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PERSPECTIVE

A study found that those who go out alone and those who go out in a group have the same amount of fun.

GST Council Recommends GST Exemption for Shared Helicopter Rides in Northeast

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHO SAID WHAT



For decades, Navi Pillay has been a champion of international law and human rights, and a steadfast, independent voice of justice amidst some of the most historic international legal cases of our time.

I warmly congratulate her on being awarded the 2026 Nobel Peace Prize.
~ Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General, United Nations

BJP’s Devashish Sharma Defeats AIUDF Chief Badruddin Ajmal by Over 1.41 Lakh Votes in Nagaon

NAGAON

The BJP scored a decisive victory in the Nagaon Lok Sabha by-election, with party candidate Devashish Sharma defeating AIUDF chief Badruddin Ajmal by 1,41,916 votes, according to the declared results.

Sharma secured 7,13,622 votes, while Ajmal polled 5,70,413. Congress candidate Sibamoni Bora finished third with 1,28,743 votes.

The result triggered celebrations among BJP workers and supporters in Nagaon town and other parts of the district on Friday.

Hundreds of party supporters gathered outside the BJP office in Nagaon after the results were announced, raising slogans in support of the party and waving saffron flags. Celebrations included the distribution of coloured powder, firecrackers and drumbeats, followed by a victory procession through the town.

Local BJP leaders credited the victory to the efforts of party workers and public support, claiming that voters had backed the party's development agenda and promise of stable governance.

The result represents a significant electoral setback for the Congress in Nagaon, while the BJP has portrayed



Sharma's victory as an endorsement of its political platform and development initiatives.

The substantial margin also gives the BJP fresh momentum in its political contest with the Congress and AIUDF in Assam.

9. Manipur BJP Mahila Morcha Demands Congress MP Bimol Akoijam's Resignation Over JNU Allegations

State BJP chief A. Sharda Devi leads

protest; party seeks disciplinary action after allegations involving 11 students at Jawaharlal Nehru University

Imphal, October 9: The Manipur BJP Mahila Morcha staged a protest on Friday demanding the resignation of Congress MP Bimol Akoijam following allegations of sexual harassment involving 11 students at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU).

The demonstration was led by A. Sharda Devi, president of the BJP's Manipur unit and a Rajya Sabha MP. Protesters also called on the Congress leadership to take disciplinary action against Akoijam in response to the allegations and the university's internal committee recommendations.

Speaking to reporters, Sharda Devi said the MP should resign voluntarily on moral grounds.

"Bimol Akoijam should be ashamed of himself. He should resign voluntarily. The Congress should also take action against him," she said.

Sharda Devi called for the matter to be addressed in accordance with the law following reports of action by the university authorities on the basis of the internal committee's recommendations.

She also appealed to Sonia Gandhi

and Priyanka Gandhi to intervene, urging women leaders in the Congress to speak out and demand accountability.

Emphasising the safety of students in educational institutions, Sharda Devi said families send their children to universities in the hope that they will receive an education and build their futures. Allegations of sexual harassment, she said, naturally raise concerns among students and their families.

She also referred to a defamation case reportedly filed by Republic TV against Akoijam and questioned the MP's position in light of the recent developments.

Sharda Devi said the Mahila Morcha would continue its campaign for the MP's resignation and appropriate action. She expressed solidarity with the alleged victims and called for justice for the students concerned.

Akoijam represents the Inner Manipur Lok Sabha constituency. The controversy surrounding the JNU allegations has intensified the political confrontation between the BJP and Congress in the state.

The allegations and the university committee's recommendations, however, should be distinguished from a final determination of criminal liability.



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Dr. Bimol Akoijam Calls JNU Dismissal a ‘Political Witch Hunt’, Alleges Attempt to Silence Him

‘No one can intimidate me through this ‘low-level politics’ or force me to back down, but I will fight till I die for my land and my people’.



BISWADEEP GUPTA
AIZAWL:Addressing a press conference following his sudden termination from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Lok Sabha MP and professor Dr. Angomcha Bimol Akoijam strongly rejected the administration's actions, describing the dismissal as a politically motivated “witch hunt” aimed at conducting a media trial and silencing his voice on the Manipur crisis in Parliament.

In a late-night press conference here in Imphal, Member of Parliament Dr. Angomcha Bimol Akoijam strongly rejected recent dismissal actions by JNU,

labelling them as a politically motivated “witch hunt”, procedural violations & broken rules.

In the briefing, Dr. Akoijam and Congress representatives detailed significant procedural lapses and violations of statutory due process committed by the university administration. Dr. Akoijam stated that the university violated basic principles of natural justice by denying him the standard right to respond to the Internal Committee's (IC) final inquiry report. The inquiry concluded only a day prior, and the termination order was issued almost immediately without giving him the requisite opportunity or the mandatory thirty-day window to inspect the final findings and present a written defence.

Under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (POSH) Act, 2013 and the Central Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules, 1965, governing university faculty, both parties are legally entitled to receive copies of the inquiry report.

The charged officer must be given

an opportunity to submit formal representations against the findings before the Disciplinary Authority decides on major penalties (such as dismissal). Dr. Akoijam stressed that this due process was bypassed in haste to execute a pre-determined political directive.

Emphasising that the issue was leaked to trigger a public media trial and damage his reputation, Dr. Akoijam has already initiated legal proceedings—including a ₹45-crore civil defamation suit against select media entities.

Dr. Bimol, sworn in the name of his parents, said that these are lies and a witch hunt. He echoed that as a law-abiding citizen, he will follow the law, ‘unlike them’. He will follow the judicial course of action to get justice not only for himself but for his people, as it is an insult!

He said, ‘No one can intimidate me through this ‘low-level politics’ or force me to back down, but I will fight till I die for my land and my people’.

Dr. Akoijam reiterated that neither the media trials nor institutional pres-

sure would deter him from his parliamentary responsibilities, asserting that he will continue to demand accountability and raise the Manipur crisis in the Lok Sabha.

During the press conference, Dr. Angomcha Bimol Akoijam directed a stern warning at the BJP, RSS, and the central government, cautioning them against weaponising educational institutions and using backdoor tactics to undermine political dissent.

“Let Them Come Without Any Mask”.

Calling out what he termed political cowardice, Dr. Akoijam challenged the ruling establishment to stop hiding behind administrative machinery, institutional committees, and selective media leaks. He remarked: “Thank God they have come out with this kind of thing. Now, let them come out without any mask. I will wait and see how things unfold.” He challenged his political opponents to confront him directly in the political and parliamentary arena instead of orchestrating proxy character

assassinations.

