the State Pay Commission and Assam's fiscal position.

He noted that Assam is among a handful of states that have raised DA and DR to 60 per cent.

The minister also updated the House on the government's proposal to extend the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) to employees whose recruitment process commenced before

February 1, 2005.

He said the Finance Department had sought detailed information from all administrative departments in March 2025 following a Budget announcement made under the state's Astadash Mukutar Unnoyonee Mala initiative.

However, verification of recruitment records dating back more than two decades has proven to be a

lengthy exercise. While departments have submitted relevant details, discrepancies have reportedly been detected in several cases involving sanctioned posts, recruitment notifications, declaration of results and dates of joining service.

Baruah said the Finance Department is currently holding consultations with departmental heads and senior officials to verify the records before moving ahead with implementation.

"The government remains committed to implementing the proposal and will proceed further after completion of the verification process," he said.

On the state's finances, the minister informed the Assembly that actual revenue collection figures for the current financial year would be available only after the Principal Accountant General publishes the annual Finance Accounts.

He added that while details of fund releases under the ceiling system have already been furnished before the House, figures relating to releases under the non-ceiling system would be available only after verifi-

cation by the Accountant General.

Meanwhile, in written replies to separate questions raised by Opposition legislators, Baruah disclosed that Assam's outstanding debt has increased substantially over the past decade.

According to the latest figures from the Accountant General, the state's total liabilities stood at Rs 1,61,761 crore as of March 31, 2025, compared to Rs 35,690 crore on March 31, 2016.

The minister clarified that Rs 18,582 crore of the total liabilities comprise interest-free loans with a repayment period of 50 years, reducing the state's effective interest-bearing debt to Rs 1,43,179 crore.

He further informed the Assembly that Assam paid Rs 9,467.75 crore in interest to various lenders during the 2024-25 financial year.

The disclosures come amid discussions in the Assembly on the state's fiscal position, employee welfare measures and long-term financial commitments, with the government balancing increased expenditure on salaries and pensions alongside rising debt obligations.

Manipur CM Felicitates MPSC 2022 Successful Candidates



IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Wednesday reiterated his government's commitment to ensuring transparent and merit-based recruitment, stating that fairness in public appointments remains a top priority of the administration. The Chief Minister made the remarks while felicitating successful candidates of the Manipur Public Service Commission (MPSC) 2022 examination during the 14th Foundation Day celebration of Creative Circle Coaching Institute held at Hotel Imolesh in Imphal. Addressing the gathering, Singh lauded the coaching institute for its role in mentoring civil service aspirants despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the state's prolonged law and order issues.

The Chief Minister interacted with the newly selected MPSC candidates and sought their views on the recruitment process. According to Singh, all the successful candidates expressed confidence in the fairness and transparency of the selection exercise. "Transparency and fairness remained our foremost priority throughout the recruitment process," Singh said, adding that public confidence in government institutions depends on the credibility of recruitment

systems.

Highlighting the government's efforts to maintain the integrity of the selection process, the Chief Minister said he had consciously avoided any contact with the Chairman of the Manipur Public Service Commission before the declaration of the results.

"I deliberately refrained from contacting or meeting the MPSC Chairman before the results were announced so that the process remained completely free from any external influence," he said.

Singh added that he congratulated the Commission Chairman only after the results had been officially declared. Expressing satisfaction over the outcome, the Chief Minister said the successful candidates had secured their positions through merit and hard work, underscoring the importance of a transparent recruitment mechanism in strengthening trust in public institutions. During the programme, Singh also highlighted the government's efforts to support aspiring civil servants through financial assistance.

He announced that the state government has implemented the Chief Minister's Scholarship Scheme for Civil Services, with an annual allocation of Rs 2.8 crore. Under the initiative, the top 200 civil services aspirants will receive full scholarships to help them prepare for competitive examinations.

Retired IAS officer R.K. Nimai Singh, who also addressed the gathering, urged the successful candidates to uphold integrity, honesty and professionalism throughout their careers.

MONSOON MAYHEM: ANNAUL RITUAL OF FAILURE

VOLUME:1, ISSUE 823

RED TAPE BEYOND THE RAJ

More than seven decades after Independence, India has transformed itself from a poor, agrarian nation into one of the world's fastest-growing economies. Cities have expanded, technology has revolutionised communication, and governance has increasingly moved online. Yet, amid this remarkable progress, one feature of public life remains stubbornly unchanged: the culture of waiting.

Waiting for approvals. Waiting for signatures. Waiting outside offices. Waiting for hearings. Waiting for documents. Waiting for justice.

The persistence of this culture raises an uncomfortable question: has India truly dismantled the machinery of colonial bureaucracy, or has it merely inherited and adapted it?

Human beings have always sought certainty. From the earliest agricultural societies that replaced the uncertainty of hunting with the predictability of farming, people have valued systems that make life more manageable. Modern governance, in theory, exists to provide precisely that certainty – clear rules, timely services, and predictable outcomes. Yet for millions of Indians, interactions with public institutions often produce the opposite experience.

What should be straightforward frequently becomes complicated. What should be timely often becomes delayed. And what should be a citizen's right is too often treated as a favour.

This is not merely an administrative inconvenience. It reflects a deeper culture in which power is measured not by service delivered but by access controlled. In many parts of society, the ability to make others wait has become a symbol of authority. The longer the queue outside an office, the more important the official appears. The harder it is to secure an appointment, the greater the perceived influence of the individual behind the desk.

This mindset extends far beyond government offices. It is visible in VIP entrances, priority services, exclusive access, and the countless informal hierarchies that shape everyday life. The privilege of avoiding queues has become a marker of success, while the power to impose delays has become a marker of status.

Such attitudes did not emerge in a vacuum. They are rooted in India's colonial inheritance.

The British administrative system in India was never designed to empower citizens. It was designed to govern subjects. Its primary objective was not efficiency but control. Layers of paperwork, procedural hurdles, and complex chains of authority served a political purpose: maintaining distance between rulers and the ruled.

Colonial bureaucracy functioned as a mechanism of power. By forcing people to navigate intricate procedures, the state reinforced its authority and reminded subjects of their dependence on official approval. Access to justice, licences, land records, and administrative services was deliberately structured through a hierarchy that concentrated decision-making power in a few hands.

The British did not invent bureaucracy, but they perfected its use as an instrument of governance over a vast and diverse population. The resulting administrative culture prized procedure over outcomes and authority over accessibility.

Independent India inherited much of this framework intact.

