



Barak Festival

NE INDIA ADVENTURE SPORTS,
ART & CULTURE PROMOTION



Barak Valley, Assam | JAN-MAR 2025

www.krctimes.com
Mo: 8721 838313

Get all the latest and updated news of today in the evening. For subscribing to this e-paper contact at -8721838313

SUBSCRIBE

₹300 / year



WhatsApp payment details : 8721838313
info@krctimes.com

PERSPECTIVE

People who live in glass houses should not throw stones

Three of Family Killed, Son Injured in Guwahati Landslide

GUWAHATI

Three members of a family were killed and another injured after a landslide buried their house in Guwahati's Mathgharia area early Tuesday, police said.

The incident occurred when the family was asleep and a portion of the hillside gave way, causing debris to crash into and bury the house.

A couple and their daughter died in the landslide. Their bodies were recovered and sent for post-mortem examination, police said.

The couple's son survived the incident but sustained injuries. He was rescued and admitted to Gauhati Medical College and Hospital, where he is undergoing treatment.

Authorities have been monitoring the situation in the area following the incident. Mathgharia and several other parts of Guwahati remain vulnerable to landslides during the monsoon, particularly after periods of heavy rainfall.

Further details on the condition of the injured person and the extent of damage were awaited.



WHO SAID WHAT



7.8% growth. Strong numbers. Even stronger confidence.
~ **Narendra Modi, PM, India**

Tripura VC Polls After a Decade: Pradyot Calls for Educated, Capable Candidates

AGARTALA

TIPRA Motha founder Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma has urged the Tiprasa community to remain united and field honest, educated and capable candidates in the upcoming Village Council (VC) elections in Tripura.

In a Facebook Live on Monday, Debbarma welcomed the State Election Commission's announcement of the elections, saying the polls would give people an opportunity to exercise their constitutional rights after a gap of nearly 10 years.

"It was a long battle, my Tiprasa people. It was not an easy fight. I went to the Supreme Court and fought the case," he said, referring to the legal efforts preceding the announcement of the elections.

Debbarma appealed to teachers, professors, retired government officials, former defence personnel and other qualified people to contest the polls and take responsibility for the development of their villages.

He also cautioned political leaders against choosing candidates on the basis of corruption, family ties or personal relationships.

"This is your election. Your voice is paramount here because this election reaches right down to the village level," he



said.

Debbarma said elected Village Councils should have a greater say in decisions concerning funds meant for village-level

development, rather than such decisions being controlled by MLAs, MDCs or political party leaders.

He also reiterated his position on a pos-

sible political alliance, saying he would not enter into an alliance until the constitutional rights promised to the Tiprasa community under the Tiprasa Accord were granted.

"I will not form an alliance until our people are granted the constitutional rights that were promised to us in the Tiprasa Accord," he said.

Calling for "Thansa", or community unity, Debbarma said the idea should extend beyond electoral politics and focus on the future of the next generation.

He said the VC elections could also set the tone for the 2028 Assembly polls, urging the community to prioritise its rights and interests over party affiliations, money and political positions.

"If we remain united, we will get our land rights, our political rights, our funding, our language," he said.

Debbarma also called upon young and educated members of the community to enter electoral politics and work for long-term development.

"Stand! Stand! No one can defeat you," he said, urging voters and prospective candidates to focus on the broader interests of the community rather than immediate political gains.

Fisherman Missing Near Bangladesh Border; Family Suspects Abduction

SRIBHUMI

A 35-year-old fisherman has gone missing from Gobindapur area of Assam's Sribhumi district after leaving home to fish near the India-Bangladesh border, with his family suspecting that he may have been abducted by Bangladeshi nationals.

Balai Namasudra reportedly left his home around 6 am to go fishing but failed to return, prompting his family to launch a search and subsequently lodge a missing-person complaint at Sribhumi Sadar Police Station.

Following the complaint, police and the Border Security Force (BSF) launched a search operation in the border area to trace Namasudra.

The circumstances surrounding his disappearance have raised questions, particularly over his reported movement towards the border fencing.

According to his family, Gobindapur falls within Indian territory, but access to areas beyond the barbed-wire fencing is regulated by the BSF. People entering and leaving the area are reportedly re-

quired to obtain permission, while their movements are also recorded. The family claimed that Namasudra's name was allegedly not found in the BSF entry records, raising questions over whether he had entered the restricted area and how he subsequently went missing. The family has expressed suspicion that Namasudra could have been taken across the border by Bangladeshi nationals. However, there is no official confirmation so far that he was abducted or taken into Bangladesh.

Police are examining all possible angles as the search for the missing fisherman continues.

Sribhumi Senior Superintendent of Police Leena Doley confirmed the incident and said the matter was being taken seriously. Search operations are underway, while investigators are working to establish the circumstances surrounding Namasudra's disappearance.

Authorities are yet to ascertain whether the fisherman was abducted, accidentally strayed into a restricted area or went missing under other circumstances.

Manipur CM Yumnam Khemchand briefs BJP leaders on Census delay, appeals for peace



IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Tuesday briefed BJP leaders and workers in Imphal on his recent meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah over the postponement of Census operations in the state, while appealing to people to refrain from bandhs and general strikes.

Singh attended a reception programme at the BJP state office, Thambal Sanglen, following his

return from New Delhi. He was welcomed by BJP state president A. Sharda Devi, MLAs, senior party leaders and party workers. The Chief Minister briefed the gathering on the discussions he had with Shah concerning the postponement of the Census in Manipur. Singh said the BJP's central leadership was aware of the sentiments, aspirations and concerns of the people of the state. He cited the implementation of the Inner Line Permit (ILP) system in

Manipur as an example of the Centre's understanding of the state's concerns.

He said the state government was committed to restoring peace, normalcy and stability and called for collective efforts from all sections of society and stakeholders to achieve lasting peace.

The Chief Minister also highlighted the reopening of national highway connectivity, saying inter-state movement had resumed and travel had become safer and more affordable for the people.

Appealing for cooperation, Singh urged people and organisations to refrain from imposing bandhs and general strikes, saying such disruptions affect normal life and adversely impact the livelihoods of ordinary citizens. He stressed the need for all stakeholders to work together to consolidate the return of normalcy and ensure that the people of Manipur are able to resume their daily activities without disruption.



IMPHAL

The Centre has agreed to upgrade the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS), Imphal, to the status of an All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), according to the state government.

The announcement followed a meeting between Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh and Union Health and Family Welfare Minister JP

Nadda in New Delhi.

During the meeting, the Chief Minister said discussions were held on measures to strengthen and improve the health sector in Manipur.

Singh said Nadda had agreed to the proposal for upgrading RIMS, Imphal, to AIIMS status. He expressed gratitude to the Union Health Minister for supporting efforts to improve healthcare infrastructure in the state.

The Chief Minister also said Nadda had agreed to approve the proposal for setting up a new medical college in Senapati district. The proposed medical college is expected to strengthen access to medical education and healthcare services in the hill district and surrounding areas.

The proposed upgrade of RIMS would mark a significant development for Manipur's premier medical institution, while the proposed medical college in Senapati could expand the state's medical education infrastructure.

Further details on the proposed AIIMS status for RIMS and the establishment of the Senapati medical college, including timelines and funding, are awaited.

Naga Villages Along IT Road Reportedly Attacked, Houses Set Ablaze



IMPHAL

Several Naga villages along the Imphal-Tamenglong (IT) Road in Manipur's Kangpokpi district were reportedly attacked and houses set ablaze by armed groups on Tuesday morning, with sustained firing reported in the area from around 4 am, according to local sources.

Tapon Khunou and Tapon Kulen were among the villages reportedly targeted in the attacks. Pipuram, a Liangmai Naga village located about eight kilometres from Makui, was also allegedly set on fire, sources said.

There were no immediate reports of casualties.

The Makui Village Authority condemned the reported attack on Pipuram and described it as an "inhuman act". In a statement, it alleged that armed Kuki militants attacked the village around 4 am, opened fire and subsequently set houses and other properties ablaze.

According to the village authority, several households were destroyed in the attack, while food grains and other belongings were

also lost.

