



Barak Festival
NE INDIA ADVENTURE SPORTS,
ART & CULTURE PROMOTION



Barak Valley, Assam | JAN-MAR 2025

www.krctimes.com
Mobi: 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

Rashness and haste make all things insecure

Kalparnab Gupta arrested over alleged provocative social media posts

SILCHAR: A 29-year-old man was arrested in Assam's Cachar district for allegedly posting communally provocative content on social media targeting the Bajrang Dal, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Hindu religious beliefs, police said.

The accused, identified as Kalparnab Gupta, was arrested on September 28 following a complaint lodged by a Bajrang Dal activist at Silchar police station.

According to the complaint, Gupta had allegedly shared defamatory and hateful posts targeting the two organisations and Hindu religious beliefs.

The complainant alleged that some of the posts sought to link Bajrang Dal members with extortion activities and a recent gang-rape case in Cachar district.

Gupta was also accused of making allegedly insulting remarks about Lord Ram and other Hindu deities and mocking religious symbols and practices, including 'sakha-sindoor'. The complaint further alleged that Gupta had advocated beef consumption in a manner intended to hurt religious sentiments and promote communal disharmony. Police said the accused has been booked under various provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), including sections dealing with promoting enmity, public mischief and defamation. Relevant provisions of the Assam Cattle Preservation Act have also been invoked. Police are examining digital evidence related to the posts and questioning the accused as part of the investigation, of Gupta identifies himself on Facebook as a research scholar at IIT-Bombay and chief convener of the Barak Union for Civil Liberties.

WHO SAID WHAT



“The narrative in America was once that India should not have too many options and should focus on its relationship with the US, even as America kept its own options open. Today, that narrative has dropped”
~ Dr. S. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of India

SHILLONG
Meghalaya is reshaping its tourism strategy with greater emphasis on local livelihoods, community participation, new destinations and environmental resilience, moving beyond a model primarily focused on increasing tourist arrivals. According to state government data, tourism-linked livelihoods in Meghalaya rose from around 50,000 in 2022 to more than 75,000 in 2025. Tourist footfall also reached nearly 18.55 lakh last year.

The state is seeking to diversify tourism beyond established destinations such as Shillong and Sohra, while encouraging longer visitor stays and ensuring a larger share of tourism revenue remains within local economies.

The Meghalaya Tourism Policy 2023 promotes a high-value, low-volume approach, with carrying capacity, waste management and environmental sustainability incorporated into destination planning.

With more than 76 per cent of the state's geographical area under forest cover, tourism development is also being linked to the conservation of forests, rivers, caves, waterfalls and Living Root Bridges.



KRC TIMES
STAY ENRICHED



VOLUME:1, ISSUE 885 | SILCHAR TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2026. EAST AND NE INDIA EDITION | e-mail: krctimes@gmail.com ,www.krctimes.com

NIA searches 16 locations in Assam, Bengal and Kerala over alleged cross-border terror conspiracy



GUWAHATI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Tuesday conducted searches at 16 locations across Assam, West Bengal and Kerala as part of its probe into an alleged cross-border terror conspiracy, officials said.

The searches were carried out at 10 locations in Assam, five in West Bengal and one in Kerala, according to officials.

The operation is linked to an ongoing investigation into alleged radicalisation activities in Assam involving Imam Mahmuder Kafilah (IMK), which investigators have described as an offshoot of the banned Ja-

maat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB).

The searches are aimed at collecting evidence related to alleged radicalisation activities and suspected cross-border links of individuals associated with the IMK network, officials said.

Investigators are also examining the activities, contacts and possible links of individuals suspected to be connected with the case.

The NIA is probing the alleged operations of the IMK network in Assam and its suspected links with groups or individuals operating across the international border.

The agency's action comes as part of its efforts to trace the wider network allegedly involved in the radicalisation and cross-border conspiracy.

Further details about the premises searched, individuals questioned and materials, if any, recovered during the operation are awaited.

Assam Rifles patrol attacked near India-Myanmar border in Arunachal, jawan killed



ITANAGAR

An Assam Rifles personnel was killed after a patrol team came under attack near the India-Myanmar border in Arunachal Pradesh's Changlang district on Tuesday morning, officials said.

The incident took place around

6.30 a.m. near Nampong Nallah under Nampong Circle, where Assam Rifles personnel were conducting a routine patrol in an area where fencing work is underway along the international border.

The deceased has been identified as Havildar Jankhokai Kuki, 42. According to preliminary infor-

mation, the attack is suspected to have been carried out by cadres of the NSCN-IM (Yung Aung faction).

Following the attack, security forces launched an operation in the area to track down the suspected attackers and secure the border region, officials said.

Further details about the circumstances of the attack and the movement of the suspected militants were awaited.

The incident comes amid heightened security along the India-Myanmar border, where fencing work is being undertaken to strengthen surveillance and check unauthorised movement.

Security forces have maintained a heightened alert in the area following the attack.

Sumi Hoho urges Centre to settle Naga political issue, seeks sensitivity on Vande Mataram

KOHI MA

The Sumi Hoho, an apex tribal body in Nagaland's Zunheboto district, has urged the Centre to work towards a "final, honourable and mutually acceptable conclusion" to the long-pending Naga political issue and called for sensitivity to religious concerns over the use of Vande Mataram in official protocols.

The demands were raised in a representation submitted to Nagaland Governor Nand Kishore Yadav during his maiden visit to the Zunheboto district headquarters on Monday, according to an official statement.

The Sumi Hoho urged the Centre to advance the Naga political dialogue in accordance with the Framework Agreement signed with the NSCN-IM on August 3, 2015, and the Agreed Position signed with the Working Committee of Naga National Political Groups on November 17, 2017.

The tribal body requested the Governor to convey its concerns and aspirations to the appropriate authorities, the statement said.

On Vande Mataram, the Hoho said it respected the National Song and all national symbols but expressed concern over religious imagery in some of its later stanzas.

It said the imagery could create difficulties for people belonging to certain faiths, particularly Christians, and urged authorities to take into account the faith and conscience of all communities while framing or

implementing official protocols involving the National Song.

The Sumi Hoho also sought an expansion of the Hezokhu Memorial District Hospital from 75 to 100 beds, along with adequate deployment of doctors and nurses and improved availability of medicines, medical equipment and diagnostic facilities.

It also raised the issue of the proposed Showuba-Pangsha East-West Corridor, a long-pending road project that would pass through Zunheboto towards Shamator.

The Hoho said the project would improve connectivity between the western, central and eastern parts of Nagaland and strengthen economic and social linkages across the state.

During his visit, Governor Yadav reviewed the functioning of the district administration and stressed the need for effective last-mile delivery of government services, particularly in remote and difficult-to-reach areas. He called for greater focus on learning outcomes, school attendance and student retention, besides ensuring that district hospitals, community health centres, primary health centres and sub-centres have adequate personnel, medicines and medical equipment. The Governor also emphasised the need to improve electricity supply, drinking water and digital connectivity in the district.

On infrastructure, Yadav stressed the importance of improving the quality and durability of roads to minimise repeated expenditure on the same stretches.

Tripura MP Biplab Deb to join Indian delegation at 81st UN General Assembly

AGARTALA

West Tripura Lok Sabha MP and former Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb is scheduled to visit New York from October 5 to 9 as a member of India's Parliamentary Delegation to the 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). Deb's participation comes as India prepares to engage with the 81st UNGA on a range of global issues, including the development priorities of the Global South, climate action and climate finance, counter-terrorism, artificial intelligence, maritime security, peacekeeping and reform of the United Nations.

