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PERSPECTIVE

“We tend to judge others by their worst moments, and ourselves by our best intentions.”

GST Council Recommends GST Exemption for Shared Helicopter Rides in Northeast

NEW DELHI

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council has recommended exempting passenger transportation by helicopters on a seat-sharing basis from GST for services to and from airports and helipads in the northeastern states, Sikkim and Bagdogra in West Bengal.

The recommendation was made at the 57th GST Council meeting in New Delhi on Thursday, chaired by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The move is expected to make shared helicopter services more affordable and improve access to remote and difficult-to-reach areas.

The proposed exemption specifically covers helicopter journeys in which passengers share seats, rather than chartering an entire aircraft. It could benefit regions where challenging terrain, limited road and rail networks, and long travel times often make surface transport difficult.

Helicopter services are particularly important in the Northeast, where mountainous landscapes and remote settlements can pose logistical challenges. Such services can provide a vital link between isolated areas and major towns, especially where conventional transport options are limited.

The recommendation comes amid the Centre's continued focus on strengthening connectivity and promoting economic integration across the northeastern states. However, the practical impact of the exemption will depend on its implementation and the availability of regular shared helicopter services.

Assam Finance Minister Jayanta Mallabaruah, who attended the meeting, described the GST Council as an important forum for cooperative federalism, bringing the Centre and states together to strengthen the country's tax framework and support economic growth.

WHO SAID WHAT



I welcome the new round of GST reforms approved by the GST Council. The Council's recommendations on removal of arrest provisions, greater decentralisation and simpler procedures will have a very positive impact. The focus is clear: Faster decisions, Lower compliance costs, Automated refunds, Trust-based administration. These are in line with our constant efforts to make GST more efficient, transparent and citizen-friendly.

Narendra Modi, PM

Northeast Climate Zone Shifts from Tropical Savannah to Temperate, Study Finds

GUWAHATI

The Northeast has undergone a significant shift in its climate classification over the past seven decades, moving from the Tropical Savannah category to the Temperate Hot-Summer category, according to a study by scientists from the India Meteorological Department (IMD) and the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune.

The study, which examined climate changes over the historical period from 1951 to 2020, found that nearly 7 per cent of the area in both the Northeast and North-west homogeneous regions had shifted towards a drier climate category.

Researchers attributed the changes primarily to rising temperatures and declining rainfall, highlighting the long-term transformation of India's climatic patterns.

“Over the historical period 1951-2020, the major change in climate zone is the shift to the drier region - temperate to Arid Steppe, hot and Tropical Savannah to Temperate Hot Summer for Northwest and Northeast India, respectively,” the study stated.

The shift in the Northeast is particularly significant because the region's



climate and monsoon patterns sustain agriculture, forests, water resources and rural livelihoods. Changes in temperature and rainfall could affect crop cycles, water availability and the region's ability to adapt to extreme weather conditions.

Tropical Savannah climates are generally warm throughout the year, with average monthly temperatures above 18 degrees Celsius. Temperate Hot-Summer climates, by contrast, are characterised

by more pronounced seasonal variations, including hot summers and potentially freezing winter conditions.

The study also identified a broader warming trend across India. Maximum temperatures during summer and minimum temperatures on winter nights have consistently risen, while rainfall trends vary across regions.

The Western Ghats and Northeast India have recorded declines in monsoonal

IMPHAL

SpaceX chief executive Elon Musk has rejected claims that insurgent groups in Manipur used the company's Starlink satellite internet service, asserting that its satellite beams remain switched off over India.

“Starlink beams are turned off over India, so the claim that they were used by anyone for any reason is absolutely false,” Musk said in a post on X on Thursday, October 8.

His statement comes amid renewed scrutiny of satellite communication technology following the recovery of Starlink-branded equipment during security operations against insurgents in Manipur in 2024.

The seizure of a satellite dish and router bearing the company's name had raised concerns over whether armed groups could use satellite internet to circumvent government-imposed internet shutdowns during periods of unrest in the northeastern state.



Manipur Police had said in 2024 that the recovered equipment was likely smuggled from neighbouring Myanmar, where Starlink's satellite internet service is operational.

The recovery triggered questions about how the devices entered Manipur and whether they had been used to facilitate commu-

nication by insurgent groups operating in the state's sensitive border areas.

A report by British newspaper The Guardian subsequently cited claims by members of the People's Liberation Army of Manipur (PLA) that they had used Starlink devices to access the internet during gov-

ernment-imposed shutdowns.

The report also cited sources who claimed that the devices had worked in some areas close to the Myanmar border. These accounts, however, stand in contrast to Musk's assertion that Starlink's satellite beams are inactive over India. Musk had also rejected similar claims in December 2024, following the seizure of Starlink-branded equipment in Manipur.

Starlink yet to launch commercial services in India

The controversy comes as Starlink awaits the remaining regulatory clearances required to begin commercial operations in India.

The Department of Telecommunications granted the company a satellite communication licence in 2025, but the service has yet to launch commercially in the country.

The delay has also become the subject of a public dispute. Musk recently alleged that “certain oligarchs” were obstructing Starlink's entry into India to protect

their dominance in the telecommunications market. The government dismissed the allegations as baseless. The Manipur case has highlighted the challenges security agencies face in monitoring satellite communication equipment in sensitive border regions, particularly where insurgent groups may seek alternative channels of communication during internet restrictions. While Musk maintains that Starlink's satellite beams are switched off over India, the recovery of company-branded equipment and the reported claims of its use near the Myanmar border have kept questions about the devices' origin, functionality and possible use under investigation.

The seizure of equipment bearing the Starlink name does not, by itself, establish that the service was operational in India or that insurgents successfully accessed its network. The discrepancy between the reported accounts and Musk's denial remains central to the controversy.

57 Suspected Bangladeshis Detained at Kamakhya Station, Srinagar Link Under Probe



GUWAHATI

The Railway Protection Force (RPF) has detained 57 people suspected to be Bangladeshi nationals at Kamakhya railway station in Assam, with investigators probing their reported journey from Srinagar in Jammu and Kashmir.

The group was intercepted aboard the Brahmaputra Mail during an operation at the station. Officials are now verifying the detainees' identities, nationality and travel documents to establish whether they were residing in India without valid authorisation.

Authorities have not yet disclosed the identities of those detained or provided details about the documents recovered during the operation. The circumstances surrounding their reported movement from Srinagar to Assam are also under investigation.

