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PERSPECTIVE

Sarcasm was created to confuse the stupid.

Rahul Gandhi Escapes Unhurt as Convoy Vehicles Collide on UP Expressway

SULTANPUR



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi escaped unhurt after several vehicles in his convoy collided on the Purvanchal Expressway in Uttar Pradesh's Sultanpur district on Monday while he was travelling to attend a hearing in a defa-

mation case, police said.

The accident occurred around 10.15 am near the 91-km milestone in the Haliyapur area. Five vehicles from the convoy and an ambulance were reportedly involved in the collision, leaving several people, including party workers, officials and security personnel, injured.A police officer described the incident as minor and confirmed that Gandhi was safe. The exact number of injured and the extent of their injuries were not immediately known.According to the officer, a private vehicle at the front of the convoy, belonging to local Congress leaders, suddenly applied the brakes for an unspecified reason. Vehicles following it then collided with one another.Gandhi was travelling to Sultanpur to appear before a special MP-MLA court in connection with a defamation case arising from alleged objectionable remarks about Amit Shah, who was the BJP president at the time and is now the Union Home Minister.The convoy, accompanied by police personnel for security, resumed its journey towards Sultanpur shortly after the accident.Later in the day, Gandhi was acquitted by the MP-MLA court in the defamation case.

WHO SAID WHAT



‘Centre aims to cut debt burden annually, bring it to 50% of GDP by 2030’

Nirmala Sitharaman
Union Finance Minister

KOHIAMA

President Droupadi Murmu has given her assent to the Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority (FNTA) Bill, 2026, marking a significant step towards greater administrative autonomy for six districts in Eastern Nagaland.

Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio announced the development, thanking the President and acknowledging the Union Ministry of Home Affairs for facilitating the process. Deputy Chief Minister Yanthungo Patton also welcomed the decision, describing it as an important step towards equitable development and greater administrative empowerment for the eastern districts.

The Nagaland Legislative Assembly had unanimously passed the Bill on September 3, following the introduction of a revised draft on September 1.

With presidential assent secured, the next step is expected to be a formal notification by the state government to bring the leg-



islation into force. The process will then move towards establishing an interim council and preparing for elections to the full authority.

The FNTA will cover Tuensang, Mon, Longleng, Kiphire, Noklak and Shamator. Its creation follows a Memorandum of Agreement signed on February 5, 2026, by the Centre, the Nagaland government and the Eastern Nagaland Peoples' Organisation

(ENPO), after years of negotiations over demands for greater autonomy in the region.

Under the proposed framework, the authority will exercise legislative, executive, administrative and financial powers over 46 subjects. These include school education, public health, agriculture, rural development, social welfare, tourism, fisheries and regional public works.

The arrangement is intended

Indian Army Flags AI-Manipulated Video Falsely Claiming Chinese Control of Arunachal Areas



NEW DELHI

The Indian Army has debunked a digitally manipulated video circulating on social media that falsely attributes statements to senior Army officer Lt Gen Girish Kalia, claiming that China has taken control of three areas in Arunachal Pradesh and Indian troops have been denied essential supplies.

In a fact-check post, the Army clarified that the video contained fabricated remarks and sought to portray them as a leaked admission by a senior military officer. It said the footage had been digitally altered using artificially generated content to falsely attribute the statements to Kalia.

The viral video alleges that China has taken control of Asaphila, Longju and Taksing Circle in Arunachal Pradesh. It further claims that Indian troops deployed in the region have been deprived of essential supplies.

Rejecting the allegations, the Army said the original footage

was taken from a press briefing delivered by then General Officer Commanding of the 28 Infantry Division, Maj Gen Girish Kalia, in Kupwara, Jammu and Kashmir, on October 27, 2023.

The briefing had focused on infiltration attempts across the Line of Control (LoC) and had no connection with the claims about Arunachal Pradesh being circulated online, the Army clarified.

During the original briefing, Maj Gen Kalia had reported that security forces had foiled 10 infiltration attempts, eliminated 27 terrorists and recovered warlike stores and narcotics.

The Army said the officer had made no statements suggesting Chinese control over any of the areas mentioned in the viral video. It also rejected the allegation that Indian troops had been denied essential supplies.

The incident highlights the potential use of digitally manipulated footage from genuine military briefings to spread misinformation and attribute fabricated statements to serving or former military officials.

The Army's clarification comes amid the circulation of unverified claims concerning India's territorial security and military preparedness. The misleading video uses footage from an authentic military briefing but presents it in a false context to lend credibility to the allegations.

The Army urged the public to exercise caution while consuming and sharing content on social media, particularly videos purportedly featuring senior military officials, and to verify such claims through official sources.

Manipur CM Calls for Surrender of Illegal Arms, Says Gun Culture Stands in Way of Peace

IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh on Sunday appealed to people to surrender illegal weapons, warning that the persistence of gun culture would continue to undermine efforts to restore lasting peace and normalcy in the violence-affected state.

Singh made the appeal during a visit to Sinai Camp, a designated camp for armed groups operating under the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement in Kangpokpi district. According to an official statement, the visit came after security forces took control of the facility following joint operations involving the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), its CoBRA unit, police and other security personnel.

The operations were launched in the aftermath of the killing of three firewood collectors near Nongshum in Imphal East district.During the operation, security personnel reportedly found 17 individuals allegedly impersonating SoO cadres by using false identities, the statement said. The camp was originally intended to accommodate around 150 cadres.Sinai Camp had been designated for the Kuki National Army (KNA) and the Kuki Liberation Army (KLA), both signatories to the SoO agreement.The chief minister's visit was described in the official statement as the first visit by a sitting Manipur chief minister to a designated SoO camp.

During his visit, Singh inspected the camp premises and received briefings from CRPF and Assam Rifles officers on the security operations and the prevailing law and order situation in the area.

He commended the CRPF's CoBRA battalion for its role in the operation that brought the camp under the control of security forces.

At the same time, the chief minister stressed that security operations must be conducted with due care to ensure that innocent civilians were not harmed.

Bihu Troupe Attack: Four More Arrested in Sribhumi, Total Reaches 17



SRIBHUMI

Four more people have been arrested in connection with the alleged attack on a Bihu troupe in Assam's Sribhumi district, taking the total number of arrests in the case to 17, police said on Monday.

"Further investigation is underway. Sribhumi Police remains committed to upholding the law, safeguarding citizens' rights and ensuring peace and harmony," the district police said in a statement.

The arrests follow an incident during a Durga Puja idol immersion procession, where a Bihu troupe invited to perform at the programme was allegedly attacked by a group of people. Several performers were reportedly injured, while traditional musical instruments were damaged.

Earlier, Assam Director General of Police Harmeet Singh had confirmed that 13 people had been

first FNTA are completed.

The legislation provides for the continuation of Nagaland's existing constitutional and legal safeguards, including Article 371A of the Constitution and the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873, which governs the Inner Line Permit system. The state's exemption from the Panchayati Raj system will also remain in place.

The FNTA is intended to address long-standing demands in Eastern Nagaland for greater administrative control and a more equitable share of development. However, the authority's effectiveness will depend on how responsibilities and financial resources are transferred, the capacity of its administration and coordination with the state government.

Presidential assent clears a major procedural hurdle. Formal notification, the constitution of the interim council and preparations for elections remain the key steps before the new authority becomes fully operational.

Manipuri Short Film ‘Toy Gun’ Wins Best Short Feature Award at CNFF 2026



IMPHAL

Manipuri short film Toy Gun, directed by Thingnam Parshuram, has won the Best Short Feature Film - North-East India award at the 10th Chalachitram National Film Festival (CNFF 2026), which concluded at Jyoti Chitraban Film Studio in Kahilipara, Assam, on Sunday.

The two-day festival, held under the theme "Our Heritage, Our Pride", celebrated films exploring cultural identity, heritage and regional narratives. The recognition for Toy Gun has brought fresh attention to Manipuri cinema and its portrayal of the human cost of conflict.

Running for 14 minutes and 55 seconds, Toy Gun marks the directorial debut of Parshuram, who received the Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar in 2023.

