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PERSPECTIVE

If you are always worried about what others think of you, you will never be happy.

Former Nagaon DC Debasish Sharma joins BJP ahead of bypoll

GUWAHATI
Former Nagaon Deputy Commissioner Debasish Sharma joined the Bharatiya Janata Party on Tuesday along with senior journalists Lenin Saurav Bora and Gunjan Kalita, days ahead of the Nagaon Assembly bypoll.The three joined the BJP at a programme attended by Assam BJP president and MP Dilip Saikia, Cabinet Ministers Piyush Hazarika, Jayanta Malla Baruah and Kaushik Rai, Nagaon MLA Rupak Sharma and other senior party leaders.Sharma's entry into the BJP has triggered speculation over whether the former bureaucrat could emerge as a contender for the party's ticket in the bypoll.Asked about the possibility, Saikia said Sharma had not approached the party for a ticket before joining.

"We have a panel of candidates," Saikia said, adding that discussions on the election were already underway.He, however, said Sharma's candidature could be considered if a request was received from him or from people in Nagaon.

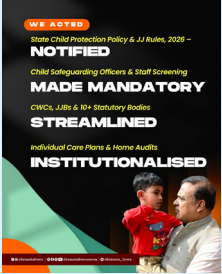
"If a request comes from his side or from the people of Nagaon, the state committee and national committee will certainly consider it," Saikia said.

The Assam BJP president also said the party's state and central leadership would decide what organisational responsibility Sharma would be assigned.

Welcoming the former civil servant into the party, Saikia highlighted Sharma's administrative experience and his association with Assam's social and cultural life.

"His life is dedicated to the people of Assam," Saikia said, describing Sharma as a "sensitive person" who had worked for the people.

WHO SAID WHAT



When it comes to our children, there can be no gaps in protection. We identified the shortcomings, acted decisively and are systematically strengthening every safeguard needed to build a robust child protection system in Assam.

~ Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, CM, Assam

NEW DELHI

The death of a 54-year-old Manipuri musician following an alleged assault in Delhi has triggered a political confrontation between the Congress and BJP, with the Opposition accusing the government of failing to ensure public safety and the ruling party hitting back over Congress leader Sam Pitroda's controversial remarks about people from the Northeast.

Chongtham Vikram Singh, a well-known musician from Manipur, died after he was allegedly assaulted by a group of delivery workers and dhaba staff outside his apartment in Kilokari early Monday. Police have arrested seven people and apprehended a juvenile in connection with the case.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge described the incident as evidence of what he called "utter lawlessness" in the national capital under the BJP government.

Kharge alleged that students and women were unsafe in Delhi and that people from the Northeast, Dalits,



Adivasis and minorities remained vulnerable to violence and discrimination. He also accused Union Home Minister Amit Shah of allowing Delhi to deteriorate into a "crime capital".

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi demanded a speedy investigation and justice for Singh's family.

"After many such incidents, every Northeast family in Delhi is asking the same question today - are we safe here?" Gandhi said, while questioning the measures being taken by the

Union Home Ministry and Delhi Police to prevent attacks, particularly against people from the Northeast.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra termed Singh's death a "national shame" and called for immediate action against those responsible.

Congress leader Pawan Khara said Rahul Gandhi had spoken to Singh's brother and conveyed his condolences to the family.

Union Parliamentary Affairs Min-

ister Kiren Rijiju said Delhi Police had assured him that a chargesheet would be filed within eight to nine days. Rijiju said he was monitoring the investigation and called for the "strictest punishment possible" for those found responsible.

According to Rijiju, the eight accused in the case are from different states, including Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar.

The BJP accused the Congress of politicising the incident and questioned its record on issues concerning people from the Northeast.

BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia referred to controversial remarks made by Sam Pitroda in 2024, when the Congress leader had described people from the Northeast as resembling the Chinese. Bhatia questioned why Rahul Gandhi was not held accountable for Pitroda's remarks.

The Congress had distanced itself from those comments at the time, calling them "unfortunate and unacceptable".

According to the preliminary

inquiry, Singh, who belonged to the Meitei community, had objected to a group of men allegedly creating a disturbance outside his residence. He was injured during the ensuing altercation and later died.

The North East Students Society, Delhi University (NESSDU), condoled Singh's death and described him as a respected Manipuri musician. The organisation said Singh had reportedly gone downstairs after noticing a group of men allegedly drinking and creating a disturbance outside his apartment. He was attacked after asking them to reduce the noise, it said.

The incident has renewed concerns among people from the Northeast living in Delhi over their safety and the response of law-enforcement agencies to alleged attacks and discrimination.

With the investigation underway, the political dispute has also brought renewed focus on the larger question of safety, accountability and the treatment of people from the Northeast in the national capital.

Assam CM reviews Advantage Assam 2.0 projects, orders faster execution



GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has directed state departments to urgently address bottlenecks delaying projects announced under Advantage Assam 2.0, as the government shifts its focus from investment commitments to their execution on the ground.

Sarma chaired a meeting with senior officials and representatives of major companies at Lok Sewa Bhawan on Tuesday evening to review the progress of projects across key sectors, including cement, power and renewable energy.

Projects and issues involving Ambuja Cements, Star Cement, Dalmia Cement, Adani Power, SJVN Green Energy Ltd, Hinduja Group, Greenko Energies Pvt Ltd, NEEPCO and NLC India Renewables, among others, were discussed during the meeting.

The Chief Minister held detailed discussions with company representatives on the challenges affecting project implementation and asked the concerned departments to take prompt and coordinated measures to resolve

the issues.

"Just finished an exhaustive meeting with industry leaders to discuss their issues and the plans ahead. Every industry & their requirements have my personal attention as we move ahead in an environment of #EaseOfDoingBusiness," Sarma said in a social media post.

He also directed the Public Works Department (Roads) to ensure adequate and good-quality road connectivity to project sites wherever required.

The direction assumes significance as inadequate road infrastructure can affect the movement of equipment, construction materials and manpower, potentially slowing down large industrial projects.

Sarma reiterated that the government's priority is to ensure that investment commitments made during Advantage Assam 2.0 translate into actual projects, employment generation and sustained economic activity in the state.The review comes months after the Chief Minister said in May, shortly after taking charge for a fresh term, that around 60 per cent of the investment commitments were at advanced stages of implementation.

According to official figures, Advantage Assam 2.0 attracted investment commitments worth Rs 5,18,295 crore.

The latest review indicates that the government is now placing greater emphasis on removing implementation hurdles and ensuring that projects move from the commitment stage to construction and eventual commercial operations.

With major investments spread across energy, cement and renewable sectors, the pace at which these projects are executed is expected to be a key indicator of the success of Assam's investment-promotion strategy.

'We want justice, not revenge': Wife of musician C. Vikram Singh

NEW DELHI

The family of Manipur-origin musician C. Vikram Singh, who died in Delhi following an alleged physical assault involving delivery executives, has called for a fair and impartial investigation and legal action against anyone found responsible.

Singh's wife, Joshna Chongtham, said the family was struggling to come to terms with his sudden death and appealed for privacy as authorities investigate the circumstances surrounding the incident.

"I am still struggling to come to terms with the loss of my husband, Vikram Chongtham Vikram," Chongtham said in a statement.

Describing Singh as her husband, the father of her child, a son, brother and a musician deeply loved by his family and friends, she thanked those who had extended support to the family following the incident.

