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PERSPECTIVE

A negative mind will never give you a positive life.

Former CM N Biren Singh heads to Delhi for talks with central leaders

IMPHAL Former Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh left for New Delhi on Monday morning to meet central leaders and discuss the prevailing situation in the violence-hit state, officials said.

Singh's visit comes amid renewed political debate over demands for updating the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Manipur ahead of the Census exercise. The Campaign for Just and Fair Delimitation (JFD), which has been leading protests over the issue, has demanded that the NRC in Manipur be updated using 1951 as the base year. The group has argued that the exercise is necessary to identify illegal immigrants and address concerns over demographic changes in the state.

Singh had recently met Union Home Minister Amit Shah and is understood to have apprised him of the demand for NRC updation before the Census.

A BJP functionary said the former chief minister had been called to Delhi by central leaders to discuss various issues concerning Manipur.

The former chief minister's visit comes at a politically sensitive juncture, with NRC updation, demographic concerns and delimitation continuing to generate debate across the state.

The issues have gained renewed attention as Manipur prepares for the ongoing Census-related exercise amid the continuing fallout of the ethnic conflict that erupted in May 2023.

Singh resigned as Manipur chief minister in February 2025 after the conflict had continued for nearly two years. He was succeeded by Yumnam Khemchand Singh, who later assumed office as chief minister following the change in the state's political leadership.

WHO SAID WHAT



"Opposition to reservation is opposition to the Constitution. Those taking an anti-reservation stand are anti-constitutional and stringent action of sedition should be taken against them,"

Ramdas Athawale
Republican Party of India (Athawale) chief

Tripura Floods: 115 Houses Damaged, Nearly 1,000 People Shifted to Relief Camps

AGARTALA

Heavy rainfall triggered flooding in several parts of Tripura on Sunday, damaging 115 houses and forcing 974 people from 280 families to seek shelter in 11 relief camps, according to the State Emergency Operation Centre's daily situation report.

The flooding affected several areas of the state, including Jirania, Sadar, Teliamura, Khowai and Mohanpur, as heavy rain caused rivers and water channels to rise.

Of the 115 houses reported damaged, 113 suffered partial damage while two were severely damaged. No houses were completely destroyed, the report said.

There were no reports of deaths or injuries. The authorities also reported no damage to electricity poles or school buildings as a result of the flooding.

Khowai emerged as the worst-affected area in terms of house damage, with 91 houses partially damaged and one severely damaged.

Three relief camps were opened in Khowai, where 559 people from 151 families were provided shelter.

In Sadar, five relief camps were operating, accommodating 330 people from 87



families.

Jirania had two relief camps sheltering 34 people from 25 families.

In Teliamura, one house was severely damaged following flooding on August 23. A relief camp at Jagannath Bari SB School was housing 51 people from 17

families.

Mohanpur reported damage to 22 houses following heavy rainfall on August 22. The authorities said financial assistance for the affected households was being processed.

The heavy rainfall also pushed water

Meghalaya, Assam set to hold joint meeting over tourist taxi dispute by Sept 10



SHILLONG

The Meghalaya government will hold a high-level joint meeting with Assam authorities by September 10 to address concerns raised by tourist taxi operators from Meghalaya over difficulties allegedly faced while operating in Assam, particularly Guwahati.

The decision was taken at a meeting involving senior officials of the Meghalaya Home Department, Deputy Commissioners and Superintendents of Police of East Khasi Hills and Ri-Bhoi districts, as well as representatives of various tourist taxi associations.

Taxi operators raised concerns about problems allegedly encountered by Meghalaya-registered tourist vehicles after entering Assam. The state government described the issues as serious and said they would be taken up with the Assam government through an inter-state coordination mechanism.

Under the proposed arrangement, the Transport Commissioners of Meghalaya and Assam will participate in the joint meeting along with represen-

tatives of tourist taxi associations from both states.

The meeting is expected to focus on resolving the issues faced by tourist vehicle operators and developing a mutually acceptable mechanism to ensure the smooth movement of tourist taxis between Meghalaya and Assam.

The Meghalaya government, however, clarified that tourist vehicle movement between the two states remains normal at present.

There are no road blockades or restrictions affecting the movement of tourist taxis, and services between Meghalaya and Assam continue to operate.

Officials said the government was committed to protecting the interests of the tourism sector while addressing the concerns of transport operators through dialogue and coordination with Assam authorities.

The proposed meeting is expected to pave the way for a longer-term resolution to the dispute and help ensure uninterrupted movement of tourist vehicles between the two neighbouring states.



Himanta meets Amit Shah, Centre assures support for rehabilitation

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi and briefed him on the state government's response to the devastating floods, with the Centre assuring full support for rehabilitation and restoration in the affected areas.

Sarma said Shah has been in constant touch with the Assam government during the flood crisis and has taken note of the extensive damage caused by the deluge.

In a post on X, the chief minister said he briefed the Union Home Minister on the state's flood response as well as other issues concerning Assam.

According to Sarma, Shah acknowledged the scale of the flood damage and assured the state government of the Centre's "unequivocal support" for rehabilitation and restoration efforts.

The chief minister also thanked Shah for his guidance and support, describing his interactions with the Union Home Minister as marked by close attention to detail and a commitment to ensuring a secure and stable Assam.

At least 105 people have died in floods in Assam this year, with the situation particularly severe in four eastern districts. Thousands of people have been affected by the successive waves of flooding, while homes, roads, agricultural land and other infrastructure have suffered extensive damage.

The Assam government has been carrying out relief and rescue operations in affected areas and has initiated assessments to determine the extent of damage to houses, infrastructure and livelihoods.

The latest meeting comes as the state enters the rehabilitation phase following one of its most severe flood episodes in recent years. The state government is expected to seek central assistance for restoring damaged infrastructure and providing support to affected families.

Manipur CM reviews security situation with Assam Rifles after major PLA arrest



IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand held a high-level security review with senior Assam Rifles officials at the Chief Minister's Secretariat in Babupara, Imphal, on Sunday, a day after security forces arrested a senior, wanted cadre of the proscribed People's Liberation Army (PLA).

The meeting was attended by Assam Rifles Inspector General (East) Major General Inderjit Singh Bhinder and DIG, 22 Sector Assam Rifles, Brigadier Anshuman Tripathi. Discussions focused on the prevailing security situation in sensitive districts, ongoing counter-insurgency operations, operational preparedness of security forces, border management and civic action programmes aimed at supporting communities in vulnerable areas. The meeting followed the arrest of self-styled PLA Captain Thiyan Boycha Singh, alias Balin, during a joint operation by the Assam Rifles and Manipur Police on August 22. Security forces apprehended Singh in the Ushoipokpi area of Thoubal district after receiving specific intelligence regarding his presence and movement. The operation was launched at around 5:30 pm, with joint teams conducting a coordinated search before intercepting the alleged militant.

Authorities described Singh as a

high-value target wanted by the National Investigation Agency (NIA), which had announced a reward of Rs 4 lakh for information leading to his arrest.

Singh is allegedly a key accused in the November 13, 2021, ambush in Churachandpur district in which Assam Rifles Colonel Viplay Tripathi, his wife and their young son, along with four other Assam Rifles personnel, were killed.

According to preliminary interrogation, Singh had allegedly spent extended periods at an insurgent camp in neighbouring Myanmar, where he received military training. He is also suspected of involvement in procuring and transporting arms and other war-like stores, besides maintaining operational links with other active insurgent groups.

Following initial questioning, Singh was handed over to Manipur Police at Lilong Police Station in Thoubal district at around 6:20 pm for further legal proceedings.

