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PERSPECTIVE

Sometimes the only way to win is not to play the game.

Nagaland initiates process to establish first organ transplant centre at NHAK

DIMAPUR

Nagaland has moved a step closer to introducing organ transplant services, with the Naga Hospital Authority Kohima (NHAK) initiating the registration and licensing process to become the state's first organ transplant centre, senior health officials announced on Monday.

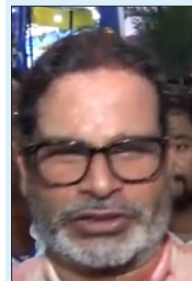
The development was announced by Principal Director of Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Mereninla Senlem, during the observance of Indian Organ Donation Day. The programme, organised by the MOHAN Foundation in collaboration with NHAK and the State Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (SOTTO), Nagaland, was held under the theme "Stories of Hope, Gifts of Life: Promoting Organ Donation in Nagaland."

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Senlem said Nagaland was entering a crucial phase in strengthening its organ donation and transplantation ecosystem. While organ transplant services are not yet available in the state, she said the government is actively working to establish the necessary infrastructure, secure regulatory approvals and build institutional capacity.

She described NHAK's move to begin the registration and licensing process as a major milestone that reflects the state government's commitment to making advanced healthcare services accessible to people within Nagaland.

Highlighting the significance of organ donation, Dr. Senlem said a single donor has the potential to save and improve multiple lives, calling it one of the highest acts of compassion and humanity. She said every successful transplant represents a story of courage, generosity and renewed hope for patients and their families.

WHO SAID WHAT



"I won't make grand promises. By becoming MLA I can't transform Bankipur to Bangalore overnight" ~ Prashant Kishore, MLA (elect) Bankipur, Bihar



KRC TIMES

STAY ENRICHED

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CRPF jawan kills two colleagues, injures one before dying by suicide



GUWAHATI

A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel allegedly shot dead two of his colleagues, injured another, and later died by suicide inside the 34 Battalion CRPF camp at Katimari in Assam's Nagaon district on Tuesday morning, officials

said. According to preliminary findings, the accused, identified as ASI/GD Ballani Premabaram, a native of Andhra Pradesh, was deployed on main gate duty when he was reportedly found without his assigned service weapon. Officials said he later took an INSAS rifle from the

camp's guard room and moved towards the rear side of the Quarter Guard before opening fire. Police said Premabaram allegedly first shot Head Constable (HV/GD) Vishnu Prasad Baghel, who succumbed to his injuries. He then allegedly fired at SI/GD Ramnawal Singh Yadav, who had arrived at the camp for document verification. Yadav also died at the scene. During the incident, ASI/Mane Govind Sripul of B/171 Battalion was also allegedly shot and sustained injuries. He was immediately shifted to Dew Care Hospital, where he is undergoing treatment. Officials said the accused subsequently entered the B/171 Battalion barrack and allegedly shot himself with the rifle. He died on the spot. The deceased have been identified as SI/GD Ramnawal Singh Yadav, Head Constable Vishnu Prasad Baghel, and ASI/GD Ballani Premabaram, the alleged shooter. The motive behind the shooting remains unclear. Security officials have launched an investigation to establish the sequence of events and determine the circumstances that led to the firing inside the camp.

JP Nadda begins 3 days Northeast tour, to review flood-hit areas in Assam and Arunachal

DIBRUGARH

Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare and Chemicals and Fertilizers Jagat Prakash Nadda on Tuesday began a three-day visit to Assam, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh, during which he will review the health-care situation in flood-affected areas and participate in a series of official engagements.According to the official itinerary, Nadda arrived in Dibrugarh from New Delhi on August 4 and is scheduled to stay overnight in the town. On August 5, the Union Minister will visit flood-affected areas in Assam's Charaideo district to assess the post-flood health situation and review relief and health-care measures. He will later travel to Mon district in Nagaland to attend official programmes before returning to Dibrugarh for a meeting with the Assam government and other scheduled events. On August 6, Nadda will

travel to Yazali in Arunachal Pradesh's Keyi Panyor district, where he is expected to review the health response in flood-affected areas and take part in official engagements. During the three-day tour, the Union Minister is expected to assess healthcare preparedness and the measures taken by state authorities to address the impact of the recent floods. He is also likely to interact with officials on strengthening medical services and public health infrastructure in the affected regions. The visit comes in the wake of widespread floods and landslides that have affected large parts of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh over the past several weeks. The disasters have claimed lives, displaced thousands of people and caused extensive damage to homes, roads, agricultural land and public infrastructure.

Three, including minor, arrested in Assam Class 10 student's alleged gang rape and murder



HAILAKANDI

Three persons, including a minor, have been arrested in connection with the alleged gang rape and murder of a 15-year-old Class 10 student in Assam's Hailakandi district, police said on Tuesday. The incident came to light on the night of August 1 when the victim's mother returned home after attending a function at a neighbour's house and found her daughter dead on the bed. Police said the victim was unclothed and had sustained visible injuries. Following information from local residents, a team from Katlicherra Police Station reached the spot and shifted the body to SK Roy Civil Hospital for post-mortem examination. Given the gravity of the case, the Hailakandi Police constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to conduct a detailed probe. Based on the investigation, police apprehended three accused, including a minor, on August 3 in connection with

the alleged crime. Officials said further investigation is underway and additional forensic and evidentiary examinations are being carried out. The incident has triggered widespread public outrage across the district. Protesters staged demonstrations and blocked National Highway-6 (NH-6), demanding stringent punishment for those responsible and swift justice for the victim. Several civil society organisations and local groups have condemned the alleged crime and called for a fast-track trial to ensure the case is disposed of without delay. Protest marches were also organised in different parts of the district, with memoranda submitted to the district administration seeking strict legal action against the accused. Police have appealed for calm while assuring that the investigation is being carried out on priority and that all legal procedures will be followed to ensure justice.

IMD issues orange alert for parts of Arunachal as heavy rain threat persists

ITANAGAR

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued an orange alert for parts of Arunachal Pradesh, forecasting heavy to very heavy rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms and lightning over the next two days, even as weather conditions are expected to improve gradually later this week. According to the latest IMD forecast, Papum Pare district is likely to receive very heavy rainfall along with thunderstorms and lightning on Tuesday, August 4. East Kameng has also been placed under an orange alert for heavy rainfall and thunderstorms, while several other districts remain under a yellow alert, indicating the likelihood of adverse weather conditions. The weather department said rainfall activity is expected to weaken from Wednesday, August 5, with only isolated districts, including Papum Pare, continuing under a yellow alert. No major weather warnings have been issued for most parts of the state beyond midweek. The latest forecast comes as Arunachal Pradesh continues to grapple with the aftermath of monsoon-induced floods and landslides. According to official data, seven people have died while nearly 1.56 lakh people have been affected across the state. The disaster has impacted 674 villages spread across 382 administrative circles in 28 districts. The IMD has indicated that weather conditions are likely to improve significantly from Thursday, with no alerts issued for most districts. Only a few western parts of the state are expected to remain under a yellow watch due to the possibility of isolated rainfall. Similar conditions are expected on Friday, with limited rainfall activity forecast across Arunachal Pradesh.