She expressed gratitude to relatives, friends and people across the country, as well as Delhi Police, political leaders and public representatives, for their support.

Chongtham stressed that the family was seeking accountability through due process and not revenge.

"We are not seeking revenge. We are seeking justice," she said, urging the authorities to ensure that those found responsible are dealt with according to law.She also appealed to the public and authorities to respect the family's privacy as it copes with the loss.

The family has called for an unbiased investigation to establish the circumstances surrounding the alleged assault and Singh's death. It has also sought appropriate legal action against anyone found responsible.

Arunachal GSDP up 149% in 10 years, road construction rises six-fold: Khandu



ITANAGAR

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Wednesday said the state has witnessed significant economic and infrastructure growth over the past decade, with its Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) rising by nearly 149 per cent and annual road construction increasing six-fold.

Addressing the concluding day of a special session of the Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly in the presence of Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan, Khandu said the state's GSDP had increased from around Rs 20,373 crore in 2016 to more than Rs 50,651 crore.

He said the state budget had grown by over 238 per cent during the period, while per capita income had more than doubled.

Khandu cited the figures as evidence of the transformation witnessed by Arunachal Pradesh in terms of economic growth and connectivity over the past 10 years.

He said road construction had

emerged as one of the major areas of infrastructure expansion, with annual road-building activity increasing nearly six-fold during the period.The Chief Minister said the expansion of road infrastructure had strengthened connectivity across the geographically challenging frontier state and contributed to improved access to markets, public services and remote areas.Khandu highlighted the economic indicators and infrastructure expansion while outlining the progress made by the state over the past decade. The Chief Minister's remarks came during a special Assembly session attended by Vice President Radhakrishnan, with the government showcasing the state's development trajectory and the changes achieved in key sectors.

The increase in GSDP, expansion of the state budget, growth in per capita income and rapid improvement in road construction, Khandu said, reflected the pace of development Arunachal Pradesh had achieved in the last decade.

Silchar civic polls: BJP finalises 38 candidates, keeps Mayor pick open

SILCHAR

The BJP has finalised candidates for 38 of the 42 wards of the newly formed Silchar Municipal Corporation, but has kept its choice for Mayor under wraps ahead of the October 3 civic polls.

The remaining four wards have been allotted to the party's NDA ally, the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), bringing an end to days of deliberations over seat allocation and candidate selection.

The 42-member corporation will cover areas falling under the Silchar, Udharbond, Borkhola and Sonai Assembly constituencies. Counting of votes will be held on October 6.

The BJP's decision not to announce its mayoral candidate at this stage is being seen as a strategy to focus first on securing a strong position across the wards before deciding who will lead the corporation.

Party sources said the civic contest is likely to be driven largely by

local factors rather than broader political equations. Candidate credibility, personal accessibility, community equations and ward-specific civic grievances are expected to play a significant role in determining the outcome.

The BJP's list includes both younger faces and experienced party workers. Kuldeep Nihal Choudhury and Abhishek Chakraborty are among the younger candidates, while former Silchar Municipal Board vice-chairperson Bijendra Prasad Singh and party workers Pradyut Paul, Amarendra Paul and Sushmita Purkayastha have also been given tickets.

Amarendra Paul and Sushmita Purkayastha are advocates by profession.

However, the announcement has also exposed discontent within the BJP, with some unsuccessful ticket aspirants reportedly resigning from the party's primary membership soon after the candidate



list was released.Their next move could become significant if they decide to contest as Independents, potentially dividing the BJP's vote in closely fought wards.The party leadership had anticipated the possibility of rebellion. During a meeting with state BJP leaders on Sunday, ticket aspirants were reportedly warned against entering the fray independently if they were denied nominations.Managing dissent and preventing rebel candidates from eating into the party's support base will therefore be among the BJP's immediate challenges as campaigning gathers momentum.

The candidate selection process involved several rounds of discussions between the state leadership and the election management committee. The deliberations intensified after a meeting attended by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday night, followed by further consultations from Tuesday morning.The final list was prepared af-

ter discussions involving Minister Jayanta Mallabaruah, Silchar election management committee chairman and Minister Kaushik Rai, MLAs Rajdeep Roy, Kishor Nath and Rajdeep Goala, former MLA Dipayan Chakraborty, Rajya Sabha MP's Kanad Purkayastha and Sushmita Dev, Cachar BJP president Rupam Saha and other senior party functionaries.The allocation of four wards to the AGP also reflects the BJP's effort to maintain coordination within the NDA while retaining the dominant share of the electoral contest.

With the candidate list now in place, the BJP faces a two-pronged challenge in Silchar - converting its organisational strength into ward-level victories and keeping disgruntled aspirants from turning the civic election into an internal contest.

The question of who will become the first Mayor of the new corporation, meanwhile, remains open.



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ISRO's New Milestone

The successful placement of EOS-05 into geosynchronous transfer orbit is much more than another achievement to be added to the growing list of milestones recorded by the Indian Space Research Organisation. It marks a significant expansion of India's ability to observe, understand and respond to developments on Earth-and, in the process, strengthens the country's technological, economic and strategic position.

Weighing more than 2,300 kg, EOS-05 is the heaviest satellite yet launched by the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle. But its significance is not measured merely in kilograms. More important is what the mission represents: a major advance in India's ability to operate sophisticated Earth-observation capabilities from geosynchronous orbit.

Satellites positioned around 36,000 km above the Earth and moving at the same apparent speed as the planet's rotation can remain focused on the same broad region for extended periods. That gives them an important advantage over conventional low-Earth-orbit observation satellites, which provide detailed but intermittent views as they pass over a particular area.

For India, this capability could have consequences well beyond the realm of space science.

The real test of a space programme is not simply how many rockets it launches or how many satellites it places in orbit. Its ultimate value lies in how effectively space technology is converted into public benefit. EOS-05 has the potential to strengthen that link.

For a country whose economy and food security remain closely tied to the monsoon, better and more continuous Earth observation can be invaluable. Changes in agricultural patterns, soil conditions, water availability and crop stress can be monitored with greater frequency. Such information can help governments and farmers anticipate problems rather than respond after damage has already occurred. The disaster-management implications are even more compelling. The Himalayas and the wider Hindu Kush region are becoming increasingly vulnerable to extreme weather events, landslides, floods and glacial lake outbursts. For the Northeast, the concern is particularly acute. Arunachal Pradesh and Assam are linked to a vast river system whose behaviour can change rapidly during periods of intense rainfall and upstream disturbances.

The experience of recent years has demonstrated that disaster management increasingly depends on information arriving not merely accurately, but early enough to make a difference.

A satellite capable of persistent observation can therefore become an important component of an early-warning architecture. Monitoring vulnerable glacial lakes, changes in river systems, flooding and other environmental threats from space can give authorities precious additional time to evacuate communities, protect infrastructure and coordinate relief. This is where India's space programme must increasingly be judged not simply by spectacular launches, but by the lives and livelihoods its technology helps protect. There is also a larger regional opportunity. India has repeatedly used its space capabilities to provide disaster-related information and assistance to neighbouring countries. Extending access to satellite-derived warnings and imagery to countries that lack comparable infrastructure would strengthen regional disaster preparedness while reinforcing India's role as a provider of public goods in South Asia. Such cooperation would have value beyond diplomacy. Climate change, floods, cyclones, landslides and other disasters do not recognise national boundaries. Shared satellite information can therefore become a practical instrument of regional cooperation at a time when geopolitical relations across South Asia remain complicated. At the same time, India should not overlook the strategic significance of what the GSLV-F17 mission demonstrates. EOS-05 is a civilian Earth-observation satellite, and there is no reason to blur that distinction. Yet technological capabilities rarely remain confined to a single application. The ability to develop, launch and place a heavy and sophisticated payload into geosynchronous orbit demonstrates advances in launch-vehicle performance, cryogenic technology, payload integration and mission management. These are capabilities with obvious strategic relevance.