Futile Attempt to Silence the Manipur Crisis:

He warned the BJP that their strategy to muzzle him would completely backfire. Stressing that the controversy was engineered to neutralise his vocal stance on the ongoing ethnic violence and governance failures in Manipur, Dr. Akoijam asserted that no amount of institutional coercion, targeted smear campaigns, or state-backed intimidation would silence him from demanding accountability inside Parliament.

Counter-Consequences for Orchestrated Media Trials:

Dr. Akoijam cautioned that those manufacturing and spreading defamatory leaks would face severe legal repercussions. He signalled that neither he nor his supporters would be intimidated by trial-by-media setups, warning that every attempt to bypass constitutional safeguards and damage his public standing would be fought tooth and nail in the courts and before the public.

Silchar wakes up to Mahalaya Crowds throng Barak ghats as Devi Paksha begins



OUR CORRESPONDENT
SILCHAR:As the first light of dawn broke over the Barak River on Saturday, thousands of devotees flocked to the twin bridges and ghats of Silchar, ushering in Mahalaya with traditional rituals and festive fervour.

The day marks the end of Pitru Paksha and the beginning of Devi Paksha, signalling the countdown to Durga Puja. Mahalaya 2026 falls on Saturday, October 10 (Ashwin Krishna Amavasya), with the Amavasya tithi prevailing through the day.

Long before sunrise, families made their way to the historic Sadarghat Bridge and the newer Annapurna Ghat, continuing an age-old local tradition. Men performed tarpan-offering water, sesame seeds and prayers to ancestors-along the riverbanks while the iconic Mahishasura Mardini (Chandipath) in the voice of the late Birendra Krishna Bhadra played from loudspeakers and homes across the city. Early reports and local updates described large gatherings transforming the bridges into a sea of people, a familiar sight that has defined Silchar's Mahalaya for decades. The atmosphere blended quiet reverence for forefathers with the rising excitement of Maa Durga's approaching homecoming.

In Silchar, the dual character of the day was on full display: solemn ancestral rites at the river and the unmistakable stirrings of the festive season. Shops began opening earlier than usual, confectioners prepared special sweets, and conversations turned to pandal preparations and the upcoming five-day celebration that formally begins with Maha Shashthi on October 16.

Weather remained favourable for the morning gatherings, allowing devotees to complete their rituals comfortably. As the sun rose higher over the Barak, the city settled into the quiet anticipation that always follows Mahalaya-the sacred bridge between remembrance and celebration.

Woman Killed in Firing During Protest in Manipur’s Kamjong District

IMPHAL

A woman was allegedly shot dead during a protest in Chassad village in Manipur's Kamjong district on Friday night, triggering tension in the area.

The deceased was identified as Domkhonei Thouthang, wife of Lallenmang Thouthang and a mother of five.

According to local sources, the incident occurred during a demonstration against the alleged arrest and detention of several volunteers associated with the village defence group.

The firing reportedly took place at around 9pm. Domkhonei, who sustained critical injuries, died at approximately 9.40 pm, according to reports.

The incident has heightened tensions in Chassad, where concerns had already been mounting over the alleged detention of village volunteers.

However, the circumstances surrounding the shooting remain unclear. It has not been established who opened fire, what prompted the shooting or how the confrontation unfolded.

No immediate official statement from the administration was available on the incident.

Further details are awaited as questions remain over the sequence of events and the circumstances that led to the woman's death.





কেআরসি টাইমস

স্টে এনরিচড

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(পূর্ব ও উত্তর-পূর্ব ভারত সংস্করণ)

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US Green Card Freeze Puts Indian IT on Trial Again

Washington’s suspension of permanent residency processing for eight technology companies raises concerns over due process, political timing and the vulnerability of Indian professionals caught in America’s immigration system.

The latest US crackdown on employment-based immigration has once again exposed the uncertainty facing Indian technology companies and their workers in America. On Thursday, the Trump administration suspended green-card processing under the Permanent Labour Certification programme, or PERM, for eight companies, including Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Infosys, Wipro and HCL. Microsoft, Adobe, Cognizant and Capgemini are also affected. The decision halts the filing of new applications and the processing of pending cases involving these employers, although existing H-1B visas and approved petitions remain unaffected.

The administration has cited suspected fraud in the H-1B and PERM systems as the reason for the action. An investigation by the Labour Department’s inspector general, launched in July alongside the White House Fraud Task Force, is examining alleged abuses. Ensuring that employers comply with immigration rules is a legitimate responsibility of the government. But enforcement must rest on identifiable evidence, transparent procedures and a clear legal basis. A suspension is not proof of guilt, and an allegation cannot substitute for a finding of wrongdoing.

The absence of publicly disclosed charges against the eight companies, or a clearly articulated account of the specific violations attributed to them, makes the decision particularly troubling. If the authorities have credible evidence of fraud, they should establish the grounds for action and allow the affected employers a fair opportunity to respond. A measure with consequences for businesses and thousands of individual careers cannot be justified by suspicion alone.

The timing has also invited scrutiny. With the November 3 midterm elections approaching, the administration’s emphasis on prioritising American workers fits neatly into a political climate shaped by anxiety over jobs, layoffs and outsourcing. Vice President JD Vance’s criticism of Microsoft over its reported 6,000 layoffs in 2025 reinforces that message. The administration may have a genuine enforcement case to pursue, but the proximity of the announcement to the elections inevitably raises questions about whether immigration policy is also being used to demonstrate political toughness.

The distinction matters. Protecting domestic employment and enforcing immigration law are valid policy objectives. Turning foreign companies into convenient symbols of job insecurity, however, does little to explain the complex forces behind corporate restructuring, automation and changing labour demand. Nor does it establish that a particular employer has violated the law. An election calendar must not become a substitute for due process.

For India’s information technology industry, the immediate financial impact may be more limited than the headlines suggest. TCS has indicated that its PERM filings over the past two years were in single digits, while industry body Nasscom has pointed out that only a small proportion of H-1B workers obtain permanent residency through this route. The reported market response has also been relatively restrained, with IT stocks rising on Friday amid other factors, including TCS’s quarterly results.

India’s major technology companies have built their business models around a combination of temporary work visas, offshore delivery centres and global client operations. Green cards are important to some employees, but they are not the foundation of the industry’s commercial success. The immediate corporate consequences, therefore, should not be confused with the human cost.