The arrest prompted the Chief Minister's security review with senior Assam Rifles officers, with particular attention to counter-insurgency operations and coordination between security agencies.

Following the meeting, Khemchand praised the Assam Rifles for its continued role in maintaining peace and security in Manipur. He also highlighted the force's contribution to efforts aimed at restoring normalcy in the state.

Security officials said the latest operation demonstrated the importance of intelligence-sharing and close coordination between the Assam Rifles and Manipur Police in countering insurgent activities and strengthening security across the state.

Phone dispute sparks clash between Northeast, local students

GUWAHATI

A dispute over a missing mobile phone at a nursing college in Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh, escalated into a confrontation between students from the Northeast and local Telugu-speaking students on August 21, prompting the district administration to move students to separate hostels as a precautionary measure.

The incident took place at SK College of Nursing after a mobile phone belonging to a student from the Northeast was reported missing. The disagreement over the phone subsequently escalated, leading to a confrontation involving students from the Northeast, including those from Manipur, and local students.

Police and district officials intervened after tensions rose at the hostel. Authorities took immediate steps to separate the groups and prevent the situation from worsening.

As part of the precautionary arrangements, students from the Northeast were moved to separate accommodation. The administration also relocated 31 students from

other states to another hostel after obtaining their consent.

The Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister's Office said Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu took note of the incident and directed senior officials to ensure the safety of the students. Following the directive, the Kakinada District Collector and Superintendent of Police personally supervised the arrangements and security measures.

Some Northeast students reportedly sustained injuries during the confrontation. Photographs and videos circulated after the incident showed students with visible injuries. The clash also created tension inside the hostel, with some students reportedly remaining indoors for their safety.

The situation later came under control following the intervention of the district administration and police.

Students from Manipur subsequently said they were safe and expressed appreciation for the authorities' prompt response, particularly the decision to provide separate accommodation and security.



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Fresh firing in Manipur leaves CRPF constable injured, three houses damaged

IMPHAL

A 54-year-old CRPF constable sustained a suspected firearm injury amid fresh firing in Senapati and adjoining areas of Kangpokpi district on Monday, as tension escalated following reports of houses being burnt and damaged in several villages.

The injured constable was taken to District Hospital, Senapati, where he is undergoing treatment. According to preliminary information, he told officials that he could not determine the direction from which the bullet was fired, as gunshots appeared to have come from both sides. The first incident was reported at around 2.40 am at Taphou Kuki. Fire and Emergency Services personnel reportedly reached the area around 3.30 am.

Preliminary reports indicated that a residential house at Taphou Kuki was burnt. Two other houses in nearby areas were also reportedly targeted af-

ter 4 am. A house belonging to a resident of Lai village, a Poumai Naga settlement, was reportedly demolished, while another house belonging to a resident of Phuba village, also a Poumai Naga settlement, was reportedly burnt. The situation deteriorated further around 9.20 am when fresh firing broke out as journalists were covering the incidents and filming the damaged and burnt houses.

The latest violence also disrupted movement along National Highway-2, the Imphal-Dimapur highway, after Naga volunteers reportedly blocked the road. The highway is a key road link connecting Manipur with Nagaland.

The Taphou Kuki Village Authority condemned the burning and destruction of a residential house belonging to a local villager, describing the incident as "deplorable, inhuman and unacceptable".

In a statement issued on Mon-

day, the village authority gave those responsible 24 hours to come forward, claim responsibility and resolve the matter under Kuki customary law. It also said it would not be responsible for any unauthorised incident that might occur thereafter.

Security forces have been deployed in Taphou and adjoining areas of Senapati and Kangpokpi districts as authorities work to contain the situation.

The circumstances leading to the firing, the extent of property damage and the involvement of individuals or groups in the incidents are yet to be established. Officials are also assessing whether there were any additional casualties.

The fresh violence comes amid heightened tensions in parts of the Senapati-Kangpokpi region, where competing community claims and recurring armed incidents have continued to pose a challenge to efforts to restore normalcy in Manipur.



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CURBING
ELECTION
CASH



The Supreme Court’s intervention regarding black money in elections initially appears to be a technical ruling concerning timelines, reporting formats, and quarterly affidavits. However, it is a judicial acknowledgement that Indian democracy’s biggest enemy is not always the ballot but the briefcase that arrives before it. In holding that illicit money “compromises democracy, rule of law and the electoral process itself”, the SC bench has put into words what election observers have argued for decades - that a vote purchased with cash is not really a free vote at all.

The order, arising from a decade-old dispute over cash seizures during the 2014 Lok Sabha election in Karnataka’s Bellary district, does three practical things. It requires seizing authorities to report cash or assets to a magistrate within 24 hours, along with reasons establishing a prima facie link to an electoral offence. It obliges investigating officers to complete their probes within a year; if they fail to do so, they must record the reasons and submit them to the EC. And it directs that any cash haul exceeding Rs 10 lakh detected by Static Surveillance Teams be flagged to the income tax authorities. None of these measures invents a new offence; they simply insist that existing law be enforced with discipline and speed.

That, in a sense, is the order’s real significance. India already has a reasonably elaborate architecture to police election money - expenditure ceilings under the Representation of the People Act, Static Surveillance Teams, Flying Squads, video surveillance, and the ECI’s citizen-reporting app eVIGIL. What has been missing is not rules but rigour: cases drag on for years, seizures are reported erratically, and the gap between headline-grabbing raids and actual convictions has remained embarrassingly wide. By imposing hard timelines and a reporting chain running up to the EC, the Court has effectively told the enforcement machinery that visibility and accountability are no longer optional.

Will this ruling change things on the ground? Realistically, only in part, and only over time. Timelines mean little without capacity. India’s police and investigative agencies are chronically overstretched, and election-related financial offences compete for attention with everyday crime. The EC itself lacks an independent financial-forensics wing and depends heavily on state police and district administration for field enforcement - bodies that report, in the end, to the very political executives whose parties are often implicated. A one-year deadline for investigations is a useful discipline, but discipline without institutional muscle risks becoming just another compliance ritual, generating paperwork rather than convictions.

Several measures deserve urgent attention. The EC needs an autonomous financial intelligence capability, drawing real-time data from the Financial Intelligence Unit and the CBDT to spot unusual liquidity spikes before polling day rather than after.

As the Indrajit Gupta Committee recommended nearly three decades ago, partial state funding in kind, through logistics, media time and digital infrastructure-could meaningfully reduce candidates’ dependence on private and often illicit financiers.

The last-mile inducement - cash or kind handed out 24 to 48 hours before voting - remains the hardest link in the chain to break, precisely because it is designed to evade surveillance windows. Static surveillance teams and flying squads need to shift from fixed checkpoints to intelligence-led, mobile deployment in the final 72 hours of campaigning, coordinated with local excise and transport departments to intercept vehicles rather than merely random spot checks. Equally, market-rate valuation of “in-kind” inducements - liquor, sarees, mobile recharges - should be brought squarely within the definition of candidate expenditure. None of this requires new legislation; it requires the existing Conduct of Election Rules to be enforced. Finally, fast-track courts dedicated to electoral financial offences would ensure the Court’s one-year investigation timeline is matched by an equally swift trial process so that detection is not divorced from consequence.

The Supreme Court has done what courts do best: reasserted a constitutional principle and tightened the procedural screws on those meant to enforce it. But judgements, however well-reasoned, cannot substitute for political will. Only Parliament can cap party spending, ban cash donations and empower the Election Commission with real financial teeth. Implementation is the key. Until it does, this order will remain an important marker of judicial intent rather than the turning point Indian elections badly need.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Don't be afraid your life will end;
be afraid that it will never begin.