While political power changed hands in 1947, many institutional structures remained remarkably similar. The colonial collector became the district administrator. The colonial police system continued under largely unchanged laws. Courts retained procedures, language, and processes rooted in another era. Citizens who had once sought approval from imperial authorities now found themselves navigating bureaucracies run by fellow Indians but operating under familiar assumptions.

The consequences are visible even today.

Despite technological advancements and digital governance initiatives, delays remain commonplace. Citizens frequently encounter obstacles in obtaining certificates, land records, licences, passports, and numerous other services. Online applications often still require offline verification. Digital portals promise efficiency, yet the final decision may remain dependent on an overburdened or indifferent official.

The problem is not merely technological. It is cultural and institutional.

A system designed around control naturally struggles to transform itself into one centred on service. When authority is linked to gatekeeping, simplifying procedures can appear threatening to those accustomed to wielding discretionary power. Every reform that reduces dependency on intermediaries also reduces opportunities for influence, patronage, and rent-seeking.

Nowhere is this legacy more visible than in policing and the justice system.

The colonial police force was established primarily to maintain order and protect state interests rather than serve local communities. The Police Act of 1861, enacted in the aftermath of the Revolt of 1857, reflected this philosophy. Citizens were viewed less as stakeholders and more as populations to be managed.

Although India has evolved into a democratic republic, public perceptions of policing often remain shaped by this historical experience. Many people continue to regard interaction with the police as something to avoid unless absolutely necessary. The institution that should inspire trust frequently evokes apprehension.

The judiciary faces similar challenges. Courts remain burdened by enormous backlogs, procedural complexity, and prolonged delays. Justice delayed may not always amount to justice denied, but it certainly erodes public confidence. For ordinary citizens, legal proceedings often mean years of uncertainty, repeated appearances, mounting expenses, and endless adjournments.

The popular phrase "tareekh pe tareekh" resonates precisely because it reflects a lived reality familiar to millions.

To be fair, governments across decades have attempted reforms. Digitisation of services, online grievance mechanisms, direct benefit transfers, e-governance initiatives, police modernisation programmes, and judicial reforms have all sought to improve citizen experience. Significant progress has indeed been made in many sectors.

Yet technology alone cannot overcome a mindset that equates authority with obstruction.

A citizen-centric state requires more than digital portals. It requires institutions that see citizens not as petitioners seeking favours but as rights-bearing stakeholders. It demands accountability for delays, transparency in decision-making, and performance metrics that reward service rather than procedural rigidity.

Most importantly, it requires a cultural shift.

The true measure of governance is not how difficult it is to access power but how easy it is to access services. A responsive administration should not derive prestige from scarcity or exclusivity. Its legitimacy should come from efficiency, fairness, and public trust.

India's aspirations as a global economic power will ultimately depend not only on infrastructure, investment, and innovation but also on the quality of its institutions. Every unnecessary delay imposes a cost – on productivity, on economic growth, and on public confidence. Every citizen forced to spend days securing a document, obtaining an approval, or pursuing a routine service loses time that could have been devoted to more productive pursuits.



POONAM I KAUSHISH

Every year, the script is identical. Monsoon unpacks its bags across States and India surrenders! Roads morph into rivers, potholes into craters, underpasses into swimming pools, choked drains, stinking sewage streams seep into houses, people sink in manholes, airports and railway stations struggle to cope, bridges collapse, landslides bury villages and our 'world class' cities are floating museums of administrative paralysis, stripping away the façade of development. An annual ritual of failure.

Every year the script is identical, only the actors change their costume, nothing else. Alas, as people grapple with rainwater calamity our netas cursorily go through their customary political circus. All lament deaths, parrot grief and vouch help to people. Babudom analyses the causes and its aftermath over official lunches in air-conditioned rooms. Their ideas and remedies as drained as an overflowing drain. Everyone is satisfied that they have done their bit, promising "lessons will be learnt." A phrase that is the official anthem of bureaucratic failure.

Questionably, does anyone really care? Given that monsoon arrives year after year leaving behind crumbling cities. No. Why does the Government only react after lakhs are rendered homeless and property worth crores is lost? Who is responsible? Who will be held accountable for Administration's ineptitude? And which head will roll? None.

Moreover, why do politicians feel that merely sanctioning monies will solve the problem? Little do they realize that, neither the Central Disaster Management Authority nor State Disaster Boards implement any project properly. Leaders, who ignore experts who in turn, blame it on lessons not learnt by successive Administrations. A creeping paralysis of 'sab chalta hai'!

Primarily because the aam aadmi translates into sterile statistics to be manipulated at will. Standing mute testimony to a callous and selfish polity and Administration bereft of cure and consolation. Everything kaam chalo! All cursing the Government. All forgetting rain, is a most unforgiving and reliable auditor of governance.

Worse, it's a tell-tale of total apathy of insensitive Administrations at the Centre and States that don't spare even ecologically sensitive zones to satiate their greed, thereby making them more vulnerable to climate change. In 2022 cracks in Uttarakhand Joshimath and flooding of Bengaluru's elite tech parks have not taught us any lesson.

Scandalously, new flyovers remain louder priorities than more drain works or sewage treatment plants. A new study by Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change has found mountains globally, including Himalayas, are now seeing more rainfall where it has mostly snowed in the past. Besides, there is mismatch between haste in commissioning projects in the ecologically fragile zone which has rung alarm bells among glaciologists.

Undeniably, the country doesn't have a monsoon problem. It has a governance problem. For months

civic agencies issue glossy presentations claiming "monsoon readiness." Drains have been de-silted, pumps serviced, emergency teams deployed and vulnerable spots identified. Then Heaven open and the same vulnerable spots dutifully drown. Apparently, only rain is surprised.

The tragedy? We have normalised failure. Flooded roads are shrugged off as seasonal inconvenience. Bridges collapsing barely raise eyebrows. Water logging that would trigger political crises in many countries is accepted here as an unavoidable act of God. It isn't. It is an act of neglect. By the time the skies clear, so does the urgency for reform. And by the time the next monsoon arrives, little has changed except the scale of the damage.

Leaders conveniently blame climate change. True, rainfall is becoming more erratic and floods are more frequent. But climate change did not encroach upon wetlands, make lakes vanish beneath concrete and block natural waterways with unplanned development. It did not choke storm-water drains with garbage. It did not approve illegal construction on floodplains. It did not build roads that disintegrate after the first decent shower. Those were entirely human achievements.