A mature space power must possess both civilian and strategic capabilities. India's challenge is to ensure that its expanding space programme remains firmly anchored in peaceful and developmental applications while retaining the technological resilience necessary to protect national interests.

That makes the journey behind this mission as important as the launch itself.

The GSLV-F17 mission carries the memory of the failed EOS-03 launch of 2021, when an anomaly in the cryogenic stage brought the mission to an early end. The road to space success is rarely smooth. Even technologically advanced space agencies have experienced spectacular failures.

What distinguishes a durable space programme is not the absence of failure but the institutional capacity to learn from it. ISRO has repeatedly demonstrated that capacity. Failures are analysed, engineering systems are reassessed and corrective measures are incorporated. Scientists and engineers return to the launch pad without allowing one unsuccessful mission to define the institution. That culture of persistence deserves recognition. India's space programme has also benefited from sustained public investment and political support. Such support is justified not because every mission is guaranteed to succeed, but because the development of advanced technological capability requires patience. Space technology cannot be built overnight, nor can strategic expertise be purchased entirely from abroad.

The economic case is equally strong. India has established a reputation for delivering sophisticated space missions at comparatively low cost. As demand for satellite launches, Earth observation, navigation and space-based services expands globally, this capability can generate new commercial opportunities for Indian industry.

The next challenge, therefore, is to ensure that ISRO's achievements create a wider ecosystem. Private space companies, universities, start-ups and research institutions must be given greater opportunities to develop technologies, build satellites and participate in the emerging space economy. The future of Indian space exploration cannot rest on one institution alone.

EOS-05 should consequently be seen not as the destination but as another step towards a much larger ambition.

India is moving from being a country capable of launching satellites to becoming a country capable of building and operating an increasingly sophisticated space infrastructure. That transition carries enormous possibilities for agriculture, disaster management, climate monitoring, communications, scientific research, commercial services and national security.

For the Northeast and the wider neighbourhood, the promise may be particularly significant. In a region where mountains, rivers, monsoons and borders intersect, timely information can be as valuable as physical infrastructure.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Be there for others, but never leave yourself behind.

- Dodinsky

INDIA-CANADA RESET: BUILDING A PARTNERSHIP FOR A FRAGMENTED WORLD



ASHOK BHAN

The world is entering an era in which old certainties are disappearing faster than new arrangements are taking shape. The post-Cold War belief in an increasingly integrated global economy has given way to geopolitical competition, strategic protectionism, fractured supply chains and a renewed contest for technology, energy and critical minerals. Europe remains unsettled by war; West Asia continues to experience profound instability; the United States and China are locked in an increasingly consequential strategic and economic competition; and countries across the Global South are demanding a greater voice in the institutions that govern the international system.

It is against this unsettled backdrop that the emerging India-Canada rapprochement deserves to be viewed.

What is taking place between New Delhi and Ottawa is more than a diplomatic thaw. It has the potential to become an important example of how two democracies can move beyond a period of profound disagreement and construct a relationship based on economic complementarity, strategic autonomy and institutional dialogue.

The inaugural India-Canada Finance Ministers' Economic and Financial Dialogue held in Toronto on August 27 has given the reset a concrete economic foundation. The two countries have set an aspiration to expand bilateral trade to CAD 70 billion by 2030, while India has expressed readiness to begin negotiations on a Bilateral Investment Treaty. Cooperation is also being explored in financial technology, modern payment systems, cross-border remittances, capital markets and critical minerals. (Canada?)

This is no longer diplomacy conducted primarily through statements. It is diplomacy being translated into institutions.

India-Canada relations suffered a severe setback following Canadian allegations concerning the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar in British Columbia. The resulting diplomatic confrontation damaged political trust and disrupted normal high-level engagement.

The lesson from that difficult period should not be that India and Canada have incompatible interests. The opposite is true.

Their interests are sufficiently complementary that prolonged estrangement carries a cost for both.

A mature bilateral relationship does not require two countries to agree on every question. Democracies will inevitably have differences over law, security, foreign policy and domestic politics. What matters is whether those differences are managed through evidence, due process, diplomacy and institutional channels.

Canada has a responsibility to uphold its constitutional commitments, the rule of law and freedom of expression. India has an equally legitimate responsibility to protect its national security, territorial integrity and citizens from terrorism and violent extremism.

These principles need not be contradictory.

The present reset represents an important recognition on both sides that disagreements should be contained within the relationship rather than allowed to define it.

That is the essence of mature diplomacy.

Canada is looking beyond dependence

Canada's strategic circumstances have changed dramatically.

For generations, the United States was the overwhelmingly dominant economic and strategic partner of Canada. Geographic proximity made this inevitable and economically advantageous. But the recent intensification of US-Canada trade tensions has demonstrated the vulnerability inherent in excessive dependence on a single market.

Prime Minister Mark Carney's government has therefore placed greater emphasis on economic diversification and building new international partnerships. Canada's present circumstances make that strategy not merely desirable but necessary.

The breakdown of recent US-Canada trade negotiations and escalating tariff tensions have added urgency to Ottawa's

diversification strategy.

India naturally assumes significance in this search for diversification.

India is not simply a large consumer market. It is a major economic, technological and geopolitical power with a young population, expanding infrastructure, growing energy requirements and an increasingly important role in the Indo-Pacific and the Global South.

Canada, meanwhile, possesses precisely those resources and capabilities that India increasingly needs: energy, critical minerals, agricultural commodities, advanced technology, capital, research capacity and access to North American markets.

The relationship therefore offers a rare combination of complementarity and scale.

India's economic rise meets Canada's resource strength

The next chapter in India-Canada relations should be built around economics.

The recent Finance Ministers' Dialogue demonstrates how rapidly the agenda is expanding. The two countries are looking at financial-sector cooperation, FinTech, capital markets, payment modernisation, cross-border remittances and merchant payments. Canada and India have also discussed expanding the use of India's Unified Payments Interface in Canada. (Canada?)

This is significant because modern diplomacy increasingly operates through economic infrastructure.

A successful India-Canada economic relationship should encompass at least six strategic pillars.

First, trade and investment. The proposed Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement should provide predictable rules for businesses and investors and create a framework extending well beyond traditional merchandise trade.

Second, critical minerals. Canada's resource base and India's manufacturing ambitions create an obvious strategic partnership. Batteries, semiconductors, electric vehicles, renewable energy systems and advanced technologies all depend upon secure mineral supply chains.

Third, energy security. India's enormous and growing energy requirements create opportunities for Canadian LNG, clean energy, nuclear cooperation and other energy technologies.

Fourth, technology and artificial intelligence. Both countries possess strong technology ecosystems and substantial pools of highly educated talent. Collaboration in AI, cybersecurity, quantum technologies and digital infrastructure could produce benefits well beyond the bilateral relationship.