The detention comes amid intensified efforts by Assam Police and security agencies to identify and take action against suspected foreign nationals allegedly staying in the state without valid documents.

27 IEDs Found, Defused Along Manipur's Kamjong Border Route After Civilian Killings

IMPHAL

Security forces have detected and defused 27 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) along an 8-km stretch of a border route in Manipur's Kamjong district, raising fresh concerns over security near Myanmar following the killing of four Tangkhul Naga civilians last month.

The explosives were recovered along the Shangkhak-Pilong route during a joint operation by the Assam Rifles and the Indian Army's bomb disposal teams between October 4 and 7, a defence official said on Friday. The devices had been hidden in bushes along the hilly road near the remote village of Pilong. Security personnel deployed sniffer dogs to locate the explosives before bomb disposal experts neutralised them. The Assam Rifles said in a social media post on Thursday night that the operation had prevented attempts to disrupt peace and security in the area and helped ensure the safe movement of local border communities. The recovery comes less than two weeks after four Tangkhul Naga civilians were shot dead by suspected militants near Pilong village on September 24. The killings heightened anxiety among residents and drew renewed attention to the fragile security situation in the district bordering Myanmar. The discovery of multiple IEDs along a route used by local communities has added to concerns over the threat posed by concealed explosives in the remote, hilly terrain. Such devices can endanger civilians as well as security personnel operating in the area. The latest operation focused on locating and neutralising the explosives to reduce the risk of casualties and restore safer movement along the route.

Security forces continue to monitor the border region amid concerns over militant activity and the safety of communities living near the international boundary. Officials have not disclosed who planted the devices or whether any arrests have been made in connection with the recovery.

CM Yumnam Khemchand Singh holds talks with Centre



IMPHAL

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will visit Manipur later this month, Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh said on Friday, following a meeting with the Union minister in New Delhi to discuss efforts to restore peace and normalcy in the violence-affected state. According to a statement from the Chief Minister's Secretariat, Khemchand briefed Shah on measures taken by the state government to improve the law-and-order situation and restore normalcy.

The Chief Minister also informed the Home Minister about the resumption of the Imphal-Dimapur-Guwahati bus

service, which has provided relief to commuters, the statement said.

Khemchand requested the Centre's assistance on various issues concerning the state. Shah assured him of the Centre's support in promoting peace, development and the aspirations of the people of Manipur, it added.

According to sources, Shah is expected to lay the foundation stone of a medical college in Senapati district and oversee other development projects during his visit. Further details of the proposed programme are awaited.

CM raises highway projects with Gadkari

During his visit to the national capital, Khemchand also met Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari to discuss key infrastructure projects in Manipur.

The Chief Minister urged Gadkari to initiate construction of the proposed Shangshak-Tengnoupal Highway and sought approval for an elevated highway project in Imphal to ease traffic congestion in the state capital. He also pressed for the timely completion of ongoing works on National Highway-37 and National Highway-2, stressing the importance of improved road connectivity for the state. The meetings come as the Manipur government seeks central assistance for restoring normalcy and advancing infrastructure development amid continuing efforts to address the state's challenges.



কেআরসি টাইমস

স্টে এনরিচড

মেম্বারশিপ ই-কপি

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Monetary policy

The credit policy has four main points of interest. The first is the repo rate, as it sets the tone for what banks can do on the deposit and lending rates that affect both savers and borrowers. The second is the stance—which can be neutral or accommodative, or indicate a withdrawal of accommodation. It is a nebulous concept that is of interest more to a market player. One is not sure if it means that in future rates can go up or down. It does not refer to liquidity, as central banks always ensure that there is adequate liquidity.

The third and fourth points of interest are the forecasts of GDP and inflation rate. In these uncertain times, these are even more important than usual as they provide important signals. Normally, forecasts would hold good for at least six months. But with the external environment being quite volatile, views can change every two months. Therefore, these forecasts acquire more importance. Even a 10-basis-point change in forecast in these two variables can signal whether the growth potential or inflation perspective has changed.

Against this background, the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee has opted for an increase in the repo rate by 25 bps. The decision has been quite unanimous, which is not surprising as in the past, too, there has been a tendency for all six members of committee to form a group-think. Rarely has there been dissent, with just a few instances of only one member holding an opposite view.

Further, the stance has changed to calibrated tightening. This is a new concept brought in, and one can guess that there will be more rate hikes in the coming months. It has been explicitly stated that rate cuts are off the table and there will be hikes or status quo in future. This is significant from the point of view of markets, which were still uncertain of the timing of the rate hikes. There will be conjectures, however, on how many more rate hikes would be in the offing.

What can one make of these decisions? First, this is the beginning of a series of rate hikes—possibly another two by March 2027. Going by an inflation forecast of 5.2 percent for the year, the terminal repo rate in this cycle should be at least 6 percent, which will yield a real rate of 1 percent, which should be acceptable. There are, however, varying estimates of what this ideal real rate should be, ranging from 1.5 percent to 2 percent.

The impact of this rate hike will get transmitted automatically to the lending rates as nearly two-thirds of loans are linked to the external benchmark, which is the repo rate or Treasury bill and the government security rate. It would need to be seen whether some banks choose to give concessions to enhance market share, especially for personal loans that tend to increase during the festival season.

However, on the deposits side it would be interesting to see how banks react. There has been a deluge of dollars due to the foreign currency scheme for non-residents which has been converted into rupees by banks. This has lowered the banks' dependence on bulk deposits; and access to the certificates of deposits market has come down.

In such a situation, there could be fewer compelling reasons for banks to increase deposit rates which, in turn, will mean that transmission of the repo rate hike can get sluggish at this end. It will be banks which have fewer surplus that will tend to raise deposit rates at the retail end. Therefore, the transmission part would have to be observed, and it looks like there will be time-lags involved given the current situation of surplus liquidity in the system.

The GDP forecast has gone up from 6.7 percent to 7.1 percent while inflation assessment for the future is up from 5 percent to 5.2 percent. The upping of the GDP forecast is something that was expected as the quarterly growth number came in at 7.8 percent for the first quarter (April-June 2026), which was much higher than expectations.

It is expected that Q2 will also register similar growth as the base year change has led to substantial declines in GDP numbers for Q1 and Q2 of 2025-26, which will prop up the number for this year.