- Grace Hansen

BANGLADESH TO
JOIN MAKKAH
PACT?



ANAD MIRZA

Bangladesh says it’s “open” to joining the Saudi-Turkey-Pakistan defence pact. That word choice is doing a lot of work. It’s not a signature, but it’s not nothing either - and for India, it confirms a drift that’s been building for two years.

Words matter in diplomacy, and Bangladesh’s foreign affairs adviser Humayun Kabir chose his carefully. Asked whether Dhaka would join the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement - the pact Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan signed on August 7 - Kabir didn’t say no. He said Bangladesh would weigh the option “considering its own interests.” That’s the language of a country keeping a door ajar, not one shutting it.

The pact itself is stark. Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Pakistan committed to treating an attack on one as an attack on all - an Article 5 clone, built on top of the Saudi-Pakistan Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement signed last September. Egypt has been debating the idea without committing, wary of its own entanglements with Greece and Cyprus. Bangladesh is now the second country to signal interest publicly. For a bloc barely two weeks old, that’s a faster gravitational pull than anyone in Delhi expected.

None of this happened in isolation. Turkey’s footprint in Bangladesh has been growing since well before the Makkah Pact existed. Ankara is now the fourth-largest supplier of military equipment to Dhaka. Late last year, Pakistan’s army began training Bangladeshi personnel - the first such arrangement since 1971, a detail that carries obvious weight in a country whose founding war was fought against Pakistan.

Turkish intelligence has reportedly financed renovations at Jamaat-e-Islami’s Dhaka office and arranged visits for Islamist figures to Turkish arms facilities. Whatever the specifics, the pattern is unmistakable: Ankara has spent two years building relationships in Dhaka that a defence pact simply formalises.

This is why Indian commentary has turned sharply toward Turkey as the more urgent problem, rather than treating Pakistan as the sole variable. Some analyst’s framing - that Turkey is becoming “the new Iran” in South Asian discourse - captures a shift in how Delhi’s strategic community talks about Ankara: not as a distant NATO member with an independent streak, but as an active player reshaping India’s eastern neighbourhood. That’s a new

category of concern, and it doesn’t map cleanly onto the India-Pakistan playbook Delhi has run for decades.

The reason it stings more than past irritants is geography. Pakistan is to India’s west, across a border India has spent fifty years learning to manage - through deterrence, through diplomacy, through sheer familiarity.

Bangladesh is to the east, wrapped around India’s most vulnerable stretch of territory: the Chicken’s Neck corridor connecting the northeast to the rest of the country, and a belt of insurgency-prone states that have depended on Dhaka’s cooperation to stay quiet. India didn’t build serious contingency planning for that flank turning unfriendly, because for fifteen years under Sheikh Hasina, it didn’t have to. Hasina’s ouster in August 2024 removed that assumption overnight.

What’s emerged since is not a formal alliance against India - nobody involved describes it that way, and the pact’s own language insists it isn’t directed at any state. But intent and effect aren’t the same thing. Whether or not Ankara, Islamabad and an interim government in Dhaka are coordinating against India specifically, the practical result is a security architecture on India’s eastern border that India didn’t design, doesn’t control and can’t easily counter with tools built for a different era.

Delhi’s response so far has been muted, and that restraint is deliberate rather than passive. Louder alarm would hand Dhaka and An-

kara a propaganda win, and validate the “encirclement” narrative that Pakistani commentary is already pushing.

Quieter diplomacy preserves options: continued engagement with Bangladesh’s interim government, reinforced ties with Gulf states that have their own reasons to hedge against an assertive Ankara, and - as analysts have noted - closer coordination with Israel, which shares India’s discomfort with a Sunni-identity bloc gaining institutional form. A reported call between Modi and Netanyahu around this period wasn’t routine; both countries are recalculating around the same shift.

There’s also a case for not overreacting. The Makkah Pact’s substance remains thinner than its language. NATO’s Article 5 works because it constitutes integrated command structures, joint exercises, and seven decades of institutional trust.

Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Pakistan have none of that. They have three different threat perceptions - Riyadh worried about Iran, Islamabad fixated on India, Ankara focused on the eastern Mediterranean - brought together more by Sunni solidarity than by a common enemy.

Pacts built on shared identity rather than shared threat tend to fray when a real crisis tests them. Egypt’s hesitation to join is itself a signal that regional players see the limits here, not just the promise.

But India can’t plan around a pact staying weak. It has to plan around what happens if Bangla-



desh formally signs on, if Turkish arms sales to Dhaka deepen further, if Pakistani military trainers become a permanent fixture rather than a one-off gesture. Each of those, individually, is manageable. Together, they describe an eastern flank that has quietly stopped being a settled question.

The larger lesson is about In-

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

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dia’s own theory of its neighbourhood. For years, Delhi’s regional strategy assumed Pakistan would remain the primary hostile actor and that everyone else - Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka - would stay within India’s gravitational pull by default, bound by geography and economic dependence.

That assumption is now visibly cracking. Smaller states are discovering they have other suitors, and those suitors - Turkey chief among them - are willing to invest political capital to become one. Kabir’s carefully hedged answer isn’t a declaration of alignment. It’s a country testing how much leverage it can extract from having options, which is precisely what should worry Delhi more than any formal signature would.

There’s a wider pattern here too, one India’s West Asia policy has been slow to absorb. Delhi’s Gulf strategy has leaned heavily on the UAE and Israel, run largely through the I2U2 grouping with the US. That framework assumed the Gulf’s centre of gravity would stay roughly where it has been for a decade.

The Makkah Pact suggests otherwise. Saudi Arabia is now co-authoring a defence architecture with Turkey and Pakistan - two countries India has historically kept at arm’s length - which means India’s energy security, its diaspora interests, and its trade routes all run through a region that just got more complicated without India as a regional power. Economic partnership isn’t the same as strategic relevance, and the gap between the two is now harder to ignore.

India’s response can’t just be counter-messaging or muted diplomacy. It requires treating Bangladesh, and the wider West Asian realignment behind it, as a live strategic problem rather than a passing irritant.

That means deeper security engagement with Gulf partners beyond the UAE-Israel axis, sustained outreach to Dhaka’s interim government instead of waiting for elections to sort things out on their own, and a clear-eyed read of Turkey’s ambitions rather than folding them into the familiar Pakistan story. The region isn’t waiting for Delhi to catch up, and neither, it seems, is Bangladesh.

Manipur Broadens Sports Quota, Silver and Bronze Medallists to Qualify for Govt Jobs

IMPHAL

The Manipur government has expanded its sports recruitment policy to include silver and bronze medallists for state government jobs, Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh announced on Saturday.

The announcement came as the government appointed 71 National Games gold medallists as Physical Education Teachers under the Youth Affairs and Sports Department.

Appointment letters were distributed to the athletes at a programme organised by the department at the Khuman Lampak Indoor Stadium in Imphal.

The new policy marks an expansion of the state's existing sports quota, under which government employment had primarily been extended to gold medallists. Khemchand said eligible silver



and bronze medallists would now also be considered for recruitment based on

merit and through a transparent selection process.

The Chief Minister also felicitated Manipuri athletes who represented India at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2026, including weightlifting gold medalist Saikhom Mirabai Chanu.

Chanu, who returned to Imphal to attend the programme amid preparations for the upcoming Asian Games, was awarded a cash prize of Rs 20 lakh and a certificate of recognition.