The authority further alleged that the armed group later attacked Makui Naga village and continued firing towards the settlement. It claimed that the attackers attempted to set houses on fire and cause casualties.

The latest incident comes days after four villagers from Makui were reportedly killed in an ambush between Makui Ashang and Thanamba villages on August 27.

The Makui Village Authority alleged that Tuesday's attack was part of a continuing pattern of violence targeting Liangmai Naga settlements along the IT Road.

It further alleged that the attacks were intended to force Liangmai Naga residents to leave the area and facilitate attempts to take control of their ancestral land.

The allegations could not be independently verified immediately.

Security forces are expected to assess the situation and the extent of damage in the affected villages. Further details regarding casualties, displacement and property damage were awaited.



VOLUME:1, ISSUE 862

MODI’S GREAT GAME

India’s diplomatic success can no longer be measured simply by the number of powerful leaders willing to sit across the table from Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The more difficult test is whether India can maintain those relationships without surrendering the freedom to make decisions in its own interest. That is the central challenge confronting New Delhi today. India has travelled a considerable distance from the days when it approached the world’s major powers largely as a developing country seeking economic assistance, diplomatic space or security guarantees. With a population of more than 1.4 billion and an economy that has emerged as one of the world’s largest, India is increasingly a power whose choices matter to others. Washington wants India as a strategic partner. Moscow wants to preserve its longstanding relationship with New Delhi. Beijing cannot afford to ignore India’s growing weight in Asia.

Yet being courted by great powers is not the same as being a great power. Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s engagement with Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping illustrates both the possibilities and the limitations of personal diplomacy. His meetings with the Russian and Chinese leaders have kept important channels open at a time when global politics has become deeply polarised. But summitry alone cannot resolve structural conflicts. Nor can personal chemistry overcome geography, history and competing national ambitions.

India’s foreign policy is therefore entering a more demanding phase: from balancing relationships to exercising strategic freedom.

No relationship presents a greater contradiction than India’s engagement with China. Modi and Xi have met repeatedly over the past decade, even as relations have suffered their worst military crisis in decades. The encounters at Wuhan and Mamallapuram were intended to restore confidence after the Doklam confrontation. The later meetings at Bali, Johannesburg, Kazan and Tianjin demonstrated that neither side wanted communication to collapse completely. Yet the persistence of meetings has not produced mutual trust. The reason is obvious. India and China are not merely two countries attempting to improve bilateral ties. They are two major Asian powers with competing strategic ambitions and an unresolved boundary. Their economic relationship has grown even as military suspicion has deepened.

The Galwan clash was a decisive reminder that diplomatic engagement cannot substitute for strategic preparedness. It shattered the assumption that frequent meetings between leaders could, by themselves, contain the rivalry.

The latest round of boundary negotiations, including the August 25 talks between National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, offers some reason for cautious optimism. The eight-point consensus and the stated commitment to pursue a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement are welcome developments. But India must avoid confusing the management of a dispute with its resolution. After decades of negotiations, another commitment to continue talking cannot be presented as a settlement. The real test is whether China is willing to create conditions in which military tensions can genuinely recede and economic relations can develop without being constantly overshadowed by security concerns.

Beijing has its own reasons for reducing friction with India. Its confrontation with Washington is becoming more consequential, and an additional strategic front on its western flank is hardly desirable. India, too, has an interest in stabilising the border so that scarce economic and military resources are not permanently consumed by Himalayan tensions. There is, therefore, room for accommodation. But accommodation must not become acquiescence. India can engage China without accepting Chinese primacy in Asia. It can expand trade without ignoring strategic vulnerability. It can pursue dialogue while simultaneously strengthening military preparedness.

That is what strategic autonomy should mean in practice. For generations, India-Russia ties have rested on accumulated strategic interests rather than temporary political convenience. Defence co-operation, energy, diplomatic coordination and institutional familiarity have given the relationship a resilience that few other bilateral partnerships possess. The Ukraine war did not destroy that relationship. Nor did Western pressure persuade India to sever its longstanding ties with Moscow.

For India, Russian energy has acquired considerable importance, while Russian-origin defence equipment continues to form a substantial part of the country’s military inventory. Moscow, meanwhile, has consistently sought to preserve its relationship with New Delhi despite its growing dependence on Beijing.

But there is a new reality that India cannot ignore. Russia has moved considerably closer to China.

That transformation complicates the traditional Indian conception of Moscow as an independent pole in the international system. Putin may enjoy an unusually durable relationship with Modi, but Russia’s growing economic and strategic dependence on China inevitably affects the space available for an independent India-Russia partnership.

This is why the idea of an India-Russia-China strategic triangle directed against the United States remains unrealistic.

The three countries may share reservations about aspects of American power, but they do not share the same strategic objectives. China seeks greater influence in Asia. India seeks a balance of power in Asia. Russia seeks to preserve its status as an autonomous great power.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Action is the foundational key to all success. - Pablo Picasso

HASINA CANNOT BE THE PRICE OF AN INDIA RESET



LT GEN BHOPINDER SINGH (RETD)

India wants Bangladesh’s new Prime Minister Tarique Rahman in Delhi. It has made little secret of it. From a formal invitation soon after Rahman’s Government took office to unusually warm assurances that he would receive the “highest honour” and a “memorable welcome”, New Delhi has gone considerably further than diplomatic niceties would normally require. India has also kept electricity and fuel supplies flowing, resumed bilateral mechanisms and facilitated medical visas-practical overtures suggesting Delhi is serious about repairing a relationship badly frayed since Sheikh Hasina’s dramatic fall in August 2024.

Yet one issue remains unresolved i.e., Sheikh Hasina herself. Dhaka wants her extradition. India says the request is being considered. For Bangladesh, this is a defining test of whether India genuinely accepts the post-Hasina political order. For Delhi, however, the matter is more complicated than choosing between an old friend and a new Government.

The temptation in Bangladesh is to see Hasina as the price India must pay for a reset. That calculation may prove mistaken. India can, and should, reassess its relationship with Bangladesh after Hasina. But expecting Delhi simply to “throw Hasina under the bus” ignores the history of the relationship, India’s own security considerations and the sensitivities surrounding the manner in which a former Prime Minister was removed from power and subsequently sought refuge in India.

Hasina is not merely another political exile in Delhi. For fifteen years she was India’s most important political partner in Dhaka. Her government worked closely with India on counter-insurgency, connectivity and security, while allowing New Delhi greater access to India’s north-eastern states through Bangladeshi territory. Road, rail and port links expanded. Security cooperation deepened. For India, this was not simply a personal relationship with Hasina; it was part of a strategic architecture constructed over years. That architecture cannot be dismantled overnight because the political weather in Dhaka has changed.

There is also a more uncomfortable reality. India has its own institutional and public sensitivities about how a former head of

government should be treated after seeking refuge on Indian soil. Whatever one thinks of Hasina’s record, and there are legitimate questions about democratic backsliding, human rights and political repression during her rule, Delhi cannot act as though these considerations do not exist. Nor can India ignore the precedent created by surrendering a former leader under circumstances that remain politically contested.

None of this means India should provide Hasina with an indefinite political platform from which to intervene in Bangladeshi politics. Her public interventions from India have complicated Delhi’s efforts to rebuild ties with Dhaka. Her recent virtual address attacking the current Bangladeshi government generated outrage in Bangladesh and placed Rahman in an awkward political position. India needs to recognise that sensitivity.

But Bangladesh, too, must recognise the difference between asking India to manage the consequences of Hasina’s presence and demanding that India abandon every consideration of its own. A reset cannot begin with an ultimatum. If Hasina is temporarily set aside, Delhi has already demonstrated considerable flexibility towards Bangladesh’s new government. India has reached out to Rahman, engaged the new administration and signalled that his visit to Delhi would receive unusual ceremony. It has maintained essential supplies and reopened bilateral channels despite the political turbulence of the past two years. These are not empty gestures.