That cost could be considerable for Indian professionals whose applications have been pending for years. Indian applicants already face long waits for employment-based permanent residency because of country-specific limits and heavy demand. A further suspension can leave workers uncertain about their long-term future, career choices and family plans. Some may change employers, where legally and practically possible; others may abandon the process or return to India. The freeze may be a regulatory action against employers, but its consequences extend far beyond corporate offices.

The legal question is equally important. Section 656.31(b) of the Labour Department’s regulations allows PERM processing to be suspended in certain circumstances while an employer is under investigation for possible fraud. Such a measure is subject to procedural and temporal limits, including an initial period of up to 180 days, with possible extensions while an investigation continues. The precise legal basis for the present action, and how it applies to each company, will be central to any challenge.

The authorities must be able to demonstrate that the suspensions are grounded in genuine investigations and are consistent with the applicable rules. If the decisions lack a sufficient factual or legal explanation, the affected companies could seek judicial review under the Administrative Procedure Act, arguing that the action is arbitrary or inadequately reasoned. Litigation would not automatically restore processing, but it could force the administration to explain its decisions under legal scrutiny.

Indian technology companies, meanwhile, should treat the episode as another warning against excessive dependence on the immigration policies of any one country. Expanding local recruitment in the United States is one practical response. TCS’s plan to hire 15,000 American workers over five years is a step in that direction, and other companies should consider comparable commitments based on their business requirements. Local hiring can strengthen relationships with clients and reduce exposure to political attacks over overseas recruitment.

Compliance must also become more rigorous. Employers need to ensure that recruitment processes are genuine, properly documented and consistent with the rules. The Cloudera case offers a reminder that labour certification cannot be treated as a routine administrative hurdle divorced from ordinary hiring practices. Stronger internal audits and transparent procedures would help companies defend themselves against legitimate scrutiny.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“I do not live for what the world thinks of me, but for what I think of myself.”
- Jack London

INDIA’S AMBITIONS
HOSTAGE TO GEOPOLITICS

PARUL CHANDRA

US sanctions and escalating regional tensions have stalled India’s ambitions for Iran’s Chabahar port, a vital gateway to Afghanistan, Central Asia and beyond. Despite mounting obstacles, New Delhi is betting on strategic patience to keep its regional connectivity vision alive.

The peaks and troughs that have come to define the development of Iran’s strategically located Chabahar port offer a stark reminder of how geopolitics can hamper major infrastructure projects. Vital for Iran, the port is also crucial for India, which views it as a strategic anchor for its own sub-regional connectivity efforts.

The Chabahar project, however, remains severely hobbled by an ever-shifting global landscape. Over the years, the port’s development and operational use have been crippled by unilateral US sanctions stemming from long-drawn Washington-Tehran tensions. The recent completion of a key rail link between Chabahar and Iranshahr, part of the larger planned 630-km line extending to Zahedan near the Afghan border, should have given India cause for cheer. But use of this rail link by India will have to wait, with Chabahar under sanctions.

Construction of the Chabahar-Iranshahr-Zahedan rail link has also suffered from prolonged delays. But Iran now says the entire Chabahar-Zahedan rail link, designed to carry 7.7 million tonnes of freight and 2.2 million passengers annually, will be ready by January next year. Once operational, this rail link could be a game-changer for regional connectivity and commerce.

Chabahar and Iranshahr are key cities in its Sistan and Baluchistan province, which shares long, porous borders with both Pakistan and Afghanistan, while Zahedan is its capital. Iran is also hopeful that the Chabahar

connectivity project will bring economic prosperity to this underdeveloped province.

Yet, India’s ability to utilise this infrastructure remains on hold. Amid Iran’s ongoing conflict with the US and Israel, the Strait of Hormuz, which is so vital for global trade and commerce, has been under a blockade. First imposed by the Iranians after military strikes by the US and Israel, Washington also initiated a naval blockade in retaliation. With the Strait of Hormuz becoming a choke point, Chabahar, Iran’s only oceanic port located close to the Gulf of Oman and overlooking the Indian Ocean, can be an alternative trading gateway. For India, Chabahar port also offers an invaluable sea-land route to landlocked Afghanistan, Central Asian countries and even Europe, effectively bypassing its hostile neighbour Pakistan and giving it the much-needed access to countries in its extended neighbourhood and beyond. With the likelihood of Pakistan allowing transit rights to India in the foreseeable future being remote, Chabahar seems a viable alternative route to Afghanistan and beyond. The denial of transit rights by Pakistan found indirect mention by a senior Indian diplomat, who was recently in Islamabad to participate in the SCO coordinators’ meet, where he stressed the need for regional connectivity.

To secure this strategic foothold, India has assisted Iran in developing the port’s Shahid Beheshti terminal. However, the US sanctions have seriously impacted India’s ambitions to use the Iranian port. The waiver India had obtained for using the port lapsed on April 26 this year. The Trump administration, which has been riding roughshod over Indian interests, threatening tariffs of up to 100 per cent for purchasing Russian oil being one such instance, did not grant a further extension to the waiver. India had used the

previous waiver to good effect, providing humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan.

India, however, was forced to withdraw hastily from operating the Shahid Beheshti terminal in Chabahar for fear of inviting US sanctions.

This has been a huge setback for India’s regional connectivity ambitions. Amid heightened US-Iran tensions, it’s unlikely that a sanctions waiver will come again anytime soon. While Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, during his visit to India last month, pressed upon New Delhi to increase its investments in Chabahar and deepen economic ties with his country, US sanctions preclude any such thing happening for now.

The ongoing sanctions on this strategic connectivity project are part of US strategy to apply maximum pressure on an adversary that has, over the decades, refused to be cowed down by Washington’s arm-twisting tactics. Beyond trade access, Chabahar for India can serve as a strategic counterweight to Pakistan’s Gwadar port, which is located just 140 km away and has been built with China’s assistance. India has justifiable concerns about China actively using Gwadar as a military outpost.

In the long term, India also envisions Chabahar as the maritime anchor for the ambitious International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), a multi-modal transport network to access regions beyond its extended neighbourhood, right up to St. Petersburg in Russia and beyond.

Backed by India, Iran and Russia, the INSTC project, however, also remains a challenging one, given the geostrategic turmoil that is currently at play. The continuing Russia-Ukraine war and the consequent nose-dive in Moscow’s relations with European countries are further setbacks for this ambitious connectivity project.