Perhaps the most troubling feature of India's monsoon crisis is the absence of accountability. Infrastructure repeatedly fails, yet meaningful consequences are rare. Committees are formed, reports are written and promises

are renewed, but systemic reform remains elusive. The emphasis remains on rescue after disaster rather than prevention before it.

Succinctly, monsoon is neither friend nor foe. It is a natural phenomenon that has sustained the country for millennia. The enemy is complacency and shoddy planning. It is not simply heavy rainfall but decades of inadequate urban planning, neglected infrastructure and weak enforcement. Alongside, the comfortable belief that public memory will evaporate faster than the floodwater.

Whether it becomes a blessing or a disaster depends largely on how political will prioritise resilience over short-term expediency. Until India replaces short-term political optics with long-term resilience, competence replaces complacency and accountability replaces excuses, the first drops of rain will continue to wash away not just roads, but the illusion that India's infrastructure is ready for the future.

An annual reminder that development is measured not by grand announcements, but by whether a nation can withstand the very rains on which its future depends.

True, India has demonstrated its capacity to build world-class highways, airports and digital infrastructure. It possesses the engineering expertise, financial resources, and technological capability to manage its monsoon far better than it does today.

What is lacking is sustained political commitment, coordinated urban planning, rigorous

enforcement of building regulations and maintenance of public infrastructure throughout the year -- not just in the weeks before the rains arrive. Surely, it can apply the same ambition to climate-resilient cities, modern drainage systems, restored wetlands, stricter building standards and scientific urban planning. What is needed is political determination.

The real challenge lies in sustained political commitment to adapting to a changing climate while addressing long-standing governance and infrastructure deficits. Time India shifts from crisis management to disaster

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

Reforms to modernise railways

- Making fertiliser transportation faster & smarter
- Container-based transportation
- Simplified freight structure
- Faster distribution across locations

~ Ashwini Vaisnaw, Minister for Railways, I&B, Electronics & IT, GoI



prevention, else the annual cycle of flooded cities, damaged roads and lost lives will continue to define monsoon more than the life-giving rains themselves.

The writing is on the wall. The measure of a nation's progress is not how it responds to predictable disasters, but whether it prevents them in the first place. Our polity needs to pull up their bootstraps and focus on long-term not short-term planning. One needs neither a bleeding heart nor blindness to know what should be done.

For if we still elect to do nothing about monsoon mayhem it only holds out promises of more misery, more wrenching news and more cries. Life, after all, is not collating numbers, but flesh and blood with beating hearts. Can we just let them bleed? Bringing to mind words from an old comic: We have seen the enemy and it is us. (INFA)



QUOTE OF THE DAY

Too many companies compete;
too few companies create. -

Magnus Lindkvist

Arunachal floods affect over 1 lakh families, devastate 85,000 hectares of farmland; MP seeks special Central package

ITANAGAR

Rajya Sabha MP from Arunachal Pradesh Tai Tagak has said that the ongoing floods and related disasters have affected more than one lakh families across 28 districts of the state, damaging nearly 85,000 hectares of agricultural land and causing widespread destruction to roads, bridges and other infrastructure.

Addressing the media on Tuesday, Tagak urged the Centre to announce a special relief package for the flood-hit frontier state, describing the scale of devastation as unprecedented and beyond the state's capacity to handle on its own.

"The situation is extremely serious and the magnitude of destruction is unprecedented. Arunachal Pradesh requires immediate support for relief, restoration and long-term reconstruction," he said.

The MP said incessant rainfall, overflowing rivers and cloudbursts have trig-



gered a series of disasters across multiple districts, with fresh areas continuing to be affected. He noted that damaged roads, washed-away bridges and landslide debris have severely disrupted connectivity, making it difficult for rescue and relief teams to

access several remote villages.

Tagak expressed concern over the risk of disease outbreaks in affected areas due to prolonged waterlogging and unsanitary conditions, urging health authorities to remain on high alert and ensure timely med-

ical assistance to vulnerable communities.

According to him, critical infrastructure, including strategic roads, bridges and culverts, has suffered extensive damage in districts such as Anjaw, Tawang and Lower Siang. Communication links have also been cut off in several interior regions, including Nilling Circle in Upper Subansiri district and Parsi Parlo town in Kurung Kumey district, which was recently hit by a cloudburst.

Highlighting Arunachal Pradesh's strategic importance along India's international border, Tagak stressed the need for urgent restoration of road connectivity and the construction of temporary bridges to reconnect isolated towns and border areas.

He said the Ministry of Defence and the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) are currently assessing damage to strategic routes across the state.

The MP informed that an inter-ministerial central team has already visited

Arunachal Pradesh to assess the extent of losses. However, he said several remote villages could not be reached because damaged infrastructure had rendered them inaccessible. Tagak also commended district administrations, government officials and personnel of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) for carrying out rescue and relief operations under challenging conditions in districts including Lower Dibang Valley, Keyi Panyor and East Siang.

Apart from damage to agriculture, he said the floods have severely affected livestock, fisheries and local markets, impacting livelihoods across large parts of the state. While detailed assessments are still underway, preliminary estimates suggest that more than one lakh families have been affected by the disaster.

Describing Arunachal Pradesh as a revenue-deficit and predominantly agriculture-dependent state, Tagak said coping with a disaster of such magnitude without

substantial Central assistance would be extremely difficult.

He appealed to the Union government to sanction a special flood relief package and urged citizens across the country to extend support to affected communities.

The Rajya Sabha MP also revealed that he had contributed Rs 19 lakh from his personal resources towards relief efforts in Keyi Panyor and Lower Siang districts. He said the contribution was made because he had only recently been elected and was yet to complete the formalities required for accessing funds under the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS).

The appeal comes as Arunachal Pradesh continues to battle one of its worst flood seasons in recent years, with widespread damage to infrastructure, agriculture and livelihoods posing major challenges for relief and rehabilitation efforts across the state.

Tripura records nearly 9% drop in road accidents in 2025: DGP

AGARTALA

Tripura has recorded a nearly 9 per cent decline in road traffic accidents in 2025 compared to the previous year, Director General of Police (DGP) Anurag said on Tuesday, attributing the improvement to coordinated road safety measures implemented by multiple agencies.

Speaking to reporters during a free eye check-up camp for commercial drivers organised by the Tripura Traffic Department, the DGP said the state registered 527 road traffic accidents in 2025, compared to 578 accidents in 2024, reflecting a reduction of 51 cases.

