

KRC TIMES
STAY ENRICHED



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ED raids 13 locations in Tripura, Bengal and Maharashtra over alleged Rs 14.55-crore tender fraud

Investigation points to fake government tenders issued in the name of a fictitious Directorate of Higher Education; agency alleges money was routed through shell entities, hawala channels and property investments

GUWAHATI,

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has conducted search and seizure operations at 13 locations across Tripura, West Bengal and Maharashtra in connection with an alleged fake government tender racket involving approximately Rs 14.55 crore.

The searches were carried out on November 4 by the ED's Agartala Sub-Zonal Office under Section 17 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002.According to the agency, the alleged fraud involved a fictitious entity named 'Directorate of Higher Education', which was used to issue fake government tender notices in Tripura's mid-day meal and power sectors.

The money-laundering investigation stems from an FIR registered at Capital Complex Police Station in West Tripura following a complaint by Nagpur-based M/s SK Sales Corporation against Abhishek Chandra, an IAS officer of the Tripura cadre, and his alleged associates.

The ED said the complainant was induced to deposit Earnest Money Deposits (EMDs) totalling approximately Rs 14.55 crore between September 2024 and February 2025 against government tenders that had never actually been floated.The FIR invokes several provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, relating to criminal conspiracy, breach of trust, cheating, impersonation and forgery. Since the alleged offences fall under the scheduled offences of the PMLA, the ED registered an Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) and initiated a money-laundering probe.

According to the ED's findings, Chandra, who is currently under suspension, allegedly presented himself as an official overseeing government tender processes in Tripura and introduced the complainant to Utpal Kumar Chowdhury, claiming that the latter was responsible for processing payments.

The EMDs were deposited through demand drafts in favour of an entity named 'Directorate of Higher Education'. However, investigators found that it was a proprietary concern belonging to Chowdhury and had a name deceptively similar to that of the genuine government department.

The agency suspects that forged tender notices and work orders were used to persuade the company to make the payments. A joint venture involving Krishna Chakraborty, represented by her husband Sudip Paul, was allegedly used to facilitate the collection of funds.

The ED further alleged that partial refunds were made at crucial stages to maintain the complainant's confidence and encourage further payments.Funds allegedly routed through shell companies and hawala channelsThe investigation reportedly found that money deposited into the fictitious entity's accounts was transferred through a network of shell entities within a short period, sometimes within 24 hours.

Several of these entities were allegedly registered in the names of domestic workers and associates of Chowdhury, according to the agency.

The suspected proceeds of crime were allegedly used to purchase immovable properties, including flats in a housing project and a residential property in Mumbai's Shivaji Park area. The properties were reportedly acquired in the names of Chandra's family members.Investigators also suspect that part of the money was spent on foreign travel and luxury goods, while certain transactions were routed through a hawala operator based in Kolkata.

The ED said it was already investigating Chowdhury and others in a separate money-laundering case, ECIR/AGSZO/03/2025, arising from five FIRs registered in West Bengal and Tripura.In that case, the agency alleged that the same fictitious entity and a similar modus operandi had been used to defraud multiple victims of more than Rs 44 crore.

The agency has issued two provisional attachment orders in connection with the separate investigation - Order No. 01/2026 dated January 22, 2026, and Order No. 05/2026 dated July 31, 2026.The latest searches covered the residential premises of Chandra and suspected hawala operators, along with offices of companies and entities allegedly linked to the money trail.

During the operations, officials seized documents relating to suspected hawala transactions, high-value properties and alleged control over corporate entities. Digital devices and other records belonging to various accused persons were also seized.

The ED said further investigation is underway to trace the suspected proceeds of crime and establish the role of those allegedly involved in the racket.

PERSPECTIVE

Being alone is a power that very few can handle.

Hit-and-run in Cachar: Man killed on Silchar-Jaintia Road, vehicle flees

SILCHAR

A man was killed in a hit-and-run accident at Bhatir Gangapur Part-I in Assam's Cachar district after an unidentified vehicle hit him on the Silchar-Jaintia Road in the early hours of Friday.

According to reports, the vehicle fled the spot immediately after the collision, leaving the victim critically injured on the road.

The incident came to light on Friday morning



when local residents spotted the man's bloodied body and alerted Borkhola Police.

Police personnel rushed to the spot, recovered the body and initiated arrangements for a post-mortem examination.

An investigation has been launched to establish the identity of the deceased and identify the vehicle involved in the accident. Police are also examining the circumstances surrounding the incident.

The hit-and-run has raised concern among local residents, particularly over road safety and the need to trace vehicles involved in such accidents.

WHO SAID WHAT



We lost the Bengal elections to the Supreme Court of India, not to BJP.

BECAUSE WE TOOK A LEAP OF FAITH!

- Abhishek Banerjee, National General Secretary & Parliamentary Party Leader, Lok Sabha, AITC

Five workers critically injured in explosion at Oil India tank farm in Dibrugarh

DIBRUGARH

At least five workers sustained critical injuries in a fire and explosion at Oil India Limited's (OIL) Intermediate Tank Farm (ITF) in Tengakhat, Assam's Dibrugarh district, on Friday. Another worker was reportedly missing following the incident.

Preliminary reports indicated that the explosion occurred while workers were operating a valve at the facility. The blast reportedly took place in the crude oil storage section of the tank farm, triggering a major fire.The injured workers have been identified as Tapas Gogoi (40), a resident of Milan Nagar in Dibrugarh, and Shailen Gogoi (45), Kumud Gogoi (38), Golap Dutta (58) and Indra Gogoi (40), all residents of Tengakhat.

All five were rushed to Assam Medical College and Hospital (AMCH) in Dibrugarh, where they are reportedly undergoing treatment in critical condition.

Meanwhile, another worker is believed to have gone missing after being thrown away by the force of the explosion. His whereabouts remain unknown.

According to preliminary information, the injured workers were employed by Mumbai-based Spectron Engineers Private Limited, a company engaged by Oil India Limited.