Fifth, financial cooperation. Canadian pension funds and institutional investors already have substantial exposure to India. Canada has acknowledged the significance of its long-term institutional capital in India's development, while both sides are examining ways to deepen engagement between financial institutions and investors. (Canada?)

Sixth, education and human capital. Universities, research institutions and professional networks can provide the intellectual infrastructure for the partnership.

A CEPA concluded without these broader dimensions would be an opportunity missed.

The Finance Ministers' Dialogue: diplomacy becoming architecture

The August 2026 Finance Ministers' Dialogue deserves particular attention because it represents a shift from episodic diplomacy towards institutionalised economic engagement.

The dialogue was established following the commitment made by Prime Minister Modi and Prime Minister Carney during their March 2026 meeting. Both governments have committed themselves to concluding CEPA negotiations by the end of 2026. (Canada?)

This institutionalisation matters.

Relationships become resilient when they are supported by permanent mechanisms rather than dependent upon individual leaders or temporary political moods.

The India-Canada relationship now needs precisely such institutional resilience.

Regular finance, trade, defence, science, technology, consular and migration dialogues should become permanent features of the relationship.

The two Prime Ministers' June meeting

at the G7 Summit already reflected this broader approach. They welcomed progress on economic cooperation, resilient supply chains, energy security and CEPA, while also agreeing to launch negotiations on a General Security of Information Agreement and deepen defence and security cooperation

That is a far more comprehensive relationship than the one that existed only a few years ago.

The human bridge must become a strategic asset

Perhaps the most extraordinary strength of India-Canada relations is the people-to-people connection.

The Indian-origin community has become deeply embedded in Canadian economic, academic, cultural and political life. At the same time, Canada has developed generations of students, researchers, entrepreneurs and professionals with strong connections to India.

This human bridge must be treated as an asset rather than a source of political contestation.

Diaspora communities should never become instruments of geopolitical rivalry.

Canada's commitment to multiculturalism and freedom of expression deserves respect. But freedom of expression cannot become a shield for incitement to violence or terrorism.

Conversely, allegations of foreign interference or transnational repression must be investigated through credible evidence and due process rather than political rhetoric.

The objective should be to create a relationship in which the Indian diaspora feels secure in Canada and Canada feels confident that its institutions are respected by India.

That is entirely achievable.

Security cannot be separated from friendship

No serious analysis of India-Canada relations can avoid the security question.

India has consistently expressed concern about extremist and separatist activities emanating from Canadian soil. Canada has raised concerns regarding foreign interference and transnational repression.

These concerns require dialogue, not denial.

The two countries should establish a sustained senior-level security mechanism involving diplomatic, intelligence and law-enforcement agencies. Cooperation should focus on terrorism, organised crime, money laundering, extortion, cybercrime and violent extremism.

The Kanishka tragedy remains a terrible reminder of what happens when terrorism transcends national boundaries.

The principle should be universal: terrorism and political violence cannot be legitimised by ideology, ethnicity, religion or political grievance.

India and Canada can disagree profoundly on many political matters and still cooperate against violence.

Indeed, that is what mature democracies should do.

The deeper significance of this rapprochement lies in the character of the two countries.

India and Canada are not superpowers. Neither seeks to dominate the international system. Both, however, possess substantial economic, diplomatic, technological and human capital.

This makes them important middle powers.

The emerging international system will increasingly depend upon such countries.

India has pursued strategic autonomy, maintaining relationships with the United States, Russia, Europe, Japan, the Gulf, Africa and the Global South. Canada is now attempting to diversify its external relationships while retaining its traditional partnerships.

Their approaches are different, but their strategic requirement is increasingly similar: neither country wants its national interests to be determined entirely by the preferences of a larger power.

This is where their partnership acquires a larger geopolitical meaning.

India and Canada can help build a world of multiple partnerships rather than rigid blocs.

The Indo-Pacific provides another im-

portant area for convergence.

India occupies a central strategic position in the Indian Ocean and is an essential actor in the Indo-Pacific. Canada, with its Pacific geography and expanding interest in the region, can become a constructive partner.

Cooperation in maritime security, critical-mineral supply chains, infrastructure, clean energy, technology and freedom of navigation can strengthen the broader regional architecture.

India has also supported Canada's engagement with the Indian Ocean Rim Association, reflecting a growing recognition of the importance of Canadian participation in the wider Indo-Pacific framework. (PM of Canada?)

The relationship should therefore not be confined to bilateral geography.

It can become part of a larger Indo-Pacific strategy.

From reset to strategic partnership

The danger now is complacency.

Diplomatic reconciliation can be fragile if it is not converted into institutional habits.

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

I am deeply distressed by the tragic demise of Chongtham Vikram Singh ji from Manipur. The safety & dignity of every person from North-East & every Indian is non negotiable. My heartfelt condolences to Vikram ji's family & loved ones. May they find strength in this tragic loss.

~ Kiren Rijju, Union Minister for Minorities Affairs & MP from Arunachal Pradesh



its.

India and Canada should therefore pursue a structured five-year roadmap.

They should conclude CEPA with ambition and balance; begin serious investment-treaty negotiations; establish permanent financial and security dialogues; expand cooperation in critical minerals and energy; strengthen university and research partnerships; and create mechanisms for regular consultation between parliamentarians, businesses, civil society and diaspora representatives.

The objective should be to ensure that no future bilateral disagreement can once again bring the entire relationship to a halt.

The true test of diplomacy is not whether countries remain friendly when they agree.

It is whether they remain engaged when they disagree.

A partnership suited to the twenty-first century

The India-Canada relationship should not be described merely as a return to normalcy.

The old normal itself has disappeared.

The international system today is more fragmented, more competitive and more uncertain. Economic security has become national security. Supply chains have become strategic assets. Technology has become a component of geopolitical power. Critical minerals have become as important to future economies as oil was to the industrial age.

In such a world, countries need trusted partners across regions.

India needs Canada for resources, capital, technology, education and access to North American markets.

Canada needs India for economic diversification, a vast and growing market, technology partnerships, investment opportunities and a stronger connection with the Indo-Pacific.

But both need something even more important: dependable democratic partnerships in an uncertain international environment.

That is why the present India-Canada reset should be seen as an opportunity of historic proportions.

The task before New Delhi and Ottawa is not to forget their disagreements. It is to develop the political maturity to prevent those disagreements from destroying the larger relationship.

The future should move from estrangement to engagement, from episodic diplomacy to institutional partnership, from suspicion to evidence-based cooperation, and from limited commerce to comprehensive economic interdependence.

If that transformation succeeds, India and Canada will have achieved something larger than a bilateral reconciliation.

They will have demonstrated that democracies can disagree without becoming adversaries; that strategic autonomy does not mean strategic isolation; and that economic interdependence can coexist with national sovereignty.

Cachar tightens security ahead of civic polls, licensed arms holders asked to deposit firearms

SILCHAR

Cachar district administration has stepped up its security and law-and-order preparedness ahead of the Silchar Municipal Corporation Election-2026, with District Magistrate Shri Rahul Kumar Gupta, IAS, directing all licensed arms holders in the district to deposit their firearms at their respective nearest police stations within seven days of receiving the notice.

The order comes against the backdrop of the Silchar Municipal Corporation Election-2026 announced by the Assam State Election Commission, Guwahati, and the ongoing process of receiving nominations from intending candidates. The move is part of the district administration's preventive measures to ensure a



peaceful, free and smooth electoral process.

