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PERSPECTIVE

1 text, 1 song, 1 mistake, 1 lie, 1 word, 1 truth, and 1 person could change your mood in 1 second.

Manipur’s Karnajit Ningthoujam Wins Mister Continental World 2026 in Thailand

IMPHAL

Manipur model Karnajit Ningthoujam has won the Mister Continental World 2026 title at an international pageant held in Thailand, bringing recognition to the state and the Northeast on the global pageant stage.

The 21-year-old, who hails from Kongpal Kshetri Leikai in Porompat, Imphal East district, secured the international crown after emerging as the winner of the 15th Gatsby Mega Mister North East 2026. The regional title paved the way for him to represent India at the international competition.

Karnajit's achievement marks a significant milestone in his modelling career, taking him from a regional platform to an international stage.

Manipur also registered a notable performance in the women's category, with Monica Konjengbam securing the first runner-up position at Miss Continental World 2026. Nigeria's Oma Osele won the women's title.

The twin achievements have brought the spotlight on Manipur's emerging talent in the modelling and pageant industry, highlighting the growing participation of contestants from the Northeast in international competitions.

Karnajit's victory adds to the region's presence in the global pageant circuit, while Monica's runner-up finish further underscores Manipur's representation across both categories.

WHO SAID WHAT

Together, let's defend the right of all girls to a childhood & end child marriage once & for all.
~ Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General, United Nations

BJP Plans Statewide Rallies in Assam as Rahul Gandhi Leads Election Commission Protest in Delhi

GUWAHATI
The political confrontation between the BJP and Congress over the functioning of the Election Commission of India (ECI) is set to intensify, with Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announcing a series of BJP rallies across the state even as Congress leader Rahul Gandhi prepares to lead an Opposition protest march in New Delhi.

Sarma said the BJP's Assam unit would organise peaceful rallies at district headquarters from October 13 to 31. The campaign, he said, would counter what he described as Congress attempts to undermine constitutional institutions and challenge electoral mandates. The announcement came as Gandhi prepared to lead an INDIA bloc march in the national capital on October 12, demanding accountability from the Election Commission over its functioning and the revision of electoral rolls.

The parallel campaigns have brought the BJP-Congress confrontation into sharper focus, with the two sides offering competing arguments over the independence of constitutional institutions, voter registration and the legitimacy of electoral processes. In a post on X, Sarma accused Congress of accepting election results when the party wins but questioning

the democratic process when it suffers defeats.

He argued that Gandhi's criticism of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's election and his challenge to the Election Commission reflected what he described as a selective approach towards democratic institutions.

The Assam chief minister also criticised Gandhi's reported plan to approach the Supreme Court after the Chief Justice of India declined a request for a meeting with Opposition MPs on the issue. Sarma maintained that constitutional institutions should not be subjected to political pressure arising from electoral disagreements. Announcing the BJP's statewide campaign, he said the rallies would highlight the party's opposition to what it considers attempts to pressure constitutional bodies.

He also accused Congress of opposing the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in a manner that, according to him, could benefit illegal infiltrators.

These allegations form part of the BJP's political argument against Congress. The Opposition, meanwhile, has raised concerns about voter-list revision and the Election Commission's accountability. Sarma said the campaign would also reaffirm the BJP's support for Modi

and his vision of a developed India by 2047.

Gandhi, meanwhile, urged Opposition parties, students and civil society groups to participate in the planned march in New Delhi, presenting it as a campaign to defend democratic rights and demand accountability from the Election Commission. The march was scheduled to begin at Connaught Place and proceed towards the Supreme Court, despite the Chief Justice of India's decision not to meet Opposition MPs over their concerns. Congress leaders defended the demonstration as a citizens' movement extending beyond the party's organisational network. Congress MP Imran Masood said the protest had been planned after the CJI declined Gandhi's request for a meeting and the submission of a memorandum. He claimed the campaign was drawing spontaneous support from people. Congress MP Jebi Mather said the march was intended to unite citizens across political, social and religious lines in defence of democracy.

Other Congress leaders accused the BJP of attempting to restrict the participation of young and first-time voters. MP Gaddam Vamsi Krishna linked these concerns to the SIR exercise and Form 6, which is used to apply for inclusion in electoral rolls. The Congress has argued that electoral roll revision and the Election

Commission's decisions require greater scrutiny. The BJP has countered that opposition to the exercise undermines efforts to maintain electoral integrity.

Security arrangements were strengthened across central Delhi ahead of the proposed march, with police barricades and additional personnel deployed at several locations.

Rapid Action Force and Central Reserve Police Force personnel were also stationed alongside Delhi Police teams. Authorities announced temporary restrictions at six metro stations - Patel Chowk, Janpath, Rajiv Chowk, Mandi House, Central Secretariat and Barakhamba Road - until 4 pm on October 12.

Congress leaders criticised the security measures, alleging that restrictions on public movement could discourage participation. The authorities cited security considerations for the arrangements. The protest follows allegations by Gandhi that Delhi Police personnel and BJP workers used violence against students and women during a demonstration demanding the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.

The allegations have added another layer to the dispute between the Opposition and the ruling party over the Election Commission's functioning.

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Naga Body Issues 48-Hour Ultimatum for Return of Man’s Severed Head

Joint Tribes Council suspends post-mortem until the missing head is returned; fresh clashes across three districts have claimed at least nine lives



IMPHAL

A Naga civil society organisation has issued a 48-hour ultimatum to the Centre and the Manipur government to recover and return the

severed head of a 52-year-old man allegedly killed in a suspected militant attack in Kangpokpi district, warning of stringent action if its demand is not met.

The Joint Tribes Council (JTC-Manipur) has also suspended the post-mortem examination of Ajinbou R, whose headless body was brought to the Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences in Imphal on Sunday night.

Ajinbou was allegedly killed during an attack on Makui Ashang village in Kangpokpi district on Saturday. A video purportedly showing his severed head among armed men wearing camouflage went viral on social media the same day.

In a statement issued on Sunday, the council said the post-mortem would not be allowed until the missing head was recovered and handed over to the family for a dignified

burial.

The organisation accused the authorities of failing to prevent the violence and held both the state and Central governments responsible for the deteriorating situation.

Describing the incident as an affront to humanity, the council demanded the immediate recovery of the missing remains and warned that it would take the “most stringent measures” if the 48-hour deadline expired without action.

The allegations surrounding the killing and the identities of those responsible have not been independently established.

Fresh violence claims at least nine lives

The ultimatum comes amid a fresh outbreak of violence in Manipur, where at least nine people were killed in separate firing incidents across Kamjong, Ukhrul and Kang-

pokpi districts on Friday and Saturday.

The latest round of violence reportedly began after a 22-year-old mother of five was shot dead by unidentified assailants in Chassad village in Kamjong district on Friday night. The killing triggered exchanges of fire between armed Kuki and Naga groups, with the clashes continuing into Saturday morning.

The incidents have heightened tensions between the two communities, raising fresh concerns over security and the prospects of restoring peace in the hill districts.

Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh has condemned the killings and directed the authorities concerned to take immediate and effective steps to control the situation, restore peace and ensure the safety of all citizens.

More than 50 killed since Febru-

ary

The latest incidents come against the backdrop of continuing violence between Kuki and Naga groups since February this year. More than 50 people have reportedly been killed and dozens of houses torched during the clashes.

Manipur is also struggling to recover from the ethnic violence that erupted in May 2023 between the Imphal Valley-based Meitei community and the Kuki-Zo communities concentrated in the adjoining hills.

That conflict has left more than 300 people dead, 49 missing and thousands displaced from their homes.

The latest killings and the council's ultimatum have added to the pressure on the state government to contain the violence, establish accountability and prevent further escalation in the conflict-affected districts.