Weightlifter Chanambam Rishikanta Singh, who won silver in the 60-kg category, and boxer Mayengbam Jadumani Singh, who secured silver in the 55-kg category, received Rs 15 lakh each.

Weightlifter Sorokhaibam Bindyaran Devi, who won bronze in the 58-kg category, was awarded Rs 10 lakh.

Other athletes who participated in the

Glasgow Games received Rs 4 lakh each, along with certificates. Coaches accompanying the athletes were also felicitated.

The state government said the prize money for Commonwealth Games medallists and participants had been increased to encourage athletes and recognise their performances.

More athletes appointed

Apart from the 71 National Games gold medallists appointed as Physical Education Teachers, appointment letters were also handed over to four athletes under the Home Department and three Asian Games medallists under the same department.

Khemchand said Manipur's athletes had helped project a positive image of the state through their performances at the Glasgow Games.

He also acknowledged the contribution of local sports clubs, families, coach-

es and athletes in nurturing sporting talent in the state.

The Chief Minister, who holds a fifth-degree black belt in Taekwondo, said his own sporting background had given him an understanding of the challenges faced by athletes and the importance of supporting them.

Deputy Chief Minister Losi Dikho and Chief Secretary Puneet Kumar Goel attended the programme.

Goel highlighted Manipur's longstanding sporting culture and its contribution to producing athletes who have represented both the state and the country at national and international competitions.

The event was also attended by legislators, National Sports University Vice Chancellor Daljit Singh Chawdhary, officials of the Youth Affairs and Sports Department, coaches and sportspersons.

Nagaland, Dibrugarh Universities Sign Five-Year MoU to Expand Academic and Research Collaboration

DIMAPUR

Nagaland University and Dibrugarh University have signed a five-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen academic, research and institutional collaboration between the two higher education institutions.

The agreement was signed at Dibrugarh University on August 20 and is aimed at expanding opportunities for academic exchange, joint research and greater interaction among faculty members, researchers and students.

Nagaland University Finance Officer (in-charge) Prof Joy Das attended the signing ceremony. Dibrugarh University was represented by Vice-Chancellor Prof Jiten Hazarika, Registrar Dr Paramananda Sonowal and Dr Bipasha Chetia, Head of the Department of Commerce, along with other faculty members.

Three research scholars from the Department of Commerce, Nagaland University, who were in Dibrugarh to participate in a national seminar, also attended the programme.

Focus on research and student exchange

The MoU provides for faculty, researcher and student exchange programmes, internships and training opportunities, collaborative research and publications.

It also envisages joint academic courses, conferences, seminars and capacity-building programmes involving the two institutions.

Under the agreement, the universities will facilitate the exchange of academic expertise and scholarly resources while encouraging initiatives of mutual interest.

AssamSAT Enters Final Stage as State Evaluates Bids for Space-Tech Partner

GUWAHATI

AssamSAT, the state's proposed Earth observation satellite system, has moved closer to implementation with the Assam government entering the final stage of selecting a private sector partner for the project, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

Sharing the update on National Space Day, Sarma said the state had invited Expressions of Interest (EoI) from potential implementation partners under the DBLOTT model - Design, Build, Launch, Operate, Train and Transfer.

The initiative has received strong interest from private space-sector companies from across the country, he said. Proposals submitted by prospective partners are currently being examined by dedicated committees before the government makes a final selection.

Sarma described AssamSAT as an important step in expanding

ing the state's role in the space technology ecosystem.

He said the project would allow Assam to move beyond being only a consumer of satellite-based information and become a more active participant in the use and application of space technology.

The proposed satellite system is expected to provide Earth observation data that can be used to support governance, infrastructure development and planning.

According to the Chief Minister, access to timely satellite data would help the government make faster and more evidence-based decisions across various sectors.

The project is being positioned as a major initiative to integrate space-based technology into Assam's administrative and development framework.

With the evaluation of bids now underway, the government is expected to finalise its implementation partner in the next stage, paving the way for AssamSAT to move towards execution.

Centre Clears Nagaland's 1965 Land Law for NH-202 Expansion



citing the constitutional protections granted to the state under Article 371(A), particularly over ownership and transfer of land and its resources.

The meeting also discussed the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for NH-202. According to Zeliang, MoRTH agreed to accept the DPR submitted earlier by the state despite certain technical shortcomings.

Necessary modifications will be made in consultation with the state-appointed consultant and

MoRTH engineers, he said.

The decision is expected to prevent further delays that could have resulted from appointing a new DPR consultant. Zeliang said a fresh consultant would have required new surveys and potentially delayed the project by several months.

The proposed widening of NH-202 is expected to improve connectivity in Tuensang, Shamator and Kiphire districts, where poor road conditions have remained a longstanding concern.

The upgraded highway is expected to facilitate the movement of people and goods while strengthening connectivity with the eastern districts of the state.

Article 371(A) at centre of land issue

The dispute over the applicable land acquisition law was linked to Nagaland's special constitutional status under Article 371(A).

The provision provides safeguards concerning Naga customary law and social practices, as well as the ownership and transfer of land and its resources.

The Centre's approval to use the state's 1965 land law is therefore expected to facilitate the acquisition process while addressing the state government's concerns over the application of central legislation.

Zeliang said the latest decision would help clear a major procedural obstacle and enable authorities to move ahead with the NH-202 widening project.

Tripura CM Manik Saha to attend state-level toolkit distribution ceremony

AGARTALA

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Sunday will attend the State-Level Toolkit Distribution Ceremony for skilled Bru candidates at Anandadhara Town Hall in Amarpur, Gomati district.

The programme is sponsored by the Directorate of Skill Development, govt of Tripura & categorically aimed at supporting skilled Bru beneficiaries by providing them with toolkits to help them utilise their vocational training for sustainable livelihood opportunities and economic self-reliance.

The distribution of toolkits among the beneficiaries is expected to strengthen the rehabilitation and socio-economic empowerment efforts for the Bru community by enabling trained beneficiaries to pursue employment, self-employment and small livelihood activities.



Chief Minister Dr. Manik Saha has attended the program as inaugurator and is likely to interact with the beneficiaries during the programme.

The initiative of Skill Development is part of the Tripura government's broader efforts to promote skill development, livelihood generation and inclusive socio-economic development among communities across Tripura.

Alongside the CM Saha, Pradeep K, Director of Skill Development

& Milind Ramteke, Secretary, Revenue, Ranjit Das, MLA, Rinku Lather, District Magistrate & Collector, Gomati District, Rampada Jamatia, Tripura Legislative Assembly Speaker are present in this grand occasion to encourage & boost the confidence of skilled Bru beneficiaries and others involved in the implementation of rehabilitation and livelihood-oriented programmes. Earlier, in a major relief to electricity consumers across Tripura, the State Government has decided to bear 100 per cent of the additional financial burden arising from the revised electricity tariff for 2026-27, instead of passing the increased burden on to consumers.

Tripura Power Minister Ratan Lal Nath told, besides addressing the media today, that the Government had taken the decision keeping in view the difficulties being faced by

ordinary consumers, households, farmers, small traders, businesses and industries following implementation of the revised tariff approved by the Tripura Electricity Regulatory Commission (TERC).

"The reduction of the additional electricity tariff burden was possible only because of the positive mentality of our Chief Minister, Manik Saha," Nath said, stressing that the Chief Minister had personally taken up the matter and held repeated discussions with senior officials.

