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PERSPECTIVE

A bad marriage is much worse for your health than being single.

HOLIDAY NOTICE

The offices of KRC TIMES will remain closed from October 17 to October 21, 2026, on account of Durga Puja. Accordingly, there will be no publication of the newspaper during this period. Normal publication will resume on October 22, 2026. We wish our readers a very HAPPY PUJA!

Editor

‘Delhi feels like an alien place’: Bimol Akoijam appears before police in JNU harassment case

NEW DELHI
Congress MP Angomcha Bimol Akoijam appeared before Delhi Police on Wednesday in connection with sexual harassment allegations against him at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), describing Delhi as an “alien place” despite having spent much of his life in the national capital.

Akoijam appeared at Vasant Kunj Police Station in response to a police summons, saying he wanted to cooperate with the investigation and avoid any suggestion that he was evading the process.

“I feel like I have come to an alien place in Delhi. I worked here, spent my life here. And somehow I feel like as if I am coming to an inimical place. I don’t quite feel belonging,” the Lok Sabha MP told reporters.Explaining why he had appeared before the police, Akoijam said he had a busy schedule but did not want his absence to be interpreted as a refusal to cooperate.“I just came here because the Delhi Police has called me to join the investigation. So I came to cooperate,” he said, adding that he wanted to avoid criticism that he was not cooperating with the authorities.The MP also said the developments surrounding the case had strengthened his emotional attachment to his home state.

WHO SAID WHAT



Rahul Gandhi is trying to blackmail India’s national institutions, but such audacity will no longer be tolerated by the people of Bharat.
~ Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, CM, Assam



VOLUME:1, ISSUE 900 | SILCHAR FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2026. EAST AND NE INDIA EDITION | e-mail: krctimes@gmail.com ,www.krctimes.com

Woman killed, two missing after suspected militant ambush in Manipur’s Kamjong



IMPHAL
A woman was killed and two civilians went missing after suspected militants ambushed two motorcycles carrying four villagers in Manipur’s Kamjong district on Thursday evening, triggering fresh tensions in an already volatile region near the Indo-Myanmar border.

The deceased, identified as Hatneikim Haokip, was travelling with her husband, Jangkhongam Haokip, when the attack took place. Her husband reportedly sustained bullet injuries but survived. The body was recovered late Thursday night, while the whereabouts of the other two travellers remained unknown.

According to the Kuki Inpi Manipur (KIM), the attack occurred between 4 pm and 5 pm on the stretch between

Molnoi and Phaikhoh. The four villagers, travelling as two couples on two-wheelers, were reportedly heading towards Phaikhoh to purchase essential commodities when they came under fire.

The missing civilians have been identified as D. Paokthothang Haokip and his wife, Boishi Haokip, both residents of Chassad village. Security personnel and local villagers launched search operations to trace the couple.

The attack has heightened anxiety in Kamjong, where reports of armed clashes and a separate road blockade near the international border added to the uncertainty on Thursday night.

Deputy CM condemns attack, calls for swift action

Deputy Chief Minister Nemcha Kipgen condemned the killing in a statement issued on October 15, describing the incident as a grave criminal act. She expressed condolences to the bereaved family and wished Jangkhongam Haokip a speedy and complete recovery.

Kipgen urged the district administration to maintain law and order, ensure a prompt investigation and identify and apprehend those responsible.She also appealed to community leaders,

young people and citizens to exercise restraint and refrain from spreading rumours or responding to provocations.“Peace, mutual respect, and the safety of all people must remain our shared and highest commitment,” she said.The circumstances surrounding the ambush, including the identity of the attackers and their motive, had not been independently established.

In a separate development, Naga women reportedly blocked a road near Border Pillar 102 in Kamjong district to prevent a security convoy from proceeding. The blockade continued until late Thursday night.

Reports of armed clashes in nearby areas further aggravated tensions. Details about the groups involved, the sequence of events and any casualties were not immediately available.

The developments unfolded as security forces and villagers searched for the missing couple following the attack on the four civilians. The combination of the killing, the unresolved disappearance and the border-area confrontation raised fresh concerns about the security situation in the district.

Kuki-Zo Council alleges NSCN-IM

role, demands impartial probe

The Kuki-Zo Council (KZC) condemned the ambush and called for an immediate and impartial investigation. In a statement issued on Thursday, the council alleged that cadres of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isak-Muivah (NSCN-IM) were responsible for the attack. The allegation has not been independently verified.

The council claimed that the number of Kuki-Zo civilians killed in violence attributed to NSCN-IM and ZUF(K) had reached 30. It called for accountability and argued that allegations involving armed groups should be investigated without favour or discrimination.

The KZC also questioned Deputy Chief Minister Losii Dikho’s reported demand for the removal of Nemcha Kipgen over allegations of complicity in the killing of Naga civilians. The council argued that allegations concerning Dikho’s alleged links with NSCN-IM and ZUF(K) should also be examined.These assertions and allegations against political figures have not been independently established.

The council further contended that if Naga leaders were demanding the abro-

gation of the Suspension of Operations (SOO) agreements with Kuki militant groups under the Kuki National Organisation (KNO) and United People’s Front (UPF), the ceasefire arrangement with NSCN-IM should also be reviewed.

It also argued that if the president of the Kuki National Front (P), or KNF (P), was to be arrested and treated as a terrorist, NSCN-IM’s leadership should face appropriate legal action if found responsible for attacks on Kuki civilians, including incidents dating back to the 1990s.

“No individual or organisation should be above the law,” the council said, calling for equal application of the law regardless of the community affected or the organisation accused.The Kuki Inpi Manipur, the apex body of the Kuki community, also condemned the attack and expressed concern over the fate of Paokthothang Haokip and Boishi Haokip.According to the organisation, Hatneikim died in the attack, while her husband escaped with bullet injuries. The missing couple’s whereabouts remained unknown as search efforts continued.

Silchar-Haflong bus services to resume from October 17 after administrative clearance



HAF LONG
Passenger bus services on the Silchar-Haflong stretch of National Highway-27 (NH-27) will resume from 6 am on October 17, bringing relief to commuters travelling between the Barak Valley and Dima Hasao district headquarters.

The district administration has granted permission to restart the services in response to public demand and to improve connectivity between Silchar and Haflong.

The clearance follows a No Objection Certificate issued by the National Highways Authority of India’s (NHAI) Project Implementation Unit in Silchar on October 14.

The resumption is expected to ease transportation difficulties faced by passengers travelling between the two destinations. However, the administration has imposed a set of conditions to ensure passenger safety and regulate traffic along the hilly stretch.

Bus operators must comply with the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, and all

other applicable rules and regulations. Every vehicle must have valid registration, fitness and insurance certificates, a pollution-under-control certificate, route permits and other mandatory authorisations. Drivers must hold valid driving licences and follow traffic regulations.

Strict speed limits will be enforced along the hill section, with drivers required to reduce speed further near bridges and road construction zones. They must also follow road signs and instructions issued by flagmen at work sites.

The order prohibits overloading, requiring operators to carry passengers strictly within the permitted seating capacity. Buses must ply only on authorised routes and must not obstruct traffic or inconvenience other road users.

The district administration, police and Transport Department will monitor compliance with the prescribed conditions. Operators will be required to follow any further instructions issued by the competent authorities.