Delhi Police Book Congress MP Bimol Akoijam in JNU Sexual Harassment Case

NEW DELHI

Delhi Police have registered a case against Congress Lok Sabha MP and Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) professor Angomcha Bimol Akoijam over allegations of sexual harassment involving female students, officials said on Monday.

The FIR was registered on October 11 at Vasant Kunj North police station following a complaint by JNU's chief security officer. The case has been filed under Sections 75, 75(1)(i), 75(1)(iv) and 79 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), which deal with sexual harassment and related offences.

Police said the matter was under investigation. The allegations have not yet been established, and the registration of an FIR does not amount to a finding of guilt.

The case has also triggered a political confrontation, with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) accusing the Congress leadership of failing to respond adequately to allegations concerning women's safety.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters on Sunday, BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj questioned the Congress leadership over allegations that Akoijam had asked sexually inappropriate questions to female students during academic assessments and engaged in unwelcome physical contact.

Swaraj also raised questions about the reported timing and circumstances of examinations, claiming that female students had been called to the MP's residence late at night for assessments. She referred to a reported viva examination that continued until 11.40 pm and alleged sexually explicit conduct in the classroom.

The claims cited by the BJP have



not been independently established through the police investigation.

Targeting Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, Swaraj questioned whether his stated opposition to patriarchy was being reflected in the party's response to the allegations.

“Is ‘Smash the patriarchy’ merely and exclusively political rhetoric for you - just a political gimmick?” she asked.

Swaraj also criticised Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and senior leaders Sonia Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra for not publicly responding to the matter. She claimed the allegations had surfaced in May and urged Rahul Gandhi to take action against Akoijam, referring to 11 female students in her remarks.

The BJP's criticism has added a political dimension to a case that now falls under police investigation. However, allegations made by political leaders and reports of alleged misconduct must be distinguished from facts established through the legal process.

The police probe will determine the circumstances surrounding the complaint and examine the allegations against Akoijam. No conclusion on the merits of the claims has been established so far.

Manipur DGP Reviews Jiribam Security, Orders Crackdown on Drug Trafficking

JIRIBAM
Manipur Director General of Police Mukesh Singh has directed security agencies to intensify vigilance against drug trafficking and strengthen coordination to maintain peace in Jiribam, a strategically important district bordering Assam.

The DGP conducted a two-day visit to the district on October 9 and 10, travelling via National Highway 37 to review security arrangements, inspect facilities for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and assess the functioning of police establishments.

During the visit, Singh inspected resettlement localities for displaced people in Jiribam and Borobekra. He also held a review meeting with the Jiribam Superintendent of Police, the Commanding Officer of the 7th Indian Reserve Battalion and senior officers of the Assam Rifles, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Railway Protection Force (RPF).

Highlighting Jiribam's importance as the eastern gateway to Manipur, the DGP instructed the officers to remain alert to potential security threats and strengthen measures against illegal activities, particularly drug trafficking.

He stressed the need for coordinated action among the agencies operating in the district to prevent illicit activities and improve the overall security response.

Inspects police infrastructure, IDP settlements

As part of the tour, Singh visited the Jiribam Superintendent of Police's office, the headquarters of the 7th Indian Reserve Battalion, Jiribam Police Station and Borobekra Police Station.

The inspections focused on the functioning of police establishments and the preparedness of the security apparatus in the district.

His visit to the IDP resettlement local-

Drone Strikes Reportedly Hit NSCN-IM Splinter Group’s Mt Horeb Camp in Myanmar



GUWAHATI

Drone strikes reportedly targeted the Mt Horeb camp, the headquarters of an NSCN-IM splinter faction, in Myanmar's Naga Self-Administered Zone in the early hours of Sunday, leaving parts of the facility damaged and some people injured.

The camp is located in Leshi Township, where the faction led by U Hanshi operates. An official of the NSCN-K/YA said the facility came under repeated attacks between 2 am and 4 am, according to a report by CNI Myanmar.

The official claimed that the headquarters had been targeted at least 20 times by drones during the assault.

Reports further stated that around 60 bombs exploded during the attack. Some reportedly detonated in mid-air or among trees, while others struck the camp directly.

Parts of the facility sustained damage. However, accounts of casualties remain unclear, with reports carrying conflicting in-

dications about whether anyone was injured or killed.

The identity of those responsible for the strikes has not been established, and the circumstances surrounding the attack remain uncertain.

Nagalim government alleges proxy war

The Provisional Government of the Government of the People's Republic of Nagalim condemned the reported strikes, alleging that the attack could be linked to a proxy war being waged by India. The allegation has not been independently verified. No independently confirmed evidence establishing India's involvement in the incident was available in the report. The attack comes amid continuing instability in Myanmar's border regions, where armed organisations operate across areas adjoining India's northeastern states.

Further details about the extent of the damage, possible casualties and the identity of those behind the drone strikes are awaited.

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CHABAHAR PORT

India's ambitious infrastructure and connectivity plans are once again confronting an uncomfortable reality: geopolitical rivalries can undermine even the most strategically important projects. Iran's Chabahar port, which New Delhi has long viewed as a gateway to Afghanistan, Central Asia and beyond, has become a casualty of Washington's sanctions policy and the deepening conflict in West Asia. The question is no longer simply how quickly India can develop alternative trade routes, but whether it can protect its strategic interests from the competing priorities of global powers.

For India, Chabahar is far more than a commercial port. It offers a vital route to landlocked Afghanistan and the resource-rich markets of Central Asia without depending on Pakistan. Islamabad has consistently denied India transit access through its territory, making alternative connectivity routes essential to New Delhi's regional ambitions. A fully operational Chabahar corridor could reduce this dependence, expand India's commercial reach and strengthen its influence across its extended neighbourhood.

Yet, despite its strategic importance, the project remains constrained by American sanctions against Iran. India has invested in developing the Shahid Beheshti terminal at Chabahar, recognising the port's potential to reshape regional trade. However, the expiry of the US sanctions waiver on April 26 this year, without a further extension, has created fresh uncertainty. Faced with the prospect of American penalties, India has been forced to withdraw from operating the terminal.

This is a serious setback, not merely for a bilateral infrastructure project but for India's broader foreign policy ambitions. New Delhi has repeatedly emphasised strategic autonomy and the importance of maintaining independent partnerships. Yet the Chabahar experience demonstrates how difficult it is to translate those principles into practice when Washington can impose substantial economic costs on countries pursuing relationships it opposes.

The contradiction in American policy deserves scrutiny. Washington expects India to be a major partner in maintaining regional stability and strengthening economic connectivity, but its sanctions against Tehran restrict India's ability to pursue precisely those objectives. India's engagement with Iran is not inherently incompatible with its partnerships with the United States. A mature international order should allow countries to maintain relationships with multiple partners without being compelled to choose sides in every geopolitical dispute.

American pressure over India's purchase of Russian oil has raised similar questions about the extent to which Washington is prepared to accommodate New Delhi's independent foreign policy choices. If India's strategic autonomy is to mean anything, it must extend beyond diplomatic declarations to decisions involving energy security, trade and regional infrastructure.

The stakes surrounding Chabahar have grown even higher amid the escalating confrontation involving Iran, the United States and Israel. Tensions around the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most critical energy and shipping corridors, have exposed the vulnerability of international commerce to military confrontation. Chabahar, located near the Gulf of Oman with access to the Indian Ocean, could provide an important alternative gateway for regional trade. But a port situated in a conflict-prone region cannot become a reliable commercial hub unless its operations are protected from sanctions, military escalation and political uncertainty.

