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PERSPECTIVE

Spending money on others results in more happiness than spending it on yourself.

Guwahati woman found murdered in flat; husband surrenders, arrested

GUWAHATI

The husband of a 25-year-old woman who was found murdered at a flat in Guwahati's Hatigaon area surrendered before police on Monday and was subsequently arrested, officials said.

The accused, identified as Ramanujan Goswami, surrendered at Hatigaon Police Station in connection with the death of his wife, Riya Talukdar Goswami.

Police and investigators recovered Riya's body from the couple's flat at Basisthapur Bylane after neighbours alerted authorities following a foul smell from the residence.

Preliminary investigation indicated that the woman's head had been severed and allegedly placed inside a refrigerator after being wrapped in a black polythene bag. Investigators also found that some of her fingers had been severed, officials said.

A sharp weapon was recovered from the flat, while bloodstains and several liquor bottles were also found at the scene. Household articles were found scattered inside the apartment.

Forensic examination has indicated that Riya was murdered. Investigators have estimated that the killing may have occurred between 24 and 48 hours before the body was recovered.

Her body was sent to Gauhati Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) for post-mortem examination.

Forensic and fingerprint teams have examined the apartment and collected evidence as part of the investigation. The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) is also probing the case. Police are examining the circumstances leading up to the murder as well as events following the alleged killing. The exact motive has not yet been established.

WHO SAID WHAT



It is a matter of great joy that BAPS Swaminarayan Hindu Mandir is being inaugurated in Paris.

@BAPS ~ Narendra Modi, PM, India

IMPHAL

The Manipur Legislative Assembly on Monday reaffirmed 1951 as the base year for updating the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in the state, with Home Minister Govindas Konhoujam saying the government would take up the matter with the Centre.

Replying to a question from Opposition MLA K Meghachandra Singh on the update of the NRC and the availability of original physical records from 1951, Konhoujam said the state government was tracing the old records and would approach the Centre on the issue.

He clarified that the state government cannot undertake the NRC exercise without approval from the Centre.

The minister said the Manipur State Population Commission, constituted following an Assembly resolution adopted on August 5, 2022, was already in place.

Konhoujam said the NRC exer-



cise would have to be undertaken cautiously, citing the experience of Assam, where the process has been challenged in courts and the final register has not been made available in the public domain.

The state government has repeatedly taken up the issue with the Centre, he said, noting that the Assembly had reaffirmed its earlier NRC resolution on March 1, 2024.

On September 2, the House unanimously passed another resolution reaffirming its earlier decisions on updating the NRC.

"We need to cautiously move the Centre so that it would not fail like that of Assam," Konhoujam said.

24,475 illegal immigrants detect-

ed. In response to another question from Opposition MLA Th Lokeshwar Singh, the Home Minister informed the House that 24,475 illegal immigrants had been detected in Manipur so far.

Of them, 14,370 were detected in Chandel, 6,545 in Kamjong and 3,560 in Tengnoupal.

Konhoujam said the government had initiated measures to identify illegal immigrants and investigate reports of influx and the alleged unnatural growth of new villages.

A 12-member committee headed by former minister Awangbow Newmai was constituted on August 7, 2024, for the exercise, he said. The government had also issued an order on the committee's Action Taken Report.

He also referred to a Cabinet Sub-Committee constituted on February 17, 2023, under former Tribal Affairs Minister Letpao Haokip, with Awangbow Newmai and Th Basanta Kumar Singh as members.

The Home Department subsequently constituted an Executive Committee on March 24, 2023, headed by Commissioner S Chourasia and comprising senior police and district officials to verify illegal immigrants and assist the Cabinet Sub-Committee.

The verification process was disrupted after violence broke out in the state on May 3, 2023, the minister said.

According to Konhoujam, 14,992 of the 24,475 detected illegal immigrants had been sent back to Myanmar, while the rest were staying in temporary shelters in the state.

In Kamjong, 5,378 of the 6,545 detected immigrants had been sent back, while 1,167 remained in government camps.

In Tengnoupal, 14 of the 3,560 detected immigrants had been sent back. The remaining 3,546 were staying in areas along the Indo-Myanmar border under the supervision of the respective deputy commissioners after their biomet-

ric details were recorded.

In Chandel, 9,600 of the 14,370 detected immigrants had been sent back to Myanmar. Biometric details had been collected from 1,308 of the remaining 4,770, the minister said.

The remaining immigrants are being housed in temporary shelters across the three districts.

In Kamjong, the shelters are located at Namli, Wanglee, Kaka, Zoro, Iko, Skipi, Huimin Thana and Phaikoh.

In Tengnoupal, the 3,546 immigrants are staying in areas around Sadang village along the international border. In Chandel, those remaining are being housed at Molcham, Gamphajol, Khangtung, L Nampao, Yaingol, Bongjang, Kheljang, New Lajang and nearby villages.

The government has directed the respective deputy commissioners to ensure that the detected illegal immigrants are kept separate from local Indian communities, the minister said.

Manipur final electoral rolls published; electorate stands at 19.60 lakh



IMPHAL

The final photo electoral rolls for all 60 Assembly constituencies in Manipur were published, with the state's total electorate standing at 19,60,620.

The final rolls comprise 9,53,350 male electors, 10,06,962 female electors and 308 third-gender electors. Women outnumber men in the electoral roll, with the state's gender ratio standing at 1,056.

The elector-population ratio has been recorded at 51.99.

The final figures were released following an extensive electoral-roll revision exercise involving enumeration, verification of entries, claims and objections, and inclusion of service voters.

Before publication of the draft roll, Manipur had 20,93,076 registered electors, comprising 10,10,317 men, 10,82,459 women and 300 third-gender electors.

During the enumeration exercise, authorities received 19,34,399 enumeration forms. A total of 1,58,677 electors whose forms were not received were excluded from the draft roll after being categorised as absent,

deceased, shifted, duplicated or falling under other specified categories.

The draft electoral roll published on July 5 contained 19,34,399 electors.

As part of the subsequent verification process, notices were issued to 91,178 unmapped electors and 11,30,655 electors flagged for logical discrepancies. In total, 12,21,833 notices were issued.

Following hearings and verification of supporting documents, 26,362 electors were found ineligible. The reasons included inadequate documentation, death, shifting, absence and duplication.

The claims and objections period, which continued from July 5 to August 4, resulted in 96,985 claims and objections being processed.

Following the exercise, 56,871 electors were added to the rolls, while 30,650 names were deleted.

The final electoral rolls also include the service voters' list, published on Sunday with July 1, 2026, as the qualifying date. The number of enrolled service electors stands at 20,819.

Electors have been advised to verify their names in the final rolls through the offices of Electoral Registration Officers (EROs), Assistant Electoral Registration Officers (AEROs) and Booth Level Officers (BLOs).