The District Magistrate, who is also the licensing authority under the Arms Act, 1959, issued the order on September 7 following a detailed review of the existing arms licences in the district in consultation with the Senior Superintendent of Police, Cachar, Silchar. The decision was taken after carefully assessing the prevailing law-and-order situation and in pursuance of the instructions and guidelines issued by the Assam State Election Commission.

Under the order, all arms licence holders in Cachar have been directed to deposit their firearms at the nearest police station within seven days of receipt of the notice. The concerned Officers-in-Charge and In-Charge of police stations have

also been instructed to serve individual notices to the respective licence holders and ensure compliance with the directive.

The administration has made it clear that licence holders who fail to deposit their firearms within the stipulated period may face prosecution under Section 223 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

The deposited firearms will be returned to the respective licence holders immediately after one week from the declaration of the election results, as provided in the order.

The directive, however, does not apply to armed guards of banks and institutions or security guards deployed at ATMs within Cachar district, considering the nature of their security duties.

For other cases, exemption from

depositing licensed firearms may be considered on a case to case basis. Applicants seeking exemption will have to submit their applications along with necessary supporting documents before the Screening Committee through the concerned police station.

The district administration has urged all concerned arms licence holders to extend their cooperation and comply with the order within the prescribed period, reaffirming its commitment to maintaining a peaceful and secure environment for the smooth conduct of the Silchar Municipal Corporation Election 2026.

This is stated in a press release issued by the Regional office of Information Public Relations Barak valley Zone Silchar Assam.

Meghalaya HC quashes FIR against six students after Rs 2.06 lakh compensation

SHILLONG

The Meghalaya High Court has quashed an FIR against six students from Uttar Pradesh accused of vandalising a homestay in Shillong after they paid Rs 2.06 lakh as compensation, officials said on Tuesday.

The court also directed two of the students to pay Rs 25,000 each and undertake six days of community service.

The order was passed by Chief Justice Revati Mohite Dere on Monday after the accused and the homestay proprietor and manager reached a mutual settlement and the latter gave their no-objection to quashing the FIR.

Taking into consideration the settlement as well as the future and welfare of the students, the court said there was no impediment to quashing the case.

As part of the community service, the two students will spend three days from September 8 at the Sikh Centre Sri Guru Singh Sabha in Laitumkhrah, Shillong, from 10 am to 5 pm under the supervision of Dr Kamaljeet Singh, an official said.

They will also participate in activities under Jiva Cares' "Project Operation Clean-Up", including cleanliness drives around the Umkhrah river and maintenance of flowers and bins across the city.

The court directed that a report confirming satisfactory completion of the community service be submitted through the public prosecutor concerned. The remaining four petitioners were exempted from community service, taking into account their ages, officials said.

Three of the six accused are minors – one aged 15 and two aged 17 – while another had recently turned 18. The remaining two students are in their 20s and are preparing for competitive examinations, officials said.

10,958 nominations filed for TTAADC village committee polls

AGARTALA

A total of 10,958 nomination papers were filed by 10,936 candidates for the upcoming Village Committee elections under the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC), with scrutiny scheduled for Wednesday, the State Election Commission said.

Polling for the Village Committees will be held on September 28, while counting of votes is scheduled for October 5.

According to the Commission, the BJP filed 1,974 nomination papers through 1,974 candidates. The CPI(M) submitted 2,487 papers through 2,484 candidates, while the Congress filed 466 nomination papers.

The Indigenous People's Front of Tripura (IPFT) filed 486 nomination papers, while the Tipra Motha Party recorded the highest number, with 4,390 papers submitted by 4,371 candidates.

The CPI filed four nomination papers, while other candidates ac-

counted for 1,151 papers.

The State Election Commission will scrutinise the nominations on September 9. Candidates can withdraw their nominations on September 11.

After scrutiny and withdrawals, the Commission will publish the final list of valid and contesting candidates, following which ballot papers will be printed.

The elections will cover 4,597 Village Committee seats across 2,634 constituencies.

Of the total seats, 4,025 are reserved for Scheduled Tribes (ST), 178 for Scheduled Castes (SC) and 394 are unreserved. Among the ST-reserved seats, 1,683 are reserved for women. Of the SC-reserved seats, 67 are reserved for women, while 245 seats in the unreserved category are reserved for women.

The nomination figures indicate a keen electoral contest across the TTAADC area, with the final field set to emerge after scrutiny and the withdrawal process.

Manipur CM urges Delhi counterpart to ensure swift probe into Manipuri musician's death

IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh has urged Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta to ensure a swift, transparent and time-bound investigation into the alleged assault and subsequent death of Manipuri musician C. Vikram Singh in New Delhi. In a letter to Gupta dated September 8, Khemchand said the 54-year-old musician, who belonged to the Meitei community, was allegedly assaulted in the early hours of September 7 outside his residence in Kilokari Village after he objected to alleged disorderly conduct, shouting and public consumption of alcohol. Singh later succumbed to injuries sustained in the alleged assault. The Manipur chief minister said the incident had caused widespread grief, anger and concern among people in the state as well as the wider Northeast community living outside the region.

Khemchand cautioned that any perception of delay, bias or



laxity in the investigation could further fuel public anxiety, particularly amid concerns over the safety of people from the Northeast living and working in metropolitan cities.

He sought Gupta's personal intervention to ensure that the probe

is conducted fairly and transparently under the supervision of senior police officials and completed within a stipulated timeframe. The Manipur chief minister also urged the Delhi government to ensure that all those responsible for the alleged assault, including any

conspirators, are apprehended without delay and prosecuted in accordance with law. Khemchand further suggested that, if circumstances warrant, the feasibility of transferring the investigation to an independent specialised agency such as the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) could be examined to strengthen public confidence in the process.

The chief minister also called for visible confidence-building and enhanced security measures in areas with significant populations of students and working professionals from Manipur and other Northeastern states. "I trust that under your leadership, the Government of NCT of Delhi will act with utmost urgency to ensure that justice is rendered swiftly and decisively to the bereaved family," Khemchand said in his letter. Meanwhile, Delhi Police have arrested seven men and apprehended a juvenile in connection with the alleged assault, officials said.

SC bars Assam from appointing, absorbing teachers under provincialisation scheme

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court directed the Assam government and its education departments not to appoint or absorb teachers in schools and colleges under the state's provincialisation scheme until further orders, while examining a challenge to the statutory framework governing the process.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana issued notices to the Centre, the Assam government and senior education officials on a PIL challenging the constitutional validity of the laws governing the provincialisation of teachers and employees of venture educational institutions. The petitioners, Rajesh Chauhan and Madhab Mukunda Pujari, have contended that the provincialisation framework allows individuals to enter substantive government service without undergoing



a fair, transparent and competitive recruitment process. The plea argues that such a mechanism violates Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution, which guarantee equality before law and equality of opportunity in public employment.

As an interim measure, the court directed that no teachers be appointed or absorbed in schools and colleges under the applicable statutory framework, including provisions governing teacher eligibility.

The petition specifically challenges provisions of the Assam Education (Provincialisation of Services of Teachers and Re-organisation of Educational Institutions) Act, 2017, alleging that the law permits provincialisation of persons who do not possess the minimum qualifications prescribed under parliamentary laws and statutory regulations.