Recent progress on Iran's railway infrastructure offers a reminder of what remains possible. The Chabahar-Iranshahr rail link forms part of a planned 630-kilometre corridor extending to Zahedan, near the Afghan border. Iran has indicated that the entire railway could be completed by January next year. Designed to carry 7.7 million tonnes of freight and 2.2 million passengers annually, the route could significantly improve the movement of goods and people across the region.

But infrastructure alone cannot guarantee connectivity. A railway may be completed, a terminal developed and investment committed, yet the commercial benefits will remain limited if sanctions prevent international partners from using the network. The disconnect between physical infrastructure and political access is at the heart of India's Chabahar dilemma.

The port also carries strategic significance because of its proximity to Pakistan's Gwadar port, developed with Chinese assistance. Located around 140 kilometres away, Gwadar has become an important component of Beijing's regional connectivity ambitions. India has legitimate reasons to monitor the expansion of Chinese influence in the region. Chabahar offers New Delhi an opportunity to strengthen its own presence and prevent regional connectivity from becoming dominated by a single strategic rival.

However, India must avoid reducing Chabahar to a contest with China. The project's long-term value lies in its capacity to generate trade, improve access to new markets and create durable economic partnerships. Strategic competition may provide the initial impetus, but commercial viability and political stability will determine whether the port can deliver lasting benefits.

The same challenge confronts the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), which India, Iran and Russia have sought to develop as a multimodal trade network linking the Indian Ocean region with Russia and markets beyond. The corridor could shorten transport routes, diversify supply chains and expand India's access to Eurasian economies. Yet the Russia-Ukraine war, deteriorating relations between Moscow and Western capitals, and instability in West Asia have complicated its prospects.

India's response must therefore go beyond waiting for geopolitical circumstances to improve. New Delhi should intensify diplomatic engagement with Washington to seek a workable sanctions arrangement while maintaining communication with Tehran. It must also explore alternative financing, insurance and logistics mechanisms wherever legally possible, and strengthen other routes to Central Asia so that its regional ambitions do not depend excessively on a single corridor.

Strategic patience remains necessary, but patience cannot become a substitute for strategic planning. India must recognise the risks of overdependence on infrastructure whose operation can be disrupted by decisions taken in distant capitals. Diversifying trade routes, building resilient supply chains and developing stronger regional partnerships should be central to its approach.

Abandoning Chabahar would undermine India's long-term interests. Yet continuing to invest without addressing the political and financial risks would be equally unwise. The challenge is to preserve the project's strategic value while ensuring that India's economic interests are not exposed unnecessarily to external pressure.

Ultimately, the future of Chabahar will depend as much on diplomacy as on ports, railways and investment. India's regional ambitions cannot be realised through infrastructure alone; they require the political space to use it. If New Delhi is serious about strategic autonomy, it must develop the diplomatic leverage and economic resilience needed to ensure that its long-term development priorities are not repeatedly held hostage to the geopolitical calculations of other powers.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“The greatest fear in the world is the opinion of others.”

- Osho, Rajneesh

A NOBEL PRIZE THAT IS NOT QUITE UNIVERSAL

M K NANDI

The overwhelming dominance of Europe and the Global North in the Nobel Prize for Literature raises a troubling question: does the selection process recognise the full diversity of world literature, or does it privilege a particular cultural and intellectual tradition?

The Nobel Prize season is traditionally a time to celebrate extraordinary human achievement. Established on the principles laid down in Alfred Nobel's will, the awards recognise contributions intended to bring the greatest benefit to humanity. Over more than a century, the Nobel Prizes have acquired an international reputation, transcending national boundaries and becoming symbols of excellence in science, literature and peace.

Yet the claim to universality deserves closer examination, particularly in the case of the Nobel Prize for Literature. Unlike achievements in physics, chemistry or medicine, literary excellence cannot be measured through universally accepted scientific standards. Judgements about literature inevitably involve interpretation, cultural familiarity and intellectual preferences. What one literary tradition considers profound and transformative may be understood differently by another.

This subjectivity does not diminish the achievements of individual laureates. Instead, it raises a more fundamental question: whose understanding of literary excellence shapes the world's most prestigious literary award?

The 2026 Nobel Prize for Literature, awarded to Anne Carson for her bold and inventive body of work, has renewed this debate. Carson's engagement with classical antiquity, desire, grief, memory and the possibilities of language has earned considerable recognition. Her literary achievements merit serious appreciation. But celebrating an individual writer need not prevent us from questioning the institutional framework through which literary greatness is defined.

The concern is not that Carson is an unworthy recipient. It is that the historical distribution of the literature Nobel appears to reveal a persistent imbalance in the recognition of literary traditions across the world.

The geographical imbalance The Nobel Prize for Literature has honoured writers from different countries and linguistic traditions. However, its historical record remains heavily concentrated in Europe and the Western world. According to the figures cited in the original analysis, Europe accounts for 98 of the 123 laureates, while North America has 14. South and Central America, including Mexico, account for eight, Asia seven, Africa six and Oceania one.

The figures reveal a striking disparity. If Scandinavia is considered separately within Europe, its 18 laureates alone outnumber the combined totals for Asia and Africa.

Such an imbalance is difficult to reconcile with the extraordinary diversity of the world's literary heritage. Asia, Africa and Latin America are home to ancient civilisations, sophisticated philosophical traditions, epic narratives, poetry and vibrant contemporary writing. Their literary contributions have shaped languages, cultures and ideas across generations.

The Indian subcontinent, for instance, possesses literary traditions stretching back thousands of years. The Mahabharata and the Ramayana are not merely monumental works of storytelling; they are repositories of ethical debate, political thought,



philosophy and reflections on the human condition. Classical Tamil literature, Buddhist writings, Persian and Arabic literary traditions, African oral epics and Latin American narrative traditions offer equally rich grounds for exploring human experience.

It is difficult to argue that these societies lack literary imagination or philosophical depth. The more pressing question is why their achievements have received such limited representation in an award that claims global significance.

When one tradition becomes the universal standard

The problem may not lie in deliberate discrimination by the Nobel Committee. It may instead be rooted in the intellectual environment within which literary value is identified and assessed.

The distinction is important. Systemic bias does not necessarily require prejudice or conscious exclusion. It can emerge when institutions rely on established networks, familiar critical frameworks and assumptions about what constitutes literary importance.

If the dominant literary institutions, publishers, critics and academic networks are concentrated in Europe and North America, writers working within those intellectual traditions are more likely to become visible to international selectors. Literary works rooted in other cultural contexts may struggle to receive comparable attention, particularly when they are written in languages with limited global publishing reach or lack strong translation networks.

Over time, this imbalance can become self-reinforcing. Writers recognised by influential institutions acquire greater international visibility. Their works are translated, reviewed, taught and discussed, strengthening their reputation as major literary figures. Writers outside these networks may remain less visible, regardless of the quality or originality of their work.

The result is a hierarchy in which one cultural perspective comes to be treated as universal, while others are viewed as regional, particular or insufficiently accessible.

This is the central concern surrounding the Nobel Prize for Literature: whether a historically dominant intellectual tradition has come to define the standards by which the literary achievements of the entire world are judged. The distinction between the Global North and the Global South helps illustrate the problem. The figures cited in the original analysis attribute 113 laureates to the Global North, comprising Europe, North America and Oceania, compared with 21 from the Global South, comprising Asia, Africa and Latin America. The totals are not a complete measure of literary achievement, but they point to a substantial disparity in international recognition.

Literature cannot be separated from power

Literary awards do more than honour individual writers. They influence publishing decisions, translation priorities, university curricula and the international circulation of ideas. Recognition from the Nobel Committee can transform a writer's global reputation and bring an entire literary

tradition to the attention of new readers.