Nath said that Chief Minister Manik Saha had made it clear that people of Tripura should not be subjected to an unbearable additional financial burden. According to Nath, the Chief Minister also accorded priority to the issue during his stay in Delhi and returned to the State to participate in discussions concerning the electricity tariff.

Tripura CPI(M) Demands Rollback of Alleged Ration Rice Quota Cut

AGARTALA

The Tripura State Secretariat of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has opposed an alleged reduction in the quantity of rice distributed through ration shops, calling the move by the BJP-led state government "inhuman" and demanding its immediate withdrawal.

In a statement issued on Sunday, the CPI(M) alleged that the government had reduced the ration rice entitlement at a time when prices of essential commodities were rising, placing an additional financial burden on households.

According to the party, the existing entitlement of 5 kg of rice per person has allegedly been restricted to a maximum of four members per family. As a result, a household would receive no more than 20 kg of rice, irrespective of the number of members, the CPI(M) claimed.

The party said ration rice forms only part of a family's food requirements and is often relied upon by economically vulnerable households. Any reduction in the quota, it argued, would further increase household expenditure.

CPI(M) flags rising prices

The CPI(M) also raised

concerns over what it described as a sharp rise in the prices of essential commodities over the past three months.

The party claimed that the price of rice had increased by around Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,500 per quintal, while masur dal had become costlier by more than Rs 1,000 per quintal.

Sugar prices had also risen by a similar margin, while mustard oil had become costlier by around Rs 25-30 per litre, it alleged. Prices of spices have also continued to increase, according to the party.

The CPI(M) criticised both the Central and state governments, alleging that they had failed to take adequate measures to contain the rising prices of essential commodities.

It called for organised public pressure and collective protests to force the government to address the issue and protect consumers from further price increases.

The party demanded the immediate withdrawal of the alleged ration rice quota reduction and urged the state government to take effective steps to control the prices of essential commodities.

The government's response to the allegations was not immediately available.

Tezpur University Teachers Seek Early Decision on VC Enquiry Report

GUWAHATI

The Tezpur University Teachers' Association (TUTA) has urged the Ministry of Education to take an early decision on an enquiry report into alleged irregularities involving Vice-Chancellor Shambhu Nath Singh, saying prolonged uncertainty over the matter is affecting the university community.

In a statement issued on Sunday, TUTA said the Ministry constituted a high-level enquiry committee on December 31, 2025, and directed Singh to recuse himself from official duties and remain on leave until the enquiry was completed.

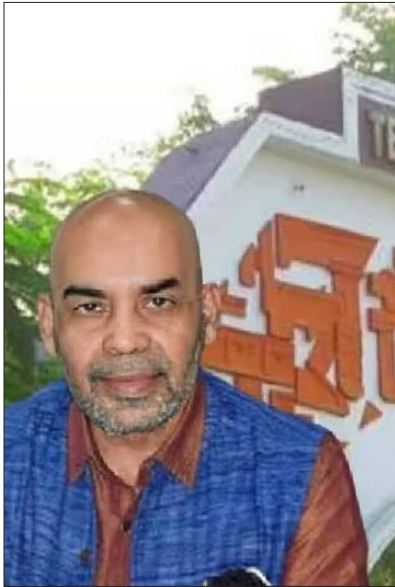
The committee was initially expected to complete its proceedings within three months and reportedly submitted its report to the Ministry in May 2026. However, the teachers' body said the university has yet to receive any information on the final decision or action taken on the committee's recommendations.

Following Singh's recusal, Amarendra Kumar Das was appointed Pro-Vice-Chancellor by the Visitor and assumed charge on January 7. TUTA said academic and administrative activities gradually returned to normal after nearly four months of protests by students and other stakeholders.

The association said the continued absence of a decision had left several issues unresolved, including Singh's present status, the recommendations of the enquiry committee and the action taken by the competent authority.

Salary payment questioned

TUTA has also raised concerns over the continued payment of Singh's salary. It referred to a Ministry of Education communication dated August 7 advising the university to continue releasing his



salary, with final adjustment to be made later based on the enquiry report and subsequent action.

The association questioned the statutory basis for continuing to pay full salary during Singh's prolonged absence from official duties.

"More than seven months have passed since the committee was set up, while Singh has been away from campus since September 24, 2025," TUTA president Kusum K Bania said.

Bania also sought clarification on Singh's current official status, noting that the December 31 order required him to remain on leave until the completion of the enquiry, while the report was reportedly submitted to the Ministry in May.

"The report has reportedly been with the Ministry since May. Tezpur University cannot be expected to wait indefinitely without knowing the outcome or the action taken. The Ministry must bring the matter to a logical conclusion," she said.

TUTA also questioned whether Singh's admissible leave may have been exhausted, citing provisions governing leave available to a Vice-Chancellor under the applicable statutes.

Protests and administrative concerns

The controversy follows a prolonged agitation at Tezpur University that began in September 2025. Students and other stakeholders had raised allegations relating to the university administration, including its handling of the death of Assamese cultural icon Zubeen Garg, besides alleged financial irregularities

and environmental concerns over deforestation and ecological damage on the campus.

Singh stayed away from the campus after a confrontation with students on September 22, 2025, following which he abstained from campus activities.

TUTA said the delay in acting on the enquiry report had created uncertainty and fuelled apprehensions that the issue could remain unresolved until the completion of Singh's tenure. It also pointed to demands for renewed protests seeking an early decision on his continuation in office.

However, the teachers' association said it did not favour any action that would disrupt the academic environment, which it said had returned to normal with the cooperation of students, teachers and non-teaching staff.

The association also urged the university authorities to expedite pending academic and administrative matters, including convocations for two batches, CAS promotion interviews and appointments to key statutory posts such as Registrar, Finance Officer, Executive Engineer and Controller of Examinations.

It further called for the completion of pending infrastructure projects.

TUTA has sought a written decision from the Ministry of Education on the enquiry report, Singh's current official status and the statutory provisions governing his continued leave and salary.

The Ministry's decision on the enquiry report and any subsequent action is awaited.

After the death of the genius, Albert Einstein, his brain was removed by a pathologist and put in a jar for future study

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Congress accuses Modi govt of ‘strangulating, emasculating’ ISRO over privatisation push



NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday accused the Modi government of pursuing an “aggressive privatisation agenda” in the space sector and questioned the rationale behind limiting the role of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) while promoting private start-ups.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said recent reports about ISRO’s future role in India’s space programme had raised “legitimate concerns” over the organisation’s capabilities and assets built over six decades.

“This has raised legitimate concerns given its capacities, capabilities, and competencies built up so methodically and painstakingly over the past six decades thanks to the vision, dedication, and leadership of Vikram Sarabhai, Satish Dhawan, Brahm Prakash, UR Rao, APJ Abdul Kalam, and so many other distinguished scientists and technologists,”

Ramesh said on X. ISRO was founded in 1969, with Vikram Sarabhai playing a key role in its establishment and serving as its first chairman.

Ramesh alleged that the government was pursuing an “aggressive privatisation agenda” in the space programme, similar to what it had done in the nuclear energy sector.

“The motivation is clearly coming from the PM (Narendra Modi) and his PMO itself. ISRO’s presence in rocket development and manufacture is to be severely limited and much of its satellite-related assets are to be transferred lock, stock, and barrel to private companies,” Ramesh said.

He also claimed that the second spaceport being developed in Tamil Nadu with an investment of around Rs 1,000 crore would be handed over to a private company.

“Given the winds of change, the future of the historic Sriharikota spaceport in Andhra Pradesh is itself anybody’s guess,” he said.