But beyond the first half of the current year, there will be a slowdown as the monsoon failure will have an impact on both agricultural production as well as rural consumption, which will be watched closely as the kharif crop is harvested October onwards. The change in the RBI's forecast for GDP growth is aligned now with what most global agencies did in the last month or so, given the rather impressive performance of the real economy.

The forecast for inflation is rather interesting. It has been put at an average of 5.2 percent for the year; but that for the next few quarters is significant. The forecast for Q3 is now at 6 percent, which will moderate marginally to 5.7 percent in Q4. Further, for Q1 of the next year, inflation is to increase to 5.6 percent. Hence, after Q2, which has gone past, inflation will average 5.8 percent for the next three quarters.

For the year, the RBI has projected core inflation—which is the non-food and non-fuel calculation—at 4.4 percent. These numbers probably factor in the higher food prices that will evolve as the kharif crop gets affected by the sub-normal monsoon. There can be an upside here in case the oil marketing companies decide to increase fuel prices—which have been held back after the first hike a few months back.

On liquidity, the RBI has not announced any specific measures. The surplus in the system today is over ₹5 lakh crore and there were expectations of the central bank announcing open market operations—where the RBI sells securities to banks. It is clearly adopting a wait-and-watch approach on this, and has only maintained it will work towards aligning overnight call rates with the repo rate. This means that there will be close monitoring of liquidity with variable-rate reverse repo operations to absorb surpluses. The surpluses could also reduce in case credit growth picks up further.

The RBI policy, always something to look forward to for a succinct overview of the economy, comes just after the Union finance ministry released its own view. The sense one gets is that the economy is doing well and the main risk factor is rising inflation, which the monetary policy is seeking to address.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

If we continue to accumulate only power and not wisdom, we will surely destroy ourselves.” - Carl Sagan

Operation Epic Fury is an epic failure at home and in Hormuz

SHASHI THAROOR

Speaking before the United Nations General Assembly in New York last month, US President Donald Trump laid bare the existential crossroads facing Washington's seven-month campaign against Iran. Framing the conflict as a choice between signing a post-midterm diplomatic deal or initiating total annihilation, his rhetoric underscored a troubling reality: Operation Epic Fury, launched jointly with Israel in late February 2026, has been an Epic Failure.

Far from delivering the swift, decisive outcome intended, it has created a humiliating stalemate, with global ramifications for the US's uncertain place in the world and domestic implications for the ruling party in the US. What Washington planned as a high-intensity decapitation effort targeting Tehran's ballistic missile infrastructure and naval assets has instead evolved into a grinding, multipolar war of attrition.

The US now finds itself caught between an unwinnable air campaign and an unpalatable political compromise, while the global economy buckles under the fallout.

The core vulnerability in the American war effort stems from a fundamental operational mismatch. Unwilling to commit ground troops to a costly land occupation, a step the administration remains reluctant to contemplate for understandable domestic reasons, the US military relies on air dominance and standoff strikes, whose limitations are all too apparent. While stationary infrastructure and conventional naval installations in Iran have been degraded, airpower alone cannot eliminate Iran's distributed, deeply buried, and asymmetric capabilities.

Tehran has also successfully broadened the theatre of operations far beyond its own borders. Houthi forces in Yemen have effectively choked commercial transit

ington demurred, constrained by a need to preserve its own dwindling supply of precision-guided munitions.

This refusal highlights a growing operational crisis within the Pentagon. Seven months of near-continuous combat sorties and high-rate missile defence interceptions have severely drawn down US and allied inventories of long-range precision strike systems, exposing the severe limitations of the Western defence industrial base.

The economic fallout of this strategic impasse extends far beyond West Asia. With transit through the Strait of Hormuz severely restricted and regional pipelines damaged, benchmark crude oil prices have again surged past \$100, having hit a recent high of \$114 five months ago. This sustained energy shock has re-introduced severe inflationary pressures into the world's economies, squeezing consumers and creating significant political headwinds ahead of the US midterm elections.

For global markets, the ongoing hostilities have triggered a profound supply-side energy shock. With the physical blockade of Hormuz choking off roughly 20 percent of global petroleum transit and liquefied natural gas shipments, elevated crude prices have spiked shipping freight costs, doubled energy transit insurance premiums, and forced global central banks to abruptly halt planned interest rate cuts to combat reignited inflationary pressures.

Few major nations bear this macroeconomic strain more acutely than India. Highly exposed due to our dependence on foreign energy to fulfil over 85 percent of crude-oil requirements, India faces a sharp widening of its current account deficit (where every \$10 surge in crude prices expands the trade deficit by roughly 0.5 percent of GDP) alongside persistent downward pressure on the Indian rupee, which has hit historic lows beyond ₹95 to a US dol-

trajectory, threatening to trim our expected GDP expansion if high energy costs remain entrenched.

Meanwhile, Washington's heavy reliance on secondary financial sanctions, has accelerated a structural shift in global finance. Member nations at the BRICS summit in New Delhi emphasised creating alternative non-dollar settlement systems to shield domestic economies from unilateral American leverage.

Concurrently, European central banks, including those of France and Norway, have quietly begun repatriating gold reserves from Federal Reserve vaults in New York back to continental Europe, reflecting a historic erosion of trust in American financial stewardship.

Far from triggering the immediate collapse of the Iranian state, the conflict has consolidated Tehran's domestic political control. By demonstrating an ability to withstand direct bombardment while disrupting roughly 20 percent of global daily oil transit, Tehran has projected an image of regional defiance that has altered diplomatic calculations.

Elevated oil prices have provided windfall revenues to Moscow to fund operations in Ukraine, while Beijing monitors American failures with a keen strategic eye on the balance of power in the Indo-Pacific. Realising that US security guarantees are constrained, traditional American partners in the Gulf have even initiated direct bilateral discussions with Tehran to manage local stability.

Beyond the immediate economic fallout, the impasse severely erodes global confidence in the US as a predictable policymaker and reliable security guarantor. By initiating a major conflict without a coherent off-ramp, and subsequently being unable to provide protection for critical energy corridors due to depleted ammunition stockpiles, Washington has demonstrated both

strained military resources.

The war between the US and Iran has settled into a dangerous, unstable equilibrium. Washington possesses overwhelming destructive capacity, yet lacks the strategic leverage or political willingness to enforce a decisive outcome. Tehran lacks the capability to win conventionally, but retains sufficient asymmetric reach to hold its own against US attacks.