Bangladesh can discount them because Delhi has not delivered Hasina. But doing so risks confusing one unresolved dispute with the entirety of the bilateral relationship. Dhaka’s emerging foreign-policy calculations also deserve scrutiny. Since Hasina’s departure, Bangladesh has sought to rebuild relations with Pakistan and expand defence and strategic cooperation with countries beyond India. There is nothing inherently wrong with diversification. No sovereign country should want its foreign policy dependent on a single neighbour. But diversification is not substitution.

Pakistan cannot replace India’s geography. China cannot replace India’s immediate neighbourhood. Neither can erase the realities of a 4,096-kilometre border, deep linguistic and cultural links, economic interdependence and

Bangladesh’s geographic importance to India’s access to its north-east. Bangladesh’s relationship with India is therefore structurally different from its relationship with Pakistan or China.

Dhaka can buy more weapons from one country, attract infrastructure investment from another or deepen diplomatic engagement with a third. None changes the map. And geography, particularly in South Asia, is often the most consequential foreign-policy fact of all. There is a danger in assuming that a strategic pivot away from India would automatically produce greater Bangladeshi leverage over Delhi. It may instead produce the opposite.

Bangladesh needs access to the Indian market. India remains important for Bangladesh’s energy security, transit, trade and connectivity. The north-eastern Indian states offer Bangladesh enormous strategic and economic opportunities, but those opportunities depend fundamentally on a functional relationship with Delhi. The same logic works in reverse. India needs Bangladesh. But mutual dependence does not mean both sides have identical leverage.

This is why Bangladesh would be unwise to interpret India’s eagerness for Rahman’s visit as weakness. Delhi is reaching out because it has substantial interests in Bangladesh. It is also reaching out because it understands that a stable and cooperative Bangladesh is in India’s interests. That is strategic realism, not capitulation. Dhaka should respond in kind.

There is a legitimate Bangladeshi argument that India must acknowledge the political transformation of 2024.

The old Hasina-centric relationship cannot simply be restored with a different occupant of the prime minister’s office. Bangladesh’s transition has changed public attitudes towards India, and Delhi needs to understand why its previous embrace of Hasina generated resentment among sections of Bangladeshi society. But making Hasina’s extradition the gateway through which every other aspect of the relationship must pass would be counterproductive.

Bangladesh should separate the Hasina question from the broader India relationship. The two governments can disagree profoundly over her future while simultaneously rebuilding trade, connectivity, energy cooperation, border management, water nego-

tiations and people-to-people ties. They can establish mechanisms to discuss the extradition request without allowing it to consume the entire relationship. That would be diplomacy.

The alternative is to turn a difficult bilateral issue into a test of national pride and then discover that pride does not generate electricity,

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

Be that Meitei or Kuki or Naga or any damn community, it’s a criminal act to kill innocent civilians. That it’s done right under the nose of the Indian State is nothing short of vastraharan of “Bharat Mata”! But all along, Modi and Amit Shah have been acting like Dhritrashtra and Duryodhana as “Bharat Mata” gets assaulted! Or is it that “adungeigi Kangleipak Manipur natte”? It’s already gone too far. But better late than never, state must assert its authority and rein in the violence and culprits must be brought to justice. There’s a need to review and change the paradigm that guides counter insurgency, of which SoO or ceasefire are crucial aspects, in the state. Stop using militia and armed groups as a state policy.

Angomcha Bimol Akoijam, MP (LS), Manipur Inner



open markets, secure borders or create transit corridors. There is a larger lesson for both countries. India cannot assume that the strategic goodwill accumulated during the Hasina years will automatically survive her departure. Bangladesh is no longer willing to accept an India policy defined primarily through one political leader. Delhi must engage Bangladesh as a country, not merely as an extension of a friendly government.

But Bangladesh should equally resist the idea that estrangement from India can be costlessly repaired through deeper ties with Pakistan or China. It cannot. China can be an important economic partner. Pakistan can be a useful diplomatic and defence partner. Saudi Arabia, Turkey and other countries can expand Bangladesh’s strategic options. But none offers the combination of proximity, connectivity, trade, security interdependence and geographic indispensability that India does.

The objective of Bangladeshi foreign policy should therefore not be to replace India. It should be to maximise Bangladesh’s interests while maintaining workable relations with India. That requires leverage, but it also requires proportion. India, for its part, should understand that protecting its relationship with Bangladesh does not require protecting every aspect of its relationship with Hasina. Delhi must distinguish between humanitarian considerations, legal processes and political activity.

A durable reset will not come from either side pretending the Hasina question does not matter. Nor will it come from making that question the price of every other form of cooperation. It will come when both governments recognise that they can disagree over one deeply consequential issue while rebuilding a relationship that geography, economics and mutual security make too important to abandon.

(The author is former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands & Puducherry)

Manipur HC puts Census exercise on hold amid demand for NRC update

IMPHAL

The Manipur High Court on Monday put on hold the Census-related exercise scheduled to begin on September 1, amid sustained demands from civil society organisations for updating the National Register of Citizens (NRC) before the Census process.

The development came during a hearing before a Special Division Bench of the High Court on petitions seeking NRC updation prior to the Census exercise.

Shanta, spokesperson for a coalition of 14 civil society organisations (CSOs) and a petitioner in one of the cases, said the court had directed that the Census process, including the house-listing exercise scheduled to begin on Tuesday, remain withheld until further notification from the Registrar General of India (RGI).



tion from the Registrar General of India (RGI).

The detailed order of the High Court is awaited and is expected to clarify the precise scope and duration of the stay.

The High Court had on August 28 constituted a Special Division Bench to hear PIL No. 14 of 2026 - The Kangleipak Students Association (KSA) and Another vs Union of India and 4 Others - and WP(C) No. 623 of 2026 - Shanta Singh Nahakpam vs Union of India and 5 Others, along with connected miscellaneous matters.

The court's intervention came against the backdrop of a sustained campaign by 14 CSOs demanding that the NRC in Manipur be updated before the Census exercise.

The issue has been pursued through court proceedings, public mobilisation and political engagement, with civil society groups arguing that the NRC

update is necessary to address concerns relating to citizenship, identity and the protection of indigenous interests.

Shanta said the campaign should not be confined to street protests and stressed the importance of pursuing legal and political avenues simultaneously.

He said people needed to understand the different strategies being adopted by civil society organisations and community leaders, particularly their efforts to take the issue through institutional and legal channels.

Defending the CSOs' recent outreach in New Delhi, Shanta said their delegation had met political leaders cutting across party lines, besides retired IAS and IPS officers, lawyers, former politicians and others with expertise on the issue.

He said the outreach should be viewed as a collective effort involving different stakeholders and political viewpoints rather than as an initiative of any single group.

Shanta also called for a broader consultation on the NRC issue, pointing out that Manipur comprises multiple communities and stakeholders.

"We are not only the Meitei community living in the state of Manipur. We have different stakeholders," he said.

He urged the Centre to bring all stakeholders together to discuss mechanisms to safeguard the interests and identity of Indian citizens in Manipur.

Monday's development came amid continuing protests over the NRC demand. The Joint Democratic Front (JDF) has also called a 24-hour strike ahead of the September 2 Assembly

session, adding to the political pressure surrounding the issue.

The High Court's direction is significant as the Census-related house-listing exercise was scheduled to commence from Tuesday. The stay now places the immediate rollout of the exercise in the state on hold pending further communication from the RGI.

The detailed judicial order is expected to provide greater clarity on the legal basis and extent of the court's direction, as well as the next steps for the Census authorities and the petitioners.

The development is likely to intensify the debate over the sequencing of the Census and NRC updation in Manipur, with civil society groups pressing the Centre to address citizenship and identity concerns before proceeding with the population enumeration exercise.

Exam, curriculum reforms must keep pace with changing times: AASU adviser

GUWAHATI

Reforms in the examination system, curriculum and subjects taught in educational institutions are essential to meet the changing needs of students, said All Assam Students' Union (AASU) chief adviser Dr Samujjal Kumar Bhattacharya on Sunday.

Addressing a felicitation programme organised by the Azara Ummayan Mancha (AUM) at Azara Public Hall, Bhattacharya called for the introduction of new and contemporary subjects and a more multidisciplinary approach to education.