The film examines the psychological and emotional consequences of violence through the experiences of a widowed mother and her young son. The narrative takes a poignant turn when the child asks for a toy gun,

bringing back painful memories of real-life violence for his mother.

Through this seemingly innocent request, the film explores how conflict leaves lasting scars on families and shapes the experiences of children growing up amid violence.

Strong festival run for 'Toy Gun' Produced by Kh Omeshwori under the banner of Freedom Ekon & Farm House Production, the film features Leishangthem Tonthoi, Thingnam Parihanba and Irengbam Premananda. Its musical score has been composed by Akhu Chingambam.The CNFF award adds to the film's growing list of festival achievements. In March 2026, Toy Gun won the Best Non-Feature Film award at the third North East India Film Festival, where it was also screened as the closing film.

The production was earlier named first runner-up at the Hyderabad International Short Film Festival 2025.

The film has also secured competitive selections at several other festivals, including the 16th Bengaluru International Short Film Festival

2026, the 14th Jagran Film Festival 2026 and the 18th SIGNS Kerala Festival.Its selection at the Bengaluru International Short Film Festival is particularly noteworthy, as the festival is an Oscar-qualifying event.

The latest recognition underscores the ability of regional cinema to bring local experiences and complex social realities to wider audiences.By focusing on a mother's memories and a child's innocent curiosity, Toy Gun approaches the consequences of conflict through an intimate family story rather than through violence alone.The film's growing presence on the festival circuit also highlights the contribution of Manipuri filmmakers to India's diverse independent cinema landscape, with stories rooted in the region reaching audiences beyond the Northeast.

Its success at CNFF 2026 marks another milestone for Parshuram's directorial debut and reinforces the place of regional storytelling in conversations about heritage, memory and the enduring human impact of violence.

Jayanta Mallabaruah Rejects Bangladesh Opposition Leader's Claims on Lutumari Eviction Drive

GUWAHATI

Assam Forest Minister Jayanta Mallabaruah has rejected allegations by Shafiqur Rahman, Leader of the Opposition in Bangladesh's Parliament and chief of Jamaat-e-Islami, over the recent eviction drive at Lutumari Reserve Forest in Assam's Nagaon district, describing his claims as "incomplete and misleading".

In a statement posted on X, Mallabaruah said the eviction was carried out in accordance with legal procedures and Supreme Court directives, asserting that the operation was neither arbitrary nor targeted at any religious community.

The eviction drive, conducted on October 17 and 18, covered 314 hectares of notified forest land and affected 563 families, according to the minister. He cited a Supreme Court order dated February 10, 2026, which laid down procedures for evictions from forest areas, and said the special leave petitions filed by the occupants were disposed of on September 2, 2026.

Mallabaruah maintained that the occupants had exhausted their legal remedies before the state government proceeded with the operation. He also said notices had been served

in advance and the administration deliberately waited until the flood season was over to minimise hardship for the affected families.

According to the minister, the operation was conducted peacefully, without resistance or the use of force.

Explaining the environmental rationale behind the drive, Mallabaruah said the reclaimed land would be restored through plantations of indigenous tree species. The initiative, he said, aims to regenerate wildlife habitats, particularly those used by elephants, and help reduce human-elephant conflict.

The minister argued that protecting notified forest land was both a legal obligation and an ecological necessity. He rejected attempts to frame the operation as an action against a particular religious community, maintaining that the eviction was driven by forest conservation requirements and legal considerations.

The remarks came after Shafiqur Rahman raised concerns over the eviction exercise in Assam. Mallabaruah's response sought to counter those allegations by citing the legal proceedings and the state government's stated environmental objectives.



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BEYOND WESTERN FEMINISM

Simone de Beauvoir remains central to modern feminist thought, but women’s struggles and achievements cannot be understood through a single intellectual tradition. Ahilyabai Holkar’s life offers a compelling reminder that leadership, political authority and social responsibility have taken different forms across civilisations.

The history of feminism is often narrated through a familiar sequence of Western thinkers and movements—from Mary Wollstonecraft’s advocacy of women’s education to the suffragettes’ struggle for political rights and Simone de Beauvoir’s influential examination of how society constructs the condition of being a woman. Their contributions are indispensable. Yet, when this narrative becomes the principal framework for understanding women’s emancipation everywhere, it risks overlooking other histories of female authority, resistance and achievement.

India’s past offers a rich and varied record of women who exercised intellectual influence, governed kingdoms, led armies and shaped public life. The Vedic thinkers Lopamudra, Gargi, Maitreyi and Ghosha represent traditions of female intellectual engagement. Kashmir’s Didda and Kota Rani, Rudrama Devi of Warangal, Chand Bibi of Ahmednagar and Rani Abbakka of Ulal demonstrate different forms of political and military leadership. Among these remarkable figures, Ahilyabai Holkar, the eighteenth-century ruler of Indore, deserves particular attention. Her life challenges the assumption that women’s power must always be understood through the language and categories of modern Western feminism. She did not leave behind a manifesto for gender equality. Instead, she demonstrated through governance, diplomacy, public welfare and personal conviction how a woman could exercise authority in a deeply hierarchical society.

Her example raises a larger question: should the history of women’s empowerment be confined to the intellectual traditions through which modern feminism developed, or should it also recognise the diverse ways women shaped their societies in different historical and cultural settings?

A woman who refused to surrender power Born into a period of considerable political upheaval, Ahilyabai entered the Holkar household through marriage at a young age. Her father-in-law, Malhar Rao Holkar, recognised her intelligence and ensured that she received an education unusual for women of her time. Alongside religious learning, she acquired knowledge of administration, accounting, warfare and statecraft. These skills became crucial when personal tragedy altered the course of her life. Her husband, Khande Rao Holkar, died in battle, leaving her widowed at the age of 21. At a time when the practice of sati continued to exert a powerful social influence, Ahilyabai did not follow her husband’s other wives, who reportedly chose to die on his funeral pyre. Malhar Rao recognised her capabilities and supported her continued role in the affairs of the state.

Following his death, her son Male Rao succeeded him but died within a year. The Holkar kingdom was left facing a succession crisis, and the question of whether a woman could rule in her own right became a political test. Her minister, Gangadhar Yashwant Chandrachur, advised her to adopt a male heir. Ahilyabai refused to allow her authority to be reduced to a question of dynastic convenience. Raghunath Rao, uncle of the Peshwa, reportedly considered military action against her.

According to historical accounts, Ahilyabai sought the support of other Maratha chiefs and prepared to defend her position. She is also said to have assembled and trained a contingent of approximately 500 women, declaring her readiness to lead them into battle if necessary. Her message to Raghunath Rao challenged the political and moral legitimacy of attacking a woman ruler. The confrontation did not develop into the anticipated invasion.

The episode reveals something important about the nature of her authority. Ahilyabai did not merely seek acceptance within an established political order. She demonstrated that competence, strategic alliances and the ability to defend the state could establish a woman’s claim to power even when prevailing conventions favoured male succession.

Her achievement was not a rejection of every tradition of her time. Rather, she worked within the political and cultural structures available to her, while refusing to let those structures determine the limits of her leadership.

Ahilyabai’s significance extends far beyond her struggle to secure the throne. During nearly three decades of rule, she developed a reputation for conscientious administration, accessibility and concern for the welfare of her subjects.

Historical accounts describe a ruler who regularly heard grievances, maintained a comparatively moderate approach to taxation and sought to protect individual property rights. Accounts of her administration also record instances in which property appropriated from widows was restored to them. At a time when a woman’s economic security could be severely weakened by the death of her husband, such interventions carried considerable significance. These practices deserve attention because they connect political authority with social responsibility. Ahilyabai’s legacy was not simply that a woman governed successfully. It was that she understood governance as an obligation to protect livelihoods, resolve disputes and ensure that power served purposes beyond the preservation of a dynasty. Her religious convictions informed this understanding of duty. She regarded herself as accountable to a higher moral authority for the manner in which she exercised power. Accounts of her daily life also describe concern for animals and birds, the provision of water for travellers, the planting of shade trees along roads and the construction of wells. Such measures may appear modest when compared with military victories or territorial expansion. Yet they illustrate a conception of leadership in which the welfare of ordinary people formed an essential part of the ruler’s responsibilities. There is a lesson here for contemporary political thought. Leadership need not be measured exclusively by the ability to command, dominate or defeat rivals. Its enduring value can also lie in the institutions it builds, the grievances it addresses and the dignity it affords those with limited access to power.