NH-2 blockade triggers essential commodity shortage in Imphal as supply chain falters



IMPHAL

Prolonged disruptions along National Highway-2 (NH-2), Manipur's principal supply corridor, have triggered an acute shortage of essential commodities in Imphal, with the crisis escalating beyond rising prices to widespread scarcity as stocks in markets and retail outlets continue to decline.The blockade on the Imphal-Dimapur highway has severely disrupted the movement of goods into the state, leaving traders struggling to replenish essential supplies. Although National Highway-37, connecting Imphal with Jiribam, remains operational, its ability to meet demand has been constrained by difficult terrain, recurring landslides and extended travel time. According to traders, trucks carrying essential commodities from outside the state are now taking between 25 days and nearly a month to reach Imphal, compared to only a few days under normal conditions. The prolonged transit

has resulted in heavy spoilage of perishable items such as fish, onions and potatoes, further aggravating shortages in local markets. The disruption has also affected major supermarkets and wholesale outlets, many of which have reported dwindling inventories and empty shelves due to the non-arrival of fresh consignments. Traders said the shortage has become increasingly severe over the past few weeks as existing stocks continue to be exhausted.Prices of several essential commodities have also remained elevated in Imphal markets. Onions are retailing at around Rs 70 per kg, potatoes at Rs 40 per kg, garlic at approximately Rs 180 per kg, Mairongbi toor dal at Rs 140 per kg, Kangtak at Rs 75 per kg and masoor dal between Rs 90 and Rs 100 per kg.The supply crisis has been compounded by seasonal factors. Local vegetable production has declined following the end of the summer harvesting season, while winter crops are yet to reach the markets. With reduced local output and limited inflow of supplies from outside the state, the availability of fresh vegetables has dropped sharply, raising concerns that shortages could intensify in the coming weeks if normal transport operations are not restored. Traders and consumers have expressed concern over the prolonged disruption, warning that continued blockades on NH-2 could furt

Manipur govt accelerates push for permanent NIT campus, CM Khemchand Singh reaffirms commitment



IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Tuesday reiterated the state government's com-

mitment to establishing a permanent campus for the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Manipur, saying efforts are underway to expedite land allocation for the project.



Addressing the institute's 13th Convocation at the City Convention Centre in Imphal, the Chief Minister said the government is actively engaging with all stakeholders to facilitate

the transfer of land at the earliest. He described NIT Manipur as a key institution contributing to the development of both the state and the nation.

Congratulating the graduating students, Khemchand Singh lauded their academic achievements and wished them success in their future careers. He highlighted the growing importance of technical education in achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, stating that graduates from disciplines such as Civil Engineering, Computer Science and Engineering, Electronics and Communication Engineering, Electrical Engineering, and Mechanical Engineering would play a vital role in nation-building.He said institutions like NIT Manipur are poised to make significant contributions towards the Prime Minister's vision of a developed India, describing the institute as one of the Northeast's emerging premier technical institutions. He urged students to pursue excellence, embrace innovation, and use their knowledge and skills to contribute to both Viksit Bharat and Viksit Manipur. The Chief Minister also acknowledged the support of Kakching MLA Rameshwar Singh in advancing the proposal for the institute's perma-

nent campus. He said discussions with the concerned stakeholders would continue to ensure early completion of the land allocation process.Chairperson of the Board of Governors Bajrang Lal Bagra also congratulated the graduating students, encouraging them to uphold the values of integrity, innovation and public service. He stressed that education should be guided by ethics and compassion and called upon the graduates to contribute meaningfully to nation-building and the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047. During the convocation, the Chief Minister, along with Board of Governors Chairperson Bajrang Lal Bagra and NIT Manipur Director Prof. D.V.L.N. Somayajulu, presented gold medals and awards to meritorious students in recognition of their outstanding academic performance.The ceremony was attended by Registrar Prof. Khumukcham Tomba Singh, members of the Board of Governors and Academic Senate, deans, faculty members, officers, staff, graduating students, parents and invited guests.



VOLUME:1, ISSUE 839

HASINA'S HOMECOMING GAMBIT

There are two ways that the resignation of Bangladesh President Mohammed Shahabuddin on July 24 can be interpreted. One is that it is an unceremonious exit, as he has been compelled to quit one year and nine months ahead of the completion of his tenure. The other is that it underlines the relevance of the country's premier political outfit, the Awami League (AL), and its leader and former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, even in absentia. Shahabuddin is originally an AL leader and was elected to the highest post as a party nominee. He was a thorn in the side of the new rulers, who took over first as an interim government on August 5, 2024, and then as a duly elected dispensation in 2026, after forcing the exit of Hasina from her office as well as the country in a climax to massive student unrest described as the July Uprising.

The departure of Shahabuddin snaps the only link that had survived between the AL and the country's ruling apparatus. Most officials perceived to have been close to Hasina during her 15-year rule have either been purged, sidelined, or subjected to judicial trial. Her party colleagues are being ruthlessly pursued, harassed, arrested, forced to flee the country, or made to face trial by the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT). Such is the AL's influence, however, that it continues to haunt the government and the party's opponents. Even after vacating the official residence, Shahabuddin continues to face mounting pressure, with growing calls for his arrest and prosecution on charges of crimes against humanity. In the current context, those allegations stem from the killings of protesters during the July Uprising. The government, led by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), has so far dismissed these allegations against the former President, maintaining that there is no substance to them. Even so, the BNP was careful not to be seen shielding him: rather than defend him outright, it let his resignation stand, distancing itself from a figure tied to the AL.

It is too much of a coincidence that Shahabuddin has become a casualty in the wake of Hasina's announcement from New Delhi, where she is presently based, that she would return to the country in December and surrender before a court. Besides numerous ongoing cases, Hasina has already been sentenced to death by the ICT. Reports persist, despite Shahabuddin's denial, that while in London for medical treatment he had a telephonic conversation with Hasina before returning to Dhaka and tendering his resignation. The timing of the resignation left little doubt among many observers that the real trigger was political rather than medical, as cited by Shahabuddin in his resignation letter.

These developments underline one home truth: the AL and its leader remain powerful enough to keep the present rulers uneasy. Hasina has set in motion one of the most consequential and volatile political moments with her plans for a voluntary homecoming, alongside other exiled party leaders, and her intended surrender before the courts. To return under a capital sentence awarded to her by the ICT on November 17, 2025 cannot be without reason. Her move comes even as attempts are underway to try the AL itself, as a party, before the ICT on charges of mass killings, the destruction of democracy, the dismantling of institutions, and the looting of the country's resources. Her strategy could be to legally challenge both her sentence and the moves against her party. Her presence on Bangladeshi soil would carry strong emotive appeal for millions, especially the families of the martyrs of 1971.

An observer has correctly summed up: "This dual framing - personal sacrifice and party revival - is the crux of the political risk. It is simultaneously a legal surrender, a symbolic act of defiance, and an organising strategy for a banned party trying to reassert relevance ahead of Bangladesh's electoral calendar."

The question, however, rankles in the minds of her sympathisers: will she be allowed to survive the death sentence in a friendless political environment? Her own government had virtually lost no time in carrying out ICT judgments against Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami (BJI) leaders, hanging about half of them. Prime Minister Tarique Rahman may personally find it difficult and the BNP too carries the bitter memory of what they believed was the ruthless oppression of the party, including its late leader and former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia. This is despite the fact that the BNP might like to use the AL's secular credentials against the fundamentalist BJI, which keeps gunning for its government.