Despite all these formidable obstacles, India has demonstrated strategic patience, maintaining its long-term investment in Chabahar in the hope that shifting geopolitical tides will eventually allow the project to realise its full potential. New Delhi is keeping its fingers crossed.

Chabahar and Iranshahr are key cities in Iran’s Sistan-Baluchistan province, which shares long, porous borders with both Pakistan and Afghanistan, while Zahedan is its capital. Iran is also hopeful that the Chabahar connectivity project will bring economic prosperity to this underdeveloped province.

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

Congress MP from Manipur and JNU professor Angomcha Bimol Akoijam has been sacked by Jawaharlal Nehru University with immediate effect after being held guilty by the Internal Committee in sexual harassment cases involving eleven girl students. Eleven students had to go through this ordeal inside an academic institution by a sitting lawmaker of the Congress party. Where is Rahul Gandhi today? Where is Priyanka Gandhi Vadra now? What happened to big slogans like “Ladki hoon, lad sakti hoon”? Where is the gang that preaches about “Smashing The Patriarchy” day and night on social media? When their own Member of Parliament faces such grave charges and gets terminated from university service, there is total silence from the top Congress leadership. Will Rahul Gandhi expel this MP immediately, or do women safety slogans apply only when playing politics against opponents? Hypocrisy of the highest order. The nation is watching!
~ Sambit Patra, MP & National Spokesperson, BJP



Manipur CM Pushes Digital Reforms to Speed Up Maternity Benefits

NEW DELHI

Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh has called for greater use of technology, improved interdepartmental coordination and stronger grievance-redressal mechanisms to ensure that eligible pregnant and lactating women receive maternity benefits without unnecessary delays.

Speaking at a national departmental conference organised by the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development in New Delhi, Singh outlined Manipur's initiatives and technology-based measures for implementing the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY).

The two-day conference began on October 8 and concluded on Friday, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi attending the closing session.

PMMVY is a direct-benefit scheme that provides financial assistance to eligible pregnant and lactating women, particularly those from economically vulnerable households. It also seeks to promote the welfare of mothers and address gender-related disadvantages.

Singh said more than 4.76 crore beneficiaries across the country had received over Rs 21,800 crore directly in their bank accounts under the scheme.

He identified disbursing benefits within 30 days of application as an

important target, stressing that coordination between departments and frontline workers was essential to prevent avoidable delays.

Technology and accountability The chief minister highlighted Aadhaar-based facial authentication for beneficiary verification, advance identification of potential beneficiaries through the Poshan Tracker and a three-tier grievance-redressal mechanism.

He also pointed to the scheme's search-and-track facility, which enables applicants to monitor the status of their applications and payments.

According to Singh, these measures can improve transparency, reduce inconvenience for beneficiaries

and make delivery of financial assistance more efficient.

Assam's coordination model highlighted

Sharing practices adopted by different states, Singh described Assam's administrative coordination model as a useful example. Assam has established a dedicated team to coordinate with the Finance Department on the scheme's day-to-day implementation.

He also cited monthly district and scheme-level performance reports in Jharkhand, daily open-discussion sessions to resolve implementation problems in Chhattisgarh, and data-based digital documentation initiatives involving Anganwadi

workers and supervisory officials in Maharashtra.

Proposes integration with health databases

Singh proposed closer integration between PMMVY's digital platform and databases maintained by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

He said sharing information on the last menstrual period, antenatal check-ups, childbirth and immunisation could reduce repeated documentation and simplify the application process.

The chief minister also advocated reviewing eligibility criteria to extend assistance to more vulnerable and disadvantaged women.

He urged the ministry to translate PMMVY guidelines into regional languages and distribute them widely to improve training for Anganwadi workers and officials responsible for implementation.

The conference also discussed moving the scheme's payment mechanism to the SNA-SPARSH system and integrating its portal with the financial management systems of states and Union Territories.

Singh said stronger coordination, improved digital infrastructure, timely grievance resolution and the adoption of successful practices from other states were essential to ensuring that no eligible woman was deprived of maternity benefits.

Mahalaya Morning Walk Draws Crowds in Assam's Dhubri



DHUBRI

Chants from the Chandi Path and religious hymns filled the streets of Assam's Dhubri town before sunrise on Saturday as devotees and residents joined a procession organised by the Dhubri Town Club to mark Mahalaya.

The procession began at around 5.30 am, drawing a large number of participants and ushering in the festive atmosphere associated with the beginning of Devipaksha and the countdown to Durga Puja.

The early-morning gathering brought together local residents and devotees, who walked through the town amid devotional recitations and prayers.

Shantanu Banik, assistant secretary of the Dhubri Town Club, said Mahalaya marks the beginning of Devipaksha and symbolises the arrival of Goddess Durga on earth.

He said the organisers prayed for the goddess to remove evil and negativity and bring peace, prosperity and well-being.

Banik added that the arrival of the goddess had generated an atmosphere of joy and anticipation across Dhubri.

The enthusiastic participation of residents in the procession reflected the town's growing preparations for Durga Puja, with devotional music and chants setting the tone for the festive season.

Bi-plab Deb Says NDA By-Election Wins Send Clear Message to Rahul Gandhi, INDIA Bloc

NEW DELHI

Consecutive NDA victories in by-elections in West Bengal, Assam and Puducherry have sent a clear political message to the opposition, Tripura BJP MP and national general secretary Bi-plab Kumar Deb said on Saturday, urging Rahul Gandhi and the INDIA bloc to learn from the results.

In a statement, Deb said the NDA's electoral success reflected the public's continued confidence in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. He argued that successive victories demonstrated that voters remained firmly behind Modi.

Deb also criticised Rahul Gandhi for questioning constitutional institutions following electoral defeats. Instead of casting doubt on institutions after every loss, the Congress leader should respect the people's verdict, he said.

"Public opinion is supreme in a democracy," Deb maintained, arguing that election results should be accepted as an expression of the electorate's choice. The BJP leader congratulated the party's senior leadership and workers on the electoral victories. He also extended his greetings to West Bengal Chief Minister Suvenud Adhikari, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and Puducherry Chief Minister N. Rangasamy.

Deb acknowledged the contributions of the BJP presidents in the respective states and party workers involved in the election campaigns.

His remarks came amid renewed political sparring between the BJP and the opposition, with the ruling party portraying the by-election results as an endorsement of its leadership and the Congress-led INDIA bloc facing fresh criticism from BJP leaders.