Ahilyabai’s public works extended well beyond the boundaries of her kingdom. She supported the construction and restoration of temples, pilgrimage facilities, river ghats and rest houses at numerous religious centres across the subcontinent. Her patronage is associated with places including Kashi, Somnath, Omkareshwar, Rameswaram, Kedarnath, Badrinath and other important pilgrimage destinations.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“Marrying means to halve one’s rights and double one’s duties.”

— Arthur Schopenhauer

YOUTH ON THE EDGE: BROKEN PROMISES, RISING ANGER AND THE CRISIS OF GOVERNANCE

PALLAB BHATTACHARYYA

The autumn of 2026 has brought a familiar but increasingly urgent question to the forefront of global politics: what happens when a generation loses faith in the promise of a better future?

In France, student protests that reportedly began on September 17 over deteriorating facilities at a secondary school in Créteil grew into a wider movement demanding better public services, fair wages and greater institutional accountability. Images of broken toilets, mould-covered ceilings and missing classroom furniture circulated on social media, turning a local grievance into a symbol of a larger public-sector crisis.

University students, trainee teachers, trade unions and the Yellow Vests subsequently joined the demonstrations. The movement’s demands extended well beyond classrooms, reflecting growing frustration over the cost of living, public expenditure and the perceived indifference of political institutions.

The reported scale of the protests and the forceful response by the authorities underscored the depth of the confrontation. Attempts by Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu to offer concessions did little to satisfy demonstrators who believed that limited administrative adjustments could not address years of accumulated grievances.

The significance of the unrest lies not merely in the number of people taking to the streets. It lies in the growing perception among young citizens that the institutions meant to secure their future are failing to deliver.

Europe’s generational divide France is part of a broader European debate over economic opportunity and generational fairness. For more than two decades, governments across the continent have grappled with austerity, financial crises, rising public debt and the pressures of ageing populations. The consequences have not been distributed equally across generations.

Young people face uncertain employment prospects, increasingly expensive housing and the growing difficulty of achieving financial independence. In several European countries, the transition from education to stable employment has become prolonged, while the cost of renting or buying a home has moved beyond the reach of many first-time earners.

The result is a generation that may be better educated than its predecessors but finds it harder to secure the economic security traditionally associated with adulthood.

Public spending priorities have become part of this debate. Pension commitments and healthcare costs are legitimate obligations of the state, particularly in ageing societies. Yet governments must also ensure that schools, universities, vocational institutions, public transport and affordable housing receive adequate investment. The challenge is not to pit the young against the elderly, but to prevent one generation’s security from being financing through another’s prolonged insecurity.

When young citizens perceive that the political system protects established interests while asking them to accept precarious employment and rising living costs, resentment can quickly spill into the political arena. Populist movements on both the left and the right have frequently drawn support from such disillusionment.

The danger is that economic frustration, if left unaddressed, can weaken confidence in democratic institutions themselves.

India’s employment and examination crisis

India faces a different economic and demographic reality, but several of the underlying anxieties are strikingly similar.

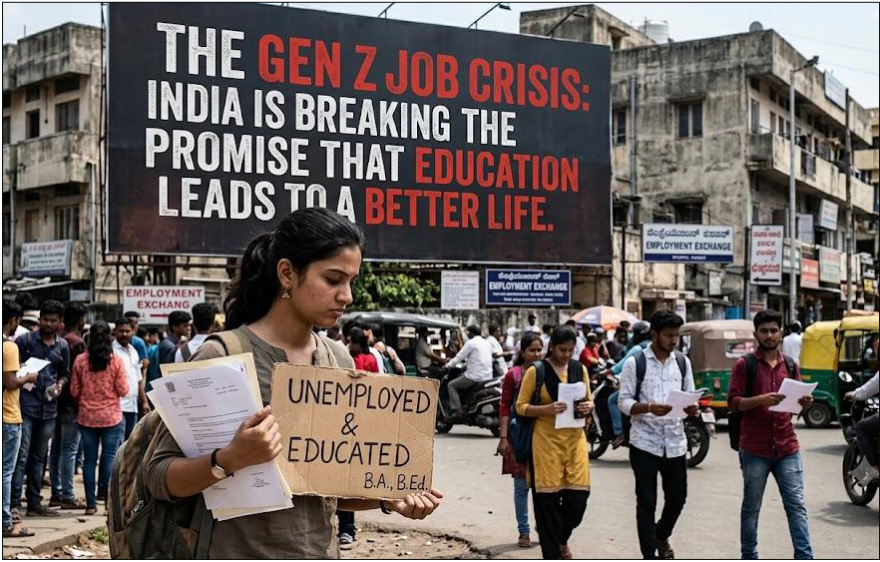
The country’s large youth population is often described as its greatest demographic advantage. A young workforce can drive productivity, innovation, consumption and economic growth. But this dividend is not automatic. It depends on the availability of productive employment, the quality of education and the ability of young people to translate qualifications into meaningful careers.

For millions of Indian students, competitive examinations have become the principal gateway to professional advancement and social mobility. Government recruitment examinations, medical and engineering entrance tests, and other selection processes carry enormous stakes because access to quality education and secure employment remains highly competitive.

Paper leaks, examination cancellations, allegations of irregularities and recruitment delays can therefore have consequences far beyond administrative inconvenience. Candidates frequently spend years preparing for a single opportunity, often with considerable financial and emotional support from their families. When an examination is compromised, the damage extends to lost time, depleted household savings and the erosion of trust in public institutions.

The controversy surrounding the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) and wider concerns over examination integrity have demonstrated how vulnerable the system becomes when fairness is questioned. Any specific allegation, cancellation or administrative decision must be assessed on verified evidence, but the underlying policy concern is undeniable: high-stakes examinations must be transparent, secure and accountable.

India’s employment challenge also requires a more nuanced understanding than headline unemployment figures alone can provide. The difficulties facing young graduates include a mismatch between qualifications and available jobs, uneven



educational quality, limited access to practical training and the concentration of high-quality employment in particular cities and industries.

A degree does not automatically guarantee employability, but neither should young people be blamed for a system that fails to connect education with economic opportunity.

The consequences are visible in the prolonged preparation cycles that many aspirants endure while waiting for recruitment examinations, vacancies and appointment letters. For some, the twenties become years of uncertainty, with professional independence repeatedly postponed.

This is not merely an individual hardship. It represents a loss of productive potential for the economy and a growing test of public confidence.

When institutions lose credibility The relationship between citizens and the state rests on a basic expectation of fairness. People may accept disappointing outcomes when the rules are transparent and the process is credible. They are far less likely to accept those outcomes when they believe the system is manipulated, arbitrary or indifferent to their circumstances. This principle applies equally to examinations, recruitment and elections.

If students begin to doubt the integrity of entrance tests, jobseekers’ question recruitment procedures and voters lose confidence in the accuracy or fairness of electoral processes, the damage can accumulate across institutions. Each controversy reinforces the suspicion that established channels of advancement are no longer dependable.

Digital platforms can accelerate this process. A grievance that might once have remained confined to a classroom, university campus or district can now reach millions within hours. Videos, personal accounts and online campaigns can bring neglected issues into public view, enabling citizens to organise across geographical boundaries.

Such mobilisation can be a powerful instrument of accountability. It can also spread misinformation, amplify unverified allegations and intensify public anger. Governments therefore need to distinguish between legitimate protest, unlawful conduct and demonstrably false claims rather than treating all dissent as a threat to public order.

The instinct to respond to unrest primarily through arrests, force or internet restrictions may offer temporary administrative control. It rarely resolves the grievances that brought people onto the streets. Excessive coercion can instead convince young citizens that peaceful participation has little value.

The more durable response is to restore the credibility of institutions before frustration turns into sustained confrontation.

The lessons of 1789

The current wave of youth discontent inevitably invites comparison with the French Revolution of 1789. The historical circumstances are very different, but the comparison offers useful lessons about the consequences of economic hardship, perceived privilege and political inflexibility.