He expressed support for the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, saying its best provisions should be adopted and implemented effectively.

Bhattacharya particularly welcomed the provision allowing students to take examinations in vernacular languages, describing it as a positive step that could make the examination system more accessible. He also stressed the need to address students' concerns and apprehensions over discrepancies in examinations and called for measures to ensure greater transparency and confidence in the system.

The AASU adviser highlighted 'Pratyasha', a pilot initiative launched by the students' body to prepare students from the North-east for All India competitive examinations. The initiative aims to help students pursue careers in the civil services and other areas of public administration, he said. Bhattacharya also urged students to remain focused on their studies and contribute to society by becoming responsible citizens.

The programme was also addressed by Ratul Goswami, president of the Asom Rajyik Prathamik Sikshak Sammilani, among others. As part of its annual initiative, the AUM felicitated 50 meritorious students from the greater Azara area for their performance in the JEE, NEET, Higher Secondary and High School Leaving Certificate examinations. The function was presided over by AUM president Dr Hari Charan Medhi, while secretary Jitendra Kumar Das conducted the proceedings.

Arunachal group protests alleged Chinese PLA presence in Taksing

ITANAGAR

The Save Taksing-Save Arunachal Movement Committee (STSAM) staged a protest in Itanagar, raising concerns over the alleged presence and activities of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) in the Taksing sector of Arunachal Pradesh.

The civil society group held a protest dharna at IG Park, demanding immediate measures to strengthen security along the international border and improve connectivity in the remote frontier region.

STSAM, which was formed to highlight concerns over alleged Chinese intrusion in Arunachal Pradesh, demanded the withdrawal of Chinese forces from areas it claims are under occupation, time-bound demarcation of the international boundary and improved road connectivity in border areas.

The group also called for the creation of a dedicated Arunachal Regiment in the Indian

Army.

During the protest, members alleged that Chinese PLA personnel had occupied five locations in the Taksing sector. The allegations could not be independently verified. "We have staged a protest against the alleged intrusion of the Chinese PLA in the Taksing sector of Arunachal Pradesh. The Chinese PLA has captured five areas, and we have organised this programme to express our concern and patriotism," a protester said.

The protesters appealed to political parties across Arunachal Pradesh to set aside political differences and jointly raise issues concerning the security of the State's international boundary.

"Maybe you have political differences, but now you should come here and raise your voice against the Chinese PLA," the protester said.

STSAM said it had submitted a memorandum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking meas-

Dedicated Pass & Videography Cell set up for Silchar Municipal Corporation Election

SILCHAR

The Cachar district administration has constituted a dedicated Pass & Videography Cell for the Silchar Municipal Corporation Election 2026 to coordinate the preparation and distribution of identity cards and passes and to manage photography and videography requirements associated with the election process. Jagriti Kalwar, ACS, Additional District Commissioner, Cachar, Silchar has been designated as the Officer-in-Charge of the cell while Arunabh Choudhury, ACS, Assistant Commissioner, Cachar has been designated as the Assisting Officer.

The cell will be supported by officials and staff from the District Commissioner's Office and other government establishments as detailed by the district administration. Additional Grade-III and Grade-IV personnel already placed with the Personnel Cell for the Silchar Municipal Corporation Election 2026 will also as-

sist in carrying out the assigned responsibilities. The Pass & Videography Cell will identify the officials and personnel requiring identity cards in connection with election duty and will coordinate the preparation of their photographs. A photographer will be provided to the cell by the District Development Commissioner, Cachar-cum-Officer-in-Charge, General Cell, Silchar Municipal Corporation Election 2026, for capturing and printing photographs required for identity cards.

The cell will prepare all categories of identity cards and passes required for the election. Colour coded identity cards, constituency wise for councillors for the counting process will also be prepared to facilitate proper identification and access at counting venues.

The printing of identity cards and passes will be coordinated through a printing press to be identified by the District Development Commissioner, Cachar-cum-Officer-in-Charge, General Cell.

The press will supply blank identity cards, passes and other related materials to the cell as and when required. The cell will assess the requirement of identity cards and passes for contesting candidates, election agents, counting agents, officials and personnel engaged in different categories of election duty. Wherever necessary, the validity period of each identity card or pass will be clearly indicated.

Identity cards meant for polling personnel will be handed over to the Material Cell at the appropriate stage. Identity cards and passes for contesting candidates, election agents and other poll-related staff and authorised persons will be prepared and distributed from the Pass & Videography Cell in due course.

The cell will also assess the requirement of videographers in consultation with the officers-in-charge of various election cells. A detailed counting plan will be prepared in coordination with the General Cell, Silchar Municipal

Corporation Election 2026.

For videography arrangements, the cell will prepare a list of vendors by inviting expressions of interest in accordance with the rate approved by the District Commissioner, Cachar. Videographers will thereafter be detailed through the selected vendors based on the requirements received from different election cells from time to time.

The Pass & Videography Cell will function from the LA Branch, first floor, Unnayan Bhawan, and the Old Sadar Revenue Circle, ground floor, Unnayan Bhawan, District Commissioner's Office, Cachar, Silchar with immediate effect.

The dedicated cell is expected to provide a coordinated mechanism for managing election-related identity cards, passes, photography and videography requirements, thereby facilitating the smooth conduct of different stages of the Silchar Municipal Corporation Election 2026.

Inter-state border clashes claim 202 lives in Assam over four decades

GUWAHATI

At least 202 people from Assam have been killed in clashes along the state's inter-state boundaries over nearly four decades, highlighting the deadly toll of long-running boundary disputes with neighbouring states, a senior government official said. According to documents accessed from the Border Organisation of Assam Police, 202 people have died in clashes involving residents of Assam and neighbouring Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh since around 1989.

A senior official of the Border Protection and Development Department said the deaths were reported from eight Assam districts - West Karbi Anglong, Karbi Anglong, Golaghat, Cachar, Jorhat, Biswanath, Dhemajai and Kamrup. Golaghat recorded the highest

toll with 142 deaths, followed by Cachar with 34 and Biswanath with 15. Four people were killed in Kamrup, while West Karbi Anglong, Dhemajai and Karbi Anglong recorded two deaths each. One person was killed in an inter-state border clash in Jorhat, the official said. The official attributed the recurring violence largely to prolonged disputes over boundary demarcation. Assam's inter-state borders have witnessed periodic clashes over several decades, with disputes over land and alleged encroachment frequently triggering tensions between communities living along the frontiers. Security experts, however, believe that economic development and greater involvement of local communities could help reduce tensions in disputed areas.

Former Assam Police special DGP Pallab Bhattacharyya said

many of the disputes could be traced to boundary demarcation that was carried out without adequately taking affected populations into confidence. Drawing a comparison with the creation of Telangana in 2014, Bhattacharyya said the absence of a similar boundary dispute between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh was partly because people were informed about the proposed boundary and accepted it. "Such initiatives were not taken when states were created in the Northeast," he said. Bhattacharyya suggested that Central government-led economic projects in disputed areas, involving people from both sides, could help build economic interdependence and reduce the possibility of violence. "Economic development always helps," he said, adding that development initiatives should involve local populations from both

sides of the disputed areas.

The State government, meanwhile, has been strengthening its security infrastructure along the inter-state boundaries.

The Border Protection and Development Department official said Assam currently has 103 police border outposts (BOPs) along its inter-state boundaries, while Central forces man additional posts.

The State also has 91 BSF BOPs along the India-Bangladesh border and 70 SSB BOPs along the India-Bhutan border, the official said.

The Assam government has proposed setting up another 50 BOPs along its inter-state boundaries, he added.

The government has maintained that strengthening the border outpost network is aimed at preventing encroachment and containing violence along vulnerable stretches.

'Water and biscuits kept us alive': 8 Assam workers return from flood-hit Nepal

DHUBRI

"For four days, we survived only on water and biscuits."

That was how Pankaj Barman of Nalbari recalled the ordeal faced by 13 Assam workers stranded on a mountain after devastating floods swept through Nepal on August 26.

Eight of the workers returned to Assam in the early hours of Monday, but five of their colleagues remain missing as search and rescue teams, including helicopters, continue to look for them.