The rolls have also been made available for download through the official website of the Chief Electoral Officer, Manipur.

Copies of the final photo electoral rolls for all 60 Assembly constituencies were handed over to authorised representatives of recognised national and state political parties at a meeting held.

Gunfight breaks out between armed groups in Manipur's Kangpokpi; primary school gutted in fire



IMPHAL

A gunfight between two armed groups broke out in Lhunjang village along the IT Road in Manipur's Kangpokpi district early Monday, following which a primary school was allegedly set on fire, police said. The exchange of fire began around 5 am in the village, which falls under Chalwa Police Station and is located about 12 km from the police station, according to police. The firing continued for nearly 30 minutes. Police said armed miscreants approached the village with an apparent intention to launch an attack, prompting security personnel deployed in the area to retaliate.

Lhunjang, which has around 40 residents, also has posts of the Manipur Rifles and personnel of the India Reserve Battalion (IRB) who were displaced from other areas. No injuries were reported in the firing, police said. Following the gunfight, the armed miscreants allegedly set fire to the Lhunjang Primary School located near the site of the clash before retreating from the area.

The school building was completely gutted in the blaze, officials said.

Police have not yet ascertained the identity or affiliation of those allegedly involved in the arson.

An investigation has been launched to establish the circumstances leading to the firing and subsequent burning of the school.

The incident comes amid continuing tensions in parts of Kangpokpi district, raising fresh concerns over the safety of civilians and the impact of prolonged violence on essential infrastructure, including educational institutions.

SC suspends sentence of NSCN-IM man after 17 years in jail in 2009 Manipur killings



NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday suspended the life sentence of a self-styled NSCN-IM lieutenant convicted in the 2009 abduction and killing of three Manipur government officials in Ukhrul district. A bench comprising Justices M M Sundresh and P B Varale took note of Hopeson Nignshen's incarceration for more than 17 years and granted him suspension of sentence while his appeal remains pending.

The court, however, directed Nignshen to remain within the territorial limits of Delhi and not leave the national capital until his appeal is decided. The Manipur government opposed the plea seeking suspension of the sentence. The Delhi High Court had on November 20, 2019 upheld the trial court's 2014 conviction of Nignshen and the life imprisonment awarded to him for the abduction and killing of three government officials.

According to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Nignshen and other National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isak Muivah (NSCN-IM) militants abducted Dr

Thingnam Kishan Singh, the then SDO-cum-BDO of Kasom Khullen in Ukhrul district, along with five members of his personal staff on February 13, 2009.

The militants allegedly released three of the abducted persons the following day. The three - Ram Singh Siro, Ramthing Singlai and Kapangkhuai Jajo - belonged to the Naga community, the CBI had said.

Kishan Singh, Y Token Singh and A Rajen Sharma were allegedly killed. Their bodies were later recovered from the banks of the Taphao Kuki river near Senapati, according to the investigating agency. The killings triggered ethnic tensions between the Meitei and Naga communities and led to a series of bandhs in Manipur.

In view of the sensitivity of the case, the state government handed over the investigation to the CBI, which arrested Nignshen on May 29, 2009. The case was later transferred from Manipur to Delhi on the Supreme Court's direction in May 2010 after the CBI expressed apprehension over threats to Nignshen's life and the possibility of unrest if he was produced before a court in Manipur.

The trial court had also convicted Nignshen of looting belongings of the deceased and imposed a fine of Rs 35,000.

The Supreme Court's latest order relates only to suspension of the sentence pending disposal of his appeal and does not amount to an acquittal.

Silchar civic polls: 249 aspirants vie for BJP tickets in 42 wards; list likely by Sept 9

SILCHAR

The BJP has intensified preparations for the first Silchar Municipal Corporation election, with 249 aspirants seeking party tickets for 42 wards and the final candidate list expected to be announced by September 8 or 9, Assam BJP president Dilip Saikia said.

Saikia reviewed the party's organisational and electoral preparedness during a three-day visit to Silchar ahead of the October 3 civic polls.

He held meetings with the party's election management committee, booth-level workers, organisational leaders, social media teams and ticket aspirants.

The BJP's 19-member election management committee is headed by Cabinet minister Kaushik Rai.

Party leaders are expected to hold further discussions in Guwahati on Monday on candidate selection and a possible seat-sharing arrangement with NDA ally Asom Gana Parishad (AGP).

Saikia said the party had adopted



a multi-layered process to assess ticket aspirants, taking into account their public acceptance, organisational record and electoral prospects.

Under the exercise, booth presidents and two designated functionaries at each booth have been asked to rank three preferred candidates. Their

recommendations will be submitted in sealed boxes and considered along with internal surveys and feedback from Shakti Kendras, mandals and dis-

trict and state-level leaders.

"The grassroots workers are best placed to judge an aspirant's public acceptance, organisational commitment and ability to win," Saikia said, adding that the process was aimed at ensuring that candidate selection was not determined solely by senior leadership.

With 249 aspirants competing for 42 tickets, the party faces the challenge of managing internal competition and preventing possible rebel candidatures.

Party sources said BJP members who contest as Independents against officially nominated candidates and adversely affect the party's electoral prospects could face disciplinary action, including suspension for six years. Aspirants willing to withdraw their applications in the organisational interest were given time until Sunday afternoon to do so, party sources said.

The BJP has already mobilised around 1,300 booth-level workers for voter outreach. The party's campaign is expected to focus on civic

issues in Silchar, along with a proposed comprehensive master plan for the city.

There is also speculation that Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma could campaign in Silchar during the election period.

Saikia said the BJP would not announce a mayoral candidate before the election. The first Mayor of the Silchar Municipal Corporation will be elected indirectly by the councillors after the polls.

The BJP has set a target of winning a two-thirds majority in the 42-member Corporation and is expected to campaign on the theme of "triple-engine" governance, linking the civic body with the BJP-led governments in Assam and at the Centre.

The 42 wards of the Silchar Municipal Corporation are spread across the Silchar, Udharbond, Borkhola and Sonai Assembly constituencies.

Polling for the civic body is scheduled for October 3, while counting of votes will take place on October 6.



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MUSLIM WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT

Seventy-nine years after India's midnight tryst with destiny, the promise of representative democracy remains incomplete. The Constitution gave every citizen the right to participate in the political life of the republic, yet Parliament still does not reflect the diversity of the people it represents. Women constitute nearly half of India's population, but their presence in the Lok Sabha remains disproportionately small. For Muslim women, the deficit is even more stark.

Since the first general elections in 1952, only 20 Muslim women have entered the Lok Sabha. Today, merely two Muslim women sit in the House - a figure that should concern anyone who takes seriously the democratic principles of representation, equality and inclusion. The recently published Missing from the House: Muslim Women in India's Parliament by Rasheed Kidwai and Ambar Ghosh brings this uncomfortable reality into sharp focus.

