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PERSPECTIVE

There's "hell" in hello, "good" in goodbye, "lie" in believe, "over" in lover, "end" in friend, "ex" in "next", "if" in life.

Three injured, traffic cop critical in suspected drunk-driving crash in Silchar

SILCHAR

Three people, including an on-duty traffic policeman, were seriously injured after a speeding Wag-onR allegedly driven by an intoxicated man hit a scooter, the policeman and a pedestrian at Sadarghat in Assam's Silchar.

According to reports, the car was travelling at high speed from the Rangpur side when it first hit a scooter at Sadarghat, seriously injuring the rider. The vehicle then went out of control and struck the traffic policeman and a pedestrian.

The injured were rushed to a hospital for treatment. The condition of the traffic policeman was reported to be critical.

Following the crash, the driver allegedly attempted to flee the spot. However, local residents and police intercepted the vehicle and detained the driver. The driver was identified as Santosh Ravidas, a resident of Tarapur Ukil Bazar in Silchar.

Local residents alleged that Ravidas was driving under the influence of alcohol when the accident occurred. Police have detained the driver and the vehicle as further investigation into the incident is underway.

WHO SAID WHAT



All set for BRICS 2026!
@BricsIndia2026

Tripura unveils Clean Energy Roadmap 2035 as power demand set to double

AGARTALA

Tripura has launched its Clean Energy Roadmap 2035, with electricity demand in the state projected to rise from around 380 MW currently to nearly 800 MW by 2035.

The roadmap was launched in Agartala on Thursday along with the Green Skilling Programme 'Unnayan' and the Transforming Renewable Energy Acceleration in Tripura programme, with support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Tripura State Electricity Corporation Ltd (TSECL) Managing Director Biswajit Basu said electricity demand was expected to reach around 520 MW by 2030 and nearly 800 MW by 2035. The roadmap seeks to expand renewable energy generation and strengthen the state's power infrastructure to meet the projected increase in demand. Key measures include wider adoption of rooftop solar systems, Battery Energy Storage Systems and the rehabilitation of hydropower projects.

The state will also explore hydrokinetic power projects, an 800-MW pumped storage project, floating so-



lar installations and green hydrogen. Tripura currently has around 60 MW of installed solar generation capacity, Basu said. The state is also exporting around 190 MW of electricity to Bangladesh through the cross-border power connection.

Power Minister Ratan Lal Nath said reliable electricity supply was crucial for industries, hospitals and educational institutions.

Nath said Tripura currently had no load-shedding, while clarifying that

temporary power disruptions in some areas should not be categorised as load-shedding.

The state is also planning a major modernisation of Agartala's power distribution network. Nath said the entire electricity infrastructure within the Agartala Municipal Corporation area would gradually be shifted underground at an estimated cost of more than Rs 1,500 crore.

The tender process has been completed and the work order issued, Nath



vestigation.

In the separate NH-37 incident, at least five drivers were injured on Thursday afternoon after a convoy carrying 150 fuel tankers and trucks

loaded with essential commodities came under stone-pelting at multiple locations between Jiribam and Imphal.

The convoy was escorted by secu-

Manipuri musician died of massive internal bleeding after Delhi assault: Post-mortem

NEW DELHI

Manipuri musician Chongtham Vikram Singh died of massive internal bleeding caused by severe trauma to his chest and abdomen after he was allegedly assaulted by a group of men in southeast Delhi, according to his post-mortem report.

The 54-year-old musician was allegedly attacked after confronting a group over noise and commotion outside his house in Kilokari village around 11.30 pm on Sunday. According to police, the attackers kicked and punched Singh and repeatedly struck him in the chest and abdomen after he fell to the ground. Dr Sudhir Gupta, chief of forensic medicine at AIIMS, said Singh died following severe physical assault that caused extensive injuries to his chest and abdomen, resulting in massive internal bleeding.

The AIIMS post-mortem report found fractures of the first to 11th ribs on the left side and the sixth to ninth ribs on the right side. Bleeding and blood clots were found around the fractures, while a laceration was also detected in the spleen.

Singh was taken to Holy Family Hospital at around 12.25 am and reached the facility around 1.30 am, police said. He initially responded to treatment but later suffered a haemorrhage and died at around 6.32 am. Police have arrested seven men and apprehended a juvenile in connection with the case. The accused have been identified as Bharat Kumar, 19, Pramod, 26, Ramzan Khan, 22, Deepanshu, 21, Mohan Vishwakarma, 32, Vijay, 36, and Mannu, 26. Police said the accused told investigators that they wanted to "teach him a lesson" after Singh objected to the noise, but did not expect the assault to turn fatal. According to police, Singh had previously complained to the owner of a nearby dhaba about noise caused by people gathering there.

Manipur Cabinet clears recruitment to 2,720 police vacancies



IMPHAL

The Manipur Cabinet has approved the filling of 2,720 vacancies across various cadres of the state police, along with the acquisition of land for an approach road to Khongsang Railway Station.

The police vacancies include posts of Sub-Inspector, Assistant Sub-Inspector, Constable, Havildar, Rifleman and Follower, besides technical and ministerial positions such as telecom personnel, nurses, pharmacists, Lower Division Clerks and constable drivers.

The recruitment decision is aimed at addressing manpower shortages in the police force, with recruitment to several cadres reportedly not having been conducted since 2018.

To expedite the process, the Cabinet approved departmental recruitment for Sub-Inspector and Jemadar-level posts, exempting them from recruitment through the Manipur Public Service Commission. Assistant Sub-Inspectors and other remaining posts will also be recruited departmentally instead of through the Manipur Staff Selection Commission.

Abit also alleged that armed individuals extorted money from vehicles stranded during the incident.

The convoy eventually reached Keithelmanbi, where security personnel arranged medical treatment for the injured drivers at hospitals in Imphal, including CT scans.

Following the attack, transport representatives and drivers announced an immediate indefinite "hands-off steering wheel" strike, suspending movement of commercial vehicles.

Maibam Anil, general secretary of the Manipur Road Transport Drivers' and Motor Workers' Union, said transport operations would remain suspended until authorities took concrete measures to strengthen road opening parties and reached a formal agreement with the state government and police leadership.

NH-37 has remained a key supply route to Imphal after NH-2 was closed on May 17 amid earlier inter-district blockades.

Nagaland: SC/ST patients eligible for medical aid up to Rs 3.5 lakh

DIMAPUR

Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) patients in Nagaland can avail medical assistance of up to Rs 3.5 lakh under the revised Dr Ambedkar Medical Aid Scheme for 2026.