This makes the question of representation particularly important. When certain regions repeatedly dominate the award, the imbalance can shape perceptions of which societies produce literature of universal significance.

The consequences extend beyond the prize itself. Writers from less represented regions may find their work judged through categories developed in different historical and cultural settings. Literary forms grounded in oral traditions, collective memory, indigenous knowledge or non-Western philosophical systems may receive less attention if they do not fit established expectations of literary achievement.

This does not mean that every overlooked writer deserves a Nobel Prize, or that literary quality should be determined by geographical quotas. Such an approach would merely replace one rigid system with another. Nor should the Nobel Committee abandon its independent judgement in response to demands for regional representation.

The issue is whether that judgement draws upon a sufficiently broad understanding of literature. Genuine universality cannot be achieved simply by applying one established set of standards to every literary tradition. It requires a willingness to recognise that different cultures may express complex ideas, moral conflicts and human experiences through different literary forms.

The dilemma of Arjuna in the Mahabharata, for example, deserves to be considered as seriously as the moral conflicts of characters in European classical literature. Neither tradition should have to prove its worth by resembling the other.

Rethinking the selection process

The Nobel Committee's nomination and assessment procedures therefore deserve closer scrutiny. The range of individuals and institutions invited to nominate candidates, the languages and literary traditions represented in the evaluation process, and the availability of reliable translations can all influence which writers receive serious consideration.

Greater geographical and linguistic diversity among nominators and experts could broaden the pool of candidates. Stronger engagement with literary scholarship from Asia, Africa and Latin America could help selectors identify writers whose significance may not be adequately reflected in dominant international publishing networks.

Translation is equally crucial. Many literary traditions remain underrepresented in global markets because their works are not widely translated into major international languages. Supporting high-quality translations and strengthening engagement with literary institutions outside Europe and North America would help reduce this visibility gap.

Transparency about the breadth of literary traditions considered could also encourage a more informed public debate. The objective should not be to prescribe the winner in advance, but to ensure that deserving writers are not overlooked because the intellectual networks through

which their work travels are too narrow.

Such reforms would not eliminate subjectivity from literary judgement. That would be impossible. They could, however, make the process more inclusive and reduce the influence of structural inequalities.

Universality must be earned

The Nobel Prize for Literature remains an important institution, and its laureates have included writers whose work has profoundly influenced readers across national and cultural boundaries. Its prestige, however, should not exempt it from critical examination.

The challenge is to distinguish

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

Rahul Gandhi and his Congress party are mounting an attack on the very foundations of India's vibrant democracy. Their double standard is plain to see. When Shri @narendramodi Ji is elected Prime Minister, Rahul Gandhi calls it manipulation, yet his own election to Parliament and his subsequent elevation as Leader of the Opposition is beyond question. When Assam votes, the result is unacceptable, when Kerala votes, it is welcomed. Democracy, for the Congress, is valid only when it delivers victory for the Congress. Now, by marching to the Supreme Court despite the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India declining a meeting, Rahul Gandhi seeks to turn political pressure on the highest court of our land. Constitutional institutions cannot be made answerable to a party's electoral frustrations. The people of Assam will not stay silent. From tomorrow until 31 October, @BJP4Assam will hold peaceful mass rallies at every district headquarters across the state. Through these rallies, we will alert our people to the Cong's party's attempts to: 1) Blackmail our constitutional institutions 2) Shield illegal infiltrators by opposing the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) 3) Undermine the democratic mandate of the people At the same time through this program, we will reaffirm our unwavering support for Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji and his vision of a Viksit Bharat by 2047. The people's mandate deserves respect. Our institutions deserve independence. Neither can be held hostage to political convenience.

- Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, CM, Assam



between the universal value of literature and the institutional power to decide which literature is considered universal. The two are not necessarily the same.

If vast literary traditions across Asia, Africa and Latin America remain disproportionately absent from the Nobel record, it is not enough to assume that the imbalance simply reflects differences in literary merit. That conclusion would require accepting, without adequate justification, that entire regions with rich and enduring cultural histories have produced comparatively few works worthy of the highest international recognition.

A more reasonable response is to examine how literary excellence is identified, whose judgements carry the greatest weight, and whether the process adequately accounts for the world's linguistic and cultural diversity.

The objective should not be to diminish Anne Carson's achievement or to question the worthiness of individual laureates. It should be to make the Nobel Prize for Literature more genuinely representative of the humanity in whose name it claims authority.

A prize cannot become universal merely because the world pays attention to it. Its claim to universality must rest on its ability to recognise excellence wherever it emerges, across languages, continents and intellectual traditions.

Until that possibility is more fully realised, the Nobel Prize for Literature will remain a prestigious global award with an unresolved question at its heart: is it recognising the literature of the world, or primarily the literature that the dominant cultural world has learned to recognise?

Cut repetition and sharpen the argumentAdd a stronger editorial conclusion

Manipur seeks 3,000 more paramilitary personnel as ethnic violence flares again



IMPHAL

The state government has sought 30 addi-

tional companies of central forces, includ- ing CoBRA and Rapid Action Force units, to bolster counter-insurgency operations

and secure vulnerable areas amid renewed clashes. The Manipur government has sought 3,000 additional central paramilitary personnel from the Union Home Ministry to strengthen security operations as ethnic violence and tensions in the state's hill districts continue to pose challenges to law enforcement. The request, which is pending with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), seeks 30 additional companies of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF), including specialised units of the Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) and the Rapid Action Force (RAF). If approved, the deployment would reinforce an existing security presence estimated at more than 300 companies, or around 30,000 personnel, according to assessments

conducted in mid-2026. Security sources said the additional forces were needed to address operational gaps across vulnerable areas. CoBRA personnel would be deployed in difficult terrain for specialised operations, while RAF units would be tasked with managing public-order flashpoints. Other CAPF personnel would help secure sensitive locations and sanitise routes before troop movements. However, it remains uncertain whether the Centre can meet the state's demand, given its security commitments elsewhere in the country. Official sources said around 8,500 security personnel had been temporarily withdrawn from Manipur earlier this year for deployment during the West Bengal Assembly elections.

The fresh request comes amid continued security challenges despite the deployment of two CoBRA battalions in June 2026 under a specialised task force named Mission Manipur. An ambush on an Assam Rifles convoy in Ukhrul district on July 6, which killed two personnel, had prompted the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) to revise its standard operating procedures. Under the revised guidelines, security forces must use bulletproof vehicles, avoid unplanned movements, sanitise routes before operations and ensure greater accountability among commanders. CoBRA units have also been assigned law-and-order responsibilities alongside their specialised jungle-warfare role. The latest demand for reinforcements reflects continuing concerns over the secu-

rity situation, with intermittent violence, ambushes and extortion reported despite the presence of substantial central forces. The conflict between the valley-based Meitei community and the hill-based Kuki-Zo community, which erupted in May 2023, has claimed more than 310 lives and left 49 people missing. Tens of thousands of people have also been displaced. Buffer zones and movement restrictions have failed to prevent sporadic killings and armed attacks, keeping several areas vulnerable to fresh violence. The situation has grown more volatile since early 2026, with renewed tensions between Kuki-Zo and Naga groups in the hill districts adding another layer of complexity to the state's already fragile security environment.

12 Bangladeshis, Including Three Children, Held in Goalpara; Assam Probes Suspected Trafficking Racket

GUWAHATI

Assam Police have apprehended 12 Bangladeshi nationals, including three children, in Goalpara district, with authorities suspecting a possible human trafficking and illegal migration network behind their entry into India.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the group comprised nine adults and three children who were allegedly brought into India through Meghalaya by a broker identified as Sabor. According to the chief minister, the group entered the country through Jaflong on October 5. The group was reportedly found wandering in a distressed condition on Friday night after reaching Goalpara by bus.