"Stop the Drama, Don't Weaken the Country": Himanta Sarma Targets Rahul Gandhi After Nagaon Win



GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma launched a sharp attack on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi following the BJP's victory in the Nagaon Lok Sabha by-election, accusing him of pursuing politics that undermines

the country's unity, culture and progress.

"Stop the drama. Do not engage in politics that weakens the country," Sarma said on Friday after the election results were announced.

Describing the outcome as a major setback for Gandhi, the

chief minister said the verdict reflected voters' rejection of the Congress leader's political approach.

"This is a major defeat for Rahul Gandhi. It is also a major defeat for his politics," Sarma said.

He further alleged that Gandhi had aligned himself with people who did not want India to

progress. According to the chief minister, the Nagaon verdict conveyed a message that the country's interests must take precedence over individual leaders and political ambitions.

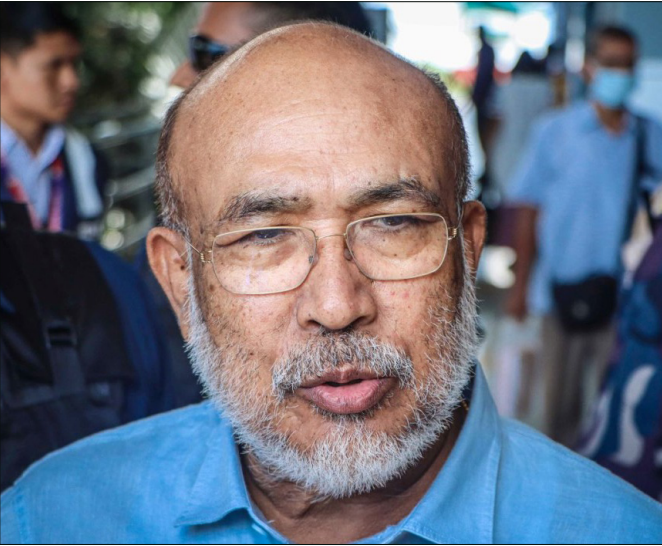
"We have humbly reminded Rahul Gandhi that India is above you. The country comes first. You are not above the country," Sarma said.

The BJP's Devashish Sharma won the Nagaon by-election, defeating AIUDF chief Badruddin Ajmal by a substantial margin. Congress candidate Sibamoni Bora finished third.

The result provided fresh ammunition for the BJP's criticism of the Congress, with Sarma using the victory to challenge Gandhi's political positioning.

The by-election has once again brought the confrontation between the BJP and Congress into focus, as the ruling party seeks to portray the result as a mandate for its leadership and political agenda.

"Listen Carefully": Former Manipur CM Biren Singh Questions Rahul Gandhi Over JNU Action Against Congress MP



IMPHAL

Former Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh has targeted

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over the action taken by Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) against Congress MP

Bimol Akoijam following allegations of sexual harassment.

In a post on X on Friday, Biren Singh addressed Gandhi with the words, "Listen carefully," and questioned whether the Congress leadership would take action against the MP.

Referring to the university's internal committee and its recommendations, the former chief minister argued that political leaders should be held accountable when serious allegations emerge against members of their party. He asked whether Gandhi would act against Akoijam and raised the question of whether the Congress leader should step down as Leader of the Opposition if accountability was not ensured.

Biren Singh also revisited Gandhi's earlier criticism of the Centre over the ethnic violence in Manipur. He referred to the Congress leader's no-confidence

motion against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government and the parliamentary confrontation surrounding the state's situation. The former chief minister alleged that the manner in which the Manipur crisis had been presented internationally had damaged the state's image. He argued that the standards of accountability demanded of political opponents should also apply within one's own party.

The remarks have added to the political confrontation between the BJP and Congress over the JNU controversy.

However, allegations of sexual harassment, recommendations by a university's internal committee and the determination of criminal liability are separate matters. The allegations should not be treated as established criminal guilt in the absence of a final determination.

Langban Tarpon: Manipur Pays Solemn Homage to Conflict Martyrs, Grieving Families Seek Centre's Intervention

Ancestral Heisoi Katpa rituals held across valley localities; retired armyman questions government silence over unending ethnic strife



Quest!

The island of Luzon in the Philippines has a lake, which has an island in it, which has its own lake, which has its own small island in it.

BISWADEEP GUPTA

IMPHAL: On the sacred occasion of Langban Tarpon—observed on the culminating day of the Meitei lunar month of Langban—Manipur re-

membered and paid homage to those who lost their lives in the ethnic strife that erupted on May 3, 2023.

Across the valley districts, families, local clubs, and civil society groups gathered along riverbanks and community ponds to perform Langban Heisoi Katpa (ancestral Tarpan rituals) to pray for the eternal peace of the deceased.

At Haobam Pokpi, a village situated approximately 10 kilometers from the state capital, the Heibongpokpi Apunba Naharol Association (HANA) organised a memorial prayer service for deceased village volunteers and victims.

"In our Meitei community, many people have died in this ongoing conflict," a representative of the association said during the ceremony. "To bring peace to their departed souls, we have organised the Langban Heisoi Katpa ritual. This marks the fourth time our local youth body has gathered to perform these ancestral offerings for our fallen brothers and sisters."

The solemnity of the ritual was accompanied by grief and pointed questions aimed at the Union government regarding its handling of the crisis.

Saikhom Rakesh Singh, an

Imphal resident and retired Indian Army serviceman whose only son was killed on July 2, 2023, voiced sharp anguish over the prolonged conflict.

"I served the country, and my only son was martyred defending Manipur," Singh said. "I want to ask the Government of India: Is Manipur not an integral state of India? If it is, why is adequate attention not being paid while the state sinks deeper into turmoil?"

Questioning the prolonged administrative stalemate, the retired veteran remarked that the authorities have appeared unresponsive to the ground realities since violence first broke out in May 2023. "What began on May 3 has still not come to an end. It feels as though the government has ears that do not listen, eyes that do not see, and a mouth that refuses to speak," Singh stated, warning citizens to remain vigilant against further losses.

Langban Tarpon remains an essential annual rite of remembrance in the Meitei calendar, but this year's observances carried the heavy imprint of collective mourning and widespread calls for constitutional accountability and lasting peace.

Mizoram Police Recover Rs 1.06 Crore Lost to Cyber Fraud, Arrest Nine

AIZAWL

Mizoram Police have recovered Rs 1.06 crore lost by victims of cyber fraud in 2026 and returned the money to them, while arresting nine people allegedly involved in cybercrime, according to an official statement issued on Friday.