The eight survivors, who were working at the Upper Trishuli hydropower project in Nepal, reached Dhubri after being brought from the Nepal border with assistance from the police and district administration. Arrangements are now being made to send them to their respective homes.

The workers were identified as Pankaj Barman, Gopal Debnath, Gautam Das, Samar Bezbaruah, Sarbison Marak, Sonewar Narzary, Silva Marak and Elipson Changma.

The workers said all 13 had travelled to Nepal in search of employment and were working at the hydropower project when floodwaters suddenly surged through the area, forcing them to flee to higher ground.

The survivors said they spent several



days stranded on a mountain with little or no food before being rescued by the Nepal Army in a helicopter and taken to Kathmandu.

"We were stuck on top of a mountain for about three days without food. The Nepal Army rescued us by helicopter and took us to Kathmandu. From there, arrangements were made for our return. We reached Dhubri at around 3 am today," said Gautam Das of Doboka in Hojai district.

He said five of their colleagues were still untraceable.

"Many of our co-workers are still missing. Helicopters are searching for them, but there is no information yet. We barely survived. Our clothes, bags

and other belongings were washed away, while our rooms and the local market were completely swept away," Gautam said.

Pankaj recalled the moment the floodwaters entered the powerhouse where the workers were engaged.

"We were working inside the powerhouse tunnel, on the turbine generator, when we suddenly heard a loud sound, like an explosion. We saw water rushing rapidly into the powerhouse and immediately ran outside whichever way possible," he said.

According to Pankaj, the river rose by nearly 50 to 60 feet, sweeping along huge stones and debris.

With the water rapidly rising, the

workers scrambled up a mountain to escape the flood.

"For four days, we survived only on water and biscuits. The Army provided us with food before rescuing us and taking us to Kathmandu," he said.

Pankaj said he had been working on different projects in Nepal for around six years and was currently employed at the Upper Trishuli project.

Silva Marak, a resident of Satgaon in West Karbi Anglong, said he had been working in Nepal for around seven to eight months.

"There were around 13 of us from Assam. Eight have returned safely, while five are still missing. Rescue teams are searching for them. We have now reached Dhubri and arrangements are being made to send us back to our respective villages," he said.

Gopal Debnath of Digaru in Sonapur said the five missing workers were from Nalbari, Karbi Anglong and Hojai districts.

"The Assam Chief Minister has arranged for our flights. We came from Kathmandu and are now in Dhubri before proceeding home," he said.

The flash floods caused widespread destruction in the affected areas of Nepal, sweeping away homes, workplaces, roads and other infrastructure.

For the eight Assam workers, the return home marked the end of a days-long ordeal, but uncertainty continues for their five missing colleagues.

Search and rescue operations remain underway in Nepal, with helicopters being deployed to trace the missing workers. Families back in Assam are awaiting news of their whereabouts.

STUDENT 5E for SUCCESS

INTERNSHIP

STOP DREAMING AND START DOING.

APPLY NOW

5eforsuccess@gmail.com

Use Project Incentives

Certificate Free Training

MHA warns of malicious ‘pornography’ apps that can hijack Android phones, enable financial fraud



NEW DELHI

The National Cybercrime Threat Analytics Unit has warned of a rise in financial frauds involving malicious pornography apps circulated through social media advertisements, which can take control of Android devices and potentially enable unauthorised financial transactions.

The malicious apps, disguised as pornography applications and operating under names such as “Night Play”, “Reloop”, “Kyss”, “Vimo”, “Rivo”, “Nexo” and “Vixa”, are being distributed through advertisements and links on Facebook and Instagram, according to the unit.

The unit functions under the Integrated Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C), the Union Home Ministry’s

anti-cybercrime agency.

According to the advisory, users clicking on the advertisements are redirected to phishing websites offering pornographic content. The websites, whose domains mainly end in “.live”, then persuade users to download APK files from outside the Google Play Store.

Once installed, the apps request permissions that can allow them to install additional applications and abuse Android’s Accessibility feature to take control of the device. This could enable financial fraud, the advisory said.

Some of the malicious applications also install a VPN, which could be used to route internet traffic associated with malicious or criminal activity.

The malware may also prevent users from uninstalling

the application through normal device settings, making it difficult for victims to regain control of their phones.

Authorities have advised Android users to download applications only from Google Play or other trusted app stores and avoid installing APK files received through advertisements, websites or suspicious links.

Users have also been asked not to grant Accessibility permissions to unknown applications and to regularly review installed apps and remove those they do not recognise.

The cybercrime unit recommended keeping Google Play Protect enabled and Android devices updated. It also advised users to regularly monitor their bank accounts and UPI transactions for any unauthorised activity.

Modi seeks wider trade, urges dialogue on West Asia conflict in meeting with Iran president



NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday told Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian that India wants to “expand and diversify” its trade basket with Iran, while calling for the West Asia conflict to be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy.

Modi met Pezeshkian on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, where the two leaders discussed bilateral ties as well as the evolving situation in West Asia.

“Met President Masoud Pezeshkian in Bishkek. Reiterated our commitment to strengthening India’s long standing friendship with Iran across diverse sectors,” Modi said in a post on social media.

“We want to expand and diversify our trade basket in the times to

come. We had a discussion on the prevailing situation in the region. India will continue to support all efforts aimed at ensuring lasting peace,” he added.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said Modi expressed concern over the escalation of tensions in West Asia and reiterated India’s consistent position that disputes in the region should be addressed through dialogue and diplomacy.

The prime minister also called for continued efforts to establish lasting peace and stability in the region and stressed the need to safeguard freedom of navigation and commerce.

“Civilians and civilian infrastructure, including commercial shipping and seafarers must not be harmed under any circumstances,” the MEA said.

Modi also reaffirmed India’s

willingness to cooperate closely with Iran through multilateral platforms, including BRICS and the SCO. He conveyed that he looked forward to welcoming Pezeshkian to India for the upcoming BRICS Summit.

According to an Iranian read-out of the meeting, Pezeshkian thanked India for its support and cooperation with Iran during the recent war and called for greater diplomatic efforts to restore peace and security in the region.

Pezeshkian said his administration had sought to resolve disputes through dialogue and negotiations, but accused the US of choosing “the path of war, insecurity and imposing their will through force” instead of diplomatic mechanisms.

He urged Modi to use India’s extensive contacts with countries in the region and beyond to encour-

age them to move away from conflict and return to dialogue and negotiations.

Pezeshkian also highlighted the longstanding historical and cultural ties between India and Iran, as well as India’s growing role in regional and global affairs.

“We believe that the solution to the issues we face lies in dialogue and cooperation, and that all available capacities must be mobilised to prevent the spread of insecurity and conflict,” he said.

Separately, Modi met Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on the sidelines of the SCO summit.

Modi said India and Armenia were set to deepen cooperation in areas including defence, information technology, space, education and pharmaceuticals, while also strengthening trade and investment ties.

INTERNATIONAL

Nepal floods expose risks to hydropower in a warming Himalayas

DHADING
Workers shoveled thick mud from a flood-ravaged power station in central Nepal, trying to revive a key node that supplies electricity to more than 20,000 people.

But as they cleared debris from equipment buried by last week’s catastrophic floods, there was hope the plant would not simply be rebuilt in the same place, beside the river that destroyed it.

In Nepal, up to 900 workers are unaccounted for from a dozen hydropower projects, according to the Independent Power Producers’ Association, Nepal, with hundreds believed trapped in tunnels. In Nepal and China combined, over 900 people have died and 4,700 are missing.

The loss of hydropower infrastructure is estimated to have taken 700 megawatts offline — about 10% of the country’s power capacity.

Once the immediate aftermath of the disaster is dealt with, the question of how to restore power, roads, bridges, schools and health facilities quickly without rebuilding the same vulnerabilities should be on top of Nepalese authorities’ minds, disaster experts said.

“Authorities have to take a hard look in the mirror now and ask how they will be rebuilding in these places. They will also have to take a close look at other projects in Nepal that have not been built yet, whether they’ll be approved after this event,” said Jakob Steiner, a geoscientist at the University of Graz in Austria, who is currently based in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Hydropower projects that were operating or under construction were fully or partly destroyed across Rasuwa, Nuwakot and Dhading, among the worst-hit districts.