Reports also suggested that several other people may have sustained injuries in the incident. However, the exact number of casualties and the circumstances leading to the explosion are yet to be officially established.

Further details are awaited as information about the incident and the missing worker remains unclear.



21 IPS trainees interact with Manipur DGP, senior police officials in Imphal



IMPHAL

Twenty-one IPS officer trainees of the 78th Regular Recruit (RR) batch interacted with Manipur Director General of Police (DGP) and senior police officials at the Police Headquarters in Imphal on Friday, gaining insights into the state's policing and security challenges.

The interaction was held at the PHQ Conference Hall as part of the trainees' institutional attachment with the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in Manipur from November 2 to 6.

During the meeting, discussions covered various aspects of policing, including the prevailing law and order situation across the state, security challenges, intelligence gathering and coordination among different security agencies and stakeholders.

The interaction provided the officer trainees with an opportunity to understand the operational realities of policing in Manipur, particularly the complexities of maintaining law and order and addressing security concerns through coordination among multiple agencies.

The programme also offered insights into the role of state police and other security forces in managing the evolving security situation in the state.

Martin Garrix to perform in Shillong on March 16 as part of 10-city India tour



SHILLONG

Global electronic dance music (EDM) star Martin Garrix will perform in Shillong on March 16, 2027, as part of a 10-city India tour organised by Sunburn Arena to coincide with Holi celebrations.

The tour will begin in Ahmedabad on March 10 and conclude in Pune on March 22, with nearly 2 lakh people expected to attend the scheduled performances across the country.

The Shillong concert will bring the internationally acclaimed DJ to Meghalaya's capital, placing the city among the destinations selected for his latest India tour.

The schedule also includes performances in Bhubaneswar on March 12, Chennai on March 13, Bengaluru on March 14, Kolkata on March 17, Hyderabad on March 19, Delhi-NCR on March 20 and Mumbai on March 21.

Known for popular tracks such as 'Animals', 'In the Name of Love', 'Scared to Be Lonely' and 'High on Life', Garrix has performed in India regularly for more than a decade.

His association with Sunburn Arena includes closing the Sunburn Festival in 2017 and undertaking a nine-show tour across eight cities in 2023.

He also headlined a large-scale Holi celebration at DY Patil Stadium and performed at the first Mumbai edition of the Sunburn Festival in December 2025.

Speaking about his return to India, Garrix said the country had been a special part of his musical journey and that he was looking forward to performing across 10 cities during the Holi celebrations."I've been coming to India for over a decade now and have played some of my most unforgettable shows there," he said, adding that performing before an expected audience of nearly 2 lakh people across the tour would make the experience even more special.Sunburn CEO Karan Singh said the collaboration with Garrix had grown over the years, with the upcoming tour building on their association through large-scale performances across the country.

Ticket sales to begin November 16.

Rising encounter demands reflect public impatience with justice system: Former Assam DGP

GUWAHATI

A growing demand for police encounters whenever heinous crimes such as murder and rape are reported has raised concerns over changing public attitudes towards justice in Assam, with former Director General of Assam Police GM Srivastava attributing the trend to increasing impatience with the country's criminal justice system.

Srivastava said that while people earlier demanded justice for victims of serious crimes, a section of society now increasingly calls for the accused to be killed in police encounters.

He observed that the growing preference for instant punishment was linked to delays in the investigation and judicial processes.

The former police chief pointed out that investigations take considerable time and that police are required to file chargesheets within 90 days. The judicial process can take even longer, as cases move from trial courts to the High Courts and the Supreme Court.

Even after a death sentence is awarded, the convicted person has the option of seeking further legal remedies, including filing a mercy petition before the President of India.



Srivastava said changing social values and declining public patience had contributed to the growing demand for immediate punishment whenever serious crimes occur.

Psychiatrist Dr Suresh Chakravarty, head of the Psychiatry Department at Gauhati Medical College, also identified changing social attitudes and declining patience as factors behind the trend.

Drawing a comparison with changing patterns of learning and everyday life, Chakravarty said people had become accustomed to instant results with the growing use of technology.

"During our student life, we had to read a number of books to write an essay. But anyone can write a number of essays in a day using apps like ChatGPT. In the same way, people want everything instantly, including justice," he said.

Chakravarty also pointed to delays in the judicial system as a factor contributing to public frustration. He cited instances where financially powerful accused persons had managed to flee abroad, adding to perceptions that the justice system was taking too long to deliver results.However, he cautioned that demanding instant justice through the killing of accused persons was a dangerous trend.

He stressed that all four pillars of democracy must work together to address the changing mindset and strengthen democratic institutions.

The remarks come amid growing public debate over police encounters and demands for swift punishment following serious crimes in Assam, raising questions about the balance between public anger, timely justice and the rule of law.

Manik Saha eyes BJP clean sweep in Tripura civic polls, seeks bigger mandate



AGARTALA

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Friday expressed confidence that the BJP would secure victory in all 21 urban local bodies in the upcoming civic elections, declaring that the party was aiming for a bigger mandate this time.

Saha said the BJP had won 20 of the 21 urban local bodies in the previous elections and was confident of achieving a clean sweep this time.

"We had won 20 out of 21 urban local bodies last time. This time, we will win all 21 and form our governments in all of them," the Chief Minister said.

He also called upon party leaders and workers to work towards securing a bigger victory margin, stressing that the BJP was looking for a stronger mandate from voters.Saha said the party would seek votes on the basis of the development initiatives and achievements of the state government.Highlighting the government's development agenda, he said several projects had been undertaken across both urban and rural areas. However, with the upcoming polls focused on urban local bodies, the BJP would primarily highlight its work in towns and cities.

"We have been carrying out extensive development work in urban areas as well as in villages. However, since this is an urban election, we are reaching out to people with our development agenda and the work we have undertaken in towns and cities," he said.The Chief Minister's remarks signal the BJP's confidence ahead of the civic elections, with the party seeking to retain its stronghold across Tripura's urban local bodies while improving on its previous electoral performance.