A local resident spotted them and alerted the authorities, Sarma said in a social media post. According to the chief minister, the group told authorities that the broker had promised them employment in Guwahati. He allegedly showed them video calls featuring other Bangladeshi nationals working at a company in the city to convince them of the job prospects. Sarma alleged that a Khasi man accompanying the broker subsequently took the group to Guwahati, where they were kept for three days. The broker allegedly fled from an area near Guwahati railway station after taking 7,000 Bangladeshi taka and a mobile phone from the group. The chief minister further claimed that the proposed arrangement involved the company owner paying Rs 20,000 for each of the nine adults, with the amount to be adjusted against their future wages. "A human trafficking and illegal migration angle is suspected. Authorities are investigating further," Sarma said.

One killed, houses torched in Tikhir-Yimkhiung clash in Nagaland's Kiphire

KOHIMA

One person was killed and another injured in a clash involving gunfire between members of the Tikhir and Yimkhiung communities in Nagaland's Kiphire district, police said on Sunday. The violence, which reportedly followed a dispute over a community festival, also left several houses damaged or gutted by fire. The clash took place at Longtsunger on Saturday, while properties were reportedly set ablaze in Zaonger village. The incident has heightened tensions in the district, prompting authorities to strengthen security in areas considered vulnerable to further violence.

According to preliminary reports, the confrontation stemmed from a dispute linked to a Tikhir community festival held in villages inhabited by members of both communities. The circumstances that led to the gunfire and the extent of the damage were not immediately clear. With tensions continuing in the affected areas, the district ad-

ministration imposed restrictions on gatherings in parts of Pungro subdivision under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS). The measure was taken amid concerns that further confrontations could threaten public order. Nagaland Deputy Chief Minister Yanthungo Patton, who also holds the Home portfolio, appealed to both communities to exercise restraint and cooperate with the authorities. He stressed the need for dialogue to resolve the dispute peacefully and prevent further escalation.

The Eastern Nagaland Peoples' Organisation (ENPO) has also called for efforts to restore calm across the region. ENPO president Chingmak Chang urged the Yimkhiung and Tikhir tribal councils to intervene swiftly and work towards ending the clashes. The organisation also appealed to tribal communities across eastern Nagaland to help prevent further violence and support efforts to restore peace in the affected villages.

Assam government crosses 1.65 lakh job appointments, 34,251 short of two-lakh target

GUWAHATI

The Assam government has issued 439 appointment letters across various departments, taking the total number of government appointments made during the two terms of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's government to 1,65,749 and leaving it 34,251 short of its two-lakh jobs pledge. The appointment letters were distributed at a ceremony at Srimanta Sankardeva Kalakshetra in Guwahati on Sunday, with Sarma asserting that the recruitment drive would continue over the next five years.

The latest round of appointments covers several departments and institutions, including Assam Co-operative Apex Bank Ltd, Labour Welfare, Public Health Engineering (PHE) and Water Resources.

"For the second time in Assam, and for the first time after the BJP and its allies formed the government following the Assembly elec-

tions, we have gathered here for the distribution of appointment letters," Sarma said.

He maintained that the recruitment process in the state had been fair and transparent, adding that appointment ceremonies allowed candidates to celebrate their achievement alongside their families.

Highlighting recruitment at Assam Co-operative Apex Bank, the chief minister said the institution had recovered from serious financial difficulties and the threat of losing its Reserve Bank of India licence to attain scheduled bank status.

The government had offered jobs to around 175 people at the bank in the latest round, Sarma said, adding that 526 appointments had been made there during the previous term.

The chief minister also announced appointments for 12 insurance medical officers at Employees' State Insurance Corporation hospitals. The Labour

Welfare Department, meanwhile, had completed recruitment for 338 vacancies over the past five years, he said.

In the Public Health Engineering Department, 184 junior engineers are to be appointed. Sarma highlighted the department's role in expanding access to safe drinking water through schemes such as the Jal Jeevan Mission. The department had made 1,173 appointments during the previous term, he added.

The Water Resources Department is also set for further recruitment. Sarma said the government planned to recruit 870 assistant engineers in civil and mechanical disciplines, along with 16 junior engineers. The department had provided employment to 2,815 candidates during the previous term, he said.

Sarma said increased government investment in roads, drinking water projects and embankments had created employment opportunities for engineering

graduates and diploma holders who had previously faced uncertainty over recruitment.

The government had also accelerated promotions for serving employees over the past six months, he said. According to the chief minister, faster promotions would help create entry-level vacancies, allow younger employees to move into senior positions and maintain continuity in government departments.

The two-lakh government jobs pledge was a key component of the BJP-led alliance's campaign ahead of the Assembly elections. Sarma reiterated the commitment during election rallies in Barak Valley on April 3, alongside promises to expand the network of co-districts in the region.

With the cumulative appointment figure now at 1,65,749, the government has completed around 82.9 per cent of its stated target. It will need to make another 34,251 appointments to reach the two-lakh mark.

Arunachal CM warns of legal action against violent protests over Siang hydropower project

IMPHAL

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu has defended the detention of protesters opposing the proposed Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP), warning that the government would not tolerate violence or disruptions to law and order in the name of democratic protest.

Speaking at a press conference on October 11, Khandu said several villagers in the Siang region had been misinformed about the project and stressed that the process was still at the pre-feasibility stage. He maintained that memorandums of understanding (MoUs) were not required to conduct the preliminary assessment.

The chief minister said the state had followed similar procedures for other hydropower projects, with pre-feasibility surveys undertaken before formal agreements were pursued. MoUs, he added, would be taken



up in accordance with established rules after the pre-feasibility report (PFR) stage.

Defending the action against those detained during the protests, Khandu said anyone found disrupting public order would face legal consequences, regardless of their position or status.

"Violence will not be tolerated," he said, maintaining that democratic rights did not exempt anyone from

the law.

The proposed project has triggered opposition among sections of local residents and organisations concerned about its implications for the Siang region. The protests have brought renewed attention to questions surrounding the project's assessment process, local consultation and the concerns of communities living in the affected areas.

Khandu said the government remained open to discussions with residents and organisations, including the AbK and the All Siang Youth Union (ASU). He urged them to engage with the administration to clarify the project's current status and resolve differences through dialogue.

The chief minister emphasised that the pre-feasibility exercise should not be confused with the subsequent stages of project development. He called for greater public understanding of the process, while reiterating that the government would take action against those accused of violating the law.

The government's position seeks to draw a distinction between peaceful opposition and alleged acts of violence. However, the debate over the Siang project continues to place public consultation, local concerns and the administration's handling of dissent at the centre of the controversy.

India, Bhutan eye Brahmaputra waterway link, Jogighopa terminal to boost trade

GUWAHATI

India and Bhutan are exploring ways to strengthen trade connectivity through Assam's inland waterways, with the Brahmaputra and the Jogighopa inland waterway terminal emerging as potential links to wider regional and international markets. The proposal was discussed during a bilateral meeting between Union Ports, Shipping and Waterways Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and Bhutan's Infrastructure and Transport Minister Lyonpo Chandra Bahadur Gurung. Sonowal highlighted the potential of National Waterway-2 (NW-2), which runs along the Brahmaputra, and the Jogighopa terminal in Assam as key components of a possible trade corridor for the landlocked Himalayan kingdom. The discussions centred on improving Bhutan's access to India's inland waterway network, strengthening cargo movement across the Northeast and developing multimodal transport links that could offer additional options for trade with international markets.

Jogighopa could play an important role in this plan by connecting river transport with road and other logistics infrastructure. Better integration of these networks could provide Bhutanese traders with alternative routes for moving goods, potentially easing some of the logistical constraints associated with the country's landlocked geography.

