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PERSPECTIVE

People do not lack strength; they lack will

Oxford University to repatriate 39 Naga ancestral remains taken during colonial era

KOHIMA
The University of Oxford has agreed to repatriate 39 ancestral human remains belonging to the Naga community that were taken during the colonial period and later held in its museum collections in the United Kingdom.

The remains are housed at Oxford University's Pitt Rivers Museum, which holds one of the world's largest collections of Naga cultural material, including thousands of objects from the region.

The museum's Naga collection comprises around 8,000 objects, including human remains, predominantly skulls. It also contains 178 objects that contain, or potentially contain, human hair.

The Pitt Rivers Museum removed human remains from public display in 2020 as part of changes to its collections and display practices.

The repatriation of the 39 remains is scheduled for November and is expected to be the largest return of human remains in the museum's history, according to comments by museum director Laura Van Broekhoven cited by The New York Times.

The Naga Tribe Hobos and the Forum for Naga Reconciliation said on Saturday that a Naga delegation would travel to the Pitt Rivers Museum to receive the remains and facilitate their return.

Naga representatives have been pursuing the repatriation for several years, with formal discussions with the museum beginning in 2020.

A Naga delegation visited the Pitt Rivers Museum in 2025 as part of discussions over the proposed return of the ancestral remains. The repatriation comes amid growing international efforts by indigenous and local communities to reclaim human remains and cultural objects removed during the colonial era and held by museums and other institutions abroad.

WHO SAID WHAT

INTERACTION WITH NATIONAL AWARDEE TEACHERS 2026

#TeachersDay is about appreciating the strong contribution of teachers to our society. It is also a day to pay homage to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. Here is what happened when the National Teachers' Awards winners were invited to 7, LKM yesterday....
~ Narendra Modi, PM

Assam to train 1 lakh government school teachers in AI by May 2027



GUWAHATI
The Assam government has launched a major initiative to introduce artificial intelligence in government school education, with nearly one lakh teachers scheduled to receive AI training by May 2027.

Samagra Shiksha, Assam, on Friday signed agreements with six organisations, including Google AI, IIT

Madras-Bodhan AI and Canva Education, to promote technology-enabled teaching, personalised learning and AI-based assessment across the state's school education system.

Education Minister Ranoj Pegu attended the signing ceremony held at the State Mission Office of Samagra Shiksha. The agreements were signed by the Mission Director of Samagra Shiksha and representatives of the partner organisations.

Under the partnership with Google AI, teachers will be provided secure digital identities and access to AI-powered tools, including Notebook and Gemini, to support teaching, lesson planning and administrative work.

Training resources will be made available in Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Hindi and English. Google will work with the State Council of Educational Research and Training and District Institutes of Education and Training to implement the programme.

As part of the initiative, IIT Madras-Bodhan AI will train around

one lakh teachers handling Classes 6 to 12 by May 31, 2027.

The training programme will initially begin with 40 master trainers, who will subsequently train other teachers through a cascade model. Teachers will be trained in using AI for lesson planning, content creation and assessment design. Their learning and performance will be evaluated through the DIKSHA portal.

They will also have access to Bodhan AI's multilingual teacher-assistant bot, which can generate lesson plans, worksheets and revision materials. However, AI-generated content will be subject to review by teachers before being used in classrooms.

Another partner, LE-HS-Wadhvani AI, will develop an AI-enabled oral reading fluency assessment system for students of Classes 3 to 8.

EkStep's Assisted Language and Math Learning platform will provide personalised support in reading and mathematics for students

of the same classes by creating individual learning profiles.

Canva Education will initially partner with 70 schools to promote digital literacy, visual communication and design thinking.

The programme will also support teachers in preparing lesson plans and classroom materials and promote responsible and age-appropriate use of AI.

The sixth partnership, with the Foundation to Educate Girls Globally, will focus on identifying and enrolling out-of-school adolescents aged 15 to 18, particularly girls, through the Assam State Open School and the National Institute of Open Schooling. The initiative will also provide support for mock tests and vocational opportunities for participating students.

The state government said the six partnerships are aimed at creating a more inclusive and technology-enabled school education system, while strengthening teachers' skills and improving learning outcomes.

HAPPY Teacher's Day

To the teachers who make learning fun and exciting, Happy Teacher's Day! Your influence extends far beyond the classroom.

KRC TIMES

STAY ENRICHED

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Manipur CM Khemchand honours teachers at state-level Teachers' Day event



IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Saturday attended the state-level Teachers' Day celebration at the City Convention Centre in Palace Compound, Imphal, and honoured teachers for their contribution to education and

society.

Chief Secretary Rajeev Singh Thakur was also present at the event.

Addressing the gathering, Khemchand said Teachers' Day provides an opportunity to recognise and appreciate educators for their contribution to shaping young minds and

building the future of society.

He said teachers play a crucial role in nurturing students, imparting knowledge and values, and strengthening communities through their dedication to education.

The chief minister congratulated the recipients of the State Teachers' Award, 2026, as well as the colleges selected for the Chief Minister's Award for Educational Excellence, 2026.

He also extended his best wishes for the success of the state-level celebration and appreciated the continued contribution of teachers towards strengthening the education sector in Manipur.

The annual Teachers' Day celebration is held on September 5 to commemorate the birth anniversary of former President and noted educationist Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan.

Potholes, poor visibility make NH-27 tunnel hazardous for commuters



HAFLONG

The deteriorating condition of National Highway-27 at Nriambanglo, including the tunnel along the Silchar-Saurashtra East-West Corridor, has raised safety concerns among commuters and residents, who have urged authorities to undertake immediate repairs.

The road surface inside the tunnel has deteriorated significantly, with bitumen wearing away at several places and large potholes appearing across the carriageway, locals said. Some of the potholes are reportedly deep and pose a risk to vehicles, particularly during night hours when visibility inside the tunnel is poor. According to local residents and regular commuters, the damaged stretch has remained in poor condition for a considerable period despite concerns being raised over its repair.

They claimed that vehicles have met with accidents after hitting potholes along

the stretch. "The situation becomes particularly dangerous at night as drivers are unable to clearly see the potholes and damaged portions of the road," a regular commuter said. The condition of the highway has also reportedly been discussed in meetings involving the Dima Hasao district administration, the Dima Hasao Autonomous Council and officials of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). However, commuters alleged that there has been little visible progress towards repairing the damaged portion inside the Nriambanglo tunnel. Several other stretches of NH-27 between Hatikhali and Nriambanglo are also reportedly in poor condition. In some locations, the road surface has peeled off, while potholes have developed at multiple points.

Residents said the condition of the highway has worsened following the monsoon, with rainfall further damaging already deteriorated sections.

BJP focuses on development ahead of first Silchar Municipal Corporation polls



SILCHAR

Assam BJP president Dilip Saikia reviewed the party's preparedness for the maiden Silchar Municipal Corporation election and said development of the city would remain at the centre of its campaign.

Saikia arrived in Silchar to interact with party leaders and grassroots workers and assess preparations for the upcoming civic polls.

"We have primarily come here to discuss the election and review our preparations. We will interact with our leaders and workers and deliberate on the steps required to take the party's campaign forward," he told reporters.

The BJP state president said the government had undertaken several initiatives for Silchar and that more development projects were in the pipeline.

He said the party's focus would be on the development and welfare of all sections of the city's population.

"Our goal is to ensure the

progress and welfare of people belonging to all sections of society. We want Silchar to grow as a developed, secure and inclusive city," Saikia said.

Saikia described the election as a significant milestone in Silchar's civic history, as residents would elect representatives to the Municipal Corporation for the first time following the upgradation of the city's civic body.

He also appealed to voters to participate in the election and exercise their franchise.

The BJP state president was accompanied by party central observer and organisational leader G R Ravindra Raju. Minister Kaushik Rai, Silchar MP Parimal Suklabaidya, Rajya Sabha MPs Kanad Purkayastha and Sushmita Dev, Silchar MLA Rajdeep Roy, Udharbond MLA Rajdeep Goala and BJP district president Rupam Saha were also present.

The visit comes as the BJP steps up its organisational activities ahead of the civic election. Party leaders are holding consultations with local functionaries and workers and working on ward-level strategies. The nomination process for the election is currently underway, with candidate selection expected to be a key focus of the party's organisational exercise in the coming days. The Silchar Municipal Corporation has 42 wards and more than 2.70 lakh registered voters.

Polling for the first Municipal Corporation election is scheduled for October 3, while counting of votes will be held on October 6.