The administration has clarified that the permission to resume services does not replace any statutory permit, route authorisation or other approval required under the law. Violations of the conditions or relevant legal provisions could lead to the suspension or cancellation of the permission.

The reopening of passenger bus services is expected to improve public transport connectivity between Silchar and Haflong, particularly for people who depend on the route for work, education, healthcare and other essential travel.

Guwahati opens Northeast’s first visa application centre, to serve 14 countries

GUWAHATI
The Northeast has got its first Visa Application Centre in Guwahati, with VFS Global opening a new facility aimed at making overseas travel-related visa services more accessible to people across the region.

The centre was jointly inaugurated by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Tourism Minister Ajanta Neog, Transport Minister Charan Boro and VFS Global South Asia Chief Operating Officer Yummi Talwar. Representatives of the diplomatic missions of Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Italy and France were also present at the ceremony.

The facility will process visa applications for 14 countries - Austria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Egypt, Estonia, France, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Malta for D-Visa applications, Morocco, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

VFS Global’s first visa application centre in Assam, the facility will serve applicants from Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. It is expected to benefit people travelling abroad for education, tourism, business and other purposes.

Located at the Inter-State Bus Terminal (ISBT) in Khanapara, the centre is accessible by road and connected to Guwahati’s wider transport network, including air and rail links.

Yummi Talwar said the centre would improve access to visa services for applicants across Assam and the wider Northeast, where interest in international education, business and tourism continues to grow.“With growing aspirations around education, business, tourism and global mobility, reliable access to visa services is central to turning ambition into opportunity,” Talwar said, adding that the company would focus on secure, technology-driven processes and a convenient application experience.

EC to revise electoral rolls in 17 states, including Manipur, ahead of 2027 polls

NEW DELHI
The Election Commission of India (ECI) will undertake a Special Summary Revision (SSR) of electoral rolls in 17 states and Union territories, including poll-bound Manipur, ahead of the 2027 Assembly elections, with January 1, 2027, fixed as the qualifying date.

In a communication to the chief electoral officers of the states and Union territories concerned, the Election Commission said the exercise would focus on enrolling eligible voters, particularly young people and first-time electors, correcting errors in existing entries and ensuring that electoral rolls remain accurate and up to date.

The revision comes ahead of Assembly elections in several states next year. The terms of the Uttar Pradesh, Manipur, Goa, Punjab and Uttarakhand Assemblies are due to end in 2027. The Uttar Pradesh Assembly has 403 seats, while Manipur, Goa, Punjab and Uttarakhand have 60, 40, 117 and 70 seats, respectively.

Under the Representation of the People Act, 1950, the Election Commission is empowered to hold elections earlier than six months before the expiry of a state Assembly’s term.

The Special Summary Revision is a routine exercise to update electoral rolls by adding eligible voters, correcting personal details and addressing other discrepancies. It differs from a Special Intensive Revision (SIR), which involves more extensive verification of voter details, including house-to-house visits by Booth Level Officers (BLOs).

During a summary revision,

voters can apply to update their registered addresses or correct other details. An intensive revision, on the other hand, involves more comprehensive verification to identify duplicate and ineligible entries and establish the eligibility of registered voters.

The distinction has assumed significance amid the political controversy surrounding the SIR exercise in several parts of the country. Opposition parties have raised concerns that stringent verification procedures and documentation requirements could lead to the exclusion of eligible voters.

Critics have particularly flagged the potential difficulties faced by migrant workers, elderly people and economically disadvantaged sections in establishing their eligibility. The possibility of wrongful deletion of names has also emerged as a major point of contention.

Several petitions challenging aspects of the intensive revision process have reached the Supreme Court, bringing the Election Commission’s powers and safeguards against the exclusion of eligible voters under legal scrutiny.

The Election Commission has maintained that intensive revision is intended to improve the accuracy of electoral rolls by removing duplicate entries and the names of deceased or otherwise ineligible persons, while ensuring that every eligible citizen is included.The upcoming SSR will provide an opportunity for eligible voters to enrol and for existing electors to correct their details before the next round of Assembly elections.

Silchar lights up for Durga Puja as elaborate pandals meet civic challenges

From a Rajasthan-inspired installation in Udharbond to a pond-top pandal and illuminated water tunnel, the city’s puja committees are raising the bar as civic authorities prepare to manage crowds, traffic and immersion

SILCHAR
Silchar is slipping into the festive rhythm of Durga Puja, with elaborate pandals, intricate artwork and dramatic lighting transforming neighbourhoods across the city and its outskirts ahead of the main celebrations.

Several big-budget pujas have already opened their gates, offering visitors a glimpse of this year’s attractions. From a Rajasthan-inspired installation in Udharbond to a pandal built over a pond in Bilpar and an illuminated water tunnel elsewhere in the city, organisers are combining traditional worship with increasingly ambitious designs.

At Kalibari Road in Udharbond, the celebrations carry added significance as the puja enters its 42nd year. Swami Girishananda Maharaj, secretary of the Silchar Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, inaugurated the festivities

in the presence of Udharbond MLA Rajdeep Goala and Borkhola MLA Kishor Nath.

The pandal draws inspiration from Rajasthan, with architectural motifs and decorative details giving the installation a distinctive character.

Nath described the Rajasthan-themed presentation as a special attraction marking the puja’s 42-year journey.In Bilpar, Mitali Sangha’s Durga Puja remains a familiar fixture on Silchar’s festive calendar. Established in 1966, the club began organising the puja in 1981. Its signature attraction is a pandal built over a pond, setting it apart from conventional installations across the city.

The Apanjan Durga Puja Committee, meanwhile, has opted for a contemporary visual experience. Inaugurated by monks of the Bharat Sevashram Sangha in Silchar, the pandal features

an illuminated water tunnel designed to draw visitors into a distinctive setting.

A bridge-like structure, enhanced by elaborate lighting, forms the centrepiece of the installation. Kolkata-based artist Piyush Haldar conceived the tunnel, while Silchar artist Sanjib Das designed the exterior lighting theme.

The committee has also adorned the Goddess with crystal ornaments, adding another distinctive element to the presentation.

Ranjan Roy, a former ward commissioner and a key member of the organising committee, has invited residents to visit the pandal with family and friends.

Together, the installations reflect the growing creative ambition of Silchar’s Durga Puja celebrations, where traditional devotion increasingly

shares space with immersive designs and elaborate visual displays.

Civic preparations under scrutiny

Behind the festive spectacle, however, lies the challenge of keeping the city functioning as crowds gather at popular pandals.

The Silchar Municipal Corporation (SMC) has stepped up preparations, focusing on traffic management, road repairs, sanitation, street lighting, uninterrupted power and water supply, noise control and idol immersion arrangements.

At a preparatory meeting chaired by SMC executive officer Abhijit Bey at the corporation’s conference hall on Tuesday, officials and other stakeholders reviewed the arrangements for the festival.

The use of loudspeakers, particularly DJ systems, during celebrations and immersion processions featured prom-

inently in the discussions.

The corporation has urged puja committees to avoid single-use plastic and made it clear that permission would not be granted for roadside pandals that obstruct traffic.

Ward-wise teams comprising labourers and supervisory officials have been formed to clean drains and remove roadside garbage. The corporation’s utility branch has been directed to repair or replace faulty streetlights, while the municipal inspector has been tasked with ensuring cleanliness and disinfectant spraying around pandals.