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INDIA'S POVERTY DECLINE

India's sharp reduction in extreme poverty over the past decade marks a significant development in its economic and social journey. According to the World Bank's October 2026 India Poverty and Equity Brief, the proportion of people living in extreme poverty declined from 27.1 per cent in 2011 to 2.6 per cent in 2023. In a country of more than 1.4 billion people, such a transformation deserves recognition. Yet, celebrating the achievement should not mean overlooking the challenges that remain.

The scale of the decline is striking. In 2011, more than one in four Indians lived below the international extreme poverty threshold of USD 3 a day, measured at 2021 purchasing power parity. By 2023, that figure had fallen to approximately one in 38. Poverty under the higher USD 4.20 threshold also declined substantially, from 57.7 per cent to 16.1 per cent. An estimated 496 million people moved above this poverty line during the period.

These figures point to a substantial improvement in living conditions for millions of households. More significantly, the progress continued despite the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, which destroyed livelihoods, weakened businesses and pushed millions of migrant workers into uncertainty. India's ability to sustain its poverty-reduction gains through such a severe economic shock suggests that social protection mechanisms and household support systems played an important role.

Several factors contributed to this progress. The World Bank identifies rising consumption, expanding employment opportunities, particularly for women, and wider social transfers, including food subsidies, as important drivers. Government policies aimed at financial inclusion, direct benefit transfers and improved access to essential services have also helped extend the reach of welfare programmes.

The expansion of bank accounts, combined with Aadhaar identification and mobile connectivity, has transformed the delivery of public assistance. Direct transfers have reduced dependence on intermediaries and made it easier for beneficiaries to receive pensions, subsidies and other forms of financial support. Although gaps in implementation and access persist, this financial infrastructure has strengthened the delivery of welfare benefits.

Food security has been another important pillar. Free foodgrain distribution to more than 800 million people has provided a safety net for vulnerable households, particularly during periods of economic uncertainty and rising prices. Housing assistance, rural employment programmes, healthcare coverage, sanitation and access to drinking water have addressed different dimensions of deprivation. Support for self-help groups, small entrepreneurs and women-led economic activities has also contributed to strengthening household incomes.

The growing participation of women in the workforce is particularly significant. Women's employment not only adds to household earnings but can also improve spending on children's education, healthcare and nutrition. Greater financial independence gives women a stronger role in household decision-making. However, the quality, security and remuneration of employment remain important concerns. An increase in workforce participation alone cannot be treated as evidence of economic empowerment unless it translates into stable and adequately paid work.

Equally important is the reported narrowing of the rural-urban poverty gap. Faster gains among rural households suggest that welfare interventions and improvements in consumption have reached sections of the population that have traditionally experienced deeper deprivation. Nevertheless, rural prosperity cannot be sustained through welfare transfers alone. Agricultural productivity, rural industries, infrastructure and non-farm employment must grow together.

This is where the next phase of India's poverty-reduction strategy faces its greatest test. The World Bank's findings indicate that poverty is increasingly concentrated among households with limited education, fewer assets and insecure employment. Nearly 57 per cent of those still living in poverty are located in the broad region stretching from Uttar Pradesh to West Bengal. The persistence of such geographical concentration underlines the uneven nature of economic development.

Income inequality presents another serious challenge. The earnings of the richest 10 per cent are approximately thirteen times those of the poorest 10 per cent. Such disparities raise questions about the distribution of economic gains and the ability of vulnerable households to improve their living standards sustainably. A country cannot measure inclusive development solely by the number of people crossing an international poverty threshold.

The security of their livelihoods, access to opportunities and ability to withstand economic shocks matter equally.

The projected pace of poverty reduction also suggests that the remaining task will be more difficult. The poverty rate under the USD 4.20 threshold is expected to decline from 14.2 per cent in 2026 to 12.1 per cent by 2028. The slower pace reflects a familiar development challenge: reaching the most vulnerable households is considerably harder than lifting those who are closer to the poverty line.

India must therefore move beyond a welfare-centred approach towards one that combines social protection with productive employment and human development. Quality education, vocational training, affordable healthcare and better access to markets and credit are essential. Investment must also reach regions that have lagged behind, creating opportunities beyond agriculture and informal work.

The government deserves credit for the progress achieved, but poverty reduction cannot become a matter of political self-congratulation. Welfare schemes must be assessed not merely by the number of beneficiaries but by their actual impact on household security and economic mobility. Better targeting, transparency, accountability and regular evaluation will be crucial to ensure that public expenditure produces lasting results.

India's poverty-reduction story is undoubtedly encouraging. Lifting hundreds of millions of people above poverty thresholds is a substantial national achievement. But the real measure of success will be whether these gains endure, whether economic opportunities become more evenly distributed and whether vulnerable families can escape poverty permanently rather than remain dependent on periodic assistance.

The ambition of Viksit Bharat by 2047 must rest on this foundation. A developed India cannot be built on impressive headline statistics alone. It requires a society in which every citizen has access to education, healthcare, dignified employment and a reasonable opportunity to improve their circumstances. India has made considerable progress in the fight against poverty. The challenge now is to ensure that this progress reaches the last household and becomes a lasting transformation.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Monsters are real, and ghosts are real too. They live inside us, and sometimes, they win - Stephen King.

Gen-Z and the Digital Age: BALANCING TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS WITH CULTURAL ROOTS

A.BHISNOI

The digital revolution has transformed the way young people learn, communicate, work and participate in society. For Generation Z, smartphones, social media and artificial intelligence are no longer merely tools of convenience; they are integral to everyday life. Yet, as technology increasingly shapes human relationships and public discourse, an important question arises: can the younger generation embrace the opportunities of the digital age without losing its cultural roots and sense of social responsibility?

The answer lies in striking a balance between technological advancement and enduring human values. India's civilisational traditions offer a framework for this balance through the concept of Panch Parivartan, which emphasises five areas of social transformation: Samajik Samrasta (social harmony), Kutumb Prabodhan (family awareness and strengthening), Paryavaran Sanrakshan (environmental protection), Swadeshi (self-reliance) and Nagrik Kartavya (civic duties).