Assam police detain nearly 300 in statewide crackdown on fraudsters, touts

GUWAHATI

Nearly 300 people have been detained across Assam in a coordinated statewide crackdown on suspected fraudsters, touts and commens, police said on Saturday.

The operation was carried out simultaneously across 29 districts following directions from Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and targeted people allegedly involved in cheating and financial fraud through phone calls, messages and other means.

Police teams conducted raids at multiple locations as part of the operation, which was still underway. Further arrests are expected as investigators verify the involvement of those detained and examine links between the suspected fraud networks.

Lakhimpur recorded the highest number of detentions with 15, followed by Nagarbera with 13. Bongaigaon and Goroimari reported 10 detentions each.

Seven people each were detained in Morigaon and Dhubri, while five were apprehended in Goalpara.

Bajali, Tamharhat and Sonatoli recorded four detentions each, while one person was detained in Chhaygaon. Sivasagar and Golaghat reported two detentions each.

In Guwahati, Garchuk Police detained five people allegedly involved in fraudulent activities in the Garchuk area.

Police sources said several cases are pending against some of those detained in connection with alleged cheating and other fraudulent activities.

Investigators are examining the nature of the alleged scams and checking possible links among the suspects as the statewide operation continues.

The crackdown comes amid concerns over a rise in fraud-related complaints and cases being registered at police stations across the state.

Amit Shah's Tripura Meeting Fuels Speculation Over BJP-Tipra Motha Poll Pact



NEW DELHI

A meeting between Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha and Tipra Motha founder Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma in New Delhi on Friday has triggered fresh speculation over a possible political understanding between the BJP and Tipra Motha ahead of the upcoming Village Committee elections under the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC).

Saha said he met Shah and held a "fruitful and constructive discussion" on issues of mutual importance, besides matters concerning the development and welfare of Tripura. Tipra Motha founder Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma and BJP North East Coordinator Sambit Patra were also present at the meeting. According to sources, the meeting was held at Shah's residence and centred largely on issues affecting Tripura's indigenous tribal population, the implementation of the Tripartite Agreement and the

forthcoming Village Committee elections. Sources claimed that Shah assured the Tipra Motha leadership that steps would be taken towards the early implementation of the Tripartite Agreement, which was signed in March 2024 between the Centre, the Tripura government and the Indigenous Progressive Regional Alliance (TIPRA), led by Pradyot.

The agreement was aimed at addressing longstanding concerns related to the political, economic, social and cultural rights of Tripura's indigenous population.

Sources also claimed that discussions included land rights for indigenous communities, with assurances that such rights would be addressed in accordance with provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

The meeting assumes political significance as the Village Committee elections approach. The polls are expected to be closely watched in the tribal areas, where both the BJP and Tipra Motha have a significant political presence.

Tipra Motha's position in the TTAADC makes its electoral strategy particularly important for the BJP, which has been seeking to consolidate its influence among tribal voters. For Tipra Motha, the upcoming polls are also seen as a test of its organisational strength and political standing in the autonomous council areas. The presence of Shah, Saha and Pradyot at the same meeting has therefore prompted speculation that the BJP and Tipra Motha could be exploring some form of electoral understanding ahead of the polls.



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When Water Becomes a Matter of National Security

India's latest response to the Permanent Court of Arbitration's pronouncement on the Indus Waters Treaty marks more than another diplomatic disagreement with Pakistan. It represents a larger assertion of principle: India will not allow an international forum whose authority it does not recognise to dictate how it exercises its sovereign rights over rivers flowing through its territory.

New Delhi's position was unusually blunt. The Ministry of External Affairs rejected the proceedings as having no legitimacy in India's eyes, describing the tribunal as "illegally constituted" and maintaining that its pronouncements cannot constrain India's sovereign decisions. Whatever one's view of the broader India-Pakistan dispute, this clarity is significant. Water, once treated primarily as a technical subject of bilateral cooperation, has increasingly become intertwined with national security, terrorism, energy requirements and strategic autonomy.

The Indus Waters Treaty was born in a very different world. Signed in 1960 with the World Bank playing a central mediating role, the agreement divided the waters of the Indus river system between India and Pakistan. India, as the upper riparian country, accepted substantial restrictions on its use of the western rivers-the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab-while Pakistan received the bulk of their waters. The arrangement survived wars, military crises and decades of hostility.

Its longevity was once regarded as proof that pragmatic water diplomacy could survive even the worst political disputes.

But longevity should not be confused with permanence. The strategic, demographic and environmental realities of South Asia have changed dramatically since 1960.

India today faces growing demands for electricity, irrigation, drinking water and climate resilience. Himalayan rivers are no longer merely geographic features; they are strategic assets in a region where water availability is increasingly affected by erratic rainfall, glacial changes, floods and prolonged dry periods.

At the same time, the western Himalayan rivers remain vital to Pakistan's agriculture and economy.

That makes the Indus system one of the most consequential shared river systems in the world. It also means that disputes over individual hydropower projects cannot indefinitely be treated as isolated technical disagreements. For decades, Pakistan has challenged several Indian projects, including Kishenganga and Ratle, raising objections under the treaty's dispute-resolution mechanisms. India, for its part, has repeatedly argued that Pakistan has attempted to internationalise matters that should first be addressed through the mechanisms agreed upon by the two countries. The deeper problem is therefore not simply whether a particular dam complies with a particular technical provision. It is whether a treaty designed for a less complicated geopolitical era can continue to function when one party increasingly views water through the lens of strategic security.

The arbitration question

India's rejection of the latest arbitration pronouncement rests on a straightforward position: a forum cannot acquire jurisdiction over a country merely because another party chooses to invoke it.

India did not participate in the constitution of the tribunal in question and has maintained that the parallel dispute-resolution process pursued by Pakistan is inconsistent with the treaty framework.

International law depends not only on judgments but also on consent, jurisdiction and the legitimacy of the process through which disputes are adjudicated. If India does not recognise the tribunal's jurisdiction, New Delhi is unlikely to regard its findings as binding.

This does not mean that India should reject international law whenever an outcome is inconvenient. Quite the opposite. A credible Indian position must remain anchored in treaty obligations, established legal principles and transparent reasoning. But accepting international arbitration cannot become an automatic obligation simply because Pakistan chooses that route.

The most politically consequential development, however, came after the Pahalgam terrorist attack, when India announced that the Indus Waters Treaty would remain in abeyance. That decision fundamentally altered the context in which the treaty is being discussed.

For India, the argument is no longer simply about water engineering or treaty interpretation. It is about whether normal cooperation can continue with a state that New Delhi accuses of supporting cross-border terrorism. Pakistan, naturally, rejects that characterisation and continues to insist that the treaty is a separate water agreement. But geopolitics rarely respects such neat compartments. A treaty can regulate water allocation. It cannot, by itself, eliminate the political and security realities between the countries that signed it.

India's repeated formulation that "water and blood cannot flow together" is therefore not merely a rhetorical slogan. It reflects a broader strategic doctrine: cooperation cannot remain insulated indefinitely from fundamental questions of security.

Yet this position also carries a responsibility. If India uses water as an instrument of strategic pressure, it must demonstrate that its actions remain within the bounds of international obligations and are driven by legitimate national interests rather than retaliation. That distinction will matter enormously to India's international standing. India's decision to accelerate projects such as Pakal Dul, Kiru, Ratle and Kwar should not be understood simply as an attempt to "punish" Pakistan.

India has legitimate developmental interests in its own territory. Hydropower projects can generate electricity, provide grid stability and contribute to regional development. Reservoirs and associated infrastructure can also improve India's ability to manage water during periods of extreme weather. The same principle applies to the long-discussed Tulbul navigation project. If India possesses treaty-sanctioned rights to use the waters of a river, exercising those rights should not automatically be portrayed as aggression. A sovereign country cannot be expected to permanently suspend legitimate infrastructure development because its neighbour objects to the project. At the same time, India should avoid the temptation to turn every river project into a strategic weapon. Water is too important and too scarce to become merely another theatre of permanent confrontation. The real lesson from the present dispute may therefore be that the Indus Waters Treaty needs something it has long avoided: a serious conversation about its future. The treaty has demonstrated extraordinary resilience. But resilience does not mean that it is beyond reform. Climate change alone has transformed the hydrological realities of the region. Water flows are becoming less predictable. Extreme rainfall can produce devastating floods, while prolonged dry spells intensify water stress. Agricultural patterns are changing, groundwater reserves are declining and energy systems are undergoing rapid transformation.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

If you do tomorrow what you did today, you will get tomorrow what you got today. - Benjamin Franklin

SHAPING MINDS; BUILDING THE FUTURE



SMT. DROUPADI MURMU

Teachers shape destinies. This Teachers' Day, on behalf of all Indians, I convey my gratitude to all teachers who instil knowledge, skills, values and motivation into the lives of crores of our students. It is well known that Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the second President of India wished that his birthday be observed as Teachers' Day. He was an intellectual of international repute, a renowned author and an esteemed statesman, yet he regarded his role as a teacher as the most important of all. Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, one of India's most beloved former Presidents, was once asked whether he thought people would remember him more as a scientist or as a President. Dr. Kalam replied that he would like to be remembered as a teacher.