Ramesh said ISRO had made the country “enormously proud” and noted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had himself highlighted its achievements on several occasions.

“Space startups certainly deserve encouragement and support. But why should ISRO, which has for long had productive partnerships with the private sector, now be strangulated and emasculated? Already, in the past few months 100-120 key ISRO professionals have quit, perhaps seeing the writing on the wall,” Ramesh claimed.

In an apparent reference to former ISRO chairman G Madhavan Nair, Ramesh said an ex-ISRO chief who joined the BJP in October 2018 after being inspired by Modi had also expressed serious concerns over the new privatisation push.

“Why don’t the five other living eminent Chairmen also speak out on this vital issue?” Ramesh said. He also shared a video of his September 2023 Rajya Sabha speech on India’s space journey.

Finding its feet in the corridors of power: TVK’s first 100 days

CHENNAI

The two-year-old Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) entered the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections with a question mark hanging over its fate. Would actor-turned-politician Vijay be able to convert his mass popularity into seats in the House? The party that seemed to be scrambling to find credible candidates to field across all 234 constituencies finally pulled off a surprise win that caught its opponents and even its own leadership off guard. In the 100-odd days since it formed the government, Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay and his team have proven they are no babe in the political woods, as assumed by many a detractor.

Within days of becoming the single largest party in the House and breaking the Dravidian duopoly that had dominated TN since 1967, the TVK stitched together an alliance to secure a majority and form the first coalition government in the state since Independence. In three months since coming to power, the TVK has finessed its political pitch, aligning with a Dravidian and Tamil nationalist ethos and a strong assurance of corruption-free governance.

A party that entered government with relatively little experience of running a conventional political organisation has since attracted former ministers, sitting MLAs and senior functionaries from the AIADMK, one of the two Dravidian majors, displaying a pragmatic streak in building a stronger conventional party apparatus with a grassroots presence.

The appointment of eight Dalit ministers and two Brahmin ministers, both the first-of-its-kind since 1967, has been part of the party’s political messaging. Even insiders admit its ideological stances on several other issues remain fluid or ambiguous. By choosing to ally with secular parties such as the Congress, VCK and the Left, the TVK managed to isolate the DMK politically in the state while simultaneously establishing credentials as a secular, anti-BJP force, without having to adopt a confrontationist approach with the national party. The party has also started developing a long-term identity by consistently pitching DMK as its rival to the exclusion of all other parties.

“Pitching DMK as the rival was intentional as we do not want to give any political credence to the other parties in the state, barring our alliance



partners. The idea is to isolate DMK from its ideological friendly parties and prove TVK is better than DMK,” a senior TVK leader told .

However, TVK’s political pragmatism has come with its own problems. TVK’s ideological positions are still unresolved features, forcing the party to repeatedly clarify its stand on various issues, including NEET, delimitation and the importance for Tamil Thaa Vazhthu, through Assembly resolutions. In fact on NEET and delimitation, the party seems to be evolving its positions in real-time.

Although the party positions itself within the broad political vocabulary of the Dravidian tradition, invoking Periyar, Anna, social justice and state rights, it has avoided committing itself to sharper positions. Political analyst Sunilkumar believes the ambiguity may be deliberate.

“Rather than presenting itself as a Dravidian party, TVK appears to be constructing a broader political identity around welfare, representation, social justice and administrative governance, while retaining enough of the Dravidian ethos to establish its roots in the state,” Sunilkumar said. Party insiders claimed

the TVK would rather implement its ideology through governance than talk about it.

The party’s elected representatives, most of them young and new to politics, are also in the process of learning their department subject as well as politics of the state.

“We are no longer just a fan-club, but a political party and we are in a position to face the press back in our districts if not in Chennai. What we speak there may not reach Chennai, but it matters locally. So, we do reach out to our seniors inside the party and our strategists whenever we have a confusion over taking a stand on issues,” a TVK MLA from delta region told .

During the first Assembly session, when DMK MLA and Leader of Opposition Udhayanidhi Stalin addressed the House and attacked the government, the CM did not respond on the floor, posting a response on social media hours later. On Friday, when Udhayanidhi challenged the CM to open files related to corruption, at least three TVK ministers responded to him on the floor.

At the same time, the party has

not completely overcome its inexperience. In the Assembly, there have been instances where the speaker expunged more comments made by ruling-party ministers and MLAs than those by the opposition. Its biggest political challenge, however, may lie in reconciling its promise of clean governance in the manner in which it has expanded its political base.

The horse-trading allegations levelled against TVK have proved difficult for the party to shake off as six sitting MLAs, former MLAs and former ministers from AIADMK have joined the party. While the induction of experienced politicians can be seen as a pragmatic move to quickly build an organisation and consolidate power, it also raises questions on how an anti-corruption party reconciles that positioning with the induction of leaders who themselves have faced serious corruption allegations.

Meanwhile, the party has also started the restructuring process, increasing its district units from 120 to 147 to give space for the new entrants from other parties as well as positions for the sitting ministers, who were just party members until recently. It also faces the task of integrating its fan-based network from the Vijay Makkal Iyakkam and TVK with the cadre joining from other parties.

“While some of the sitting AIADMK MLAs who resigned and joined the party were given posts, most of us who joined were not given any posts, but we continue to guide the youngsters of TVK on the ground. They listen to us, but, unless we have a party position, it may not be smooth in the long term,” a former AIADMK minister, who joined TVK, told .

In 100 days, TVK has broken the state’s long-standing two-party system, formed its first coalition government in decades and attracted leaders from the very parties it sought to replace. But the same speed that has helped it consolidate power has also exposed its ideological ambiguity, contradictions in its anti-corruption promise, and the challenge of turning Vijay’s personal popularity into a coherent political organisation.

The real test for TVK is whether the party will remain Vijay’s party, or evolve into a political organisation capable of surviving after him.

INTERNATIONAL

Ukraine backers gather as war escalates, air defence runs low



KYIV

Ukraine on Monday hosts a meeting of its key European backers to press for critical air-defence supplies and more pressure on Moscow, with Russian attacks killing more civilians than at any time since the first months of the invasion.

The meeting of the Coalition of the Willing will be jointly chaired by the leaders of Britain, France and Germany.

UK Prime Minister Andy Burnham will be in Kyiv for his first international trip since entering 10 Downing Street, and several other leaders are expected to join remotely.

EU Council President Antonio Costa is also due in Kyiv for the talks,

which come amid the latest, deadly escalation of the war.

Russia has been pounding Kyiv with ballistic missiles in recent weeks, ripping open apartment blocks and killing dozens of citizens in the capital.

The escalating Russian strikes have pushed civilian deaths to their highest levels since the first months of Russia’s 2022 invasion.

After almost every attack – which sees tens of thousands hunker in the Kyiv metro system and many more in basements and other shelters across the city – Zelensky has issued public pleas for more air-defence support.

The meeting of the Coalition of the Willing will be jointly chaired by the leaders of Britain, France and Germany. “Russia should be in no

doubt of our resolve,” Burnham said in a statement before his arrival in Kyiv.

“We will not back down until there is a just and lasting peace.”

Diplomacy on ending the conflict – Europe’s largest since World War II – is effectively frozen.

Russia is demanding hardline territorial and political concessions that Kyiv has rejected as a capitulation that would only enable another Russian attack. Burnham is set to announce that the British government is authorising defence firm MBDA to release classified information needed to help Ukraine and France set up local production of the long-range SCALP missile.

And on Saturday, French President Emmanuel Macron pledged Paris

would deliver new interceptor missiles.