The petitioners have also challenged provisions relating to the provincialisation of tutors, arguing

that persons who do not meet the prescribed minimum qualifications should not be permitted to teach in government or provincialised educational institutions. The plea has sought a comprehensive review of all persons provincialised under the Assam Venture Educational Institutions (Provincialisation of Services) Act, 2011 and the 2017 Act to verify whether they possess the qualifications mandated under applicable laws. It has also sought directions restraining the Assam government from making fresh teacher appointments through the provincialisation route. According to the petitioners, future government teaching posts should instead be filled through a fair, transparent, merit-based and competitive recruitment process.

The Supreme Court's interim direction will remain in force pending further consideration of the challenge.

Assam Congress questions safety of Northeast people in Delhi after Manipuri musician's death

GUWAHATI

The Assam Congress on Tuesday questioned the safety of people from the Northeast living in Delhi following the alleged killing of Manipuri musician C. Vikram Singh and demanded stringent action against those responsible.

Singh, 54, died after he was allegedly assaulted by a group of delivery workers and dhaba staff outside his residence in Kilokari village in the early hours of Monday. Delhi Police have arrested seven people and apprehended a juvenile in connection with the case, officials said.

Senior Congress leader and former Assam Assembly Leader of Opposition Debabrata Saikia questioned whether Delhi was safe for people from the Northeast, alleging that people from the region frequently face racism and physical violence after moving to the national capital for education and employment.

"Is Delhi really safe for the people of the Northeast?" Saikia said in a social media post, describing Singh's death as not only the killing of a renowned musician but also a reflection of concerns over the safety of Northeasterners in Delhi.

Saikia described Singh as a

pioneer of Manipur's rock music movement and recalled his association with bands including Ultra Vires, Phoenix and Eastern Dark.

He also questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah over what he alleged was a failure of the Delhi Police and administration to adequately protect people from the Northeast.

Assam Pradesh Congress Committee president Gaurav Gogoi also condoled Singh's death and paid tribute to the musician, describing him as a humble person who had dedicated his life to music.

"The entire Northeast prays for your family," Gogoi said, while calling for justice for Singh.

Saikia demanded swift legal action and the "harshest possible punishment" for those responsible, saying the case should send a strong message that violence against people from the Northeast would not be tolerated.

Singh's death has triggered concern across the Northeast, with political leaders and civil society groups calling for a fair, transparent and time-bound investigation into the circumstances surrounding the alleged assault.

Meghalaya-Assam tourist taxi standoff resolved, states agree on hassle-free movement

SHILLONG

The standoff between tourist taxi associations of Meghalaya and Assam has been resolved, with both states agreeing to ensure hassle-free movement of tourist vehicles and address concerns over parking, toilet facilities and police checks.

The agreement was reached at a joint meeting in Shillong on Tuesday attended by seven tourist taxi associations from Assam and five from Meghalaya. The meeting was jointly chaired by Meghalaya Deputy Chief Minister Sniawbhalang Dhar and Assam Minister Atul Bora.

Dhar said the meeting was positive and that the concerns raised by the transport associations had been taken up for resolution.

The Meghalaya-based associations raised the need for dedicated parking space for tourist vehicles at the airport as well as toilet facilities for drivers, Dhar said. The Assam government has agreed to address the concerns and take necessary steps, he added.

The two state governments have also directed their respective police forces to coordinate during vehicle checks to prevent unnecessary harassment of tourist taxi operators and facilitate smoother movement between the states.

"Both associations have committed to work together from now onwards. If



any minor lapses remain, they will be resolved within a few days," Dhar said.

A sub-committee headed by the transport commissioners of Assam and Meghalaya will meet whenever required to address emerging issues between the associations and prevent a recurrence of disruptions.

Bora said Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had directed him to engage with the Meghalaya government

following the violence on August 19.

A meeting was subsequently held in Guwahati on August 22, following which a set of resolutions was adopted, he said. Bora added that he later met protesters, following which the agitation was withdrawn.

Tuesday's follow-up meeting was held at the request of the Meghalaya-based associations, Bora said, adding that the situation had now returned

to normal.

"We are working on the resolutions adopted on August 23. Now the situation is normal," Bora said.

The latest agreement is expected to restore regular tourist taxi movement between Assam and Meghalaya and provide a formal mechanism for the two states to address operational issues and prevent similar disruptions in the future.

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After Rahul’s attack over musician’s death, BJP brings up Pitroda’s ‘Chinese’ remark on Northeast



NEW DELHI

The BJP hit back at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for his remarks over the alleged murder of a Manipur-origin musician, and asked where he was hiding when his party leader Sam Pitroda said the people of Northeast looked like the Chinese.

The BJP asked Gandhi why he and other Congress leaders were silent when party leader Sam Pitroda made an objectionable remark about people from the Northeast.

“Was he hiding when Congress leader Sam Pitroda said the people of Northeast looked like the Chinese,” asked BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia.

Gandhi had earlier lashed out at the Centre over the musician’s death, questioning what the Union Home Ministry, headed by Amit Shah, was doing to

prevent what he described as “growing lawlessness”. He also demanded a swift probe into the incident.

Chongtham Vikram Singh, a 54-year-old Manipuri musician, died after a group of delivery workers and dhaba staff allegedly assaulted him when he objected to their shouting and drinking alcohol outside his Kilokari village apartment early Monday, according to officials. Police arrested seven men and apprehended one juvenile in the case.

Bhatia said at a press conference that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s leadership, every citizen feels secure and takes pride in being Indian. “I want to ask a question to this rotten Congress, Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge. When their leader Sam Pitroda said the faces of people from the Northeast resemble those of the Chinese, where did Rahul

Gandhi go into hiding?” he asked.

Pitroda had triggered a controversy in May 2024 with his remark, “People of the east look like the Chinese and those from the south look like Africans.” The Congress, however, had distanced itself from Pitroda’s comments, describing them as unfortunate and unacceptable. The party had said it “completely dissociates” itself from the remarks.

In a podcast, Pitroda, head of the Indian Overseas Congress, had said, “We have survived 75 years in a very happy environment where people could live together.” He added, “We could hold the country as diverse as India together. Where people in the east look like the Chinese, people in the west look like the Arabs, people in the north look like, maybe, white and people in the south look like Africans.

WHO honours India for sustaining maternal, neonatal tetanus elimination for a decade

NEW DELHI

India’s role in sustaining the elimination of maternal and neonatal tetanus (MNTE) over the past decade earned it recognition from the World Health Organization (WHO).

The honour came at the ongoing 79th Session of the WHO Regional Committee, where India received two WHO South-East Asia Regional awards recognising the country’s sustained achievements in critical areas of public health.

The second recognition was for India’s strong leadership in addressing non-communicable diseases through primary healthcare, including its achievement of national targets for placing people with hypertension and diabetes on protocol-based management.

Taking to X, Union Health Minister J P Nadda said, “India’s public health achievements received significant recognition at the 79th Session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia, where I had the honour of receiving WHO South-East Asia Region awards on behalf of the country for sustaining the elimination of maternal and neonatal tetanus over the past decade, and for India’s leadership in tackling noncommunicable diseases through primary health care.”

“Under the visionary leadership of Hon’ble Prime Minister Shri @narendramodiji, India has continued to strengthen primary healthcare, expand access to quality services and drive focused action on both communicable and non-communicable diseases, with the resolve to ensure better health outcomes for every citizen,” he added.