The two ministers also discussed the potential of the Manas and Sankosh rivers and their possible

integration with the national waterways network. Improved connectivity involving these river systems could create further opportunities for cargo movement between Bhutan and India, particularly through Assam.

For Bhutan, access to inland waterways could complement existing transport routes and widen its options for reaching markets beyond its immediate neighbourhood. For Assam, stronger cross-border logistics links could generate additional economic activity through cargo handling, transport services and related infrastructure. The initiative also comes amid India's broader push to expand inland water transport as an alternative for freight movement. Greater use of waterways could diversify logistics options and strengthen economic links between the Northeast and neighbouring countries.

Beyond infrastructure and trade, the meeting also covered cooperation in maritime and inland waterway training. Sonowal discussed opportunities for Bhutanese youth at the Centre of Excellence in Dibrugarh, which is being developed to provide specialised training and build skills in the sector. The proposed initiatives indicate a broader effort by the two countries to deepen economic cooperation through transport infrastructure, trade facilitation and human resource development. However, the extent of the benefits will depend on further planning, infrastructure integration and the development of commercially viable cargo routes.

Lovlina's boxing academy gets land at Re 1, Assam eyes next generation of champions

GUWAHATI

Olympic bronze medallist and Asian Games gold winner Lovlina Borgohain has expressed hope that a proposed boxing academy named after her in Assam will create new opportunities for aspiring athletes, following the state government's decision to allot four big-ha of land at a nominal premium of Re 1.

Speaking after being felicitated by the Sports Authority of India (SAI) in Guwahati, Borgohain said the proposed facility could help build a stronger foundation for the next generation of boxers from Assam.

"I already run a small academy, but it doesn't have hostel facilities yet," she said, highlighting the need for better infrastructure to support young athletes.

"With the plot the Assam government has allotted, we will try to build a great platform for the future," she added.

The Assam Cabinet approved the concessional land allotment on October 9 under the Palasbari Revenue Circle. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced the decision, saying the proposed academy near Guwahati would help nurture boxing talent and provide

Quest!

When you drink a glass of water, it has already been drunk by other people and animals, possibly several times over.



young athletes with improved training facilities.

The initiative is expected to address some of the infrastructure gaps faced by emerging boxers, particularly those who need access to residential training facilities to pursue the sport seriously.

The announcement came days after Borgohain returned to Assam following her gold-winning performance in the women's 75kg boxing final at the Asian

Games in Japan. She defeated China's Bao Ziyi by a unanimous 5-0 decision on October 2, securing the gold medal on her birthday.

Reflecting on the achievement, Borgohain said she competed without allowing the pressure of winning a medal to dominate her approach.

"I was mentally very free. My focus was on giving my hundred per cent rather than just on the medal. I enjoyed it,"

she said, adding that Japan had proved lucky for her.

The victory marked another milestone in the career of the boxer from Assam, who won a bronze medal at the Tokyo Olympics. She had earlier claimed silver in the same category at the 2022 Asian Games in Hangzhou. Her latest triumph also made her the second Indian woman boxer to win Asian Games gold, after MC Mary Kom achieved the feat in 2014.

On October 6, Sarma felicitated Borgohain at Lok Sewa Bhawan and presented her with a cheque for Rs 50 lakh in recognition of her achievement. The chief minister described her victory as a matter of pride for Assam and the country, saying it would inspire young athletes.

Borgohain also received a welcome at Guwahati's Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport upon her return from Japan. Sports and Youth Welfare Minister Biswajit Daimary, Assam BJP president Dilip Saikia, family members and supporters were present. A Congress delegation led by senior leader Pranati Phukan also felicitated the boxer.

Beyond the celebrations surrounding her latest victory, the proposed academy could become a significant step towards strengthening grassroots boxing in Assam. Its long-term impact, however, will depend on the development of training infrastructure, residential facilities and sustained support for young talent.

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Delhi Police Bars Protests at Jantar Mantar; Dipke Hits Back, Warns of Nationwide Protests



NEW DELHI

Jantar Mantar, one of the national capital's most prominent venues for public demonstrations, has lost its status as a designated protest site, following a fresh order issued by the Delhi Police. The decision has drawn sharp criticism from the Congress and the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), which have questioned its implications for democratic rights and the freedom to protest.

Delhi Police Commissioner Anurag Kumar issued the standing order on October 11, designating Ramilla Maidan, Burari Ground and CBD Ground in east Delhi as alternative venues for organising demonstrations.

The order stated that the Union Ministry of Home Affairs had constituted a committee to examine suitable alternative locations where citizens could exercise their right to organise protests and demonstrations.

A revised standard operating procedure (SOP) for conducting demonstrations at the three designated venues will be issued separately, according to the order. The decision partially modifies an earlier standing order dated April 28, 2022.

The move comes amid heightened security arrangements in the national capital following calls for protests at Jantar Mantar.

Congress accuses Centre of curbing dissent

The Congress launched a sharp attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, alleging that the decision reflected growing intolerance towards public dissent.

Jairam Ramesh, the party's general secretary in charge of communications, described the move as a sign of "extreme panic" and recalled Jantar Mantar's long-standing role as a platform for citizens challenging those in power.

"The poisonous pair is embattled, and we have seen in the past few days how brutally they have dealt with peaceful public protests," Ramesh said in a social media post.

The CJP also opposed the decision, questioning whether the Home Ministry had consulted citizens or organisations before changing the status of the protest venue.

Saurav Das, the party's co-convenor, called the move "unacceptable" and alleged that withdrawing Jantar Mantar's designation would further restrict the space available for democratic expression.

A landmark venue for public movements

For decades, Jantar Mantar has served as a focal point for public demonstrations on cor-

ruption, women's safety, racial discrimination and a range of social and political issues.

In 2011, social activist Anna Hazare began a five-day hunger strike at the site, demanding a stronger Jan Lokpal Bill to tackle corruption. The protest became a defining moment in the anti-corruption movement and drew nationwide attention.

In December 2012, Jantar Mantar and its surrounding areas witnessed demonstrations following the gang rape of a young woman on a moving bus in Delhi. The woman, widely known as Nirbhaya, later died of her injuries, triggering widespread protests across the country.

The site also became a platform for protests in 2014 following the death of Nido Tania, a student from Arunachal Pradesh who was allegedly assaulted in south-east Delhi. His death renewed demands for action against racial discrimination and violence targeting people from the Northeast.

For many who participated in these movements, Jantar Mantar represented more than a designated protest ground. Its location in the heart of the capital allowed citizens to bring grievances directly into the public and political spotlight.

Dr Pranav Raj Singh, a Delhi resident who joined the protests following the Nirbhaya case, recalled how the incident had affected him as a teenager and prompted him to participate in the demonstrations.

Rani Sharma, who took part in the Anna Hazare movement, said withdrawing the site's designated status would reduce the space available for dissent. She argued that its proximity to the country's highest government offices had made it an important venue for citizens seeking accountability.

"March for democracy, march for justice": Rahul Gandhi raises pitch ahead of INDIA bloc march to SC against Election Commission

NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha Leader of opposition Rahul Gandhi has raised the pitch ahead of the planned protest by the INDIA bloc in the capital. The Congress MP called for the "Challo Dilli" protest march which will get underway this afternoon from Connaught Place to the Supreme Court against the functioning of the Election Commission.

The protest will continue despite the CJI not giving his assent to a meeting with the opposition MPs on the issue.

Rahul Gandhi has also called for a news conference on the protest. In a post on X he said, "March for Democracy. March for Justice. Chalo Dilli."