On the eve of the Revolution, the French monarchy faced severe fiscal pressures, while the unequal distribution of taxation and privilege intensified public resentment. Food shortages and the rising cost of bread added immediate hardship to a deeper crisis of legitimacy. Educated and politically conscious sections of society increasingly challenged the authority of institutions they considered unjust.

Today’s democracies operate under fundamentally different conditions. Citizens generally have access to elections, constitutional protections, courts, political parties and established channels of public participation. Contemporary protesters often seek reforms within the constitutional framework rather than the overthrow of the state.

Yet the historical warning remains relevant. Institutions can become vulnerable when they lose the ability to respond credibly to changing social expectations. Limited concessions may fail when citizens believe that the problem is structural rather than temporary.

The lesson is not that present-day protests will necessarily lead to revolution. It is that governments should not mistake the absence of revolutionary demands for an absence of serious political risk.

A society can remain formally stable while confidence in its institutions steadily erodes.

Turning demographic potential into opportunity

India’s circumstances make the stakes particularly high. Unlike much of Europe, which faces ageing populations and pres-

sures on its workforce, India has a substantial reservoir of young people entering the labour market. This can be a major advantage, but only if economic growth generates sufficient productive employment.

The number of young people alone does not create a demographic dividend. Skills, health, education, labour-force participation and the quality of available jobs determine whether a young population becomes an engine of prosperity or a source of frustration.

Governments must therefore look beyond headline growth rates and examine the quality of employment being created. Secure jobs, fair wages, opportunities for advancement and access to social protection matter as much as the overall expansion of economic output.

Equally important is the transition from education to work. Universities and colleges cannot be expected to solve the employment crisis independently, particularly when curricula and labour-market requirements remain poorly aligned. Industry, educational institutions and public authorities must work together to ensure that qualifications lead to relevant skills and realistic career opportunities.

Vocational education and apprenticeships deserve greater emphasis. Models in Germany and Switzerland demonstrate how closer cooperation between employers and training institutions can provide young people with practical experience while helping industries develop the skills they need. Such approaches cannot simply be transplanted into India, but their underlying principle is relevant: education and employment must be connected by design, not left to chance.

India must also recognise the importance of jobs outside a narrow group of prestigious professions. Modern manufacturing, healthcare, tourism, renewable energy, logistics, construction, agricultural processing and the digital economy can all generate opportunities if supported by appropriate investment, training and infrastructure.

For states in the Northeast, the agenda should include stronger local enterprises, food processing, tourism, logistics, renewable energy and cross-border trade where commercially and legally viable. Young people should not have to leave their home regions simply because meaningful employment is concentrated elsewhere.

Four priorities for governments Preventing recurring waves of youth anger requires more than appeals for patience. It demands credible policy commitments and measurable results.

First, protect the integrity of examinations and recruitment. High-stakes tests require secure question-paper handling, transparent procedures, independent oversight and prompt investigation of suspected irregularities. Candidates affected by cancellations or proven malpractice must receive clear information about remedies and revised schedules. Recruitment agencies should publish vacancy calendars, examination timelines and selection results wherever practicable.

Technology can improve security, but it cannot substitute for accountability. Independent audits, effective grievance mechanisms and meaningful penalties for proven wrongdoing are essential to restoring confidence.

Second, build a reliable bridge between education and employment. Governments should expand apprenticeships, industry-linked training and career guidance while improving the quality of vocational institutions. The European Union’s Youth Guarantee, which seeks to connect young people with employment, further education, apprenticeships or training, offers a useful policy reference.

India could adapt this principle through time-bound support for young jobseekers, stronger placement services and publicly accessible information about training and employment opportunities. The objective should be to ensure that leaving school or college does not mean entering an indefinite period of uncertainty.

Third, make housing and essential services more affordable. Economic opportunity loses much of its value when rent, transport and basic living costs consume an excessive share of earnings. Cities need more affordable rental housing, reliable public transport and better access to healthcare and education. Vienna’s long-standing social-housing system offers one example of how sustained public investment can moderate housing pressures, although local solutions must reflect India’s land markets, finances and urban conditions.

Public budgets should also be assessed through the lens of generational fairness.

Pension commitments and support for older citizens must be protected, but not at the expense of essential investment in schools, public health, infrastructure and skills. Transparent spending reviews can help governments identify imbalances without turning intergenerational fairness into a contest between age groups.

Fourth, give young citizens a meaningful voice in decision-making. Youth participation should not begin and end with election campaigns. Statutory youth councils, consultations with student organisations, accessible grievance systems and regular

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

Modi Govt deals another lethal blow against drugs with Operation Trident.

Our agencies launched a barrage of simultaneous crackdowns across 38 locations in Assam, Mizoram and Manipur on 23 October, smashing an international narco-cartel. The operation revealed ₹100 crore worth of hawala transactions, froze 1,424 bank accounts, attached properties worth ₹7.82 crore, seized 500 detonators and ₹12 lakh in cash, and led to the arrest of 18 people.

The network trafficked narcotics across the borders of India, Myanmar and Bangladesh through the Death Triangle Corridor. The offensive attests to India’s Himalayan resolve to realise the mission of eradicating every drug network by 31 December 2029. India will hammer until the last nail is driven into the coffin of drug cartels.

Heartiest congratulations to the anti-narcotics team comprising central agencies, and police forces of the three states.

~ Amit Shah, Union Home Minister



engagement with young workers can help governments identify problems before they escalate.

Digital consultation platforms, including Taiwan’s vTaiwan initiative, offer examples of how technology can facilitate public discussion and policy engagement. Such mechanisms must be designed to include those who lack reliable internet access or the resources to participate in formal consultations.

The right to peaceful protest must also be respected. Authorities should maintain public order proportionately while ensuring that students and other citizens can express grievances without intimidation. Timely dialogue is not a concession to disorder; it is a practical means of preventing disputes from becoming crises.

A generation demanding answers The central issue connecting youth discontent across countries is not that young people have suddenly become impatient. It is that the promises made to them increasingly appear disconnected from their lived experience.

They are told that education will create opportunity, yet encounter examinations whose integrity they question. They are encouraged to work hard, yet struggle to secure stable employment. They are urged to become independent, yet face housing costs that make independence difficult. They are asked to trust democratic institutions, yet expect those institutions to demonstrate fairness and accountability.

These contradictions cannot be resolved through slogans about national progress or by dismissing every protest as politically motivated. Nor can governments assume that economic growth will automatically eliminate dissatisfaction. Growth that fails to produce accessible opportunities may leave substantial sections of the population feeling excluded from its benefits.

The autumn of 2026 should serve as a warning to political leaders. Whether the immediate grievance concerns deteriorating schools in France, examination controversies in India or the rising cost of living elsewhere, the underlying demand is for institutions that work fairly and effectively.

Young citizens do not necessarily expect governments to eliminate every hardship. They do expect a credible path forward, transparent rules and a reasonable chance to build a secure life through effort.

When those expectations are repeatedly disappointed, anger becomes more than a passing political mood. It becomes a challenge to the legitimacy of governance.

The choice facing governments is therefore clear: invest in education, employment, affordable living and institutional accountability, or risk allowing manageable grievances to develop into prolonged social unrest.

A country’s future cannot be secured by asking its young people to wait indefinitely for their turn. It must be built by giving them a fair opportunity to participate in the present.