These principles need not remain abstract ideals or be confined to traditional settings. Properly interpreted, they can provide useful guidance for a generation navigating artificial intelligence, global connectivity and rapidly changing social relationships.

Technology has democratised access to information and created unprecedented opportunities for young people to express themselves. Social media can amplify marginalised voices, challenge discrimination and bring communities together around common causes. At the same time, misinformation, online hostility and superficial digital activism have exposed the limitations of connectivity without responsibility. A viral hashtag may generate attention, but it does not necessarily produce meaningful social change.

This makes Samajik Samrasta particularly relevant. Social harmony does not demand uniformity of opinion; it requires respect for differences and recognition of human dignity. Gen-Z can use digital platforms to challenge stereotypes, counter discriminatory narratives and encourage constructive conversations across communities. However, such engagement must be grounded in fact-checking, responsible communication and a willingness to disagree without hostility. The real test of digital citizenship is whether the values expressed online are reflected in everyday conduct.

The changing nature of digital engagement also raises questions about family relationships. Excessive screen time and constant online interaction can weaken meaningful personal connections. Kutumb Prabodhan offers an opportunity to restore the importance of family dialogue, intergenerational understanding and shared responsibilities.

Young people can play a constructive role in bridging the digital divide within families. They can help older relatives access online public services, identify cyberfraud and protect personal information. At the same time, elders can pass on cultural memory, traditional knowledge and practical wisdom. Digital technology can also help preserve regional languages, folk traditions, oral histories, indigenous practices and family archives. The objective should be to use technology to strengthen relationships rather than allow it to replace personal interaction.

Environmental responsibility is another area where the digital generation can make a meaningful contribution. Social media has increased awareness of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss, but awareness must translate into measurable action. Paryavaran Sanrakshan calls for sustained participation in protecting natural resources and maintaining ecological balance.

Digital tools can help young people organise waste-management campaigns, monitor water conservation, document biodiversity and support ecosystem restoration. Schools, colleges and community organisations can use technology to track local environmental initiatives and assess their outcomes. The success of such programmes should be measured not by online engagement but by tangible results, including reduced waste, conserved water and the protection of native vegetation.

The environmental cost of the digital economy also deserves attention. Frequent replacement of electronic devices, growing electronic waste and the enormous resources required to maintain technological infrastructure have significant ecological consequences. Responsible consumption, device repair, longer product life and proper disposal must therefore become part of digital citizenship.

The principle of Swadeshi also acquires a wider meaning in an interconnected world. Self-reliance should not be confused with isolation from global developments. Rather, it should encourage the development of indigenous capabilities, local enterprise and technologies suited to India's diverse economic and cultural needs.

Gen-Z can contribute by connecting local artisans and small businesses with wider markets, helping traditional enterprises adopt digital tools and developing products and services for regional-language consumers. Artificial intelligence can support research, translation, design and entrepreneurship, while digital marketing can create new opportunities for traditional crafts and local industries.

Swadeshi, in this context, is not simply about choosing domestically produced goods. It is also about developing technological competence, generating employment and building the capacity to innovate. India must aspire to become a creator and developer of technology rather than remain primarily a consumer of systems developed elsewhere. Its young population has a significant role in realising that ambition.

Equally important is Nagrik Kartavya, which emphasises that citizenship involves responsibilities alongside rights. Digital platforms have created new opportunities for public participation, but online criticism alone cannot resolve local problems. Young citizens can use technology to identify civic deficiencies, document public concerns, coordinate community initiatives and engage with administrative authorities.

Issues such as poor waste management, unsafe roads, inadequate public facilities, accessibility barriers and gaps in digital inclusion require sustained local action. Campus initiatives, volunteer networks and community-based digital campaigns can help connect citizens with institutions. What matters is the transition from raising concerns to following up on solutions and holding the relevant authorities accountable.

Artificial intelligence adds another dimension to these responsibilities. It offers enormous possibilities in education, research, productivity and innovation, but its outputs are not always accurate or impartial. AI systems can reproduce existing biases, generate misleading information and facilitate impersonation or deceptive content. Their use must therefore be guided by transparency, privacy protection and human accountability.

Panch Parivartan can offer an ethical framework for navigating these emerging challenges. Social harmony requires resisting fabricated narratives and discriminatory digital content. Family awareness involves protecting relatives from cyberfraud, impersonation and online exploitation. Environmental protection demands greater awareness of the ecological costs of technological consumption. Swadeshi encourages indigenous innovation and locally relevant digital solutions, while civic responsibility requires users to verify information, protect privacy and remain accountable for decisions assisted by artificial intelligence.

Digital literacy must consequently go beyond knowing how to operate devices and applications. It must include the ability to evaluate information, recognise technological limitations and understand the wider social consequences of digital behaviour. Before relying on AI-generated information or sharing online content, users should ask whether it is verifiable, whether it respects privacy and human dignity, and whether its intended use serves a constructive purpose. However, individual responsibility cannot replace institutional safeguards. Technology companies, educational institutions and policymakers must also ensure transparency, data protection, fairness and appropriate regulation. A responsible digital ecosystem requires both informed users and accountable institutions.

Ultimately, the relevance of Panch Parivartan lies in its ability to connect personal conduct with collective well-being. Its principles will have little meaning if they remain confined to slogans, hashtags or occasional campaigns. They must find expression in everyday choices and sustained community participation.

Generation Z stands at a unique intersection of technological opportunity and social transformation. It possesses the tools to communicate globally, innovate locally and mobilise communities at an unprecedented scale. The challenge is to use these advantages with wisdom and responsibility.

A generation that can combine digital intelligence with cultural awareness, innovation with environmental consciousness and individual ambition with civic commitment can contribute meaningfully to India's future. The objective should not be to choose between tradition and modernity, or between cultural identity and global connectivity. It should be to make them complementary.