“It is crucial to provide Ukraine with all the necessary means to defend its skies and thwart this aggression,” Macron wrote on X.

The ballistic missiles Russia has been firing in their dozens are incredibly fast and travel with a high-arching trajectory, making them difficult to stop.

Kyiv’s home-grown weapons cannot shoot them down, meaning Ukraine is reliant on advanced systems – chiefly, US Patriot interceptors – to protect its skies. But amid shortfalls globally since the US launched its war on Iran, Ukraine has been left exposed.

The meeting of the Coalition of the Willing will be jointly chaired by the leaders of Britain, France and Germany.

Ahead of the meeting, Zelensky revealed the extent of the deficit, releasing usually closely guarded numbers.

He said deliveries of crucial Patriot interceptors had halved since 2023.

“Over the entire of 2023, Ukraine received 675 missiles, and over all of 2025 – 364, even though Russian missile strikes have increased,” Zelensky said.

“For 2026, as currently projected, it is 264,” he added, saying Ukraine was seeking a package of at least 300 for the upcoming winter. The United States faces its own shortfall of the missiles amid its war on Iran and has resisted releasing large numbers to Ukraine.

Zelensky said Russia could produce around 100 ballistic missiles a month.

Ukraine, meanwhile, has accelerated its own campaign of long-range strikes on Russian energy and logistics sites – including oil refineries and retail warehouses.

The Coalition of the Willing is a Franco-British initiative to deliver support to Ukraine and ramp up pressure on Russia.

Originally designed as a group of countries that would be willing to deploy peacekeeping troops to Ukraine in the event a ceasefire was reached, it has become a parallel forum for marshalling support to Ukraine amid uncertainty over US commitments under Donald Trump.

Retired Hindu school teacher, wife, children killed in Bangladesh; two detained



DHAKA

A retired Hindu school teacher along with his wife and two children were allegedly killed at their residence in Bangladesh’s Rangpur city, according to a media report.

The deceased were identified as Ganapati Chakraborty, 65, Pritilata Chakraborty, 50, Agami Chakraborty Prarthi, 23, and Priyam Chakraborty, 12, the Daily Star newspaper reported.

The police have detained two men, identified as Mughdho and Siddhartha, for their involvement in the killings. They are cousins.

The duo allegedly entered the rooftop of



Chakraborty’s house through a neighbouring building and took the drug yaba there on Thursday night, Rangpur Metropolitan Police Commissioner Mohammad Abdul Mabud said in a media briefing on Sunday.

According to the official, Ganapati Chakraborty went to the roof top after hearing noises and questioned the two men about their presence there.

To avoid being exposed, the suspects strangled him with a gamchha (thin cotton towel) he had been carrying on his shoulder, police said.

Hearing the noise, his wife went upstairs.

The suspects allegedly strangled her with a piece of cloth on the staircase, the official said.

The couple’s daughter and son were also killed during the incident, police said. The bodies of the four family members were recovered from their locked house in the Daspara area of Rangpur city around 11:30 pm on Friday. The police said the family had no known disputes or enmity with anyone.

When the Guwahati-Shillong Road Turns Into a Fault Line

The violence in Shillong and the retaliatory blockades along the Assam-Meghalaya border have exposed a deeper danger: when individual acts of violence are answered with collective suspicion, ordinary citizens pay the price.

The violence that erupted during the Khasi Students' Union rally in Shillong on August 19 has done more than disrupt traffic and damage vehicles. The incident, followed by retaliatory protests and blockades along the Assam-Meghalaya border, has exposed how quickly a law-and-order problem can acquire a dangerous social and economic dimension.

What began with violence during a protest has now affected movement between two neighbouring states, disrupted tourism and transport, unsettled businesses and, most worryingly, threatened to weaken the everyday trust that has long connected the people of Assam and Meghalaya.

Reports said 31 vehicles were damaged during the Shillong violence, while more than 3,770 Assam-registered vehicles were subsequently escorted out of Meghalaya. The situation later spilled over to the Assam side, with protests and blockades reported at Jorabat and other entry points along the Guwahati-Shillong corridor.

The numbers are significant. But the deeper concern lies beyond the vehicles stopped, damaged or escorted.

The real danger is that registration plates could become symbols of collective identity and suspicion.

An Assam number plate should be nothing more than a vehicle registration detail. A Meghalaya number plate should mean the same. Neither should become a reason to judge the person behind the wheel.

Yet when violence is followed by retaliatory action based on identity, ordinary objects can acquire political meanings. A vehicle can become an alleged symbol of the state it comes from, and an individual can be made to answer for an incident in which they had no role.

That is where a dispute becomes a social divide.

A relationship built on everyday movement Assam and Meghalaya are not connected merely by a highway. They are connected by thousands of everyday journeys.

People travel between Guwahati and Shillong for education, employment, healthcare, business, tourism and family reasons. Students cross the border to attend colleges and universities. Employees commute for work. Traders transport goods. Patients travel to hospitals. Families visit relatives. Tourists head towards Shillong, Sohra, Dawki, Mawlynnong and other destinations.

The relationship has developed over decades through this constant movement.

For people in Assam, Meghalaya has become a familiar destination. Shillong is not simply a tourist attraction; it is part of the social and cultural geography of the region. Assam residents regularly spend their holidays in Meghalaya, staying in hotels and homestays, eating at restaurants, hiring taxis and purchasing goods from local businesses.

That movement creates livelihoods on both sides.

A tourist may see a hotel room, a restaurant meal or a taxi ride as a holiday expense. For the person providing that service, however, it is an income.

This distinction matters when roads are blocked.

A prolonged disruption does not punish only those who participated in a protest or a violent incident. It affects the driver waiting for a passenger, the hotel employee waiting for guests, the shopkeeper waiting for customers and the roadside vendor depending on tourist traffic.

The economic consequences of tension therefore spread much further than the original site of violence.

The people paying for a conflict they did not create

The transport sector is among the first to feel the impact of such instability.

For taxi drivers, the Guwahati-Shillong route is not a political battleground. It is a workplace. A cancelled trip means lost income. A blocked road can mean an entire day without earnings. Damage to a vehicle can impose a financial burden that a driver may struggle to recover from.

The same applies to tourism workers.

Hotel owners, homestay operators, restaurant workers, guides, drivers, café employees, market vendors and small traders depend on the steady movement of visitors.

When tourists begin cancelling trips because they fear getting stranded or caught in violence, the consequences are immediate.

The irony of retaliatory action is that it often hurts precisely those who have the least influence over the dispute.

A taxi driver did not organise the rally. A hotel employee did not damage a vehicle. A restaurant worker did not attack a tourist. A tourist from Assam did not participate in violence in Shillong.

A shopkeeper in Meghalaya cannot be held responsible for the actions of a protester.

Likewise, a Meghalayan travelling in Assam cannot be treated as responsible for an incident that occurred in Shillong.

Justice cannot operate on the principle of collective punishment.

Accountability must be individual. There is no ambiguity about the need for accountability.

Those who damaged vehicles, assaulted people or committed other offences during the Shillong violence should be identified and prosecuted in accordance with law. The same principle must apply to anyone involved in retaliatory violence, intimidation, vandalism or unlawful blockades.

The response should be based on evidence, investigation and individual responsibility—not identity.

If a person committed a crime, investigate that person.

If a vehicle was damaged, identify those responsible.

If someone was assaulted, prosecute the perpetrators.

If property was destroyed, the victims should have access to appropriate legal remedies and compensation mechanisms. But punishing an entire community for



the actions of individuals only creates another grievance.