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

#SDGs
1-No Poverty
2-No Hunger
3-Health
4-Education
5-Gender Equality
6-Water& sanitation
7-Clean energy
8-Economies
9-Innovation
10-Reduced inequality
11-Cities
12-Reduce Consumption
13-Climate
14-Ocean
15-Biodiversity
16-Peace
17-Partnerships

~ Sustainable Development Goals 2030



through the Bab al-Mandab, turning the Southern Red Sea into an operational hazard zone, while Iranian-aligned Shia militias in Iraq have executed drone and missile strikes against critical regional energy infrastructure, including Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline.

When Saudi leaders requested US air defence coverage to shield these vital supply routes, Wash-

ing the volatile unpredictability of its foreign policy and its operational limits. This stark gap between American strategic commitments and actual ability to sustain them is forcing all nations to diversify their security relationships, hedging against a superpower whose promises increasingly seem subject to domestic political whims and con-

As military stockpiles run low and global markets adjust to prolonged instability, the Iran War serves as a stark demonstration of the limits of unilateral military force in an increasingly multipolar world.

Shashi Tharoor | Lok Sabha MP, Chair of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and Sahitya Akademi-winning author

Manipur flags 307 hectares of forest land under poppy cultivation, bamboo planted on 255 hectares

IMPHAL

The Manipur Forest Department has identified 307 hectares of forest land under illegal poppy cultivation across Churachandpur, Senapati and Chandel districts, with bamboo plantations established on 255 hectares of the affected land as part of efforts to restore degraded forests.

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests Anurag Bajpai disclosed the figures at a press conference at the Forest Department headquarters on Friday, adding that surveys were continuing and more areas under illegal poppy cultivation could be identified.

Describing poppy cultivation as a serious threat to both the environment and society, Bajpai said the department had been surveying forest areas since 2018 to detect and address the problem.



The bamboo plantations are intended to help rejuvenate degraded forest land while creating alternative livelihood opportunities for local communities. The department is also researching plant species that could inhibit poppy

growth, as the plant's seeds can germinate rapidly and spread easily.

Bajpai said the department was engaging village chiefs to discourage poppy cultivation and encouraging those involved in the practice to take up alter-

native livelihood activities.

With poppy plants generally flowering in October, forest officials are maintaining vigilance and coordinating with central security forces to identify and destroy illegal cultivation.

The department has also stepped up preparations for the dry season, which begins in October, with forest fires, illegal poppy cultivation, forest produce smuggling, wildlife trafficking and unauthorised tree felling among its key concerns.

Bajpai said around 78 per cent of Manipur's geographical area was classified as forest land, while forest cover accounted for approximately 74 per cent.

The department has issued a standard operating procedure for forest fire prevention and will work with local communities and volunteers to respond to fire incidents.

Revenue from seized forest products touches Rs 47 crore

The department is also intensifying efforts to curb the smuggling of forest products along the India-Myanmar border. Myanmar teak, areca nuts and timber are among the items being smuggled into the state, Bajpai said.

Forest personnel are conducting foot patrols in vulnerable areas, while coordination with intelligence agencies and security forces has been strengthened to tackle the illegal trade.

According to Bajpai, revenue generated from seized forest products has increased steadily over the past three financial years.

The department collected Rs 30 crore in 2023-24, Rs 38 crore in 2024-25 and Rs 47 crore in 2025-26.

He said seized forest products must be handed over to the Forest

Department in accordance with a Supreme Court order and the prescribed standard operating procedure. The department subsequently auctions the materials and collects the proceeds as revenue.

Bajpai also warned that illegal tree felling, wildlife killing and unauthorised earth cutting would invite action.

Confirming the suspension of 12 personnel of the Thoubal Forest Division in connection with an alleged tree-felling incident, he said an inquiry was underway and the department was awaiting its findings.

The measures form part of the state's wider efforts to curb illegal poppy cultivation in the hill districts, restore damaged forest areas and promote sustainable livelihood options for communities dependent on forest resources.

Arunachal RTI activist, Assam Rifles rifleman found hanging at Hunli transit camp

GUWAHATI

Rakhini Mipi, an RTI activist and rifleman with the 24th Assam Rifles, was found hanging in a bathroom at an Army transit camp in Hunli in Arunachal Pradesh's Lower Dibang Valley district on Sunday morning, police said.

Mipi's body was discovered around 7.10 am at the transit camp near the Circuit House, Hunli police station officer-in-charge Inspector Mohon Mili said, according to The Arunachal Times.

Mipi was travelling with his unit to Anini to participate in an Armed Forces warfare exercise. The 24th Assam Rifles had arrived in Hunli on the evening of October 3 and was scheduled to leave for Anini the following morning.

Police have registered a case of unnatural death and launched an investigation into the circumstances surrounding his death. The possibility of foul play has not been ruled out, with investigators expected to examine the matter after recording statements from his family members.

The body was taken to Roing for a post-mortem examination and subsequently handed over to the family.

Mipi was known for using the Right to Information (RTI) Act to raise questions about government projects and alleged irregularities in their implementation. He had highlighted suspected discrepancies in several projects, including those under the Jal Jeevan Mission in two Dibang Valley districts.

On August 10, he raised concerns on social media over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Dibang Valley. He alleged that a significant number of people belonging to Scheduled Tribes from outside Arunachal Pradesh had been enrolled, warning of possible implications for electoral delimitation in the future.

JNU Dismisses Congress MP Bimol Akoijam Over Sexual Harassment Allegations

NEW DELHI

Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) has dismissed Congress MP and professor Angomcha Bimol Akoijam over sexual harassment allegations following an inquiry by the university's Internal Committee, which recommended major punishment in the case.

The dismissal was ordered by JNU Vice-Chancellor Santishree D Pandit on October 9 and took immediate effect, according to an official order issued by the university.

Akoijam, who represents Inner Manipur in the Lok Sabha, was a faculty member at the Centre for the Study of Social Systems under JNU's School of Social Sciences.

The university said the decision was taken after following due process and considering the available facts and the findings of the Internal Committee.

"Upon following the due process and considering all available

facts and as per the report of the Internal Committee, the punishment of dismissal from the services of the university is hereby imposed," the order stated.

