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PERSPECTIVE

Chase everything you want except love and death.
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Manipur Congress protest at CEO office, seeks arrest and removal of CEC Gyanesh Kumar

IMPHAL

The Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) on Friday staged a protest in Imphal demanding the arrest and removal of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, as part of the Congress's nationwide agitation against the Election Commission.

Congress workers marched towards the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Manipur, at Lamphelpat and attempted to enter the premises. The situation led to a confrontation with security personnel, who used tear gas shells to disperse the protesters.

The demonstration followed the Congress's nationwide call for protests outside state election offices. The party has demanded Kumar's removal and an independent review of decisions relating to electoral rolls during his tenure.

Addressing the protesters, MPCC president and former Manipur chief minister Okram Ibobi Singh questioned the functioning of the Election Commission and the decision-making process within the three-member poll panel.

Ibobi referred to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's allegations of "vote chori" and raised questions over reports of differences within the Election Commission. He alleged that important decisions were being taken by the CEC despite the panel having three members.

The Congress leader also claimed that Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi had raised objections to some decisions. The party has used these allegations to demand Kumar's arrest and removal.

"The protection of democracy cannot be ignored," Ibobi said while addressing the gathering.

WHO SAID WHAT



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Four Tangkhul Naga civilians killed in suspected attack near Myanmar border in Manipur

IMPHAL

Four Tangkhul Naga civilians were killed in a suspected armed attack near Pilog village in Manipur's Kamjong district, close to the Myanmar border, on Thursday afternoon, police said.

The victims were identified as Phami Jajo, 43; Ningthem Kashak, 35; Betterson Jajo, 50; and Vareishim Jajo, 67. Their bodies were brought to Kamjong district headquarters, where post-mortem examinations are underway.

According to police, unidentified armed persons suspected to be members of a Myanmar-based rebel group entered the area and opened fire on a group of villagers. One person who was reportedly present during the incident escaped and later hid in the nearby jungle.

The attack took place at Pilog, around 30-35 km from Kamjong district headquarters. Police teams led by personnel from Chassad Police Station, along with local security personnel and Assam Rifles, were



sent to the area following the incident. Police have registered a suo motu case at Chassad Police Station under provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Unlawful Activities

(Prevention) Act and the Arms Act. Investigators are working to establish the circumstances of the killings and identify those responsible.

The Tangkhul Naga Long (TNL), meanwhile, has alleged that cadres of the Kuki National Army-Burma (KNA-B) and other armed groups were responsible for the killings. The allegation has not been independently verified.

TNL announces 24-hour shutdown

Following the killings, the TNL announced a 24-hour emergency total shutdown across its jurisdiction from 7 am on September 25 to 7 am on September 26.

The organisation said the shutdown was called in protest against the deaths of the four civilians. Essential services, including power, medical and fire services, as well as movement related to funerals and condolence programmes, have been exempted.

The killings have heightened security concerns in the remote border areas of Kamjong, where diffi-

cult terrain and limited accessibility pose challenges for security forces.

Youth body opposes CM's proposed Ukhrul visit

Separately, Khanuithot-Khon (Voice of the Tangkhul Naga Youth) has opposed Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh's proposed visit to Ukhrul on September 28, citing security concerns in Naga-inhabited areas.

The organisation said the chief minister is scheduled to attend a Public Service Delivery Camp in Ukhrul and urged the government to reconsider the visit in view of recent violence.

It also raised concerns over the activities of armed groups operating under the Suspension of Operations (SoO) framework and called for greater accountability for attacks on civilians.

The youth body urged the state and Central governments to strengthen security in Naga-inhabited areas and ensure investigations into killings and other incidents of violence.

Landslide damages homes, roads in Sikkim's Rimbi amid heavy rain



GANGTOK

A major landslide struck Rimbi village in Sikkim's Gyalshing district late Thursday night, damaging homes, roads and other infrastructure following continuous heavy rain in the area. No casualties have been reported so far.

The landslide occurred in the Yuksum-Tashiding constituency, where residents have already been facing difficulties due to prolonged ground instability. An active landslide in the area in August had reportedly put more than 150 people at risk.

Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang expressed concern over the latest incident and said the safety of residents remained the government's top priority. He directed authorities to stay on high alert, monitor the situation closely and take necessary measures to protect people in vulnerable areas. Tamang also urged residents to remain vigilant, follow official advisories and extend support to those affected as heavy rain continues across the state.

The incident comes amid a weather alert issued by the Meteorological Centre, Gangtok, with heavy to very heavy rainfall forecast in parts of Sikkim over the next two days.

Gyalshing, Namchi and Soreng districts are under an orange alert for September 24 and 25. Heavy to very heavy rain is likely at isolated places in these districts, while heavy rainfall is forecast at some locations on Friday. Gangtok, Mangan and Pakyong are under a yellow alert, with heavy rain possible at isolated places. The weather department has forecast light to moderate rain at most places in Sikkim from September 24 to 26. Rain is expected at many places on September 27 before gradually easing between September 28 and 30. Officials are likely to maintain closer monitoring in Gyalshing, Namchi and Soreng through Friday because of the possibility of intense rainfall and further landslide activity.

NIA arrests two Kuki student leaders from Manipur in Aizawl



AIZAWL

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested two Kuki student leaders from Manipur in Mizoram's Aizawl, officials said on Friday, hours after the agency detained United Kuki National Army (UKNA) chief Thangkhang Haokip and his driver.

The two student leaders were detained from a hotel in the Khatla area of Aizawl on Thursday, according to an official familiar with the operation.

Their detention came several hours after the NIA, assisted by the Assam Rifles, apprehended Haokip and his driver on the outskirts of Aizawl.

The two student leaders, along with Haokip and his driver, are currently in NIA custody, the official said.

Haokip is wanted in connection with several cases registered in Manipur. However, details of the cases and the specific charges, if any, against the two student leaders were not immediately available.

The arrests come amid ongoing investigations by the central agency into cases linked to the ethnic conflict in Manipur.

The official also clarified that the Subsidiary Intelligence Bureau (SIB), which had earlier been reported to have participated in the operation, was not involved in the arrests.

Further details about the circumstances leading to the arrests and the cases against the two student leaders are awaited.

Himanta Biswa Sarma meets South Korean envoy, explores cooperation in semiconductors and technology



GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma met South Korean Ambassador to India Lee Seong-ho in Guwahati on Thursday and discussed potential areas of cooperation between Assam and South Korea, including semiconductors, technology parks, cosmetics and cultural exchanges.

Sarma said the meeting brought back memories of his visit to Seoul in 2025, where he observed South Korea's technological capabilities, industrial development and cultural heritage.

The discussions focused on opportunities for collaboration in emerging sectors, particularly semiconductors and technology parks. Possibilities in the cosmetics industry were also discussed, along with avenues for strengthening cultural ties between As-

sam and South Korea.