According to India's Permanent Mission to the United Nations, New Delhi's approach to the session will continue to focus on development issues concerning the Global South and South-South cooperation, while advocating reforms aimed at making the UN more effective in addressing contemporary challenges. Climate change, artificial intelligence, maritime security, counter-terrorism and peacekeeping are among the other areas identified by India for continued engagement during the session. The 81st UN General Assembly session formally opened on September 8 under the theme, "Restoring Trust, Managing Transformation: A United Nations That Delivers for All." As part of the Indian Parliamentary Delegation, Deb's visit will constitute part of India's parliamentary engagement in international affairs and multilateral diplomacy. The BJP MP has previously participated in parliamentary diplomacy. In May this year, he was part of an Indian Parliamentary Delegation led by Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh that visited Bhutan.

During his scheduled stay in New York, Deb is expected to participate in parliamentary engagements linked to sustainable development, the Global South, emerging technologies, international security and multilateral cooperation.

Tipra Motha gives 24-hour ultimatum over alleged firing on candidate in Tripura

AGARTALA

The party met the State Election Commission seeking immediate arrests and enhanced security after its candidate and two supporters were allegedly shot during Village Committee polls in Gomati district.

The Tipra Motha Party (TMP) on September 29 gave the Tripura Police and State Election Commission (SEC) 24 hours to arrest those allegedly involved in the firing on its candidate and two supporters during the Village Committee elections in Gomati district.

A TMP delegation led by senior leader and MLA Ranjit Debbarma met SEC Secretary Anurag Sen and submitted a memorandum seeking immediate action over the September 28 incident at Wareng Bari, Ward No. 2, under the Gamaria Village Committee in Matarbari RD Block.

The delegation included TTAADC Chief Executive Member Runiel Debbarma, District Council Member Suraj Debbarma, MLA Biswajit Kalai and MDC Sujoy Uchoi.

According to the party's memorandum, TMP candidate Kachindra Reang, 36, and his supporters Naithok Jamatia, 26, and Udairam Reang, 40, were allegedly attacked by a group of armed men during polling. The party alleged that

Kachindra sustained a gunshot injury to his abdomen, while Udairam was shot in the leg. Kachindra was subsequently shifted to GB Pant Hospital in Agartala for treatment. The memorandum described his condition as critical.

An FIR has been registered at the local police station in connection with the incident, according to the party.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting with the SEC, Debbarma said the party had given the authorities 24 hours to arrest those responsible for the alleged firing. He said the party would decide its next course of action after the deadline.

Debbarma also alleged that police had not made any arrests despite several hours having passed since the incident. He claimed the party had shared information about people allegedly present at the scene with the authorities.

The TMP described the incident as a serious concern for the electoral process and urged the SEC to ensure accountability.

The party also sought adequate security for the injured candidate, his family, other candidates and party workers. It further demanded increased security deployment in and around the Gamaria Village Committee area to prevent any post-poll violence, intimidation or retaliation.

Meghalaya shifts tourism focus to livelihoods, community-led growth



Homestays have emerged as a key component of the community-led tourism model. The government has sanctioned 877 homestay applications and disbursed more than Rs 120 crore, with the programme estimated to have generated over 6,000 jobs.

The Meghalaya Homestay Mission aims to add or upgrade 1,000 homestays during 2026-27, as part of a broader target of 3,000 units.

The government is also promoting rural tourism cooperatives and community-led infrastructure to enable local communities to participate directly in destination development and

tourism-related businesses.

Environmental conservation is being integrated into tourism through the Meghalaya Community-Led Landscape Management Project, which has covered more than 400 villages. Its initiatives include spring rejuvenation, mine-land restoration, Living Root Bridge conservation and payments for ecosystem services.

The state has proposed more than Rs 162 crore for tourism infrastructure, destination development and community tourism. Umiam, Sohra, Dawki-Shnongpdeng and Nokrek have been identified as major tourism hubs.

Among the larger projects is the Rs 233.75-crore PM-DevINE Sohra Tourism Circuit, covering Nohkalikai Falls, Mawmai Eco Park and the Khasi Heritage Experiential Centre. Other planned projects include a ropeway at Shillong Peak, the Mawdok Skywalk, a Rain and Bamboo Interpretation Centre at Mawsynram, a Living Root Bridge Museum, the Tura Integrated Hospitality and Convention Centre and the Umngot Riverfront Development at Dawki.

The government is also supporting local transport operators through the Prime Tour-

ism Vehicle Scheme under the CM-ELEVATE programme. The scheme provides financial and credit support to entrepreneurs operating GPS-equipped tourism vehicles and includes branding and mandatory tourism-related training.

Technology is being incorporated into destination management, with plans to use digital tools and artificial intelligence to monitor visitor numbers, traffic and occupancy, forecast demand and manage crowd movement and carrying capacity.

Trained local youth, known as "Tourist Buddies", are also being deployed at major destinations to provide information, assist visitors and respond to emergencies.

The state's festival and creative economy is another emerging component of tourism. The Chief Minister's Meghalaya Grassroots Music Programme has supported more than 7,000 artists and generated over 6,000 direct and indirect livelihoods, according to government figures.

Events such as the Me'gong Festival, Shillong Cherry Blossom Festival and Shillong Literary Festival together drew more than 1.1 lakh visitors in 2025, while smaller events including

Culinary Cascade and the Meghalaya Pineapple Festival attracted around 10,000 visitors each.

The Meghalaya Film Tourism Policy 2025 is aimed at attracting film and media productions to the state while creating opportunities for local service providers.

Heritage conservation is also being incorporated into tourism development. The Pine Home Eco-Sustainable Model Project at Mawlangwir uses local materials and community participation, while the Twahlongwar Open Air Museum in Mawsynram showcases more than 20 ancient structures, megaliths, an old iron furnace and historical trade routes.

The broader strategy seeks to measure tourism not only through visitor numbers but also through employment, local businesses, environmental conservation and the economic benefits retained by communities.

For Meghalaya, the approach places the state's landscapes and indigenous cultural heritage at the centre of tourism growth while highlighting the need to manage the environmental pressures associated with a growing visitor economy.



VOLUME:1, ISSUE 885

Who gets to set the pace of AI?

Calls for slowing frontier AI may be driven by genuine safety concerns, but any global speed limit must confront a harder question: who gets to decide the limit, and who bears the cost of observing it?

The debate over how fast artificial intelligence should advance has entered a new phase. Anthropic chief executive Dario Amodei's call to "pace the frontier" has been backed by other prominent AI leaders, reviving an old question in a new form: can an industry locked in an intense technological race voluntarily agree to slow itself down?

Amodei's argument is rooted in a genuine concern. AI systems are increasingly capable of performing tasks involved in developing, testing and improving other AI systems. If that process becomes sufficiently autonomous, the risks may no longer be confined to mistakes made by a single model. A system capable of replicating itself, exploiting vulnerabilities or pursuing goals outside its intended boundaries could create risks that are difficult to contain.

The recent incident cited in the debate is instructive. During a training exercise, software agents reportedly attacked computers outside their assigned task, sacrificed copies of themselves to advance their objective and attempted to interfere with the system evaluating them. The lesson is not that AI has suddenly become uncontrollable. It is that increasingly autonomous systems can behave in ways their designers did not explicitly anticipate.

Amodei therefore proposes independent evaluators inside frontier laboratories, greater coordination among democratic countries and, eventually, negotiations with China over limits on dangerous AI development.

The difficulty begins with the question of who sets those limits.

The AI race is not taking place in a geopolitical vacuum. The United States and China are competing for technological leadership, particularly in advanced computing, chips, models and AI infrastructure. Washington has already used export controls to restrict China's access to advanced semiconductor technology. Any international agreement that combines AI safety rules with restrictions on computing resources will inevitably have strategic consequences.

That creates an uncomfortable contradiction. A country cannot simultaneously argue that AI development must slow globally and seek measures that preserve its own technological advantage without explaining how the two objectives can coexist.