The issue is not simply about numbers. It is about whose experiences are heard when laws are debated, whose concerns influence policy and whose presence is recognised as legitimate in the highest institutions of the republic.

India's founding generation understood that political democracy could not survive without social reform. The struggle for independence was accompanied by a parallel struggle against entrenched customs that denied women education, dignity, property rights and public participation. Reformers such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Jyotiba and Savitribai Phule challenged practices that had reduced women's lives to dependence and subordination.

That reformist tradition was carried into the national movement and, later, into constitution-making. B R Ambedkar understood perhaps more clearly than most that political equality would remain hollow if social hierarchies continued to deny women genuine freedom. Jawaharlal Nehru, too, regarded women's emancipation as essential to building a modern India.

Yet the gap between constitutional promise and social reality has remained stubbornly wide.

For Muslim women, that gap has often been compounded by the intersection of gender, community and conservative social structures. Their political marginalisation has been particularly visible in Parliament. Issues that have profoundly affected their lives - from maintenance rights after divorce to triple talaq and questions surrounding polygamy - have frequently been fought through courts, political movements and civil society rather than through sustained parliamentary representation by Muslim women themselves.

That absence matters.

It is not an argument that only Muslim women can speak for Muslim women. Nor should Parliament be reduced to a collection of narrowly defined identity groups. But a genuinely representative democracy must ensure that communities and social groups facing distinctive barriers have a meaningful opportunity to participate in decision-making.

The history of independent India offers an early warning. Of the 299 members of the Constituent Assembly, only 15 were women, and only one was Muslim: Begum Qudsia Aizzaz Rasool. Her political career demonstrated both the possibilities and the resistance faced by Muslim women entering public life.

Her experience is instructive because it exposes an uncomfortable truth: exclusion does not always come from formal laws. It can emerge from social expectations, political gatekeeping and community pressures. A woman may have the constitutional right to contest an election and still find herself denied the practical freedom to do so.

The record of Muslim women in the Lok Sabha makes the point starkly. Of the first 18 Lok Sabhas, five had no Muslim woman MP at all. In no Lok Sabha did their number rise above four. The current figure of two is therefore not an aberration but part of a longstanding pattern.

The question is why.

Political parties remain the most important gatekeepers to Parliament. Before voters can choose a candidate, parties decide who will be allowed to contest. This is where much of the exclusion begins. Women are frequently told that a constituency is too difficult, that they lack electoral strength, or that a male candidate has a better chance of winning. Such arguments can sound pragmatic, but repeated often enough they become a mechanism for reproducing male political dominance.

The problem is particularly acute when gender intersects with minority status.

Muslim women seeking political office may face resistance from several directions simultaneously. Conservative social attitudes can discourage public participation. Political parties may hesitate to nominate them. Campaigning requires money, networks and organisational support that many aspiring women lack. Family responsibilities can impose additional constraints. In some communities, women who enter politics may also face accusations that public life conflicts with religious or social norms.

These barriers do not merely prevent individual women from becoming MPs. They deprive Parliament of perspectives that can improve policymaking.

A woman legislator brings experiences that can influence debates on education, healthcare, employment, social security, family law and welfare. A Muslim woman who has navigated the specific pressures associated with both gender and minority identity may bring another layer of understanding to those debates. Representation does not guarantee good legislation, but the absence of representation can certainly leave blind spots.

This is why the debate over Muslim women's political representation must not be dismissed as identity politics. It is, at its core, a question of democratic capacity.

India has spent decades celebrating nari shakti, women's empowerment and women's leadership. But empowerment cannot be measured by slogans, commemorative speeches or symbolic appointments. It must also be measured by who receives party nominations, who gets access to campaign resources, who occupies the opposition benches and treasury benches, and who gets the opportunity to shape laws.

The experience of the 20 Muslim women who have entered the Lok Sabha also challenges another stereotype: that women from minority communities who enter politics are merely symbolic representatives. Their parliamentary record, as documented by Kidwai and Ghosh, demonstrates otherwise. They participated in debates, raised questions, contributed to committees and pursued constituency development. Their careers show that the problem is not a lack of ability or commitment. It is the narrowness of the political doorway through which they must pass.

The forthcoming implementation of the Women's Reservation Act, 2023, therefore presents an important opportunity. Reservation can increase the numerical presence of women in legislatures, but numbers alone will not solve the problem. Political parties must ensure that women from socially and politically marginalised communities are not confined to constituencies where victory is unlikely. Reservation must produce genuine political power, not token representation.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Be there for others, but never leave yourself behind. - Dodinsky

INDIA IN THE SCO: RIDING TWO BOATS



DR. D. K. GIRI

The 26th Summit of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) concluded in Bishkek on September 1, coinciding with the organisation's 25th anniversary. Held under the theme "Together for Sustainable Peace, Development and Prosperity," the summit adopted the Bishkek Declaration. Prime Minister Narendra Modi signed the declaration along with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and the leaders of six other member states.

The declaration is firm and unambiguous. It expresses "deep concern over developments in West Asia and around Iran" and condemns "military attacks on the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran," which have resulted in civilian casualties and inflicted severe damage on the country's economy. It further states that such actions "violate the principles and norms of international law and the UN Charter and pose serious risks to international peace, security and stability" - an obvious reference to US-Israeli military operations. The SCO also supported a comprehensive and just solution to the Palestinian issue, opposed unilateral sanctions and reaffirmed its commitment to a multipolar world order.

For India, signing this declaration does not appear straightforward. Just days before the escalation of the war with Iran, Prime Minister Modi was in Israel, where, amid expressions of deepening ties between the two countries, he even described Israel as India's "fatherland." How can these two positions - condemning attacks on Iran in Bishkek while praising Israel in Tel Aviv - co-exist? This contradiction lies at the heart of India's current foreign-policy dilemma.

It is natural for heads of government to make grand diplomatic statements while visiting foreign countries. Diplomatic formalities, courtesies and the desire to please the host are all part of statecraft. In Tel Aviv, an Indian prime minister would praise Israel; in Tehran, another prime minister might quote lines from Hafez.

But this issue goes far beyond statements.

India-Israel relations have become deeply entrenched. Defence, technology, agriculture, intelligence cooperation and the Indian diaspora have transformed

the relationship from a merely formal one into a strategic partnership. On the other hand, India is part of a grouping whose members - with the exception of Pakistan, which has mastered the art of double standards - have little sympathy for American policies. The Bishkek Declaration is clearly intended to challenge American dominance and unilateral action, support Iran's rights and question the use of sanctions.