The police said the recovery was achieved through legal procedures, including the Money Restoration Module (MRM), court orders and investigations into reported cases.

In a move to strengthen the state's response to cybercrime, the Mizoram government formally recognised the State Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (S4C) as a separate unit under the police on July 27.

The centre is responsible for detecting cyber offences, coordinating investigations and prosecution, reducing the impact of cybercrime, raising public awareness, monitoring social media and responding to emergencies.

According to the statement, the cybercrime wing arrested nine suspects from different parts of the state during the year. It also coordinated with law-enforcement agencies in other states during investigations.

The police said action had been taken to remove several illegal URLs from social media platforms following complaints involving obscene and unlawful online content. Bank account complaints addressed

The S4C has also addressed complaints from people whose bank accounts were frozen despite their alleged lack of involvement in transactions linked to fraudulent funds.

The police said 28 such complaints had been resolved through the centre's grievance-redressal mechanism. As part of its awareness campaign, Mizoram Police organised 89 programmes in schools and colleges during the year, reaching 9,376 students. Awareness initiatives were also conducted through Doordarshan, local cable television channels and All India Radio, including discussions and question-and-answer sessions. Social media campaigns highlighted cybersecurity practices and ways to avoid online scams. The police advised people who fall victim to financial cyber fraud to contact the national cybercrime helpline at 1930 without delay. Complaints can also be registered through the government's cybercrime reporting portal at cybercrime.gov.in.

Victims can additionally approach the Cyber Crime Police Station on the third floor of the Superintendent of Police's office building at Treasury Square in Aizawl.

The police stressed that prompt reporting and preservation of transaction details could help investigators trace fraudulent transfers and improve the chances of recovering lost money.

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India slams Pakistan at UN, says nuclear weapons must not be routine tools of statecraft

NEW DELHI India has strongly criticised Pakistan at the United Nations, asserting that nuclear weapons must not be used as “routine instruments of statecraft” and declaring that New Delhi will not bow to nuclear blackmail.

India exercised its Right of Reply during Friday’s plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly’s First Committee, which deals with disarmament and international security, after Pakistan raised the issue of Jammu and Kashmir.

Delivering India’s Right of Reply, after remarks made by Pakistan raked the issue of Jammu and Kashmir, Senior Adviser (Disarmament) at the Permanent Mission of India to the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva, Anmol Sher Singh Bedi said Jammu and Kashmir is an integral and inalienable part of India.

“We call for India’s illegally occupied territories to be vacated and returned,” he said adding that India does not seek conflict.

“India has always stood for peace and continues to seek peace with one and with all. However, if there is no accountability for reckless actions, then peace rarely becomes a pause between crises,” he said.

India has strongly criticised Pakistan at the United Nations, asserting that nuclear weapons must not be used as “routine instruments of statecraft” and declaring that New Delhi will not bow to nuclear blackmail.

He underlined that India’s capabilities are defensive in nature and are shaped by the country’s own security environment and are not directed against any state.

“We heard concerns about escalation. These are legitimate concerns. However, these are best judged by conduct over time. Nuclear weapons must not be treated as routine instruments

of statecraft,” he said.

“A posture that relies on nuclear overhang to limit the consequences of subconventional activity raises the risk of escalation and not the prospect of restraint,” Bedi said.

Referring to Pakistan’s tactics, he said that in India’s experience, crises in the region have tended to follow a “recurring pattern: first, provocation; second, denial of responsibility; and third, appeals for restraint once a response has been made.

“Where those in power are neither elected by people nor accountable to them, their decisions carry no risk and impose no cost for those who take them. That is how crisis becomes an instrument of power. That is how instability becomes useful, and that is how the cycle keeps on repeating,” he said.

“The use of force by states under the garb of non-state actors does not erase the state’s responsibility. India’s right of self-defence remains intact,” he said. India underlined that it has drawn three clear lines.

“First, any terrorist attack against India will receive a fitting response. Second, India will not bow to nuclear blackmail. Third, India will make no distinction between those who sponsor terrorism and those who mastermind it,” Bedi said. India has strongly criticised Pakistan at the United Nations, asserting that nuclear weapons must not be used as “routine instruments of statecraft” and declaring that New Delhi will not bow to nuclear blackmail.

He told the Committee that India’s actions in May last year followed a “grave provocation” and the country acted in self-defence after the Pahalgam terror attack, in which 26 civilians were killed. “These actions were measured, targeted, and designed to be non-escalatory,” Bedi said.

In May last year, India had

launched Operation Sindoor targeting terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in retaliation for the dastardly April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir perpetrated by The Resistance Front, a proxy of Pakistan-based terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba, in which 26 civilians, mostly tourists were killed.

He also noted that The Indus Waters Treaty, when it was signed, rested on good faith and goodwill.

“A state cannot undermine those foundations of trust and cooperation and at the same time insist that the privileges flowing from the relationship remain untouched,” he said.

In the aftermath of the Pahalgam attack, India said the Indus Waters Treaty will be held in abeyance until Pakistan, a global epicentre of terror, credibly and irrevocably ends its support for cross-border and all other forms of terrorism.

On proliferation, Bedi referred to the history of the AQ Khan network, which contributed to the Security Council Resolution 1540 almost two decades back.

Named for the Pakistani nuclear physicist who is also known as the father of Pakistan’s nuclear bomb, Khan led an extensive international network aimed at the proliferation of nuclear equipment and know-how, which the US State Department has described, as providing a “one stop shopping” for countries seeking to develop nuclear weapons.”

“This is relevant in the context of demands for unquestioned nuclear cooperation and transfer of advanced weapons and military capabilities. We urge all states and all responsible suppliers to exercise the highest degree of vigilance, not because of India, but for their own security,” Bedi said.

NEW DELHI

Elon Musk on Saturday stepped up his attack against industrialist Mukesh Ambani, sharing screenshots of media reports alleging that a Reliance-funded firm helped boost BJP campaigns on social media and that a Reliance-linked company made large political donations to the ruling party.

The latest post by Musk on X featured an Al Jazeera report from 2022 headlined “How a Reliance-funded firm boosts BJP’s campaigns on Facebook” and an archived Indian Express report from 2024 on Qwik Supply, which reported that the Reliance-linked firm donated Rs 385 crore to the BJP and Rs 25 crore to the Shiv Sena through electoral bonds.

The latest post comes amid Musk’s scathing criticism of Mukesh Ambani over a persistent delay in the launch of Starlink satellite broadband services in India.