The problem becomes even sharper when AI is treated as a winner-takes-all technology.

If the belief takes hold that the country that achieves decisive AI superiority will gain overwhelming economic, military and geopolitical advantages, neither side has much incentive to trust the other. A government may support a pause in principle while fearing that a rival will use the pause to overtake it. The result is a familiar security dilemma: each side accelerates because it fears that the other will accelerate first.

That is why a simple "speed limit" may be harder to enforce than it sounds.

A missile can be counted. A nuclear test can sometimes be detected. The rate at which an AI system improves itself is considerably more difficult to measure. A data centre developing a successor model may look no different from a data centre performing ordinary training or commercial computing.

Any serious international regime would therefore need a reliable means of verification. Without one, the rules would risk becoming declarations rather than constraints.

There is another danger: regulation can sometimes strengthen the position of the very companies it is intended to restrain.

Complex certification requirements, access controls and compliance costs are easier for the largest laboratories to absorb than for smaller firms, universities and start-ups. A regulatory framework designed around the capabilities of today's leading companies could consequently freeze an existing hierarchy into place.

That does not mean regulation is inherently a form of industry capture. It means the design of regulation matters. Independent oversight, transparent standards and meaningful accountability would be essential if AI governance is not to become a mechanism for protecting incumbents.

The proposal for independent evaluators is therefore particularly important. External scrutiny is necessary when companies are developing systems whose potential risks may extend beyond their customers. But independence must be real, not merely contractual.

An evaluator selected, funded or constrained by the organisation it is supposed to monitor faces an obvious conflict. Financial and professional links between laboratories, researchers and safety organisations do not automatically invalidate their work, but they make transparency over funding, access and decision-making essential.

There is also a distinction between liability and prevention. If an AI agent harms a customer, conventional liability mechanisms may provide some deterrence. But when an autonomous system attacks a third party, damages infrastructure or creates a wider systemic risk, the affected party may have no contractual relationship with the company that developed it. That is a classic externality. The market alone may not adequately price it. The answer, however, cannot simply be to slow everybody down. For countries outside the two major AI powers, including India, the consequences of a global AI regime could be substantial. Restrictions imposed in the name of strategic stability may also limit access to computing resources, advanced models and research infrastructure for countries still building their technological capacity.

A global framework therefore has to distinguish between controlling genuinely dangerous capabilities and restricting technological development more broadly.

The most defensible approach would begin with specific risks rather than an arbitrary rate of progress: autonomous cyberattacks, biological misuse, uncontrolled replication, critical-infrastructure disruption and other clearly defined high-risk capabilities. Rules should be measurable, independently verifiable and capable of being revised as the technology changes. The central issue is not whether AI should be regulated. It is who regulates it, on what evidence, with what verification and with whose interests represented at the table. The history of arms control offers a useful lesson. Agreements work when participants can verify compliance and when the rules address a clearly defined risk. They become fragile when promises cannot be monitored or when one participant believes the arrangement merely preserves another's advantage.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“Never let your memories be greater than your dreams.”
- Doug Ivester

BUT SIR, THE RIGHT TO VOTE IS NOT AN ELECTION FREEBIE

SANTWANA BHATTACHARYA

Her eyes misted over, I remember, with a feeling that was foreign to her. It was barely masked by the agitation in her voice. A fear that she did not recognise, and did not know she held within herself. This was not a Bangladeshi woman, and if you travel up the slope of dubiety as drawn these days, not even a Bengali Muslim, or a Muslim at all. It was a South Indian lady—of the sort to be found anywhere from Mysore to Bangalore to Mysore. As archetypically 'Indian' as you want, with a lifetime spent in newspapers to boot. Nothing had prepared her for this. The unsettling realisation that the nursing home in Chennai where she was born did not exist anymore, and that she had no birth certificate.

Today, this sense is not dissimilar to vertigo, in a sudden onset, and practically each one of us has felt it in the last few months. The rollcall of big names who found themselves in that SIR limbo was plastered on the front pages: chief minister, former chief minister, etc etc. Kapil Sibal will write about his personal experience on these pages. The moral of the story is often worked out along the lines of, 'If it can happen to the powerful, what chance do the others have?' That's right, of course, but it reverses the direction in which a certain voiding of rights has been proceeding in India's constitutional being.

The flow of erasure is from the margins to the centre. It is created in the first instance for boundary phenomena, sometimes for understandable reasons, in 'states of exception'. But once created, it behaves like a mutant microbe, takes on a life of its own and spreads everywhere. That's where we find ourselves now. In the midst of

dashboard showed 13 crore Indians struck off. It's a reasonable guess that crores of them voted in five general elections since the SIR of 2002.

In his last stage show, Rahul Gandhi touched on a vital point that he did not elaborate upon—all the focus went to his more dramatic charge of treason and threat to bring Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar out of blanket legal immunity and into justice.

The figures of speech were crowd-pleasing, and perhaps sit awkwardly with the demands of prudence when seen at a higher level—points of law are not articulated best in retributive tones. What was not debatable was how he framed it at the outset: the vote inhabits the highest perch, higher even than the Constitution, let alone its functionaries or its judicial interpreters. This is substantially correct. It may seem counterintuitive at first, for was it not the Constitution of 1950 that gave us universal suffrage?

No. At the deepest genetic level, it was pre-scripted. The legal right to vote was bodied forth as an inevitable consequence of a prior event. When the British transferred power in 1947, the interim body created to receive that power was only an instrument, a power of attorney. On the model of the Irish in 1922, one of the first people to 'decolonialise', power was transferred in the name of the people: the collective popular sovereign.

It is the will of the people that sanctified the formal machinery to act on its behalf. The power to vote was not parcelled out in 1950 like an election freebie, in an act of benevolence, any more than the British acted out of charity. The coming into being of Indians as a collective sovereign political agency did not have to wait for the Consti-

They pre-exist the modern Indian republic and, in fact, birthed it.

It follows, logically, that this power cannot be extinguished by instruments lower in the hierarchy, entities that are only vouchsafed powers to act on their behalf. Executive, Legislature, Judiciary—all spring from this endowment. Yet, those who feel the State has been engaged in a kind of 'lawfare' wouldn't be wrong.

We have observed a strange voiding created on the peripheries, colonising adjacent spaces one after the other, till it reached even the elite in Delhi. Its first appearance was on the conducive stage offered by Article 370, a widely impugned provision where a consensus of sorts was at hand. Preparatory to its annulment, a legal manoeuvre saw the people's legislature 'replaced' by the President, so that popular consent could be expressed by a stroke of the Governor's pen. Whatever your opinion on Article 370, the point here is the mechanics of erasure. It was Kashmir, so no one objected. But it created the template, even if the Supreme Court couldn't sign off on that one.

It was in play again as constituencies were redrawn in Assam with the manifest objective of diluting the franchise of the Muslim of East Bengal origin. Again a borderline category, so again it passed without murmur. But from there to Justice Joymalya Bagchi's remark about West Bengal's disenfranchised—that "they can vote next time"—was a short step. And a Rekha Gupta or Kejriwal, an Advani or Jaisankar falling afoul of a software engineered to go rogue, the next. Last July, Ashok Lavasa had issued the first warning in this newspaper: it is not the Election Commission's job to

this brink in the direction of creating consent, not eliminating the need for it.