He further said, “These recognitions are a tribute to the dedication of our healthcare workforce, especially our frontline health workers, whose tireless efforts continue to strengthen service delivery, expand access to quality care and improve health outcomes across the coun-



try.” The WHO had earlier validated India’s achievement in eliminating MNTE in April 2015, much ahead of the global target date of December 2015. India has now received the WHO honour for sustaining its efforts to eliminate the public health challenge over the past decade.

According to the Union Health Ministry, the recognition reflects India’s sustained commitment to

strengthening primary healthcare, disease prevention, early detection and effective management of priority health conditions. “The Government of India remains committed to advancing Universal Health Coverage through investments in health infrastructure, human resources, primary healthcare, digital health and health system resilience,” the ministry said.

MNTE is a global public health initiative led by the WHO and its partners to reduce neonatal tetanus cases to fewer than one case per 1,000 live births in every district.

In 2023, the Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry launched an ambitious initiative to screen and place 75 million people with hypertension or diabetes on standard care by December 2025.

INTERNATIONAL

IRGC attacks American base in Jordan, claims strikes on US vessels, 8 tankers as 5 Iranian tankers destroyed



TEHRAN

Iran’s Revolutionary Guards said Wednesday they pummelled a US military base in Jordan, vowing retaliation for American strikes on Iranian oil tankers that dragged the foes deeper into war.

Tehran’s bombs came after US forces destroyed five Iranian oil tankers on Tuesday in response to Iran targeting an American warship, the second such attack in less than a week.

The Iranian Revolutionary Guards also said on Wednesday that they attacked two US vessels, eight oil tankers and 10 “non-compliant vessels” trying to pass through the Strait of Hormuz.

“Two US vessels, eight oil tankers, and 10 non-compliant vessels attempting to pass through the prohibited and unsafe zone of the Strait of Hormuz were targeted,” the Guards said in a statement published by the official IRNA.

The United States and Iran are locked in a stalemate six months into

the war, with Iran maintaining a stranglehold on the Strait of Hormuz, a vital shipping route for the world’s oil and gas, and Washington pushing a campaign to choke Iran’s ports and economy.

The Islamic republic said on Wednesday it would target oil tankers off US-allied Kuwait and Bahrain in retaliation for the strikes on its tankers.

Minutes later, Iran’s Revolutionary Guards – the most powerful arm of the Iranian military, said they had struck the US air base of Al-Azraq in Jordan with missiles, state media reported.

The “punitive operation” damaged maintenance and repair facilities, deployment locations and shelters for fighter jets, according to IRNA.

Jordan’s army said it shot down 18 missiles from Iran targeting the kingdom.

The strikes came after Tehran urged crews on oil tankers off Kuwait and Bahrain to leave their vessels, warning they “will be targeted”, the

Guards said in a statement posted on IRNA.

The US military said it destroyed five Iranian oil tankers on Tuesday after Iran’s Revolutionary Guards targeted a U.S. Navy warship with ballistic missiles twice over two days, according to U.S. Central Command.

The vessels — Kivik, Charminar, Horizon 1, Riesco and Derya — were struck in the Gulf of Oman and near Kharg Island in the Strait of Hormuz. CENTCOM said the crews were warned to abandon the ships before the strikes.

The US had also destroyed three Iranian oil tankers on Saturday, after Iran attempted to attack a U.S. aircraft carrier and destroyer with ballistic missiles.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Washington would continue responding to Iranian attacks on its naval forces, warning that Iran would lose tankers for each attempt to strike U.S. warships.

The latest strikes come as the U.S. maintains a blockade of Iranian ports,

restricting Tehran’s oil exports, while American forces assist some vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz.

The latest flare-up was triggered after US forces destroyed five Iranian oil tankers, with the US military saying it “directed the crews to abandon ship” before hitting the vessels.

“Iran continues to try to hit US naval ships, and for every time they do that or try to do that, they’re going to lose tankers, and I think you’ll see that again today,” US Secretary of State Marco Rubio told reporters on Tuesday on a visit to Colombia.

Iranian media reported Tuesday that a US missile struck a tanker off the coast of Kharg Island, adding that there were no casualties.

The chief of staff of Iran’s army Ali Abdollahi had warned the Islamic republic would hit US bases in the region if Iranian oil tankers were hit.

Global oil prices climbed on Wednesday to near \$100 a barrel as the war threatened to further choke supply from the crude-rich Middle East.

The price of Brent crude, the benchmark international contract, rose to \$99.38 per barrel, while the main US contract West Texas Intermediate was at \$94.51 per barrel.

Iran has largely controlled the Strait of Hormuz – which normally carries around a fifth of the world’s oil and liquefied natural gas – since the start of the war in February, with traffic through the waterway virtually paralysed.

Iran’s Revolutionary Guards also said on Tuesday they seized “one of the most modern, unmanned” American submarine drone in the Strait of Hormuz. The US military said that the drone had “malfunctioned”, insisting it was an “older model” that did not carry any sensitive data.

Iranian state TV also said the Guards had attacked two US destroyers with ballistic missiles.

The US military did not immediately comment on the report.

Bangladesh FM declines to say if PM Tarique Rahman will attend BRICS Summit in India



DHAKA

UN General Assembly President and Bangladesh Foreign Minister Khairul Rahman on Tuesday declined to comment on whether Prime Minister Tarique Rahman would attend the BRICS Summit in India later this week, after New Delhi invited him to participate in an outreach session of the grouping.

India will host the annual BRICS summit in New Delhi on September 12 and 13, with the meeting expected to deliberate on several pressing global challenges, including the economic fallout of the West Asia crisis.

Responding to a question by news agency on whether the Bangladeshi prime minister would attend the summit, Rahman said he was speaking in his capacity as President of the UN General Assembly and asked that bilateral issues be taken up separately in his role as foreign minister.

“I’m not here in a national capacity, so please forgive

me. I will really ask all of you to ask me questions or approach me in my capacity as the President of the General Assembly. If there are bilateral issues, I’m still the Foreign Minister; I’ll speak to you separately,” he said at a press briefing.

Rahman assumed charge as President of the 81st session of the UN General Assembly on Tuesday, taking over the presidency of the world body’s annual session.

His remarks came amid uncertainty over Dhaka’s participation in the BRICS summit, which India is hosting as the grouping’s current chair. India has invited Tarique Rahman to attend the summit’s outreach session in his capacity as the current chair of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). BIMSTEC comprises India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan.

Bangladesh’s participation in the summit is expect-

ed to be closely watched amid strained ties with India following New Delhi’s decision to provide political asylum to former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, who fled to India after her ouster in a youth-led uprising in August 2024.

Earlier on Tuesday, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in New Delhi that there was no update on whether Dhaka had confirmed the Bangladeshi prime minister’s participation in the BRICS summit.

BRICS, originally comprising Brazil, Russia, China, India and South Africa, expanded in 2024 to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates. Indonesia joined the grouping in 2025. The grouping has emerged as an influential forum of major emerging economies, with its 11 members accounting for around 49.5 per cent of the global population, 40 per cent of global GDP and 26 per cent of global trade.

BRICS and the Northeast: Turning India's Eastern Frontier into an Economic Bridge

India's leadership of BRICS comes at a time when the global economic and geopolitical order is undergoing a significant transition. Economic influence is shifting towards Asia, supply chains are being reorganised and countries of the Global South are demanding greater representation in institutions that shape international affairs.