JNU cited the applicable service rules, including Rule 11(ix) of the Central Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules, while imposing the penalty.

The dismissal follows the committee's examination of the sexual harassment allegations and its recommendation for major disciplinary action. The university order did not provide further details of the allegations or the committee's findings.

Akoijam's dismissal marks a significant development involving the Congress MP, who has been a prominent political voice from Manipur in Parliament. Further details regarding the case and any response from Akoijam were not available in the order cited by the university.

Tripura to deploy over 10,000 security personnel for Durga Puja; green corridor planned

AGARTALA

Tripura Police will deploy more than 10,000 personnel for Durga Puja security this year, with enhanced surveillance, additional patrol teams and a dedicated green corridor planned for emergency vehicles to ensure smooth traffic movement and public safety during the festivities.

Director General of Police (in-charge) G S Rao announced the security measures at a press conference on October 8, attended by senior police officials and Superintendents of Police from all eight districts. He said the deployment of police and Tripura State Rifles (TSR) personnel would be increased compared with last year.

A total of 2,905 Durga Puja celebrations have been registered across the state so far, against 2,928 in 2025. The number could rise further as additional applications are received, Rao said.

Police plan to install around 180 additional CCTV cameras and set up 169 watchtowers at strategic lo-



cations to strengthen surveillance and crowd management. Additional vehicles will also be hired for mobile patrolling.

In Agartala, where shopping activity has intensified ahead of the festival, police have stepped up security in crowded areas. Twenty-nine additional motorcycle patrol teams have been deployed in locations witnessing heavy footfall. More women police personnel and plainclothes officers will also be deployed to prevent harassment, theft and other offences.

Green corridor for emergency services

Traffic management remains a key focus in Agartala, where around

450 Puja celebrations are expected to be held. Police have drawn up plans covering parking arrangements, no-entry zones, stopping restrictions and public transportation.

A green corridor is being planned for ambulances and fire-service vehicles to ensure emergency services can move without unnecessary delays during the festive period. No-entry restrictions in Agartala will remain in force from 5 pm to 1 am during the specified Puja period.

A round-the-clock traffic control room will monitor vehicle movement and coordinate responses to emergencies.

Security arrangements have also

been strengthened at railway stations, with the Government Railway Police (GRP) taking additional measures.

Five extortion cases registered
Rao said police had registered five extortion cases linked to Puja-related activities so far this year, compared with two cases during the corresponding period last year.

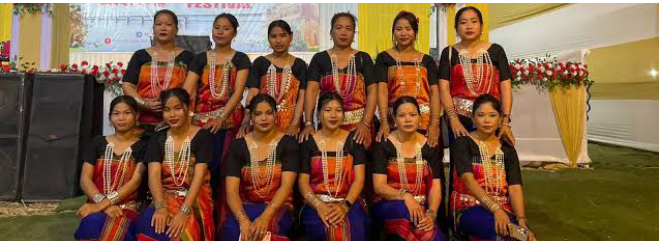
He warned that strict legal action would be taken against anyone found involved in extortion or other unlawful activities.

Police have also held meetings with Puja committees and local police stations to coordinate security deployment, volunteer support and law-and-order arrangements.

The state police have intensified their anti-drug campaign ahead of the festival, with special enforcement measures planned to prevent drug-related activities.

Rao said the overall objective was to ensure that people could celebrate Durga Puja in a peaceful, safe and orderly environment.

Haflong to host first ethnic sports and cultural festival 'Ethnosphere 2026' on October 10



HAFLONG

Haflong in Assam's Dima Hasao district will host 'Ethnosphere 2026', a one-day ethnic sports and cultural festival on October 10, aimed at promoting unity, peace and brotherhood among the hill district's diverse communities.

Organised by the Dima Hasao Students' Organisation Co-ordination Committee (DHSOCC), the festival is the first event of its kind in the district and will bring together communities to showcase their traditional sports, cultural heritage and distinctive identities.

Announcing the programme at a press conference in Haflong, members of the organising committee said the festival would feature a marathon, traditional sports representing different communities of Dima Hasao and a cultural evening.

The programme will also include traditional dance performances, stalls showcasing ethnic attire and food stalls highlighting the region's diverse culinary traditions.

The organisers said the festival seeks to provide a common platform for communities to celebrate their cultural identities while strengthening mutual understanding and social harmony.

They expressed hope that the event would help preserve the district's rich cultural heritage and foster a greater sense of unity among its residents.

Dima Hasao, a hill district of Assam, is home to several communities with distinct traditions, languages and cultural practices. The organisers said Ethnosphere 2026 would seek to bring these communities together through sports and cultural exchange.

Karbi Anglong Ginger Eyes European Market Through Slovenia

KARBI ANGLONG

Karbi Anglong in Assam is exploring a potential partnership with Slovenia to expand exports of its aromatic ginger to European markets, with the Slovenian ambassador to India expressing interest in connecting local producers with the country's business community.

Tomaz Mencin, Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia to India, said he was examining ways to build commercial links between Karbi Anglong and Slovenian businesses, potentially opening avenues to the wider European Union market.

Mencin's interest follows his visit to the inaugural Ginger Festival in Karbi Anglong on January 8 this year. He said the event introduced him to the region and prompted him to explore its agricultural and economic potential.

"I visited the first-ever ginger festival in Karbi Anglong. Thereafter, I started studying the very interesting autonomous region," Mencin told The Assam Tribune on the sidelines of a pre-event for Ginger Festival 2.0 in New Delhi.

Drawing parallels between Slovenia



and Karbi Anglong, the envoy said both could pursue a modern, green and sustainable economy by building on their agricultural strengths. Slovenia, despite having a population of around two million, offers access to the larger EU single market, he noted.

The Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) is preparing to organise the second edition of the Ginger Festival in Diphu. The council is also seeking to

turn ginger cultivation, a traditional source of livelihood, into a globally recognised agricultural brand.

Ritesh Engli, KAAC executive member in charge of tourism, said the council had visited Delhi to engage with diplomatic missions, investors, companies and government agencies to explore international market opportunities.

"There is a significant story - a deep connection - linking this ginger to the

Karbi tribe, and we want to brand it globally," Engli said.

He added that the council was holding discussions with various agencies and Central government departments to expand the market for the crop.

The proposed Slovenia connection comes amid broader efforts to strengthen India-EU trade ties. The article noted that negotiations for an India-EU Free Trade Agreement had concluded, potentially creating a wider framework for Indian agricultural and processed food products to access European markets.