Entertainment and K-pop featured among the cultural areas discussed during the meeting. Sarma said such exchanges could contribute to closer people-to-people and cultural links between the two sides.

"It was a privilege to meet H.E. Mr. Lee Seong-ho, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to India, who called on me today in Guwahati," Sarma said in a social media post. The meeting comes as Assam seeks to attract investment in technology and other emerging industries while expanding its international economic and cultural engagements.

The chief minister's discussions with the South Korean envoy are part of these efforts, with potential cooperation spanning both industrial sectors and cultural exchanges.

India could see 15,800 additional heat-related deaths amid 'Super El Niño': report

GUWAHATI

India could record an estimated 15,800 additional heat-related deaths between September 2026 and February 2027 compared with an average year if unusually warm conditions linked to the current El Niño persist, according to a report by the Climate Impact Lab.

The estimate carries an uncertainty range of around ±1,600 deaths and places India among the countries projected to face the highest additional heat-related mortality during the six-month period.

The report, titled 451,000 at Risk: Where Action Can Save Lives During the Super El Niño, projects global land temperatures to remain about 1.2°C above normal during the period. It estimates that the unusually warm conditions could result in 44 per cent more extremely hot days than in a normal year.

India among countries facing highest projected impact

India ranks fourth in the report's



list of countries with the highest projected additional heat-related deaths, after Nigeria, Indonesia and Sudan.

The report estimates that India could record around 7,400 additional heat-related deaths between December 2026 and February 2027, compared with the 1996-2025 average.

It also warns that the health impact could continue beyond the current forecast period. India and Pakistan could experience another increase in heat-related mortality as the Northern Hemisphere approaches summer.

Globally, the Climate Impact Lab estimates 451,000 additional heat-related deaths during the first six months of the current El Niño event, from September 2026 through February 2027, compared with a normal year.

The analysis uses 1996-2025 as its baseline and draws on temperature-mortality relationships across 24,378 regions worldwide, taking

into account differences in climate, vulnerability and the ability of populations to adapt.

The researchers applied those relationships to seasonal temperature forecasts from the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF).

Report highlights scope for prevention

The Climate Impact Lab said the projections are intended not only as estimates of potential mortality but also as an indication of where preventive action could save lives.

Among the measures highlighted are heat-warning systems, targeted health outreach, cooling centres, hydration stations, protections for outdoor workers and additional capacity for health services.

The report cautions that the figures are projections rather than observed deaths and are subject to uncertainty. The estimated mortality burden could also increase if unusually high temperatures persist beyond the six-month forecast period.



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WIELDING
OPEC TO
DOUSE THE
OIL FIRE

The oil market has never been governed by economics alone. It has been shaped by geopolitics, national ambition, corporate power and, increasingly, the strategic calculations of countries seeking to secure their place in a changing global energy order. The history of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec), founded in 1960, is essentially the history of that struggle.

The circumstances that produced Opec were rooted in a challenge to the dominance of Western oil majors. As Soviet oil exports to Europe and Asia increased, companies such as Burmah-Shell and Caltex responded with a 14 per cent reduction in prices for Indian imports, following the availability of cheaper Russian crude. The interconnected ownership structure of international oil companies, combined with pressure from consuming nations for lower prices, contributed to a reduction in West Asian crude prices.

The unilateral nature of these price cuts angered oil-producing nations. Venezuela's Mines and Hydrocarbons Minister Juan Pérez Alfonso and Saudi Arabia's first oil minister, Sheikh Abdullah Tariki, began searching for a mechanism that could regulate production and bring greater stability to prices. Five major producers-Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela-subsequently met at the historic Baghdad Conference.

On September 14, 1960, Opec was born with an ambitious objective: to coordinate and unify the petroleum policies of its members, stabilise international oil markets and secure fair returns for oil-producing countries.

That mission soon acquired global significance. The 1973 oil crisis demonstrated how profoundly oil supply could influence the world economy. Over subsequent decades, Opec became both a stabilising force and a source of market volatility. In the early 1980s, its production policies sought to support prices. But the expansion of global exploration and competition eventually prompted Saudi Arabia to flood the market, contributing to the price collapse of 1986.

The cartel repeatedly found itself navigating the same difficult equation: prices high enough to sustain producers, but not so high that they fuel inflation, destroy demand or encourage competitors to enter the market.

During the 1990 Gulf War, supply fears tested the organisation's ability to respond. In 2008, as oil prices approached \$147 a barrel amid strong demand from emerging economies and intense speculative activity, Saudi Arabia again increased production. But only months later, the global financial crisis caused demand and prices to collapse.

The next major challenge came from the United States. Brent crude reached \$115.06 a barrel in June 2014, before the rapid expansion of US shale production transformed the supply landscape. The lifting of Washington's crude export ban in December 2015 further weakened Opec's traditional influence. By January 2016, oversupply had pushed prices down to around \$30 a barrel.

Opec initially chose to defend market share rather than cut production. The consequences were severe across the industry, with more than 100 US oil and gas companies filing for bankruptcy by mid-2016.

The response was eventually institutional rather than unilateral. The 2016 Algiers Accord paved the way for production restraint, followed by the Vienna Agreement in November that year, under which Opec members agreed to cut output by 1.2 million barrels per day. Ten non-Opec producers joined the arrangement in December, creating the broader Opec+ framework.

Yet the oil market had already begun changing faster than the organisation itself.

Saudi Arabia has traditionally been regarded as Opec's de facto leader because of its enormous reserves, production capacity and ability to adjust output relatively quickly. Riyadh's production decisions have therefore carried consequences far beyond its own borders. Its policy has also required a delicate balance between relations with Western powers, competition among oil producers and the economic requirements of its own domestic agenda.

But the emergence of new producers has steadily reduced that leverage.

Fresh oil discoveries in South America and the Caribbean have expanded the competitive field. At the same time, several petro-states have used oil revenues to finance large fiscal deficits rather than sufficiently invest in long-term energy infrastructure. China, meanwhile, has emerged as a powerful economic participant in the global energy system, financing oil and energy infrastructure across continents. Its loan-for-oil arrangements have offered producers an alternative source of capital and a powerful new market.

The changing equation was visible in Opec's membership itself. Qatar left the organisation in 2019, citing a strategic focus on natural gas and stronger energy ties with Asian markets. Ecuador followed in 2020 after deepening its economic engagement with China. Angola's subsequent engagement with Beijing, including major Chinese investment commitments in solar power and oil exploration, further illustrated how producers are seeking partnerships beyond traditional Opec relationships.

The UAE's growing strategic engagement with China represents another important dimension. Abu Dhabi has sought a broader and more resilient economic partnership with Beijing while simultaneously pursuing its own ambitions in Asian energy markets and clean energy. Such moves reflect a wider reality: oil producers increasingly have multiple strategic options.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“Being hated by idiots is the price you pay for not being one of them.”