Anurag said reducing road accidents remains a key priority for the Traffic Department and credited the decline to the implementation of the "Four Es" strategy - Education, Enforcement, Emergency Care and Engineering. "The primary objective of the Traffic Department is to reduce road accidents. Through the Four Es approach and coordinated efforts among various stakeholders, we have been able to achieve a significant reduction in accident numbers," he said.

He noted that the improvement was the result of sustained collaboration between the Traffic Department and other agencies involved in road safety management across the state. The DGP also announced a new initiative jointly launched by the Traffic Police and the community policing programme Prayas to provide free eye examinations for commercial drivers. Under the programme, commercial drivers diagnosed with vision-related issues will be provided spectacles and corrective lenses free of cost. Anurag said many commercial drivers are unable to undergo regular eye check-ups due to financial constraints or lack of time, and the initiative seeks to address these challenges while contributing to safer roads.

ED Probes Rs.1,500 Crore Areca Nut Smuggling Racket, Conducts Raids Across Four States



KRC TIMES NEWS DESK

GUWAHATI: The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) has launched a major money laundering investigation into an alleged cross-border areca nut (betel nut) smuggling network, conducting searches at 20 locations across Assam, Mizoram, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh.

The investigation, initiated under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, centres on

the alleged illegal import and sale of foreign-origin areca nut, commonly known as Burmese supari. According to the ED, the smuggling syndicate is suspected to have generated proceeds of crime exceeding Rs. 1,500 crore.

The searches were carried out on July 3 as part of the ongoing probe. The ED said the case is based on multiple FIRs registered in Assam alleging large-scale smuggling of areca nut and evasion of customs duty.

The agency is also relying on findings of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), which had earlier seized 655.32 metric tonnes of areca nut following directions issued by the Gauhati High Court.

The ED is examining the alleged financial trail linked to the smuggling network and is investigating the movement of illicit funds generated through the illegal cross-border trade. Further investigation is underway.

Assam to realign revenue circles with Assembly constituencies, create 13 new circles

GUWAHATI

The Assam government has launched a statewide exercise to align revenue circle boundaries with Assembly constituencies following the delimitation process, with Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announcing the creation of new revenue circles in 13 Assembly constituencies that currently lack one.

Addressing the Assembly during the ongoing Budget Session on Tuesday, Sarma said several administrative anomalies have emerged after the delimitation of Assembly constituencies, with villages often falling under revenue circles located in different constituencies or even different districts.

The Chief Minister said the initiative aims to make revenue circles and Legislative Assembly Constituencies (LACs) co-terminus,

thereby improving administrative efficiency and reducing inconvenience for both residents and elected representatives.

"Following delimitation, panchayat boundaries were reorganised, but in many places revenue circles were not adjusted accordingly. As a result, villages belonging to one constituency continue to remain under revenue circles of another constituency and, in some cases, even another district," Sarma told the House.

To address the issue, District Commissioners (DCs) across the state have been directed to submit proposals within two days to ensure that every village falls under the revenue circle corresponding to its Assembly constituency.

"Our immediate objective is that no MLA should have to travel outside his or her constituency to visit a revenue circle. We are not abol-

ishing any existing revenue circles at this stage. We will only transfer villages so that revenue circles and Assembly constituencies become co-terminus," he said.

The Chief Minister cited several examples of the existing discrepancies. He noted that villages under the Balijana Revenue Circle in Dudhnoi are linked to the Goalpara East Assembly constituency, while a panchayat in Barkhetri remains attached to Sarthebari in Barpeta district. Similar anomalies, he said, continue in areas such as Tinkhong and Naharkata in Upper Assam.

Referring to Golaghat district, Sarma pointed out that several villages now falling within the Golaghat Assembly constituency after delimitation continue to be administered under the Dergaon and Golaghat revenue arrangements established before the boundary changes.

sought an explanation for the alleged failure to prevent the incident or apprehend those responsible.

The DMCC also raised concerns over the unresolved disappearance of a Meetei civilian, identified as Kamal Babu, from the same area last year, stating that the case remains pending. Among the properties destroyed in the fire was the residence of former Indian footballer Laitonjam Sanathoi, the organisation said.

Drawing parallels with the ethnic violence that erupted in Manipur on May 3, 2023, the committee said the latest incident had revived painful memories for many residents. It alleged that hundreds of Meetei homes were destroyed during the initial phase of the conflict.

The organisation further criticised the treatment of Inner Manipur Member of Parliament Angomcha Bimol Akoijam during his visit to the affected area, alleging that the conduct of security personnel reflected a lack of respect for an elected representative and the concerns of local residents.

According to the DMCC, villagers from Meetei and Naga communities attempted to extinguish the fire and prevent further destruction but were allegedly prevented from accessing the area by security personnel. The committee further alleged that force, including lathi charge and tear gas, was later used against members of the public.

The statement also expressed dissatisfaction with remarks made by Manipur Home Minister Govindas Konhoujam, claiming that his comments appeared to justify the burning of Meetei houses. The organisation called on the Chief Minister and the Home Minister to step down if they were unable to ensure the protection of citizens and their property.

The DMCC additionally alleged that security operations were being conducted disproportionately in Meetei-dominated areas while insufficient action was being taken in locations from where armed attacks were allegedly launched.

Raising concerns over the ongo-

ing disarmament process, the committee stated that several Meetei groups had surrendered weapons following the Governor's appeal, while some Kukli militant groups operating under the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement had reportedly refused to surrender arms unless their political demands were addressed.

The organisation demanded a detailed explanation from the authorities regarding the incident and called for action against those responsible for the destruction of property.

Among its key demands, the DMCC sought stronger measures against militant networks operating in the state, a review of the Suspension of Operations arrangement, and the restoration of normalcy, law and order across Manipur.

Reaffirming its solidarity with the affected families, the committee urged the government to ensure the safety and security of all communities and bring the perpetrators of the arson attack to justice.

Tripura CM inaugurates, launches Rs 105.73-crore projects in Gomati; highlights development push

AGARTALA

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Tuesday inaugurated and laid the foundation stones for development projects worth Rs 105.73 crore in Gomati district, asserting that rapid infrastructure development is now visible across the state. The projects, unveiled at Udaipur, include the inauguration of two new school buildings and a synthetic turf football ground. The Chief Minister also laid foundation stones for a sub-divisional hospital, two additional school buildings, a Public Works Department (PWD) office and a district labour office.