Operation Trident: Manipur CM Renews ‘Drug-Free State’ Pledge After Multi-State Crackdown



IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh has reiterated his government's commitment to building a drug-free state following Operation Trident, a coordinated crackdown on an alleged international narcotics network operating across Manipur, Mizoram and Assam. Congratulating Union Home Minister Amit Shah and the agencies involved in the operation, Singh said the state remained committed to the wider mission of building a “Drug-Free India and Drug-Free Manipur”, with a focus on protecting young people from substance abuse and securing a healthier future. “Manipur stands firmly committed to the mission of a Drug-Free India and Drug-Free Manipur, safeguarding our youth and securing a healthier future,” the chief minister said in a social media post while

sharing Shah's statement on the operation. The crackdown was conducted on October 23, when central agencies and police forces carried out simultaneous searches at 38 locations across the three northeastern states. According to Shah, the operation resulted in the arrest of 18 people and exposed alleged hawala transactions worth ₹100 crore. Authorities also froze 1,424 bank accounts, attached properties valued at ₹17.82 crore, seized 500 detonators and recovered ₹12 lakh in cash. Alleged cross-border narcotics network under scanner. Shah said the alleged network was involved in trafficking narcotics across the borders of India, Myanmar and Bangladesh through what he described as the “Death Triangle Corridor”. The scale of the operation points to an investigation extending beyond the sei-

zure of narcotics, with financial transactions, bank accounts and properties also coming under scrutiny. The freezing of bank accounts and attachment of assets form part of the action against the alleged financial infrastructure supporting the network. However, the allegations against those arrested remain subject to investigation and judicial proceedings. Shah described Operation Trident as a major strike against drug trafficking and reiterated the Centre's target of eliminating drug networks by December 31, 2029. He also commended the central agencies and police forces of Assam, Mizoram and Manipur for coordinating the operation across state boundaries. Manipur's drug-control challenge. Singh's statement comes amid the state government's continuing efforts to curb drug trafficking and substance abuse

in Manipur. The chief minister has placed the protection of young people and the prevention of narcotics-related harm among the stated priorities of his administration. The operation also highlights the importance of inter-state coordination in tackling alleged trafficking networks that exploit regional transport routes and cross-border connections. With financial links and suspected trafficking channels under investigation, the effectiveness of the crackdown will depend on whether authorities can establish the alleged network's operations, identify its wider connections and secure convictions through the legal process. The state government has reiterated its commitment to the drug-free mission, while Operation Trident has brought renewed attention to the challenge of dismantling narcotics networks operating across the Northeast.

Zubeen Garg Death Case: AASU Calls Statewide Candlelight Marches on October 29

GUWAHATI

The All Assam Students' Union (AASU) will organise candlelight processions at district headquarters across Assam on October 29, renewing its demand for justice in the death case of singer Zubeen Garg. The move comes amid public discontent over the progress of the case and the grant of bail to two accused, Amritprabha Mahanta and Sandipan Garg. The students' organisation has called for the demonstrations to remain peaceful and democratic. It has also demanded that the bail orders granted to the two accused be challenged and overturned through legal proceedings. AASU president Utpal Sarma said public demands for justice had persisted even after street protests subsided following the commencement of day-to-day hearings in the fast-track court. “The mysterious death of Zubeen Garg, which the Chief Minister himself has called a murder, has led the people of Assam to demand strict punishment for the perpetrators ever since the singer's passing,” Sarma said. He added that the start of daily court hearings had temporarily reduced the need for street demonstrations, but had not diminished public expectations of accountability. Sarma expressed concern over the passage of nearly a year without a final resolution of the case, saying that the release of accused persons on bail had added to public dissatisfaction. He stressed, however, that punishment could follow only if the allegations and charges contained in the Special Investigation Team's (SIT) chargesheet were established in court. AASU, he said, would continue to press the state government to ensure an effective prosecution and prevent any lapse in the pursuit of justice. “The people of Assam will not sit still and allow any negligence on the part of the government in delivering justice,” Sarma said. The students' body has also called for legal action against the bail orders granted to Mahanta and Sandipan Garg. Sarma referred to statements by Assam Advocate General Devajit Saikia and the SIT chief regarding the possibility of approaching the Supreme Court.

Gas Cylinder Explosion Fuels Blaze, Roadside Eatery Guttled Near Dibrugarh Court



DIBRUGARH

A roadside eatery near the Dibrugarh judicial court in Assam was completely gutted in a massive fire on Sunday, October 25, after a cooking gas cylinder exploded inside the establishment, intensifying the blaze. Several fire tenders rushed to the spot after receiving infor-

mation about the incident and launched an operation to bring the flames under control. The fire spread rapidly through the eatery, destroying its structure and the items stored inside. The situation became more dangerous when a cooking gas cylinder exploded, causing the flames to intensify and accelerating the destruction of the establishment. Firefighters worked to contain the blaze and prevent it from spreading to nearby buildings. Their timely intervention ensured that the adjoining judicial court complex escaped damage. The eatery was completely gutted, with its contents reduced to ashes. No injuries were reported in the incident. The cause of the fire remains unclear, while the extent of the financial losses is yet to be officially assessed. Authorities have not released further details about the incident.

Bihu Troupe Assault in Sribhumi: Sarbananda Sonowal Says Attack on Assamese Heritage ‘Unacceptable’

SIRBHUMI

Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal has condemned the alleged assault on a Bihu troupe in Assam's Sribhumi district, describing the incident as an attack on the state's cultural heritage and asserting that hostility towards its artists would not be tolerated. The incident reportedly took place on October 24 during a Durga Puja programme organised by Hindustan Club in Sribhumi, where the troupe had been invited to perform. According to preliminary reports, a group of people allegedly objected to Assamese songs being played at the event, triggering a confrontation with the performers. “Bihu is the lifeline that binds the greater Assamese society. Any assault on our artists and hostility towards our heritage is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated,” Sonowal said in a post on X on October



25. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma also condemned the reported attack and directed the state police chief to take immediate action against those responsible. “The news of an attack on a Bihu troupe in Sribhumi is deeply disturbing and unfortunate. Bihu is the soul of Assam, our pride and our identity. We will never tolerate any insult to our culture and heritage,” Sarma said in his social media post. Ob-

jection to Assamese songs allegedly triggered confrontation. According to the initial account of the incident, the group allegedly objected to the performance of Assamese songs in the Barak Valley before confronting members of the troupe and assaulting them. Reports said the performers sustained serious injuries in the alleged attack. Traditional Bihu musical instruments were also reportedly damaged, while some

instruments were allegedly taken away. A gold chain belonging to one of the young performers was also reported to have been stolen during the incident. These allegations are yet to be independently established, and further details are awaited from the police. The troupe had been invited by Hindustan Club to perform as part of its Durga Puja programme. The alleged assault has raised concerns about the safety of artists participating in cultural events and the circumstances surrounding the confrontation. The incident has prompted demands for a thorough investigation and legal action against those involved. The chief minister's direction to the police chief signals the state government's call for an immediate response, although details of any arrests or formal police findings were not available in the initial report.

Nagaland Gets Its First Five-Star Hotel as Kohima Steps Up Tourism Push

KOHIMA

Nagaland has opened its first five-star hotel in Kohima, marking a significant addition to the state's hospitality infrastructure as it seeks to attract more tourists, generate local employment and encourage private investment. The 56-room property was inaugurated by Nagaland Governor Nand Kishore Yadav, who said improved hospitality facilities could help the state make better use of its cultural heritage, festivals and natural attractions while creating economic opportunities for local communities. Addressing the inauguration ceremony, Yadav emphasised that tourism development should extend beyond bringing visitors to the state and deliver tangible benefits to residents. “Tourism is not merely about attracting visitors; it is about creating

meaningful experiences while ensuring that local communities benefit from the opportunities tourism generates,” he said. The Governor highlighted the potential of hospitality investment to create jobs, promote entrepreneurship and support local products. He also stressed the importance of maintaining high standards of service, cleanliness and safety to strengthen Nagaland's appeal among domestic and international travellers. Kohima, with its cultural significance and proximity to several major tourist destinations, is expected to benefit from the additional premium accommodation, particularly during the annual Hornbill Festival. Government looks to attract private investment. Nagaland Tourism and Higher Education Minister Temjen Imna Along described the hotel as an important addition to the state's

hospitality sector, expressing hope that the development would encourage further private investment and contribute to government revenue. Along said the state government and the Tourism Department would work with the hotel group to support the growth of the sector and encourage businesses to participate in Nagaland's economic development. The property marks the entry of Shillong-founded Polo Hotels Group into Nagaland. Established in 1981, the group operates hospitality properties in Meghalaya, Tripura and Kolkata. The hotel's opening comes as Nagaland seeks to strengthen tourism infrastructure and improve its capacity to accommodate visitors looking for higher-end facilities. Naga culture at the centre of the design. Beyond accommodation, the property incorporates elements of Naga cultural heritage into its interiors and

architecture. Traditional artwork, woven textiles and design features inspired by local community structures form part of the hotel's identity. Its facilities include an infinity pool overlooking the surrounding landscape, rooms with views of Kohima and the valley, and a restaurant serving Indian, Oriental and Western cuisine. A seven-course Naga menu has also been introduced to showcase the region's culinary traditions. Deval Tibrewalla, chief executive officer and whole-time director of Polo Hotels Group, said most employees at the Kohima property were local residents. He added that the group intended to source products from local weavers, artists, farmers and carpenters, potentially opening up additional opportunities for artisans and small businesses. The approach is aimed at linking