Organisers have also been asked to install dustbins, segregate waste and display appropriate signage.

Two-day immersion plan

The final phase of the celebrations will bring its own logistical demands. Idol immersion is scheduled for October 21 and 22, with the district admin-

istration directing that the process be completed within the two-day window.

At Sadarghat, the Forest Department will supply truckloads of sand, gravel, crusher dust and red soil to facilitate the arrangements.

The Inland Water Transport Department will deploy a motorboat for immersion operations and a launch for rescue work. Police have been asked to maintain security at the ghat, while magistrates and disaster-response teams will be deployed to help prevent untoward incidents.

As Silchar’s pandals draw visitors with elaborate themes and dazzling lights, the festival will also test the city’s civic preparedness. Managing crowds, keeping roads accessible and ensuring clean surroundings will be as important as the visual spectacle in determining how smoothly the celebrations unfold.



VOLUME:1, ISSUE 900

PUNJAB’S
DRUG CRISIS

The alleged recovery of heroin worth ₹40 crore from a police constable’s residence raises troubling questions about institutional integrity, political accountability and the effectiveness of the state’s war on drugs.

Punjab, a land celebrated for its valour, agricultural prosperity and entrepreneurial spirit, is confronting a crisis that threatens to undermine its social fabric and institutional credibility. The state that sent generations of young men to defend the nation and fed millions through its hardworking farmers is increasingly struggling with the devastating consequences of drug addiction and trafficking. What makes this tragedy even more alarming is the possibility that those entrusted with enforcing the law may themselves come under suspicion.

The reported recovery of heroin worth ₹40 crore from a police constable’s residence is a deeply disturbing development. The allegation must be investigated impartially, and guilt cannot be presumed before the facts are established. Yet, the case raises an unavoidable question: if the very institution responsible for dismantling drug networks is suspected of harbouring elements linked to the trade, who will protect the public from the protectors?

A police uniform must represent public trust, not provide cover for criminal activity. If any officer has abused that trust, the response must be swift, transparent and uncompromising. Equally, investigators must establish whether the alleged offence involves an individual acting alone or points to a wider network of complicity. Selective action against a junior functionary, while influential operators and their protectors remain untouched, would do little to restore public confidence.

Punjab’s drug problem, however, cannot be reduced to a single police case. Addiction has spread across villages, towns and urban neighbourhoods, devastating families and depriving young people of education, employment and the prospect of a productive future. Behind every statistic lies a human tragedy: parents watching their children succumb to dependency, elderly people losing their expected support, and households pushed towards financial and emotional ruin.

Addiction is not simply an individual failing. It is a public health challenge, a law-enforcement problem and a symptom of deeper social and economic distress. Treating every person caught in its grip as a criminal will not solve the crisis. Those who profit from trafficking must face the full force of the law, while people suffering from addiction need accessible treatment, psychological support and a realistic path towards rehabilitation.

The scale of the enforcement figures cited by the authorities makes the need for a more searching assessment particularly urgent. Punjab Police reportedly arrested 10,524 alleged drug traffickers over a ten-month period, including 153 major operators. During the same period, authorities seized 790 kilograms of heroin, 860 kilograms of opium and other narcotic substances, besides taking action against drug-linked assets valued at more than ₹208 crore.

These figures indicate the scale of police operations, but they cannot, by themselves, establish that the campaign is succeeding. Indeed, the persistence of addiction and the continued availability of narcotics raise a more fundamental question: why do the supply networks remain so resilient despite repeated arrests and substantial seizures? Arrest figures measure enforcement activity; they do not necessarily measure the effectiveness of a strategy. The real test is whether drugs are becoming harder to obtain, whether major trafficking networks are being dismantled, whether their financial channels are being disrupted and whether fewer young people are falling into addiction. Without such outcome-based assessments, a high number of arrests risks becoming a substitute for meaningful progress.

Punjab’s approximately 553-kilometre border with Pakistan adds another dimension to the crisis. The use of drones to smuggle narcotics and weapons has made border management increasingly complex. Reports of 183 drones being seized along the Punjab border so far in 2026 underline the seriousness of the challenge. Cross-border trafficking networks must be confronted through stronger surveillance, intelligence-sharing and coordinated operations. But external threats must not become a convenient explanation for every failure within the state. Narcotics cannot sustain a domestic market without networks for distribution, finance and local supply. Investigators must therefore examine the entire chain, from cross-border operators and domestic distributors to financial intermediaries and anyone suspected of providing protection. Where evidence points to official or political complicity, the investigation must follow the facts regardless of rank or influence. The Aam Aadmi Party government’s credibility will ultimately depend on whether its anti-drug campaign produces measurable change. Promises of a drug-free Punjab may generate political expectations, but they cannot replace sustained action. Raids, arrests and public announcements are necessary components of enforcement; they are not proof of victory. The government must publish credible assessments of drug availability, major-network prosecutions, asset confiscations and treatment outcomes. It must also ensure that allegations against police personnel are investigated independently wherever circumstances warrant it. Accountability cannot stop at the lowest rung of the administrative ladder. There is an equally urgent need to strengthen the public health response. De-addiction centres must be adequately staffed and accessible, treatment must be free from stigma, and families must receive guidance and support. Schools, colleges, village institutions and community organisations can help identify emerging problems before addiction becomes entrenched. Employment opportunities, vocational training and rehabilitation programmes are also essential if recovering young people are to rebuild their lives with dignity. None of this diminishes the need for firm policing. Rather, it recognises that enforcement and rehabilitation must work together. A campaign that arrests traffickers but fails to reduce demand will remain incomplete; one that treats people struggling with addiction while allowing organised suppliers to operate with impunity will be equally ineffective.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Envy is a declaration of inferiority.”
- Napoleon Bonaparte

DEPENDENCY ON
FOREIGN TECHNOLOGY
AND NEW THREATS TO
NATIONAL SECURITY

MAHENDRA TIWARI

The fierce war between Russia and Ukraine is no longer limited to the use of conventional weapons. In this era of modern warfare, information and communication technology has emerged as the most powerful weapon. Satellite-based communications have become crucial for the success of any military operation. In this context, a new and serious controversy has recently arisen, sparking diplomatic and strategic tensions internationally. Ukraine’s most important satellite communications system was suddenly disrupted in the midst of its military operations. This incident occurred while Ukraine was facing Russian missile attacks. The sudden disruption of communications resulted in heavy losses for the Ukrainian army and forced the suspension of several crucial defence operations. This unexpected disruption deeply concerned the Ukrainian leadership and exposed the dangers of technological dependence on the battlefield to the entire world.

The primary cause of this entire crisis was an unannounced technical blockade of military communications equipment. Ukrainian military officials and defence experts discovered that a speed limit had suddenly been imposed on the high-end communications equipment they used. If any unmanned reconnaissance aircraft or military equipment exceeded 160 kilometres per hour, satellite contact was automatically lost. According to some military reports, this serious problem was observed even at speeds of 110 kilometres per hour.

ly high-speed satellite communications networks. When these aircraft are flying at very high speeds, maintaining satellite contact with constantly changing geographical coordinates is a complex technical process. Losing contact after crossing the speed limit means these aircraft suddenly become blind, unable to transmit visuals or receive instructions from their operators. Disoriented, these expensive and advanced aircraft either crash or are destroyed by enemy radar. This technical blockade, implemented without any prior warning, rendered many advanced Ukrainian military aircraft useless before reaching their targets.