- Jean Cocteau

WHY PUBLIC DEBT
IS THREATENING
PRIVATE POCKETS

SATYAJIT DAS

The interest rates on 10-year bonds in the US, Japan, the UK, Europe and Australia have risen 0.6-0.9 percent since the start of 2026. The rises are modest and, in absolute terms, the rates are still lower than those touched pre-2007. Yet this represents a significant shift from the ultra-low rates of recent decades and exacerbates the problems of global public debt, which is at 94 percent of world GDP—more than 10 percent higher than before the pandemic—and is expected to reach 100 percent by 2030.

There are several reasons behind the rise in rates. First, inflation remains around 3-4 percent, mostly above central bank targets. It is being fed by the higher energy prices driven by the intractable West Asia conflict. Higher costs of fertilisers, industrial chemicals, plastics and materials may take till 2027 to flow through into final prices. Conflict and climate-driven disruption to food supplies and transportation costs, due to lower water levels in key transit routes, are additional factors.

Continuing economic wars will also keep prices high. Since 2016, the US has implemented tariffs, export or import bans, sanctions and asset seizures that interrupt cross-border investment and trade of goods and services. The higher costs of tariffs and countermeasures are borne by consumers, about 96 percent in the case of

of processors and memory, in some cases six-fold—christened ‘RAMageddon’ or ‘RAMpocalypse’—pushing up electronic product prices further, feeding inflation.

Second, continued high issuance of government debt affects rates. The average fiscal deficit across the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries is 4.6 percent of GDP, reflecting increased defence spending, demographic pressures, tax cuts and addiction to expansionary fiscal settings.

The US has persistent budget deficits (6 percent of GDP currently), which may be worsened by measures such as the ‘Trump dividend’ entitling all American adults to \$5,000 (costing \$1 trillion) if the Republican party retains control of the congress and senate. Europe also faces a new debt crisis centred around BIF (Britain, Italy, France) rather than the 2011 PIIGS (Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Spain), all heavily indebted countries with stagnant economies, structural problems and growing political instability.

Third, capital flows are shifting. Japan largely finances domestically with 90 percent of its government bonds held by local investors. Others like the US and the UK are reliant on foreign capital, with overseas investors holding roughly 24 and 30 percent of government debt, respectively. But the amount of capital available may be diminishing.

Gulf petro-States, affected by the Iran war, have reduced

ment debt, especially their US Treasury bond exposure, reflecting lower surpluses or growing concerns about the security of their investments.

America is now increasingly dependent on volatile demand from extremely price and volatility sensitive leveraged speculators, in the form of basis trades, to purchase government issues.

Finally, confidence in policymakers’ willingness to act appropriately is low. US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, a former hedge fund manager, dared markets: “I have asymmetric information. I am the House now. You can bet against me if you want.” The equation of markets to casinos was troubling.

Higher for longer rates mean rising government interest expense reducing funds available for other spending. In 2025, the total debt-servicing bill of governments exceeded \$2 trillion, or 3 percent of global GDP. The US government’s annual interest expense on its national debt is currently around \$1.2 trillion, about 20 percent of tax revenues. The Japanese government’s borrowing costs are a quarter of spending and projected to reach 30 percent of outlays in three years.

Governments are financing this additional expense by issuing additional debt. With yields elevated, the rate paid exceeds the expected rate of nominal economic growth making the debt increasingly unsustainable. With the exception of Euro-zone members,

to the problems. Instead of extending the maturity of debt during the period of low rates, the US chose to increase its reliance on short-term borrowing to minimise borrowing costs. This means rises in rates affect interest expense quickly, and the US government must refinance around a third of its debt every year, creating a substantial risk of a disruption which

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

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In 1986, the Central Reserve Police Force made history by raising the 88 (Mahila) Battalion—the world’s first fully women-led paramilitary unit. Over the past four decades, our brave CRPF women personnel have shattered stereotypes on every front: Counter-Insurgency & Anti-Naxal Operations: Standing shoulder-to-shoulder in the most challenging terrains. Global Peacekeeping: Winning international acclaim in UN missions, notably Liberia. Law, Order & VIP Security: Demonstrating exceptional tactical discipline and operational readiness. Their sacrifices, courage, and trailblazing milestones tell a story of sheer dedication. Watch this tribute to understand four decades of grit, honour, and supreme sacrifice. The nation salutes the indomitable spirit of our CRPF Nari Shakti. ~ CRPF



would trigger a major credit or currency crisis.

The effects extend beyond governments. Higher rates will result in losses on existing holdings for investors, banks and central banks. The 2023 Silicon Valley Bank collapse was the result of losses on its holdings of long dated securities. As of end-2025, total unrealised losses on held-to-maturity and available-for-sale securities portfolios were \$306 billion. Central banks globally have substantial holdings of government bonds and mortgage back securities, much of it acquired as part of quantitative easing programmes. As of early 2026, the US Fed Reserve had unrealised losses on its bond holdings of around \$850 billion. Globally, the losses are four to five times that amount and would have increased with higher rates.

With total global debt of over \$348 trillion (308 percent of GDP), higher government rates will flow through into borrowing costs of households and businesses forcing cutbacks in spending and investment, and the overextended will slide into financial distress. This, in turn, will result in bad debts for financial institutions who will tighten lending standards and reduce the supply of credit, the lifeblood of modern economies, slowing economic activities. In parallel, the private sector faces an ongoing war for capital with governments and risks getting squeezed out. Higher rates have usually been a catalyst for major economic and financial adjustments. It is unlikely to be different this time.

Satyajit Das | Former banker and author of the forthcoming book, The Everything Bubble



the US. Emphasis on sovereignty, independence, industrial capability and employment encourages de-globalisation. The relocation of production onshore increases costs due to the loss of economies of scale and comparative advantages, increasing price pressures. The AI boom has increased the cost

investible funds and may need to liquidate some of their holdings. Japan’s share of the US Treasury market is 4 percent, down from 18 percent in 2004, due to slowing reserve accumulation. Chinese, Brazilian, Indian, Australian, Norwegian and Japanese investors have reduced holdings of govern-

under a fiat currency system, governments can continue to meet their obligations through their ability to monetise their debt, but this has implications for inflation, the currency, purchasing power and willingness of foreigners to invest.

The structure of government debt, in some countries, adds

Gaurav Gogoi, Assam Congress leaders detained during protest against CEC Gyanesh Kumar

GUWAHATI

Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president and MP Gaurav Gogoi and several senior Congress leaders were detained by police on Friday during a protest in Guwahati against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.

The protest was part of the Congress's nationwide agitation demanding Kumar's removal and arrest, along with an independent review of changes made to electoral rolls during his tenure.

The Assam Congress had planned a march from Rajiv Bhawan to the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Assam, at Janata Bhawan. Police detained Gogoi and other leaders as the demonstration progressed.