Many of the workers had taken



shelter in the tunnels but are stuck, waiting to be rescued, according to officials.

“The tunnels are built to access hydropower infrastructure and to divert water,” Steiner said, describing the tunnels as big enough to drive trucks through.

Apart from the hydropower projects, tens of kilometers (miles) of roads, multiple bridges and essential buildings like schools and hospitals have been destroyed.

Ramraj Narasimhan, a senior director with the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, said rebuilding should focus on continuity of services rather than trying to make every structure indestructible.

“If it gets damaged, let it get damaged, but can we build in redundancy in the system?” he said.

That can mean choosing a better location for construction, alternate routes, backup power, improved early warning and financial tools such as insurance to speed recovery, Narasimhan said.

Risk assessments should examine where a river bends, where slopes are unstable and where a single failure

could cut off several communities.

Narasimhan’s organization estimates that \$124 billion worth of Nepal’s infrastructure is exposed to climate-driven disasters, creating the potential for hundreds of millions of dollars in losses each year.

A report by the coalition earlier this year found that Nepal’s average annual losses are nearly \$760 million from various disasters, while the country’s national disaster funds is only a fraction of this amount.

Climate scientists said the Himalayan region — which is warming faster than many other parts of the world — is particularly at risk from increasing global warming as a result of human-caused climate change.

Climate experts said the flooding adds to evidence that infrastructure planning in the Himalayas is being forced to account for disasters that are increasing as the climate warms.

Glaciers across the Hindu Kush Himalayas are losing ice at an accelerating rate, while permafrost degradation, unstable slopes, glacial lakes and increasingly erratic rainfall are raising the risks of floods, landslides and debris flows, according to

reports by Kathmandu-based climate research group International Center for Integrated Mountain Development.

The stakes are particularly high for Nepal because hydropower is both a foundation of its electricity grid and an important source of economic growth and export revenue. Much of the country’s potential is run-of-river hydropower, Narasimhan said, meaning facilities are closely tied to steep river corridors where land is limited and hazards can cascade quickly.

Steiner said smaller floods can sometimes be managed with diversions that keep debris and high flows away from expensive infrastructure and tunnels. But for events as large as the latest flood, he said, physical defenses may be overwhelmed. In those cases, early warning becomes the critical protection for people.

He said the flood was detected at the China-Nepal border after moving rapidly from its source, leaving little warning time upstream. But there was still time as the flood traveled downstream toward hydropower sites, raising questions about whether warnings could have reached workers sooner.

The disaster is also likely to intensify scrutiny of where future projects are approved. Himanshu Thakkar, coordinator of the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People, said environmental, social and disaster-risk assessments need to reflect the specific landscape and past hazards of each valley, backed by land-use rules and stronger accountability.

Hydropower projects can themselves become “force multipliers” when large structures, debris and altered river channels add to downstream damage, Thakkar said. He argued that Nepal should also consider more decentralized solar power as part of a broader energy mix.

Experts’Prospects will be even brighter’: Putin, Xi hold talks on sidelines of SCO summit



BISHKEK

Russia’s Vladimir Putin and China’s Xi Jinping began talks Monday in Kyrgyzstan, where a dozen other heads of state also gathered for a two-day summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which seeks to be a counterbalance to the West.

Iran’s leader Masoud Pezeshkian, Turkey’s Recep Tayyip Erdogan, India’s Narendra Modi and Pakistan’s Shehbaz Sharif were also among those in Bishkek to attend the summit of the regional SCO bloc, which celebrates its 25-year anniversary.

The summit takes place four-and-a-half years into Moscow’s Ukraine invasion and six months into the war between Washington and Tehran.

Putin and Xi have previously used SCO summits to promote their vision of a multipolar world and present a united front against the West.

Xi told Putin he was “happy” to see him, saying Russia-Chinese ties have become “more solid” and that their “prospects will be even brighter.”

“The amount of uncertainty and unpredictability in the international order has obviously increased,” the Chinese leader said.

Putin told Xi: “Cooperation is successfully developing on all fronts.” The pair last met in May.

Russia’s economy has become increasingly dependent on China during its invasion of Ukraine. Western countries have called on Beijing to pressure Moscow to end its offensive.

The Kremlin’s spokesman Dmitry Peskov told Russian media the pair only discussed the Ukraine war “in passing”.

Putin also met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with both leaders arriving in the same car for the talks.

The Russian leader said Moscow was “following the path” towards resolution of the conflict in Ukraine, without elaborating.

The peace talks, brokered by the United States, remain stalled.

Putin is also expected to hold separate talks with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian.

Russia and Iran — among the most sanctioned states in the world — have massively deepened their military and economic ties since Moscow invaded Ukraine.

Putin’s meeting with Pezeshkian will come days after the CIA’s director John Ratcliffe made a rare trip to Moscow, with US media speculating he could have discussed Ukraine and Iran with his Russian counterparts.

Speaking in Bishkek after the first exchange of fire between the United States and Iran in a month, Iran’s Pezeshkian said continuing the war was not in Tehran’s interests.

“We continue to strive for a path of agreement and understanding, and we believe that continuing the war is neither in our interest, nor in the interest of the region,” he told India’s Modi.

Putin, Xi, Pezeshkian, Modi and Sharif are due to take part in a plenary session chaired by Kyrgyz leader Sadyr Japarov.

The SCO has historically focused on economic issues but has gained momentum in recent years under Moscow’s and Beijing’s leadership.

On top of its 10 members, it now has 15 “dialogue partners”, including Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

It also has two observer countries: Afghanistan and Mongolia.

The Bishkek summit takes place at a time when some SCO members are in the midst of real wars — the Ukraine and Iran conflicts — or trade wars, with the imposition of US tariffs on Chinese and Indian goods.

This month, the US slapped secondary sanctions on Iran’s trading partners in the sectors of gold, technology, digital assets, aviation and maritime transport, aiming to cripple Tehran’s economy.

Washington has also threatened Iran’s allies with sanctions.

China, a major importer of Iranian oil, responded by saying it would “firmly defend” its interests.

Siang Dam: India's Water Security Test Must Also Protect Indigenous Rights

India's proposed Siang Upper Multipurpose Project in Arunachal Pradesh sits at the intersection of national security, water management, hydropower ambitions, climate vulnerability and indigenous rights. The challenge is not simply whether the country should build the dam, but whether it can do so without marginalising the communities whose lives, land and culture are tied to the Siang River.

The Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP), proposed in Upper Siang district, is planned as a nearly 11,000-MW hydropower and water-regulation project. If completed as envisaged, it would become one of India's largest hydropower projects. The Siang eventually flows into Assam as the Brahmaputra, making developments along the river significant far beyond Arunachal Pradesh.

The project has gained urgency because of developments upstream in Tibet, where China is building a massive hydropower project on the Yarlung Tsangpo, as the Brahmaputra is known there. But the strategic argument for SUMP cannot be separated from the equally important concerns of the Adi and Galo communities living in the proposed project area.

The question, therefore, is not merely about a dam. It is about how India balances strategic necessity with ecological responsibility and the rights and aspirations of indigenous communities.

Why the Siang project matters

The strategic case for SUMP begins with the changing hydrogeopolitics of the Brahmaputra. China began construction in 2025 on a massive hydropower project in Tibet's Medog region, at the Great Bend of the Yarlung Tsangpo. The planned project, reportedly comprising a cascade of dams with a capacity of around 60,000 MW, would be one of the largest hydropower developments in the world.

For India, the scale of Chinese infrastructure on an international river is a serious concern. There is no comprehensive, binding water-sharing treaty between India and China governing the Brahmaputra. Although the two countries have arrangements concerning the sharing of hydrological information, disagreements and interruptions in data-sharing have occurred in the past.

The Brahmaputra is vital to millions of people across Tibet, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Bangladesh. Any major alteration in the river's flow has the potential to affect agriculture, flood management, ecosystems and livelihoods downstream.