Karbi Anglong ginger is known for its pungent aroma and distinctive earthy flavour. It is cultivated extensively in the Singhasan Hills through traditional jhum and tila farming. The district produces more than 30,000 tonnes annually, with around 10,000 farmers depending on the crop, according to the report.

Beyond fresh ginger, potential opportunities could include processed ginger, spices, beverages and other value-added agricultural products. However, any expansion into Europe would depend on establishing viable trade links and meeting applicable market and regulatory requirements.

For KAAC, the challenge now is to translate diplomatic interest into commercial opportunities that can expand market access, strengthen the ginger brand and improve returns for local farmers.

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India reiterates zero-tolerance stance on cross-border terrorism at UN



NEW YORK

An Indian parliamentary delegation participating in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) session reiterated India's commitment to fighting terrorism on the global stage.

According to an official release, Rajya Sabha MP Sikander Kumar led the delegation and made it clear that India's stance on cross-border terrorism is resolute and that the country strictly adheres to a policy of "zero tolerance" against terrorism.

During their stay in New York, the Indian parliamentary delegation held a bilateral meeting with Alexander Zouev, Acting Under-Secretary-General (Acting USG) of

the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT). Detailed discussions were held on making cooperation between India and UNOCT in counter-terrorism operations more effective and robust.

Articulating India's position during the meeting and sessions, Kumar stated that terrorism cannot be justified in any form or manifestation. He emphasised that the global community must take decisive action in unison against state-sponsored and cross-border terrorist networks.

The Indian parliamentarians reaffirmed India's steadfast commitment to global capacity-building and technical cooperation in the international fight against terrorism. International

coordination was also termed imperative to prevent the misuse of modern technologies and illicit financial flows, a release said.

Kumar underscored that India has long borne the brunt of terrorism; therefore, a rules-based order is essential to counter it on global platforms.

The delegation highlighted India's ongoing contributions to intelligence sharing with UNOCT, curbing the spread of terror in cyberspace, and strengthening the global legal framework.

Concluding the session, the Indian delegation delivered a clear message: lasting peace remains unattainable until cross-border terrorist safe havens are completely dismantled, a release added.

'All options on the table': INDIA bloc eyes fresh protests over alleged 'vote chori'

HEAVY SECURITY AHEAD OF CJP PROTEST IN DELHI SHOWS MODI GOVT'S 'PANIC AND NERVOUSNESS': JAIRAM RAMESH

NEW DELHI

The INDIA bloc MPs will meet at the Central Hall of Samvidhan Sadan at 3 pm on Friday and may proceed with another protest against alleged "vote chori", reported PTI, citing sources.

The sources told that the opposition alliance has sought an appointment with President Droupadi Murmu and that "all options are on the table" if it does not receive one.

Seva Teerth, Rashtrapati Bhawan, the vice-president's residence and the residences of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah are among the possible venues for protests against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, the sources said.

If held, Friday's protest would mark the fourth consecutive day of demonstrations by opposition leaders.

On Thursday, Congress general secretary (organisation) K C Venugopal said the INDIA bloc had requested an appointment with President Murmu and was awaiting a response from Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Venugopal said the first request was sent on October 2. The Rashtrapati Bhavan subsequently asked the opposition alliance to provide the names of the leaders who would attend the meeting.

"We submitted the request again on October 5, along with the names, seeking an appointment on October 7, 8 or 9," he had said.

"So far, we have received no response. We will wait until Friday," Venugopal added.

Last week, the INDIA bloc finalised a joint action plan over the SIR controversy, which included rallies and "save democracy" marches.

On Thursday, opposition leaders intensified their agitation by stag-



ing a sit-in at Mahatma Gandhi's memorial at Rajghat. They alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar were "hijacking" the country through a criminal conspiracy involving alleged vote chori.

It was the third consecutive day of protests against the CEC and the alleged manipulation of voter rolls. Opposition leaders vowed to continue their agitation until Kumar resigns.

The Rajghat demonstration followed two days of intense protests during which several leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, were detained and forcibly removed by police. On Thursday, opposition leaders gathered at the memorial to offer floral tributes and pray for "wisdom to the

BJP government and the chief election commissioner".

The opposition's campaign has intensified following media reports that Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi had recorded objections at least 14 times over the preceding 10 months, mostly concerning decisions and orders related to the SIR of electoral rolls.

Responding to the objections raised by the two commissioners, the Election Commission said differing views and observations were a normal part of deliberations in any institution. It maintained that all its orders carried full legal sanction and followed established statutory procedures.

The Congress on Friday criticised the Modi government over the heavy deployment of security personnel

ahead of the Cockroach Janta Party's October 10 protest, saying it reflected the government's "panic and nervousness" following four days of sustained protests by the INDIA bloc.

More than 20,000 police and paramilitary personnel have been deployed across Delhi ahead of the Cockroach Janata Party's (CJP) protest, a senior officer said on Thursday.

The officer said no permission has been granted for any protest at Jantar Mantar and appealed to people to avoid participating in any unauthorised gathering.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh tagged a post on heavy security personnel deployment in the national capital ahead of the CJP protest.

In his post on X, Ramesh said, "Clearly shows the level of panic and nervousness coming as it does after four days of unrelenting protests by the INDIA janbandhan."

The security personnel deployment was made as a precautionary measure to prevent any breach of peace and ensure the smooth movement of people and traffic. The officer said prohibitory orders are already in force in the area. Police have appealed to protesters and members of the public not to indulge in any violence or attack the force members deployed for security duties. They have issued specific instructions to personnel regarding handling women protesters and have told them to avoid unnecessary confrontation. Police have also cautioned people against believing or circulating unverified information on social media or elsewhere. The CJP and several student groups have been demanding the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar over allegations against him of presiding over the deletion of lakhs of voters across the country in the name of the Special Intensive Revision of Voter lists.

INTERNATIONAL

New US indictment charges former Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro with torture

NEW YORK

US authorities added new torture charges Thursday to their case against former Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, ramping up pressure on the ousted authoritarian leader already fighting drug trafficking allegations.

Maduro and wife Cilia Flores, already charged with participating in a conspiracy to send cocaine into the US, now also face allegations of human rights abuses during his time as president of the oil-rich South American nation.