Woman Found Dead in Lumding Home; Head Injuries, Missing Mobile Phone Under Probe



LUMDING

A 35-year-old woman was found dead inside a house in the Kalibari Shantipara area of Ward No. 2 in Assam's Lumding on Sunday morning, with reported injury marks on her face and head and her mobile phone missing from the premises. The deceased was identified as Tara Kurmi. Police reached the spot after receiving information about the incident and initiated an investigation to determine the circumstances surrounding her death. The injury marks on Kurmi's face and head have raised questions about the events leading up to her death. The reported absence of her mobile phone has also emerged as a point of concern, although it is not yet clear when or how the device went missing. The cause of death has not been officially established, and the sequence of events remains unclear. Sister says family unaware of what happened. Kurmi's sister said the family had no clear information about what had happened before the incident. According to her account, she rushed to the house after receiving

a telephone call informing her that Kurmi was not waking up. “When I got the call saying that my sister was not waking up, I came home and found her dead. We don't know what happened. I don't doubt anyone,” she said. She also said Kurmi had a son and that her husband lived in Bokajan. A local resident said information about the incident was received between 10.30 am and 11 am on Sunday. The resident went to check on Kurmi after learning that she was unresponsive. “I got a call around 10.30 to 11 in the morning saying that she wasn't waking up, so I came and checked on her. She was dead,” the resident said. Police investigation underway. Police are investigating the case to establish the cause of death and reconstruct the events preceding the discovery of the body. The reported injuries and missing mobile phone remain details requiring clarification as part of the investigation. No conclusion has been established regarding the circumstances of Kurmi's death. Further details are awaited from the police as the investigation progresses.

‘INDIA Bloc Has No Common Ideology, Won't Last Long’: Tripura CM Manik Saha

AGARTALA

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha questioned the political cohesion of the opposition INDIA bloc, alleging that its constituent parties lack a common ideology and have come together primarily to challenge the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Speaking to reporters on October 25, Saha expressed confidence that the opposition alliance would not pose a significant challenge to the BJP in the forthcoming urban local body elections in Tripura. “We do not call it the INDIA alliance; we call it the INDI alliance. They have no common principles. Each party has its own ideology and agenda. They have come together only because they are against the BJP. Such an alliance cannot sustain itself for long,” Saha said. The chief minister alleged that opposition parties were attempting to unite against the BJP without presenting a common political vision or a shared agenda for governance. He maintained that voters understood the opposition's political strategy and would not be swayed by what he de-



scribed as an attempt to mislead the public. Saha also questioned the political consistency of the opposition leadership, referring to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and the party's associations with other opposition groups. He further criticised the opposition's functioning in Parliament, raising doubts about the effectiveness of the alliance. Turning to the forthcoming urban local body elections, Saha asserted that the INDIA bloc's political cooper-

ation would not significantly affect the BJP's electoral prospects in the state. He expressed confidence that the BJP would secure a comfortable victory, dismissing the opposition alliance as a serious electoral threat. “Let them continue with their political activities. There is no reason for us to be concerned,” the chief minister said. The remarks come as opposition parties seek to coordinate their political activities against the BJP at both the national and state levels. The IN-

DIA bloc brings together parties with different political backgrounds and ideological positions, with electoral cooperation against the BJP serving as a key factor behind its formation. Saha's comments underline the BJP's strategy of questioning the durability and ideological coherence of the opposition alliance ahead of the local body polls. The electoral contest in Tripura will test the parties' organisational strength and their ability to translate political alliances into votes.

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Congress banked the powerful, we banked the poor: PM Modi



BHUBANESWAR
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday launched a scathing attack on the Congress saying, before 2014, a different kind of phone banking system was operating in the country, which was available only to a handful of people, either from the party or well connected with the powerful.

Inaugurating the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Data Centre and Cybersecurity Training Institute at Infovalley-II in Jatni, Modi said, bank loans worth thousands of crores of rupees were given through phone banking to certain Congress leaders and people with whom they had connections. “The poor and middle class families needed a guarantor to open a bank account. But in the phone banking scheme of the Congress, thousands of crores of rupees were available for the rich at any time. As a result of this mismanagement, India’s banking system was hit by NPAs. The banking system was on the verge of collapse,” he said. He said banks were nationalised in the 1960s and 1970s in the name of helping the poor. Yet, until 2014, more than half of the country’s population remained outside the banking ecosystem. Products such as bank loans were a distant dream even for the middle class. Poor people, small farmers and landless women could

not even imagine accessing them, he said. Referring to former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi’s observation that only 15 paise of every rupee sent from Delhi reached beneficiaries, Modi said direct benefit transfers had enabled the intended amounts to reach beneficiaries directly. More than 59 crore Jan Dhan accounts have enabled direct transfers of government benefits to beneficiaries, eliminating leakages in welfare delivery. Schemes such as MUDRA, PMSVANidhi and PM Vishwakarma have extended formal credit to small entrepreneurs, street vendors and traditional artisans. Today, digital banking in India has connected everyone with 24-hour banking services, he said. “The NDA government has adopted a model of pro-people, proactive and good governance. For us, development means balanced development of India, ensuring that villages and smaller cities also have the opportunities. Our goal is to provide better connectivity to remote areas and ensure that poor families have access to facilities which allow them to live with dignity. Our sincere and constant efforts reassure every citizen that they will not be left behind in the journey of development,” Modi said. The prime minister said in the recent years, the systems India has established and the new ecosystem developed

through Digital India have taken banking services to every citizen of the country. “India’s banking sector has become one of the strongest in the world,” he added. The PM said with the blessings of Mahaprabhu, Bhubaneswar is now giving a new institution to New India. He described the RBI Data Centre and Cybersecurity Training Institute as a major step towards strengthening the country’s financial infrastructure and bolstering its defences against rising cyber threats.

He said India’s growing economic strength made it imperative to protect its financial infrastructure from cyber-criminals and cyber terrorists. “Today, wars are not fought with weapons. A country can be weakened by attacking its economy,” Modi said and added that modern infrastructure and skilled human resources are essential to tackle the changing nature of cyber threats.

The PM said the RBI’s new facilities reflected the government’s focus on making banking more efficient, reliable and accessible in the coming decades. “The past decade was devoted to taking banking to people who were deprived of it. The coming decade will be about making banking more efficient, reliable and secure,” he said. The prime minister also emphasised that Odisha is becoming a growth engine for a developed India. The state is expanding beyond its traditional strength in mineral-based industries and building a new ecosystem in semiconductors, electronics, data centres and advanced computing.

“Odisha is going to write a new future, from mines to microchips,” he said, adding that emerging investments in technology and computing will create opportunities for the state’s youth.

NEW DELHI

Amid ongoing Congress-led Opposition protests across the country, particularly in Delhi, the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) on Sunday launched a nationwide youth outreach campaign, ‘Arajakta Hatao, Loktantra Bachao’ (Remove Anarchy, Save Democracy), which will continue until November 30.

The campaign aims to engage young citizens in meaningful discussions on democracy, counter misinformation and encourage informed participation in nation-building. The BJP said the initiative would also seek to counter what it described as the Opposition’s false narratives on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and other issues.

To mark the launch, BJYM state units organised the ‘Mann Ki Baat Yuvaon ke Saath’ programme, inviting young professionals to listen to Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s monthly radio broadcast, Mann Ki Baat, followed by discussions on national development and youth participation.

“These interactive sessions were held across more than 600 locations nationwide, with over 50,000 young professionals participating in the programme, across all the states and districts of the Nation. The session involved discussion on the role of professionals in achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat and discussion on the opportunities created by the Modi government across various fields was also held”, the BJP said in a statement issued late on Sunday evening.