Addressing a public gathering, Saha said the state had witnessed a significant acceleration in infrastructure development under the present government. "During the last financial year, I inaugurated or laid the foundation stones for projects worth around Rs 1,500 crore. In the current financial year, the figure has already reached about Rs 221 crore.

This reflects the scale of infrastructure development taking place across Tripura," he said. The Chief Minister highlighted the state's growing budgetary allocations, stating that Tripura's annual Budget had increased from Rs 32,000 crore in 2025-26 to Rs 34,000 crore in 2026-27. He added that capital expenditure had also seen a substantial rise, increasing from Rs 7,000 crore to Rs 10,000 crore during the same period.

Saha also referred to the Destination Tripura: Business Conclave

2026, held on July 9 and 10, describing it as a major success in attracting investment to the state.

"I had expected investment agreements worth around Rs 1 lakh crore, but proposals worth Rs 1.21 lakh crore were signed. This demonstrates the confidence investors have in Tripura and reflects the investment-friendly environment created by the government," he said.

According to the Chief Minister, the growing interest from investors, entrepreneurs and business leaders is expected to boost economic activity and create new opportunities across multiple sectors. Finance Minister Pranajit Singha Roy, who was also present at the event, said spending on infrastructure development had increased significantly under the BJP-led government. He noted that annual expenditure on infrastructure projects had risen from around Rs 3,000 crore during the previous government's tenure to nearly Rs 8,000 crore at present. The enhanced investment in infrastructure, he said, is aimed at improving public facilities, strengthening connectivity and generating employment opportunities for the state's youth. The inauguration and foundation-laying ceremonies form part of the Tripura government's broader push to expand educational, healthcare and administrative infrastructure while leveraging private investment to accelerate economic growth and development across the state.

Northeast gets major boost in disaster monitoring; weather radars rise from 2 to 13 in a decade

SHILLONG

The Northeast's disaster monitoring and scientific infrastructure has expanded significantly over the past decade, with the number of weather radars increasing from just two to 13 and seismological observatories more than doubling, Union Minister for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh said on Tuesday.

Reviewing the progress of science and technology institutions at the North East Centre for Technology Application and Reach (NECTAR) in Shillong, Singh said the region has witnessed substantial investments in weather forecasting, earthquake monitoring and technology-driven development despite its longstanding vulnerability to natural disasters.

"Before 2014, the entire Northeast had only two weather radars, including one in Meghalaya, even though Cherrapunji is among the wettest places in the world. Today, there are 13 weather radars across the region," the minister said.

He added that the number of seismological observatories has increased from 84 to 171 during the same period. In addition,



lightning detection stations, which were absent in the region before 2014, have now been established in Meghalaya and Tripura.

According to Singh, the expansion of scientific infrastructure has considerably strengthened the region's disaster preparedness and early warning capabilities in the face of recurring floods, earthquakes, landslides and extreme weather events.

During his visit, the minister inaugurated NECTAR's state-of-the-art Geo-Informatics Laboratory, equipped with advanced drones, LiDAR systems, hyperspectral imaging technology and high-performance computing facilities designed to support geospatial research and applications.

He said institutions such as NECTAR are playing a critical role in translating scientific research into practical solutions that benefit farmers, entrepreneurs and rural communities across the Northeast.

Among the innovations showcased was

a Mobile Food Processing Unit developed jointly by NECTAR and the CSIR-Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI). The unit enables farmers to process agricultural produce at the farm level, helping reduce post-harvest losses while creating opportunities for value addition and rural enterprise.

Singh also reviewed the Vasundhara Soil Organic Carbon Detection Laboratory-cum-Manufacturing Unit, developed under the PM-DeVINE programme using technology transferred from the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC). Officials informed the minister that nearly 2,500 farmers have already received soil testing kits under the initiative, which aims to build a comprehensive soil health database for the region.

The minister visited NECTAR's STEM Education Laboratory, where students are being trained in emerging technologies such as robotics, coding, artificial intelligence and 3D printing. Under the programme, 50 STEM Laboratories are planned across five northeastern states in collaboration with IIT Kanpur, with an estimated 25,000 students expected to benefit, particularly in remote areas.

Officials said the newly inaugurated Geo-Informatics Laboratory has already mapped more than 2,000 square kilometres for projects involving forest carbon assessment, biodiversity conservation, mining restoration and disaster resilience planning. Drone-based surveys conducted

by NECTAR have also supported mapping exercises in over 700 villages under the SVAMITVA Scheme, while scientific organic farming projects under PM-DeVINE have benefited nearly 25,000 farmers across the region.

Highlighting the institution's contribution to skill development, Singh said NECTAR has trained 569 drone technicians, 247 GIS and remote sensing professionals, 107 certified drone pilots and more than 4,500 students in advanced technologies. These initiatives have created livelihood opportunities for over 190 young people from the Northeast, he added.

The minister also reviewed progress on NECTAR's upcoming permanent campus at New Shillong, which is being developed as a regional hub for geospatial science, innovation, technology incubation and research. Expressing confidence in the institution's future role, Singh said NECTAR is well positioned to leverage emerging technologies such as drones, artificial intelligence and geospatial mapping to address the Northeast's unique developmental challenges while contributing to the national vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

The expansion of weather surveillance, seismic monitoring and technology infrastructure comes at a time when the Northeast continues to face increasing climate-related risks, making scientific preparedness and early warning systems crucial for safeguarding lives and livelihoods across the region.

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A lack of education can be as deadly as smoking, according to a new study.

India issues first response to US indictment of Lawrence Bishnoi gang; reaffirms anti-crime cooperation



NEW DELHI

India issued its first official response after the United States indicted jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi and several associates over the 2023 killing of Khalistani separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Canada who had been designated a terrorist by New Delhi, saying New Delhi and Washington share a strong partnership in combating transnational organised crime and terrorism.

Responding to questions on the US Department of Justice's indictment, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said India had taken note of the action and reiterated its longstanding position on the threat posed by international criminal networks.

"We have seen the

announcements made by the US Department of Justice regarding the indictments and enforcement action against transnational organised criminal networks operating across several countries," Jaiswal said.

Calling transnational organised crime a growing global challenge, he added, "India has consistently maintained that transnational organised crime, terrorism, narco-trafficking, human trafficking, illegal firearms trafficking and related criminal networks pose a serious threat to our societies."