The teachers whose competence and character make them venerable, and the students devoted to such teachers, have always been our ideal. Our ancient texts prescribe that teachers should love their students as their own children, they should treat them all equally and fairly, they should not lose their temper on students, they should remain patient, keep the well-being of their students foremost, and teach them according to their ability to learn. It is in the spirit of deep respect for such teachers that, Shikshavalli in Taittiriya Upanishad, gave the timeless message, 'Acharyadevo Bhava', nearly three millennia ago.

It has been my greatest fortune to have been guided by many wise and affectionate teachers. Sometimes, our teachers would teach us in their homes even beyond school hours, and would look after us with great care. After completing class-VII, I was the first girl to venture out of the village to pursue further studies. Later, while studying in Bhubaneswar too, I was blessed to receive abundant love and encouragement from my teachers. I mention my teachers here with humility, because their story illustrates a profound truth: a loving and dedicated teacher can awaken limitless potential and inspiration within a student. Strengthened by that encouragement, students develop the courage to face life's toughest challenges and the confidence to pursue the loftiest of goals. Teachers do far more than teach a curriculum. Through their own conduct and example, they also instruct their students in the art and skills needed to live a fruitful life. Besides being a mentor,

a teacher is also a well-wisher, a friend and a fellow-traveller in the students' quest for learning.

The insight about what makes a good teacher, handed down through our culture and traditions since ancient times, remains entirely relevant even today. Centuries ago, in his play 'Malavikagnimitram', Mahakavi Kalidas writes that a good teacher is one who possesses profound knowledge and also has the ability to transmit this knowledge effectively.

A well-known Sanskrit maxim tells us: 'Sarvatrayajam icchet, shishyaticchet, parajayam' - one may wish for victory everywhere, except before one's own student, where one should wish to be defeated. To encourage independent thinking in students, to ignite their curiosity, to promote the tendency to ask questions, to sharpen their capacity for argument and judgement, and to help them grow into independent individuals - these are among the most useful and rewarding dimensions of teaching. It is only through such inspiring education that we will raise generations of successful entrepreneurs, brilliant scientists, creative artists and citizens capable of finding innovative solutions to emerging challenges.

Teaching is not merely avocation; it is a vow. It is more than a career or a job; it is the sacred task of shaping humanity. It is the noble responsibility of illuminating the path for generations to come. My memories associated with teaching give me a special sense of fulfilment. I taught children at the Sri Aurobindo Integral School in Rairangpur, Odisha. Apart from teaching them various subjects, I used to be fully involved in helping the children prepare for their musical performances, sports activities and plays. Even today, it is exhilarating for me to reminisce about our preparations for Independence Day and Republic Day celebrations and the joyful excitement of the children during the functions. I also found great satisfaction and meaning in taking students on picnics to beautiful natural surroundings and, through play and exploration, introducing them to the world of animals, birds, trees and plants.

Years after leaving school, my students still invite me to their family functions. I not only distinctly recall the names of many of my students but also the nicknames we would fondly address them by. I have also learnt much from the students I taught. I believe that teachers too learn a lot from the spontaneity and curiosity of children.

On the occasion of completing the second year of my term as President, I spent time with the students at the school located in the premises around Rashtrapati Bhavan and taught them about environmental conservation. I am always keen to meet students and understand their thoughts and ideas. What they share stays on with me.

About eleven years ago, I established a residential school at my village home. Students from disadvantaged families and children who have lost their parents study in that school. I have been visiting

the school from time to time to meet the children. This year, on the 20th of June, I was delighted to meet the children on my birthday. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji also visited the school with me and motivated the students. The extraordinary experience of meeting him will remain an enduring source of inspiration for them. Watching those children thrive fills me with a special sense of meaningfulness.

The task of imparting education is not the responsibility of teachers alone. Those who become role models for children through their conduct and achievements are also a valuable source of learning and inspiration.

Parents and guardians repose the highest trust in teachers when they send their children to study. They believe that the teachers will treat the children as their own and take utmost care of the child's safety and development. It is the dharma of every teacher to uphold this sacred trust placed in them. A teacher's attitude, conduct and behaviour should not generate fear and anxiety in the children, break their morale or allow any sense of inferiority to develop. Good teachers help their students become the best versions of themselves. It is the sacred duty of teachers to guide their students to be good human beings. Students who achieve prosperity and glory while remaining ethical in their thoughts and actions are living embodiments of a teacher's success.

Our country is moving steadily towards the goal of becoming a developed nation with social inclusion at the core. As we advance on this journey, I want our teachers to shape generations of students who value the richness of our cultural heritage and traditions; who develop a sci-

entific outlook and work for the welfare of humanity; who uphold the ideal of Antyodaya; who protect the environment and all living creatures; who strive for individual and collective excellence, and who move forward with

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

Rising seas can feel like an unstoppable force, but how much damage is done, and to whom, still depends on the choices that people, communities and governments make today.



the spirit of 'Nation First'. To every citizen, I make an appeal: always hold our committed and sincere teachers in the highest esteem. I ardently wish that with the contribution of our dedicated teachers, India continues to learn and goes on to lead. (The author is the President of India)

THE NEEDONOMICS WAY
Recruit, Respect and Retain Teachers: Rebuilding Education

Prof. M. M. Goel, former Vice-chancellor

On Teachers' Day 2026, Needonomics School of Thought greets the teaching fraternity in India and calls for serious introspection on the role in implementing the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 amid emerging challenges.



A teacher's true responsibility is not merely to deliver knowledge, but to convert the careless into careful, the incapable into capable, and the useless into useful and responsible citizens.

Teachers are celebrated as "assets" on Teachers' Day, September 5, and National Education Day, November 11. But for the remaining 363 days, if society treats them without respect and dignity, the "t" in assets seems to disappear!

Needonomics calls for Competence Before Certificates, Values Before Volumes, and Teachers Before Trends. Let us restore the dignity of teaching and make education a mission of character, competence and nation-building for Viksit Bharat 2047.

Manipur CM Khemchand Calls for Reconciliation, Urges Meitei and Kuki Communities to Rebuild Trust

IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Friday appealed to people from different communities to “forgive and forget” the violence of the past and work together to rebuild trust and restore peace in the state.

Addressing a public interaction programme at Christian Center Church in Leimakhong, Kangpokpi district, Khemchand acknowledged the pain and suffering caused by the prolonged crisis among both the Meitei and Kuki communities.

The chief minister said he had interacted with internally displaced persons (IDPs) from both communities and found that they shared a common aspiration - to return to their respective homes.

“Considering the future of the younger generation, let us all collec-



tively shun violence and work towards creating a peaceful environment for our youths,” Khemchand said, calling for greater understanding and peaceful coexistence.

His remarks came during a visit to

Kangpokpi as the state continues efforts to address the humanitarian and infrastructure impact of the violence that began in May 2023.

Earlier in the day, Khemchand visited L Champhai village to inspect a water

supply project and review repair work on a major pipeline supplying drinking water to Thangmeiband in Imphal.

The pipeline was damaged during the violence in May 2023. Officials of the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) informed the chief minister that the repair work was expected to be completed within a month, following which potable water supply would be restored to the affected areas.

MLAs Haokholet Kipgen, Heikham Dingo Singh and Kh Joykisan Singh assured support for the project, including assistance in ensuring security for officials involved in the repair work.

Khemchand also urged village leaders to extend cooperation to PHED personnel so that the restoration work could be completed without disruption.

During his interaction with residents at Leimakhong, the chief minister announced that the government would

consider upgrading the existing Primary Health Centre into a Community Health Centre.

He said the upgradation process could take some time and, as an interim measure, specialist and super-specialist doctors from the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) would be arranged to visit Leimakhong and provide medical services to residents.