For the time being, however, Hasina's announcement has served its purpose, whether her intention is to actually go back to Bangladesh or is just a carefully calculated trial balloon to gauge her opponents' response. Home Minister Salahuddin has declared more than once that there is no provision for surrender and that she will be arrested the moment she sets foot in the country. Nahid Islam, one of the leading figures of the July Uprising, has insisted that the death sentence should not merely remain on paper but be carried out. In his view, Hasina has forfeited any legal recourse, since the 30-day period available for filing an appeal has expired. He has demanded that she be taken into custody immediately upon her return, expressing confidence that the Supreme Court, "in the interest of complete justice", will uphold the ICT verdict and ensure it is carried out.

BJI chief Shafiqur Rahman remarked, with unmistakable irony, that "Hasina will never return", dismissing her announcement as little more than political theatre orchestrated from exile. His party portrayed the declaration as part of a larger political conspiracy rather than a genuine homecoming. Yet, paradoxically, few political forces have as much reason to want Hasina back in Bangladesh to face the consequences of the ICT verdict. For Jamaat, Hasina's return would carry an unambiguous sense of historical retribution.

Taken together, the responses of the government, the leaders of the July Uprising, and the Islamist opposition point to a remarkable convergence. Despite their differing political agendas, they appear united in one objective: to ensure that Hasina's return to Bangladesh marks not the revival of her political fortunes but the closing chapter of one of the country's most consequential political careers.

Within five days of Hasina's announcement, Tarique Rahman personally instructed the relevant authorities to intensify the ongoing crackdown on the AL and its affiliated organisations, including the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and the Jubo League (youth wing). He also directed officials to prevent members of these banned groups from engaging in activities that could undermine public safety or disrupt law and order. The very issuance of such a directive underscores the AL's enduring organisational capacity and influence, even under exceptionally adverse circumstances. That reality is likely to provide some comfort to Hasina as she approaches two years away from her homeland.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Keep your thoughts positive because your thoughts become your words.

- Mahatma Gandhi

TRUMP TARIFFS TARGET INDIA AGAIN



PRABHU CHAWLA

In the long arc of democratic history, the spectacle of the world's richest democracy systematically hounding the world's largest and fastest-growing democracy should provoke more than routine diplomatic furore. It should force a reckoning with what power has become when it confuses leverage with leadership. Donald Trump has turned the instruments of diplomacy into tools of coercion and intimidation. That coercion has fixated with particular intensity on India. Trade and commerce have been weaponised. Trump has converted them from a means of building consensus into a blunt instrument for dictating the terms of trade and imposing asymmetrical pressure on any partner that fails to yield at once.

The result is not statecraft, but a sustained campaign of economic destabilisation that undermines the very norms of reciprocity upon which stable international relations are built. The latest and most provocative action arrived last week, hours after the funeral of Senator Lindsey Graham at Washington National Cathedral, where Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Benjamin Netanyahu stood among the mourners, when the US Senate voted 86-12 to advance the Graham's legislation, Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026.

The legislation authorises secondary tariffs of up to 100 percent on countries that continue to purchase Russian oil and gas. An earlier draft had explicitly named India, China, Slovakia, Hungary and Azerbaijan as targets. Trump's fear and favour were clearly reflected in the provisions of the Act. It carefully exempted 15 European nations still importing Russian gas on the grounds that their volumes represented a smaller and declining share of demand.

India buys oil, but then, Europe buys gas. Only one category was judged suitable for maximum pressure. That bipartisan statute—advanced after a colleague's funeral with more than 60 co-sponsors from both parties—is far harder to reverse than any presidential order. It represents the institutionalization of coercive diplomacy, transforming a temporary executive preference into enduring legislative mandate.

This vote is the culmination of a campaign that has already altered the duty on Indian goods five times in 15 months. Each one of the penal changes were calibrated to extract further concessions rather than to establish a durable framework. In April 2025, Washington threatened a 26 percent

tariff. By August, the rate stood at 50 percent, the additional 25 points imposed solely because India continued to purchase Russian crude. Earlier this year, Trump and Modi announced an interim understanding that lowered the rate to 18 percent in return for \$500 billion in promised Indian purchases of American energy, technology and other goods.

Eighteen days later, the US Supreme Court, in a 6-3 opinion authored by Chief Justice John Roberts, ruled that the International Emergency Economic Powers Act never authorised those tariffs, voiding more than \$160 billion already collected and rendering the India understanding moot. Trump absorbed the judicial setback and immediately imposed a flat 10 percent surcharge under Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974.

When that temporary authority expired on July 24, Section 301 duties of 10 percent took effect the same night, justified by findings on forced-labour enforcement. Five successive rates, one country, 15 months—an unbroken sequence of recalibration conveying a sordid saga of undiplomatic conduct. It's for the first time in America's 250-year-old history that its Head of State has acquired the image of a bully with scant regards for conviction and consistency.

China, which imports comparable volumes of Russian oil, has faced no such revolving door of punishment and has been offered something closer to a negotiated truce. India, the more cooperative partner, has been the more frequently punished. Keeping in view the importance of strategic partnership, India

has been making significant concessions. The US goods trade deficit with India stood at around \$58 billion in 2025, 27 percent higher than the year before.

However, India's own surplus with the US narrowed to \$34.4 billion in 2025-26 from \$40.9 billion the previous year. India reduced the share of its crude imports drawn from Russia, increased purchases of American energy and kept the negotiating channels open while Indian firms committed substantial new investment on American soil. More than a dozen rounds of high-level negotiations followed by visits of senior officials to both Washington and New Delhi have taken place. But they have been turned into either photo albums, TV bytes, or been dismissed by Trump as irrelevant for now.

None of these adjustments has produced a stable rate, a durable exemption, or even a settled legal basis for the duties currently applied. Cooperativeness has been interpreted not as leverage to be reciprocated but as elasticity to be tested repeatedly. Funnily, Trump continues to describe Modi as a friend while deploying every available statute and legislative opportunity to damage his prestige at home. The Trumpian presidency has been transformed from an institution that seeks to forge global consensus into one that thrives on confrontation. Leaders like Netanyahu and Zelenskyy, who postpone or avoid fresh electoral mandates, receive public support and diplomatic latitude. But the fastest-growing large democracy is treated as a problem to be managed through successive layers of tariffs.

Policies that generate world-

wide economic instability fall with particular force on brown democracies that lack China's strategic weight or Europe's alliance insulation. Modi has so far kept his counsel and refused to escalate, preserving India's strategic autonomy and room for manoeuvre. Yet, the longer this campaign of coercive diplomacy continues, the clearer it becomes that the damage will rebound upon Trump's own political base and upon the American economy.

As India expands its manufacturing base, deepens partnerships across the Global

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

Families in Sivasagar shared their pain, struggles and hopes with me today.

One of our sisters spoke about the recurring threat posed by the Dikhow River. This morning, we announced the construction of a new embankment at Sundarpukhuri to help protect the area.

~ Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, CM, Assam



South, and positions itself as a credible counterweight to Chinese influence in South Asia, it will emerge stronger, not weaker. By targeting that rising power, Washington is not protecting Americans. It is eroding the commercial relationships and strategic partnership that once promised to balance Asia and advance shared interests.