Following this serious incident, the Ukrainian President publicly alleged that their communications services were being deliberately disrupted in the war zone. He believed that such technical disruptions amid Russian attacks could be a conspiracy to weaken Ukrainian security. Following these serious allegations, Elon Musk, head of the company that built this satellite communication system, was forced to come forward and offer clarification. He clarified the situation, explaining the difference between a civilian-use system and a military-use system. He stated unequivocally that the US government has full ownership and control of the specific military communications system being used by the Ukrainian military. According to him, the sole authority to control, slow down, or impose any restrictions on the network rests with the US Department of Defence and the country’s Supreme Commander,

impact the global energy market. Political experts believe that the US administration was pressuring Ukraine to stop or limit these attacks. When diplomatic negotiations failed, attempts were made to convey messages by controlling communications technology that directly impacted the battlefield. This is a clear example of how superpowers can influence the course and outcome of war through technological control, even without directly engaging in combat.

This incident has deeply concerned not only Ukraine but also other European countries and allies. Several member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization have reacted strongly. They argue that if the technological communication infrastructure, vital to the battlefield, is used to exert political pressure, it poses an unprecedented threat to the security of all allies. Defence experts in countries like Poland have publicly expressed concern that the situation that has befallen Ukraine today could happen to any other country tomorrow. Complete dependence on the technology of a foreign superpower in defence matters poses a significant risk to national security.

This entire incident has sparked a new debate about national sovereignty in diplomatic circles. When a country relies on another country’s technology for its defence equipment, can it truly make independent decisions? The situation in Ukraine provides an answer to this question. Even as their soldiers fight valiantly on the ground, control of their weapons and communications is in the hands of an American

visible technological networks and satellite communications have become the most decisive fronts of war. Whoever possesses technological dominance can determine the true outcome of a war. With the US government and president in control of this military communication system, it becomes

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

Food is a basic human right.

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#WorldFoodDay

~ Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations



Advanced unmanned aircraft used in modern warfare fly at very high speeds and rely on constant satellite contact to gather accurate information or engage targets.

These unmanned aircraft have become crucial in the current war. These aircraft not only perform reconnaissance of enemy positions but are also capable of pinpointing and dropping munitions. Such aircraft must constantly receive instructions from remote operators, which are possible only through extreme-

President Donald Trump.

Following this revelation, this technical issue has become a full-blown geopolitical controversy. International affairs analysts and diplomatic experts have begun linking this incident to the recent political tensions between the US and Ukraine. It is believed that this move was not merely a technical glitch but a tool to exert diplomatic pressure. Ukraine has been carrying out frequent attacks on Russian energy installations for some time, which has the potential to

president sitting miles away. Diplomatic experts believe that using technology as a weapon in this way marks the beginning of a dangerous trend. If defence aid or technical support is withdrawn or limited in the middle of a war due to political differences, it could directly lead to that country’s defeat.

Ultimately, this entire episode of the communication disruption in Ukraine establishes that future wars will not be fought solely through geographical boundaries and artillery. In today’s world, in-

clear that countries providing technology can at any time suspend or alter its use to suit their own convenience and political advantage. Ukraine’s experience is a bitter lesson for all countries around the world. This incident proves that technological dependence also implies political dependence. Unless a country is self-reliant in its defence communication technology, its sovereignty and military independence will always be dependent on the political decisions of another country.

28,337 cheques distributed among students in Cachar under Nijut Moina and Nijut Babu schemes

SILCHAR

All together 28,337 cheques were distributed among students across Cachar district on Thursday under the Assam Government's Mukhya Mantrir Nijut Moina Aasoni and Mukhya Mantrir Nijut Babu Aasoni extending financial assistance to students pursuing higher secondary and higher education in the district.

Under the Mukhya Mantrir Nijut Moina Aasoni a total of 24,907 cheques were distributed among girl students pursuing Higher Secondary and degree courses at government and provincialised schools and colleges, as well as Gurucharan University. The scheme seeks to provide financial assistance to eligible girl students and encourage them to continue their education.

Meanwhile, 3,430 cheques were distributed among boys studying in colleges and Gurucharan University under



the Mukhya Mantrir Nijut Babu Aasoni. The initiative is intended to extend financial support to eligible male students pursuing higher education. The distribution ceremonies were held at various educational institutions across Cachar district with designated chief guests handing over cheques to the beneficiaries. The programmes covered institutions in 7 Legislative Assembly

Constituencies bringing students together to receive assistance under the two state government schemes.

At Assam University, Silchar, the cheques were distributed by social worker Sajalendu Das Laskar. At Cachar College, Mihir Kanti Shom, former Udharpodh MLA handed over cheques to the beneficiaries. The distribution programme at Government Model College, Borkhola was attended by Kankan Narayan Sikidar Chairman of the Cachar Zilla Parishad.

At Gurucharan University, Silchar former Dholai MLA Nihar Ranjan Das distributed cheques among the students. At Jagannath Singh College, Udharpodh, the distribution was carried out by Udharpodh MLA Rajdeep Goala. At Janata College, Sonai social worker Swapan Suklabaidya handed over cheques to the beneficiaries.

At Katigorah Anchalik Degree College, social worker Gopal Kanti Roy dis-

tributed cheques among the students. At Madhab Chandra Das College, Sonai, the programme was attended by MLA Aminul Haque Laskar and Sonai Municipal Board Vice-Chairperson Sheikh Saharul Alam Laskar. At Mohendra Kumar Dey College, MLA Amiya Das distributed cheques among the beneficiaries.

At Nehru College, Lakhapur, the cheques were distributed by Chairman Lakhapur MB Mrinal Kanti Das. At Radhamadhab College, Silchar, former Silchar MLA Dipayan Chakraborty handed over cheques to the students. At Satindra Mohan Dev College, Lakhapur, Reena Singha, Chairperson of Manipuri Development Council was present at the distribution programme.

At Satya Ranjan College, Katigorah, MLA Katigorah Kamakhya Dey Purkayastha distributed cheques among the beneficiaries. At Silchar College, the distribution was carried out by social

worker Shri Amitabh Rai. At Silchar Polytechnic, social worker Amarendra Paul handed over cheques to the students while at TTC, Silchar, social worker Dr. Chandan Dey distributed cheques among the beneficiaries.

At West Silchar College in Borkhola, MLA Kishore Nath distributed cheques to the students. At Women's College, Silchar, social worker Rupam Saha handed over cheques to the beneficiaries.

The live telecast of the central programme from Guwahati was also displayed at the venues across Cachar district. During the central event, Assam Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma handed over cheques to student beneficiaries enabling students and attendees in Cachar to witness the proceedings.

This is stated in a press release issued by the Regional Office of Information & Public Relations, Barak Valley Zone, Silchar, Assam.

Arunachal appoints 21 Assistant Professors, directs immediate joining at government colleges

ITANAGAR

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Thursday handed over appointment orders and posting details to 21 candidates selected for Assistant Professor posts through the Arunachal Pradesh Public Service Commission (APPSC) Examination 2026, directing them to join their assigned government colleges immediately. The appointments are intended to fill vacant teaching positions under the state Education Department. With the academic session already under way, Khandu said the government could not afford further delays in deploying the newly recruited faculty members.