The Dr Ambedkar Foundation under the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has revised the scheme to provide enhanced financial assistance to eligible SC/ST patients suffering from serious and life-threatening ailments.

Under the revised guidelines, applicants with an annual family income of up to Rs 5 lakh are eligible for assistance for major ailments requiring surgery or specialised treatment. The information was forwarded to the concerned authorities by the Chumoukedima deputy commissioner's office on Thursday.

The scheme covers treatment for kidney, heart, liver, cancer and brain-related conditions, besides organ transplantation, spinal surgery and other life-threatening

diseases.

The maximum assistance includes Rs 3.5 lakh for kidney surgery, dialysis and kidney or organ transplantation; Rs 2.5 lakh for cancer surgery, chemotherapy or radiotherapy; Rs 2 lakh for brain surgery and other life-threatening diseases; and Rs 1.5 lakh each for heart and spinal surgery.

The scheme provides assistance covering 100 per cent of the estimated treatment cost, subject to the prescribed ceiling. The approved amount is released directly to the concerned hospital.

Beneficiaries covered under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) may also be eligible for assistance for kidney or organ transplantation, subject to the conditions under the revised guidelines, as kidney transplantation is not covered under PM-JAY.

Applicants must belong to the SC or ST community, have an annual family income of no more than Rs 5 lakh, require treatment covered under the scheme and undergo treatment at an eligible or approved hospital.



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BRICS Builds a New Wall

If India’s objective as chair of BRICS is to host a “successful” 18th summit in New Delhi, it is difficult to see how the meeting can fail. The more important question, however, is what constitutes success. In the Indian context, a summit that concludes without open discord, much like the 2023 G20 summit in New Delhi, is likely to be presented as a diplomatic triumph.

But India’s plurilateral diplomacy is no longer directed solely at member states or the wider international community. It also serves a domestic political purpose: reinforcing the perception that India has emerged as a consequential global power. The elaborate public mobilisation around the G20 summit illustrated this perfectly. The summit was presented not merely as an international meeting but as an event of national significance.

Brazil and South Africa subsequently hosted the G20 without anything comparable. The forthcoming G20 summit in Miami is unlikely to generate such national spectacle either, although US President Donald Trump’s tariff wars and diplomatic unpredictability may provide enough drama.

BRICS, meanwhile, means different things to its principal members. For China, one of the original BRIC members, the organisation is valuable primarily insofar as it advances Chinese interests. Beijing will therefore judge the New Delhi summit not by the rhetoric of solidarity but by whether BRICS can be nudged further towards becoming a hedge against American economic and strategic dominance.

That calculation will be particularly important when Chinese President Xi Jinping arrives in New Delhi with a large delegation. Beijing would like India to reconsider its high tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles, an issue of considerable importance to a country that dominates global EV manufacturing. Whether New Delhi is willing to make concessions will be one of the quieter tests of the summit.

China and Russia are also expected to press for the creation of BRICS credit-rating agencies. The proposal has an obvious rationale. Developing economies have long complained about the disproportionate influence of Western rating agencies such as Moody’s, S&P and Fitch, whose assessments can affect borrowing costs and capital flows. India, which has itself objected to what it considers the inadequacies and biases of these agencies, should have some sympathy for the argument.

Yet institutional alternatives do not emerge merely because there is political consensus for them. The powerful financial interests surrounding the existing rating architecture will resist change. If the proposal does not advance in New Delhi, Beijing and Moscow are likely to pursue it more aggressively when China assumes the BRICS chair.

The same logic applies to SWIFT, the Western-dominated backbone of international financial transactions. Russia’s exclusion from much of the system following sanctions exposed the vulnerability of countries dependent on Western financial infrastructure. Iran has faced a similar problem under US sanctions. A BRICS alternative to SWIFT is unlikely to emerge overnight, but the political and economic groundwork for one is steadily being laid.

This is where BRICS acquires significance beyond its often cumbersome summit diplomacy. Its real contribution may not be the creation of a single alternative global financial system, but the gradual construction of multiple alternatives.

Financial multipolarity is already taking shape, driven less by ideology than by necessity. Much of the Global South remains dissatisfied with a post-Second World War financial architecture in which decision-making power is concentrated in institutions dominated by the West. The Bretton Woods system remains indispensable, but its monopoly is increasingly being questioned.

The New Development Bank, headquartered in Shanghai, is a modest example of what an alternative can achieve. It is nowhere near replacing the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund. Yet in roughly 11 years, it has financed projects worth around \$43 billion, many of which might not have attracted conventional multilateral financing. Its emphasis on infrastructure and social development gives it a distinct role.

More significant is the currency dimension. A substantial share of New Development Bank financing has been in local currencies, while intra-BRICS trade increasingly takes place without the dollar. China’s use of the renminbi in energy transactions with Iran, and the growing use of the Chinese currency in Saudi oil sales to China, point to a wider trend.

This is not yet the collapse of dollar dominance. Nor is it necessarily intended to be. India, Brazil, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have little interest in destabilising the global financial system by deliberately attacking the dollar. But diversification is different from confrontation. Countries can reduce their dependence on a single currency without seeking to destroy it.

That distinction matters. De-dollarisation within BRICS is likely to proceed incrementally, through trade, banking and settlement arrangements, rather than through grand declarations. The more resilient the alternatives become, the less necessary it will be to announce them as an ideological challenge to the West.

Supply chains offer another area where BRICS co-operation could prove practical. Trump’s tariff confrontation with China has highlighted Beijing’s enormous leverage over critical minerals and rare earths, some of which China controls at dominant levels globally. The lesson for other economies is stark: strategic dependence on a single supplier can quickly become an economic vulnerability.

India’s decision to put supply-chain resilience high on the BRICS agenda is therefore sensible. New Delhi has already worked with Japan and Australia on resilient supply chains following the disruptions of the Covid-19 pandemic. A broader BRICS framework could expand that effort, particularly in critical minerals, energy, pharmaceuticals and strategic technologies.

China, too, has an incentive to cooperate. For Beijing, building resilient supply chains with BRICS partners is preferable to remaining dependent on an increasingly adversarial relationship with Washington.

This is the paradox at the heart of the new BRICS. It is too diverse to become a conventional alliance and too internally divided to function as a coherent anti-Western bloc. India does not want it to become an anti-American organisation; Brazil has little reason to embrace such a role either. The Gulf members have their own carefully calibrated relationships with Washington and Beijing.