And grievances, when left unresolved, have a habit of producing new grievances.

That is how a cycle of retaliation begins.

Border disputes should not become people disputes

Assam and Meghalaya have longstanding differences over several issues, including inter-state boundaries, land, identity and competing perceptions of rights and interests.

These are serious issues. They deserve political negotiation, institutional mechanisms and sustained dialogue.

But none of these questions can be resolved by targeting ordinary citizens.

The border between two states may be politically significant, but for the people who live and work around it, movement across that border is part of daily life.

The road connecting Guwahati and Shillong carries more than vehicles. It carries economic activity, social interaction and human relationships.

When that road is blocked, the consequences travel far beyond the barricade.

Jorabat illustrates this reality particularly clearly. As a major gateway between Assam and Meghalaya, disruption there affects the entire Guwahati-Shillong corridor. Transport services, tourism, commercial movement and daily commuting can all be affected.

A blockade at such a strategic point is therefore not a local inconvenience. It can become a regional disruption.

Government action must restore confidence

The reported steps by the Assam and Meghalaya governments to restore normal movement and strengthen police coordination are important. Meghalaya's decision to constitute a special investigation team to probe the August 19 violence, along with the registration of FIRs, also represents a necessary institutional response.

But government action must go beyond statements.

People need visible assurance that they can travel safely.

Taxi drivers need to know that their vehicles will not become targets because of their registration plates.

Tourists need confidence that travelling to a neighbouring state will not expose them to intimidation.

Businesses need assurance that transport corridors will remain open.

Police forces on both sides must therefore coordinate closely, particularly at vulnerable stretches and during periods of heightened tension.

There should also be a clearly communicated mechanism for reporting harassment, threats or attacks involving inter-state travellers. Complaints should be investigated quickly, and verified cases of property damage should be dealt with transparently.

The objective should be to prevent isolated incidents from turning into a wider atmosphere of fear.

Civil society cannot remain a spectator

Governments have the primary responsibility for maintaining law and order, but the responsibility for preserving social harmony cannot rest with governments alone.

Student organisations, community leaders, transport associations, tourism bodies, business groups and civil society organisations have an important role to play.

At a time when social media can rapidly spread rumours, anger and unverified claims, responsible voices are particularly important.

Political and community leadership must resist language that paints an entire state or community as responsible for the actions of a few individuals.

There is nothing wrong with expressing anger over violence. There is nothing wrong with demanding justice. There is nothing wrong with defending legitimate interests.

But protest loses its democratic legitimacy when violence becomes its instrument, just as public anger loses its moral force when it turns into collective punishment.

The message from responsible leadership should be simple: Assam is not the enemy of Meghalaya, and Meghalaya is not the enemy of Assam.

The two states may disagree on issues. Their governments may have differences. Communities may have competing concerns.

But their people do not have to become enemies.

The tourism relationship must not be allowed to collapse

The tourism economy provides perhaps the clearest example of how interconnected the two states have become.

Meghalaya's hills, waterfalls, forests, villages and towns attract visitors from Assam throughout the year. Guwahati, meanwhile, serves as an important transit point for tourists travelling deeper into the Northeast.

This relationship benefits thousands of people. When visitors stop travelling because of fear,

the impact is felt in places far removed from the original conflict.

A hotel room remains empty.

A taxi remains parked.

A restaurant receives fewer customers.

A guide loses a booking.

A vendor sells less.

A family-run homestay loses income.

These are not abstract economic statistics. They represent household earnings.

The tourism sector, already vulnerable to weather, seasonal fluctuations and uncertainty, cannot afford prolonged disruption caused by a climate of fear.

Do not allow the road to become a psychological border

Physical barricades can eventually be removed.

Roads can be reopened.

Traffic can resume.

But rebuilding trust is harder.

The greatest danger emerging from the present episode is not simply that people may be temporarily unable to travel between Assam and Meghalaya. It is that they may begin travelling with suspicion.

An Assam resident who once drove to Shillong without hesitation may begin wondering whether their vehicle will be targeted.

A Meghalayan travelling through Assam may begin fearing retaliation.

A tourist may decide to cancel a trip altogether.

Repeated experiences of this kind can gradually change public perceptions.

That is how an ordinary highway becomes a psychological border.

And once fear becomes normal, restoring confidence takes far longer than clearing a roadblock.

The choice before Assam and Meghalaya

The present crisis demands two things that are sometimes treated as contradictory but are, in fact, inseparable: accountability and restraint.

Those responsible for violence must face the law.

Those whose property was damaged must receive justice.

Those who were threatened or assaulted must be protected.

At the same time, ordinary citizens must not be made to pay for offences they did not commit.

The governments of Assam and Meghalaya have a responsibility to ensure that political disagreements do not spill over into hostility between their populations. They must keep communication channels open, strengthen coordination between security agencies and ensure that inter-state movement remains safe.

Community leaders have an equally important responsibility to prevent anger from becoming collective hatred.

And ordinary citizens, too, have a role: to resist rumours, reject collective blame and refuse to allow an isolated incident to define an entire people.

The Guwahati-Shillong road should be a symbol of the Northeast's interconnectedness, not a fault line.

For years, people have crossed it without asking whether the person coming from the other side is Assamese or Meghalayan. They travelled because they needed to work, study, trade, visit family or simply enjoy the landscape.

That everyday relationship is worth protecting.

Eventually, the barricades will come down. Vehicles will move again. Tourists will return. Businesses will reopen their doors to customers from across the border.

But the real test will be whether people can once again make that journey without fear.

Assam must protect its people. Meghalaya must protect its people. Both governments must defend legitimate interests.

But protecting people cannot mean turning neighbouring populations against each other.

The road between Guwahati and Shillong was built to connect. It must remain so.

Because when a road becomes a divide, it is not only traffic that gets trapped. Trust, livelihoods and the ordinary human relationships that hold neighbouring societies together can become casualties too.

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ROLE

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RESPONSIBILITIES

- Conduct demos & presentations
- Understand client needs
- Travel for meetings
- Achieve sales targets

REQUIREMENTS

- Graduate/PG in Science and Engineering
- Good communication skills
- Sales interest & willingness to travel

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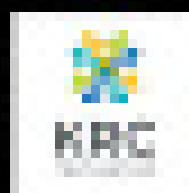


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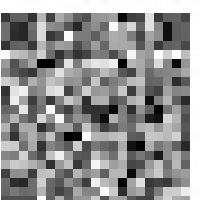


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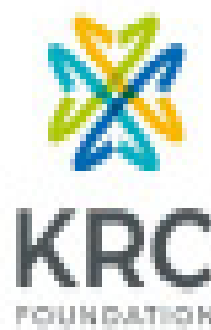
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- Anne Frank

TOPICS

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- PROMOTING TOURISM, MSME, AGRO & HORTICULTURE, ACT EAST DIPLOMACY
- DISASTER MANAGEMENT, ADVENTURE SPORTS & CLIMATE CHANGE
- ART & CULTURE, THEATRE, CINEMA, MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT
- SE FOR SUCCESS- PROMOTING EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, EMPLOYABILITY, ENTREPRENEURSHIP & EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Open to Students from Class VI to Senior Citizens, divided into 5 categories+topics

Each entry will receive a digital participation certificate

There is NO fee for participation

The selected entry will be published on www.krcetimes.com

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5 categories: A- Class- VI, VII, VIII | B- Class- IX, X, XI, XII | C-College & PG Students | D- Working Class & Homemaker | E- Retired & Senior Citizen (60+)

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