"We hurriedly called for giving away the appointment letters along with posting places to all successful Assistant Professors because we cannot delay the process as we are already into the middle of the academic session," the chief minister said.

Congratulating the appointees, Khandu said the recruitment reflected the government's commitment to a fair, transparent and merit-based selection process. He credited the APPSC and the Arunachal Pradesh Staff Selection Board (APSSB) with helping ensure equal opportunities for government job aspirants.

Emphasising the importance of education in the state's development, Khandu said human resources were as important as physical infrastructure. Teachers, he noted, played a crucial role in shaping students and preparing future generations.

"You on your own chose this profession, prepared for it and appeared for the examination. You worked hard to achieve success. Now it's your turn to do justice to what you have chosen," he told the newly appointed faculty members. The recruitment process began with the APPSC advertisement issued on January 22, 2026. The commission conducted viva voce examinations for the 21 posts on August 18 and 19 and declared the results on the same day. Of the 263 applications received across five subjects, 66 candidates were shortlisted for interviews and 21 were selected. Mathematics and Chemistry accounted for six appointments each, followed by Physics with five. Anthropology and Sociology received two appointments each.

Manipur allocates 4 crore for civil services, NEET and JEE coaching schemes

IMPHAL

The Manipur government has earmarked 4 crore for civil services coaching support and initiatives to help students prepare for medical and engineering entrance examinations, Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh announced on Thursday. Under the Chief Minister Scholarship Scheme, 400 civil services aspirants will receive coaching support. The state government has allocated 2.80 crore for the scholarships, while another 1.20 crore will be provided through the corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative of ALS IAS. Eligible candidates can apply for the screening test until October 25, 2026. The examination is scheduled for November 1, and no application fee will be charged. The initiative is intended to help aspiring candidates prepare for competitive examinations and improve their access to civil services coaching.

The government has also partnered with coaching institutes to

IMPHAL

At least 81 personnel of the Border Security Force (BSF) and three civilian drivers were hospitalised at the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) in Imphal on Thursday following suspected food poisoning.

The personnel reportedly developed repeated vomiting after consuming breakfast, comprising puri and vegetables. The exact cause of their illness, however, has not yet been officially established.

RIMS Medical Superintendent Professor Dr Rameshwor Singh told ANI that an entire BSF company was brought to the hospital's outpatient department after the personnel began vomiting.

He said all the patients were responding positively to treatment and were being given adequate fluids. The hospital authorities expressed confidence that their condition would improve within a few hours.

According to reports, the af-



fected personnel belong to the D Company of the BSF's 58th Battalion, deployed for security duties in areas under the jurisdiction of Lamsang police station in Imphal West district.

The personnel were provided immediate medical attention fol-

lowing their admission to the hospital. Their condition was reported to be stable, with doctors continuing treatment and monitoring their recovery.

Manipur Home Minister Govindas Konthoujam also visited the hospital to enquire about the health

of the affected personnel, according to local media reports.

While food poisoning is suspected, the precise cause of the incident remains unclear. Further details are awaited regarding the food consumed and the circumstances that led to the sudden illness.

Meghalaya launches 'Ka Jingkyrmen' to strengthen child protection amid POCSO cases

SHILLONG

Meghalaya has launched a child protection initiative in East Khasi Hills to improve awareness of children's rights, prevent sexual abuse and strengthen community-level safeguards, following reports of 55 cases under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act in two blocks. Named Ka Jingkyrmen, meaning 'Hope', the project has been launched by the Meghalaya State Legal Services Authority (MSLSA) and the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), East Khasi Hills, in collaboration with the state government.

The initiative comes against the backdrop of 29 reported POCSO cases in Mawlai Block and 26 in Mawryngkneng Block, figures cited by Social Welfare Department Commissioner and Secretary Pravin Bakshi to underline the need for sustained preventive measures and community awareness.

Chief Justice of the Meghalaya

High Court Revati Mohite Dere, who is also the patron-in-chief of MSLSA, said the initiative was conceived in response to cases encountered during judicial proceedings, including those involving adolescents in romantic relationships.

She stressed that under the POCSO Act, sexual activity involving a person below 18 is covered by the law, and a minor's consent is not a legal defence. Such cases can have serious consequences for young people, including prosecution, pregnancy and disruption of education, she noted. The Chief Justice urged children to continue their education and pursue their aspirations, emphasising the role of education in empowerment and access to future opportunities.

Bakshi said Ka Jingkyrmen would prioritise legal awareness, community sensitisation and coordinated interventions involving government departments and other stakeholders.

He also highlighted existing child protection mechanisms, including Mission Vatsalya, which supports children in difficult circumstances, and Child Care Institutions that provide shelter, protection and rehabilitation to those in need.

The Child Helpline has been integrated with the Emergency Response Support System (112) and the Women Helpline (181) to improve access to assistance, he added. Justice H S Thangkiew, a Meghalaya High Court judge and executive chairman of MSLSA, said the initiative had been developed under the Chief Justice's directions to improve awareness among vulnerable children and communities affected by offences. He emphasised the need to communicate legal provisions in languages that children and local communities can understand, making information about their rights and available support services more accessible.

The programme will cover chil-

Mizoram rolls out four digital finance systems to boost transparency, accountability

AIZAWL

Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma on Wednesday launched four digital financial management systems aimed at improving transparency in public expenditure, strengthening fiscal oversight and ensuring faster delivery of government benefits.

The initiatives - Mizoram Integrated Works Accounts System (MIWAS), e-Sanction, e-Budget and 100 per cent Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) - were launched at the Chief Minister's Office on October 15. The new systems are intended to reduce paperwork, improve the monitoring of government spending and make financial transactions more accountable. MIWAS will streamline works accounts in six departments: Public Works, Public Health Engineering, Power and Electricity, Irrigation and Water Resources, Environment, Forest and Climate Change, and Land Resources, Soil and Water Conservation. The system is expected to improve the reconciliation of expenditure records with the Accountant General and ensure that expenditure vouchers are properly submitted through the Treasury.

perwork, minimise calculation errors and shorten delays in the budget preparation process.

The e-Sanction system will facilitate electronic processing of expenditure approvals, allowing proposals to move from Drawing and Disbursing Officers and Heads of Departments to the concerned administrative departments and the Finance Department. It is also designed to prevent departments from spending beyond their approved budget allocations. Under the 100 per cent DBT system, payments under state government schemes, including Thlai Thar Leina, the state's crop procurement initiative, the flagship Bana Kaih scheme and power subsidies, will be transferred directly to beneficiaries' bank accounts after the Treasury clears the bills. The system will also allow beneficiaries and government officials to track payment status through IFMS, potentially improving transparency and reducing delays in the disbursement of assistance.

Addressing the launch, Lalduhoma stressed the importance of digital financial management in ensuring the transparent and efficient use of public funds.

He said Mizoram had received 7350 crore under Part IX of the Special Assistance for Capital Investment (SASCI) scheme in the previous year and was preparing to secure around 7650 crore for 2026-27.