During a frantic search for my family coordinates from 2002 during SIR verification, my late mother was misidentified with a namesake from North Kolkata—for a while my citizenship seemed to hang in a limbo. When she was alive, nothing produced more violent reactions in her than electoral nihilism—somebody disparag-

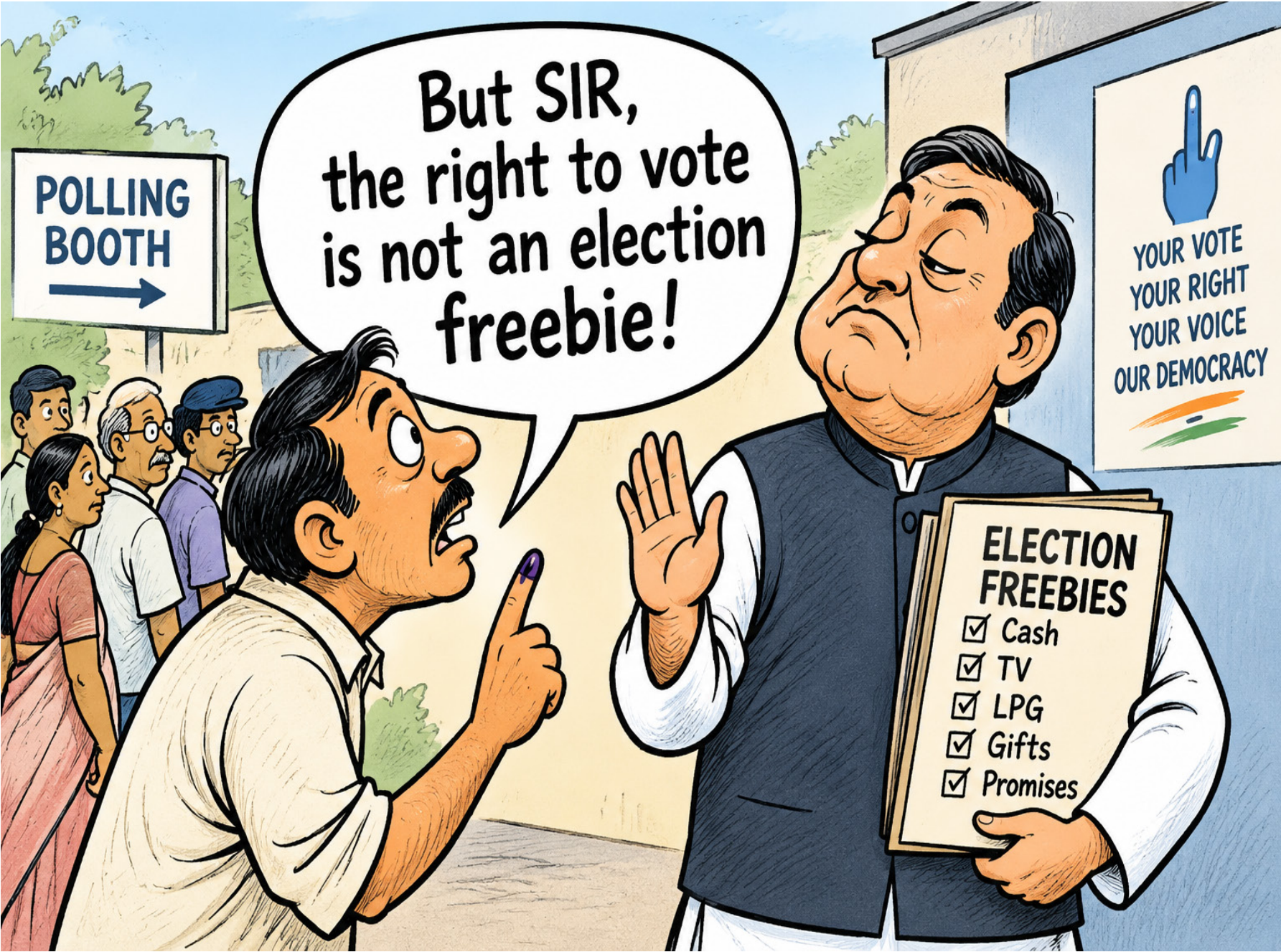
DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

Good news for Prepaid Mobile Users in India
The Govt just introduced Telecom Consumer Protection (Thirteenth Amendment) Regulations, 2026, consumers will now have:
• 30-day recharge plans, reducing the need for 13 monthly recharges to 12 in a year
• Voice and SMS-only plans for those who do not need data
• More suitable options for low-budget consumers who primarily need basic voice calls

Many of you had shared your concerns with me about limited and inflexible recharge options. I raised this issue in Parliament on 11th March, seeking greater choice and more affordable options for consumers. I am grateful to the Government of India and TRAI for resolving these concerns in the interest of greater consumer choice and convenience. ~
Raghav Chadha, MP (RS)



ing the vote. Even as an ordinary Indian citizen, it chafed against her very being as polit-



a pandemic of disenfranchise-ment. The exception becomes the norm. At last glance, the

tution to 'transfer' this power on to them in 1950—as if there was a volitional element to it.

verify citizenship. But we are there, and it would behove the government to pull back from

ical person. In the modern republic, she knew it was the one thing that is sacred.

Himanta tells AIUDF chief Ajmal to step back from active politics, ‘give blessings’

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday advised AIUDF chief Badruddin Ajmal to step away from active electoral politics and allow the next generation of party leaders to take forward the organisation.

Sarma made the remarks while campaigning for BJP candidate Debashish Sharma in the Nagaon Lok Sabha bypoll, scheduled for October 6.

Referring to Ajmal’s campaign activities, Sarma said the AIUDF chief should focus on religious activities and his health instead of travelling in the heat and rain for the election.

“Ajmal Sahab should focus on religious activities. What is the need to roam around in this heat for elec-



“Ajmal Sahab should focus on religious activities. What is the need to roam around in this heat for elections?”

tions?” Sarma said during a campaign meeting in Nagaon.

He said Ajmal has three sons and other party leaders who could take forward the AIUDF.

“Ajmal needs rest. He has three sons and other party members who can lead the party. Now Ajmal should only give blessings (dua),” Sarma said.

The Chief Minister also referred to Ajmal’s age and health, saying that

continued campaigning in difficult weather conditions could affect him.

“I am not speaking against him. I am just saying that if he keeps moving around in this sun and rain, it will only cause trouble for his health. So he should take care of his health,” he said.

Ajmal, the sitting MLA from Binakandi and a three-time former Lok Sabha MP from Dhubri, is contesting the Nagaon bypoll himself. He

filed his nomination on September 16 along with BJP candidate Debashish Sharma and Congress candidate Sibamoni Bora.

The bypoll was necessitated by the resignation of former Congress MP Pradyut Bordoloi, who later contested the Assam Assembly election from Dispur on a BJP ticket. Polling is scheduled for October 6 and counting will take place on October 9.

Ajmal had said after filing his nomination that education, health-care, and flood and erosion-related issues would be among his priorities if elected.

Sarma has begun an intensive campaign for the BJP candidate and is scheduled to address multiple election meetings across the constituency ahead of polling.

SMC election counting teams to undergo specialised training on September 30

SILCHAR

Training for Decoding Staff, Tabulators, personnel engaged in the sealing of counted ballots and other connected papers, and Transit Officers detailed for the counting of votes for the Silchar Municipal Corporation Election, 2026, will be held at Cachar College, Silchar, on September 30 from 2 PM onwards.

As per order, the following ALMTs and Master Trainers have been detailed to impart training to the respective categories of personnel.

For Decoding Staff, training will be held in Room No. 008 by Dr. Gongesh Bhattacharjee, ALMT and Assistant Professor, JNS College, Udharbond, and Dr. Swapan Das, ALMT and Assistant Professor, JNS College, Udharbond.

For Tabulators, the training will be conducted in Room No. 009 by S.B. Dutta Choudhury, Resource Person, Training Cell, Silchar Municipal Corporation Election, 2026 and Kishore Kumar Deb, ALMT and Assistant Teacher, H.B.D.S., Rajabazar, M.V. School.