According to APCC Media Department chairman Bedabrat Bora, those detained included AICC secretary Manoj Chauhnan, Seva Dal president Deep Bayan, APCC general secretary Udit Bhanu Das and party leaders Bidisha Neog, Mou-

sumi Neog, Tazika Parbin, Main-ajan Begum, Shantanu Bora, Gollam Mustaque Osmani, Ankur Raj Gogoi and Anwar Hussain, among others.

Bora condemned the police action, alleging that Congress leaders were forcibly detained while taking part in a democratic protest. He also alleged that police used force when protesters attempted to burn an effigy of the Chief Election Commissioner.

The agitation comes amid the political controversy surrounding the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. The Congress has been demanding Kumar's resignation and removal, alleging irregularities in the handling of electoral-roll revisions.

The party has also cited reports that Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi had raised objections during discussions on issues linked to the revision process, voter deletions and electoral data.

The Election Commission has rejected suggestions of a split within the three-member poll panel. It has maintained that differing views during internal deliberations are part of the functioning of a multi-member body and that decisions on SIR and other matters were taken by the Commission.

The Assam Congress has announced another round of protests by its district units outside district commissioner offices on September 28.

Arunachal: ANSU calls 48-hour bandh in seven Nyishi districts from September 28

ITANAGAR

The All Nyishi Students' Union (ANSU) on Thursday announced a 48-hour bandh across seven Nyishi-inhabited districts of Arunachal Pradesh from September 28 if the state government fails to address its demands concerning education infrastructure.

ANSU president Ashok Doka announced the proposed shutdown while outlining the next phase of the organisation's agitation. The union has been seeking infrastructure upgrades and other measures for schools and higher educational institutions in Nyishi-inhabited areas.

The bandh call came on the same day ANSU observed a 12-hour shutdown in the Itanagar Capital Region over its education-related demands.

Among the union's key demands are the renovation and upgradation of 56 identified schools, establishment of a special-needs school in Pakke Kessang, development of Toru Engineering College and improvement of Late Neelam Taram Government College.

ANSU has also sought concrete action on the condition of educational institutions in the affected areas, arguing that existing infrastructure requires improvement to meet the needs of students. The state government has held discussions with representatives of the students' union over the demands. However, ANSU has maintained that several of its grievances remain unresolved. The proposed 48-hour bandh marks a further escalation of the students' agitation. The union has said it would intensify its movement if the government does not take concrete steps on the issues raised by it. The proposed shutdown will cover seven districts with significant Nyishi population, according to the ANSU announcement.

Assam cancer care network delivers nearly 15 lakh patient services in four years: Himanta

GUWAHATI

The Assam Cancer Care Foundation (ACCF) has provided nearly 15 lakh patient services through 12 specialised facilities across the state over the past four years, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

The services include cancer consultations, diagnostic tests, chemotherapy, radiotherapy and surgeries, reflecting the expansion of specialised cancer treatment facilities within Assam.

Sarma made the remarks after chairing a meeting of the ACCF board and its annual general meeting on Thursday night, where he reviewed the progress of initiatives aimed at strengthening cancer care services in the state.

According to the chief minister, the network has helped patients access specialised treatment within Assam, reducing the need for people to travel outside

the state for cancer care.

The state government is also planning to expand the network with five additional hospitals. Sarma directed officials to expedite construction of the proposed facilities in Dhubri, Nalbari, Nagaon, Sivasagar and Goalpara.

The expansion is aimed at improving access to cancer diagnosis and treatment across different parts of the state, particularly for patients who currently have to travel long distances for specialised care.

The ACCF is a joint initiative of the Assam government and Tata Trusts, established to build a statewide cancer-care network and make specialised treatment more accessible and affordable.

The latest review comes as Assam continues to expand its cancer-treatment infrastructure, with the government focusing on increasing the availability of diagnostic and treatment services within the state.

Assam BJP warns rebel candidates of five-year expulsion ahead of Silchar civic polls



SILCHAR

Assam BJP president Dilip Saikia has warned party mem-

bers contesting the upcoming Silchar Municipal Corporation election as Independents that they could face expulsion

from the party for five years if they refuse to withdraw their nominations.

Saikia issued the warning during the BJP's campaign in Silchar on Thursday, saying party members who are contesting against officially nominated BJP candidates would face disciplinary action.

The warning comes amid reports of dissent within the party following the announcement of its candidates for the first Silchar Municipal Corporation election. The BJP had announced candidates for 38 of the corporation's 42 wards, while its ally Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) is contesting the remaining four wards.

Saikia said party members who had sought BJP tickets but entered the election fray as Independents would have to withdraw their nominations to avoid disciplinary action. Those who continue to

contest against official BJP nominees, he said, would be removed from the party for five years.

The Silchar civic election is scheduled for October 3 across the corporation's 42 wards. Two BJP candidates have already been elected unopposed, leaving polling in 40 wards. Counting of votes is scheduled for October 6.

The BJP's warning comes as the party intensifies its campaign in Silchar, where internal competition over nominations has emerged as one of the issues ahead of polling.

The election marks the first civic poll after the erstwhile Silchar Municipal Board was upgraded to a municipal corporation with 42 wards. The BJP-AGP alliance is contesting all 42 wards, with the BJP fielding candidates in 38 and the AGP in four.

Nagaland CM launches fellowship programme, unveils study on state's development potential



KOHIIMA

Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio launched the Chief Minister's Fellowship Programme Nagaland (CMFPN) and released a research report highlighting opportunities for economic growth across emerging

sectors in the state.

The report, titled "Strategic Interventions for Endogenous Development", was prepared under a collaboration between the North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd (NEDFi) and the Technology and Entrepreneurship

Development Fund (TEDF).

The study identifies niche agriculture and horticulture, tourism, the creative economy, sports, entrepreneurship and other emerging sectors as areas with significant potential in Nagaland. Rio said the key challenge was to convert this potential into enterprises, investment, exports and sustainable livelihood opportunities.

The Chief Minister also highlighted the growing importance of the creative economy, noting that Nagaland has been among the early states to recognise the sector as a potential avenue for economic opportunity and youth empowerment.

Launching the fellowship programme, Rio described the initiative as an investment in Nagaland's human resource capacity for the coming decades. He said the programme should provide fellows with practical exposure and meaningful

experiences rather than being limited to meetings, reports and certificates.

"Nagaland's greatest resource is our people," Rio said, emphasising the state's young, talented and ambitious population as a key strength.

He said creating the right environment and opportunities for young people would be crucial to building a productive, self-reliant and investment-ready Nagaland.

Rio thanked NEDFi-TEDF for its collaboration and support and acknowledged the contributions of the Investments and Development Authority of Nagaland, along with institutions and individuals involved in the initiatives.

He also congratulated the 18 fellows selected for the first CMFPN cohort, describing them as pioneers of the programme and urging them to make meaningful use of the opportunity.