With a few exceptions, political leaders across the world are known for speaking ambiguously on international affairs. Prime Minister Modi cannot be entirely different. If foreign policy is driven solely by national interests while global forums are treated as secondary, his approach would be no different either. Yet India has traditionally been known for taking a moral, neutral and institutional position on global issues - reflected in non-alignment, Panchsheel and a carefully calibrated strategic autonomy. It appears that this tradition has, for the moment, been pushed aside.

The other dimension of India's foreign policy today is the promotion of "multi-alignment" in a multipolar world. This explains Modi's desire to remain in both camps - condemning attacks on Iran in Bishkek while supporting Israel's right to self-defence in Tel Aviv; buying oil from Russia while purchasing weapons from the United States; being part of the Quad while also signing the Bishkek Declaration.

I have two responses to this.

First, some strategically important countries located close to major powers or caught in conflicts with them have made their positions completely clear. Take Sweden and Finland. For decades, they adopted a policy of neutrality - what came to be known as "Finlandisation" - partly out of a need to respect Soviet sensitivities. But after Russia's invasion of Ukraine made that position untenable, they made a choice and joined the Western security alliance, NATO, to protect their territorial integrity.

When security is at stake, neutrality has a shelf life.

In the SCO, all members except India belong to a camp broadly opposed to Western powers. It was an unusual strategy by Donald Trump that brought Pakistan forward as a potential peace mediator in the Iran war, making India's position even more complicated.

Second, we should remember the old saying: "A friend to

everyone is a friend to no one." Multi-alignment cannot mean permanent ambiguity. At some point, credibility requires consistency.

My argument is that a country like India, which seeks to project a moral position in world affairs, must build and preserve its credibility. As a democracy, an inclusive and liberal society, and a responsible power that speaks for international law, India's image must be nurtured. It has taken decades to build this moral capital.

Modi and his team may want to put pressure on Donald Trump to negotiate with India on respectful terms - on tariffs, trade, technology transfer and the Pakistan issue. Donald Trump and the United States must also clarify their position on India's important role in Asia as a counterweight to China. Trump recognised this during his first term, but in his second term he has been inconsistent - imposing what he described as the "toughest sanctions in history" under "Operation Economic Outcast" one day, and then engaging China on rare earths the next.

Coming to the SCO, where India occupies a delicate position, it is a China-led initiative that began in 1996 as the Shanghai Five and became the SCO in 2001. Today, it represents 43 per cent of the world's population and 23 per cent of the global economy. This summit took place against the backdrop of two ongoing wars involving two SCO members - Russia and Iran - and amid the US-Israeli war against Iran, which has thrown global energy markets into turmoil.

In Bishkek, the principal objectives were to promote the concept of a multipolar world and strengthen mutual trade in opposition to Trump's unilateral policies. Discussions focused on condemning attacks and sanctions against Iran and attacks on Palestine, but attention was also given to concrete measures. Twenty-eight documents were signed, including rules for a new Universal Centre to address emerging threats, an action plan for ports and logistics centres through 2030, a green technology corridor and, most importantly, a declaration on nuclear safety and energy cooperation.

With Iran now a full member of the SCO, alongside Russia and China, the declaration on energy cooperation has a direct bearing on US efforts to restrict Iranian oil revenues.

The declaration also recalled the organisation's non-aligned

character and emphasised the establishment of an SCO Development Bank to facilitate trade settlements in local currencies - a clear step towards de-dollarisation, or reducing dependence on the US dollar.

For India, which had refused

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

China Masters conquered by India!
A historic moment for India. What a sensational victory on Chinese soil!
Many congratulations to our champions,
@satwiksairaj
and
@Shettychirag04
. You've made the entire nation proud!
Kudos to the
@BAI_media
for nurturing and supporting our champions.
~ Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma,
CM, Assam & President of the
Badminton Association of India



to endorse an SCO statement in June 2025 condemning Israel's attacks on Iran, signing the latest declaration marks a significant shift. In Bishkek, Modi met Pezeshkian for the first time in two years and discussed regional stability and issues concerning seafarers. It was a small indication that New Delhi wants to keep the channel of dialogue open.

New Delhi may be hoping that summit declarations are merely diplomatic formalities - words that are not legally binding. If only that were true.

In today's world, such declarations are likely to be interpreted in Washington, Tel Aviv and Brussels as signs of alignment with one camp or another.

India must choose the right partners who can contribute to the country's peace, progress and security.

India cannot ride two boats indefinitely - one sailing towards Washington and Tel Aviv, and the other towards Beijing, Moscow and Tehran. Even in a policy of multi-alignment, there must be a hierarchy of priorities.

India's fundamental position is with democratic countries, international law and freedom of navigation. The language of the Bishkek Declaration on international law is appropriate, but its geopolitical anti-Western tilt is not India's natural position.

The Bishkek summit will be remembered not only for marking 25 years of the SCO but also for highlighting India's ambiguous position. In a world where everyone wants India to choose a side, saying "we are friends with everyone" may soon mean that we are trusted partners of no one.

Credibility, like trust, takes years to build and can be lost very quickly.

Naga group warns of intensified protests over Leilon Vaiphei case, seeks justice for victims

IMPHAL

A Naga community organisation on Sunday warned of intensified protests over the alleged abduction and killing of six Liangmai Naga men in the Leilon Vaiphei incident, accusing the Manipur government of delaying justice for the victims.

The warning was issued during a protest at Khwairamband Ima Market in Imphal, where demonstrators demanded action in cases involving people killed or reported missing during the ethnic violence that began in Manipur on May 3, 2023.

The protest was jointly organised by women vendors of Khwairamband Ima Market, the Joint Tribe Council of Co-ordination Committee Imphal Area and the Save Indigenous People of Manipur. Women from various Naga tribes also participated.



The protesters formed a human chain and raised slogans seeking justice for indigenous people killed or reported

missing during the conflict. They also attempted to take out a rally from the market but were stopped by security

personnel after moving a short distance.

Speaking to reporters, Amana Thamei, co-convenor of the Naga Humanitarian Aid Committee, Manipur, said Naga and Meitei communities had repeatedly used democratic forms of protest to seek justice for victims and their families.

He alleged that the state government had failed to adequately address their demands despite the conflict continuing for more than three years.

Thamei also criticised the handling of cases linked to the violence and said the Centre should take note of developments in Manipur, which, he claimed, had been widely reported by traditional and social media.

He further alleged that issues concerning victims had not received sufficient attention during the ongoing session of the Manipur Legislative Assembly.

Objection to Assembly statement

On the Leilon Vaiphei case, Thamei disputed a statement attributed to state Home Minister Govindas Konthoujam during the Assembly session that the chief of Leilon Vaiphei and a Manipur Police constable from the area were not involved in the incident.

Thamei claimed that alleged eyewitnesses had told survivors that the two were involved in the incident. He accused the government of providing misleading information to the Assembly.