A superpower that mistakes harassment for statecraft will eventually discover that the countries it seeks to discipline possess alternatives, and that the voters who once cheered confrontation will tire of higher prices, disrupted supply chains and diminished alliances. India has already demonstrated the patience of a rising power that knows time is on its side. America would do well to remember that patience is not the same as permanent forbearance, and that the weaponisation of diplomacy ultimately weakens the hand that wields it.



Himanta Sarma defends Assam’s Rs 15,000 flood relief, says rehabilitation support will continue

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma defended the state government’s decision to provide Rs 15,000 as interim financial assistance to flood-affected families, saying the amount was only the first phase of relief and that the government would continue extending support during the rehabilitation process.

Speaking to reporters while visiting flood-hit areas in Nazira of Sivasagar district, Sarma dismissed criticism that the assistance was inadequate, asserting that those questioning the relief package were unaware of the government’s long-term rehabilitation plans.



“Whoever is making fun of us doesn’t know us. The people of Nazira constituency and Sivasagar district know us. They know we will continue to help them for many days,” the chief minister said. Referring to criticism over the Rs 15,000 interim relief, Sarma said the amount should not be seen as the government’s final assistance.

“Whoever is saying that Rs 15,000 is very little has a very limited way of thinking. They don’t know us. But the people know the government is with them, and that is why they are not questioning us,” he said.

Sarma said the government’s immediate priority was to stand with flood-affected families in

stead of engaging in political debates over the relief package.

“In these difficult times, we should be with the people. They will judge us by what we do and how effectively we help them. We will help them in every possible way,” he said.

Outlining the next phase of the rehabilitation exercise, the chief minister said training for damage assessment teams would be held in Jorhat on August 7 and Nazira on August 8. After the training, teams comprising teachers and other designated officials will conduct door-to-door surveys to assess losses suffered by each affected household. The findings will form the basis for compensation and rehabilitation assistance.

Asked about the recent cloud-burst in Nagaland’s Mon district, Sarma declined to comment, saying his focus remained on Assam’s flood-affected people.

“Don’t ask more questions. I am here to be with the people. Otherwise, people will say politics is being done. Those questions can be answered later. Today, we are here to stand with the people,” he said.

The chief minister spent the day reviewing relief and rehabilitation efforts in Sivasagar district, interacting with affected residents and assessing the extensive damage caused by the recent floods as the state government continued its recovery and rehabilitation operations.

Petrol bombs hurled at Meghalaya Pollution Control Board office in Shillong; police launch probe

SHILLONG

Two unidentified masked men allegedly hurled petrol bombs at the office of the Meghalaya State Pollution Control Board (MSPCB) in Shillong on Monday afternoon, triggering a police investigation. No injuries or property damage were reported in the incident.

According to police, the attack took place between 12 noon and 12.30 pm when the two assailants arrived on a scooter, threw two petrol bombs at the MSPCB office and fled the scene immediately afterwards.

Officials said the explosives did not cause any casualties or significant damage to the premises.

The incident comes just days after the Meghalaya State Pollution Control Board conducted a public hearing on a proposed limestone mining project in East Jaintia Hills district, which had witnessed opposition from sections of the local community.

However, police said it was premature to link Monday’s attack with the recent public hearing.

An official of the Pollution Control Board confirmed that a First Information Report (FIR) had been lodged and that investigators had begun collecting evidence from the scene.

“We have lodged an FIR. Police and the forensic team visited the office and collected evidence,” the official said.

Shillong City Superintendent of Police Dangsang Khyriem confirmed that two petrol bombs had been thrown at the office and said a criminal case would be registered based on the complaint filed by the Board.

Asked whether the incident could be connected to the recent public hearing on the proposed limestone mining project at Lum Syrman, Khyriem said investigators had not established any such link and that all possible angles were being examined.

Mizoram completes biometric enrolment of 98.9% Myanmar refugees; drive underway in four districts

AIZAWL

Mizoram has completed biometric enrolment of 29,248 Myanmar refugees, covering 98.89 per cent of those currently taking shelter in the state, with the exercise still underway in four districts, officials from the Home Department said.

The biometric registration drive, launched in late July 2025 following directions from the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), has so far covered 29,248 of the 29,577 Myanmar refugees residing in Mizoram. Officials said the remaining enrolment work has slowed due to district administrations being simultaneously engaged in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and Census-related activities.

According to officials, the biometric registration has been completed in seven of Mizoram’s 11 districts, including Champhai, which hosts the largest refugee population in the state. The border district shelters 12,083 Myanmar refugees, all of whom have been enrolled under the exercise.

The enrolment process has also been completed in Lawngtlai district, where 6,328 refugees are staying, making it the second-largest refugee-hosting district in the state. In Aizawl district, which accommodates 4,159 Myanmar refugees, biometric registration has likewise been completed.

Among the four districts where the exercise is still in progress, Hnahthial has recorded significant progress, with biometric data collected from 563 of the 622 refugees residing there, achieving over 90 per cent coverage.

Officials said the remaining districts host comparatively smaller refugee populations and the exercise is expected to be completed after ongoing electoral revision and Census-related work is concluded. Meanwhile, officials confirmed that biometric enrolment of all 1,679 refugees from Bangladesh’s Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) has been completed. The exercise for Bangladeshi refugees commenced after the biometric registration of Myanmar nationals had largely been concluded.

Manipur Youth Assembly adopts ‘Manipur First’ resolution, seeks regional unity and transparent governance



IMPHAL

The Manipur Youth Assembly 2026 concluded with the adoption of a seven-point resolution under the theme “Manipur First”, calling for regional political unity, transparent governance, employment generation, rehabilitation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and lasting peace in the state. The assembly, organised by Manipur Miyang Ehou (MAMEE) under the guidance of its

leader Khaidem Mani, was held at the Senate Hall of the Department of Earth Sciences, Manipur University, Canchipur. The event brought together students, researchers, civil society representatives and other stakeholders to deliberate on the state’s political, social and economic challenges.

Addressing the gathering, MAMEE convener Oinam Premdash urged young people to move beyond political indifference and play a more active role in shaping

Manipur’s future. He said the state’s multiple challenges require a united regional approach rather than fragmented political efforts.

One of the key resolutions adopted by the assembly appealed to regional political parties, including the Manipur People’s Party (MPP), Naga People’s Front (NPF), Democratic People’s Front (DPF) and People’s Democratic Alliance (PDA), to unite under a common regional platform. According to the resolution, such an alliance could emerge as a stronger regional alternative to national political parties in future elections. The assembly also highlighted the state’s growing unemployment crisis, expressing concern over delays and the lack of transparency in government recruitment processes. Delegates called for merit-based, transparent recruitment and urged the government to create greater employment opportunities for the youth.

Participants further appealed to the state government to formulate and announce a comprehensive

rehabilitation plan for internally displaced persons before the next elections, stressing the need for their timely resettlement and long-term support.

The resolution also raised concerns over repeated disruptions along Manipur’s national highways since the outbreak of ethnic violence on May 3, 2023. Delegates urged both the state and central governments to ensure the safe and uninterrupted movement of civilians and essential supplies across the state.