Kipgen described Leimakhong as a “Mini Manipur”, pointing out that people from Meitei, Kuki, Naga, Nepali and Bihari communities live in the area.

He expressed hope that Leimakhong would regain the social harmony it experienced before the outbreak of violence. Dingo Singh said the chief minister’s initiatives could help reduce differences between communities and called for collective participation in efforts to restore peace and accelerate development.

Joykisan Singh stressed the impor-

ance of strengthening a common Manipuri identity while avoiding excessive emphasis on separate community identities.

Later, Khemchand visited Kanto Sabal village in Imphal West, where he interacted with members of the Women Welfare Organisation at the Village Development Committee Hall.

He heard their grievances and concerns and assured them that the government would examine their demands and extend assistance wherever possible.

The chief minister’s outreach comes as Manipur continues to grapple with the consequences of prolonged displacement, damaged infrastructure and deep social divisions. Rebuilding trust between communities, alongside the restoration of basic services and rehabilitation of affected families, remains central to the state’s broader peace and recovery efforts.

Arunachal Tensions Escalate in Bordumsa During SIR Hearing, Protest Turns Violent

ITANAGAR

Tensions escalated in Arunachal Pradesh’s Bordumsa area on Friday during a hearing linked to the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, after a protest by student and local organisations reportedly turned violent. Members of the All Arunachal Pradesh Students’ Union (AAP-SU), the Bordumsa Students’ Union and other organisations staged a demonstration at the ADC office, raising objections to the alleged inclusion of members of the Chakma community in the SIR process.

The protest reportedly escalated into clashes, followed by incidents of open firing. However, it was not immediately clear who opened fire, and authorities have yet to establish the exact circumstances that led to the firing. An AAPSU leader was also reportedly injured in a machete attack during the unrest, adding to tensions in the area. Security forces were deployed in Bordumsa following the incidents to prevent further escalation and maintain law and order. Authorities are expected to investigate the firing and the reported attack, besides establishing the sequence of events and identifying those involved. The developments come amid growing concerns in parts of Arunachal Pradesh over the verification of electoral rolls under the SIR exercise.

The revision process has become a contentious issue in areas where questions have been raised over voter verification and the inclusion of certain communities in electoral records.

Officials are expected to assess the situation and take necessary measures to prevent further disturbances as the SIR hearing process continues.

Akhil Gogoi Questions 477% Rise in Congress MP Rakibul Hussain’s Declared Assets



GUWAHATI

Rajior Dal MLA Akhil Gogoi has questioned the rise in Congress MP Rakibul Hussain’s declared assets between 2016 and 2024, alleging that the value increased by 477 per cent during the period Assam was governed by the BJP.

Gogoi claimed that Hussain had declared assets worth Rs 4.38 crore in his 2016 election affidavit. According to figures cited by the Rajior Dal leader, the amount rose to Rs 25.29 crore in Hussain’s 2024 election affidavit.

“During Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma’s tenure, listen to the untold story of the phenomenal rise in the assets of MP Rakibul,” Gogoi

said while raising the issue. Based on the figures cited by Gogoi, Hussain’s declared assets increased by about Rs 20.91 crore over the eight-year period. Hussain, a senior Congress leader, was elected from Assam’s Dhubri Lok Sabha constituency in the 2024 general election. Gogoi’s remarks come amid continuing political differences between him and the Congress leadership in Assam, with both sides frequently trading allegations over political and organisational issues. The asset figures referred to by Gogoi are based on election affidavits submitted by Hussain. A rise in declared assets, however, does not by itself establish financial wrongdoing or determine the source of the increase. Hussain’s response to the allegations was not immediately available. The controversy comes at a politically significant time in Assam, with the BJP-led government and opposition parties engaged in an increasingly sharp political contest over issues of governance, accountability and the financial declarations of public representatives.

AIZAWL/SILCHAR

Train services between Assam and Mizoram have been disrupted after heavy rainfall triggered soil erosion along the railway track between Jamira in Assam and Bairabi in Mizoram on the Katakhal-Bairabi section.

The damage was reported on September 3, affecting around 70 metres of railway track, while soil erosion has extended up to 40 metres from the track centre, according to the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR).

NFR has launched restoration work at the affected location and is monitoring the condition of the track. However, repair work is expected to take time as the site does not have direct road connectivity, making it difficult to transport workers, equipment and construction materials.

The disruption has resulted in the cancellation and curtailment of several passenger and long-distance train services connecting Assam and Mizoram.



Train No. 15610 Sairang-Guwahati Express will remain cancelled for journeys beginning on September 5, 7 and 9, while Train No. 15609 Guwahati-Sairang Express will be cancelled for journeys beginning on September 6 and 8. Train No. 55667 Silchar-Bairabi Express will remain cancelled from September 5 to 9, while Train No. 55668 Bairabi-Silchar Express will be cancelled from September 6 to 10. Train Nos. 55669 Silchar-Sairang Express and 55670 Sairang-Silchar Express have also been cancelled on specified dates between September 6 and 10. Several services curtailed

Some long-distance trains will operate on shortened routes because of the disruption.

Train No. 15610 Sairang-Guwahati Express, scheduled to commence its journey on September 6 and 8, will originate from Hailakandi instead of Sairang. The Sairang-Hailakandi portion of the service will remain cancelled.

Train No. 13126 Sairang-Kolkata Express, scheduled to depart on September 7, will also originate from Hailakandi, with services between Sairang and Hailakandi cancelled.

On the Guwahati-Sairang route, Train No. 15609, scheduled

to commence its journey on September 5, 7 and 9, will terminate at Hailakandi. The Hailakandi-Sairang section will remain cancelled. Similarly, Train No. 13125 Kolkata-Sairang Express, scheduled to commence its journey on September 5, will be short-terminated at Hailakandi. Train No. 20508 Anand Vihar Terminal-Sairang Express, scheduled to commence its journey on September 6, will also terminate at Hailakandi. NFR said restoration work is underway and railway officials are continuously assessing the condition of the damaged track and the progress of repairs.

The railway authorities said further changes to train operations will depend on the pace of restoration work and the safety assessment of the affected section.

The disruption is likely to affect passengers travelling between Assam and Mizoram, particularly those relying on the rail connection through Bairabi, the gateway to Mizoram’s rail network.

Assam Agricultural University Wins State NSS Award for Best University



JORHAT

Assam Agricultural University (AAU), Jorhat, has been conferred the State NSS Award 2024-25 in the Best University category for its contribution to community service, social welfare and other outreach activities under the National Service Scheme (NSS). The award was presented by Assam Sports and Youth Welfare Minister Biswajit Daimari at the Arjun Bhogeswar Baruah Complex in Guwahati on September 3 during the State Sports Day programme. Dr Binoy Kumar Medhi, Director of Students’ Welfare-cum-NSS Programme Coordinator at AAU, received the award on behalf of the university. The recognition also acknowledged Medhi’s role in leading and coordinating the university’s NSS Cell. Under his supervision, the cell has expanded its outreach programmes, with NSS programme officers and volunteers taking part in community service, social welfare, environmental activities and other initiatives aimed at contributing to society.

The university said its NSS

volunteers have remained actively involved in various community-oriented programmes, reflecting the institution’s emphasis on social responsibility alongside academic activities.

In another achievement for AAU, Ayushman Boruah, a fourth-year student of the College of Agriculture, Jorhat, received the State NSS Award 2024-25 in the NSS Volunteer category. Boruah was recognised for his leadership and contribution to NSS activities and community service. AAU said the two awards reflected the collective efforts of its NSS fraternity and the coordination of the university’s NSS Cell. The university added that the recognition would encourage students, programme officers and volunteers to expand their participation in community service, environmental initiatives and other social welfare activities.

The awards mark a significant recognition of AAU’s efforts to connect student engagement with community development and social responsibility through the NSS programme.

Nomination process for Silchar Municipal Corporation Election, 2026 underway

SILCHAR

The nomination process for the Silchar Municipal Corporation Election, 2026 commenced on September 2, 2026 at the designated venue of Government Boys’ H.S. School, Silchar. Candidates are required to submit their nomination papers between 11 AM and 3 PM during the prescribed nomination period.