As part of the nationwide campaign, BJYM will organise essay-writing competitions, quizzes, elocution contests and more than 100 ‘Viksit Bharat Yuva Samwad’ town hall programmes across India.

“These town halls will bring together young people to discuss on national issues, share their aspirations and understand their role in shaping the country’s future”, the BJP said.

BJYM youth leaders will also visit colleges and educational institutions across the country to interact directly with students, young professionals and aspiring leaders.

“These interactions will focus on



addressing misconceptions surrounding democratic institutions and the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. Through fact-based discussions and direct engagement, the initiative seeks to counter misinformation and misleading narratives being propagated by the opposition and promote a better-informed understanding of democratic processes”, said the BJP.

The campaign will also feature one-to-one interactions between youth icons, influencers and students. These engagements will provide a platform to examine claims circulating in the public domain, clarify misinformation and encourage young people to critically assess information before accepting or sharing it.

On the inaugural day of this campaign, major ‘Viksit Bharat Yuva Samwad’ town hall programmes were organised in Vadodara in Gujarat, Dhule in Maharashtra and Rohtak in Haryana, drawing thousands of young participants from diverse academic and professional backgrounds, with around 1,000 attendees at each venue. The programmes brought together

students, UPSC aspirants, research scholars, young professionals and others for discussions on national priorities, democratic awareness, youth empowerment and their contribution to the vision of Viksit Bharat.

In Vadodara, thousands of young people participated in the programme addressed by BJYM National President Dr Hemang Joshi. The event was also attended by Jayprakash Soni, State President of BJP Gujarat, who joined the interaction with the youth. The gathering provided an opportunity for participants to discuss national development, democratic awareness and their role in realising the vision of Viksit Bharat.

At Rohtak, the programme featured Ayan Lohchab and Ashu Malik, gold medalists in kabaddi at the 2026 Asian Games. Their sporting achievements served as an example of discipline, perseverance and dedication to the nation.

Dr Archana Gupta, State President of BJP Haryana, was also present at the programme and interacted with young participants on issues of national importance and their role in building

a stronger India.

“These programmes marked the beginning of BJYM’s wider nationwide effort to connect with young citizens through direct dialogue, encourage informed civic participation and strengthen their engagement with the democratic process”, said the BJP in a statement.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Hemang Joshi, National President of BJYM, said “The future of our democracy depends on an informed, aware and responsible youth. Under the BJP’s ‘Arajakta Hatao, Loktantra Bachao’ Abhiyaan, BJYM is committed to reach campuses and communities, addressing young people’s concerns with facts and countering misinformation through meaningful dialogue. Under the leadership of Hon’ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji, India’s youth have been given a clear vision of Viksit Bharat.” He also said “Our endeavour is to empower every young Indian to look beyond misleading narratives, understand national priorities and channel their energy towards constructive action and nation-building.”

INTERNATIONAL

Brazil’s Lula defies odds to defeat Flavio Bolsonaro and secure unprecedented fourth term

BRASÍLIA

Brazil’s leftist President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva pulled off a dramatic comeback on Sunday as he clinched election victory against right-wing senator Flavio Bolsonaro, who trounced him in the first round.

With Lula’s victory, Brazil staved off a conservative wave that has seen numerous countries – such as Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Peru – all shift right, backed by US President Donald Trump.

The leftist icon, who turns 81 on Tuesday, defied all projections to win an unprecedented fourth term.

According to official results, he won 51.7 percent of the votes to 48.2 percent for Flavio Bolsonaro, son of former far-right president Jair Bolsonaro, who had entered election day confident with his lead in the polls.

Since the first direct election following the end of Brazil’s dictatorship in 1989, no candidate who lost the first round had gone on to win the second.

Fireworks and vuvuzelas rang out in Rio de Janeiro, while thousands of people dressed in red, the color of Lula’s Workers’ Party, streamed into the streets of Sao Paulo to celebrate.

In a video posted to social media, the president appeared jumping for joy, wearing red, star-shaped glasses, at a hotel in Sao Paulo, where he is scheduled to speak to the press later.

Flavio Bolsonaro, who is in Brasilia, has yet to react.

In Cinelandia Square, in the heart of Rio, Lula’s supporters were moved to tears.

Julio Canelo, 42, a lawyer hailed a victory for “the entire democratic spectrum.”

“It was the result of the people mobilizing in the streets and online,” he told.

The left swung into action with massive rallies after the first-round defeat, declaring “Never Again Bolsonaro” and revamping a lacklustre social media



strategy.

The abstention rate decreased from the first round, falling from 21 percent to 19 percent.

A bitter campaign marred by scandals and mudslinging laid bare the deep divisions that have remained in the country of over 200 million people over the past decade.

Lula heads into a fourth term with a country divided, with almost half of the nation having rejected him, desperate for change.

Flavio Bolsonaro, 45, pitched himself as more moderate and jovial than his father and managed to galvanize conservatives as well as less ideological voters fed up with crime, the high cost of living and a sense of stagnation.

“We’re in a deep hole, things are dire. People can barely afford to eat – buying meat is out of the question,” said Tereza Cristina Ramos, a 68-year-old retiree, who voted in Rio de Janeiro.

After a campaign marred by scandal and mud-slinging, Sunday’s vote plunged into chaos after a last-minute Supreme Court ruling extending voting by two hours, at the request of Lula who said buses had been pulled from circulation in various cities, barring citizens from voting.

Lula’s re-election marks another remarkable comeback for the man who grew up dirt poor in the northeast, in a family of illiterate farmers.

He rose to the presidency as a work-ing-class hero, taking office for the first time in 2003. He was re-elected in 2006.

Revered for social welfare programs that lifted millions out of poverty, Lula made a dramatic return to office in 2022 elections after a corruption scandal saw him jailed for over 18 months.

The charges, annulled on procedural grounds, have continued to haunt him.

In his third term he has overseen a drop in inflation and unemployment, and

lifted millions out of hunger, but many voters who turned to Flavio Bolsonaro felt gloomy about their economic situation and fed up with crime.

After a campaign marked by fear-mongering on both sides – many voters reported choosing what they considered the lesser evil.

Already one of the world’s oldest leaders, Lula will be 85 by the end of his new term in 2030.

He will thus have spent 16 years in power, following his first stint as president from 2003 through 2010.

Lula is also facing a hostile Congress dominated by the right.

His options are constrained by the economic outlook, with growth expected to slow.

He has also come under renewed pressure to confront rampant security problems in a country plagued by criminal factions that sow terror in working-class neighborhoods.

Blanche says Trump isn’t trying to meddle with Alaska election results by suing over Senate race



WASHINGTON

US Attorney General Todd Blanche on Sunday defended the Trump administration’s lawsuit to block certification of Alaska’s Senate results if Republican incumbent Dan Sullivan loses the race and argued that the legal challenge was a necessary step to avoid confusing voters in the closely watched mid-term race.

US President Donald Trump, who said Friday that he was “the one that said do it,” is not trying to overturn state election results “in any way, shape or form” on the cusp of the Nov. 3 election, Blanche told CNN’s “State of the Union.” “We wish that we didn’t have to do this. We hope for a resolution that works,” Blanche said. Republicans fear that a second candidate on the ballot who is named Dan Sullivan — a retired teacher and school administrator from the tiny fishing community of Petersburg — could siphon away votes from the senator and tip the outcome in favor of Democrat Mary Peltola, a former congress-woman.

A day after the lawsuit

was filed on Thursday, Peltola called it “just flagrant, flagrant corruption in my opinion” and a diversion tactic by Republicans. Alaska’s other Republican senator, Lisa Murkowski, also criticized the lawsuit in a social media post.

Trump told reporters on Sunday that he believed the ballot was illegal because it was unfair and that Sen. Sullivan should be identified to voters as the sitting senator.

“At least let him use the name Sen. Dan Sullivan as opposed to incumbent, because a lot of people don’t know what incumbent means,” Trump said.

Alaskan voters will see “Dan S. Sullivan” identified as a “registered Republican” and “incumbent” on their ballots, while “Daniel J. Sullivan Jr.” will not have a party affiliation.