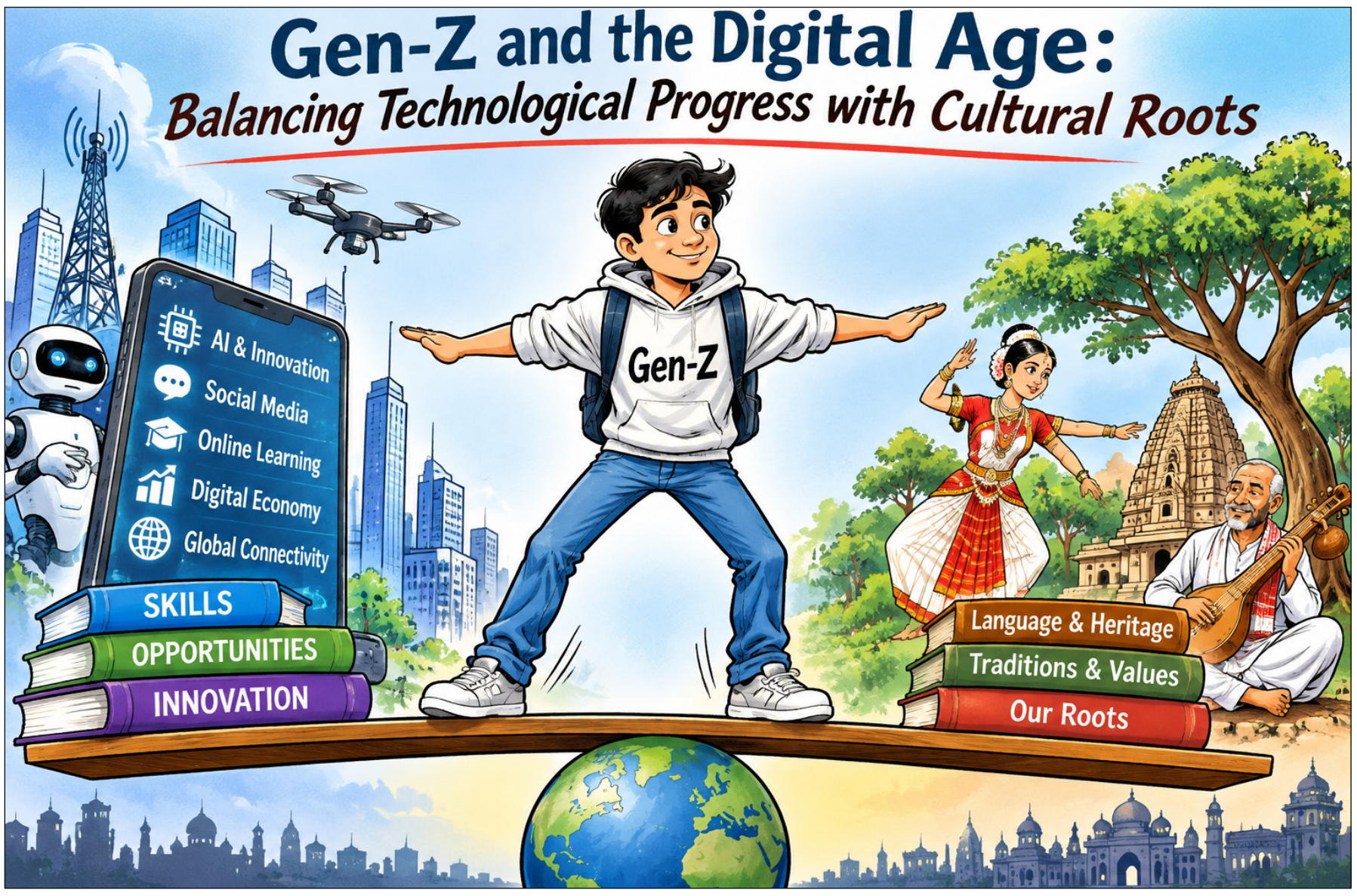
The screen may be in the hand, but the values guiding its use must remain rooted in the heart. That is how Gen-Z can turn the possibilities of the digital age into lasting social progress.

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

"Mota bhai, if the Home Ministry is beyond your control, why are you still clinging to that chair? In 7 years, the country's 3 crore infiltrators haven't been managed. Manipur hasn't been under control for 3 years. Now even Arunachal Pradesh isn't being managed," Khera said in a post on X.
He also referred to the Pulwama and Pahalgam attacks, the blast near the Red Fort and the recovery of 300 kg of RDX near the national capital, questioning the Home Minister's handling of security matters.
"It's not in your league. Just let it go," Khera said.
Taking a swipe at Shah, the Congress leader suggested that he should return to the BJP's organisational role and take what he described as a "mobile circus" from Hyderabad to Karnal and other parts of the country.
"Why are you sinking the country's ship by holding onto the Home Ministry?" he asked.

Khera also took a dig at BJP president Nitin Nabin, saying he should be "set free" from his responsibilities, and ended his post with a Hindi proverb suggesting that people should stick to the work they are suited for.





Silchar's First Municipal Corporation Begins Five-Year Term, Puts Waterlogging at Top of Agenda

Mayor Amarendra Paul promises action on chronic civic problems; new administration pledges transparent governance, improved public services and a cleaner city

SILCHAR

Silchar's first Municipal Corporation formally began its five-year term on Thursday, with Mayor Amarendra Paul, Deputy Mayor Bijendra Prasad Singh and newly elected councillors taking the oath of office amid expectations of improved civic administration and a renewed push to address the town's longstanding urban problems.

The swearing-in ceremony at Rajiv Bhawan marked a significant milestone in Silchar's civic history, which dates back to 1882.

Addressing the gathering, Mayor Amarendra Paul identified the mitigation of waterlogging as the foremost priority of his tenure. He sought the cooperation of residents in tackling the



persistent problem, which affects several parts of the town, particularly during the monsoon.

Deputy Mayor Bijendra Prasad Singh stressed the need for corruption-free and transparent municipal administration, saying the convenience of citizens should be the principal measure of efficient governance.