Highlighting bilateral cooperation with Washington, Jaiswal said, "India and the United States enjoy strong and growing cooperation in combating terrorism as well as transnational organised crime. Our agencies have

worked closely together over the years, and this cooperation continues to deepen." The statement marks New Delhi's first official reaction after US federal prosecutors charging 37 people linked to India-based organised crime syndicates, including the Lawrence Bishnoi gang. According to the US Department of Justice, Bishnoi, 33, who has been lodged in an Indian prison since 2015, and his close associate Satinderjeet Singh alias Goldy Brar, allegedly ordered the June 2023 assassination Nijjar outside the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara in Surrey, British Columbia. Brar remains a fugitive. US prosecutors said that the Bishnoi gang operated a transnational criminal network involved in targeted killings, extortion, drug trafficking and intimidation across multiple countries. They further accused the group of targeting prominent religious and political leaders before extorting members of the community.

Announcing the indictments, First Assistant United States Attorney Bill Essayli had said, "Transnational criminal gangs who spread fear, drugs, and violence will face the full force of justice and the weight of the federal government. There is no safe harbor for these thugs."

The killing of Nijjar triggered a major diplomatic dispute between India and Canada. In 2024, Canadian authorities arrested four Indian nationals in connection with the murder, while the Bishnoi gang was later designated a terrorist entity by Canada, enabling authorities to freeze its assets and seize its property.

Opposition leaders urge Wangchuk to end hunger strike; AAP chief Kejriwal to visit Jantar Mantar on July 16



NEW DELHI

Opposition leaders appealed to educator and climate activist Sonam Wangchuk to end his indefinite fast at Delhi's Jantar Mantar, while expressing support for the ongoing protest.

AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal extended his party's support to the ongoing protest by Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) at Jantar Mantar and urged Wangchuk to end his indefinite hunger strike.

In a press conference, Kejriwal said he will visit Jantar Mantar at 5 pm on Thursday to extend his support to Wangchuk and the CJP protest.

"Sonam Wangchuk is on hunger strike for some days and his health

is deteriorating. He is an asset of the country and I appeal him to end his hunger strike. There are other ways also for the struggle," the former Delhi chief minister said.

AAP supports the CJP protest and its demands and Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan should immediately step down, he said.

Kejriwal added the exam system should be improved to plug paper leaks and protect students from facing problems in the future.

AAP leader and former Delhi chief minister Atishi met Wangchuk at Jantar Mantar on Monday.

Meanwhile, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav also appealed to Wangchuk to end his indefinite fast,

saying no sacrifice holds significance for the "insensitive" BJP government.

"We humbly request and earnestly appeal to Shri Sonam Wangchuk ji to break his fast. His life is invaluable to the entire world because it embodies the same commitment to humanity and the environment as it does to democracy," Yadav posted on X.

"The BJP government, which he is attempting to awaken through his fast unto death, is itself a principle-less and corrupt system. In its insensitivity and heartlessness, the sacrifice of anyone holds no significance; therefore, expecting any sense of propriety or change of heart from BJP members is utterly futile," he said.

"For them (BJP), no one's life holds

any value. For them, money is paramount. They are intoxicated with the arrogance of wealth earned through corruption. Hoping for change in them is in vain. Those who are arrogant cannot be refined," he added.

The appeals come on the 24th day of the Cockroach Janta Party's (CJP) protest at Jantar Mantar and the 17th day of Wangchuk's indefinite hunger strike.

Meanwhile, CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke said Wangchuk has begun losing muscle mass and is in severe pain. Sharing their conversation on X, Dipke said he urged the activist to end his fast, but Wangchuk responded, "Don't ask me to end my fast. Ask the govt why they won't even have a dialogue."

Yadav also targeted the BJP over the donation theft at the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

"How would those who are looting even temples out of greed for power ('satta-graha') understand the significance of 'Satyagraha'? They have no concern for the future of the youth, nor for the dreams of their parents and other family members; they are simply self-centred people," he said.

"To defeat and permanently remove the BJP, which is strangling democracy, and its gang of underground, unregistered allies may your morale and moral strength continue to inspire every true Indian, and may you forever remain a beacon of light for your countrymen, the youth, and the struggles for democracy and the environment against negative forces. This is our collective wish and prayer," he added. Earlier, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray also extended support to the protest and appealed to Wangchuk to end his protest, insisting his life was precious.

According to the organisers, Wangchuk has lost 8.2 kg since he began fasting. The CJP has been holding a protest at Jantar Mantar demanding Pradhan's resignation over alleged irregularities in the NEET examination. Wangchuk joined the agitation on June 28 and has been on an indefinite fast since then. The organisation has announced a march to Parliament on July 20.

INTERNATIONAL

North Korea on Typhoon Bavi alert as Kim Jong Un orders 'maximum vigilance' against heavy rains



SEOUL

North Korea warned of heavy rain and strong winds on Tuesday as Typhoon Bavi drew near, with leader Kim Jong Un urging "maximum vigilance" to prevent damage.

Natural disasters tend to have an outsized impact on isolated North Korea due to its weak infrastructure and economy.

The typhoon is expected to weaken into a low-pressure system before crossing the country's central region via the Yellow Sea between Tuesday and Wednesday, according to Pyongyang's state-run Rodong Sinmun newspaper.

The country's weather agency issued warnings for heavy rain-fall and strong winds, the paper said.

All officials and workers are "urged to remain on maximum vigilance and take steps to minimise damage," Kim was quoted as saying.

Rodong said rainfall of 80-120 millimetres (3.1-4.7 inches), with



downpours of 30-60 millimetres per hour, is forecast on Tuesday across parts of the country's northern and central regions.

The southern regions, among others, are set for 150-200 milli-

metres of rain, as well as winds of 10-15 metres per second along the west coast and in some inland areas.

North Korea has stepped up disaster prevention efforts, the Korean Central News Agency reported last week.

Heavy rain also battered South Korea recently, dumping up to 200 millimetres in some areas. Hundreds of residents in the central Chungcheong province evacuated the area or were stranded by flooding.

Waves crash into the coastline in Yilan on July 10, 2026, as Typhoon Bavi moves toward northeastern Taiwan.

A man in his 70s was reported missing after being swept away

by a swollen river in the southern region of Gyeongsang, according to broadcaster KBS.

Seoul's weather agency forecast rain across the country from Tuesday through Wednesday,

with heavy downpours expected in central regions and the southern province of Jeolla.

Scientists say human-driven climate change is making extreme weather more frequent, prolonged and intense.

Last summer was South Korea's hottest on record, and both Koreas recorded their warmest June.

This year's return of El Nino, a natural Pacific warming pattern linked to heat, drought and heavy rain across parts of Asia, has added to the risks.