Blanche represented Trump as a personal attorney before the Republican president appointed him to lead the Department of Justice, which filed the lawsuit in Alaska. Blanche defended Trump in his election inference case before voters elected Trump to a second White House term, effectively ending the crim-

inal prosecution.

Blanche told CNN host Dana Bash that it was “crazy” for her to ask him if Trump was trying to lay the groundwork for the same sort of election challenges that occurred before a mob of his supporters stormed the US Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

“We are not doing anything improper. We’re not doing anything we’re not allowed to do. And we have to let the process play out,” Blanche said. “But I do think it’s important for the American people to understand that we are not — (and) President Trump is not — trying to take over a state election in any way shape or form.”

The lawsuit, he told CBS’ “Face the Nation,” is meant to “put guardrails in place” to preserve possible evidence of voter confusion at the polls. “It’s not saying, ‘Don’t certify.’ It’s saying, ‘If a court ultimately determines that it was decided because of confusion and not the will of the voters, then we do not think the states should certify.’ And that’s consistent with federal law and consistent with even Alaskan law, if that happens,” he said.

50 crore teleconsultations, Northeast’s millet revival, IIT Madras brain mapping: Modi highlights key achievements in ‘Mann Ki Baat’

From expanding digital healthcare to pioneering brain research and reviving traditional millet cultivation in the Northeast, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday highlighted a range of initiatives reflecting India’s progress in technology, scientific research and community-led development during the 139th episode of his monthly radio programme, Mann Ki Baat.

Modi announced that the government’s E-Sanjeevani telemedicine initiative had recorded nearly 50 crore consultations, describing the milestone as an example of how technology and the dedication of healthcare professionals could improve access to medical services, particularly in remote areas.

He also highlighted research at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras, where scientists are using the Param Shakti supercomputer to develop high-resolution three-dimensional maps of the human brain. The programme also featured examples of traditional millet cultivation being revived through local entrepreneurship and community participation in Meghalaya and Nagaland.

E-Sanjeevani crosses 50-crore consultation mark

Highlighting the expansion of digital healthcare, Modi said E-Sanjeevani had enabled nearly 50 crore teleconsultations, helping patients access medical advice without always having to travel long distances to hospitals.

“The E-Sanjeevani programme shows how technology can improve lives and make everyday tasks easier,” the Prime Minister said, crediting the achievement to technological capabilities, the commitment of doctors and public trust.

He also pointed to the role of more than 1.9 lakh Ayushman Arogya Mandirs in extending primary healthcare services to communities across the country.

According to Modi, these centres are increasingly serving as local wellness facilities, enabling villagers to access routine medical consultations and health check-ups closer to home. E-Sanjeevani, he said, is contributing to this transformation by connecting patients with healthcare professionals through digital platforms.

IIT Madras researchers map the human brain

Turning to scientific research, the Prime Minister highlighted the work of the Sudha Gopalakrishnan Brain Centre at IIT Madras, which is developing high-resolution digital three-dimensional images of the human brain.

The centre aims to create detailed 3D maps of 100 human brains for in-depth scientific study. Modi described the initiative as a pioneering effort and said the Param Shakti supercomputer was being used to support the computationally intensive research.

He also acknowledged the contribution of industry, government institutions, IIT alumni and the academic community in establishing and supporting the research centre.

The project is expected to contribute to the understanding of the brain’s structure and support further research in neuroscience, although its broader scientific impact will depend on the findings and applications emerging from the work.

Meghalaya’s millet entrepreneurs create new markets

The Prime Minister devoted particular attention to grassroots initiatives in the Northeast, highlighting efforts to restore millet cultivation and develop new markets for traditional crops.

In Khanduli village in Meghalaya’s West Jaintia Hills district, two friends have helped revive interest in millet farming by developing value-added products from the crop.

Modi said the entrepreneurs introduced millet-based cookies, cakes, muffins and baby food, creating new opportunities for farmers by expanding the range of products available to consumers.

The initiative has reportedly increased sales of millet-based products and stimulated demand for the crop, demonstrating how local processing and entrepreneurship can improve the commercial viability of traditional agriculture.

The example also underlines the importance of moving beyond raw agricultural production towards value addition, which can help rural communities retain a greater share of the value generated by their crops.

Farmer’s initiative boosts millet cultivation in Garo Hills

Modi also praised Chekjing Sangma, a farmer from Sadolpara village in Meghalaya’s West Garo Hills district, for adopting modern farming methods to cultivate millets.

According to the Prime Minister,



Sangma’s efforts have helped improve farming prospects while raising awareness within the local community about the crop.

Millets are valued for their nutritional properties and their ability to grow under a range of climatic conditions. Their cultivation can also contribute to agricultural diversification, particularly in areas where farmers face changing weather patterns and pressure on conventional crops.

The initiatives in Meghalaya illustrate how traditional farming knowledge, modern techniques and local processing can work together to strengthen rural livelihoods.

Nagaland village revives millet farming after a decade

The Prime Minister also cited Kezoma village in Nagaland’s Kohima district, where millet cultivation was restarted in 2024 after being discontinued for more than a decade.

The prolonged break had left an entire generation unfamiliar with the traditional crop, Modi said. The community’s decision to resume cultivation marked an effort to restore both agricultural practices and local knowledge.

In 2025, the village organised its first millet festival, providing a platform to celebrate the crop and promote awareness of its importance.

The revival in Kezoma highlights the role of community participation in preserving traditional agriculture. Such initiatives can also create opportunities to promote local food products and strengthen the connection between farming, culture and rural enterprise.

Organ donation highlighted as an act of humanity

Moving beyond technology and agriculture, Modi recalled the decision by the family of Shivani from Narmadapuram in Madhya Pradesh to donate her organs after she died in a road accident.

The Prime Minister praised the family’s decision, saying organ donation could help save lives and contribute to medical research.

“One such act of humanity can bring happiness back into another family. At the same time, it can also make a valuable contribution in research,” he said.

The example was presented as a reminder of the importance of compassion and the potential of organ donation to help patients awaiting life-saving treatment.

Modi pays tribute to fibre-optics pioneer

With October 31 approaching, Modi also paid tribute to Dr Narinder Singh Kapany, the Indian-born scientist widely known as the “Father of Fibre Optics”, ahead of his birth centenary.

Kapany’s pioneering work helped advance the development of fibre-optic technology, which has become fundamental to modern telecommunications and high-speed internet connectivity.

The Prime Minister urged young people to learn about scientists such as Kapany and draw inspiration from their contributions to research and innovation.

October 31 also marks the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, observed across India as Rashtriya Ekta Diwas, or National Unity Day. Modi appealed to citizens to participate enthusiastically in the annual Run for Unity,

saying the event offered an opportunity to reaffirm national solidarity.

‘Vocal for Local’ opens international marketsIn a related appeal ahead of the festive season, Modi urged consumers to prioritise locally made products, saying the growing preference for indigenous goods was helping Indian farmers and rural artisans reach international markets.

He cited examples of Bihar’s Purnia makhana reaching Greece and pulses from Karnataka’s Kalaburagi finding a market in the Maldives.

The Prime Minister said the Vocal for Local initiative was helping connect Indian producers with overseas consumers and called on people

to support domestic products while shopping for Diwali and Chhath.

The message complemented the broader themes of the broadcast, which highlighted how digital platforms, scientific innovation, agricultural entrepreneurship and community participation could contribute to development.

Through examples spanning healthcare, neuroscience, agriculture and social responsibility, the 139th episode of Mann Ki Baat focused on initiatives that the Prime Minister said reflected India’s growing technological capabilities and the contribution of local communities to the country’s development.

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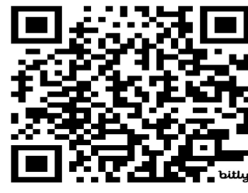
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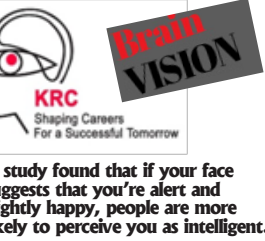
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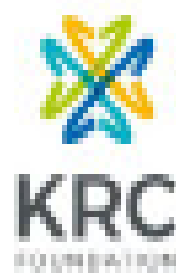


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