Announcing his first initiative, Singh said he would work towards ensuring that death certificates are made available to bereaved families at the cremation grounds itself, sparing them repeated visits to municipal offices during difficult times.

He said public cooperation and collective efforts would guide the corporation throughout its five-year tenure of 1,825 days.

Barak Valley Development Department Minister Krishnendu Paul also called for transparent and corruption-free civic administration, echoing Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's emphasis on accountability in public services.

He said residents should not face unnecessary difficulties in accessing municipal facilities and stressed that documents and certificates must be provided through a transparent and hassle-free process.

Identifying traffic congestion, waterlogging and improper garbage disposal as major challenges, the minister called for coordinated efforts to improve urban infrastructure and civic services. He also suggested that the new leadership draw on the experience of former Silchar civic board chairperson Sushmita Dev.

Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Kaushik Rai assured the new corporation of the state government's cooperation and urged elected representatives to rise above political considerations and work collectively as 'Team Silchar Municipal Corporation'.

Rai announced that municipal application forms would be provided free of cost and that efforts would be made to accelerate online services to improve public access.

He said the guiding vision of the new administration should be a clean, congestion-free and well-maintained Silchar.The Mayor and Deputy Mayor positions will follow a rotational reservation system. Both posts will remain open during the first five-year term. The subsequent terms will be reserved for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women, respectively, before returning to the open category after the completion of the 20-year cycle.

Silchar MP Parimal Suklabaidya, Rajya Sabha MP Kanad Purkayastha and MLAs Rajdeep Goala, Kishor Nath and Dr Rajdeep Roy also took oath as ex-officio members of the corporation.

Following the ceremony, ministers, MPs, MLAs and councillors paid tribute to Mahatma Gandhi and the language martyrs at Gandhi Bagh Park.

With its first elected municipal corporation now in place, Silchar faces the challenge of translating promises into tangible improvements. The new administration's performance on waterlogging, traffic congestion, waste management and delivery of basic civic services will be crucial in determining its success.

Aizawl divided into four zones and 18 sectors for policing

AIZAWL

The Mizoram government has stepped up security and anti-drug measures ahead of Christmas and New Year, announcing a coordinated enforcement plan involving police, excise authorities, civic bodies and community organisations.The arrangements were reviewed at a high-level meeting chaired by Home Minister K Sapdanga in Aizawl. Officials from the police, Excise and Narcotics Department, district administration, Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC) and Central Young Mizo Association (CYMA) attended the meeting.Sapdanga called for close coordination among the departments and organisations to ensure peaceful celebrations and maintain law and order during the festive season. He expressed confidence that collective efforts would help prevent unlawful activities and ensure public safety.

Excise and Narcotics Minister Lalnghinglova Hmar said coordinated action against drug trafficking had yielded positive results in recent months. He highlighted the arrests made during Operation Trident and presented a separate report on the activities carried out by his department under the operation.

Inspector General of Police (Headquarters) H Ramthengliana announced that the police would launch Operation Peace Christmas and New Year to strengthen security during the celebrations. He also outlined the proposed deployment of personnel and reviewed the ongoing anti-drug enforcement drive, Operation Jericho-2.Aizawl Superintendent of Police Zosangliana said the state capital had been divided into four zones and 18 sectors to streamline security arrangements and ensure effective policing across the city.Meanwhile, Excise and Narcotics Commissioner Z Lalhmangaiha said leave for departmental personnel would be restricted during the festive period to maintain adequate manpower. Both serving personnel and trainees would be deployed for enforcement duties.The meeting also decided to strengthen round-the-clock surveillance at key and sensitive locations across Aizawl. Additional safety arrangements for the upcoming Winter Festival were also discussed as part of the wider festive security strategy.

Ripnar Lyngdoh sworn in as Meghalaya Chief Information Commissioner

SHILLONG

Former IAS officer Ripnar Lyngdoh was sworn in as Meghalaya's new Chief Information Commissioner , filling the vacancy created by the death of Rebecca V Suchiang in August.

Governor CH Vijayashankar administered the oath of office to Lyngdoh at Lok Bhavan in Shillong.

The swearing-in ceremony was attended by Chief Secretary Shakil P Ahammed, Additional Chief Secretary to the Governor HC Chaudhary, senior government officials and members of Lyngdoh's family.

Lyngdoh will head the Meghalaya State Information Commission, which is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005, and exercising the powers vested in the body under the legislation.

According to a notification issued by the Personnel and Administrative Reforms Department, Lyngdoh's tenure will be for two years from the date she assumes office or until she attains the age of 65, whichever is earlier.

Her tenure and remuneration will be governed by the provisions of the Right to Information Rules, 2019.The appointment is expected to restore the leadership of the State Information Commission, which had been without a Chief Information Commissioner since Suchiang's death in August. in connection with a bank fraud case when the incident occurred.

According to Sivasagar Senior Superintendent of Police Papori Chetia, Gogoi allegedly attempted to snatch the service weapon of an investigating officer, triggering a scuffle. Police said shots were fired during the confrontation, leaving Gogoi critically injured. He was subsequently taken to a hospital, where he was declared dead.

Tripura's indigenous land rights notification likely in 1-2 days: Pradyot after Amit Shah talks

AGARTALA

Tipra Motha founder Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma on November 5 indicated that a notification on land rights for Tripura's indigenous communities could be issued within a day or two, following his conversation with Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Pradyot said he spoke to Shah on Wednesday and that representatives of Tipra Motha were likely to be invited to New Delhi for further discussions on the issue.

"I think a notification regarding land rights for indigenous people may be issued today or tomorrow. Yesterday, I had a conversation with Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and they would call us to Delhi," he said.

He added that the party would move forward based on the recommendations outlined in the notification.



Stressing the urgency of resolving the issue, Pradyot said the rights and entitlements of Tripura's indigenous population must be protected to ensure meaningful development in the state.

"If you want development in Tripura, the Tiprasa people must get their rights. Until that happens, we will continue to stand firm on our demands," he said.

The Tipra Motha founder also ruled out any compromise on the interests of the indigenous community, asserting that the future of Tripura and its Tiprasa people remained his priority.