Assam's skilled workforce key to industrial growth: Jayanta Malla Baruah



GUWAHATI

Assam Finance Minister Jayanta Malla Baruah on Thursday said the state's human resource base was its biggest strength in driving industrialisation and attracting new investments. Baruah made the remarks while participating in the 13th SBI Banking and Economics Conclave in Mumbai, where he spoke about Assam's strengths as an investment destination.

"For decades, the obvious answers were tea and oil. Today, Assam's strength lies in diversifying beyond these traditional sectors without compromising them, backed by a very credible and capable human resource base," Baruah said in a post on X.

ing investment and making it easier for enterprises to operate in the state. "Assam's greatest resource for industrialisation is Human Resource and that makes Assam the best destination for investment right now," Baruah said. According to the minister, the government's focus is on creating an environment that supports entrepreneurship and investment while expanding the state's industrial base beyond its traditional sectors. "The focus now is clear, Creating the right environment for enterprise and investment, a priority that has remained at the heart of Hon'ble CM Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma's vision for #ViksitAssam," he said. Baruah is currently in Mumbai to attend the SBI conclave, which brings together representatives from the banking, economic and business sectors.

The minister said Assam was gradually expanding into emerging sectors, including semiconductors, while also witnessing growth in its startup ecosystem.

He highlighted the state government's business-oriented reforms and single-window clearance system as measures aimed at facilitat-

His remarks come as Assam seeks to attract investments in newer industries while continuing to build on its established sectors such as tea and oil.

Nagaon bypoll: Congress seeks suspension of CEC Gyanesh Kumar, alleges poll irregularities

NAGAON

Congress leader and Dhubri MP Rakibul Hussain alleged irregularities in the functioning of the Election Commission of India (ECI) and sought the immediate suspension of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.

Addressing a press conference at Rajiv Bhawan in Nagaon, Hussain referred to a September 23 report by The Indian Express that said Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi had formally raised objections at least 14 times over 10 months to decisions taken by the poll panel. The reported objections covered issues including electoral roll management, changes to Form 6 and access to the voter database.

Hussain said the reported differences within the three-member Commission reinforced the Congress's concerns over the electoral process.

"There are three Election Commissioners and the opinion of all three matters. If two opinions are the same and one is different, the majority opinion is supposed to prevail," he said, alleging that Kumar had taken decisions contrary to the views of the other two commissioners.

The Congress leader linked the issue to the party's earlier allegations of "vote chori" and raised questions over the deletion of names from electoral rolls. He cit-



NEWS

ed figures of around 27 lakh and 65 lakh voters while making his allegations.

"We demand the immediate suspension of Gyanesh Kumar. Wherever discrepancies have occurred and votes have been cancelled, those votes should be brought back. New elections should be conducted wherever necessary," Hussain said.

The Election Commission, however,

has rejected reports of internal disquiet, with officials saying that decisions relating to the Special Intensive Revision and other matters had the approval of all three commissioners.

Hussain also reiterated Congress allegations concerning the conduct of preparations for the Nagaon bypoll and the role of former Nagaon district commissioner Devasish Sharma.

He claimed the Congress had raised objections before the bypoll over the manner in which election preparations were being handled. According to Hussain, the party would not have objected if Sharma had resigned from his administrative post before entering politics.

"If he wanted to enter politics, he could have resigned three months earlier. We would not have had any objection. Our objection is to what happened when preparations for the elections were underway," he said.

Hussain also referred to the September 21 incident in Samaguri and alleged that Congress leaders had alerted election and police authorities about the possibility of an attack on party workers.

He said the party had informed the returning officer about the alleged threat and was assured that adequate patrolling would be arranged. Hussain claimed he later contacted the Superintendent of Police and Additional SP Rosy Talukdar before proceeding towards the area where the clash took place.

"We informed the returning officer that we had received information that we would be attacked in Barma. He assured us that steps would be taken," Hussain said.

He further alleged that the subsequent police questioning was being conducted in a manner that could divert attention from those responsible for the alleged attack.

The Congress has continued to raise questions over the electoral process ahead of the Nagaon bypoll, while the Election Commission has maintained that its decisions were taken with the approval of the full Commission.

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Studies have found that being a "bad boy" is no longer perceived as "cool."

Those opposing UN reforms are using the world body, don't care for it: Jaishankar



NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday said frustration was growing among countries over the lack of progress on reforming the United Nations, asserting that those opposing reforms were merely “using” the world body and did not genuinely care about it.

Speaking at a ministerial session on the sidelines of the 81st UN General Assembly in New York, Jaishankar said the demand for UN reform had become stronger, with countries increasingly feeling that the organisation needed to reflect present-day geopolitical realities.

“The frustrations are mounting because at the end of the day, if we are serious about reform, we need some text-based negotiation because you can’t have a negotiation without a text. Then it’s not a negotiation. Then it’s just gaining time,” he said.

Jaishankar said the UN

was increasingly seen as being “behind the curve”, and argued that reform was necessary to make the institution more representative of the contemporary world.

“That is actually the nub of the view that the UN should change. The UN is seen as behind the curve. That’s not being anti-UN. It’s actually those who care for the UN would like to reform the UN,” he said. “I would suggest to you that those who oppose the reform are people who don’t really care for the UN. They are using the UN, but they don’t care for the UN,” he added.

Jaishankar also rejected the idea that UN reform could be achieved through unanimity, saying a text must first be prepared and negotiated before member states take a decision.

“You’re not going to get reform by unanimity,” he said, adding that countries should be allowed to put forward their views before a democratic resolution is reached through vot-

ing. He further said there was a greater willingness among Global South countries to cooperate and reduce traditional dependencies, describing it as a step towards a “more democratic world”.

His remarks come amid India’s longstanding push for reform of the UN Security Council, including expansion of both its permanent and non-permanent membership. India has maintained that the current structure, established in 1945, does not reflect contemporary geopolitical realities.

Jaishankar also said the idea of having a woman as the next UN secretary general was a “bottom-up idea, not a top-down idea”.

The minister was speaking at a session titled ‘Ruptures & Ramparts: Building Bridges for a Changing World’, organised by the Observer Research Foundation, Reliance Foundation, UN in India and India’s Permanent Mission to the UN.

‘Prapanch shiromani’: BJP rejects Rahul’s ‘vote chori’ charge, says he is hyping media report on EC row



NEW DELHI

The BJP dismissed Rahul Gandhi’s “vote chori” charge as “baseless”, saying the Congress leader was trying to create “hype” over a media report on differences within the Election Commission, driven by his jealousy toward Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his party’s electoral setbacks.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters in New Delhi, party spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi also called Gandhi “prapanch shiromani (master manipulator)” and alleged that the PPT presentation the Congress leader made at his press conference on Thursday came from unknown and dubious sources.

“All decisions (at the Election Commission) were taken unanimously. There is no evidence that the decisions were taken by majority,” Trivedi said.