For India, the BRICS moment is therefore about more than diplomacy. It is an opportunity to connect its expanding global ambitions with economic changes taking place within the country. Few regions illustrate this possibility as clearly as the Northeast.

For much of independent India's history, the Northeast was viewed primarily through the prism of distance, difficult terrain and security. Its international borders were seen as strategic vulnerabilities rather than economic advantages. That approach is increasingly out of step with the region's potential.

The Northeast shares borders with Bangladesh, Bhutan, China and Myanmar and lies close to the wider Southeast Asian market. As India deepens its Act East policy, this geography can give the region a role in connecting the Indian economy with one of the world's most dynamic economic neighbourhoods.

But the Northeast should not be reduced to the status of a transit corridor. That is the central challenge.

If new roads, railways, waterways and border links merely allow goods to pass through the region, the economic gains will remain limited. The objective should be to create an ecosystem in which production, processing, trade, services and employment grow within the Northeast itself.

From passage to production

The emerging global economy offers an opportunity to rethink the Northeast's role. Companies are increasingly seeking diversified supply chains and alternative production locations. India is attempting to strengthen its manufacturing capabilities while expanding trade and investment links across Asia.

The Northeast can participate in this process if infrastructure is accompanied by industrial and commercial capacity.

Assam is particularly well placed to anchor such an ecosystem. Its location, agricultural base, tea industry, petroleum resources, educational institutions and growing services sector provide a foundation for diversification. Guwahati, already the region's principal commercial centre, can develop further as a logistics and services hub.

But the larger opportunity lies in creating value within the region.

Agricultural production can be linked to food processing and cold-chain networks. Tea can move up the value chain through branding, packaging and specialised products. Handloom and handicrafts can reach wider markets through digital platforms. Tourism can generate local enterprises rather than concentrating benefits in a handful of established destinations.

The same approach can be adapted to the other Northeastern states according to their own strengths.

Such diversification would reduce the region's dependence on the traditional model of sending out raw or minimally processed commodities.

Bangladesh and Southeast Asia

Bangladesh has a particularly important role in this economic geography.

For several parts of the Northeast, access through Bangladesh can shorten transportation routes to ports and external markets. Better road, rail and inland-water connectivity could reduce logistical costs and make regional products more competitive.

The potential is considerable, but connectivity must be supported by efficient customs procedures, warehousing, border markets, financial services and logistics infrastructure.

The same principle applies to India's engagement with Myanmar and Southeast Asia. The success of the Act East policy cannot depend exclusively on diplomatic agreements or major transport projects. It requires commercially viable routes and businesses capable of using them.

That means building an economy around the corridors, not merely building corridors through the economy.

The digital dimension

Physical geography is only one part of the Northeast's development challenge.

Digital technology is already reducing some of the disadvantages associated with distance. A technology company, designer, education provider or professional-services firm in the Northeast can potentially reach customers across India and overseas without being physically located in a metropolitan centre.

This opens an important avenue for the region's young population.

Start-ups and small businesses need reliable digital infrastructure, access to fi-



nance, skills, incubation and markets. These requirements are not unique to the Northeast, but the impact of meeting them can be greater in a region where geographical isolation has historically restricted opportunities.

India's BRICS engagement increasingly intersects with areas such as digital commerce, innovation, technology and financial inclusion. Northeastern entrepreneurs should be connected to these expanding networks rather than treated merely as beneficiaries of domestic development schemes.

Culture as economic capital

The Northeast also possesses an asset that cannot be created through infrastructure spending: its extraordinary cultural diversity.

The region's music, cuisine, textiles, crafts, festivals and indigenous traditions can contribute to tourism and the creative economy while strengthening India's cultural engagement with Southeast Asia.

This is particularly relevant to the people-to-people dimension of Act East.

Cross-border economic relationships become more durable when accompanied by educational, cultural and social exchanges. Universities, artists, entrepreneurs, tourism operators and young people can create connections that complement formal diplomacy.

The Northeast can therefore contribute to India's Asian engagement not only through geography, but also through culture.

Development must respect the landscape.

There is, however, a danger in treating the region solely as an infrastructure and trade project.

The Northeast contains some of India's most fragile ecological systems and important biodiversity zones. Rivers, forests and mountains are integral to the region's economy and way of life.

Large infrastructure projects therefore require careful environmental planning. Climate resilience must also become a central consideration, particularly in a region vulnerable to floods, landslides and erosion.

Sustainable agriculture, responsible tourism, renewable energy and biodiversity-based enterprises can provide alternatives to a development model based entirely on heavy infrastructure.

The objective should be to make environmental sustainability part of economic competitiveness rather than an afterthought.

Local participation is the decisive factor.

Perhaps the most important question is who benefits from the Northeast's emerging connectivity.

A new highway may improve movement, but its wider economic value will depend on whether local producers can use it. A border trade route will have limited developmental significance if local enterprises remain excluded from the supply chain.

Farmers, artisans, small businesses, transport operators, tourism enterprises and young professionals must have access to the markets that new infrastructure creates.

This is particularly important in border districts, where legitimate economic activity can strengthen local economies and provide communities with greater stakes in stability and connectivity.

The Northeast's development, in this sense, is linked to both economic security and national security.

What BRICS can mean for the Northeast

India's BRICS leadership should be viewed against this domestic backdrop.

India has consistently argued for a more representative international system and a stronger voice for the Global South. That vision becomes more convincing when the benefits of India's international engagement are visible across its own regions.

For the Northeast, the relevant questions are practical.

Can emerging global markets create new demand for products made in the region?

Can investment help establish processing and manufacturing capacity? Can digital cooperation create opportunities for entrepreneurs? Can improved connectivity bring Southeast Asian markets closer to local businesses? Can cultural exchanges strengthen tourism and people-to-people ties?

These outcomes matter more than diplomatic symbolism.

The Northeast also provides India with an opportunity to demonstrate what a genuinely interconnected Global South can look like at the regional level. Its position between South and Southeast Asia gives it the potential to become a meeting point for commerce, culture and knowledge.

But that potential will not be realised simply by describing the region as a gateway.

A gateway implies that something passes through.

The Northeast needs to become a place where economic value is created.

A test of India's wider economic vision

India's next phase of growth cannot remain concentrated in its established metropolitan centres. New sources of economic expansion will increasingly have to come from regions with underutilised resources, human capital and strategic advantages.

The Northeast is one of them.

Its transformation should not be justified only by its proximity to international borders. It should be understood as part of India's broader economic strategy.

That requires sustained investment in logistics, skills, education, digital infrastructure, energy, entrepreneurship and institutions. It also requires greater coordination between the Centre, state governments and local economic actors.

Most importantly, policy must move beyond the old perception of the Northeast as a distant frontier.

It is an emerging economic region with the potential to connect India to Bangladesh, Myanmar and Southeast Asia while developing its own production and services base.

That is why India's BRICS moment should prompt a discussion that extends beyond the summit table.

The real measure of India's global rise will not only be its influence in international institutions. It will also be its ability to turn new international opportunities into broad-based prosperity at home.

The Northeast can be an important part of that process.

It should not merely be India's eastern gateway.

It should become one of the places from which India's economic engagement with the wider world takes shape.

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<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