For the convenience of candidates and to ensure smooth conduct of the nomination process, separate rooms have been designated for different groups of wards at the Government Boys’ H.S. School. Candidates contesting from Ward Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are required to submit their nomination papers at Room No. 1 on the Ground Floor, while candidates from Ward Nos. 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 will submit their papers at Room No. 2 on the Ground Floor. Similarly, Room No. 3 on the Ground Floor has been



designated for Ward Nos. 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15, while Room No. 4 on the Ground Floor has been allotted for Ward Nos. 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20, while Room No. 5 on the Ground Floor has been designated for candidates from Ward Nos. 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25. On the First Floor, Room No. 6 has been allotted for Candidates Ward Nos. 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30. Candidates from

Ward Nos. 31, 32, 33, 34, 35 and 36 will submit their nomination papers at Room No. 7, while Room No. 8 has been designated for candidates from Ward Nos. 37, 38, 39, 40, 41 and 42.

The ward wise allocation of rooms has been made to facilitate candidates and their representatives in completing the nomination formalities in an organised manner.

Election officials and personnel are present at the designated venue to oversee the process and assist with the prescribed procedures.

The Silchar Municipal Corporation Election, 2026, covers all 42 wards of the corporation. Candidates intending to contest the election are required to complete the nomination process within the stipulated time and in accordance with the provisions and instructions issued by the competent election authorities. All concerned candidates and their representatives are requested to take note of the designated rooms for their respective wards and adhere to the prescribed nomination timings while submitting their nomination papers. This is stated in a press release issued by the Regional office of Information & Public Relations Barak valley Zone Silchar Assam.

“There is no shortcut to success except hard work”: Minister Kaushik Rai

SILCHAR

There is no shortcut to success other than hard work. The students who work hard will definitely get results”, this was stated by the Assam Govt’s Minister for Food and Public Distribution, Housing and Urban Affairs and Cooperation, Kaushik Rai at Lakhipur on Friday urging them to make studies their foremost priority as they prepare for the HSLC examination in February 2027.

Addressing students at Nehru Higher Secondary School, where he formally launched the distribution of suggestion books for the 2027 HSLC examination at his own initiative, Minister Kaushik Rai said that he had decided to provide study materials to students of government schools under Lakhipur constituency to help them prepare systematically for the examination. Approximately 2,200 students studying in government schools under Lakhipur constituency are expected to receive the suggestion books.

Minister Rai said the initiative was planned after discussions with teachers and taking their advice on the academic needs of students. The distribution began at Nehru Higher Secondary School and will be completed in all government schools in Lakhipur in the coming days with the remaining suggestion books scheduled to



reach schools by next week.

The Minister said students today are appearing in examinations in an increasingly competitive environment and need to prepare with a clear understanding of the changing pattern of evaluation. Recalling the academic scenario of earlier years when securing a second division in the matriculation examination was considered an achievement, he said the situation had changed considerably, with a large number of students now securing first divisions.

“Division should not be the priority. Students should prepare themselves in such a way that they can face competitive examinations successfully,” Minister Rai said advising the students to concentrate on building a strong academic foundation rather than merely clearing the HSLC examination.

He said every parent dreams of seeing their children become successful and established in society, and therefore merely passing the HSLC examination should not be regarded as the final goal. Students should strive for higher marks so that they can pursue higher studies and compete for opportunities in the future.

Referring to the expansion of higher

educational opportunities in Lakhipur, Minister Kaushik Rai said the constituency now has a Model Degree College and a Law College. He urged students to prepare seriously from the school level so that they could take advantage of such institutions and pursue higher qualifications.

“The days when admission to higher studies could be secured through someone’s reference are gone. Today students have to earn their place through their marks and merit,” the Minister added.

Minister Kaushik Rai also spoke about employment opportunities in the State and said the government under the leadership of Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma had provided government appointments to around 1.60 lakh job aspirants over the past five years on the basis of merit. He said the Chief Minister had announced plans to provide government employment to another two lakh job aspirants over the next five years.

“There is no place for backdoor entry into government jobs. No job will be given through an MLA or a Minister. It is the merit of the student that will fetch him or her a job,” mentioned Minister Kaushik Rai asking students to prepare themselves with discipline and determination.

Appealing to the students not to waste the crucial months before the HSLC examination, the Minister said February 2027 was not far away and described the present period as an important phase in their academic careers. He asked them to devote their time primarily to their studies and make full use of the support being extended by the government and their teachers.

Minister Rai also announced that extra classes would also be introduced in government schools to provide additional

academic support to students. He further said that career guidance and coaching facilities would be introduced in schools across the Lakhipur constituency so that students could understand different career options and make informed choices about their future.

The Minister announced that free MBBS coaching would be introduced in Lakhipur next year, enabling students to prepare for the NEET examination without having to depend entirely on costly coaching facilities outside the area. He also announced that an APSC coaching centre would be introduced in Lakhipur in the first part of next year.

He said ADRE coaching classes would also be introduced shortly and the government would continue to provide necessary support to students. At the same time he reminded the students that government assistance could create opportunities, but success would ultimately depend on their own effort, discipline and perseverance.

Minister Kaushik Rai expressed gratitude to Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma for introducing initiatives such as Nijut Moina for girl students and Nijut Babu for boys saying such programmes were creating additional avenues of support for young people pursuing education.

The Minister also announced his broader priorities for Lakhipur for the coming five years, saying that as MLA and Minister he would give greater attention to human resource development alongside roads, infrastructure and other physical development projects. He said that developing the skills, knowledge and capabilities of young people would remain an important part of the constituency’s development agenda.

Quest!

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JPC on ‘One Nation, One Election’ seeks suggestions from depts through questionnaire

NEW DELHI

The Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) examining the proposed “One Nation, One Election” (ONOE) Bills is seeking the views of Union ministries and departments through a questionnaire, it is learnt.

The JPC has prepared questions on the role and functioning of ministries to assess how staggered elections affect their functioning and seek their views on simultaneous elections. The Lok Sabha Secretariat sought the response of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA).

In an office memorandum addressed to the Department of Capital Development under the ministry, the Secretariat said the exercise would seek assessment of administrative, financial, operational and policy implications of staggered polls and the benefits and challenges of simultaneous

elections.

The questionnaire, containing 27 queries, seeks an assessment of how staggered elections affect the ministry’s functioning, projects and public services. The Department has been asked to submit its views by September 15.

The Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Ninth Amendment) Bill, 2024 and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024, known as the ONOE Bills, were introduced in the Lok Sabha on December 17, 2024. They were subsequently referred to a Joint Committee of both Houses, headed by Lok Sabha MP P.P. Chaudhary, for wider consultation. The questionnaire asks how staggered elections over the past 10 years have affected the ministry’s functioning. It also asks whether the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) during successive elections has affect-

ed policy formulation, administrative decisions, approvals and implementation of programmes and schemes. The ministry has been asked to provide examples and quantify the impact.

It has also been asked whether projects, schemes, reforms or other initiatives were delayed, deferred, modified or implemented in phases because of successive polls, and whether the staggered cycle affects the planning and execution of medium- and long-term programmes, including multi-year projects and policy initiatives.

The questionnaire asks how staggered elections over the past 10 years have affected the ministry’s functioning. Another set of questions seeks details of personnel deployed for election-related duties and whether such deployment has affected functioning or created additional workload for other personnel.



image courtesy: onoe.gov.in

INTERNATIONAL

UK far-right party rallies behind Nigel Farage after new foreign donation scandal



BIRMINGHAM

British far-right leader Nigel Farage sought to play down a fresh donations scandal Friday sparked by an undercover sting operation that overshadowed his Reform UK party’s annual conference.

Farage had been hoping to use the gathering to move on from damaging controversies over financial gifts by setting out the policies of any future Reform government, including cooperation with France’s anti-immigrant National Rally (RN) party.

But just hours before Farage’s keynote address, two senior Reform officials resigned following an investigation aired by Channel 4 News.

The report included undercover footage that showed the party discussing steps to secure a foreign donation – banned

under UK electoral law.

Reform said in a statement that policy head James Orr and Farage’s longtime aide Dan Jukes had stepped down from their roles pending the outcome of an internal probe into the sting.

The ruling Labour party was among rival parties to say they had reported Reform to police over claims it took funding from a US firm for three opinion polls it commissioned earlier this year.

The purported donors were in fact undercover reporters for investigative journalism group Verbatim.

Speaking to reporters, Farage dismissed suggestions that Reform had previously taken disguised foreign donations as “loose pub talk” but acknowledged that comments by Orr and Jukes in the footage were “injudicious at best”.

In his keynote address to a packed

conference hall, a defiant Farage condemned the undercover filming as a “prolonged exercise in entrapment”.