The updated indictment "alleges conduct that is truly unthinkable," New York-based US Attorney Jamie McDonald said outside the courthouse where the case is being handled.

He said thousands of Venezuelans, and some Americans, were tortured to ensure that Maduro and Flores held onto power.

"This is the epitome of corruption," McDonald said.

The allegations include electric shocks, beatings and asphyxiation at Maduro's behest. Maduro, the indictment claims, signed off on torture methods, sought and got updates on specific victims' treatment, watched a video of a forced confession and personally threatened the killing of one prisoner's child "as a form of psychological torture."

Flores, a former legislator and attorney general, helped develop the repressive system and ordered the torture of some specific people, the indictment contends.

A message seeking comment was sent to Maduro's lawyer. Flores' attorney said he hadn't yet had time to review the new allegations.

The couple pleaded not guilty in the US drug case first brought years ago against them and numerous alleged co-conspirators. Their attorneys have asked for the case to be dismissed on the grounds that they have immunity as the



leader and first lady of a foreign country.

They face potential sentences of life in prison if convicted.

Maduro, who served as Venezuela's president from 2013 until his capture in January, has been under investigation for years by the International Criminal Court over allegations of crimes against humanity, tied to his crackdown on opponents. He has always denied any wrongdoing.

Both Maduro and Flores have been behind bars in New York since early January, when forces seized them from their Caracas home in a middle-of-the-night raid. Flores' lawyers unsuccessfully asked a judge Thursday to release her on house arrest.

Outside the courthouse, over a dozen demonstrators chanted slogans and held signs supporting her request.

The revised indictment includes several mentions of the involvement of Venezuela's feared DGCIM military intelligence agency, which was headed for many years by one of Maduro's co-defendants, Gen. Hugo Carvajal. He broke with Maduro years ago, pleaded guilty last year to drug trafficking charges

in New York and has offered to testify against his former boss.

While the indictment doesn't name the alleged torture victims, three are described as US citizens. One was punched, subjected to electric shocks and forced to eat his own vomit during eight months of imprisonment, the indictment says. Another was beaten badly enough to necessitate a long hospital stay and had a gun stuck in his mouth. A third was handcuffed, hooded and beaten for two days every half an hour, suffering a permanent eye injury, the indictment said.

Maduro has long ignored lawsuits brought in US courts by Americans who alleged they were beaten while in custody in Venezuela.

Among those who sued is Matthew Heath, a former US Marine corporal from Tennessee. He was arrested at a roadblock in Venezuela in 2020 and held in custody for more than two years.

In May, Heath and another former prisoner won a \$300 million default judgment against Maduro and other top Venezuelan officials for oversee-

ing a pattern of torture. The lawsuit, brought under a federal anti-terrorism law, included allegations of waterboarding, electrocution, threats of rape with a nightstick, administration of mind-altering medications and the repeated use of a cramped cell nicknamed "El Tigrito."

"It's incredible to see a dictator in court," Heath said Thursday upon learning of the new charges. "The Maduro prosecution will do more to prevent the kidnapping of Americans by rogue regimes than a hundred press releases from the United Nations."

Meanwhile, Flores' lawyers argued that Flores, 69, has medical problems that cannot be treated effectively in jail.

She has lost 25 pounds (11 kilograms) while imprisoned at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn, might have suffered a minor heart attack in July, has "lingering lightheadedness, dizziness and shortness of breath" and has been told that she might need heart surgery, the attorneys said.

They also said she suffered permanent scarring when she was "thrown against a wall or dresser" during her capture.

Prosecutors opposed the bail request, saying that Flores was an "extreme" flight risk and has been taken for treatment at a local hospital when needed.

US District Court Judge Alvin Hellerstein denied Flores' request. He noted, among other things, that she's unwilling to undergo catheterization in jail in order to determine the cause of her heart problems and the appropriate steps for treatment.

He also pushed back at the notion that her high blood pressure was life threatening, noting she's already on medication for that.

US President Donald Trump's administration has defended the raid to capture Maduro as a "surgical law enforcement operation." Maduro has called himself a prisoner of war and his capture a kidnapping.

US Suspends PERM Green Card Filings for Major IT Firms, Including Infosys, TCS and Wipro



WASHINGTON

The United States has suspended several major technology companies from the PERM labour certification programme, a key step in employer-sponsored green card applications, amid an investigation into alleged misuse of employment-based immigration programmes.

The US Labour Department said the action covers major technology firms, including Microsoft, Cognizant, Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Wipro, HCL, Capgemini and Adobe.

US Vice-President JD Vance announced the action against Microsoft on Thursday, accusing the company of abusing the programme and calling on businesses to prioritise American workers. He said the decision followed an ongoing investigation into the use of foreign labour.

The administration's move comes amid heightened scrutiny of the H-1B visa system and other employment-based immigration routes. Officials have argued that companies benefiting from the US economy should do more to hire domestic workers rather than replace American employees with foreign labour.

PERM, or Program Electronic Review Management, is the labour certification process that employers generally must complete before sponsoring foreign workers for permanent residency under several employment-based green card categories. It is separate from the H-1B visa, which allows skilled foreign professionals to work temporarily in the United States.

The latest action follows the suspension of Cognizant's PERM filings in

September amid an investigation into alleged fraud and misuse of employment-based immigration programmes.

For Indian IT professionals, the development could create uncertainty over future employer-sponsored green card applications. However, a suspension of new PERM filings does not automatically cancel existing approved green card cases, according to immigration reports.

The action also comes as the Trump administration intensifies scrutiny of technology companies' reliance on foreign workers. The allegations against the companies have not, by themselves, established wrongdoing.

The impact on individual employees will depend on the scope and duration of the suspensions, as well as the status of their immigration applications.

“The Joy Lies in the Waiting”



PRADIP DUTTA ROY

Which is sweeter: waiting for something wonderful that one longs for, or finally attaining it? Samuel Beckett's timeless play *Waiting for Godot* opens with its two central characters, Vladimir and Estragon, waiting for a man named Godot, whose arrival they believe might give meaning to their otherwise insignificant lives. Days pass. The fading beauty of spring gives way to the freshness of new greenery, and nature comes alive once again, but Godot never arrives. The play ends with the waiting still unresolved.