Tripura targets 500 MW renewable energy capacity by 2030

AGARTALA

Tripura has set a target of achieving 500 MW of renewable energy capacity by 2030, with plans to expand rooftop solar installations, strengthen electricity storage infrastructure and shift thousands of drinking water pumps to solar power.

Tripura State Electricity Corporation Ltd (TSECL) Managing Director Biswajit Basu announced the target on Wednesday at an event marking World Standards Day 2026 at the corporation's headquarters in Agartala.

Basu stressed the need to make clean energy more accessible and affordable while modernising the state's power infrastructure to meet rising electricity demand.

The programme was jointly organised by the Indian Buildings Congress (IBC), Tripura State Chapter, and TSECL under the theme, "A Shared Vision for a Better World: Affordable and Clean Energy".

Basu said reliable and affordable electricity was essential for economic growth and social development. He added that expanding renewable energy would be critical to ensuring long-term energy security while reducing environmental pressure.



He also pointed to the growing demand for electricity driven by artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies, underscoring the need to diversify energy sources and strengthen the power system.

Rooftop solar push

Tripura currently has around 17 MW of installed rooftop solar capacity, Basu said. A proposal to install rooftop solar systems with a combined capacity of 150 MW

across 1.5 lakh households is under consideration. If implemented, the initiative would significantly expand household-level solar power generation in the state.

TSECL is also planning to develop electricity storage infrastructure with a capacity of around 200 megawatt-hours (MWh) at the 33-kilovolt (kV) level to improve grid stability and power management.

Another key initiative involves convert-

ing more than 5,000 drinking water pumps to solar-powered systems, reducing their dependence on conventional electricity.

Basu said the corporation was also working to train local youths in solar energy technology to develop technical skills and create a workforce capable of supporting the state's renewable energy expansion.

Infrastructure modernisation

Emphasising the broader challenges facing the power sector, Basu said distribution companies must focus on technological upgrades, energy efficiency and reliable service delivery while maintaining financial sustainability.

He said these measures would be essential for Tripura to transition towards cleaner energy and meet its future electricity requirements.

The event was attended by IBC national president engineer Chinmoy Debnath, Tripura Electricity Regulatory Commission chairman Hemanta Verma, National Institute of Technology Agartala associate professor Shubhadeep Bhattacharya, former IBC Tripura State Chapter president R K Majumdar, TSECL general manager Swapan Debbarma and IBC Tripura State Chapter president Bimal Das.

Bhattacharya and Debbarma delivered the keynote addresses, while discussions focused on clean energy adoption, power infrastructure upgrades and the role of standards in promoting environmentally sustainable development.

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The scent that lingers after a nice rain is called "petrichor."

‘Unacceptable interference’:
Indian envoy slams US
lawmaker’s ‘purging 130 million
from voter rolls’ remark



NEW DELHI

India slammed US Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal’s remarks on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, calling them “unacceptable interference” in the country’s internal affairs.

“The remarks by @RepJayapal on India’s electoral and political processes are unacceptable interference in India’s internal affairs,” India’s Ambassador to the US Vinay Mohan Kwatra said in a post on X.

Kwatra said India was a vibrant democracy with robust, independent constitutional institutions and a longstanding record of free and fair elections.

He added that he remained open to constructive conversations

with Jayapal to dispel what he described as her misconceptions.

On Wednesday, the Democratic lawmaker from Washington state expressed concern over the deletion of around 130 million names from India’s draft electoral rolls, describing it as a “purge”.

She also voiced support for non-violent protests against what she termed “anti-democratic efforts” in India.

Jayapal drew parallels between the developments in India and the Trump administration’s actions in the US, alleging that both reflected similar attempts to undermine voting rights. She said people in both countries deserved free and fair elections and stressed the importance of protecting

democracies.

According to Election Commission of India data, around 7.2 crore names were deleted from draft electoral rolls during the first two phases of the SIR, conducted across 13 states and Union Territories. In the ongoing third phase, draft rolls published in 18 states and Union Territories have recorded 6.16 crore deletions.

The Election Commission has maintained that the exercise aims to update electoral rolls by removing entries of deceased, duplicate, shifted and otherwise ineligible voters.

It has also said that voters whose names were inadvertently omitted can seek inclusion through the claims and objections process and subsequently by submitting Form 6.

EC announces Special Summary
Revision of rolls in 17 states,
mandates ‘readable’ versions



NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) announced on Thursday a Special Summary Revision (SSR) of electoral rolls in 17 states and Union Territories, directing that political parties be supplied with a “readable PDF format” in a first-ever move.

The move comes amid debate and protests across India over the poll body’s Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise across the country.

The states where SSR will be held include Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Punjab and Manipur, where polls are due “early next year”.

A machine-readable voter list has been a key demand of opposition parties. The EC has till now turned down this demand, citing fudging concerns and court orders.

In a key change, the EC will provide political parties with soft copies. Draft

and final electoral rolls (without photos) will now be provided in “readable PDF format” instead of image PDF format.

At the draft stage, addition, deletion, and modification supplements will be shared with recognised political parties.

In a letter to the chief electoral officers of the states and Union territories, the EC said January 1, 2027, would be the qualifying date for the exercise.

According to the letter, the SSR covers Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Puducherry, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal.

The letter says the schedule for states and UTs where the SIR is under way or has just ended, among them Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha, Telangana and Delhi, will be announced later. The same applies to Himachal Pradesh, Jammu &

Kashmir and Ladakh, where the SIR has not begun. Their schedule will follow, keeping weather conditions in view.

Under the schedule, polling stations are to be rationalised by November 2. Draft rolls will be published on November 12, with claims and objections accepted until December 11 and disposed of by December 28. Final rolls are due on January 4, 2027.

In a letter to the chief electoral officers of the states and Union territories, the EC said January 1, 2027, would be the qualifying date for the exercise.

The commission is also seeking advance applications for three later qualifying dates: April 1, July 1 and October 1, 2027, the letter says. Only claims for January 1, 2027, will be decided in this round, while the rest will be handled in the relevant quarter.

The letter holds each electoral registration officer (ERO) responsible for ensuring that “no eligible citizen is

left out while no ineligible person gets included”. It says furnishing Aadhaar is voluntary and that no application will be denied, and no entry deleted, for failure to provide it.

On polling stations, the EC said, “No polling station has more than 1,200 electors, except with the prior approval of the Commission.” Electors “should not be required to travel for more than two kilometres or cross any natural barriers”, it said.

In a letter to the chief electoral officers of the states and Union territories, the EC said January 1, 2027, would be the qualifying date for the exercise.

The letter also sets out safeguards against wrongful deletions. It refers to a separate October 9 order that limits Form 7 filings “to discourage bulk filing of applications by individual electors”. EROs must personally cross-verify cases where deletions exceed 2 per cent of a polling station’s electors or where the same person is the objector in more than five cases.

For each deletion, the ERO must pass “a speaking order after giving an opportunity of hearing to the concerned person”. No decision on a claim or objection can be taken until at least seven clear days after the lists are published. Appeals lie to the District Magistrate and then to the chief electoral officer.

Booth-level agents of recognised parties “shall not submit more than 10 Forms to BLO per day”. If an agent files more than 30 forms during the claims period, “the cross-verification must be done by ERO/AERO themselves”, the letter said. Invoking Article 324 of the Constitution, the EC directed chief secretaries to ensure that “no post notified as DEO/ERO/AERO is vacant”. It also said that “no official connected with the exercise of SSR is transferred without prior approval of the Commission” between draft and final publication.