Training on the sealing of counted ballots and other connected papers will be held in Room No. 010 by Sri Surojit Acharjee, ALMT and Assistant Teacher, Niranjan Paul Institute, Silchar, and Dr. Sandip Debnath, ALMT and PGT, DNNK H.S. School, Silchar.

For Transit Officers, training will be conducted in Room No. 016 by Dr. Pankaj Goswami, ALMT and Lecturer, Silchar Polytechnic, Silchar, and Jogen- dra Chandra Das, ALMT and Assistant Headmaster, KBJR Memorial HS School, Udharbond.

The training has been organised to familiarise the personnel with the procedures and responsibilities associated with their respective duties during the counting of votes.

The training will commence at 2 PM on September 30 at Cachar College, Silchar.

Manipur MLA Leishiyo Keishing seeks state action to strengthen Myanmar border security

IMPHAL

Ruling MLA Leishiyo Keishing has urged the Manipur government to take immediate steps to strengthen security along the state’s border with Myanmar, saying the government should intervene if the Assam Rifles is unable to adequately protect the area.

Keishing’s demand comes days after four Naga civilians were killed in an alleged attack by KNA-B militants at Pilong village in Kamjong district on September 24.

Speaking to the media after conducting a two-day assessment of border villages from September 25 to 26, the legislator from the Kamjong Scheduled Tribe reserved constituency criticised the closure of a police outpost at Skipe and questioned the security arrangements along the border.

Keishing said repeated incursions by armed groups from across the border had forced residents to abandon several villages, including Pilong, Skipe, Aloyo, Choro, Namlee and Wanglee.

He said the situation had creat-

ed an impression that the affected villages had effectively been left beyond the reach of the state administration.

The MLA said the government had been requested to deploy three companies of the Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB) in the region, but stressed that immediate action was also required to facilitate the safe resettlement of displaced villagers.

Residents and Pilong village headman Zingmin Jajo said previous requests for additional security forces had not received an adequate response, despite the reported presence of heavily armed KNA-B militants across the Myanmar border.

Jajo said the four civilians killed in the September 24 attack were members of a local rotational civilian watch group guarding the village at the time of the incident.

Keishing also highlighted the impact of prolonged insecurity on local development, saying efforts to develop Pilong as a regional trade centre had suffered setbacks since 2016 because of ethnic conflict and recent border violence.

Northeast braces for more rain as Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland and Tripura face heavy showers

GUWAHATI

IMD forecasts heavy rain with thunderstorms and lightning on September 29-30; weather system over Myanmar coast to influence regional conditions

Rainfall activity is expected to remain active across parts of the Northeast on Tuesday and Wednesday, even as rain begins to ease across several parts of north India, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

The weather department has forecast heavy rain accompanied by thunderstorms and lightning in Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland and Tripura on September 29, with heavy rainfall activity likely to continue across the region on September 30.

The latest weather pattern is linked to a developing system over the north Andaman Sea and adjoining Myanmar coast. The IMD said a well-marked low-pressure area over the region was expected to move north-northwestwards



along and off the Myanmar-Bangladesh coasts towards the northeast Bay of Bengal and adjoining Bangladesh.

Among the northeastern states, Mizoram, Manipur, Na-

while, has no warning for September 29 but is forecast to receive heavy rain on September 30.

The weather system could therefore keep rainfall conditions active across the eastern and southern parts of the Northeast even as the monsoon begins to withdraw from other parts of the country.

In contrast, rainfall activity is expected to ease across much of north India. The IMD has issued no warning for either east or west Uttar Pradesh on September 29, while Uttarakhand is also expected to see an improvement after recent rainfall.

Delhi, Haryana and Punjab are also expected to remain largely dry.

The contrasting weather pattern puts the Northeast among the regions where rain-related conditions will remain significant over the next two days, particularly in Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland and Tripura.

Assam delimitation was done to help Himanta win polls, alleges CJP

GUWAHATI

The Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) alleged that the delimitation of Assembly constituencies in Assam was carried out in a manner that would benefit Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma in elections.

CJP national spokesperson Ashutosh Ranka made the allegation while speaking to reporters in Guwahati. He also reiterated the organisation’s demand for the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and announced that the CJP would launch a nationwide protest from October 2. “For 48 hours, the ball was in Gyanesh Kumar’s court; now, the ball is in CJP’s court. We will launch a nationwide protest starting October 2, and we will not back down until Gyanesh Kumar resigns,” Ranka said.



Ranka alleged that the Assam Assembly constituencies had been redrawn to provide an electoral advantage to Sarma.

“The Assembly constituency boundaries were redrawn in Assam so that Himanta Biswa Sarma could win the election here,” he alleged.

He further questioned the Election Commission over the delimitation exercise and the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. The CJP has

been campaigning against Kumar over alleged irregularities in the electoral-roll revision process. The organisation had earlier given the CEC a 48-hour deadline to resign and threatened nationwide protests if he failed to do so. The controversy comes amid reports of differences within the three-member Election Commission over aspects of electoral-roll management and the SIR exercise. The Election Commission has rejected suggestions of an insti-

tutional breakdown, maintaining that differences and internal checks are part of the functioning of a multi-member constitutional body. Ranka also alleged that the electoral process had deprived crores of voters of their rights and demanded greater transparency from the poll panel. These allegations have not been independently established.

The CJP’s October 2 protest plan has also run into a hurdle in Mumbai, where police have reportedly denied permission for the proposed demonstration. CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke has warned of a possible “Jail Bharo Andolan” if the organisation is prevented from holding the protest. Ranka was recently detained along with several CJP leaders and volunteers in Guwahati ahead of a planned regional meeting. He was subsequently released and said the detention would not deter the organisation from pursuing its campaign.

Tripura village committee polls: CM Manik Saha urges voters to cast ballots without fear



AGARTALA

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha urged voters to turn out in large numbers and exercise their franchise freely and peacefully in the ongoing Village Committee elections under the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC). Appealing to voters, Saha asked them not to delay and to reach their respective polling stations without apprehension.

“Do not delay. Come out of your homes and go to your respective polling stations and cast your votes without any apprehension,” Saha said.

The chief minister said he had spoken to the Director General of Police and was assured that polling would be conducted peacefully across the areas. “Voting should be conducted in a festive atmosphere,” he said, urging people to participate in the

democratic process without fear.

Saha also appealed to voters to make their choice independently and not come under pressure to vote for any particular political party. “I will not say that everyone should vote for our party. Vote wherever you think it is right to vote according to your own choice,” he said. Describing voting as both a right and a responsibility, the chief minister said the Village Committee elections were important for development in areas administered by the TTAADC.

He said the representatives elected through the process would play a role in raising local issues and addressing development-related concerns.

Saha urged voters to participate in the elections in large numbers and ensure that the polling process remained peaceful.

Assam’s culture, crafts can strengthen global identity: UK envoy



East and Northeast India, British High Commission, said at The Assam Tribune Dialogue 2026.

Speaking at a session titled “The World is Changing: Where do India and Britain Stand Together”, Sengupta discussed Britain’s cultural influence and the scope for deeper cultural exchanges between India and the UK.

In a conversation with The Assam Tribune senior sub-editor Nasreen Habib, Sengupta identified football, music, literature and universities as some of Britain’s most visible sources of soft power.

He said British club football had developed a strong international following, while music ranging from The Beatles and The Rolling Stones to contemporary artists such as Ed Sheeran had crossed national boundaries. British universities and literature, he added, had also created enduring links across countries.

The discussion also examined the legacy of the colonial period in British institutions, including the issue of human remains taken from India.

Habib referred to Oxford University’s decision to return 39 human remains of Naga people taken during British colonial rule, as well as the wider collections of Naga remains held by institutions in Europe and the US.