"As long as I am alive, I will never compromise on the future of the state of Tripura and my Tiprasa people," he said.

Pradyot cautioned against attempts to derail the process through political divisions and called for unity within the community. He said dialogue and negotiations were essential to securing peace, development and the interests of the next generation.

"We will talk and negotiate for our next generation, for peace, development and the implementation of all the points of the Tiprasa Accord," he added.

The proposed notification is expected to be a key development in the ongoing discussions over the rights and demands of Tripura's indigenous communities.

Former Meghalaya DGP L R Bishnoi exits SC panel probing Jantar Mantar violence

SHILLONG

Former Meghalaya Director General of Police (DGP) L R Bishnoi has stepped down from the Supreme Court-appointed High-Powered Enquiry Committee (HPEC) investigating alleged police excesses and violence during the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP)-led protests at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi.

The Supreme Court on November 5 accepted Bishnoi's request to be relieved from the panel on personal grounds. However, the court directed the committee to continue its fact-finding exercise without waiting indefinitely for fresh complaints.A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi expressed concern over the limited response from alleged victims, despite the committee's efforts to invite submissions through an online portal, a dedicated email address and physical applications.

The committee, headed by former Supreme Court judge Justice R Subhash Reddy, informed the court that it had received very few complaints despite publishing notices in 149 newspapers across the country on October 17. A reminder was also issued on October 21, but the response remained limited.

According to its action taken report submitted on October 31, only one complainant appeared before the committee during its October 29 sitting and submitted an affidavit. Some police personnel also appeared before the panel.Taking note of the situation, the Supreme Court directed the committee to examine the evidence already available, including video recordings, petitions and affidavits submitted before the court.

The bench also asked lawyers representing the petitioners to forward all relevant materials to the committee, emphasising that complainants could submit evidence without disclosing their identities.

Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appearing for some petitioners, questioned the committee's report, claiming that representations had been submitted both before and after the launch of its online portal. He said the petitioners had been assured that their submissions would be examined.

Senior advocate Vrinda Grover also argued that the committee should examine videos and other evidence already placed before the Supreme Court instead of requiring every affected individual to approach it separately.

However, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre and Delhi Police, maintained that the petitioners might not have direct knowledge of the incidents and argued that victims themselves should come forward with their accounts.Grover further alleged that no FIR had been registered in connection with the reported incidents of violence and police excesses. Sankaranarayanan also raised concerns over the apparent absence of departmental action against police personnel allegedly involved in misconduct.

Clarifying its earlier position, Justice Bagchi said the formation of the enquiry committee should not prevent police authorities or their superiors from initiating action against personnel found to have violated rules during the protests.

The Chief Justice urged the petitioners to encourage victims to share their experiences and evidence with the panel. The court reiterated that complainants could submit information anonymously without providing their names, phone numbers or other personal details.

The HPEC, besides Justice R Subhash Reddy, comprises former Punjab and Haryana High Court Chief Justice Ravi Shankar Jha, former Delhi High Court judge Justice Shalinder Kaur and former CBI director Rishi Kumar Shukla.

Aizawl International Half Marathon targets 5,000 runners, announces Rs 20 lakh prize pool

AIZAWL

Mizoram is targeting more than 5,000 participants, including international athletes, for the third edition of the Aizawl International Half Marathon (AIHM), scheduled to be held on February 20, 2027.

Sports and Tourism Minister Lalnghinglova Hmar announced on November 4 that the event would carry a total prize pool of Rs 20 lakh. The marathon will be organised at Rajiv Gandhi Stadium in Aizawl.

The participation target represents a significant increase over previous editions. The inaugural event in April 2025 attracted around 1,500 participants, while the second edition in February 2026 saw nearly 3,000 runners, including 16 international athletes from countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia, Bahrain, the United Kingdom and France.

The 2027 edition will feature five race categories - the 21.1-km half marathon, 10-km open race, 5-km fun race, junior race and senior/veteran race.

The organisers expect participation from professional athletes, amateur runners, students, fitness enthusiasts and National Cadet Corps (NCC) cadets.

A key addition to this year's event is the proposed involvement of the NCC. Its Director General, Lieutenant General Virendra Vats, has agreed to become one of the patrons of the marathon. The organisation is expected to facilitate cadet participation, subject to institutional arrangements.

The development followed a meeting in New Delhi involving Hmar, Vats and AIHM curator Captain Rahul Bali.

Three-day expo to showcase Mizoram's culture

Alongside the marathon, a three-day expo will be organised from February 18 to 20. Bib distribution and race-kit collection will take place on February 18 and 19.

The expo will feature health and wellness displays, partner showcases and cultural programmes, providing an additional platform to promote Mizoram's local culture and tourism potential.

The state government is also looking to use the sporting event to generate business opportunities for hotels, homestays, restaurants, transport operators and local entrepreneurs.Hmar said the marathon had evolved beyond a sporting initiative and could bring together athletes and communities from across India and abroad.He said the government intended to use sports to encourage youth participation, promote fitness and attract tourists while creating economic opportunities for local communities.

The Aizawl International Half Marathon is organised by the Mizoram government in association with Innovations India, with support from the Athletics Federation of India, Sports Authority of India, Northeast Frontier Railway and other institutions. The event is accredited by the Athletics Federation of India.

Zubeen Garg death case: Sonapur protest warns of intensified agitation ahead of Supreme Court hearing

GUWAHATI

Hundreds of people gathered at Zubeen Khetra in Sonapur on Thursday, demanding justice for Assam's cultural icon Zubeen Garg, a day before the Supreme Court is scheduled to hear matters concerning bail for prime accused Shyamkanu Mahanta and Siddharth Sharma in connection with the singer's death.

The protest was organised by the Zubeen Garg Nyay Samiti and led by Raijor Dal. Participants raised slogans including "Himanta Biswa Sarma Hai Hai", "Joi Zubeen Da" and "Joi Aai Axom", expressing dissatisfaction over the investigation and demanding accountability.