Its potential therefore lies elsewhere: in building a wall of plurilateral alternatives.

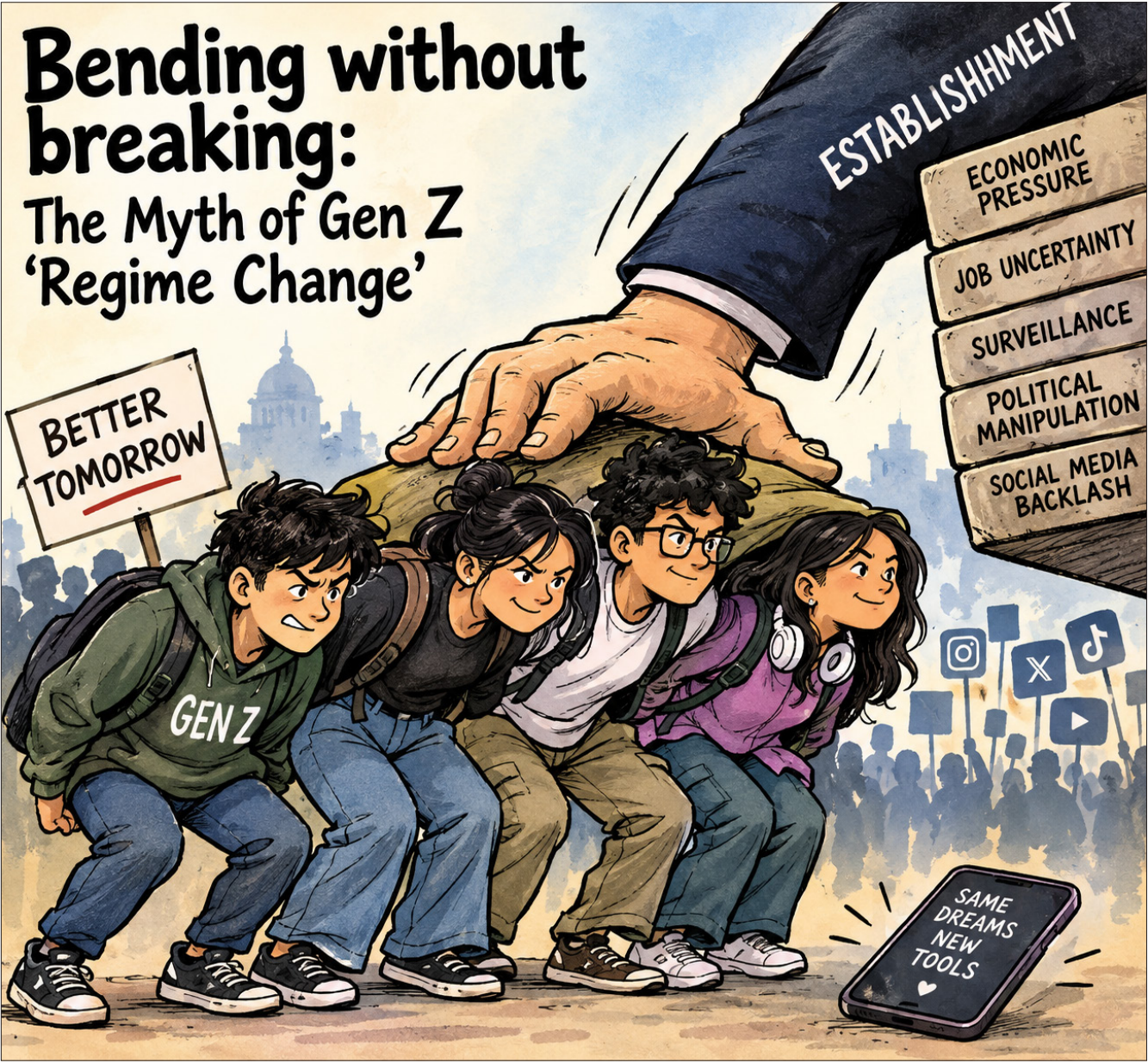
Prime Minister Narendra Modi had already sought to redefine BRICS during India’s chairship around resilience, innovation, cooperation and sustainability. The expansion of the grouping beyond its original five members has made such a redefinition necessary. The new BRICS is larger, more diverse and inevitably more complicated.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“Never, never, never give up.” - Winston Churchill

BENDING WITHOUT BREAKING: THE MYTH OF GEN Z ‘REGIME CHANGE’

Bending without breaking: The Myth of Gen Z ‘Regime Change’



K B JANDIAL

At times, an authoritarian family head bends to resolve discord and protect unity and harmony. While the family views this compromise as wise, neighbours might see it as a weakening of parental authority and the beginning of family division. Regardless of perceptions, the immediate crisis is averted. A nation is no different—a larger family where state authority occasionally bends before friction escalates out of hand. This is what has happened in India recently.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi yielded to the little-known Cockroach Janta Party (CJP). Led by one, Abhijeet Dipke, a former AAP communication strategist, the Gen Z movement emerged from nowhere. Despite its satirical moniker, the movement achieved monumental success within 36 days—a swift triumph that eluded even Anna Hazare’s historic India Against Corruption movement.

This concession stands in stark contrast to the Modi Government’s previous major climbdown: the repeal of the three farm laws. That rollback required a gruelling 420-day sit-in at Delhi’s borders by farmers from Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh. Tragically, that prolonged struggle cost nearly 700 lives due to extreme weather, chronic illnesses, accidents, and suicides. That a satirical student movement forced a retreat so quickly underscores a major shift in the political landscape. Had Modi not defused the flashpoint last July, could this unrest have caused a “regime change,” as witnessed in neighbouring Bangladesh and Nepal? While a serious crisis, total collapse was never highly probable. Political scientists emphasize that India’s democratic, independent judiciary and institutional architecture make street anarchy leading to regime change highly unlikely.

In Bangladesh and Nepal, highly centralized power structures and a weak opposition left the streets as the single avenue for dissent. Armies historically stepped in, refused to fire on the unruly mob and instead forced rulers to exit and take refuge in India. Furthermore, choking centralized capitals like Dhaka or Kathmandu freezes the entire state apparatus. Conversely, India possesses robust institutional buffers: an independent judiciary, an active opposition coalition, regular state elections, and a strictly apolitical military. India’s vastness, diversity and geographically fragmented population mean a protest in New Delhi cannot paralyze the entire nation; history confirms regime change occurs exclusively through the ballot.