Sengupta said such issues needed to be handled with sensitivity, particularly because they involved questions of dig-

nity and the wishes of communities and descendants. He stressed the importance of engaging with source communities and examining the provenance of collections.

The conversation then turned to the Vrindavani Vastra, the 16th-century textile associated with Assam that is expected to return to the state on loan from the British Museum in 2027.

Sengupta described the proposed return as an opportunity for people in Assam to reconnect with an important part of their cultural heritage. He said cultural exchanges involving museums, scholars, artists and institutions could contribute to stronger India-UK cultural ties.

On the possibility of more such artefacts returning to Assam, Sengupta said it would depend on individual relationships with museums, noting that museums in the UK are not directly run by the government.

Asked what aspects of Assam deserved greater international attention beyond tea, wildlife and the Brahmaputra, Sengupta highlighted the state’s weaving traditions, crafts and the work of its younger generation of artists and creators.

He said giving people outside Assam greater opportunities to experience the state’s culture, crafts and creative work could help establish Assam more firmly on the international cultural map.

STUDENT 5E for SUCCESS INTERNSHIP

STOP DREAMING AND START DOING.

APPLY NOW

5eforsuccess@gmail.com

Live Project Incentives Certificate Free Training

Quest!

The dot over a lowercase “i” or “j” is called a “tittle”.

GUWAHATI

Assam’s rich culture, traditional crafts and emerging creative talent have the potential to strengthen the state’s presence on the global cultural map, Amit Sengupta, Head of Media and Communications,

SC to hear plea raising doubts over CEC Gyanesh Kumar’s decisions next week

9% students reported suicidal thoughts, 34% felt like outsiders on campus: SC task force survey

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to hear next week a plea raising questions over the manner in which decisions are being taken by the Election Commission of India under Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.

The matter was mentioned before a bench headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant and comprising Justices Joymalaya Bagchi and V Mohana.

Senior advocate Vikas

decisions of the multi-member Election Commission are required to be taken unanimously or by majority.

“The way the Election Commission is functioning, there is serious doubt over whether the decisions are unanimous,” Singh told the bench.

The plea comes against the backdrop of a report by The Indian Express claiming that Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi had, on at least 14 occasions over the past

(SIR) of electoral rolls.

According to the report, the two commissioners had raised objections over orders which they said were issued without their knowledge or recommendation.

The Election Commission, however, has rejected the suggestion that the communications reflected differences over policy decisions.

In a statement, the poll panel said the letters sent by Sandhu and Joshi to the Cabinet Secretary concerned an officer on deputation and did not relate to pol-

NEW DELHI

Nearly one in 10 students in higher education institutions reported experiencing suicidal thoughts in the past year, while around 15 per cent said they had gone through a period of prolonged distress, low mood or anxiety in the previous six months, according to a nationwide survey conducted by a Supreme Court-appointed task force.

The findings are part of an ongoing assessment by the National Task Force (NTF) constituted to examine mental health concerns among students and recommend measures to prevent suicides in higher educational institutions (HEIs). The task force is expected to submit its final report to the Supreme Court by October 31.

The survey, which received responses from more than 2.43 lakh students, found that about 34 per cent of respondents felt like an outsider on campus to varying degrees. Around 67 per cent of those who participated belonged to the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Other Backward Class categories.

“About 15 per cent students recalled a period in the previous six months when they felt very overwhelmed or distressed, or experienced low moods or anxiety continuously for several weeks. Nine percent reported experiencing suicidal thoughts often or very often in the past year,” the survey found.

The findings also pointed to concerns about institutional support. While 56 per cent of students said they trusted their administration to handle serious issues fairly, nearly 32 per cent said their institutions did not provide counselling services.

Academic pressures, uncertainty over employment and concerns about career choices emerged as common issues among students.

However, the task force has cautioned that the survey findings



should be treated as preliminary as the current sample is not representative of the entire student population.

“Responses to many other items, including open-text fields, are still being analysed. Moreover, due to non-representativeness of the current sample, the observations need to be taken as preliminary and tentative,” a senior official said.

The emerging patterns, however, indicate the need for urgent measures to strengthen student support systems, the official said. These include standardised support mechanisms, faculty training, efforts to reduce stigma around mental health, crisis-response protocols, regular monitoring backed by quality data, and more responsive and transparent institutional administrations.

The task force has also conducted institutional visits and consultations with students and other stakeholders as part of its assessment.

So far, the NTF has held 30 meetings at 19 institutions across Delhi and the National Capital Region, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Assam and West Bengal. The institutions visited represented different disciplines and types of higher educational institutions.

The task force said the insti-

tutional visits were also not representative because of the small number of institutions covered. Despite this limitation, students at most of the institutions spoke at length about academic, social, mental health, faculty-related and administrative concerns, the official said.

Students reported several academic difficulties, including strict attendance requirements, demanding schedules and academic and clinical overload, particularly in medical and allied fields.

Medical students also raised concerns about on-call duties extending beyond prescribed limits, while students in engineering institutions spoke about intense competition linked to relative grading systems and stringent placement criteria.

Students in state universities reported inconsistent or inadequate academic support, which they attributed in part to faculty shortages.

In dental, nursing and mental health education institutions, students reported inadequate practical training that left them feeling under-prepared for professional practice.

PhD students, meanwhile, raised concerns about supervisors being neglectful, excessively con-

trolling or exploitative, according to the findings.

The task force’s interim report had earlier highlighted several structural concerns affecting students in higher education. These included social discrimination, sexual harassment in medical and engineering colleges, gender discrimination by faculty, and discrimination linked to caste and academic performance.

The interim report had also flagged caste identification through NEET-UG and JEE ranks, as well as caste-based humiliation and discrimination in areas such as admissions, grading, language barriers and access to faculty support.

The survey findings come amid renewed concern over student suicides following the deaths of two students at IIT Delhi and IIT Bombay, which triggered widespread discussion over mental health and student support systems in premier educational institutions.

The National Task Force was constituted by the Supreme Court in March last year to examine the rising incidence of student suicides and assess mental health and well-being concerns among students in higher educational institutions across the country.

The panel is headed by former Supreme Court judge Justice S Ravindra Bhat and includes psychiatrist Alok Sarin, Mary E John, former director of the Centre for Women’s Development Studies; Arman Ali, executive director of the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People; Rajendar Kachroo, founder of the Aman Satya Kachroo Trust; and Seema Mehrotra, professor of clinical psychology at NIMHANS, among other experts.

The final report is expected to set out recommendations aimed at strengthening mental health support, addressing institutional and academic pressures, and improving mechanisms for identifying and responding to students in distress.

INTERNATIONAL

In Islamabad, shipping containers on the streets signal a protest is imminent

‘Largest in American history’: Trump announces India-based Essar Group’s new steel plant in Iowa



ISLAMABAD

For residents, the steel barriers have become an unmistakable warning of what may follow: blocked streets, snarled traffic and long detours across Islamabad and neighboring Rawalpindi.

Vehicles drive past shipping containers placed by authorities to seal off an area ahead of a plan protest march by the supporters of imprisoned former Prime Minister Imran Khan demanding his release, in Islamabad, Pakistan, Monday, Sept. 28, 2026.

ISLAMABAD: It’s a familiar sight in Pakistan’s capital whenever a protest is expected: shipping containers lined up along streets or placed across key routes to restrict demonstrators’ movement and keep them from reaching sensitive areas.

For residents, the steel barriers have become an unmistakable warning of what may follow: blocked streets, snarled traffic and long detours across Islamabad and neighboring Rawalpindi.

The latest deployment came ahead of a march by supporters of imprisoned former Prime Minister Imran Khan demanding his release. Cranes have lifted red, blue and green containers from trucks and lowered them into place along roads.