Calling for an end to prolonged unrest, the assembly urged the government to take concrete measures to promote reconciliation among communities, bridge ethnic divisions and restore lasting peace and social harmony in Manipur. The event concluded with participants reaffirming their commitment to the “Manipur First” vision, emphasising the need for inclusive governance, regional cooperation and greater youth participation in the state’s political and developmental processes.

Supreme Court Summons Arunachal Top Officials Over Alleged Non-Cooperation in CBI Probe into PWD Contracts

KRC TIMES NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday summoned Arunachal Pradesh’s Chief Secretary and Principal Secretary (Home) after the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) reported alleged non-cooperation by the state government in its preliminary enquiry into the allotment of public works contracts. A bench comprising Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Sandeep Mehta took note of the CBI’s status report, which stated that the agency was not being provided with the necessary records required for its enquiry. The court issued notices to both senior officials and directed them to appear in person on August 24 to explain the alleged non-compliance with its earlier orders.

The bench observed that the CBI’s status report “reflects that there is non-cooperation at the end



of the state government in providing the necessary records.” The enquiry relates to allegations that public works contracts in Arunachal Pradesh were awarded preferentially to firms allegedly owned by or linked to relatives of Chief Minister Pema Khandu.

Reacting to the development, Congress general secretary Jairam

Ramesh said the court’s action was expected. In a post on X, he noted that the Supreme Court had, on April 6, 2026, ordered a CBI investigation into PWD contracts allegedly awarded to family members of the state’s Public Works Department minister, who is also Chief Minister Pema Khandu. He also questioned the Chief Minister’s continuation

in office, alleging it contradicted the Centre’s commitment to accountability. In its April 6 judgment, the Supreme Court had observed that the state and its instrumentalities cannot confer benefits based on the “whims of any political or administrative functionary” and held that the matter warranted an independent investigation. The court directed the CBI to conduct a preliminary enquiry and, if necessary, a full investigation into the award and execution of public works contracts and work orders in Arunachal Pradesh between January 1, 2015, and December 31, 2025. The probe also covers works and compilations already placed before the court during the proceedings. The case stems from a petition filed by the NGOs Save Mon Region Federation and Voluntary Arunachal Sena, which sought a CBI or Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe into the alleged irregularities in the award of public works contracts.

Assam may rebuild entire villages in worst-hit flood zones of Sivasagar, Charaideo: Himanta Sarma



GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the devastation caused by the recent floods in Sivasagar and Charaideo districts was far more severe than what had been portrayed on television, indicating that the government may have to rebuild entire villages in some of the worst-affected areas. After travelling by tractor through the flood-ravaged Nepali Khuti area to assess the damage, Sarma said the scale of destruction had gone beyond what could be addressed through immediate financial assistance alone.

“The damage in Sivasagar and Charaideo is far more severe than what is being shown on television. Flood relief alone will not be enough,” the chief minister said.

He said several villages, including Bihubor, Nepali Khuti, Bethari and Nimaian, had suffered extensive destruction of homes, public infrastructure and livelihoods, making comprehensive rehabilitation essential. “In places such

as Bihubor, Nepali Khuti, Bethari and Nimaian, we may have to rebuild entire villages,” Sarma said. During his visit, the chief minister interacted with flood-affected residents and reviewed the extent of damage caused by the disaster. Large stretches of the affected areas continue to bear the impact of the floods, with houses destroyed, livestock lost and agricultural land severely damaged. Sarma said the government was now looking beyond immediate relief measures and preparing a long-term rehabilitation strategy for the worst-hit regions.

As part of the rehabilitation process, the government plans to conduct detailed assessments of damaged houses, public infrastructure and livelihood losses to determine the assistance required for affected families.

The recent floods have caused widespread devastation across Upper Assam, with Sivasagar and Charaideo among the worst-affected districts. Thousands of families were displaced after floodwaters inundated villages, damaged homes, destroyed crops and affected livestock.

The chief minister said the state government would continue evaluating the ground situation and take all necessary measures to ensure the long-term rehabilitation and recovery of flood-affected communities.

Centre approves Rs 2,537 crore for 263 flood management projects across Northeast till March 2026



NEW DELHI

The Centre has sanctioned Rs 2,536.96 crore under the Flood Management and Border Areas Programme (FMBAP) for 263 flood management projects across the

Quest!

Not understanding sarcasm can be a warning sign of dementia later in life.

Northeastern states, including Sikkim, till March 2026, the Ministry of Jal Shakti informed the Rajya Sabha on Monday.

In a written reply to the Upper House on August 3, Minister of State for Jal Shakti Raj Bhushan Choudhary said flood management and anti-erosion works are primarily the responsibility of state governments, while the Centre extends technical support and financial assistance through the FMBAP for projects related to flood control, anti-erosion, drainage development and protection

against sea erosion. The ministry said the Central Water Commission (CWC) currently operates 360 flood forecasting stations across the country, including 53 stations in the Northeast. These comprise 15 inflow forecasting stations and 38 water level forecasting stations, providing advance information to help authorities prepare for potential flooding.

It further stated that the CWC has developed a basin-wise rainfall-runoff model capable of issuing flood forecast advisories up to seven days in advance,

enabling state agencies to undertake timely evacuations and disaster preparedness measures.

According to the ministry, flood forecasts are disseminated through multiple platforms, including dedicated online portals, the Flood Watch India mobile application, social media channels and the Common Alert Protocol (CAP) integrated with State Disaster Management Authorities to ensure wider public outreach. The Centre also informed Parliament that hydrological and meteorological data are regularly shared with neighbouring countries to improve river basin management and strengthen flood forecasting mechanisms in the region.

As part of its long-term flood mitigation strategy, the Ministry of Jal Shakti circulated technical guidelines on Flood Plain Zoning to all states and Union Territories in August 2025, encouraging scientific assessment and regulated development in flood-prone areas. The ministry added that the Brahmaputra Board has prepared 52 master plans covering the Northeastern states, incorporating both structural and non-structural measures for flood management and erosion control. On disaster relief, the Centre reiterated that immediate assistance to flood-affected people is provided by state governments through the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF). Additional financial support from the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) is released for disasters classified as being of a severe nature after assessment by an Inter-Ministerial Central Team.

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SC clarification on FIRs
a ‘big victory’ for youth,
says CJP; seeks immediate
implementation of assurances



NEW DELHI

The Cockroach Janta Party welcomed the Supreme Court’s clarification on the withdrawal of FIRs against student protesters in the NEET paper leak agitation, urging the Centre and BJP/NDA-ruled states to immediately implement the assurances made under the July 25 agreement.

The apex court clarified that the term “criminal antecedents” in its earlier order applied only to those accused of grave and heinous offences, while states were free to close or withdraw FIRs against the remaining protesters in accordance with law.

The clarification followed

the Centre’s submission that it would not pursue cases against students who took part in the NEET paper leak protests, including the July 20 Parliament march in Delhi, provided they did not have criminal antecedents.

The matter is scheduled to be heard again on August 18. CJP chief spokesperson Saurav Das said the court’s clarification had removed ambiguity over the government’s commitment not to proceed against student protesters, except those accused of serious crimes.

“Now that the Supreme Court has removed confusions, we expect the Government of India and all BJP/NDA-ruled states to immediately honour the

assurances given on July 25 to the youth of this country,” Das said in a post on X.