“The party has done nothing wrong. The party has taken no illegal money,” he said to cheers and applause from the floor.

Attendees at the conference in the central English city of Birmingham also played down the allegations.

“I just think they (opponents) are so worried about Reform, it’s attack, attack, attack all the time,” 62-year-old nurse Heather Kynman told.

Darren Ball, another delegate, predicted the furore would not knock Reform’s prospects. “Reform is the only party that can save this country. Immigration is a huge thing for the UK. It needs to be addressed,” said the 51-year-old, who works in security.

The party’s main focus is its anti-immigration policies, in particular ending the arrival of thousands of irregular migrants by small boat on England’s southern coast.

Setting out the party’s pledges on immigration, home affairs spokesperson Zia Yusuf told the conference a Reform government would “deploy the Royal Navy to stop the boats” and “remove every foreign national who entered this country illegally”.

The conference was also addressed by Jordan Bardella, president of France’s far-right National Rally party.

He promised that under a National Rally government France would no longer be the “gateway for illegal immigration into the UK”.

He and Farage announced a memorandum of understanding to cooperate on the issue should their parties each win power.

Britain’s centre-left Labour government has said the number of boats carrying migrants and asylum seekers across the Channel was the lowest this summer since 2019, in part because of existing cooperation deals with the French government.

Firebrand Farage has been seeking to regain the momentum that saw Reform chalk up significant success at May local elections.

Security was tight at the conference centre but Farage’s speech to conference was repeatedly interrupted by shouting protesters who were booed as they were removed by security.

During a speech by Reform’s deputy leader Richard Tice a climate protest banner depicting Farage in a top hat and reading “Collect £5 million, burn the planet” appeared for several minutes before being taken down.

Tice is also facing allegations that he failed to declare financial gifts.

Several delegates wore Union Jack clothing while one man roamed around dressed as medieval king Richard the Lionheart.

“It’s appropriate because he fought for the right thing, like Farage,” said 62-year-old historical re-enactor Chris Luck, dressed in a red cloak, chain mail balaclava and crown.

India in touch with Ukraine and Russia, seeks ideas to help end war: EAM Jaishankar

NEW DELHI

India has been in continuous touch with both the Ukrainian and Russian sides and is trying to see if there are ideas and suggestions which can be developed in some way that will contribute to the mitigation or the cessation of the conflict, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Friday.

Jaishankar, who arrived in Warsaw from Kyiv, where he held talks with top Ukrainian leadership on Thursday, made the remarks after meeting Poland’s Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski.

Addressing a joint press meet alongside Sikorski, Jaishankar said he discussed complex global challenges, including supply chain resilience and food, fuel and fertiliser security, with his Polish counterpart.

“The Deputy Prime Minister and I also understandably discussed some major global and regional issues, notable among them is the war in Ukraine, now in its fifth year... I myself have just come here from Kyiv,” he said, referring to his visit to Ukraine a day earlier.

Replying to a question, he said India has been in continuous touch with both the Ukrainian and Russian sides.

“What we are trying to do is to see if there are ideas and suggestions which can be developed in some way in which they will contribute to the mitigation, ideally, the cessation of the conflict,” he added.

A day earlier, Jaishankar had said in Ukraine that India is ready to extend “any help in any manner” to end the Ukraine-Russia war. He had met President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and his Ukrainian counterpart Andrii Sybiha in Kyiv on Thursday.

External Affairs Minister



S. Jaishankar with Poland’s Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Radoslaw Sikorski during a bilateral meeting to review the India-Poland Joint Action Plan 2024-28, in Warsaw, Poland, Sept. 4, 2026. After talks with Jaishankar, Zelenskyy had said that he was “grateful to India for its commitment to ending this unjust war.”

“This certainly must not be a time of war. Peace is needed. This is India’s clear position,” he said and hoped that other major world powers would also take a clear stance that this war must end and that a reliable peace must be achieved.

On Friday, Jaishankar reiterated that India believes that endless war must give way to an end to war.

“These are wars without winners. Every additional day means more death, more destruction, more loss to the parties themselves, and more cost to the rest of the world,” he said in Warsaw. The External Affairs Minister recalled that this concern was voiced publicly by Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently.

“Our efforts must therefore focus on promoting dialogue and diplomacy. We must each do what we can in whichever way we believe could be most

effective and support the efforts of others to bring this conflict to an end. This is India’s strong conviction, and we are acting on it,” he added.

On India’s purchases of Russian oil, the minister said the issue is a conflict, and its solution lies in negotiations, not in trade.

“This war is not going to end... not because somebody chose to buy or not buy oil or alumina or fertilisers or metals and minerals. It will end when there is diplomacy, when there is dialogue and when there is negotiation. So, I think let’s diagnose the problem right,” he said while replying to another question.

Trump administration scrubs data on gender-based bullying from school civil rights survey

WASHINGTON

The Trump administration this week quietly released an update to a major survey on civil rights in schools that was scrubbed of all data related to nonbinary students or bullying based on gender identity.

The numbers come from the Education Department’s Civil Rights Data Collection, a federal survey of nearly every public school in the nation. The release this week covers the 2023-2024 school year, when the survey included “nonbinary” as a gender category alongside male and female.

However, an Associated Press analysis shows that in every column for information related to gender identity, the numbers were replaced with a code indicating “Suppressed in Compliance with Executive Order.” That refers to an executive order that President Donald Trump signed on his inauguration day calling for the federal government to define sex as only male or female.

The government also suppressed the number of allegations of harassment or bullying based on gender identity in schools, information about whether the districts had written policies prohibiting such harassment, and any links to those policies.

Those questions in the data collection are designed to capture the experiences of transgender and nonbinary students — whether they experience harassment, participate in sports or face overly harsh discipline, said Seth Galanter, a senior fellow at the Edley Center on Law and Democracy and a former attorney with the Education Department’s Office for Civil Rights under the Biden and Obama administrations.

Only school districts that already collected data on trans and nonbinary students were required to report it to the federal government, Galanter said, and roughly

1,800 out of the more than 13,000 U.S. school districts reported data in the last collection.

“We’re losing the granular experience of those kids,” Galanter said. “They exist in the world, their schools acknowledge their existence, but we now no longer have any way to have any kind of local, state or national picture about these kids and what their school experience is like.”

In a written statement, the Education Department said the Office for Civil Rights would be releasing more data in coming weeks. It also said the Trump administration is “realigning the functions of OCR to align with its statutory mandate.”

The data suppression reflects the Trump administration’s wider efforts to target protections for transgender and nonbinary students in schools. The White House has repeatedly clashed with schools and colleges over accommodations for transgender students, with the Justice Department this week announcing a federal lawsuit against the school system in Kansas City, Kansas, over its policies on transgender students.

It’s also one of many instances in which the administration has removed data related to gender from government resources.

The Williams Institute, an LGBTQ+ law and policy research center based at the UCLA School of Law, has identified around 360 cases where the Trump administration removed information related to sexual orientation or gender identity from federal data collections, ranging from Medicare surveys that asked about discrimination in doctors’ offices to data on homeless youth.

The author of the Williams Institute’s report, Lauren Bouton, said the Office for Civil Rights could have used the data to identify schools that have a problem with bullying of nonbinary

students and then require them to follow an action plan to improve. “No one’s being held accountable to these kids,” Bouton said.

The Civil Rights Data Collection is one of the country’s most important and comprehensive sources of data related to educational opportunity in public schools. As required by federal law, the Office for Civil Rights collects information from every school in the country on topics like discipline, corporal punishment, bullying and harassment, and access to advanced coursework.

The lack of transparency around the most recent update could erode public trust the government has worked to build for its civil rights data, said Ivy Morgan, director of research and data at EdTrust, a Washington, D.C.-based think tank that advocates for educational equity. “The way this data was released is part of a long-standing pattern that we have observed for the last two years,” Morgan said.

“This administration just does not care about data, doesn’t care about research, doesn’t care about evidence. And it particularly doesn’t care about that information when it is helping us understand the experiences of students and people who are marginalized in our society.”

Preparations for the latest data collection began under President Joe Biden’s administration, and Morgan said the attempt to gather data on nonbinary and trans students was one of the most comprehensive efforts to date from the federal government. The survey went out to schools a month before Trump was inaugurated.

While Trump had previously announced his administration would remove questions related to gender identity, it was unclear whether that would affect the 2024 data or only future surveys.