He also questioned the progress of the investigation into the alleged abduction and killing of six Liangmai Naga men, which he alleged was carried out by Kuki groups.

According to Thamei, around 115 days had passed without the victims' families receiving justice. He claimed the bodies remained at the mortuary of

the Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences (JNIMS) Hospital.

He warned that continued delays could lead families and community organisations to intensify their agitation, including taking the victims' bodies to the official residences of the Chief Minister and Home Minister.

Thamei also warned that failure to protect the lives and property of indigenous communities could lead some sections of the population to consider taking matters into their own hands, including resorting to armed resistance.

The allegations made during the protest could not be independently verified.

The demonstration comes amid continuing demands from different communities in Manipur for investigations, accountability and justice in cases linked to the violence that has gripped the state since May 2023.

Assam removes licence requirement for petroleum products to ease business regulations



GUWAHATI

The Assam government has abolished the licence requirement for petroleum products as part of measures aimed at improving the ease of doing business and attracting investment to the state, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

Sarma announced the decision in a post on X, saying the government was working to create a business environment where enterprises could operate in Assam in a "hassle-free and rewarding" manner.

The move is expected to reduce regulatory procedures for businesses dealing in petroleum products and facilitate their operations in the state.

The chief minister said the initiative was part of a broader effort to simplify regulations and strengthen Assam's investment ecosystem.

Besides regulatory reforms under the Ease of Doing Business framework, the state government is also providing incentives to encourage investment and support businesses, he said.

The government is focused on creating a business-friendly ecosystem to promote entrepreneurship, facilitate investment and boost economic activity across Assam, Sarma said.

The latest decision comes as Assam seeks to streamline business regulations and attract greater private investment across sectors.

Two UKNA cadres killed, two injured in gunfight with security forces in Manipur

IMPHAL

Two cadres of the United Kuki National Army (UKNA) were killed and two others injured in an exchange of fire with a joint team of the Indian Army and Assam Rifles in Manipur's Churachandpur district, officials said.

The operation was launched following intelligence inputs about the presence of UKNA cadres at a camp in Phaibong village under Henglep subdivision, officials said. Security forces kept the suspected camp under surveillance before launching a tactical operation early on September 2.

According to the Assam Rifles, the militants opened fire at around 5.30 am, following which troops responded with controlled fire.

The Assam Rifles later said in a social media post that intelligence inputs had confirmed that two UKNA cadres were killed and two others injured in the operation.

A subsequent search of the camp led to the recovery of weap-

ons and ammunition, including two MA rifles, an AK-56 rifle and a lathode gun, officials said.

Security forces also recovered seven lathod grenades, 15 AK magazines, 371 rounds of AK-56 ammunition, 601 MA rifle rounds and 172 SLR rounds.

Fifteen combat uniforms and seven ammunition pouches were also recovered from the site, according to officials.

The search operation was continuing in the surrounding jungle areas to trace any other cadres who may have fled the site, the Assam Rifles said. The UKNA is not a signatory to the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement between the Centre, the Manipur government and several Kuki and Zomi armed groups. The operation comes amid continued security operations against armed groups in parts of Manipur, where ethnic violence since May 2023 has led to prolonged security and humanitarian challenges.

Nagaland govt assures Assembly of steps to protect villages amid Assam border tension

KOHIAMA

Nagaland Deputy Chief Minister Y Patton on Wednesday assured the state Assembly that the government was taking steps to prevent a recurrence of recent confrontations along the Nagaland-Assam border and ensure the safety of villages and residents in disputed areas. Patton was responding to a discussion raised by MLA and Advisor Achumbemo Kikon on the latest developments along the inter-state boundary.

He detailed incidents reported on August 25 and 26 in the Mekirang-Neghrebil area of Sector D of the Disputed Area Belt (DAB).

According to the deputy chief minister, two village chairmen and a representative of the Lotha Lower Range Public Organisation were allegedly assaulted during a protest on August 26. An FIR was subsequently registered at Bhandari Police Station on August 27.

Following the incidents, the



Border Level Peace Committee was activated by the Wokha and Golaghat district administrations to strengthen coordination between the two states, maintain peace along the boundary and prevent further confrontations.

Patton also referred to an eviction dispute in the area. He said 205 households were served evic-

tion notices during a joint eviction drive in August 2025, of which 146 were subsequently evicted.

The eviction of the remaining 59 households was stayed by the court. The Gauhati High Court, in an order issued on August 18, 2026, subsequently granted the 59 families an additional 60 days to vacate the area, Patton said.

The deputy chief minister said the Nagaland government was closely monitoring developments in the Disputed Area Belt and pursuing the matter with both the Assam government and the Centre.

He said the Wokha district administration, led by the deputy commissioner and border magistrates, was coordinating with their counterparts in Assam to ensure the protection of Naga villages, settlements and residents in the disputed areas. Patton also said Nagaland and Assam would work towards ensuring that future eviction or plantation drives were not undertaken unilaterally. "A 'proper mechanism' would be put in place to ensure that such operations are conducted jointly by officials of both states, he said.

The deputy chief minister stressed that greater administrative coordination was necessary to prevent a repeat of the confrontations reported on August 25 and 26 and maintain peace along the inter-state boundary.

BJP, Tipra Motha to hold seat-sharing talks for Tripura village committee polls

AGARTALA

The ruling BJP and its ally Tipra Motha Party are set to hold discussions evening to finalise a seat-sharing arrangement for the upcoming Tripura Village Committee elections, scheduled for September 28.

Tipra Motha MLA Ranjit Debbarma, who returned to Agartala from Delhi, said his recent meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah was "fruitful" and expressed hope that the Centre would begin implementing the Tripartite Agreement aimed at addressing the concerns of indigenous communities in the state. Debbarma said land rights were among the key issues discussed during his meeting with Shah and claimed that a central delegation was expected to visit Tripura for consultations with Tipra Motha founder and royal scion Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma and



other members of the indigenous community. "I spoke to the royal scion, and he has confirmed this. We are hopeful that implementation of the Tripartite Agreement will begin this month, particularly on land rights, which require amendments," Debbarma said.

The Tripartite Agreement was signed by the Centre, the Tripura government and representatives of the indigenous communities to

address various issues concerning the state's tribal population.

On the Village Committee elections, Debbarma said representatives of the BJP and Tipra Motha would meet on Sunday evening to work out the seat-sharing formula. The Tipra Motha delegation will comprise Debbarma, Minister of State Brishaketu Debbarma, Chief Executive Member Runiel Debbarma and former MDC Purna Chandra

Debbarma. Agriculture Minister Ratan Lal Nath and other BJP leaders are expected to represent the BJP during the discussions. "We will assess where the BJP has influence and Tipra Motha does not, and vice versa. Seats will be distributed accordingly," Debbarma said. He said there was still time for candidates to withdraw nomination papers and indicated that Tipra Motha was open to adjustments based on the outcome of the alliance talks. "We do not want to hurt anyone or anyone's sentiments. We are hopeful that our demands will be fulfilled soon," he said. The proposed seat-sharing talks assume significance as both parties seek to coordinate their electoral strategy ahead of the Village Committee polls, while Tipra Motha continues to press for progress on issues covered under the Tripartite Agreement, particularly land rights.