The BJP leader questioned the authenticity of the report published in the Indian Express, contending that it does not have a comment, even off the record, from the Election Commission or any of the election commissioners.

“What is the basis of the report?” he asked.

Trivedi said Gandhi was merely creating a “hype” over such a media report out of his frustration and jealousy against Prime Minister Modi and also because the Congress was facing electoral setbacks.

“Over the last 70 years, the

BJP has risen decade by decade and the Congress has declined decade by decade. It’s because Prime Minister Narendra Modi is a leader who is deeply connected to the grassroots.

“Rahul Gandhi zameen se ude hua neta hai (Rahul Gandhi is a leader who is disconnected from the grassroots),” he said.

“He flies abroad every other month, returns after acquiring knowledge from there and attempts to cite baseless facts,” Trivedi added.

The Rajya Sabha MP also hit out at Gandhi over his remarks that he has never seen any political leader not facing anti-incumbency, saying it reflects the Congress leader’s lack of knowledge of Indian politics.

The real anti-incumbency is not against the BJP but against the Congress and the Gandhi family, he said, adding that Gandhi perhaps still does not realise that the Congress has been out of power in states such as West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh for the last 30 to 50 years.

“The Congress remained in power for a long time when voter cards did not exist, booth capturing took place and ballot boxes were looted during elections. Till then, there was no anti-incumbency against it,” Trivedi said.

“Ever since elections became transparent, central paramilitary forces began replacing local police, CCTV cameras were installed and live coverage of polls was introduced, and an independent media and judiciary came into existence, the Congress has been struggling to return to power,” he said.

Trivedi further said that the anti-incumbency is so strong against the Congress under the leadership of the Gandhis that they have to struggle to win their Rae Bareilly and Amethi Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh.

The Congress cannot win these two seats without the Samajwadi Party’s support, he claimed, alleging that Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi won Wayanad Lok Sabha seat in Kerala with the support of the Muslim League.

“Truth is that the Congress has been facing greater anti-incumbency since Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi came to the helm of the party. Actually, there is anti-incumbency against the Gandhi family within the Congress.”

“Rahul Gandhi should look at the plight of the Congress and become an approver of why his Congress has had to witness such difficult times under his leadership,” Trivedi said on the Congress leaders asking Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar to become an approver of the alleged wrongdoings in the poll panel.

INTERNATIONAL

A month after Nepal-China floods, families await answers about more than 50 missing Ukrainians



BANGKOK

Olena Kalynychenko was looking forward to sharing the chrysanthemum tea she had bought in China with her partner.

“She said, ‘When I come back home, we will drink the tea made from Chinese flowers,’” said Oles Visich, Kalynychenko’s partner. He has now been waiting for news about her for a month, after she and thousands of others disappeared in catastrophic flooding along the Nepal-China border.

Her last known location was exiting China at a border post at 10:22 a.m. local time, 15 minutes before the flood.

Kalynychenko, 36, was part of a group of 56 people, mostly Ukrainians,

who had traveled to Mount Kailash in Tibet for a spiritual retreat.

Their families’ situation is a sign of how complex and time-consuming the process is of rescuing, recovering and identifying victims lost to the disaster. Given the number of missing, the process will likely take months.

They disappeared while heading from China to Nepal on their way home. Some relatives say they have received no information from authorities. The Chinese government has told at least two families that their relatives left Chinese territory before the flood struck, but they haven’t been able to confirm whether they entered Nepal as Nepal’s immigration complex and its records were destroyed in the floods.

The floods killed more than 1,400 people and left more than 6,000 missing, most of them on the Nepali side of the border. Nepal has said that 636 foreign nationals remain missing, including 54 Ukrainians. China has reported 261 foreign nationals among the missing on its side, including one Ukrainian.

Families in Ukraine say most of them have not received any answers since realizing their relatives were among the missing.

“We only have the statistics that are being posted online — how many people have been found, how many are alive, how many are dead, and how many are still missing,” said Stanislav Solohub, whose brother and sister-in-law went missing on Aug. 25.

Nepal says it has recovered 1,451 bodies, but only 112 have been handed over to families so far.

The government said it has collected DNA samples from 2,035 relatives so far, but it has not disclosed how many victims have been identified.

The group, led by Irina Blonskaya, a spiritual teacher who often organized retreats, was returning from its journey home in China when the flood struck Aug. 26. Their plan was to travel by bus from the Tibet region to Kathmandu, where its members would board flights to their respective countries. The group’s last message was sent at 8:27 a.m. Nepal time, about 10 minutes before the mountain slope collapsed. Many had not checked in with their loved ones that morning, owing to the time difference.

Authorities have said the were triggered when a section of ice and rock broke away from a Himalayan mountain slope, creating a fast-moving torrent of water, ice, mud and debris. It destroyed communities and Gyirong Port, a border crossing used by some pilgrims traveling to or returning from Mount Kailash.

Vladyslava Horlova’s mother, Elena, was traveling in the group as

well. She initially found her mother’s name of the list of the missing from the Nepali government, but hasn’t received any further information from the Nepali side. Later, the Chinese embassy confirmed her mother had left the country, and was not counted in China’s list of missing people.

Horlova, a college student who is a refugee in Norway, worries her mother wasn’t in either country when the flood struck. There’s a stretch of road between the Nepali immigration building and the Chinese one along the border, videos from travelers show.

“You think about what if someone appeared to be in a no man’s land or that they left China, but not physically, who’s looking for them?” she asked.

Horlova has attempted to contact organizations ranging from the Ukrainian embassy in China, to Norwegian police, and even the Red Cross. She, like the others, have submitted their DNA samples to police to help the search.

On the other side of the border, China has said that when the remains of foreigners are identified, it will notify their respective embassies, but the authorities have not given any details about how many identities have been confirmed so far. Though it has been a month since the original disaster, some families are still holding out to hope.

Just days before Kalynychenko left for her travels, she organized a retreat for women in Ukraine whose partners were fighting on the front lines of the war, some of whom had not heard from their partners for two years.

Visich, her partner, sees the irony of his situation, but like others in the group, has chosen to stay positive. Visich, also a psychologist, wrote a support guide for others like himself, offering tips on mental health.

“Because for my Olenka, for example, the most important thing in our connection, that each other ... needs to be happy,” Visich said.

China, US should be ‘partners rather than rivals’, says Xi Jinping



UNITED NATIONS

Bangladesh became free from fascism in 2024, and the government is pursuing a strategy of recovery, restoration and reconstruction to “repair” the country battered by fascist rule and exploitation, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman said at the UN General Assembly.

Rahman, who delivered his speech in the UN assembly in Bangla, became the third member of his family, after his father, former president Ziaur Rahman and mother, former prime minister Khaleda Zia to address the UNGA.

His father, Ziaur Rahman, had addressed the UNGA in 1980, while his mother addressed world leaders in 1993.