“WHEN KRISHNA RETURNS”

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

The Last Kurukshetra, A Soldier's Search for Dharma.

There are questions that do not belong to one generation. They survive kingdoms, empires and civilizations. One such question has travelled with India for thousands of years!

Will Krishna return?

The answer has been interpreted in many ways.

Some wait for a divine figure to descend from the heavens. Some believe that whenever dharma declines, the Divine manifests in another form. Others believe that Krishna never truly leaves that his consciousness appears whenever courage rises against injustice.

But perhaps there is another question.

If Krishna returned today, would we recognize him?

Would we recognize him if he did not carry a Sudarshan Chakra?

If he did not wear a crown?

If he did not perform miracles?

What if he entered Parliament instead of a battlefield?

What if his battlefield was corruption?

What if his weapons were truth, law, strategy and courage?

And what if the first person to recognize him was not a priest, but an old soldier?

The Soldiers perspective.

Colonel Kumar had spent most of his life serving India.

The Army had taught him that duty was not a matter of convenience.

When the nation called, the soldier went.

When danger appeared, the soldier stood.

When fear entered the mind, discipline took its place.

He had served in difficult environments and had seen the country from places most citizens never saw. He had known the silence of mountains, the uncertainty of borders and the loneliness that comes with responsibility. After retirement, he settled quietly in the hills. But retirement had not retired his mind.

He began writing.

History became his second battlefield. Among all the figures of India's ancient past, Krishna fascinated him most. Kumar did not study Krishna merely as the deity worshipped in temples.

He studied the man behind the tradition.

The child separated from his parents.

The boy raised by Nanda and Yashoda.

The young Krishna who grew up amid danger.

The strategist who left Mathura when circumstances demanded it.

The builder of Dwarka.

The student of Sandipani.

The protector of the Pandavas.

The friend who stood beside Draupadi.

The charioteer who transformed Arjuna's despair into duty.

The statesman who knew when to negotiate and when to fight.

The man who saw his beloved Dwarka destroyed and yet did not abandon his inner balance.

Kumar wrote in his diary:

"Krishna's greatest miracle was perhaps not what he did. It was what he refused to become."

He never allowed power to possess him.

He carried responsibility without becoming attached to its rewards.

That lesson stayed with Kumar.

The India of his time.

India had changed enormously.

The nation had nuclear weapons.

Satellites circled the earth.

Artificial intelligence was transforming human life.

Indian scientists were reaching into space.

Young Indians were leading global companies.

The economy was expanding.

The world was beginning to look toward India with respect. And yet, beneath this extraordinary progress, Kumar sensed a dangerous weakness.

Corruption.

Not merely the exchange of money under a table.

Something deeper.

A culture in which influence could replace merit.

Money could replace fairness.

Connections could replace competence.

Fear could replace truth.

Political patronage could protect wrongdoing.

Some businessmen purchased influence.

Some officials sold decisions.

Some politicians protected criminals.

Some criminals entered politics.

Some honest officers were punished for refusing to compromise.

Some citizens had become so accustomed to corruption that they had stopped believing change was possible.

The Colonel began writing again.

"The Kauravas have returned."

Then he stopped.

The Kauravas of the modern age were not sitting together in Hastinapura.

They were everywhere.

They were not one family.

They were a mindset.

A belief that the nation existed for personal benefit.

A belief that institutions could be captured.

A belief that honesty was for fools.

A belief that power could protect wrongdoing.

Kumar closed his diary.

He stared out of his window.

And a question came to him:

"If Krishna were alive today, what would he do?"

The politicians.

The answer appeared on television a few weeks later.

A young politician had suddenly begun attracting national attention.

His name was Krish Dev.

He was unlike the politicians Kumar had known.

He did not arrive with a procession of luxury cars.

He did not make extravagant promises.

He refused expensive gifts.

He publicly disclosed his campaign finances.

When one of his own party members was accused of corruption, Krish Dev did not defend him.

Instead, he said:

"If he is innocent, the law will protect him. If he is guilty, the law must reach him."

The statement created an uproar. A journalist asked him:

"Do you believe politics can become clean?"

Krish Dev smiled.

"Politics cannot become clean until people stop treating corruption as normal."

Another journalist asked:

"Why did you enter politics?"

His answer was simple.

"Because public life should belong to the public."

Kumar watched the interview twice.

Something about the man disturbed him.

Not because he seemed dangerous.

Because he seemed familiar.

The Meeting.

They met in Imachal Pradesh. Krish Dev had come for a public programme and asked to meet Colonel Kumar privately.

"You wanted to meet me?" Kumar asked.

"Yes."

"Why?"

"I have read some of your writings."

"You read history?"

"I read anything that helps me understand India."

Kumar smiled.

"That is an unusual quality in a politician."



Perhaps that is why I became one. They spoke for several hours.

About Krishna.

About Kurukshetra.

About the Constitution.

About national security.

About corruption.

About the future of India.

Finally Kumar asked:

"What do you really want?"

Krish Dev looked toward the mountains.

To restore trust.

In whom?

In the people.

And how will you do it?

"By making honesty stronger than corruption."

Kumar laughed.

That sounds good in a speech.

I am not asking you to believe my speech.

"What are you asking?"

"Test me."

The Team of Mine

Kumar agreed to help.

But he knew that one politician could not change a nation.

He assembled a team.

A retired police officer whose career had suffered because he refused political pressure.

A constitutional lawyer.

A former judge.

A technology expert.

An investigative journalist.

A civil servant known for integrity.

An economist.

And young citizens who had refused to accept corruption as inevitable.

They met secretly at first.

Krish Dev looked at them.

We are not creating another political organisation.

"Then what are we creating?" Kumar asked.

"A mechanism through which honest people can finally protect one another."

Kumar nodded.

For the first time, he saw a strategy.

The enemy was not a single individual.

The enemy was a system that protected corruption.

Break that protection, and corruption would weaken.

The First Battle.

The first investigation concerned government contracts. For years, projects had been awarded to favoured companies.

Costs were inflated.

Middlemen received commissions.

Officials received benefits.

Politicians received political funding.

The money moved through layers of companies until its origin disappeared.

The Dharma Team began collecting evidence.

There were no dramatic raids.

No television spectacle.

No arbitrary arrests.

Every allegation was documented.

Every transaction traced.

Every witness protected.

Every accused person given due process.

Then the first arrest took place.

A powerful politician.

The country was stunned.

The second arrest involved a senior bureaucrat.

The third involved a businessman.

Then a police officer.

Then another politician.

The message travelled across the country:

The law had begun moving upward.

The Price of Honesty.

But every battle has a price.

Kumar discovered this personally. One evening, he found the name of an old colleague in the investigation.

A man with whom he had served.

A man who had once saved Kumar's life during a difficult operation.

A man whose family had stood beside Kumar during his own troubled years.

The Colonel refused to believe it.

"This cannot be true."

Krish Dev placed the file before him.

"Read it."

Kumar read.

Bank transactions.

Property purchases.

Companies.

Payments.

Undisclosed interests.

The evidence was overwhelming.

Kumar closed the file.

"I know this man."

Krish Dev replied:

"You know the man he was."

Those words broke something inside Kumar.

For decades he had believed that loyalty was a virtue.

Now he understood that loyalty to a wrongdoer could become complicity.

He went home and sat alone.

The next morning he returned.

"Tell me what I should do."

Krish Dev shook his head.

"No."

"Why?"

"Because you already know."

"I want your decision."

"You don't need my decision."

"Then what do I need?"

"Your conscience."

Kumar stared at him.

Krish Dev continued:

"Ask yourself one question. If this man were a stranger, what would you do?"

The Colonel knew the answer.

He signed the statement.

His old colleague was arrested.

Kumar was attacked publicly.

He was accused of betrayal.

Some friends stopped speaking to him.

For several months, the old soldier felt utterly alone.

One evening he told Krish Dev:

I have lost everything.

Krish Dev answered:

No. You have only lost those who were comfortable with your silence. Kumar never forgot those words.

That was his personal Kurukshetra. And he had won it.

The Second Battle -The Police.

Krish Dev now turned toward policing.

He told Parliament:

"A policeman who fears a politician cannot protect a citizen."

Police reforms followed.

Recruitment was strengthened.

Transfers became more transparent.

Investigations were protected from arbitrary political interference.

Honest officers received institutional protection.

Corrupt officers were investigated according to law regardless of rank.

The message was clear:

The uniform belonged to the Constitution, not to an individual politician.

The Third Battle -Justice.