Congress MP Imran Masood on Monday said the party had scheduled a protest following the Chief Justice of India's (CJI) rejection of Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi's meeting request and memorandum, asserting that people were joining the movement spontaneously.

Speaking to ANI, Masood said, "We have scheduled a protest. Everyone will abide by whatever directive the party issues. People are coming out on their own; everywhere it is a spontaneous movement."

Congress MP Jebi Mather said, "We will march to the Supreme Court—not as a political party, individuals, men, women, or belonging to any state, caste, religion, or creed, but as citizens who believe democracy needs to be protected. Rahul Gandhi, India Bloc leaders, and others are approaching every institution and authority in the streets... Today will be marked in golden letters as a protest of a magnitude that Delhi has never witnessed."

High Security is in place in Central Delhi, security has been tightened with barricades at multiple locations, and entry and exit at certain metro stations will remain closed from



till 4:00 PM on October 12, 2026, for security reasons. Security personnel have been deployed at Barakhamba Road, near Mandi House. RAF (Rapid Action Force) and CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force) personnel are also deployed along with Delhi Police personnel. Due to security reasons, the entry and exit of several metro stations will remain closed till 4 PM. These are Patel Chowk, Janpath, Rajiv Chowk, Mandi House, Central Secretariat, Barakhamba Road.

Speaking on the security measures Congress MP Jebi Mather said, "The police—coming under Home

Minister Amit Shah—are ignoring the Supreme Court's clear ruling that metros should not be shut, and are taking every step to stop people by closing metro stations, altering routes, and gathering large numbers of police and CRPF forces, we remain undeterred."

Congress MP Gaddam Vamsi Krishna said, "It clearly shows that the BJP is against the youth, the Gen Z of this country. They are unable to win the vote of the first-timers. That is why they have introduced Form 6. SIR was brought in to delete names of new voters. We will fight against this."

Rahul Gandhi has called on other

opposition parties to join the protest march.

"12th October, India marches peacefully as one to the Supreme Court. Students, civil society organisations, Opposition parties: Please join us to defend our democracy," Rahul Gandhi said.

Gandhi announced that the INDIA bloc would take to the streets, alleging that Delhi Police and Bharatiya Janata Party workers used violence against students and women during the CJP-led protest demanding the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.

INTERNATIONAL

UK-India trade mission announces over £1 billion in new deals, boosting jobs and investment



NEW DELHI

A major UK trade mission to India has announced more than GBP 1 billion in new commercial deals, including a GBP 50 million investment in artificial intelligence research in the UK and an expansion of aviation services by Menzies Aviation, as both countries seek to strengthen trade and investment ties following the implementation of their landmark free trade agreement.

According to a release issued by the British High Commission, the announcement comes as a UK trade delegation comprising more than 100 businesses, the UK Business Secretary, the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, seven mayors from northern England and a combined authority leader arrives in India to strengthen trade and investment ties between the two countries.

The latest announcements build

on the momentum generated by the UK-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA), with nearly GBP 12 billion worth of deals announced since the agreement was signed in July 2025.

Among the key developments, Meta for Data Technologies (MFD) has announced a GBP 50 million investment to fund AI research in the UK, while UK-based aviation services company Menzies Aviation is seeking to generate more than GBP 600 million in revenue through an expanded presence in India.

The trade mission aims to strengthen commercial partnerships across sectors, including advanced manufacturing, technology, aviation, education, agriculture and food and drink, while opening up new opportunities for businesses in both countries.

UK Business Secretary Jonathan Reynolds said the trade agreement had created opportunities for regional businesses, with northern England's

mayors playing a key role in developing partnerships to drive jobs, investment and economic growth.

"From advanced manufacturing to education, we want to continue to deepen ties with one of the world's fastest-growing economies to bring opportunity for businesses and consumers in all corners of both countries," Reynolds said.

The delegation also includes representatives from Scottish and British food and drink industries, including the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB), the British Meat Processors Association, Fever-Tree, Kendamil, the National Farmers' Union, Salmon Scotland, the Scotch Whisky Association and Walker's Shortbread.

Scotland Secretary Douglas Alexander said the trade agreement would create opportunities for Scottish exporters, particularly producers of

salmon and whisky, while encouraging inward investment and supporting employment in Scotland.

"Scotland's success in markets like India is supported by the strength, reach and influence that come from being part of the UK. Boosting export opportunities and encouraging inward investment in Scotland means real benefits back at home in economic growth and jobs," he said.

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Secretary Angela Eagle said the government was working with British farmers and food and drink companies to translate the agreement's commitments into tangible export opportunities.

"We're in India alongside food and drink exporters, helping them showcase the best of British produce, build new trading relationships, and unlock the export opportunities for communities across the UK," she said.

During the visit, Reynolds is scheduled to meet Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal in the national capital to co-chair the UK-India Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO). He will also co-chair the UK-India Science and Innovation Council with Minister for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh.

In Mumbai, the Business Secretary will meet Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis to discuss closer regional economic cooperation and attend a trade marketplace showcasing British products and services.

The visit comes three months after the UK-India trade agreement entered into force. The agreement is expected to increase bilateral trade by GBP 25.5 billion annually in the long term, according to the release.

The mission underscores the two countries' efforts to translate the trade pact into new business opportunities, export growth and employment across the UK and India.

Judge orders the Trump administration to cancel taxpayer-funded promotional TV ads



WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump must cancel any remaining television commercials paid for with millions of dollars in taxpayer money to promote his political message, a federal judge ordered Sunday night, even as the administration said the ad campaign was coming to an end. U.S. District Judge Jennifer L. Rochon in New York sided with a coalition, including the nonpartisan watchdog Common Cause, that challenged the ads as an illegal misuse of funds. She told the administration to cancel any remaining ads, including any set to air Sunday night, in granting a temporary restraining order.

"Defendants shall not enter into, renew, or expand any agreement authorizing the development, creation, dissemination, placement, or airing of the challenged advertisements" during the two-week duration of her order, the judge said.

Asked for comment, the

White House referred to an Oct. 5 social media post from Trump in which he defended the taxpayer-funded ads as "rather standard" but, amid backlash, said he would pay for them from his political fundraising.

In a court filing late Saturday, the Justice Department argued that the temporary restraining order was unnecessary because "the alleged offending conduct will end tomorrow."

The Department of Homeland Security tapped \$20 million in taxpayer money for the ads. Legal experts have suggested that violated a federal statute against congressionally appropriated money being used for "publicity or propaganda" and potentially other laws.

"We are pleased the court acted swiftly to prevent more taxpayer dollars from being used for such blatantly unlawful political propaganda," the plaintiffs said in a statement issued by Democracy Forward, the nonprofit legal organization

that represents them. "There is no legal justification—and no precedent—for the president to use the machinery of the government and funds set aside by Congress for other uses to influence electoral outcomes that further his own agenda."

In a court declaration Saturday, senior DHS official Holly Mehringer wrote that the money came from funds appropriated by Congress that are "available for, among other things, commemorating efforts and events related to border security."

The White House has defended the ads as public service announcements akin to what past administrations have done to promote various policies. But the recent ads differ from many past public service announcements because they aren't aimed at helping members of the public benefit from specific government programs.

The ads, which began airing in late September, glorify Trump and echo his political messaging going into the midterms. One features a clip of Trump talking about the threat of communism and another is a replay of an ad from his last presidential campaign. The fifth ad in the campaign began airing Tuesday, focusing on the Trump administration's capture of Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro.

The use of public funds to pay for the ads drew heavy criticism—including from some in the GOP.

"It shouldn't be paid for with taxpayer dollars," Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., told reporters.

The Democratic National Committee has separately sued the Republican administration over the ads.