However, PM Modi should have deployed political wisdom earlier to prevent escalation. Anarchy solves nothing. The ignition point for the Gen Z onslaught was the widespread anger of students over a paper leak during the NEET-UG 2026 examination on May 3, which was cancelled on May 12 following credible reports. The National Testing Agency (NTA) ordered an un-

precedented nationwide re-test.

Paper leaks have plagued public exams before, but modern agitators under the “Gen Z” banner challenged the regime’s invincible aura, forcing Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan to resign within 36 days. While the acute phase ended after a compromise, the underlying issues remain unresolved. Emboldened by victory, the CJP had called for a march from India Gate to Jantar Mantar on September 5, which was later called off after Supreme Court verdict.

Public anger was understandable given the NTA’s delinquency. Evaluating the 2024 NEET controversies alongside the 2026 crisis highlights a shift in state reactions. While past scandals involved prolonged Supreme Court interventions, the 2026 crisis led to immediate cancellation. Furthermore, the 2024 scandal was a localized theft in Hazaribagh, whereas the 2026 leak involved instantaneous, mass digital circulation. Investigators discovered a digital “Guess Paper” matching 140 exam questions.

Faced with this digital contagion, the Modi Government found itself on the back foot and succumbed to the core dictates of the CJP to avoid a protracted standoff—especially as Rahul Gandhi opened a parallel front. This youth activism quickly spread beyond Delhi. Later, similar protests arose regarding the alleged paper scams in Jharkhand, Punjab, and Bihar.

The paper leak was the spark, but the administration’s remedy proved equally volatile. While ordered with good intentions, the June 21 re-test proved deeply traumatizing for students who had performed well initially. This secondary trauma caused by the cancellation of the test led to the tragic suicides of nearly 20 aspirants, (no official figures available), generating public anger far exceeding the initial outrage over the leak.

Abhijeet Dipke packaged this frustration over unemployment and exam scams, wrapping it in the symbolism of B.R. Ambedkar, constitutional values, and internet-first messaging. Online satire rapidly evolved into a formidable nationwide movement.

Alarming, intelligence agencies and political strategists misjudged the possible reaction. On July 20, authorities were caught napping regarding the scale of the crowd marching toward Parliament. Police strength fell dangerously short, allowing protestors to reach the gates of the Parliament complex.

The only saving grace was that authorities refrained from using lethal force. The Rapid Action Force allegedly fired two rounds of plastic pellets, which are structurally distinct from metal pellets and designed not to pierce the body. These pellet guns were originally evolved as a non-lethal crowd-control measure in Jammu and Kashmir to control stone pelters. Despite the absolute absence of fatalities in police action, Rahul Gandhi, however, turned the use of pellet guns into a major controversy. This raises the

question of why Rahul and other opposition leaders remained silent when pellet guns were deployed in Kashmir, first in August 2010, and when more than 6200 persons were injured by pellet firing during the unrest in the summer of 2016 following the killing of Burhan Wani.

Ultimately, the Government lost the perception game, compelling the Prime Minister to take to Instagram at midnight to build an emotional bond with Gen Z. Analysts viewed it as too little, too late. Had Education Minister resigned when student suicides began—or immediately after successfully conducting the complex nationwide re-test—the CJP could not have exploited the situation so effectively. The agitators were not the NEET unsuccessful aspirants but represented a generally frustrated youth population handed a potent grievance of unemployment and educational scams.

In the aftermath, Government strategists blundered by failing to persuade the Prime Minister and Home Minister to attend Parliament and deliver the administration’s definitive response on 20th July violence and paper leak. Both Modi and Amit Shah are formidable orators who could have silenced the opposition benches. Given the opposition’s past strategy, it was likely the opposition would not have allowed the PM or Home Minister to speak or would have walked out when they began their response. Instead, their absence provided much-needed oxygen to Rahul Gandhi. Paradoxically, after the negotiation with the CJP, the Congress party was briefly on the back foot for failing to support the student movement early on. Taking the bull by the horns, the Govt should have agreed to an adjournment motion, allowing MPs anger to vent safely on the floor of the House. By retreating behind technicalities, the Government unnecessarily gave them precious political space.

Avoidable Past Crises

PM Modi’s tenure has been defined by unprecedented mandates, a centralized governance model, and unparalleled personal popularity. However, this centralized execution has exposed repetitive, avoidable political and administrative fault lines, united the disjointed Opposition and provided opportunities to challenge Modi’s image as an infallible administrative machine. The recent Mood of the Nation survey by C-Voter reflected this trend following the NEET paper leak and the CJP agitation: Modi’s approval ratings dropped significantly from 57.7% in January 2026 to 48.7% in August, contrasting with a slight concurrent increase in Rahul Gandhi’s ratings from 26.6% to 27.1%. While Modi’s position as the most popular leader remains intact, these systemic vulnerabilities highlight four distinct historical fault lines.

Parliamentary Absenteeism

PM Modi has always described Parliament as the highest temple of democracy, yet his evident reluctance to sit in the House and speak directly on pressing national crises has al-

lowed the opposition to routinely paralyze proceedings on the ground of his absence. Modi is a highly articulate communicator whose words resonate deeply with the public. Frontally addressing the House would counter raucous behaviour from the opposition benches, turning disruptions into political gains. This time, Home Minister Amit Shah also avoided the parliamentary floor when he should have actively deployed his mastery of language and facts to dismantle opposition rhetoric surrounding the Jantar Mantar violence. Surprisingly, no high-level inquiry into much talked about 20th July violence was ordered, leaving the public to wait for the Supreme Court to intervene. This generated a distinct impression that the government had

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

We have yet to grasp the scale of what happened in Assam yesterday.

1 Together with IIT Guwahati, we further strengthened Assam’s entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem.

2 PepsiCo’s first foods plant in Nalbari commenced operations, creating jobs and new opportunities for our farmers.

3The launch of the Guwahati International Marathon placed the city on the global marathon map.

4 Industry leaders from education, healthcare, FMCG, defence and biotech held one-on-one discussions with my entire team to resolve pending issues and accelerate projects.

Day by day, Assam strides forward into a brighter future

~ Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, CM, Assam



something to hide, alienating Modi’s silent supporters.

Chanda Chori at Ram Mandir

The construction of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya was designed to be the ultimate political achievement of the ruling establishment. However, when allegations of land irregularities and “Chanda Chori” emerged against the Temple Trust, Modi maintained total silence, fuelling public speculation. Instead of proactively defusing the controversy by speaking out against the accused, assuring devotees of strong punishment, and ordering a time-bound SIT investigation, the administration allowed the issue to fester. Only after prolonged Opposition pressure was an SIT finally constituted by the Uttar Pradesh government—which the Supreme Court later sought to reconstitute.