Reliance has not publicly responded to Musk’s allegations, while the government has maintained that the country’s authorisation framework for telecom and satellite services is “fair and non-discriminatory” and that any suggestion that it was being applied selectively was “baseless and misconceived.”

A few hours before he made the post, Musk on X addressed Mukesh Ambani as “Prime Minister Ambani” and accused him of protecting a monopoly. Musk wondered if Ambani would consider allowing his satellite internet service to compete with his entity in the country.

On Friday, Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia asserted that India does not permit monopolies in any sector, and that despite the buzz around one particular company, three players have received satcom licences and can start operations after meeting the security requirements and milestones.

Musk has alleged that powerful business interests are seeking to block his service to preserve their dominance in the Indian market. He said his Starlink was being blocked by certain oligarchs seeking to “maintain

Musk escalates Ambani feud, shares reports alleging Reliance links to BJP campaign boosts, donations



their monopolistic chokehold on the Indian people.”

“Dear Prime Minister Ambani, Please accept my humble apologies for not realising that you are the real boss of India. Naturally, you would prefer to maintain your monopolistic exploitation of the great people of India, but would you nonetheless consider allowing Starlink to compete?” he wrote.

Musk also said many areas of India have no internet access and the absence denies children education and small businesses the opportunity to sell their goods to a global market.

Starlink would change their lives for the better, the technocrat asserted.

Within minutes of that post late Friday evening, Musk wrote another, saying Starlink has proven to be essential in saving lives during natural disasters throughout the world, when all other communication systems failed. “So you would also be helping save men, women and children throughout India,” he added.

Scindia has said India doesn’t allow monopoly in any sector.

“Let me set the record straight. For us, the Department of

Telecommunications, we are technology agnostic... Our job is to be able to provide the bouquet of services to every single customer. It is for the customer to choose in a free market which service he or she prefers, and within that service bouquet, which company’s service he or she prefers,” the Union minister said at a briefing at the India Mobile Congress here.

Scindia said three entities - Musk’s Starlink, Reliance Jio’s satellite venture Jio Satcom, Bharti-backed Eutelsat OneWeb - have already secured licences, while Amazon’s Project Kuiper has expressed interest and will need to follow the established procedure.

While there is a lot of conversation about one particular company, three have got satcom licences, he said. “We are very clear on our stand. There are three parties that have got a licence; as and when the government decides the charge system on the revenue basis, that spectrum will be assigned to them, and as and when they individually fulfil the security conditions, they can start operations,” the minister said.

TRAII and the telecom department

are close to a final decision on pricing regime for satcom spectrum, Scindia added.

The BJP leader also hit out at the Congress in the backdrop of Rahul Gandhi and Musk’s exchange on X. “As far as the Congress is concerned... I don’t think they themselves know whether they’re going left or right,” the former member of the party said.

He said the Congress initially had a problem with “a certain person getting a licence” and pointed out that “now they have a problem, and they’ve allied with that person in terms of why he’s not getting a licence.”

“So I don’t know whether they have clarity on where they’re going, but that is the case with the Congress, which is to be expected,” Scindia said.

Musk’s allegations came as India Mobile Congress (IMC) – a grand annual telecom event - unfolded in Delhi.

“Starlink is licensed in over 165 countries and has spent five years complying with every single law and requirement of the government of India, so why still no license?” Musk wrote in a post on X earlier.

INTERNATIONAL

India calls Vance’s remarks on Indian professionals ‘unwarranted’ and ‘deeply offensive’



NEW DELHI

India termed US Vice-President JD Vance’s remarks on foreign workers “unwarranted” and “deeply offensive,” asserting that Indian professionals make significant contributions to the American economy, innovation and job creation. New Delhi also said the US decision to suspend Permanent Labour Certification (PERM) applications for certain companies does not advance the shared ambitions of the two countries.

“Talent mobility is of tremendous mutual benefit for the two countries and our expectation is that all stakeholders in this process can appreciate this fact,” the External Affairs (MEA) said.

“The steps announced by the US do not advance the shared ambitions of

both countries,” said the MEA.

The response came after the US suspended new PERM applications and halted the processing of pending applications for eight companies, including Microsoft, Adobe and Capgemini, as well as Indian IT firms Cognizant, Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Wipro and HCL.

The move is part of the Trump administration’s wider push to tighten employment-based immigration, with officials arguing that companies should prioritise American workers. Vance accused Microsoft of using the programme to replace American employees with foreign workers. Rejecting the characterisation of foreign professionals as

“foreign indentured servants,” the MEA said such descriptions ignored the contribution of Indian workers to the US economy and innovation ecosystem. “Resorting to terminology that carries painful historical and colonial legacy connotations is deeply offensive,” the MEA said and highlighted the role generations of immigrants have played in America’s economic growth and prosperity.

The suspension affects the PERM programme, a labour-certification process that US employers generally need to complete before sponsoring eligible foreign employees for employment-based Green Cards. Introduced in 2005, the programme requires employers to establish that

there are not enough qualified and available US workers for a position and that hiring a foreign worker will not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of similarly employed Americans.

For Indian professionals employed by the affected companies, the suspension could delay a key route to permanent residency. Many skilled workers enter the US on temporary H-1B visas before seeking employer-sponsored Green Cards. Disruption to the PERM process could leave eligible employees waiting longer for permanent residency and make US employment less attractive to some international recruits. The MEA, however, clarified that PERM is separate from the H-1B visa programme and that the suspension does not, by itself, affect existing H-1B visas or the status of their holders and dependants.

“While it creates opportunities for Indians, it equally helps US companies with cutting-edge talent, innovation, research, productivity, competitiveness and job creation, besides creating shareholder wealth in the US,” the ministry said.

The latest action follows the Trump administration’s broader efforts to restrict skilled immigration, including its announcement of a one-time \$100,000 fee on new H-1B visa petitions. The fee has faced legal challenges, adding to uncertainty surrounding US immigration policy.

India maintained that skilled migration benefits both countries and called on stakeholders to recognise its economic contribution. The dispute highlights the challenge of balancing US domestic employment priorities with the technology sector’s reliance on international talent and the broader economic ties between Washington and New Delhi.

Trump slams Norway over Nobel snub, claims he deserved eight Peace Prizes for wars he says he settled



WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump on Friday lashed out at Norway for not awarding him the Nobel Peace Prize, claiming he deserved eight prizes for the eight wars he said he had settled.