Amal, the young protagonist of Rabindranath Tagore's *The Post Office*, similarly waits for a letter from the King. Whether the letter ever arrives becomes secondary; the waiting itself seems to take on a sweetness of its own. Perhaps this is because anticipation takes flight in the realm of imagination, while fulfilment remains rooted in reality. Waiting, therefore, knows no bounds, whereas fulfilment is always limited.

These thoughts came to mind in a different context. Mahalaya is just around the corner. The ritual offerings to the ancestors during Pitri Paksha will conclude, ushering in Devi Paksha, the fortnight devoted to the Goddess. Soon, Bengalis everywhere will once again immerse themselves in the annual celebrations of Durga Puja.

For a few days, the anxieties of a year spent working, the calculations of gains and losses, and the burdens of sorrow and grief will recede into the background. Durga Puja will bring a different kind of joy and emotional warmth into the lives of Bengalis. As the festival approaches, my memories return to those childhood days when the waiting for Puja was itself the greatest source of happiness. The very thought that Puja was coming would send a thrill through us for days on end. That anticipation filled our hearts and minds with the sweet excitement of something wonderful yet to come.

My childhood and adolescence were spent in the Maligaon Railway Colony. I received my primary education at the railway school there. Durga Puja arrived every year, as it always does, but in those adolescent days, an entirely different excitement would begin to build long before the festival. We would eagerly wait for one particular event: the Puja committee meeting.

We children were not allowed to attend. The elders and guardians of the neighbourhood would gather to discuss and decide the arrangements for the festival. On the day of the meeting, it was impossible to concentrate on our studies. We would wait impatiently for the proceedings to end, wondering when our fathers would return home and

attractions our neighbourhood Puja would offer that year! The curiosity and excitement surrounding these decisions were immense.

Once the meeting was over, work would begin on constructing the temporary pandal. The route I took to school passed right by the Puja venue. Every day, on my way to and from school, I would stop for a while in front of the pandal to see how much work had been completed and how it was taking shape. Watching the structure grow a little more each day became part of our adolescent routine. And with every new development in the construction, a colourful canvas was gradually taking shape in our young minds as well.

Nature, too, seemed to reveal a different face at this time of year. The sky would be clear, dotted with clouds as soft and white as tufts of cotton. In the evenings, stepping out into the neighbourhood meant being greeted by the intoxicating fragrance of shiuli and chatim flowers. It was as though nature itself was dressing up to announce the arrival of the Goddess. The Puja holidays were approaching, and the entire atmosphere cast an indescribable spell over our adolescent minds, adding even greater depth and meaning to those hours of waiting.

The night before Mahalaya brought its own preparations to every household. We children would be woken up in the early hours of the morning and made to sit in front of the radio. Somewhere between sleep and wakefulness, we would hear the majestic voice of Birendra Krishna Bhadra, reciting those unforgettable opening lines:

“On the autumn dawn of Ashwin, the anklets of light have begun to ring; clouds veil the outer sky of the earth, while within nature's inner sky awakens the radiant Goddess, heralding Her arrival.”

It was an experience unlike any other. The recitation gave meaning to the waiting itself. Stirring the hearts of young minds already trembling with anticipation of the yet-to-come, it seemed to whisper once again: “Puja is coming!”

The final strokes of the brush in our long period of anticipation came on Panchami, the day before the main festivities began. On that day, the people of our neighbourhood would travel together in a truck to bring the idol of the Goddess. Children were generally not allowed to accompany them. But we would repeatedly plead with the older boys, and with the indulgent blessings of our guardians, we would eventually find a little space in one corner of the truck. Standing throughout the journey, we would set off with the others to bring the idol home.

Even today, I carry within me the joy and emotion of travelling there and returning with everyone. The women of the neighbourhood would gather to welcome the idol. The sacred sounds of ululation and conch shells would fill the Puja pandal. It was an atmosphere beyond words.

At that age, the beginning of Puja almost felt like its end. The few days of celebration would pass so quickly amid

a whirlwind of activity that we scarcely realised how soon they were over. There were visits to the city's Puja pandals, cultural programmes in different localities, and endless roaming around with friends throughout the day. Yet, despite all these attractions, our hearts remained firmly attached to our own neighbourhood pandal.

It might not have had extravagant decorations or dazzling displays, but the sincerity, cooperation and shared sense of belonging among the residents transformed it into an annual gathering of the entire community. Every family in the neighbourhood had a stake in it, and everyone became part of the celebration.

Finally came the moment of Bijoya Dashami. After the idol was immersed in the evening, a strange silence would

descend upon the neighbourhood. It felt almost like the grief of losing someone dear.

Today, after navigating the many ups and downs of life, I find myself standing on the threshold of old age. For understandable reasons, the excitement and anticipation that once accompanied the thought of “Puja is coming” no longer stir me as deeply as they did during those adolescent years. Perhaps this feeling is shared by everyone who has travelled a considerable distance along life's journey and gathered the lessons that experience brings.

And yet, I long to return to those carefree days. I long for them intensely.

The world inhabited by today's boys and girls, those still attending school, is far more expansive than the one we knew. Thanks to the internet, much of the world is now within their reach. The days when we eagerly waited for the festive editions of *Anandamela*, *Kishore Bharati* or *Shuktara* seem to belong to another age.

In urban areas, neighbourhood Pujas organised on a modest, community-based scale are also gradually disappearing. Community Pujas have become more spectacular, and the queues of visitors have grown longer. But the sense of togetherness and personal involvement has diminished. In rural areas, however, one can still find traces of that old warmth and sincerity.

How deeply the thought that “Puja is coming” stirs today's adolescent generation remains an open question. Perhaps it does move them, but the emotion may express itself in a different way.

Whatever the extent of our immersion in an increasingly mechanised world, certain feelings will endure. The shiuli flowers and kash blossoms of autumn, Birendra Krishna Bhadra's recitation of the Chandi on Mahalaya morning, and those emotionally charged hours of anticipation from our adolescence—all these experiences blended together to create an enduring landscape in our minds. That inner world will remain with us for the rest of our lives.

May the days of Puja bring goodwill, harmony and prosperity into everyone's life.

Wishing everyone a joyful Durga Puja!

(The author is the founding president of the student organisation AKH-SA and an advocate at the Gauhati High Court.)

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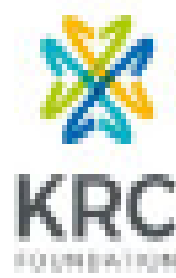
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