Addressing a press conference later, Das said the court had made it clear that states could withdraw FIRs against student protesters and that the expression “criminal antecedents” referred only to those accused of heinous crimes such as murder and rape.

“Today there has been another big victory of the youth. The Supreme Court clarified that if the state has to withdraw all the FIRs against students and protesters, then it can do so. It also made it clear that only those accused of grave crimes such as murder and rape can face action in future,” he said.

Das said the CJP remained in constant touch with senior Union government representatives and would closely monitor the implementation of the assurances.

“From Day 1, the Cockroach Janta Party has stood by every student and every protester, providing legal assistance, medical support, and every other form of help within our means. The youth of this country honoured their word. It is now time for the government to honour its own immediately,” he said. CJP spokesperson Ratna Singh said the Supreme Court had also indicated that it could invoke Article 142 of the Constitution to quash FIRs, if required.

She added that the party was in touch with the family of protester Ruchika, who had alleged harassment, and reiterated that the CJP would provide legal assistance to women protesters who were allegedly harassed.

CHENNAI

Former Deputy Chief Minister and MLA Udhayanidhi Stalin was detained for questioning by a joint team of Thanjavur and Neelankarai police from his residence on East Coast Road in Neelankarai at around 11 am on Tuesday in connection with multiple cases registered over his alleged derogatory remarks against women during a Cauvery protest in Thanjavur on Monday.

According to police sources, six FIRs have so far been registered against Udhayanidhi across Tamil Nadu over the speech. The Thanjavur case was filed based on a complaint by the women’s wing organiser of the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), who alleged that his remarks were offensive and derogatory towards women.

Security was tightened outside Udhayanidhi’s residence on Tuesday morning, with additional police personnel deployed as a precautionary measure.

After being arrested by the police, Leader of the Opposition Udhayanidhi Stalin alleged that the State government was using diversion tactics to distract people from real issues.

“I spoke for over 20 minutes on farmers, their welfare and the Cauvery river water issue. They have manipulated something that I never spoke about and are using it as a diversion tactic. It’s not me; even a basic member of my party will not be threatened by such arrests. We will face it legally,” Udhayanidhi told the media.

DMK cadres thronged Udhayanidhi’s residence and raised slogans against his detention. Meanwhile, TVK national spokesperson Pazha Selvakumar submitted a representation to the National Commission for Women (NCW), seeking action against Udhayanidhi over his alleged remarks.

Alleging that the speech objectified women and normalised verbal harassment, he urged the commission to take cognisance of the rally speech, seek a public apology from the Leader of the



Opposition, and direct the authorities to initiate legal proceedings under the relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

Senior DMK leaders, including Duraimurugan, E V Velu, Sekar Babu and M A Subramanian, along with Chief Minister M K Stalin’s son-in-law V Sabareesan, were present at the residence when the police team arrived.

Before being taken away for questioning, Udhayanidhi briefly addressed reporters and described the police action as a “comedy”.

He alleged that the government had failed to answer questions raised by farmers and said he had highlighted several issues during Monday’s protest.

The remarks triggered a political controversy, with opposition parties condemning the statement. The TVK also staged statewide protests on Tuesday, demanding action against the former Deputy Chief Minister.

Police said Udhayanidhi was detained as part of the ongoing investigation into the cases. Further inquiries are under way.

High drama unfolded outside Udhayanidhi’s Neelankarai residence

before his detention, with police officials arriving amid the controversy surrounding his remarks at the farmers’ protest in Thanjavur.

The DMK also approached the Madras High Court seeking protection for the party leader.

During his address at the rally, Udhayanidhi was criticising Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay when a person in the crowd reportedly mentioned the name of a Tamil actress. Udhayanidhi then responded with a remark that was alleged to contain a suggestive double entendre. The comment subsequently drew criticism on social media and from political opponents.

Supporters of the ruling Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), along with several other users online, criticised the statement, calling it inappropriate for a Leader of the Opposition and alleging that it diverted attention from issues such as the Cauvery water dispute.

The BJP also criticised Udhayanidhi over the remarks. BJP chief spokesperson Narayanan Thirupathy described the statement as “disgusting, obscene, vulgar and shameful” and demanded action against him. “It is shameful

that former Chief Minister M K Stalin is silently watching those who claim to represent the ‘Dravidian Model’ make such indecent remarks in public,” Thirupathy said.

The controversy has further intensified the political battle in Tamil Nadu, with rival parties targeting the DMK over Udhayanidhi’s comments and the subsequent police action at his residence. DMK leader and Lok Sabha MP T R Baalu, however, said Udhayanidhi had not made any remarks targeting any woman and dismissed the allegations as “false”.

Meanwhile, TVK national spokesperson Pazha Selvakumar submitted a representation to the National Commission for Women (NCW), seeking action against Udhayanidhi over his remarks.

Alleging that the speech objectified women and normalised verbal harassment, he urged the commission to take cognisance of the rally speech, seek a public apology from the Leader of the Opposition and direct authorities to initiate legal proceedings under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)

INTERNATIONAL

Twenty-five states file lawsuit
challenging Trump’s latest tariffs
on India and 58 other countries



WASHINGTON

Twenty-five states sued the Trump administration Monday over its latest tariffs, calling them a pretext for replacing import taxes the Supreme Court struck down in February.

The United States last month imposed double-digit tariffs on 59 countries and the European Union, charging that they had not done enough to crack down on imports produced by forced labor. The new tariffs took effect just as the clock ran out on temporary tariffs President Donald Trump had turned after the Supreme Court defeat.

“After losing at the Supreme Court, the administration is once again trying to illegally raise taxes on families and businesses with a new round of tariffs,” said New York Attorney General Letitia James.

Joining New York in the lawsuit

announced Monday are Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin.

Trump, who argues that high tariffs will revive American manufacturing, last year overturned decades of U.S. policy that favored lower tariffs and ever-freer trade. Invoking the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act, or IEEPA, he imposed double-digit tariffs on imports from almost every country, saying America’s longstanding trade deficit amounted to a national emergency.

But the Supreme Court ruled that IEEPA did not authorize tariffs. The decision forced the administration to

send refunds to importers who’d paid the tariffs. Eager to make up the lost revenue, Trump turned to temporary 10% worldwide tariffs. But they expired at midnight July 24.

Now he’s tapping more durable tariffs under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, which permits the president to impose import taxes and other sanctions against countries found to engage in unfair trade practices. Trump used Section 301 to impose big tariffs on China in his first term, and they survived court challenges.

The administration invoked Section 301 to impose the forced-labor tariffs, which range from 10% to 12.5% and hit countries that provide 99% of American imports.

“The United States is using its lawful authority to obtain the elimination of unreasonable acts, policies, and practices that burden U.S. commerce,”

White House spokesman Kush Desai said. “A foreign country’s failure to impose and effectively enforce a prohibition on the importation of goods produced with forced labor is unreasonable and burdens U.S. commerce, including American workers, and must be addressed. Section 301 tariffs have proven to be a legally durable tool since the President’s first term, and they remain so now.”

The states’ lawsuit follows two other lawsuits filed in The Court of International Trade in July by small businesses that also challenged the 301 tariffs.

Both of those lawsuits argue that the government didn’t adequately establish its case against each specific economy or spell how the tariffs will eliminate the specified practice they are being levied for, as required by Section 301.