The letter also asks that women, transgender persons, Scheduled Tribes, senior citizens and persons with disabilities be “treated with due sensitivity and empathy”.

INTERNATIONAL

Defying Trump, Zelensky says will
keep hitting Russian refineries



KYIV

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said his country would resume hitting Russian oil refineries and adopted a noticeably more defiant tone towards US President Donald Trump in an interview published Thursday by the Financial Times.

Since Trump returned to power, Washington’s support for Ukraine has fluctuated alongside his unexpected social media remarks, which have often taken Moscow and Kyiv by surprise.

Trump last week unilaterally announced an “energy ceasefire” that was never publicly confirmed, and Moscow continued striking

Ukrainian energy infrastructure.

But after a wave of renewed Russian strikes on facilities on Wednesday, Zelensky told the FT: “The block (on attacking refineries) is out. We’re done.”

Russia on Thursday said Ukraine had attacked an oil refinery in Ryazan, south of the capital, Moscow.

Since Russia launched its invasion in 2022, Ukraine has faced repeated strikes on its power infrastructure and gradually expanded what it says are retaliatory strikes into Russian territory, including on refineries.

Trump criticised the attacks, especially after he struck a surprise diesel deal with Moscow and ordered Ukraine to stop targeting Russian refineries.

Zelensky said Ukraine paused the strikes for several days, despite Russian claims – denied by Kyiv – that Ukraine attempted to target refineries during that period.

Despite complying, Zelensky said Ukraine saw its access to key US military capabilities and intelligence restricted.

Starshield, the satellite network built on Starlink and used by militaries, was slowed over Wednesday.

“It was not a technical problem, it was the will,” Zelensky told the FT. He also warned of a “dangerous” cutting off of intelligence sharing with Kyiv, which relies heavily on early warnings to protect its cities from Russian air attacks.

Fears that Washington could curb intelligence cooperation had already surfaced after a public clash between Trump and Zelensky early in Trump’s presidency. The Ukrainian presidency has since worked to smooth relations with Washington, trying to adapt to Trump’s fluctuating stances.

In the interview, Zelensky made a pointed comment about the relationship between Trump, and Russian President Vladimir Putin. Trump “speaks about it openly and loudly that he loves such people and he respects such people. Because for him people who can be leaders 20 years, 30 years, 40 years, it means they can be very strong”, he said.

German police seize robot
that groped 16-year-old girl,
investigate whether young
men were at the controls



COLOGNE

German authorities opened an investigation into possible sexual harassment after a robot controlled by two young men touched the buttocks of a 16-year-old girl and made thrusting movements toward her, police said.

Police in the western city of Cologne responded after the incident overnight Saturday to Sunday in which the robot’s suspected 16-year-old owner and a 19-year-old companion were said to have filmed the alleged assault.

They were said to have streamed the incident and commented on it online.

Cologne police spokesman Christoph Bermel said the two male teenagers have not been charged but are considered suspects, and investiga-

tors were examining whether the robot’s movements were preprogrammed or controlled in real time.

Police were unfamiliar with this type of incident, he said.

“We have not been aware of this phenomenon so far,” Bermel told The Associated Press, saying it was “new territory for us.”

Emergency teams that were dispatched to the scene near a fast-food restaurant found the robot in the trunk of a vehicle, Cologne police said in a statement on Monday. The robot and the two young men’s mobile phones were confiscated.

North Rhine Westphalia Police Cologne, on Facebook, posted an image of the red-and-gold robot lying on the ground.

The robot, said to be 120 centimeters (about 3 ft 11 inches) tall, was dressed in a white tank top, black sweatpants and wearing a gold chain and sunglasses. It also had what appears to be a fake mustache.

Videos circulated on the internet show two young men escorting the robot toward a group of women, bumping into one and hugging others, on a lively nighttime street.

One of the men repeatedly shouts at the robot and pulls it backward after it makes sexual gestures, prompting laughter among people in the area.

On the police’s Facebook account on Tuesday, officers criticized inappropriate comments and warned that sharing or joking about such incidents can worsen the impact on any victim.

From Manipur’s hills to Africa’s skies: Amur falcons return as satellite-tagged pair heads towards Tamenglong

Every October, as the monsoon recedes and the hills of Manipur begin to settle into the changing season, an extraordinary journey unfolds across the skies of North-east India. Small flocks of Amur falcons arrive from distant breeding grounds in northeastern China, pausing in the region to rest and build up the energy needed for the next leg of a migration that will eventually take them to southern Africa.

This year, the first signs of their return were reported on October 11, when residents of Guangram village in Tamenglong district spotted the migratory birds. The sightings have signalled the beginning of another Amur falcon season in Manipur, bringing renewed attention to the forests, villages and river valleys that form part of the birds’ remarkable journey.

The falcons are arriving in small batches, according to Tamenglong Divisional Forest Officer Amit Kellar. Their numbers are expected to increase over the coming weeks as more birds make their way through the Northeast.

Adding a scientific dimension to the seasonal spectacle, two satellite-tagged Amur falcons, Apapang and Alang, are expected to reach Manipur by October 20. The birds began their southbound journey from their breeding grounds in north-eastern China on October 10, according to Dr Suresh Kumar of the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun, who has been monitoring their movements.

Their anticipated arrival is more than a marker on the seasonal calendar. It offers researchers an opportunity to follow the movements of individual birds across continents and understand the routes, stopover sites and environmental conditions that shape their migration.

For Manipur, particularly Tamenglong and neighbouring Noney district, the return of the falcons also reflects the growing importance of community participation in wildlife conservation.

A journey across continents

The Amur falcon (*Falco amurensis*) is a small migratory bird of prey whose annual journey spans roughly 20,000 km. It breeds in parts of northeastern Asia, including northeastern China, and travels south towards wintering grounds in southern Africa.

The scale of the journey is striking. The birds cross multiple countries, negotiate changing weather conditions and depend on suitable stop-over habitats along the way. Their migration connects ecosystems separated by thousands of kilometres, making their survival dependent on conditions far beyond any single country or region.

The Northeast occupies an important place in this annual movement. Amur falcons generally begin arriving in the region from the second week of October, with Manipur and Nagaland among the areas where large numbers gather.

For a bird that spends much of its life travelling between distant geographical extremes, these temporary resting places are essential. The falcons need to feed and accumulate energy before undertaking the next stage of their journey.

They usually remain in the region until late November, after which they continue towards Africa. One of the most demanding stretches of their migration involves a long flight across the Arabian Sea, where opportunities to rest are limited.

The birds’ ability to undertake such journeys has made them a subject of scientific interest. Yet the migration also presents a conservation challenge: protecting a species that crosses international boundaries requires cooperation across the landscapes and jurisdictions on which it depends.

A safe roosting site in Manipur is only one part of that larger picture. The birds must also encounter suitable habitats along the remainder of their route.

Guangram’s seasonal visitors

The first sightings this year came from Guangram village, around 150 km west of Imphal. For local residents, the arrival of the birds marks the return of a familiar seasonal visitor.

The early sightings also provide an important indication to forest officials and conservation groups that the migration has begun. As the falcons arrive in greater numbers, their presence draws attention to the need to protect the sites where they gather.