Gaurav Gogoi welcomes Bhupesh Baghel as new Assam Congress in-charge



GUWAHATI

Assam Congress president Gaurav Gogoi on Sunday welcomed the appointment of former Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel as the AICC general secretary in-charge of the party's Assam unit. Gogoi also thanked outgoing AICC general secretary Jitendra Singh for his leadership and guidance during his tenure as the party's Assam in-charge.

"We in Assam look forward to working with AICC GS Shri @bhupeshbaghel ji. His experience and guidance will be invaluable for us," Gogoi said in a social media post.

"I am grateful to Shri @JitendraSALwar for his stewardship and mentorship of the party in the recent past," he added.

The Congress on Saturday announced a major organisational

reshuffle, appointing Baghel as the general secretary in-charge of Assam and shifting him from Punjab, where he had been overseeing the party's affairs ahead of the Assembly elections. Baghel, a senior Congress leader, served as Chhattisgarh chief minister from 2018 to 2023. He was also among the AICC observers for Assam during the recently concluded Assembly elections. The Congress suffered a setback in Assam in the 2026 Assembly polls, with the party failing to return to power.

Jitendra Singh had been overseeing the Assam unit for the past few years and stepped down from the post following the party's defeat in the Assembly elections.

Baghel's appointment comes as the Congress begins an organisational reset in Assam and prepares to strengthen its state unit following the electoral setback.

TMC Cachar chief Rajesh Deb, 50 others join BJP ahead of Silchar civic polls



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SILCHAR

The Trinamool Congress suffered an organisational setback in Assam's Cachar district with its district president Rajesh Deb, senior leader Mohan Lal Das and 49 other leaders and workers joining the

BJP ahead of the upcoming Silchar Municipal Corporation election.

The leaders joined the BJP on Sunday at the party's Cachar district office in the presence of Assam BJP president Dilip Saikia and Rajya Sabha MP Sushmita Dev.

Saikia welcomed the new entrants and described the induction

as an expansion of the BJP's organisational base in the Barak Valley.

He said the new members would contribute to strengthening the party's organisation and its outreach in the region.

Referring to Sushmita Dev's political activities, Saikia said her association with Assam and the development of the Barak Valley would continue despite her election to the Rajya Sabha from West Bengal.

"Together, every karyakarta will work for the development of the region, the state and the country," Saikia said while welcoming the new members.

The latest political shift comes less than a month before Silchar's first municipal corporation election, scheduled to be held on October 3, with counting set for October 6.

The BJP is looking to consolidate its organisational presence in Silchar ahead of the civic polls, while the departure of the TMC's district president and several party functionaries is a setback for the opposition party's local organisation.

Sushmita Dev herself switched from the TMC to the BJP in June, adding to the political realignment in the Barak Valley.

The latest defections are expected to have a bearing on the TMC's organisational preparedness as political parties gear up for the first municipal corporation election in Silchar.

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Six killed, 11 rescued after multi- storey hostel collapses in Delhi’s Satya Niketan



NEW DELHI

A total of 11 people have been rescued from the debris of a 50-year-old multi-storey building that collapsed in southwest Delhi’s Satya Niketan area, with the death toll rising to six, officials said on Monday. One more person was rescued during overnight operations but was brought dead to hospital, taking the toll to six, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southwest) Amit Goel said. Rescue operations continued through the night after the building, which housed a boys’ paying guest (PG) accommodation near Delhi University’s South Campus, collapsed around 1.30 pm on Sunday while repair work was underway. Teams of the Delhi Police, Delhi Fire Service, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) were involved in the

rescue operation. Emergency personnel worked through the debris to trace those still feared trapped. The five-storey structure, including a basement, was nearly 50 years old. It was being used as a PG accommodation and was located in the densely populated Satya Niketan area, known for its concentration of student accommodations and eateries near the university campus. Repair work was reportedly underway in the basement when the building collapsed. Locals had claimed that water had accumulated in the basement following days of rain and may have weakened the building’s foundation, though the exact cause of the collapse has not yet been established. Following the incident, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta ordered a magisterial inquiry and directed that an FIR be registered against the building owner. The Delhi government said those found

responsible would be held accountable. Police have now registered a case against the building owner and others. DCP Goel said efforts were continuing to trace people allegedly connected with the incident. The collapse triggered a large-scale rescue operation, with around 200 emergency personnel involved in the initial response. The area’s narrow and congested lanes posed additional challenges for rescue teams trying to clear the rubble and reach those trapped. The incident has also raised concerns over the safety of the numerous PG accommodations and multi-storey structures that have come up in Satya Niketan, a major residential hub for students of Delhi University’s South Campus. The locality has seen several residential properties converted into student accommodation over the years.

Modi govt has prepared roadmap to make India drug-free by 2029, says Amit Shah



NEW DELHI

Asserting that the Union government has prepared a roadmap to make India drug-free by 2029, Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said it is Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s objective that drug-free youth power will lead to Viksit Bharat in 2047. The Modi government is committed to making the country drug-free to realise the dream of a developed India, just as it has worked to end the menace of Naxalism and terrorism, Shah said. The Centre has adopted a coordinated, nationwide strategy to dismantle the entire narcotics network, from drug trafficking and financing to rehabilitation, as part of its goal of ‘Drug-Free India’ by 2029, he said. “It is Narendra Modi’s objective that drug-free youth power will lead to Viksit Bharat in 2047,” Shah said while addressing a press conference after chairing a high level meeting on narcotics that was attended by Goa Chief Minister

Pramod Sawant as well as MHA and state government officials.

“Before 2014, the fight against narcotics was largely conducted in small units and isolation. Agencies were often satisfied catching small time accused. Our government is making the fight national security priority,” he said. In 2019, a four-tier National Coordination Committee for Countering Drug Trafficking (NCCDD) mechanism was created at the executive, state and district levels to ensure coordinated action against the drug menace. “Dedicated Anti-Narcotics Task Forces (ANTFs) have been constituted in all states and Union Territories and local police have been linked with the national strategy,” Shah said. He said a Joint Coordination Committee was also formed in 2019 to enable central agencies and state governments to take joint decisions against major drug networks, their international connections and operational gaps.