Addressing a rally in Syracuse, New York, Trump also claimed to have saved 50 million lives by preventing nuclear-armed India and Pakistan from going to war.

“The United States of America, represented by me as your president, should have received the Nobel Peace Prize, but didn’t. And this is an indelible stain on the country of Norway, and those people that made such a disgraceful and embarrassing decision,” Trump said.

“The Nobel Peace Prize has been forever discredited by a handful of radical ideologues who are anti-democracy and ready enemies of civilisation.

We will not forget, Norway, that you didn’t give this prize,” he added.

The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Navi Pillay, the South African former UN human rights chief, for her work on justice and accountability for war crimes and genocide. Trump dismissed her as someone “nobody ever heard of.”

“The Nobel Prize was given out today (Friday) to a liberal person who works at the United Nations, who nobody has ever heard of. I’ve never heard of the person, but congratulations anyway,” Trump said.

He then listed the conflicts he claimed to have resolved, adding that he was working to end two more — the wars involving Iran and Russia and Ukraine.

“We will not forget Norway, that you didn’t give this prize with the greatest record in history — eight

wars, we should have had 8 Nobel Prizes for each war — but that you didn’t give the Nobel Prize for Peace to the United States of America,” Trump said.

Trump also claimed to have prevented Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and averting a wider conflict.

“Additionally, I stopped Iran from having a nuclear weapon and blowing up the entire Middle East and ultimately far beyond the Middle East, including Europe, perhaps the US and I saved more lives than anyone in history,” he said. Four US presidents have received the Nobel Peace Prize: Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Jimmy Carter and Barack Obama. Obama won the award in 2009, his first year in office.

Trump has repeatedly criticised Obama’s Nobel win, arguing that his predecessor “got a prize for doing nothing”.

From Rs.1,000 to a Multi-Crore Enterprise: Manipur Couple Turns Entrepreneurial Dream into Reality

Chungkham Arunkishan and his wife, Nirmala Devi, build a business spanning furniture manufacturing, interior design and construction, with a vision to create jobs for local youth



WAARI SINGBUL NETWORK

IMPHAL: In a state where securing formal employment remains a major concern for many young people, the entrepreneurial journey of Chungkham Arunkishan and his wife, Chungkham Ongbi Yengkhom Ningol Nirmala Devi, offers a story of perseverance, partnership and the possibilities of building a business from modest beginnings.

The couple, who started a small poultry venture in 2014 with just 1,000 and 54 chicks, have since built a multi-crore enterprise encompassing furniture manufacturing, interior design and construction services. Their journey, marked by years of hard work, gradual reinvestment and a willingness to learn new skills, has culminated in the establishment of Shang-Gai Construction & Interiors.

Their latest outlet, recently inaugurated along National Highway 102, the Imphal-Moreh road, near Manipur University at Canchipur, provides customers with access to their range of products and services. Their workshop, located at their residence in Thongju-II, Boro Makhong, employs around 35 men and women.

“Hard work, smart work and patience will eventually lead to success,” Arunkishan and Nirmala told Waari Singbul during an interaction at their newly inaugurated outlet.

For Arunkishan, the desire to become an entrepreneur dates back to his childhood, even though he once aspired to join the police force. After marriage, he began his business journey with poultry farming, taking his first steps with limited capital and the support of his family.

While managing the small farm, he simultaneously trained as a software designer at Takyel Industrial Estate in Imphal West district. The poultry business provided him with an initial source of income, while his technical training opened another avenue for professional growth.

In 2017, after saving from his modest earnings, he purchased a manual furniture-making machine. He began producing furniture and selling

his products door to door, introducing his work directly to prospective customers.

His skills as a software designer subsequently led him to work with different companies in Manipur. These professional engagements exposed him to interior design, modular kitchens and the practical demands of furnishing homes and commercial spaces. He gradually translated that experience into a business of his own, establishing Shang-Gai Interiors.

What began with a small poultry farm and a single machine continued to expand as he reinvested in the enterprise and diversified its operations.

A major turning point came in 2023, when Arunkishan acquired machinery worth around 1 crore from Ahmedabad. The investment significantly expanded the firm’s manufacturing capacity, enabling it to produce a wider range of furniture and fittings, including almirahs, sofas, wardrobes, membrane-finished products and hardwood doors.

The enterprise subsequently broadened its scope beyond furniture manufacturing and interior design to include architectural consultancy, reinforced cement concrete (RCC) construction, cement fibreboard products and ironworks.

The expansion prompted the business to adopt a broader identity as Shang-Gai Construction & Interiors, reflecting its growing range of services.

Behind this growth has been the steady support of Nirmala Devi, who says she stood by her husband throughout the journey, including periods marked by obstacles and uncertainty. “From the beginning, I supported him at every step. Even when there were difficulties, he remained positive and continued working towards his goals,” she said, adding that seeing the business develop has brought her considerable satisfaction.

For the couple, however, success is not measured solely by the scale of their enterprise or the machinery they have acquired. They see their business as an opportunity to contribute to the local economy by creating employment for people who might otherwise struggle to find work.

With around 35 employees already working at their workshop, they hope to expand opportunities for unemployed young people and encourage

others interested in entrepreneurship to consider establishing similar ventures in Manipur.

Their aspiration carries particular

significance in a state where many young people seek salaried employment, while locally developed enterprises can offer alternative pathways to earning a livelihood and building professional skills.

The couple also hopes to support aspiring entrepreneurs who wish to enter furniture manufacturing, interior design or related trades, drawing on the experience they have accumulated through their own journey.

Arunkishan and Nirmala were quick to acknowledge the role of their parents, Chungkham Thoiba and Chungkham Ongbi Renu Devi, in their success, crediting them for their support and encouragement.

Their story is not one of overnight success.

It is a reminder that entrepreneurship often grows through small beginnings, the willingness to acquire new skills, careful reinvestment and the courage to pursue opportunities beyond one’s original plans.

From raising 54 chicks with 1,000 to operating a multi-crore business with a workforce of around 35, the couple’s journey illustrates how determination and a shared vision can turn a modest livelihood into a growing enterprise.

Now, as they look towards expansion, their ambition extends beyond building a successful company. They hope to help other young people in Manipur discover that employment need not always begin with a job application; sometimes, it can begin with an idea, a skill and the resolve to start small.

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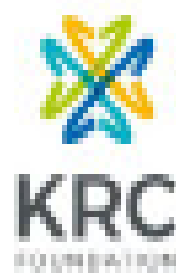
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