Tamenglong’s landscape of hills, forests and river valleys forms part of the wider natural environment through which the birds move. The district and neighbouring Noney have become important centres of conservation activity associated with the annual migration.

The return of the falcons has also helped connect local knowledge with scientific research. Residents can identify changes in the arrival pattern and report sightings, while researchers use field observations and tracking technology to build a more detailed understanding of the birds’ movements.

Such cooperation is particularly valuable for migratory species. Scientists cannot continuously observe every bird along a route stretching across continents. Information from local communities can help complement data collected through satellite tracking and other monitoring methods.

The challenge is to ensure that the arrival of large flocks does not expose them to disturbance or hunting. Conservation efforts must therefore extend beyond recording their presence to protecting the places where they feed and roost.

Apapang and Alang: following the migration by satellite

Among the most closely watched travellers this season are Apapang, a male, and Alang, a female Amur falcon.

The pair be-



gan their southward migration from northeastern China on October 10. Dr Suresh Kumar of WII expects them to reach Manipur by October 20, based on the monitoring of their migratory routes.

Their movements are being tracked through satellite transmitters, allowing researchers to follow their progress over long distances. Unlike conventional field observations, satellite tracking can provide information about a bird’s route even when it is far beyond the reach of researchers on the ground.

The data can help scientists examine migration timing, movement patterns and the locations used by birds during their journeys. Over time, information from tagged individuals can contribute to a broader understanding of the environmental factors that influence migration.

Apapang and Alang’s names also carry a connection to Manipur’s landscape. They were named after a roosting site and the Barak and Irang rivers in Tamenglong district.

The names offer a reminder that these birds are not merely passing through an abstract point on a map. Their annual journeys intersect with identifiable places, rivers and communities that have become part of the region’s conservation story.

Their expected arrival will also renew attention on the scientific programme that has helped place Manipur on the map of Amur falcon research.

The birds’ journeys do not follow administrative boundaries. Their route links breeding habitats in Asia with stopover locations across the wider region and wintering grounds in Africa. Tracking their movements can therefore help researchers understand how changes in one part of the journey may affect the species as a whole.

Building a scientific record since 2018

Manipur’s satellite-tagging programme began in 2018 as part of efforts to study the Amur falcon’s migration routes and the environmental patterns associated with its long-distance journey.

In 2019, a five-member WII team led by Dr Kumar radio-tagged five Amur falcons, including two males, at Puching village and other locations in Tamenglong district.

The programme brought together scientific researchers, the state Forest Department, district administration, Rainforest Club, Tamenglong, and local residents.

The collaboration is significant because wildlife research in remote areas often depends on relationships with communities that know the local terrain and seasonal changes. Researchers may bring specialised equipment and scientific methods, but residents can provide valuable observations about the birds and their habitats.

Satellite tracking has added another layer to that knowledge. By following tagged birds beyond their local roosting sites, scientists can study routes that would otherwise be difficult to document through ground observations alone.

The information can help identify important stopover areas, assess the timing of migration and improve understanding of the environmental conditions encountered along the way.

It can also strengthen the case for conservation measures that extend beyond a single village or district. If a bird relies on several locations during its journey, the protection of only one site cannot guarantee the safety of its entire migration.

The long-term value of the programme therefore lies not simply in following individual birds but in building a scientific picture of the wider migration system.

Conservation moves beyond the forest department

The Amur falcon’s annual arrival has become an opportunity for Manipur to promote conservation through public awareness and community participation.

The state Forest Department organises activities during the migration season, including the Amur Falcon Festival, to encourage local involvement in protecting the birds.

Such initiatives can help people understand the ecological significance of the migration and the consequences of hunting or disturbing roosting flocks. They can also reinforce the idea that wildlife conservation is not solely the responsibility of government departments or scientific institutions.

The role of village residents is especially important. People living near roosting sites are often best placed to notice the birds’ arrival, observe changes in their numbers and alert authorities to possible threats.

Community participation can also help build a sense of local responsibility for the protection of habitats. When conservation becomes part of the relationship between residents and their surrounding environment, it has a better chance of

continuing beyond a particular campaign or festival.

The involvement of local organisations, including Rainforest Club, Tamenglong, has supported the effort to connect awareness with practical protection.

In May this year, Union Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Bhupender Yadav described Manipur’s satellite-tagging programme as “one of the successful community-led conservation efforts in India”.

The recognition highlighted the role of local communities in a conservation initiative that combines scientific monitoring with grassroots participation. But maintaining that progress requires continued vigilance. Awareness programmes must be accompanied by protection of roosting areas, cooperation with local residents and sustained monitoring throughout the migration season.

Amur falcons are protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and are listed under Schedule IV. India is also a signatory to an international agreement on the conservation of migratory birds of prey.

These protections provide an important legal framework, but the practical challenge is to ensure that the birds remain safe during their stay in the region.

Migratory species face risks that can arise at different stages of their journey. Hunting, habitat disturbance and changes in the availability of suitable stopover sites can affect their ability to complete long-distance migrations.

Because the birds travel across national

boundaries, their conservation also depends on the conditions they encounter outside India. Protecting a flock during its stay in Manipur is an important contribution, but the wider migration requires attention to habitats and threats along the entire route.

This is where scientific tracking becomes particularly useful. The movements of tagged birds can help researchers identify the locations on which they depend and improve understanding of how migration patterns may respond to changing environmental conditions.

The data does not remove the need for field conservation. Instead, it can help direct attention towards the places and periods that matter most to the birds.

The season ahead

With the first sightings already reported in Guangram, the coming weeks are expected to bring more Amur falcons into Manipur. The anticipated arrival of Apapang and Alang around October 20 will provide another opportunity to follow the progress of two individual travellers whose movements connect the hills of the Northeast with distant landscapes across Asia and Africa.

For forest officials and conservation groups, the immediate task is to maintain awareness, protect roosting sites and encourage residents to remain involved in safeguarding the birds. For researchers, the tagged pair offers a window into a migration that remains remarkable for both its scale and its demands. Each recorded movement can add to the scientific understanding of the routes taken by these raptors and the environments on which they depend.

For local communities, the annual return is a reminder of the ecological connections that extend far beyond the boundaries of their villages. The falcons arrive for a relatively short period, but their journey brings together landscapes and people separated by thousands of kilometres. As the migration gathers pace, the success of Manipur’s conservation efforts will depend on whether that connection can be translated into lasting protection.

The Amur falcons will eventually leave for Africa, continuing a journey shaped by instinct, weather and the availability of suitable habitats. Their stay in Manipur may last only a few weeks, but the responsibility to protect them reaches much further. When Apapang and Alang arrive, they will be two birds returning to a familiar part of their migration route. Their journey will also tell a larger story: that the survival of a species travelling across continents depends, in part, on the care shown by communities in places like Tamenglong.

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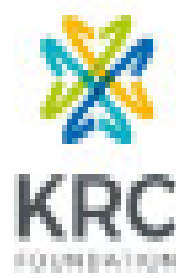
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ABOUT US

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

KRC TIMES E-COPY NE India Edition

- 5 Page e-copy published every evening
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www.krctimes.com

Why e-paper

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

Clean journalism

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

For Whom

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

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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

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