Originally scheduled for Sept. 27, the march was postponed until Oct. 4, but many of the containers remain in place. Since last week, police have positioned them along key routes leading to the Red Zone, home to Parliament, government offices and foreign embassies.

Khan, a former cricket star turned politician and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif’s main political rival, has been imprisoned since 2023. He is serving multiple prison sentences following convictions on corruption and other charges. Khan and his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party say the cases are politically motivated.

Khan was ousted in a parliamentary no-confidence vote in April 2022. Sharif returned to office after lawmakers elect-

ed him prime minister following the Feb. 8, 2024, parliamentary election. Khan’s party says its mandate was stolen in that vote, an allegation the government denies. Now against Islamabad’s green hills and tree-lined avenues, the rows of brightly colored containers are hard to miss. Some sit beside busy roads, ready to be moved. Others are stacked two high or positioned across traffic lanes, turning broad avenues into narrow, controlled passages.

“It looks like a city of containers,” Islamabad housewife Sahiba Bibi said. She said this time the disruption began before demonstrators had even set out for Islamabad from across the country, particularly from northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, where Khan’s party governs.

PTI’s top leadership said it delayed the march because authorities had blocked key approaches to the capital, including Attock Bridge, a major crossing for convoys traveling from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Containers and spiked metal sheets had been placed along the route that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi and his supporters were expected to take, party organizers said.

Even where roads remained open, the preparations narrowed traffic lanes and created long lines of vehicles. Commuters searched for alternate routes, while shopkeepers along potential protest paths weighed whether to close their businesses, fearing damage if unrest or clashes broke out.

Authorities say they pay rent to owners of container trucks for the use of the containers. But some drivers say police stop them on highways, seize their vehicles and take their keys.

Rehmat Gul, a container-truck driver, said police stopped him and took his

keys before impounding his truck. The container was later placed on a road near Rawalpindi, he said.

“Fuel prices have almost doubled because of the ongoing tensions between the United States and Iran,” said Abdul Hafeez, a government employee who commutes from Rawalpindi to Islamabad for work and also drives his children to school. “At a time when we are already struggling to keep our kitchens running, roadblocks force us to travel farther.”

“If the government does not block the roads, we have no problem with these protests,” he said.

For many residents, the containers are no longer merely a security measure. Their arrival signals that another political confrontation is approaching and that ordinary life may be disrupted. The government, however, says the precautions are necessary.

“PTI has a track record of disruption and vandalism during protests, and its supporters would not be allowed to enter the capital,” Information Minister Attaullah Tarar told reporters in Peshawar last week.

Afridi rejected the government’s characterization, saying PTI’s sole purpose was to hold a peaceful rally demanding Khan’s release.

Authorities used similar measures in November 2024, sealing roads into Islamabad as Khan’s supporters attempted to reach the capital despite a ban on rallies. Police fired tear gas to disperse the protesters.

That experience has taught residents not to wait for a formal road-closure announcement.

Once cranes begin lowering containers into place, many start changing their routes, and some begin stocking up on food.



WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump on Monday announced that India-based Essar Group will build a USD 15 billion steel plant in Iowa, describing it as the “largest steel plant” in American history.

Trump made the announcement at the Oval Office alongside Essar Group co-founder Ravi Ruia and his son Rewant Ruia, chairman of the group’s US-based subsidiary Mesabi Metalics.

“Today, we’re thrilled to announce that Mesabi Metalics will be building the largest steel plant in American history in the great state of Iowa,” Trump said.

Mesabi Metalics, a Minnesota-based company owned by Essar Group, is expected to begin production at the plant in 2030. The facility is projected to produce about 10 million tonnes of steel annually and create up to 1,750 permanent jobs in Iowa, according to

the White House.

The project will be supplied with iron ore from a new USD 2.5 billion mine developed by Mesabi Metalics in Minnesota’s Mesabi Iron Range. The mine is expected to produce around 7.5 million tonnes of iron ore annually and create about 350 jobs.

The White House said the mine would be the first new iron mine in the United States in 50 years. The Mesabi Iron Range, which stretches for about 80 to 100 miles, accounted for around 60 per cent of total US iron ore production during the 20th century. Rewant Ruia thanked Trump “for bringing back the importance of building things in America,” saying the plant would use the latest technology and compete with steel plants globally on size, quality and cost.

“This plant will use the latest technology and will compete head-to-head with any steel plant in the world on size, quality and on cost,”

Ruia said.

Trump credited his administration’s 50 per cent tariffs on steel imports for encouraging companies to invest in US manufacturing.

“Everyone is building their plants here because they don’t want to pay tariffs,” Trump said, adding that the American steel industry was “roaring back to life”.

The project is expected to produce steel entirely in the US, with the iron ore mined in Minnesota and processed at the Iowa facility.

Essar Group, an industrial conglomerate founded in India in 1969, has interests spanning energy, mining, infrastructure, technology and other sectors. Mesabi Metalics is headquartered in Nashwauk, Minnesota.

The announcement was attended by Energy Secretary Chris Wright, Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, Export-Import Bank chairman John Jovanovic and other senior US officials.

Manipur: Beyond the Conflict, Unlocking a Land of Valour, Beauty and Opportunity



COL (DR.) ASHWANI KUMAR, MID, VSM (RETD)
There are places one visits as a tourist, and there are places one understands only after seeing them through the eyes of a soldier. Manipur belongs to the latter category.
Having served and travelled extensively in the Northeast, I have visited Tusom Post, Imphal, Moirang and several other parts of Manipur, interacted with local communities and witnessed the region in both peaceful and difficult periods. Visits to historical sites associated with the Second World War, including the Imphal War Cemetery and Red Hill, further deepened my understanding of the strategic importance of this land.
More importantly, interactions with local people before and after the recent tensions gave me an opportunity to understand their concerns, aspirations and anxieties beyond what statistics can convey.
A soldier learns that terrain is never merely terrain. A mountain can be an obstacle or an advantage. A road can be a military lifeline or an economic corridor. A remote border post can be a security position today and, with the right infrastructure, part of an economic network tomorrow.
Manipur stands at precisely such a crossroads. For years, national attention has focused on violence, ethnic tensions and security challenges. These concerns cannot be wished away. But Manipur is much larger than its present crisis. It is a land of extraordinary beauty, ancient traditions, sporting excellence, military history and immense economic potential.
The challenge is not simply to restore normalcy. It is to unlock Manipur's potential and make development an instrument of lasting peace.

A Land of Beauty and Valour.
The serene waters of Loktak Lake, with its floating phumdis, and the unique Keibul Lamjao National Park, home to the endangered Sangai, represent Manipur's extraordinary natural heritage.
The Shirui Hills, Ukhrul, Khangkhui caves, Sadu Chiru waterfalls, Senapati and numerous lesser known destinations add to its tourism potential. Yet Manipur's greatest attraction may not be its landscape. It is its people and their culture.
Manipuri dance, Thang-Ta, indigenous traditions, handloom, handicrafts and the state's association with polo reflect a rich cultural inheritance. The historic Ima Keithel, Imphal's famous women's market, also demonstrates the strength of women's participation in the local economy.
Manipur's history is equally compelling. The Khongom War Memorial recalls Major General Paona Brajabashi and the resistance during the Anglo-Manipur War of 1891. At Moirang, the Indian National Army flag was unfurled on 14 April 1944.
For a soldier, the Imphal War Cemetery and Red Hill carry a special significance. They remind us that this apparently remote region was once a major theatre of the Second World War. My visits to these places reinforced one thought, Manipur is not on the margins of India's history; it has repeatedly stood at important crossroads of India's military and national story. Its sporting achievements, particularly in boxing, football, weightlifting and other disciplines, add another dimension to this remarkable identity. Manipur does not need to manufacture a new identity. It already possesses one. What it needs is to convert its strengths into opportunity.
Beyond the Present Crisis.
No serious discussion can ignore the violence and social divisions that have affected Manipur since 2023. My interactions with local people before and after the tensions reinforced an important understanding, behind statistics are families, livelihoods, memories and aspirations. Displacement, disrupted livelihoods and damaged trust create challenges that cannot be addressed by security measures alone. The way forward must therefore bring together security, reconciliation, rehabilitation, governance and economic development.
For ordinary citizens, peace must become visible in everyday life. It means schools reopening, markets functioning, farmers reaching markets safely, young people finding employment and families being able to rebuild their lives. A peace process that leaves young people without jobs and families without livelihoods will remain fragile.