Ignoring Manipur and Silence

The Prime Minister’s decision to forgo a visit to Manipur to offer a healing touch to the victims of ethnic violence between the Meitei and Kuki communities—while maintaining initial silence on the crisis—remains profoundly incomprehensible to the public.

Repeal of Farm Laws

After a year-long official justification & stand off over the three deregulatory progressive farm laws in 2020 and 2021, withdrawal of Laws was widely perceived as retreat under intense pressure. Political analysts consider that the political fault line lay not in the economic merits of the legislation, but in the administration’s initial refusal to engage in meaningful compromise before the sit-ins polarized the electorate. The script of contemporary Indian politics is changing rapidly, driven by an internet-first generation that refuses to accept systemic governance missteps. By taking refuge in technicalities and parliamentary absence, PM Modi is inadvertently allowing the opposition to craft a powerful narrative against him. PM Modi remains India’s most popular leader, but popularity is a depleting asset with repeated systemic fault lines.

The Govt’s retreat serves as a stark reminder that while the ballot box remains the ultimate arbiter of regime change in India; the streets still hold the power to disrupt. In a maturing democracy, true political infallibility belongs not to those who refuse to bend, but to those who possess the wisdom to listen before street anarchy forces their hand.

Silchar civic polls: Congress ticket row exposes internal rift as 39 candidates named

SILCHAR

The Congress' preparations for the Silchar Municipal Corporation election were hit by internal dissent on Thursday, hours after the party announced candidates for 39 of the city's 42 wards.

Furniture was allegedly vandalised at the Silchar District Congress Committee office as a section of party supporters protested against the selection of candidates for Wards 27 and 36. A chair in the chamber of district Congress president Sajal Acharjee was reportedly damaged, although he was not present when the incident took place.

Police were deployed at the party office and brought the situation under control. Former minister and senior Congress leader Misbahul Islam Laskar



was also seen at the premises amid the unrest. Some protesters alleged that the party had overlooked long-time workers while awarding a ticket in one of the wards to a woman leader who had

recently joined the Congress after crossing over from the BJP.

Party members contacted for a response declined to comment. Acharjee's cellphone remained unreachable following the incident, and no formal reaction from the district Congress leadership was available at the time of filing this report.

The episode has brought the Congress' internal differences into the open at the beginning of the civic election campaign and could pose an early challenge to the party leadership's efforts to maintain unity.

The Assam Pradesh Congress Committee, headed by president Gaurav Gogoi, had approved the candidate list, which was issued through a circular signed by general secretary (organisa-

tion) Ramanna Baruah.

However, nominees for Wards 20, 21 and 34 have not yet been announced, suggesting that consultations over the remaining seats are continuing.

The list includes organisational functionaries as well as former civic representatives. Radha Das has been nominated from Ward 7, while former Mahila Congress president Bandita Trivedi will contest from Ward 8.

Ward 13 is expected to witness a closely watched contest, with the Congress fielding advocate Binay Krishna Das, a former municipal commissioner and vice-chairperson of the erstwhile Silchar Municipal Board. The ward has already attracted political attention following reported dissent within the BJP over its nominee.

Ironically, the APCC circular announcing the candidates directed District Congress Committee office-bearers, Mandal committees and party workers to extend full cooperation to the nominees and coordinate their campaigns.

The unrest at the district office, however, underlined the gap between the leadership's call for unity and the discontent among sections of the party organisation.

September 11 is the last date for filing nominations. Scrutiny will be held on September 14, while candidates can withdraw their nominations until September 17. Polling for the Silchar Municipal Corporation is scheduled for October 3, with counting set for October 6.

Mizoram doctor receives first US Consulate Citizen Liaison Volunteer of the Year Award in India

AIZAWL

Dr Vanlalsiamha Chhangte, Medical Director of Ebenezer Medical Center in Aizawl, has become the first recipient in India of the Citizen Liaison Volunteer of the Year Award instituted by the US Consulate General in Kolkata.

The award was presented to Dr Vanlalsiamha by US Vice Consul Warren Newton at Hotel Regency in Aizawl on September 7. The recognition included a memento and a certificate signed by US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor.

The award recognises the medical assistance provided by Ebenezer Medical Center to US citizen Collin Mayfield, who was brought to Mizoram on December 1, 2025, after sustaining injuries in Myanmar.

Mayfield was treated at the medical centre for about a month and underwent surgery performed by orthopaedic surgeon Dr Lalrinliana Varte.

He subsequently recovered and returned to the United States.

Representatives of the US Consulate said the Citizen Liaison Volunteer of the Year Award was being introduced in India for the first time, making Dr Vanlalsiamha its inaugural recipient.

Speaking about the recognition, Dr Vanlalsiamha said the medical centre's mission was to "Transform Lives through Healthcare" and that it provided treatment irrespective of patients' economic background or nationality.

He said the recognition from an international institution was an encouragement to the doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals working at the centre.

Dr Vanlalsiamha said Ebenezer Medical Center would continue its efforts to strengthen healthcare services and contribute to the development of the health sector in Mizoram.

Nagaland minister urges USTM students to reject racial and ethnic discrimination



RI-BHOI

Nagaland Education Minister Temjen Imna Along on Thursday urged students at the University of Science and Technology Meghalaya (USTM) to reject racial and ethnic discrimination, uphold unity and take pride in being Indians. Along was speaking at USTM's

Orientation Programme for newly admitted students at the university campus in Baridua, Ri-Bhoi district. USTM Chancellor Mahbubul Hoque, faculty members and students attended the programme. Commending USTM for bringing together students from different parts of the Northeast, Along encouraged the freshers to remain focused on their studies, pursue their academic goals with dedication and strive for excellence.

He also called upon the students to reject discrimination based on race or ethnicity and work towards strengthening unity and a sense of shared identity.

The minister's remarks came as USTM welcomed a new batch of students drawn from across the Northeast, a region known for its ethnic and cultural diversity.

Along urged the students to make the most of their educational opportunities and contribute positively to society while maintaining harmony and mutual respect on campus.

Rakibul Hussain targets Bordoloi, Sharma over Congress exits

GUWAHATI

Congress MP Rakibul Hussain criticised former MP Pradyut Bordoloi and former bureaucrat Debashish Sharma, days after two Congress leaders from Assam's Samaguri constituency quit the party.