North Korea also suffers chronic power shortages, and experts say most residents lack air conditioning.

The impoverished country

was hit by severe flooding in its northern regions in 2024, with South Korean media reporting that as many as 1,500 people could be dead or missing -- estimates Pyongyang dismissed at the time.

US pays back \$81 billion in Trump tariffs ruled illegal by Supreme Court



WASHINGTON

The US government has already paid back tens of billions of dollars in tariffs it collected before the Supreme Court ruled them illegal, according to budget figures released Monday.

Tariffs -- taxes on imported goods -- have been a key part of President Donald Trump's game economic plan since he took office again last year.

But in February, the Supreme Court shut down a big chunk of the extra tariffs Trump ordered,

forcing the government to return money to the companies that had paid them.

According to the budget data, the US has paid out \$81 billion in tariff refunds so far this fiscal year, which started in October 2025, compared to just \$5 billion during the same stretch last year.

A Treasury Department official told reporters that the spike is almost entirely because of the Supreme Court decision, with most of the refunds happening in May and June.

Trump had pitched the

tariffs as a catch-all fix for the economy -- bringing factories back to America, getting better trade deals and closing the deficit in the federal budget.

But the deficit, which had actually gotten a little smaller last year thanks to the tariff income, is now growing again. It hit \$1.367 trillion in the first nine months of the fiscal year, up two percent.

The US also spent over \$1 trillion just on paying interest on its debt, up 14 percent, and military spending climbed five percent because of the war in the Middle East.

ASSAM BUDGET 2026-27: A BLUEPRINT FOR INDUSTRIAL TRANSFORMATION AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

ASSAM BUDGET 2026-27

BEYOND ELECTORAL PROMISES—

- ↑ RISING DEBT
- ↑ REVENUE > CAPITAL EXPENDITURE
- ↑ UNEMPLOYMENT CHALLENGE
- ↑ PRICE RISE & CARTEL SYSTEM
- ↑ CAG WARNINGS & MISSED PROMISES

A BLUEPRINT FOR FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY & STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION

EXPECTATIONS . CHALLENGES . SOLUTIONS

INDUSTRIAL GROWTH | EMPLOYMENT GENERATION | FISCAL DISCIPLINE | INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT | SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Assam Budget 2026-27 may eventually be remembered not merely as another annual financial exercise but as a strategic attempt to redefine the state's economic future. Presented by Finance Minister Jayanta Malla Baruah, the budget signals a transition from a development model driven largely by welfare expansion and conventional sectors towards one increasingly anchored in technology, manufacturing, clean energy and innovation. At the same time, it retains substantial commitments to social welfare, reflecting the government's effort to balance economic transformation with social stability.

For decades, Assam's economy has relied heavily on agriculture, tea, oil, natural gas and public-sector spending. While these sectors have provided employment and revenue, they have also exposed the state to the vulnerabilities associated with commodity cycles, limited industrial diversification and constrained private investment. The 2026-27 budget appears to acknowledge these realities and proposes a roadmap aimed at broadening the state's economic base.

At the centre of this strategy lies the goal of employment generation. The government has set a target of creating two lakh jobs over the next five years, an ambitious objective that reflects both the aspirations of Assam's growing youth population and the need to absorb an expanding workforce. Rather than depending solely on traditional industries, the budget identifies a range of emerging sectors—including semiconductors, electronics manufacturing, green energy, gaming and digital services—as future drivers of employment and economic growth.

This shift represents a significant policy evolution. In the past, economic discussions in Assam were dominated by concerns related to agriculture, tea production, infrastructure deficits and connectivity challenges. While these remain important, the state is now attempting to position itself within industries that are shaping the global economy. The success of this approach could fundamentally alter Assam's place within India's industrial landscape.

Perhaps the most significant pillar of the government's industrial vision is the development of a semiconductor ecosystem centred around the Tata semiconductor project at Jagiroad. The facility has already attracted national attention because of its strategic importance to India's efforts to reduce dependence on imported semiconductor components and build domestic manufacturing capabilities.

The budget treats the Jagiroad project not as an isolated investment but as the foundation of a larger industrial ecosystem. Policymakers envision a network of ancillary industries, logistics providers, component manufacturers, research institutions and specialised service providers emerging around the semiconductor facility. If realised, such an ecosystem could generate substantial direct and indirect employment while creating opportunities for local entrepreneurs and small businesses.

The significance of the semiconductor project extends beyond economics. It also carries symbolic value. For a state long viewed primarily through the lenses of natural resources and agriculture, becoming a participant in one of the world's most advanced manufacturing sectors would represent a transformative shift in perception. It would signal that Assam is capable of attracting sophisticated industries requiring advanced infrastructure, skilled manpower and long-term investment commitments.

However, semiconductor manufacturing is highly demanding. Success will depend on uninterrupted power supply, efficient logistics networks, skilled technicians, robust training institutions and streamlined administrative processes. The budget acknowledges these requirements by linking industrial policy with broader investments in infrastructure and human capital.

Energy development emerges as another major theme. Reliable and affordable power remains one of the most critical prerequisites for industrial growth, and the government appears determined to address this challenge through an expansive energy strategy. The budget outlines investments exceeding 77,000 crore across hydroelectric projects, solar power generation, battery storage systems, thermal energy capacity and transmission infrastructure.

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Assam possesses significant

hydropower potential due to its river systems and geographical advantages. Simultaneously, improvements in solar technology have created new opportunities for renewable energy development across the state. By investing in multiple energy sources rather than relying on a single model, the government is pursuing a diversified energy portfolio designed to improve reliability and sustainability.

The implications extend beyond electricity generation. A robust power infrastructure can enhance industrial competitiveness, attract private investment and reduce operational costs for businesses. It can also improve the quality of life for citizens by ensuring more reliable access to electricity in urban and rural areas alike.

The government's ambition to transform Assam into a green energy hub for the Northeast is particularly noteworthy. As India accelerates its transition towards cleaner energy sources, states capable of producing surplus renewable power could enjoy significant economic advantages. Becoming power-surplus would strengthen Assam's industrial credentials and potentially create opportunities for power exports within the region.

The budget also demonstrates an awareness of the growing importance of knowledge-based industries. Among the sectors receiving policy attention is digital gaming, a field that has expanded rapidly across India and globally. While gaming remains relatively new in Assam, the government's interest reflects a broader understanding that future economic growth will increasingly be driven by digital creativity, software development and intellectual property.