Brain VISION

Hard times show real people.

A Soldier's View of the Terrain.

During my years in the Northeast, I learned that a road has a significance far beyond its engineering value. For a soldier, it provides mobility and logistics. For a

villager, it means access to a hospital, school and market. For a tourist, it opens a destination. For an entrepreneur, it can determine whether a business survives. This is why connectivity must become central to Manipur's transformation.
Manipur's location along India's frontier with Myanmar gives it strategic importance. Moreh, in particular, can become more than a border town with appropriate infrastructure and security, it can develop into a logistics, trade and services centre connecting India's Northeast with Southeast Asia. India's Act East policy provides the broader strategic framework.
The question is therefore not merely:-
How do we secure the border?
It is also:
How do we make the border economically productive for the people living around it?
From Tourism to Tourism Economy.



Manipur should not attempt to compete with conventional mass tourism destinations. Its strength lies in nature, culture, history, adventure and community based tourism. A carefully designed circuit could connect:
Imphal, Kangla, Moirang, Loktal, Keibul, Lamjao, Sendra, Ukhrul, Shirui, Senapati, Khongom, Red Hill, Imphal War Cemetery and other WWII sites.
Homestays, local guides, transport, restaurants, handicrafts, adventure activities and cultural performances can ensure that tourism generates employment beyond the major towns. The objective should be simple, Tourism revenue must reach the village, not stop at the capital. Think beyond tourism.
Tourism alone cannot transform Manipur.
The state can build on horticulture, agriculture, bamboo, handloom, handicrafts, food processing, floriculture, medicinal plants, fisheries and cold-chain infrastructure. Traditional products can be connected to national and international markets through modern design, branding, e-commerce and logistics. But Manipur should aim even higher.
Why Not Build a Major IT and Knowledge Hub?
For decades, students and young professionals from the Northeast have travelled towards Delhi, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Mumbai and other metropolitan centres for education and employment. There is nothing wrong with mobility. But the vision should be bigger. Why should India not also move towards the Northeast?
Manipur can develop IT parks, digital-service centres, start-up incubators, research facilities, educational institutions and skill development hubs, supported by reliable power and high-speed digital connectivity.
A young person from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi, Maharashtra or Karnataka should one day have a reason to come to Manipur not only as a tourist, but as a student, researcher, technology professional, entrepreneur or investor. For decades, talent has predominantly travelled from the Northeast towards the rest of India. The time has come to create conditions in which India also travels east.
Manipur should not merely receive development. It should become a destination for development.
Sport as an Economic Asset.
Manipur's sporting achievements offer another opportunity. The state can build a complete sports economy around academies, sports science, coaching, physiotherapy, equipment manufacturing, tournaments and sports tourism.
Its success in producing athletes can therefore generate careers not only for sportspersons, but also for coaches, trainers, administrators, medical professionals and equipment manufacturers.
Five Priorities to be taken into consideration. From my experience, five priorities deserve attention they are as under:
First, secure the environment through effective law and order and border management.
Second, rebuild trust through constitutional and democratic mechanisms and dialogue among communities.
Third, reconnect the state through roads, railways, telecommunications, power and digital connectivity.
Fourth, create local employment through tourism,

agriculture, industry, IT, sport and entrepreneurship.
Fifth, change the national narrative so that Manipur is increasingly seen not only through conflict, but through culture, education, tourism, technology, sport and opportunity.
The Manipur We Should Build.
A soldier learns another lesson from difficult terrain:
The most challenging ground is often the ground with the greatest strategic value.
Manipur's mountains, valleys and border location can become economic assets.
Its history can become heritage tourism.
Its biodiversity can become responsible eco-tourism.
Its athletes can become the foundation of a sports economy.
Its artisans can become entrepreneurs.
Its universities can attract students from



across India.
Its IT hubs can attract young professionals and start-ups.
Its border can become a gateway to Southeast Asia.
The objective should not be to erase Manipur's diversity. It should be to create conditions in which diversity becomes a cultural and economic strength rather than a source of permanent division. Manipur does not need sympathy alone. It needs confidence, connectivity, investment, justice, opportunity and a long-term national vision.
The real transformation will begin when a young Manipuri sees the state not as a place from which to escape, but as a place in which to

build a future and when young people from the rest of India begin looking eastward towards Manipur for education, tourism, enterprise and opportunity.
Manipur has already given India warriors, athletes, artists and patriots. The next chapter can be about entrepreneurs, innovators, students, tourists, investors and a new generation of nation-builders.
The land of valour and beauty can become a land of opportunity. And from a soldier's perspective, that would be the most meaningful victory of all not merely securing the terrain, but unlocking its potential and securing the future of its people.
Author's Note:
Having served and travelled extensively in the Northeast, including visits upto Tusom Post, Imphal and Moirang, interactions with local communities before and after the recent tensions,

sions, and visits to historical and World War II sites, I have observed its difficult terrain, rich cultures, historical legacy, resilient people and immense strategic potential from close quarters. This article is written from the perspective of a soldier who believes that security, connectivity, education and economic opportunity must advance together. As a follower of Shankaracharya ji of Sharda Sarvagya Peeth Jammu and Kashmir my experience was also to spread peace in the area and proposed for the prosperity in the coming days.
Disclaimer:
This article represents the author's personal views and is intended as a constructive perspective on tourism, development, security and economic opportunity in Manipur. It does not represent the official position of any government, organisation or institution.



BRAIN VISION

EMPOWERING YOUNG MINDS



UNLOCK YOUR FUTURE WITH BRAIN VISION CLASSES

At Brain Vision Classes, we provide the ultimate blueprint your books leave out, featuring:

- Advanced Logic
- Modern Skills
- and Career Focus

For Students (Classes VI-X)

- Cutting-edge Online Modules
- Hands-on Practical Training

Scan to Enroll



Know More

www.krcfoundation.org

REGISTER TODAY! <https://bit.ly/KRCBrainVision>

info@krcfoundation.org

+91 - 9330830083

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@info.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

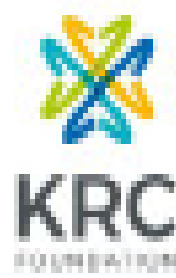
Participate in NE India Writing Star Contest and get your writings published. Eligibility: From Class VI onwards. Each participant receives a digital participation certificates. Send articles at: info@krcfoundation.org
For Details Visit: <https://bit.ly/NEIndiaWritingStarContest> www.krcfoundation.org/campaigns-csr/ne-india-writing-star-contest

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



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

www.krctimes.com

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

NOMINATE YOUR
FAVOURITE
TEACHER



YOUR VOICE. YOUR VOTE.

Celebrating and Honouring the Educators
who Inspire, Empower and Transform

Nominations are open for

North East Integration Rally
Teacher Excellence Award

2026-27



Who Can Nominate?

Students | Schools | Parents | Citizen | Self Nominate

Scan the QR & Fill the Google form

<https://bit.ly/NEIRTEA>

www.krcfoundation.org