Barry Appleton, a law professor and co-director of New York Law School’s Center for International Law, said the challenges stem from the fact that the 301 tariffs are the third time the administration has tried to impose similar worldwide tariffs under different statutes, and their “nearly copy-pasted” nature could pose a challenge to defend in court.

However, he said while the statutes that the administration implemented tariffs under previously were novelties and hadn’t been used before for that purpose, Section 301 has been used before.

During Trump’s first term, he cited Section 301 to impose tariffs on Chinese imports, which survived legal challenges.

“Presidents have used it for decades, and Congress built it with real guardrails: investigation, consultation, a public record,” Appleton said. “The government’s defense won’t be ‘I had no power to do this.’ It will be, ‘I stayed inside the lines Congress drew.’ That is a real fight, not a formality, and it is the one that will decide this case.”

TOKYO

Japan needs to adapt to the new methods of warfare like drones and artificial intelligence used in Ukraine and the Middle East and strengthen its defense industry, the government said Tuesday.

Japan has bolstered its military capability and spending in recent years and has started deploying long-range cruise missiles as a deterrence to China’s military activity.

The 598-page defense paper adopted by the Cabinet on Tuesday reiterated that China is Japan’s biggest strategic challenge. Japan is alarmed by the growing presence and frequency of Chinese warships in the Pacific Ocean.

The annual white paper outlines Japan’s military activity and priorities and analysis of military trends in specific countries. As Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi’s government needs public support for further military buildup and spending and to attract service members, the report has features to appeal to readers including a cartoon on the cover and links to video clips in Japanese, English and Chinese.

Inspired by the use of drones by Ukraine, Japan considers it essential to adapt to “new ways of warfare,” the paper said.

With many countries racing to develop combat drones, Japan’s government prioritizes development of its own for a coastal defence, in combination with long-range missiles.

The Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency recently selected four drone makers out of 38 applicants for a rapid development program and that they will advance to testing by Japan’s navy in early August before a final selection.

A number of companies are developing similar drones. Toshiba announced Friday

plans to jointly develop combat drones with startup Pro Drone.

Uncrewed weapons could help Japan make up for its decreasing number of service members in a country with a shrinking population.

Experts say developing fully homemade drones while Japan’s commercial drone market is dominated by Chinese imports would be a challenge.

Japan has strengthened its military forces on southwestern islands in recent years and has started deploying long-range cruise missiles, as it worries about a conflict in Taiwan, which China claims as its territory.

The paper noted the growing presence Chinese warships and frequency of their activity in the Pacific as a major concern. The Defense Ministry has established a unit dedicated to study Japan’s Pacific strategy and strengthen its defense against China.

China has consistently increased its military spending without transparency and strengthened nuclear and missile capability extensively and rapidly, the defense paper said.

It noted that in last December Chinese aircraft locked their radars, considered possible preparation for firing missiles, on Japanese planes during Chinese aircraft carrier drills near southwestern Japan.

Two Chinese aircraft carriers were spotted last June near the southern Japanese island of Iwo Jima for the first time. This triggered Tokyo’s worries about Beijing’s rapidly expanding military activity far beyond its borders and in disputed areas in the East China Sea.

Tensions between Tokyo and Beijing have escalated since Takaichi said in November that Chinese military action against Taiwan could justify Japan’s use of force.

China’s growing joint military operation with Russia around Japan, including joint bomber flights and warship operations, is also “a grave national security concern,” the paper said.

It says North Korea’s rapid development of missiles, including hypersonic arsenals, is an “increasingly serious and pressing threat” and that the North’s growing military ties with Russia and its backing for Moscow’s war in Ukraine are a grave concern.

Japan’s Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi speaks with media after meeting with South Korea’s Defense Minister Ahn Gyu-back at the headquarters of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Yokosuka District, south of Tokyo, on Friday, Jan. 30, 2026.

China vows ‘resolute response’ to any reckless acts after Japan election

In a country that had maintained a pacifist pledge since the end of World War II, many established companies avoid ties to lethal weapons, but a growing number of startups are showing interest in converting dual-use technology for military use, officials say.

Japan’s recent scrapping of lethal weapons export ban could also help strengthen the country’s underdeveloped defense industry.

Weapons technology transfer and joint development and production strengthens both Japanese defense industry base and Japan’s ties with its defense partners, said Koizumi, whose travels to other countries have involved arms sales.

Japan recently made major deals, including the joint development and transfer of 11 upgraded Mogami-class frigates to Australia. It is discussing a similar deal with New Zealand and has struck a deal to sell retired destroyers to the Philippines.

Japan says combat
drones key to adapting to
new warfare as tension
rises in the region

When the Rivers Changed Course: Assam's Flood Disaster Demands a New National Response

There are disasters that a society prepares for, and then there are disasters that arrive by rewriting every assumption people have ever held about the land beneath their feet. Assam has lived with floods for centuries. The Brahmaputra has always been both a source of life and an agent of destruction. Generations have learned to live with its rhythms, adapting their homes, crops and livelihoods to a river that has never been entirely predictable.

Yet the floods that engulfed Assam in 2026 represent something fundamentally different. They are not merely another chapter in the state's long history of monsoon devastation. They are a warning that the geography of risk itself is changing. Communities that once believed themselves insulated from recurring floods have found themselves submerged. Villages that had little institutional memory of flood preparedness suddenly became disaster zones. Families who had never imagined abandoning their homes were rescued by boats from rooftops and embankments.

This is no longer simply a story about an overflowing river. It is a story about a changing climate, fragile infrastructure, inadequate planning and the urgent need to rethink how India prepares for extreme weather.

The latest figures underline the scale of the crisis. Since the beginning of this year's flood season, more than 80 lives have been lost across Assam, while over 1.14 lakh people have been affected in multiple districts. Thousands of homes have been damaged or destroyed, hundreds of villages have remained inundated, and agricultural land stretching across thousands of hectares has been rendered unusable. Relief camps have sheltered tens of thousands of displaced residents, while countless others have chosen to remain with relatives or on whatever patches of higher ground they could find. The Assam government has announced financial assistance, including the release of more than Rs 112 crore as the first instalment of flood relief for affected families, but the magnitude of destruction suggests that recovery will take months, if not years.

Behind every statistic lies a deeply personal tragedy.

For a farmer in Sivasagar, the flood is not simply about losing a crop. It is the disappearance of an entire year's income, the destruction of seeds preserved across seasons and the uncertainty of whether the next sowing cycle will even be possible. For a shopkeeper in Charaideo, it is years of savings washed away in a single night. For families in Jorhat, Golaghat or Dibrugarh, it is the painful realization that the homes they believed were safe no longer offer protection from nature's growing unpredictability.

What makes the 2026 floods especially alarming is not merely the extent of inundation but the geography of surprise. Upper Assam has traditionally viewed devastating floods as problems faced elsewhere. While the Brahmaputra's floodplains have always been vulnerable, many of the communities hit this year had never experienced water rising with such ferocity. They lacked elevated shelters, flood-resilient housing, evacuation plans and, perhaps most importantly, the collective memory that helps communities respond when disaster strikes repeatedly.