This is where SUMP enters the strategic conversation.

The proposed project is intended not only to generate electricity but also to regulate the flow of the Siang. Supporters argue that a large reservoir could provide India with greater capacity to manage sudden changes in river discharge and reduce the risks associated with extreme flows.

The project would also add substantial generation capacity to the Northeast's power infrastructure. Arunachal Pradesh has enormous hydropower potential, and successive governments have regarded the sector as a major source of revenue and development.

From this perspective, SUMP is being presented as both an energy project and a strategic asset.

Yet national security cannot be the only yardstick by which such a project is judged.

The people who live along the river

The proposed project is located in a landscape where the river is not simply a source of water or a potential site for electricity generation. For indigenous communities, it is embedded in agriculture, culture, food systems, traditional practices and collective memory.

This makes the question of displacement particularly sensitive.

Estimates of the number of villages and people potentially affected have changed as the project has evolved. Earlier assessments indicated a smaller number of villages facing submergence, while organisations such as the Siang Indigenous Farmers' Forum have raised concerns about a much wider impact, potentially involving around 27 villages and more than 100,000 people through direct or indirect effects on land and livelihoods.

The differences in these estimates themselves point to the importance of a transparent and credible impact assessment.

For communities dependent largely on agriculture, the loss of land is not equivalent to the loss of an ordinary economic asset. Agricultural fields, forests, riverbanks and community spaces can have social and cultural significance that cannot easily be reflected in compensation packages.

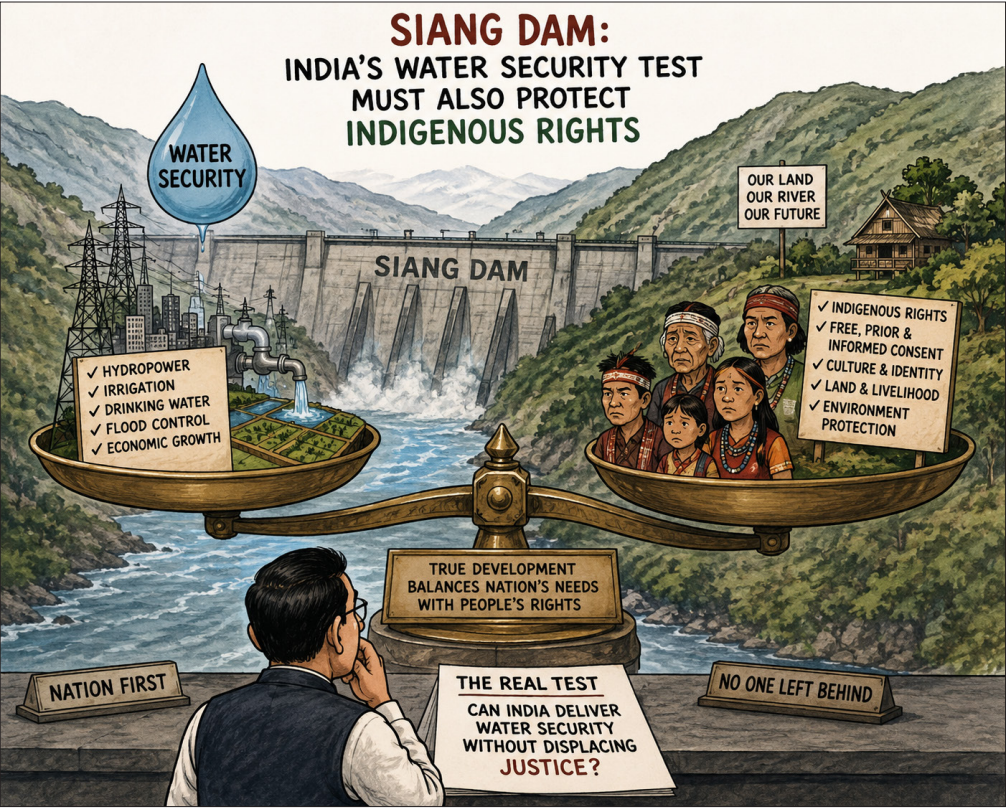
This is why consultation must go beyond public meetings and administrative procedures.

There have been instances of local families supporting preliminary survey work. In March 2026, families from Simong and Halleng villages reportedly agreed to allow preliminary surveys. Such developments demonstrate that engagement between the government and communities is possible.

But agreements have also been disputed, and the Adi Bane Kebang, the apex traditional body of the Adi community, has opposed the project in its present form.

The deployment of central security personnel during survey-related activities in 2025 further complicated the atmosphere.

For a project of such magnitude, consent cannot be treated as a procedural hurdle. If sections of the affected population believe that agreements were obtained without adequate consultation or do not represent the community's collective



position, distrust will inevitably deepen.

The government therefore needs to establish a consultation process whose legitimacy is beyond dispute.

Indigenous knowledge is an asset, not an obstacle

There is another dimension to the debate that deserves far greater attention: the traditional ecological knowledge of the communities living in the Siang valley.

The Adi and Galo people have accumulated generations of experience in understanding the behaviour of the river, forests, soil, rainfall and agricultural cycles.

Traditional practices such as Lipum, a winter fishing method involving carefully constructed stone structures, reflect an understanding of seasonal river flows and sediment movement. Terraced wet-rice cultivation and traditional irrigation systems similarly demonstrate an intimate understanding of terrain and water.

Research has also documented the use of hundreds of wild plant and animal species for food, medicine and cultural purposes.

Such knowledge should not be romanticised. Nor should it be treated as a substitute for modern hydrological, geological or engineering studies.

But dismissing it would be equally misguided. Local communities observe environmental changes continuously and across generations. Their knowledge can provide information about seasonal patterns, animal behaviour, rainfall, river levels and changes in local ecosystems that may not be captured by short-term scientific surveys.

One example from research on Adi biocultural knowledge concerns the use of insects as seasonal indicators. Local knowledge-holder Otek Moyong has described how the behaviour of a particular insect found near rocks and moist riverbank areas can be interpreted as an indication of the coming rainfall pattern. Such observations can influence decisions about which varieties of paddy should be planted.

These practices illustrate a larger point: climate adaptation in the Himalayas cannot rely exclusively on technical models developed outside the communities that inhabit the landscape.

If the Siang project is ultimately intended to improve water security, the people who have spent generations observing the river should have a place in determining how that security is defined.

Climate change complicates the equation

The strategic rationale for a regulating reservoir becomes stronger as climate change increases the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events.

But climate change also makes large infrastructure projects in the Himalayas more complicated.

The eastern Himalayas are exposed to earthquakes, landslides, extreme rainfall and glacial hazards. Concerns about Glacial Lake Outburst Floods, or GLOFs, have become increasingly important in discussions about Himalayan infrastructure.

The destruction and severe damage caused to hydropower infrastructure in Uttarakhand following the 2021 disaster demonstrated the vulnerability of projects located in high-altitude and mountainous environments.

The lesson is not that hydropower projects should never be built in the Himalayas. Rather, it is that old assumptions about climatic and geological stability cannot be taken for granted.

The very unpredictability that strengthens the argument for a large reservoir also creates questions about how such a reservoir would behave under unprecedented climatic conditions.

Would the project be able to withstand extreme flood events beyond historical records? How would sediment accumulation affect the reservoir over decades? What would happen downstream during an emergency release? How would seismic risks be incorporated into the design? And how would climate projections, rather than historical averages alone, shape the project's safety parameters?

These questions need credible, independent answers before construction proceeds on a project of this scale.

Strategic necessity cannot become a shortcut

India cannot ignore the strategic implications of China's infrastructure development on the Yarlung Tsangpo.

Waiting indefinitely for a comprehensive water-sharing agreement with Beijing is not a real-

istic water-security strategy. India needs its own capacity to monitor river flows, improve flood forecasting, strengthen downstream infrastructure and protect vulnerable populations.

But strategic urgency should not become a justification for weakening environmental safeguards or community consultation.

Indeed, public acceptance is itself a component of national security.

A project that triggers prolonged conflict with local communities, generates allegations of forced consent and leaves affected families dissatisfied cannot be considered a complete strategic success.