The next challenge was the justice system.

Krish Dev never attacked judicial independence.

Instead, he strengthened it.

Corruption cases were given specialised mechanisms and time-bound procedures consistent with constitutional safeguards.

Witnesses were protected.

Technology reduced opportunities for manipulation.

Evidence became harder to suppress. Judges were protected from political pressure. At the same time, ethical standards and lawful accountability were strengthened.

Krish Dev said:

"An independent judiciary must be fearless, and a fearless judiciary must serve the Constitution not any government, party or individual."

Public confidence slowly returned.

The Fourth Battle - Parliament.

Parliament was the hardest battlefield. There were politicians who had become accustomed to power. There were people who believed politics existed primarily to secure the next election.

There were those who opposed every reform that threatened their interests.

One night, an influential politician met Krish Dev privately.

"You will destroy your own government."

Krish Dev replied:

"If my government survives by protecting corruption, then it deserves to fall."

The politician stared at him.

"You don't understand politics."

Krish Dev smiled.

"Perhaps."

Then he added:

"I understand duty."

The Modern Kauravas Strike Back.

The corrupt network understood that its survival was threatened.

It fought back.

False cases were created.

Misinformation spread across social media.

Fake documents appeared.

Communities were provoked against each other.

Money moved through hidden channels.

Political pressure increased.

Then came the attack.

Krish Dev's convoy was ambushed.

Several security personnel were injured.

Kumar was furious.

"Now we fight."

Krish Dev looked at him.

"No."

"They attacked you."

"I know."

"We should destroy them."

"No."

"Why?"

"Because they want us to become them."

Kumar fell silent.

"Find those responsible," Krish Dev said.

"And then?"

"Give them to the law."

The Colonel understood.

The modern Kurukshetra could not be won by becoming another Kaurava army.

The Avatar of Modern Krishna.

One night, Kumar finally asked the question that had been growing inside him.

"Are you Krishna?"

Krish Dev remained silent.

Kumar repeated:

"Are you?"

The young politician looked at him.

"What would happen if I said yes?"

"I would believe you."

"And then?"

"I would follow you."

Krish Dev smiled.

"That is exactly why I cannot say yes."

"Why?"

"Because Krishna never asked Arjuna to stop thinking."

Kumar looked at him.

"Then who are you?"

"A servant of dharma."

"Are you an Avatar?"

Krish Dev looked toward the night sky.

"Perhaps."

Kumar waited.

"An Avatar," Krish Dev said slowly, may not always arrive in the form people expect.

Then how will we know?

You won't.

Why?

"Because the moment you become certain, you may stop thinking."

He turned toward Kumar.

"Do not ask whether I am Krishna."

"Then what should I ask?"

"Ask whether what I am doing restores dharma."

Kumar had no answer.

He did not need one.

The Last Kurukshetra.

The final battle began when the corrupt network attempted to destabilise the country. Its objective was larger than money. It wanted to destroy public confidence in institutions. If people stopped believing in Parliament, police, courts and administration, democracy itself would weaken.

The country came dangerously close to chaos.

Krish Dev addressed the nation.

He did not call for revenge.

He did not call for violence.

He did not ask citizens to hate their opponents.

He said:

"India will not be destroyed by those who oppose her. India will be weakened only when Indians surrender their faith in truth, justice and duty."

He asked soldiers to remain loyal to the Constitution.

He asked police officers to remain impartial.

He asked judges to remain fearless.

He asked civil servants to remain honest.

He asked Parliament to remember that power ultimately belonged to the people. And he asked citizens to do something even harder:

To refuse corruption even when corruption was convenient.

The country listened.

The institutions held.

The conspiracy collapsed.

The New India.

The transformation took years. There was no single magical morning when corruption disappeared.

Instead, thousands of small victories accumulated.

A police officer refused a bribe.

A civil servant rejected political pressure.

A judge delivered a difficult judgment.

A businessman refused to pay a commission.

A teacher rejected influence in recruitment.

A doctor refused an illegal payment.

A citizen stopped offering money to get work done.

Honesty began to acquire institutional protection.

Corruption began to carry real consequences.

The greatest change was psychological.

People stopped saying:

"Nothing can change."

They began saying,

"We can change it."

Bharat Rises.

India entered a new era.

Its economy grew.

Its technology became globally influential.

Its armed forces remained strong.

Its scientists led major international projects.

Its universities attracted students from around the world.

Its villages became prosperous.

Its cities became cleaner and better governed.

Its Parliament regained dignity.

Its police regained public trust.

Its judiciary became more accessible.

Its civil services regained prestige.

India became a global superpower.

But Krish Dev repeatedly warned against arrogance.

"Power without character is only another form of weakness."

India's strength was now measured not merely by GDP, weapons or technology.

It was measured by the confidence of its people that justice could be obtained without influence.

That honesty could succeed without patronage.

That public office was service.

And that the nation belonged equally to the powerful and the powerless.

The Final Meeting.

Many years later, Colonel Kumar met Krish Dev one last time.

The politician was sitting alone.

No crowd.

No cameras.

No security entourage.

Kumar smiled.

"You changed India."

Krish Dev shook his head.

"No."

"Then who did?"

"The people."

"What did you do?"

"I reminded them."

"Of what?"

"Of themselves."

The Colonel looked at him for a long time. He suddenly remembered the Krishna he had studied all his life.

The child who survived danger.

The strategist who knew when to fight.

The statesman who built Dwarka.

The friend who never abandoned the Pandavas.

The charioteer who refused to fight for Arjuna but taught him how to fight his own battle.

The man who carried responsibility without attachment.

Kumar finally asked:

"Will you stay?"

Krish Dev smiled.

"Krishna never stays where people want him to stay."

"Where will you go?"

"Where dharma needs me."

He stood.

As he walked away, Kumar noticed something on the table.

A small wooden flute.

He picked it up.

"Do you play?" he called.

Krish Dev turned.

For a moment, there was that familiar smile.

"Only when the world becomes quiet enough to listen."

He walked away.

Kumar watched until he disappeared.

Epilogue -The Answer.

That evening, the old soldier opened his diary.

On the first page was the question he had written years earlier:

"Will Krishna return?"

He looked at it for a long time. Then he wrote beneath it:

"Perhaps the question was wrong."

He continued:

"Perhaps Krishna does not return merely to save humanity."

He paused.

Then wrote:

"Perhaps he returns to awaken humanity so that humanity can save itself."

Outside, the Indian flag moved gently in the evening breeze. India was at peace.

Not because it had no enemies.

Not because corruption had become impossible.

But because the people had rediscovered the courage to resist it.

The Colonel closed his diary.

He looked toward the horizon.

For a fleeting moment, he thought he heard a flute.

Perhaps it was the wind.

Perhaps it was memory.

Perhaps it was Krishna.

He smiled.

He no longer needed to know.

Because the answer was no longer important.

The Avatar had done what an Avatar was meant to do.

He had awakened dharma.

He had reminded a nation of its strength.

He had made honest people fearless.

He had made corrupt people answerable.

He had restored dignity to institutions. And, most importantly, he had taught a civilization that no nation can become great merely by becoming powerful.

A nation becomes great when power is guided by dharma.

Colonel Kumar closed the diary.

The sun was rising over Bharat. And somewhere, beyond the mountains, a flute was playing.

Dharma had risen again.

Bharat had awakened.

And perhaps Krishna had never really left.

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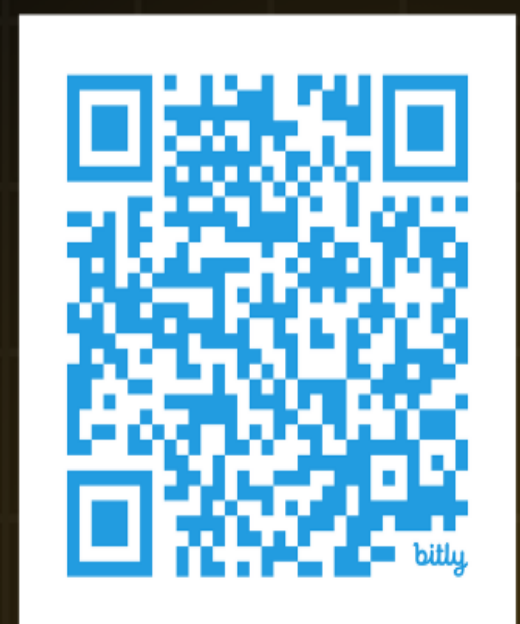
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