That absence of experience carries enormous consequences. People unfamiliar with severe flooding often delay evacuation, underestimate the danger posed by rapidly rising waters and fail to anticipate how quickly roads, bridges and communication links can disappear. By the time rescue teams arrive, valuable hours have already been lost.

The deployment of the National Disaster Response Force, State Disaster Response Force, Army, Air Force, Fire and Emergency Services and local volunteers undoubtedly prevented an even greater catastrophe. Rescue boats navigated submerged villages. Medical teams established temporary health facilities. Relief camps distributed food, drinking water and essential supplies. Railway authorities cancelled and diverted trains to ensure passenger safety as tracks disappeared beneath floodwaters.

These efforts deserve recognition. But disaster response alone cannot become disaster policy.

Every year, enormous resources are mobilized after rivers overflow. Helicopters are deployed, relief camps established and compensation packages announced. Yet once the waters recede, public attention gradually shifts elsewhere.



where, leaving affected communities to rebuild largely on their own. The cycle repeats itself with remarkable consistency.

This recurring pattern raises uncomfortable questions.

Why does flood management continue to focus overwhelmingly on relief rather than resilience? Why are embankments repeatedly breached despite years of investment? Why do thousands of families remain vulnerable despite decades of experience dealing with floods? Most importantly, why are communities that were previously considered relatively safe now facing disasters of unprecedented intensity?

The answer cannot be reduced to one factor alone. Climate change has altered rainfall patterns across the eastern Himalayas and the Brahmaputra basin. Scientific studies increasingly point towards more frequent episodes of extreme precipitation, glacial changes and greater variability in river flows. Short periods of exceptionally heavy rainfall now generate volumes of runoff that older infrastructure was never designed to withstand. At the same time, decades of deforestation, unchecked erosion, encroachment on wetlands, degradation of natural drainage channels and unplanned urban expansion have significantly reduced nature's ability to absorb excess water. Rivers carry greater sediment loads, channels shift more frequently and floodwaters spread into areas previously considered secure.

The Brahmaputra itself is among the world's most dynamic river systems. Attempting to control such a river exclusively through embankments has always been an incomplete strategy. Embankments provide essential protection in many locations, but when poorly maintained or overtopped, they often fail catastrophically, exposing entire communities to sudden flooding.

Assam therefore faces a challenge that cannot be solved by engineering alone.

It requires integrated river basin management that combines modern science with ecological restoration, better forecasting, stronger local governance and community participation. Early warning systems have improved considerably in recent years, but warnings must translate into action. Information must reach remote villages in local languages through multiple communication channels. Schools, village councils and community organizations should regularly conduct evacuation drills, ensuring that every household understands where to go when danger approaches.

Equally important is the question of livelihoods.

Flood recovery is often measured by the number of relief camps established or compensation cheques distributed. Yet true recovery begins only when families regain the ability to earn a living.

Thousands of farmers have lost standing crops. Small traders have watched inventories disappear beneath muddy water. Fishermen have lost equipment. Daily wage workers have seen employment vanish overnight. Women running self-help groups face interrupted incomes precisely when household expenses increase dramatically.

Financial assistance must therefore extend beyond immediate relief. Affordable credit, agricultural input support, crop diversification programmes, livestock replacement, insurance reforms and employment generation initiatives should become central components of rehabilitation.

Mental health also deserves far greater attention than it currently receives.

The psychological consequences of losing one's home, possessions and sense of security rarely appear in official assessments. Children experience interrupted education and trauma. Elderly residents struggle with displacement. Families endure prolonged uncertainty regarding rebuilding and compensation. Community-based counselling and psychosocial support should become standard elements of disaster response rather than afterthoughts.

The floods have also highlighted the indispensable role played by local communities.

Across affected districts, ordinary citizens

became first responders long before official rescue teams could reach many villages. Neighbours used country boats to rescue stranded families. Youth groups distributed food. Religious institutions opened their premises to displaced residents. Civil society organizations coordinated relief in remote areas where official assistance was delayed.

Such local solidarity represents one of Assam's greatest strengths.

However, volunteerism should complement state capacity, not substitute for it.

Government institutions must strengthen partnerships with community organizations, panchayats, academic institutions and local disaster management committees. These groups possess intimate knowledge of terrain, vulnerable households and logistical challenges that cannot always be captured through centralized planning.

The economic implications extend well beyond the affected districts.

Floods disrupt transportation, damage roads and bridges, interrupt railway services and affect regional trade. Agricultural losses influence food prices. Educational institutions suspend classes. Health systems confront increased risks of waterborne diseases. Tourism suffers as visitors cancel travel plans. Each successive flood therefore imposes costs that ripple across the broader economy. The challenge facing policymakers is no longer whether floods will occur—they will. The challenge is whether Assam can transition from reactive disaster management to proactive climate resilience.

That transition requires investment in resilient infrastructure, flood-resilient housing,

elevated public buildings, improved drainage systems, scientific land-use planning and restoration of wetlands that naturally store excess water. It also requires better coordination between the Union government, neighbouring states and upstream authorities because river systems ignore administrative boundaries.

Water has never respected political maps.

Neither should disaster planning.

The changing behaviour of the Brahmaputra and its tributaries demands national attention. Assam cannot shoulder this burden alone. Climate adaptation financing, scientific research, modern forecasting technologies and resilient infrastructure must become national priorities rather than episodic responses triggered only by extreme events.

The floods of 2026 should therefore be remembered not merely for their devastation but for the questions they compel India to confront. Can development continue without accounting for ecological realities? Can disaster policy remain centred on relief instead of resilience? Can governments continue rebuilding the same vulnerable infrastructure after every flood without fundamentally changing how rivers are managed?

These questions extend far beyond Assam. From Himachal Pradesh to Kerala, from Uttarakhand to Bihar, India is witnessing increasingly frequent climate-driven disasters that challenge assumptions built over generations. What happened in Upper Assam this year could become tomorrow's reality elsewhere.

The water will eventually recede. Crops will be replanted. Roads will reopen. Schools will resume classes. Markets will slowly return to life. But if the lessons of 2026 are forgotten, the next flood will once again find thousands of families unprepared.

Assam has demonstrated extraordinary resilience throughout its history. Its people have repeatedly rebuilt after earthquakes, erosion, floods and conflict. Yet resilience should never become an excuse for institutional complacency. Citizens cannot be expected to endure ever-intensifying disasters without corresponding investments in protection, preparedness and sustainable development. The rivers have changed. The climate is changing. Public policy must change with them.

Only then can Assam move from surviving floods to truly living with its rivers in a future where extreme weather is no longer an exception but an increasingly permanent reality.

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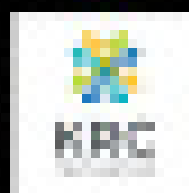


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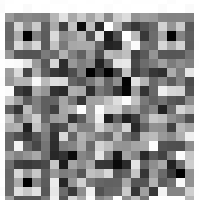


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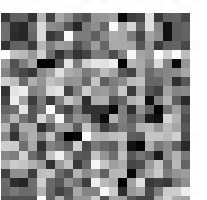


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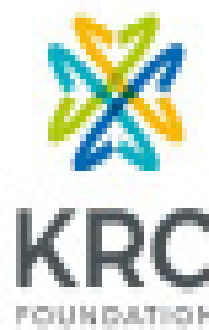
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