Addressing a press conference in Rupohihat, Hussain alleged that Bordoloi was reaching out to Congress workers and inducting people into his camp amid concerns over his own political position.

Hussain also questioned the Assam government's ongoing campaign against alleged middlemen, alleging that ordinary people were being harassed in the name of the drive. He claimed that the involve-



ment of "real middlemen" could be established by examining the call recordings of two MLAs. Hussain, however, did not pro-

vide details to substantiate the allegation.

The Congress MP also targeted Sharma, alleging that the former bureaucrat

had been frequently visiting the homes of people accused of being middlemen in Samaguri.

Hussain said he would file a case against Sharma over the matter. Hussain further alleged that Sharma, while serving as deputy commissioner of Nagaon, had facilitated the pushback of a Muslim woman to Bangladesh after she was declared a Bangladeshi national.

According to Hussain, the Supreme Court later directed that the woman be brought back to India. The allegations come amid political tensions in Samaguri, where the exit of Congress leaders has triggered a fresh debate within the party over its organisational strength and leadership.

Union Home Minister Assured Further Talks on FCRA Bill: A.L.Hek



BISWADEEP GUPTA SHILLONG: Meghalaya

BJP leader and senior MLA Alexander Laloo Hek said

that the issue of the Foreign Contribution (Regula-

tion) Act (FCRA) Bill was discussed with the Union Home Minister during a recent meeting with Christian representatives.

MLA Hek, who met Amit Shah, said the Home Minister told them he had already discussed the matter with at least 35 Christian forums and leaders.

According to Hek, the FCRA Bill has currently been referred to the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) for further discussion and consideration.

He said the Home Minister assured the Christian stakeholders that once the JPC completes its process, they would be invited to Delhi for further discussions on the Bill.

TIPRA Motha wins 1,148 Tripura village committee seats unopposed



AGARTALA

The TIPRA Motha Party has secured 1,148 seats unopposed in Tripura's ongoing Village Committee elections, giving the party a significant early advantage ahead of polling in the remaining seats. The unopposed victories account for nearly 25 per cent of the 4,597 Village Committee seats being contested across the state. The remaining seats will be decided through the electoral process, with polling and counting scheduled as per the election programme.

The Village Committee polls are being closely watched for their implications for grassroots politics and local governance in Tripura. The final results are expected to provide an indication of the relative strength of TIPRA Motha and other political parties at the local level.

Earlier on Thursday, State Election Commissioner P K Chakraborty said 10,958 nomination papers had been filed for the

elections, with 10,936 candidates set to contest after completion of the nomination process. The last date for filing nominations was September 8. Chakraborty also said the State Election Commission had taken steps to address allegations raised by opposition parties regarding the nomination process. Security arrangements have been strengthened for the elections. The State Election Commission had sought additional Central forces from the state government to ensure the smooth conduct of the polls. Following the Commission's request, the state government approached the Union Ministry of Home Affairs for additional security deployment. The ministry subsequently approved 74 companies of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) for election-related duties, Chakraborty said.

The deployment is expected to strengthen security across polling areas and facilitate the peaceful conduct of the Village Committee elections.

Tripura VC polls: CPI(M) alleges BJP, Tipra Motha workers threatening candidates

AGARTALA

Tripura Leader of the Opposition and CPI(M) state secretary Jitendra Chaudhury on Thursday alleged that party-backed candidates were facing pressure and threats from workers of the BJP and Tipra Motha Party ahead of the September 28 Village Committee elections under the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC).

The nomination process for the elections concluded on September 8, while scrutiny was completed on September 9. Candidates can withdraw their nominations until September 11.

Polling will be held in 587 Village Committees across the TTAADC area, covering 2,634 constituencies and 4,597 seats.

Chaudhury made the allegations while speaking to reporters after visiting Rupaichari block under the Sabroom subdivision of South Tripura. He claimed the CPI(M) was receiving a positive response from voters in the area.



The CPI(M) leader alleged that Tipra Motha was attempting to discourage candidates from other political parties from con-

testing the polls to establish dominance over the Village Committees.

"People are not accepting such an ap-

proach. Women and young people are actively coming forward and participating in the democratic process," Chaudhury said.

He also claimed that differences had emerged between BJP and Tipra Motha workers at the grassroots level despite the two parties contesting the elections as allies.

According to Chaudhury, candidates backed by both parties have been fielded in several wards in Rupaichari block, leading to competition between the alliance partners.

He further alleged that CPI(M)-backed candidates were being pressured to withdraw their nominations and that some party workers had received threats.

"Our candidates will not be intimidated. We are prepared to face the situation and have also brought the matter to the attention of the administration," he said. Chaudhury said attempts to influence candidates through threats or pressure would undermine the electoral process. "Elections should be fought through democratic competition. Intimidation cannot be allowed to decide who participates in the electoral process," he added. The allegations came ahead of the September 28 Village Committee polls, which are being held across the TTAADC area amid intensified political activity and competition among the major parties.

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Vladimir Putin arrives in Delhi for BRICS summit, to hold bilateral talks with PM Modi

NEW DELHI

Russian President Vladimir Putin began a three-day visit to India on Friday to attend the BRICS summit and hold talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with the two sides expected to focus on expanding bilateral trade, investment and energy cooperation.

Putin is accompanied by a high-level delegation.

“Warmly welcome President Vladimir Putin of Russia for the 18th BRICS Summit. He was received by MoS K V Singh at the airport. India and Russia share multifaceted and longstanding ties anchored in Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership,” Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a post on X.

It will be Putin’s first in-person participation at a BRICS summit outside Russia since the war in Ukraine began in February 2022.

The two-day BRICS summit hosted by India starting Saturday is expected to focus on boosting collective resilience in food, energy, health, disaster reduction and critical supply chains with New Delhi positioning the bloc as an effective anchor to navigate a fragmented geopolitical environment.

The summit in New Delhi is taking place against the backdrop of a global economy facing the adverse impacts of the Russia-Ukraine war, the West Asia crisis, especially the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, and the Trump administration’s trade and tariff policies.

Chinese President Xi

Jinping, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, Indonesian counterpart Prabowo Subianto, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali and Vietnamese Prime Minister Le Minh Hung are among the top leaders attending the summit.

Putin and Modi are scheduled to hold wide-ranging bilateral talks on Friday afternoon.

The meeting is expected to focus on enhancing cooperation in a range of areas, including defence, energy, technology, pharmaceuticals and people-to-people exchanges.