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has been strengthened by reorganising its cadre and enhancing its manpower, zonal presence and operational capabilities, Shah said while emphasising that the fight against drugs was not just limited to enforcement. The government has linked awareness, treatment, counselling, rehabilitation and livelihood opportunities with the anti-narcotics campaign, he pointed out, adding that the 1933 MANAS helpline has been introduced to support persons with drug addiction. The government is committed to achieving the goal of ‘Drug-Free India 2029’ through political will, coordinated enforcement and measures aimed at preventing addiction and rehabilitating victims, he said. The Modi government’s three-year roadmap to a drug-free India is based on a four-pillared approach to destroy narcotic networks, Shah said. “These pillars include intelligence and operation-based enforcement, control on synthetic drugs, demand and harm reduction and creation of capacity and coordination,” he explained. Under the Narendra Modi regime, Jammu and Kashmir is on the path to progress and development after the decline of terrorism, which is gradually approaching zero there, he said. The sentiment of separatism has lessened since the abrogation of Article 370, Shah said. The Modi government’s broader internal security strategy had succeeded in addressing three long-standing challenges – terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, insurgency in the Northeast and Left-Wing Extremism, Shah said. “The Modi government has taken various steps to improve and strengthen internal security. Those who dreamt of a ‘red’ (Maoist) corridor from Tirupati to Pashupati have laid down arms and joined the mainstream,” he said. Referring to the Northeast, Shah said 14 major peace agreements had been signed since 2019 and around 11,000 armed youths had laid down their weapons and joined the mainstream. He said India ended the nearly

six-decade-old challenge of Left-Wing Extremism on March 31, 2026, through a coordinated strategy combining security, development and trust. “We have eradicated Naxalism and will deal with menace of narcotics in the same manner,” the Union minister asserted. Shah said the Centre has a target to demolish 100 national and international networks by March 2029 and bring back 100 fugitives to the country. By March 2027, there will be clear end-to-end visibility of the supply chain while at least 75 secret labs would be destroyed in 2026, he said. He said the government had also adopted a mission-mode approach to bring back fugitives hiding abroad. Between July 2019 and July 2026, as many as 274 wanted or absconding criminals were brought back to India from 36 countries, he said. Over the past three years, 401 Red Corner Notices have been issued, including 182 up to July 2026, Shah said. He said more than 1,400 Central and state agencies were connected through Interpol, facilitating faster information sharing. Between 2019 and 2026, assets worth Rs 17,874 crore belonging to fugitives were attached, while Rs 18,762 crore was recovered or restored, Shah informed. Shah also highlighted the government’s efforts against cybercrime, saying the cyber system had helped save more than Rs 11,158 crore across 32.8 lakh complaints as of June 30, 2026. He said strengthening border and coastal security, implementation of three new criminal laws and the Vibrant Villages Programme were among the measures taken to strengthen internal security. The Union minister said the government has adopted a “zero tolerance” policy towards terrorism and a first-responder approach to disaster management. He also praised the Goa police for effective implementation of the three new criminal laws saying the conviction rate has increased from 22 percent to 53.2 percent.

INTERNATIONAL

Iran threatens greater force if US launches more attacks



TEHRAN

Iran’s top negotiator on Sunday threatened a more forceful response to any further US attacks after Tehran targeted American warships in their latest round of clashes. The exchanges of fire, which began with US raids last week, come amid a deadlock in the six-month war between the two sides. Iran has maintained its stranglehold on the strategic Strait of Hormuz while Washington continues a counter-blockade of Iranian ports. Washington is also seeking to choke Iran’s economy, rolling out sanctions on entities with financial links to the Islamic republic in a bid to force it into submission. “The Americans must have understood that the era of proportionate responses has come to an end,” said Iran’s parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, who has acted as chief

negotiator in talks to end the war. “Any aggression against Iran’s interests and security will receive a faster, more intense and more painful response,” he added, in a speech carried by state media. On Saturday, US Central Command (CENTCOM), which oversees American military operations in the region, said Iran had unsuccessfully fired at two American warships – an aircraft carrier and a destroyer. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the ideological arm of Iran’s military, said the warships had been “forced to retreat” after “suffering damage”, but CENTCOM said they successfully evaded the attacks. In response, the US military said it struck three oil tankers linked to the Iranian Guards. “Following Iran’s failed attacks, CENTCOM permanently disabled the IRGC crude oil carriers M/T Downy off the coast of Kharg Island and M/T

Stark 1 near Jask,” CENTCOM said. “American forces also completely destroyed the unladen crude oil carrier M/T Kyo... in the Gulf of Oman, striking the vessel in multiple critical locations to render it inoperable after the crew was directed to abandon ship.” Video posted by CENTCOM showed large fireballs and billowing flames after projectiles slammed into the ships. The three vessels were “part of a multibillion-dollar shadow network that funds the ICGC and its regional proxies”, CENTCOM said. Iran quickly retaliated, with the Guards saying their naval forces “targeted three oil tankers on the unauthorised route of the Strait of Hormuz and three vessels affiliated with the child-killing America in other areas”. It warned ships not to attempt to transit the key trade waterway via routes unapproved by Tehran. Early on Sunday Iran’s Guards also

said they attacked a US naval drone trying to enter the strait, according to a statement carried by state television. CENTCOM commander Admiral Brad Cooper said after the exchange of strikes: “If you shoot at two of our ships, we will impose an even higher economic cost – taking out three of yours.” The Iranian foreign ministry hit out at Washington over the attacks on its oil tankers, calling them “illegal and aggressive actions”. A correspondent for Iranian state TV in Jask in the southern province of Hormozgan said one of the tankers was empty and the second was carrying oil. The crews were transported to shore on lifeboats, they said. Another state TV correspondent on Kharg Island said the attack there caused no casualties. The administration of US President Donald Trump has tried to downplay the significance of the six-month conflict, which has proven increasingly unpopular at home as midterm elections near. US Vice President JD Vance has gone so far as to say that he “wouldn’t call it a war”. Trump reiterated that view on Friday, calling the war “small potatoes” for Washington. Iran’s security chief Mohsen Rezaei warned this week that the Islamic republic had adopted a “new strategy” against Washington that “will shatter your foundations”. The US has been trying to step up pressure on Tehran in a bid to wrestle control of the Hormuz strait, through which one-fifth of world oil supplies previously flowed. A fragile ceasefire between the two sides collapsed in July after attacks on commercial ships in the waterway. Trump has in recent weeks repeatedly threatened to claim sovereignty over the strait, even posting a map showing it as “new US territory”. Vance has insisted the US will not reopen talks with Iran until it ends attacks on commercial shipping in the strait.