“After ending more than a decade and a half of fascist rule and exploitation, Bangladesh became free from fascism in 2024,” Rahman said on Thursday in his maiden address.

“Having been freed from the scourges of enforced disappearances, killings, abductions, corruption, plunder and money laundering that had become the norm under fascist rule, Bangladesh is now once again embarking on the

path of democracy,” he said at the General Debate of the 81st session of the UN General Assembly.

He said that to repair a Bangladesh battered by fascist rule and exploitation, the Government is pursuing a 3-R strategy: Recovery, Restoration and Reconstruction.

“After more than a decade and a half of movement and struggle against fascist rule and exploitation, and through the sacrifice of thousands of lives, Bangladesh is now free from fascism,” he said.

He added that in a free, fair and impartial national election held in February this year, the people entrusted the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) with the responsibility of governing the country.

He further said that every conflict should be resolved through dialogue, diplomatic processes and cooperation.

“Equality, fairness, protection of mutual interests, and respect and dignity among disputing states should form the basis of bilateral and multilateral relations,” he said.

“We aspire to a peaceful world, a humane global community where, rather than weapons of destruction, reason

and debate, diplomacy, education and humanity become the instruments of change,” he said.

On the Rohingya crisis, he said that for more than nine years, Bangladesh has been sheltering more than 1.2 million forcibly displaced Rohingyas from Myanmar.

“This has placed immense pressure on our resources, environment, security and local communities.

“As a densely populated country, Bangladesh believes that the source and origin of the Rohingya crisis lie in Myanmar; therefore, its solution also lies there. The only solution to this problem is the early safe return of the displaced Rohingya people to their homeland, Myanmar,” he said.

He called upon the United Nations and the international community to continue life-saving assistance programmes for the displaced Rohingya people until they can be repatriated to their own country, Myanmar.

“If the international community fails to ensure justice for the displaced Rohingya people, this could turn into a humanitarian crisis in the near future,” he said.

NORTHEAST: FROM FRONTIER TO STRATEGIC FULCRUM



COL (DR.) ASHWANI KUMAR, MID, VSM (RETD).

A Soldier's Perspective on Security, Borders and India's Strategic Future.

For a soldier, a border is never merely a line drawn on a map. It is a combination of terrain, weather, mountains, rivers, intelligence, logistics, local populations and, above all, the ability to anticipate a threat before it materialises. No where is this reality more evident than in India's Northeast, where geography, history, ethnic diversity and strategic competition converge to create one of the country's most complex security environments.

For decades, India's Northeast was viewed primarily through the lenses of insurgency, internal security and economic development. That approach is no longer sufficient. The region today occupies a pivotal position in India's national security architecture. With China to the north, Myanmar to the east, Bangladesh to the south-west and Bhutan along its western approaches, the Northeast is both India's eastern shield and its gateway to Southeast Asia.

Having served in difficult operational environments of the Northeast and other sensitive frontiers, I have learned that national security cannot be measured merely by the number of troops deployed or the weapons available. It depends equally on intelligence, infrastructure, logistical resilience, civil-military cooperation and the confidence of the people living along our borders.

India must therefore transform its Northeast from a region traditionally regarded as a remote frontier into a strategic fulcrum of national power. The Geography of power: A Soldier's Assessment.

The Northeast presents extraordinary operational challenges. Its mountains, dense forests, narrow valleys, fast flowing rivers and unpredictable weather create an environment in which conventional military planning must be adapted to local conditions.

A road that appears insignificant on a map may be the only means of reinforcing an isolated military post. A bridge may determine the speed of mobilisation. A mountain ridge may provide observation over an entire valley, while an unguarded jungle track may become an infiltration route.

The soldier sees geography differently from the administrator. He assesses terrain in terms of observation, mobility, concealment, communications, defensive positions and the ability to sustain operations.

India's Northeast must consequently be developed with both civilian and military requirements in mind. Roads, tunnels, bridges, advanced landing grounds and communication networks should be planned as dual-use strategic assets.

Infrastructure that cannot withstand extreme weather or sustain military mobilisation during an emergency provides only limited strategic value.

China and the Himalayan frontier.

The Chinese frontier remains India's principal conventional military concern in the Northeast. Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim occupy particularly sensitive positions in the country's defence architecture.

China's infrastructure development in Tibet, its military modernisation and its territorial claims require sustained Indian attention. India's response, however, must be based on professional military assessments rather than rhetoric.

The critical questions are operational. Can India detect unusual military movements sufficiently early? Can troops and equipment reach threatened sectors rapidly? Are adequate ammunition, fuel, medical facilities and reserves available? Can forward formations maintain secure communications and sustain operations during prolonged adverse weather?

The answers depend on preparedness long before a crisis develops.

India must continue strengthening its surveillance capabilities, all-weather infrastructure, air mobility and integrated intelligence systems while maintaining diplomatic mechanisms for managing border disagreements.

A credible military posture, supported by diplomacy, is essential to preventing localised incidents from escalating into wider confrontation.

Myanmar: The eastern Security Challenge.

The India-Myanmar border presents a fundamentally different but equally complex security environment. Its difficult terrain, longstanding ethnic connections and Myanmar's continuing instability complicate conventional border management arrangements.

The consequences extend beyond insurgency. Weapons trafficking, narcotics, organised crime, irregular migration and the movement of armed groups

create overlapping challenges for security forces and civil authorities.

For a soldier, the distinction between external and internal security becomes increasingly blurred in such an environment.

The Assam Rifles, Army, intelligence agencies, state police and civil administration must operate through effective coordination and clearly defined responsibilities.

However, security policy must also recognise the legitimate social and economic relationships of communities living along the international boundary. Border management should distinguish between civilians, legitimate cross-border activity and individuals involved in criminal or armed operations.

Military operations alone cannot resolve the consequences of political instability across an international border. India requires a combination of surveillance, intelligence sharing, diplomatic engagement, humanitarian coordination and effective law enforcement.

Bangladesh and The Changing Strategic Environment.

Bangladesh occupies an important position in India's eastern security calculations. Its geography influences connectivity, border management, trade and the movement of people and goods between the Northeast and the rest of India.

The extensive India-Bangladesh border includes riverine stretches and densely populated areas where conventional fencing and surveillance can be difficult.

Smuggling, trafficking, irregular migration and transnational criminal activity require sustained cooperation between border forces and law-enforcement agencies.

At the same time, constructive relations with Bangladesh can strengthen regional connectivity and provide additional logistical options for the Northeast.

India's strategic approach must therefore combine effective border management with diplomatic engagement and mutually beneficial infrastructure development.

The Siliguri Corridor: India's Strategic Lifeline.

No assessment of Northeast security is complete without examining the Siliguri Corridor, popularly known as the Chicken's Neck.

This narrow geographical passage connects the northeastern states with the rest of India. Its importance extends beyond civilian transport. It carries critical military, economic and logistical traffic.