‘It’s become fashion for powerful to be arrogant’: Rahul vows justice for slain Manipuri musician



NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said it had become a “fashion” in the country for the powerful to be violent and arrogant, as he vowed to fight hatred and seek justice for slain Manipuri musician Chongtham Vikram Singh.

Speaking at a memorial gathering for Singh at the Ambedkar International Centre in Delhi, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha said incidents like the “murder” of the musician were occurring too frequently and asserted that “we stand against it, will fight and defeat it”.

“It is something that has become a fashion these days that if you are powerful, you can be violent. If you are powerful, somehow you can be arrogant, somehow you can do whatever you feel like,” Gandhi said.

Calling Singh’s death a tragedy

on multiple counts, Gandhi said the musician was targeted because of where he came from and said the incident was also a tragedy for the people of Manipur.

“It is a tragedy on many counts. It is a tragedy that a young man has been murdered. It is also a tragedy that he was attacked for because where he was from, it is a tragedy for people of Manipur. People of Manipur have been facing huge tragedies again and again. It is a tragedy because his parents will never see their son again,” the former Congress chief said.

“It doesn’t matter whether it is a mistake or not. Whether he was killed or not, there was violence, hatred and arrogance in the act,” he said.

Gandhi said violence should not be answered with violence, and urged people to respond by defending their values and expressing themselves rather than with

anger and hatred.

He said Vikram Singh had become a symbol of love and affection and asserted that justice would be secured.

“We are extremely proud of him. We expect justice...we will get justice and we will not be scared or cowed down by violence,” Gandhi said.

He also said the incident was part of a larger pattern of violence and threats against people from the Northeast and other communities.

“This is not a single incident. This happens now all the time. Sometimes it does not end in murder, sometimes it is a threat, it is happening too much in our country. It is happening to the Northeast people and other communities in the country. We stand against it, we will fight and and we will defeat it,” Gandhi said.

Lok Sabha LoP Rahul Gandhi addresses a memorial gathering

organised for Manipur musician and music teacher Chongtham Vikram Singh, who was beaten to death in Southeast Delhi, at the Dr Ambedkar International Centre, in New Delhi on Thursday.

“He had a name, a family, a life that mattered”: Family of slain Manipuri musician seeks justice

Former Manipur chief minister Okram Ibobi Singh, who also addressed the gathering, said the killing was shocking for the entire country and particularly for people from the Northeast.

“We are not here for politics or political gain. India attained Independence more than 70 years ago and still we are asked whether we are from. Manipur is a part of India and though small in size, it is a state of India. How long can we tolerate this type of attitude towards Manipur and the Northeast,” he said. Targeting the BJP, Ibobi Singh alleged that killings had continued in Manipur since the party came to power and accused it of following a “divide and rule” policy.

“Manipur people never bow down till they get justice,” he said.

Rahul Gandhi had earlier this week criticised the Modi government over Singh’s killing, questioning what Home Minister Amit Shah’s ministry was doing to address “growing lawlessness” and demanding a thorough probe.

According to police, Singh, 54, was beaten to death by a group of delivery workers and dhaba staff after he objected to them shouting and drinking alcohol outside his apartment in Kilokari village early Monday. Seven men have been arrested and a minor detained in connection with the case.

Singh, who had lived in Kilokari for more than two decades, was the lead guitarist of Manipur rock band Phoenix and later worked as a music teacher and performer in Delhi. His family performed his last rites on Wednesday evening after his mortal remains were flown to Imphal.

INTERNATIONAL

Vance assails Democratic ‘hatred’ in fiery US midterm pitch



WASHINGTON

Dallas, United States: US Vice President JD Vance called Democrats the “party of hatred” Thursday and urged voters to send them packing in November’s midterms, in a prime-time convention speech that showcased him as a possible heir to Donald Trump in 2028.

The 42-year-old vice president was greeted by a huge roar and chants of “JD! JD!” as he took the stage at the American Airlines Center in Dallas.

“This fall, the Democrats are running candidates who will tell your children what they’re allowed to say, how they’re allowed to live, and, importantly, who they ought to hate,” Vance said.

“The Democrats are the party of hatred. They’re the party that despises America and the people who built it. They’re the party that can find sympathy for the terrorists who perpetrated 9/11,” he added.

Trump returned to the stage after Vance and immediately praised his vice president.

“I want to thank our great vice

president. What a job he did tonight!” Trump said. “You know, the Democrats are getting nervous.”

The president promised to be brief before introducing a convention-closing music set, saying: “I’m getting a little tired of politics now.”

But he reprised familiar rally lines, attacking “radical left” Democrats and again making himself the centerpiece of the Republican midterm campaign.

“I’m not on the ticket. You got to pretend I’m on the ticket,” Trump told supporters.

“You got to do me the biggest favor you’ve ever done me. You’ve got to do this for me. You’ve got to pretend I’m on the ticket.”

Republicans head into November under heavy electoral pressure.

US election tracking site Decision Desk HQ projects Democrats will win the House 229-206 and has the Senate on a knife-edge at 50-50. Trump’s approval rating has languished in the low-to-mid 30s amid stubborn inflation and an unpopular war with Iran.

Trump also repeated his extraordi-

nary promise from Wednesday to pay every American adult a \$5,000 “Trump dividend” if Republicans retain both chambers of Congress.

Vance, meanwhile, sought to sharpen a convention-long portrayal of Democrats as extremists, arguing that disagreements within the Republican coalition were minor compared with what he called the rhetoric of the “far left.”

Family and fatherhood were recurring themes as Vance sought to contrast what he described as traditional values with the political left, adding “we got to send their asses packing in November.”

He also paid tribute to conservative youth activist Charlie Kirk on the first anniversary of his killing, addressing Kirk’s young children directly.

“History will record that your father was a great man,” Vance said.

He recalled Kirk’s particular appeal to young men, saying the activist believed there was “no greater calling for a young man” than falling in love, starting a family and becoming

a father.

Vance also accused political opponents of attacking the traditional family.

“To the radicals who wish to abolish my family and the thousands and millions of other families all across our country, we have a simple message for them: stay the hell away from our kids.”

His speech was briefly interrupted by a protester waving a Mexican flag and shouting from the crowd.

“Well, my friend, if you love Mexico so much, get your ass over there,” Vance responded. “I’ll buy you the plane ticket.”

Vance is widely regarded as an early front-runner for the 2028 Republican presidential nomination, although he has said he will not make a decision until after the midterms.