The government therefore faces a difficult but manageable task: demonstrate that the national interest and indigenous interests need not be mutually exclusive.

A better way forward

The first requirement should be complete transparency about the project's actual footprint.

The government should publish updated, independently verified assessments of the number of villages, households, agricultural lands, forests and cultural sites that would be affected. Different estimates circulating among government agencies and community organisations only deepen uncertainty.

Second, consultation must be continuous and representative.

Traditional institutions, village councils, women's groups, farmers, young people and other affected stakeholders should have meaningful opportunities to participate. Agreements should be clearly documented, publicly accessible and understandable to the people whose land is at stake.

Third, rehabilitation must go beyond monetary compensation.

A displaced family does not simply lose a

house. It may lose farmland, community networks, access to forests, religious or cultural sites and an established way of life. Rehabilitation must therefore include land-for-land options wherever feasible, livelihood restoration, community infrastructure and long-term monitoring.

Fourth, independent climate and seismic assessments are essential.

Given the scale of SUMP and the vulnerability of the Himalayan region, safety assessments should not be confined to conventional historical data. They should incorporate climate-change scenarios, extreme rainfall, GLOFs, seismic risks, landslides and sedimentation.

Fifth, indigenous ecological knowledge should be formally incorporated into environmental planning.

This does not mean replacing scientific assessment with traditional knowledge. It means bringing the two together. Local observations can help identify ecological changes and vulnerabilities that conventional surveys may overlook.

Finally, India must continue pursuing diplomatic engagement with China.

A domestic dam cannot substitute for international cooperation on a transboundary river. India needs stronger mechanisms for hydrological data-sharing, advance notification of unusual releases and dialogue on the cumulative impact of upstream infrastructure.

The real test

The Siang project represents a genuine national dilemma.

India has legitimate reasons to strengthen its water-security and hydropower capabilities. China's rapidly expanding infrastructure on the Yarlung Tsangpo cannot simply be ignored. The Northeast needs reliable electricity, better flood management and stronger infrastructure.

But Arunachal Pradesh cannot be treated merely as a strategic frontier or a reservoir of untapped hydropower.

The Siang valley is also a lived landscape, inhabited by communities with a deep relationship with the river and surrounding ecosystems. Their concerns are not peripheral to the national interest. They are part of it.

The success of SUMP should therefore not be measured only in megawatts generated or cubic metres of water regulated.

It should also be measured by whether affected communities trust the process, whether environmental risks have been honestly assessed, whether displaced families can rebuild secure lives and whether indigenous knowledge has been treated as a resource rather than an inconvenience.

India does need greater water security. It needs strategic resilience. It needs clean energy.

But it also needs development that commands legitimacy.

The central question, then, is not whether India can build the Siang dam. It is whether India can build the institutions, safeguards and trust necessary to ensure that a project of such extraordinary scale strengthens national security without weakening the communities and ecosystems it is supposed to protect.

SPACE FOR YOU ONLY

Rs. 150/- per day

PLACEMENT

Fresher, job seekers can register with KRC Placements. Send resume to - 5eforsuccess@gmail.com To source candidates, organisation can contact KRC Placements at info@krcfoundation.org For Details Visit: <https://bit.ly/krcplacements> Apply here: <https://bit.ly/KRCPlacementForm>

VOLUNTEERS REGISTERS @ NEIR 2026

We are looking for volunteers across NE & West Bengal Interested candidates (College students, youths) can register at https://northeastintegrationrally.in/Volunteer_Registration.aspx, send an email: neintegrationrally@gmail.com

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Business establishments, educational institutions, individual service providers etc. can enlist themselves or advertise their products or services at the most reasonable cost in InfoCom Diary. Send your details to InfoCom.Solutions@infocom.krc@gmail.com Submit Here: <https://bit.ly/InfoComDiaryForm>

STUDENTS' INTERNSHIP

Students can apply for a three-months internship with KRC Foundation. During the internship the student can get an opportunity to work on a live project. On successful completion the student is awarded a certificate. Apply to 5E for Success: 5eforsuccess@gmail.com For Details Visit: <https://bit.ly/krcstudentinternship> or www.krcfoundation.org/products-services/training-development-5e-for-success/internship

NE INDIA WRITING STAR CONTEST

Participate in NE India Writing Star Contest and get your writings published. Eligibility: From Class VI onwards. Each participant receives a digital participation certificates. Send articles at: info@krcfoundation.org For Details Visit: <https://bit.ly/NEIndiaWritingStarContest> www.krcfoundation.org/campaigns-csr/ne-india-writing-star-contest

CONNECT@ KRC TIMES



KRC TIMES

To engage with KRC TIMES, please use the following e-mails and WhatsApp Nos: For News: krctimes@gmail.com / WP: 8721838313 For Advertisement: info@krcfoundation.org / WP: 9330830083 For Subscription: krctimes@gmail.com / WP: 8721838313 Editor: biswadeep.gupta@gmail.com / WP: 8721838313

Brain VISION

KRC
Shaping Careers
For a Successful Tomorrow

Fake people have an image to maintain. Real people just don't care.

GROW YOUR BRAND WITH US!

KRC TIMES

Our media platform can help elevate your brand's reach and build awareness to a niche market and cover the last miles that align with your business goals and purposes.

OUR PLATFORMS:

Website

YouTube

Social Media

Magazine

E-Copy

Events

For more information, please contact us at:

www.krctimes.com

info@krcfoundation.org

DOWNLOAD ADVERTISEMENT RATE CARD

<https://bit.ly/krctimesratecard>



KRC TIMES E-COPY

Daily NE Edition



ABOUT US

KRC TIMES is a journalistic initiative from KRC Foundation where we follow our core philosophy of 'Connecting the unconnected' We cater to the untold and unheard stories with an aim to reach the last mile.

KRC TIMES E-COPY NE India Edition

- 5 Page e-copy published every evening
- Front Page, Editorial, Regional, National & 5Es/Advertorials
- **Subscribe @ Rs.300 for 365 Days**

www.krctimes.com

Why e-paper

Get the most of the day's news, information, insights, etc. that can be processed quickly every evening

Clean journalism

KRC TIMES e-copy, is a sincere efforts to provide non-biased news and information

For Whom

Students, youths, entrepreneurs, parents & professionals ...

Send your number to get your copy
WhatsApp: 8721838313
e-mail:krctimes@gmail.com



KNOWLEDGE RESOURCE CENTRE
FOUNDATION

8721838313@barodampay

CONTACT US
+91-8721838313

<https://bit.ly/whykrctimes>



Presents



OPEN TO ALL FOR
| 5 CATEGORY | 8 NE STATES |
| 5 BROAD TOPICS |

Writing Star Contest

MAY-NOV 2026

DIGITAL PARTICIPATION CERTIFICATE
THE SELECTED ARTICLE WILL BE PUBLISHED ON
WWW.KRCTIMES.COM

"I can shake off everything as I write;
my sorrows disappear, my courage is
reborn."
~ Anne Frank

TOPICS

- INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT OF NER (ROADS, RAILS, AVIATION, HYDROPOWER & SECURITY)
- PROMOTING TOURISM, MSME, AGRO & HORTICULTURE, ACT EAST DIPLOMACY
- DISASTER MANAGEMENT, ADVENTURE SPORTS & CLIMATE CHANGE
- ART & CULTURE, THEATRE, CINEMA, MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT
- 5E FOR SUCCESS- PROMOTING EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, EMPLOYABILITY, ENTREPRENEURSHIP & EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Open to Students from Class VI to Senior Citizens, divided into 5 categories+topics

Each entry will receive a digital participation certificate

There is NO fee for participation

The selected entry will be published on www.krcetimes.com

email articles: info@krcfoundation.org

5 categories: A- Class- VI, VII, VIII | B- Class- IX, X, XI, XII | C-College & PG Students | D- Working Class & Homemaker | E- Retired & Senior Citizen (60+)

FOR RULES AND DETAILS, PLEASE VISIT

www.krcfoundation.org

<https://bit.ly/NEIndiaWritingStarContest>

e-mail articles at: info@krcfoundation.org