Amid the backlash, Trump said he would start paying for the ads with a campaign account. A White House official said there were no immediate plans to reimburse the government for money already spent.

Rewriting the ‘Monster’: Anne Carson’s Nobel and the Reinvention of Myth

The 2026 Nobel Prize in Literature recognises a writer who dissolves the boundaries between poetry and scholarship, classical mythology and contemporary life. Through Autobiography of Red, Anne Carson gives a silenced mythological monster a voice of his own, transforming an ancient Greek tale into a modern exploration of love, identity, loneliness and the limits of human understanding.

What can a poet do with an ancient Greek word? Look up its meaning in a dictionary, explain its grammatical function, or bring it back to life through poetry. Anne Carson has chosen the third path. For her, ancient Greece is not a museum of forgotten stories but a living past that returns unexpectedly to inhabit the modern world of love, desire, loneliness, the body and memory.

On October 8, 2026, the Swedish Academy awarded the Canadian poet, essayist, translator and classicist the Nobel Prize in Literature. The citation recognised her bold and inventive body of work, particularly her creative engagement with the classical tradition. Carson’s achievement lies in making that tradition speak to contemporary experiences without stripping it of its historical depth.

To understand Carson, one must read her poetry alongside her scholarship. Her academic training laid the foundation for this distinctive combination. After studying at the University of Toronto, she earned a PhD in classics, developing a deep engagement with Greek poetry and the ideas of love and desire. That scholarship eventually informed Eros the Bittersweet, a work that examines love not as a simple romantic emotion but as a complex psychological condition shaped by attraction and distance, fulfilment and deprivation, pleasure and pain.

This approach defines Carson’s literary method. She does not merely retell ancient myths. She relocates them within the emotional and psychological landscape of the present. Nowhere is this more striking than in Autobiography of Red.

Giving the monster a voice

In the fragmentary ancient Greek poem Geryoneis, by Stesichorus, Geryon is a fearsome monster who meets his death at the hands of Heracles. In 1998, Carson transformed this mythical figure into the protagonist of a remarkable work that moves between poetry, fiction and the reinvention of classical mythology.

Her Geryon is no longer simply a monster from an ancient legend. He becomes a young man navigating love, rejection, sexuality, his own body and the difficult process of understanding who he is.

The book opens with the memorable line: “Geryon was a monster everything about him was red.”

The colour red gradually becomes central to the work’s imaginative world. Geryon’s body is red, but the colour also suggests desire, shame, anger, sexuality, danger, love and emotional wounds. Through this transformation, Carson turns the mythical monster into a figure through whom readers can explore the complexities of human existence.

Yet the novel raises a question that extends far beyond mythology: can one person ever truly see another?

Carson captures this difficulty in another striking line: “I will never know how you see red and you will never know how I see it.”

The statement expresses a fundamental limitation of human relationships. Our experiences, memories, bodies and emotions are never entirely identical. Even when people love one another, an unbridgeable distance remains between their inner worlds. The same is true of friendship and language.

In this sense, Autobiography of Red moves beyond the modernisation of an ancient myth. It becomes an exploration of consciousness, identity and the limits of empathy. We may come close to another person, but we can never fully inhabit that person’s experience.

There is also a deeper reversal at work. Geryon has been defined by others as a monster. Carson gives him the opportunity to tell his own story. The character who once existed within a narrative controlled by others becomes the author of his own experience.

The title itself is a literary puzzle. How can a colour have an autobiography? Carson’s answer lies in the impossibility of separating identity from perception. Red is not merely a physical colour; it becomes a way of expressing the intensely personal nature of experience.

Canadian writer Alice Munro praised the book as writing she had found “so marvellously disturbing”. The word disturbing offers



an important clue to Carson’s literary power. Her writing rarely provides comfortable answers. Instead, it unsettles familiar assumptions and forces readers to reconsider what they believe they understand.

Is Geryon really a monster? Or does the deeper monstrosity lie in a society that turns those who appear different into objects of fear and exclusion?

The question that emerges from an ancient Greek story remains relevant to contemporary debates about identity, sexuality, difference and social acceptance.

Breaking the boundaries of literature

Carson’s originality extends beyond her treatment of mythology. She is equally sceptical of the conventional boundaries separating poetry, prose, scholarship, translation and autobiography.

The Beauty of the Husband, for instance, carries the subtitle “a fictional essay in 29 tangos”. The work explores marriage, infidelity and separation through a distinctive combination of poetry, prose, memory and the rhythm of dance. It won the T. S. Eliot Prize, making Carson the first woman to receive the award.

Her later works, including Men in the Off Hours, Decreation, Nox, Red Doc and Float, continue to challenge conventional literary categories. In Carson’s hands, poetry does not occupy an isolated space, separate from the essay or the scholarly text. Research, mythology, personal memory, philosophy, visual art, drama and verse flow into one another.

Literature is often organised into clearly defined categories: poetry, short stories, novels, essays, drama and translation. Carson questions whether these divisions adequately reflect the complexity of human experience.

A poet can also be a scholar. A classicist can write about modern love. An ancient Greek myth can become a vehicle for examining contemporary sexuality, loneliness, the body and identity.

Carson’s work does not simply dress the past in modern clothing. It reveals that many of the questions confronting contemporary society have existed, in different forms, for centuries. Ancient literature becomes relevant not because its stories are unchanged, but because their unresolved questions continue to trouble us.

Geryon, the red monster who struggles to understand himself and his relationships, becomes one embodiment of those enduring uncertainties.

Living beside the fire

Towards the end of Autobiography of Red, the imagery of fire acquires particular significance. The line “We are amazing beings... We are neighbors of fire” suggests something essential about Carson’s understanding of human life.

Human beings live close to fire. Love can warm us, but it can also burn. Desire can make life more vivid, yet leave us wounded. We seek to establish our identities, but we can never entirely escape the influence of how others perceive us.

This tension animates Carson’s literary world. Her characters inhabit the uncertain space between intimacy and distance, self-knowledge and misunderstanding, vulnerability and resistance.

The fire becomes an image of the inten-

sity and danger inherent in being human. It also captures the restless quality of Carson’s writing, which continually moves towards the boundaries of language and established forms in search of new ways to express familiar experiences.

Her Nobel Prize should therefore be understood as more than an award to an accomplished poet. It recognises a writer whose work challenges the separation between scholarship and creativity, classical

literature and modern life, personal memory and inherited cultural traditions.

The Swedish Academy’s description of Carson’s work as bold and inventive finds a compelling illustration in Autobiography of Red. She does not simply translate an ancient Greek myth into a contemporary setting. She gives its central figure a new life, a new body, a different experience of sexuality and, most importantly, a voice.

Above all, she writes the autobiography of a monster.

Literary history has given countless heroes the opportunity to speak. Carson turns towards a figure whom the inherited story had condemned to the margins, allowing him to articulate an experience that the original myth could never fully contain.

That transformation makes Carson a writer of particular relevance to our time.

Her work asks readers to reconsider the labels through which society defines individuals and to recognise the distance between the person we encounter and the person we imagine we understand.

From ancient Greece to the contemporary world, Carson’s journey returns to a deceptively simple question: how well can we ever see another human being?

Perhaps literature cannot answer that question definitively. Its purpose may instead be to create a space in which we recognise the limits of our own understanding.

The red that another person sees will never be entirely the red we see. Our experiences may overlap, our emotions may resonate and our lives may intersect, but the inner worlds we inhabit remain irreducibly individual.

It is within that distance, between what we can know and what remains beyond our reach, that Carson discovers the possibilities of poetry.

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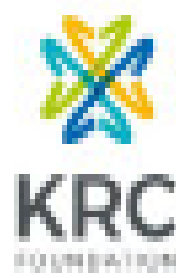
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