His appearance immediately before Trump’s closing remarks gave him one of the convention’s most prominent speaking slots as Republicans begin to consider their post-Trump future.

The convention resembled an extended Trump rally more than a traditional party meeting, with no nominations or formal business and more than 50 speakers or presentations each night.

Organizers said 20,000 spectators attended Wednesday’s opening day – close to capacity for the arena, which had conspicuous gaps in the crowd during parts of Trump’s speech.

The central Republican gamble remains whether Trump can mobilize voters personally loyal to him even when he is not actually running, without further alienating independents who have soured on his presidency.

Vance’s appearance added the longer-term question of whether one of Trump’s potential successors can eventually inherit the political coalition he built.

“I’m not asking you to agree with every policy of our administration,” Vance told the crowd.

“I’m asking you to recognize the contrast with the radicals, and the achievements of the last 18 months.”

No Dhaka representation at BRICS Summit as Bangladesh rules out Rahman’s visit



DHAKA

Bangladesh formally ruled out Prime Minister Tarique Rahman’s participation in the BRICS Summit in New Delhi this weekend, saying the invitation extended to him was in his capacity as chair of BIMSTEC and not as Bangladesh’s prime minister.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Humayun Kabir said Dhaka had not received an invitation for Rahman to attend the summit in his capacity as prime minister.

“How shall we go? Has anyone from the Bangladesh government been invited? Our prime minister was not invited. Who told you that our prime minister

was invited?” Kabir told reporters. India has invited Rahman to the summit as chair of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), the seven-nation regional grouping currently chaired by Bangladesh. A separate bilateral invitation for Rahman to visit India has been pending since February.

Kabir indicated that Dhaka wants Rahman’s first India visit to be framed primarily around the bilateral relationship rather than a multilateral gathering.

“We are placing greater emphasis on bilateral visits and discussions,” he said, adding that there was no need to “rush” the visit.

“When the environment

is favourable, and mutual respect is maintained, bilateral visits will take place,” Kabir said, signalling that Dhaka remains open to bilateral engagement with New Delhi when circumstances are considered appropriate.

The issue assumes significance as India and Bangladesh navigate a relationship marked by both deep economic and geographic interdependence and a series of unresolved issues.

One of the most immediate is the 1996 Ganges Water Sharing Treaty, which expires in December after 30 years.

Kabir said Dhaka would approach matters involving its national interests with “full gravity and efficiency.”

The Forests Remember: The People Behind Assam's Conservation Story



JAYANTA MALLABARUAH

We all know Kaziranga. We know Manas, Nameri and Orang. We know our rhinos and elephants, our tigers, our grasslands, the rivers running through them and the forests that turn green with the rains.

But have you heard of Akshay Kr. Rajbongshi? Or Atowa Munda? Dinesh Lahkar? Lankeswar Lahkar? Tipusaran Sahu? Jirsong Engti? Perhaps not. But our forests do remember them.

On 16 February 1989, Game Watcher Akshay Kr. Rajbongshi and Mahout Atowa Munda were at Lafasari Camp in Manas when they were killed by poachers. They had families waiting for them too. They simply never returned home from work. And there were many others.

The records from Manas alone tell us that between 1989 and 1998, at least ten deaths involved poachers, an armed encounter or extremists.

Imagine what it meant to be a forest guard in those years. Your office was the forest. There were no

walls around it. No locked door at the end of the day. Yet, every morning, they went back.

Assam has travelled a long way since those difficult years. The menace of organised poaching and extremism that once threatened our forests has been brought under control through years of determined action by our governments, security agencies, the Forest Department and, above all, the men and women on the ground.

But the danger has not disappeared. It has changed its form.

In more recent records, we find forest personnel losing their lives to elephants, rhinos, tigers and wild buffalo. Some drowned while on duty. Some died while patrolling. Others lost their lives in road accidents while responding to wildlife emergencies.

When the Brahmaputra rises and Kaziranga begins to flood, we worry about the animals moving towards the highlands. Our forest guards move towards them.

When an elephant enters a village at night, people move to safety. Our forest personnel move towards the elephant.

When there is news of an injured animal deep inside a forest, someone has to walk into that forest.

That someone is often a forest guard, a mahout, a game watcher,

a home guard, a forester, an AFPP personnel, a casual worker, a boatman or a driver.

Not all our forest martyrs held senior ranks. But all of them stood on the same frontline.

Perhaps that is something we sometimes forget when we admire a photograph of a rhino in Kaziranga or a tiger in Manas.

A forest does not protect itself.

There are people behind every patrol camp, every rescued animal, every night vigil and every kilometre of forest that remains safe.

They know the animals by their movements. They know when the river is rising. They know the paths through the elephant grass. They know the sounds of the forest after darkness falls.

For most of us, the forest is somewhere we visit. For them, the forest is their office. And for some, it became their final resting place.

On National Forest Martyrs Day, observed every year on 11 September, we remember those who gave their lives protecting India's forests and wildlife.

Today, when Assam's conservation achievements are recognised across the world, we must also remember the people whose names may never appear on the signboards of the forests they protected.

Akshay. Atowa. Dinesh. Lankeswar. Tipusaran. Jirsong. And many more.

The next time we see a rhino walking peacefully through the grasslands, and a newspaper headline that reads, Poaching reaches Zero in Assam, is the time we remember their sacrifices all the more again.

My deepest respect and gratitude to Assam's forest martyrs and to the families who waited for them at home.



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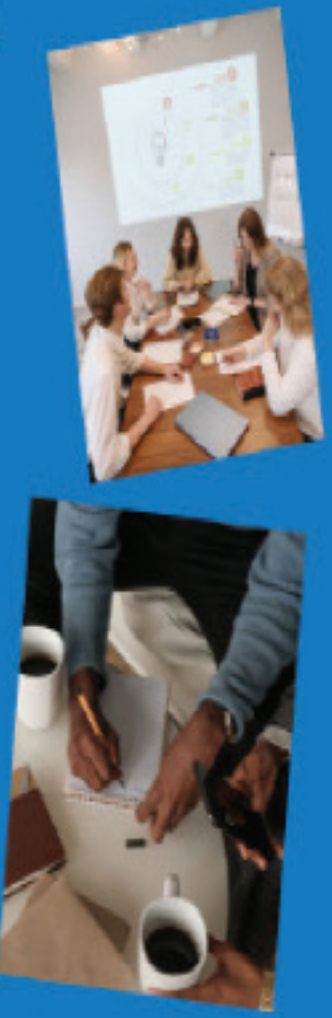
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