The gaming industry encompasses far more than entertainment. It creates opportunities for programmers, graphic designers, animators, writers, sound engineers, marketers and digital entrepreneurs. Encouraging investments in this sector could help retain skilled young professionals who might otherwise leave the state in search of employment opportunities elsewhere.

More broadly, the focus on digital industries signals recognition that economic competitiveness in the twenty-first century depends not only on physical infrastructure but also on digital capabilities. States that successfully nurture technology-driven sectors are likely to benefit from higher-value employment and greater resilience in a rapidly changing global economy.

Yet the budget does not abandon traditional industries. Tea, which remains one of Assam's most important economic sectors and a major source of employment, continues to receive policy support. Tax relief measures announced for tea gardens are intended to ease financial pressures arising from rising production costs, labour expenses and intensifying global competition.

The tea sector faces numerous challenges, including fluctuating international prices, climate-related uncertainties and changing consumer preferences. Supporting the industry therefore remains important not only from an economic perspective but also from a social standpoint. Thousands of workers and their families depend directly or indirectly on tea plantations for their livelihoods.

The government's approach suggests a recognition that economic modernisation does not require neglecting established industries. Instead, the budget attempts to create a dual-track strategy in which traditional sectors are strengthened even as new industries are developed.

Infrastructure development remains a central pillar of the state's growth strategy. Over the past several years, Assam has made substantial investments in roads, bridges, airports and public facilities. The 2026-27 budget continues this trajectory by emphasising transport connectivity, industrial infrastructure and educational facilities.

Improved infrastructure serves multiple purposes. It lowers logistics costs, enhances market access, attracts investment and improves overall productivity. For a state seeking to position itself as an industrial destination, such investments are indispensable.

One of the more innovative proposals involves the establishment of modern Integrated Academic Complexes through the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model. This initiative reflects an understanding that future economic growth will depend heavily on the availability of skilled human resources.

Educational institutions often struggle to keep pace with rapidly evolving industry requirements. By encouraging collaboration between the public and private sectors, the government hopes to create learning environments better aligned with emerging industries such as electronics manufacturing, information technology and digital services. If implemented effectively, such institutions could help bridge the persistent gap between education and employability.

Alongside industrial and infrastructure initiatives, social welfare remains a major component of the budget. More than 6,000 crore has been allocated to flagship welfare programmes that support women, economically disadvantaged households and vulnerable communities. These schemes, many of which were temporarily suspended during the election period, are expected to resume with renewed funding.

The continuation of welfare spending reflects a political and economic reality. While industrialisation and economic growth are essential long-term goals, large segments of the population continue to require direct support. Welfare programmes can provide a safety net during periods of economic transition and help ensure that development benefits are shared more broadly.

At the same time, the government has sought to introduce greater conditionality into some welfare programmes. New eligibility requirements linked to legal and social reforms indicate an effort to align welfare benefits with broader policy objectives. Supporters view such measures as promoting accountability and social reform, while critics may question their implications and implementation. Regardless of differing perspectives, the approach reflects a growing trend towards linking public assistance with specific governance goals.

Land governance is another area receiving significant attention. Through Mission Basundhara 4.0, the government aims to strengthen land rights for indige-

nous communities while improving the efficiency and transparency of land administration.

Land remains one of the most sensitive and consequential issues in Assam. Secure land ownership is crucial for social stability, agricultural productivity and economic development. At the same time, industrial expansion requires access to land for factories, infrastructure and investment projects.

Balancing these competing demands is rarely straightforward. The government's strategy appears to involve providing greater protection to indigenous landholders while simultaneously facilitating land availability for industrial development through legislative reforms and administrative measures. The effectiveness of this balancing act will have important implications for both social cohesion and economic growth.

Underlying all these initiatives is a commitment to fiscal discipline. Large-scale investments in infrastructure, energy and industrial development require substantial financial resources, making prudent fiscal management essential.

The budget emphasises revenue mobilisation through improved efficiency and the reduction of leakages rather than the imposition of significant new tax burdens. This approach seeks to strengthen state finances without discouraging investment or economic activity. It also reflects an understanding that sustained economic growth depends on maintaining a stable and predictable financial environment.

Nevertheless, ambitious plans inevitably face implementation challenges. Industrial projects require more than announcements and budget allocations. They demand effective coordination among government departments, timely approvals, skilled manpower, environmental compliance and efficient project management. Delays in any of these areas can undermine expected outcomes.

Similarly, employment targets will be achieved only if proposed investments translate into operational enterprises capable of generating sustainable jobs. Training and skill development programmes must keep pace with industry requirements, particularly in sectors such as semiconductors and digital technology where specialised expertise is essential.

The same principle applies to energy investments. Large projects often face challenges related to financing, environmental clearances and execution timelines. Their success will depend on maintaining momentum over multiple years and across changing economic conditions.

Despite these challenges, the Assam Budget 2026-27 stands out for its willingness to think beyond conventional development frameworks. It recognises that welfare and industrialisation are not mutually exclusive but can be pursued simultaneously. It acknowledges the importance of traditional sectors while preparing for the opportunities of a technology-driven future. And it attempts to connect employment generation, energy security, educational reform, land governance and fiscal management within a single strategic vision.

Whether this vision ultimately succeeds will depend on implementation. Yet the direction is clear. Assam is seeking to move beyond its historical economic identity and position itself as a competitive player in emerging industries. If the semiconductor ecosystem takes root, green energy projects deliver as planned, digital industries expand and infrastructure investments are executed efficiently, the state could witness a significant transformation over the coming decade.

In that sense, the 2026-27 budget is more than a statement of annual expenditures and revenues. It is a blueprint for Assam's next phase of development—a roadmap aimed at transforming a resource-rich state into a diversified economy driven increasingly by technology, manufacturing, innovation and skilled employment. If its promises are matched by performance, this budget could mark the beginning of a new chapter in Assam's economic history.

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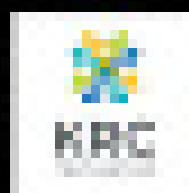


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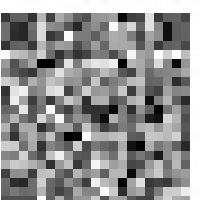


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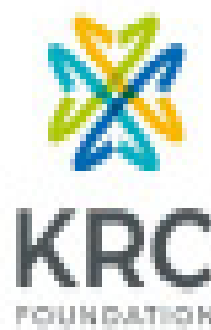
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