At least five dead after Amazon cargo plane barreled off runway at Miami airport



loved ones, and all those affected by this devastating loss.” Last year, a UPS plane crashed after losing its engine while accelerating down the runway at Louisville’s Muhammad Ali International Airport. The crash killed all three pilots and 12 people on the ground. Twenty-three more were injured. Aviation safety expert Steve Arroyo said that a 767 cargo aircraft would typically be staffed only by a pilot and copilot on domestic flights. A third pilot would be added for an international flight, and a long-haul international flight would require a fourth pilot. Arroyo, a retired longtime United Airlines pilot, said he wants to know whether the Amazon plane landed in the touchdown zone of the runway, and if it was beyond that area why it didn’t simply abort that landing and go around to line up for another attempt. Typically, the landing zone is within the first 3,000 feet (914 metres) of a runway. “Did the aircraft land within the required touchdown zone?” he asked. “If it did, what happened?” Mary Schiavo, who is a pilot and former inspector general of the Transportation Department, said that video posted online of the landing shows the Amazon plane floating above the runway for an extended period without flaring the nose upward to force the main landing gear onto the ground. “It didn’t touch down right away, and so it lost a lot of critical real estate by just continuing to float over the runway. It was literally still flying,” Schiavo said. She noted the Miami airport is not equipped with arresting systems that the FAA says have been installed at more than 120 airports nationwide to safely stop planes that do go past the end of a runway. Those beds of lightweight, crushable material at the end of a runway have been credited by the FAA with helping save at least 497 lives aboard planes that overran runways.

MIAMI An Amazon cargo plane barreled off a runway at Miami International Airport on Sunday, killing at least five people and injuring five others as it struck vehicles and was engulfed in flames, authorities said. The aircraft overran the runway around 2 p.m. after arriving from San Juan, Puerto Rico, and plowed across a road used by warehouse workers and other businesses that surround the airport. Five people were killed, three critically injured and two others hospitalized with less severe injuries, Miami-Dade County officials told a news conference. Miami officials said Sunday afternoon that it was too soon to say whether the people who died were on board the plane or in the vehicles the plane hit. The crash, which sent thick black smoke billowing into the sky, trapped the pilot and copilot in the cockpit and some occupants in cars, said Miami-Dade Rescue Fire Chief Ray Jadallah. The agency said crews also had to extricate a person who was trapped under a vehicle. The crash halted flights at the busy travel hub for much of the afternoon. Some 200 emergency personnel responded, finding the plane with heavy flames and smoke from a complex engine compartment fire, the department said. Firefighters used foam from specialized airport firefighting units to extinguish the fire, and crews were still dealing with a fuel leak on the plane hours later. The Prime Air plane came

to rest beside a roadway near two semi-trucks, images showed. The aircraft appeared to be resting on its belly and was largely intact despite the fire. The cause had yet to be determined, and it was not clear if weather had played a role. Thunderstorms and wind gusts up to 30 mph (48 kph) were recorded in the area at the time, according to the National Weather Service. The flight had been operated by 21 Air, a cargo carrier based in North Carolina. The 32-year-old Boeing 767 was originally built to carry passengers and flew for several airlines for more than two decades before being converted to a cargo plane in 2015, according to flight-tracking site Flightradar24. More than 160 flights were canceled and nearly 325 delayed by late Sunday, according to FlightAware, a website that tracks flight disruptions. Officials from Orlando International Airport, more than 200 miles (320 km) north of Miami, said some flights were diverted there. The National Transportation Safety Board said it was sending a team to Miami led by Chairwoman Jennifer Homendy to investigate. Amazon said in a statement that it would cooperate with any investigation. “We’re heartbroken to learn that five people lost their lives in today’s incident at Miami International Airport,” the company said. “Our deepest sympathies go out to the families,

Kolkata marks Bhupen Hazarika's birth centenary with three-day cultural celebration



BISWADEEP GUPTA
KOLKATA

The birth centenary of legendary Assamese singer, songwriter, writer and filmmaker Bhupen Hazarika is being celebrated in Kolkata with a three-day cultural programme organised by the Kolkata Assamese Cultural Association under the aegis of the Department of Cultural Affairs, Government of Assam.

The celebrations began on September 5 and continued on September 6, with the concluding programme scheduled for September 8. Kolkata holds special significance in Hazarika's life, as the Brahmaputra bard spent an important part of his life in the city and created many of his evergreen works there.

The first day of the celebration began with the screening of the documentary Bhupen Da Uncut, directed by Bobeeta Sharma, at a theatre in Mukundapur. The documentary features candid conversations with Hazarika recorded in London around 25 years ago.

The screening was inaugurated by musician Bickram Ghosh, actress Jaya Seal and writer Navamalati Neog in the presence of director Bobeeta Sharma and producer Chinmoy Sharma.

The main cultural programme was held on September 6 at Assam Bhawan in Salt Lake. The event was attended by Dr B Kalyan Chakravarty, Additional Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam; Dr Sharadwat Mukherjee, Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Government of West Bengal; Rahul Chandra Das, Director, Directorate of Cultural Affairs, Government of Assam; Avneet Punia, Director of Information, Government of West Bengal; Ranadeep Dam, Joint Resident Commissioner, Assam Bhawan, Kolkata; and Dr Khanindra Pathak, president of the Kolkata Assamese Cultural Association.

Professor, author and scholar Sheikh Maktul Islam, known for his research on folk literature and Bhupen Hazarika, spoke about the life, works and personality of the legendary artist.

The programme featured renditions of Hazarika's songs by the Prayash Group, led by renowned singer Mona Banerjee. Young singer Kanushee Baruah performed songs in Assamese, Hindi and Bengali.

Bengali singer Mithun Dhar, a close associate of Hazarika during his Kolkata days, shared memories of the legendary musician and performed some of his songs.

A Kathak-based dance presentation on Bhupendra Sangeet was performed by Oishanee Dutta Roy. A fusion dance performance led by Odissi and folk dancer Urmimala Sengupta of West Bengal and classical jazz, ballet and Kathak dancer Prasanna Saikia of Assam highlighted the cultural bond and spirit of brotherhood between Assam and Bengal.

Members of the Kolkata Assamese Cultural Association also presented a dance, recitation and musical short drama based on Hazarika's poetry and literary works. The cultural evening concluded with a performance by National Award-winning singer and composer Tarali Sarma, who presented several evergreen classics of Bhupen Hazarika.

The second edition of the 15th issue of the trilingual annual magazine Sristi, published by the Kolkata Assamese Cultural Association, was also launched. The special issue, dedicated to Hazarika's birth centenary, has been edited by Dr Jyotish Payeng and Danny Gam.

The final programme of the centenary celebration will be held on September 8 at 6 pm at Hazarika's former residence at 77B Golf Club Road in Tollygunge.

The concluding event will feature a tribute ceremony by the people of Tollygunge and Kolkata, with 100 earthen lamps to mark the 100th birth anniversary of the legendary artist. A mime drama will also be staged as part of the programme.

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