A soldier assessing the corridor must consider the consequences of simultaneous disruptions to roads, railways, communications or essential infrastructure.

India needs sufficient logistical redundancy to sustain the Northeast during natural disasters, infrastructure failures or military emergencies.

Alternative transport routes, improved railway capacity, air connectivity, inland waterways, secure communications and adequate forward logistical reserves can reduce dependence on any single transportation artery.

The strategic objective should be to ensure that the Northeast remains connected, supplied and operational under all foreseeable contingencies.

Intelligence: The First Line of Defence.

My experience in Military Intelligence has reinforced one fundamental principle, information obtained at the right time can prevent a tactical incident from becoming a strategic crisis.

Border security requires much more than physical deployment. Human intelligence, technical surveillance, satellite imagery, unmanned aerial systems and ground-based sensors must complement one another.

The challenge is not simply collecting information but converting it into timely and actionable intelligence.

An unusual movement across a frontier, the emergence of a new route, changes in local activity or suspicious logistical preparations may provide early indications of a developing threat.

Such information must reach the appropriate operational commander without unnecessary bureaucratic delay.

The Northeast requires an integrated intelligence architecture in which military formations, border forces, central intelligence agencies and state authorities exchange relevant information through secure and reliable mechanisms.

Technology can expand surveillance capabilities, but it cannot replace local knowledge, professional judgment and human intelligence.

The Border Population: An Essential Partner in National Security.

One of the most important lessons of soldiering in difficult terrain is that the confidence of the local population is indispensable.

Border communities possess knowledge of terrain, weather, traditional routes and local developments that cannot be replicated by technology alone.

However, cooperation must be built on trust.

Remote villages need dependable roads, healthcare, education, telecommunications, employment opportunities and access to markets. These services improve civilian life while strengthening the resilience of frontier communities.

A border village should never feel that it exists merely to serve as a military outpost.

The relationship between security forces and local residents must be based on mutual respect, lawful conduct and shared confidence in national institutions.

The integration of border communities into India's economic and social development is therefore an important component of long-term national security.

From Act East to Strategic Reach.

India's Act East Policy provides an opportunity to transform the Northeast into a major centre of economic and strategic connectivity.

Projects connecting the region with Myanmar and Southeast Asia have the potential to expand trade, improve transport networks and strengthen India's regional engagement.

However, connectivity initiatives must be supported by realistic assessments of security conditions, project viability and the reliability of international partnerships.

From a defence perspective, infrastructure should create multiple options for civilian and military movement.

Improved connectivity can strengthen national resilience, but international transport corridors must not become substitutes for dependable domestic logistical networks.

India's eastern strategy should integrate economic development, military preparedness and diplomacy rather than treating them as separate objectives.

From Border Guarding to Comprehensive Border Security.

Traditional border guarding remains necessary, but the Northeast's evolving security environment demands a more comprehensive approach. Modern threats include conventional military pressure, insurgency, organised crime, narcotics trafficking, cyberattacks, disinformation and the disruption of critical infrastructure.

These threats do not always respect the administrative boundaries separating military, police, intelligence and civilian responsibilities.

India needs coordinated planning, clearly defined institutional roles, secure intelligence-sharing arrangements and regular joint exercises.

At the same time, military forces must remain focused on their primary operational responsibilities. Civil administration and law-enforcement institutions must be capable of addressing problems that do not require military intervention.

A successful security architecture is one that prevents threats where possible, responds effectively when necessary and preserves normal civilian life.

A Soldier's Perspective: Preparedness Before Crisis.

A soldier deployed in difficult terrain understands that the greatest operational advantage often belongs to the force that prepares before a crisis.

Military readiness is not demonstrated solely through major exercises or public announcements. It is reflected in the reliability of communications, the condition of roads, the availability of reserves, the quality of intelligence and the confidence of junior commanders.

A forward post must be capable of functioning when weather deteriorates. A formation must have alternatives when its principal supply route is disrupted. Commanders must receive accurate information early enough to make informed decisions.

These principles apply equally to the mountains of Arunachal Pradesh, the forests along the Myanmar frontier and the logistical networks supporting the entire Northeast.

Strategic preparedness also requires restraint. Military strength is most effective when it supports national objectives without allowing isolated incidents to dictate wider policy.

India needs to develop an integrated Northeast security doctrine that brings together the military, paramilitary forces, intelligence agencies, police, civil administration and border communities.

The priorities should be clear, better intelligence, stronger surveillance, faster mobilisation, resilient logistics, all-weather infrastructure, secure communications, improved air connectivity and deeper coordination between agencies. But the military dimension must remain only one part of the larger strategy.

Economic development, education, healthcare, employment and connectivity are equally important to creating a secure frontier.

The objective should be to make the Northeast not merely defensible, but resilient.

To conclude, the northeast As India's Strategic Fulcrum.

India's Northeast must no longer be regarded merely as a remote region requiring protection and development. Its geography places it at the intersection of India's continental defence, eastern diplomacy, internal security and engagement with Southeast Asia.

China's military posture, Myanmar's instability, relations with Bangladesh, the resilience of the Siliguri Corridor and the aspirations of northeastern communities will continue to shape India's strategic calculations.

The region requires sustained investment in military preparedness, intelligence, infrastructure, economic opportunity and effective governance.

Above all, India must recognise that the strength of its eastern frontier depends not only on the soldiers guarding it but also on the institutions supporting them and the citizens living alongside them.

For a soldier, the Northeast is not simply where India's territory ends.

It is where India's strategic reach begins.

The Northeast is India's eastern shield, its gateway to Southeast Asia and a vital component of its future strategic power. Transforming it from a frontier into a strategic fulcrum must become an enduring national priority.

Certainly, Aks ji. I would make the Author's Note a single flowing paragraph, slightly more authoritative and personal, while keeping the disclaimer concise. You can append these to the existing article:

Author's Note.

This article is written from the perspective of a soldier who has had the opportunity to serve in challenging operational environments and sensitive border areas and to observe at close quarters the relationship between terrain, intelligence, logistics, local communities and national security. The Northeast is not merely a geographical frontier in my assessment, it is a region where the soldier's experience of the ground must be connected with the larger strategic vision of the nation. The observations in this article draw upon my professional experience, understanding of border issues and study of India's evolving security environment. The purpose is to stimulate informed public and strategic discussion on how the Northeast can be secured, strengthened and transformed into an important pillar of India's national power and strategic outreach towards Southeast Asia.

Disclaimer:

The views expressed are the author's personal views and do not represent the official position of the Indian Army, Government of India, or any organisation with which the author has been associated. The article is based on publicly available information, professional experience and the author's independent assessment.

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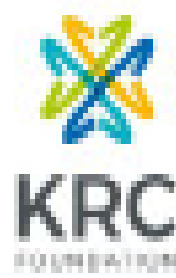
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Who Can Nominate?

Students | Schools | Parents | Citizen | Self Nominate

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