Addressing the gathering, Raijor Dal president Akhil Gogoi described November 6 as a crucial day for Assamese society and warned that the agitation would intensify if the two prime accused were granted bail.

"They have to send Amritparabha and Sandipan back to jail. And if the prime accused get bail tomorrow in Supreme Court, we will intensify our protests. We'll protest every single day against the Himanta Biswa Sarma-led government. Tomorrow is a very important day for Assamese society," Gogoi said.



Raijor Dal leader Gyanshree Bora questioned the progress of the investigation and urged the state government to ensure that the accused were not released. She also demanded further investigation and an additional chargesheet.

"The investigation conducted by the SIT has not yielded the desired results. We demand that the SIT file another chargesheet. The accused should not be released under any circumstances," she said.

Several youth representatives, including Bidyut Saikia, Bikash Asom, Marsel Baruah and Sarat Sourav, also addressed the gathering, demanding justice for the late singer.

Saikia raised questions about the investigation, alleging that several statements made by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had not been incorporated into the chargesheet.

He claimed that the omission had contributed to the bail granted to Amritprabha Mahanta and Sandipan Garg.

Expressing concern over the November 6 hearing, Saikia warned that granting bail to Shyamkanu Mahanta and Siddharth Sharma could trigger widespread public anger across Assam.

The protest comes amid continuing legal developments in the case. The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing Garg's death had announced on October 18 that it would challenge the bail orders granted to Amritprabha Mahanta and Sandipan Garg before the Supreme Court.

SIT chief Munna Prasad Gupta had said the Gauhati High Court's orders would be challenged after the courts reopened following the holidays.

The Gauhati High Court granted bail to Sandipan Garg on October 16, observing that there was limited scope for him to tamper with the evidence. Amritprabha Mahanta was granted bail on October 9 after the court heard arguments from both sides.

The Supreme Court proceedings scheduled for November 6 are being closely watched in Assam, where demands for justice for Zubeen Garg continue to fuel public protests and political mobilisation.

Quest!

Research shows that reminding yourself that a good moment will end and that you need to enjoy it while it lasts actually makes you happier.



NATIONAL

Women are leaders, not merely participants; Nari Shakti Vandan Act must be implemented: NCW chief



NEW DELHI

National Commission for Women (NCW) chairperson Vijaya Rahatkar has said women in India are not merely participants but leaders who have demonstrated their capabilities across sectors, expressing confidence that the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam will be implemented soon to ensure greater representation of women in Parliament and state assemblies.

Rahatkar said women had proved their leadership abilities whenever they were given opportunities, citing their growing representation in Panchayati Raj institutions following the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments.

"Women in our country are not merely participants; they are women who lead the nation. And this is not just something we say. We have witnessed this since ancient times. Women in India have demonstrated leadership in every section of society and in every field," she said.

Referring to the 33 per cent reservation for women in Panchayati Raj institutions, Rahatkar said there were initial doubts about whether women would be able to discharge their responsibilities effectively.

"Initially, people wondered how women would function, assuming that they had come into the system only for five years. However, women learned their work, and today, they have performed so well that many state governments have increased the reservation to 50 per cent," she said.

"Today, when we look back, we can see that women have performed exceptionally well under the 33 per cent reservation. This is why several state governments subsequently increased the reservation to 50 per cent," Rahatkar said.

She pointed out that women's representation in some state legislative houses had risen to 54, 55 and even 56 per cent, with women also getting elected from open general category seats apart from those reserved for them.

"Today, I see several states where women's representation has gone beyond the mandated 50 per cent reservation. Apart from the 50 per cent reserved seats, women are also getting elected from the open general category," she said.

Emphasising the need to provide equal opportunities and bridge the gender gap, the NCW chief said the passage of the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam was an important step towards ensuring greater participation of women in decision-making.

"Today, after years of waiting, we have finally seen the passage of the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam in our country. Now, all that remains is its implementation," she said.

Rahatkar expressed confidence that consensus would be built among stakeholders for implementing the legislation and that women would make an outstanding contribution in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies.

"We are confident that, in the coming days, after building consensus among all stakeholders once again, this legislation will be implemented, and women will make an outstanding contribution in their respective fields, whether in the Lok Sabha or the state legislative assemblies," she said.

She said women had consistently demonstrated their ability to discharge responsibilities with dedication and fairness wherever they were given leadership roles.

"We have seen that wherever women enter, they discharge their responsibilities with complete dedication and a strong sense of fairness. I am confident that the daughters of our country will not lag behind here either. We are now simply waiting for the reservation to be implemented," Rahatkar said.

The Women's Reservation Act, 2023, which provides for 33 per cent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies, came into force on April 16, 2026, following a notification issued by the Union Law Ministry. The law provides for the quota to be implemented after a delimitation exercise undertaken following the first census conducted after its commencement.

EC orders Special Summary Revision in six states, UTs; November 30 set draft list date



NEW DELHI

The Election Commission of India has ordered a special summary revision (SSR) of electoral rolls in six states and Union Territories, with draft rolls due on November 30 and final rolls on January 21, 2027. The exercise will include safeguards against wrongful deletions, including limits on objections, scrutiny of bulk applications and protection against exclusion for failure to furnish Aadhaar details.

In a November 4 letter to the Chief Electoral Officers, the Commission said the exercise will cover Arunachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Mizoram, Odisha and Sikkim, with January 1, 2027, as the qualifying date for voter eligibility.

Advance applications will also be accepted for the subsequent qualifying dates of April 1, July 1 and October 1, 2027. Draft rolls will be published on November 30 and final rolls on January 21, 2027. Claims and objections can be filed from November 30 to December 30 and must be disposed of by January 16. Polling stations are to be rationalised by November 20.

An individual cannot file more than 10 Form 7 applications seeking deletion of names during the claims and objections period. Booth-level agents of political parties cannot submit more than 10 forms a day to Booth Level Officers. If an agent submits more than 30 forms during the entire period, the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) or Assistant Electoral Registration Officer (AERO) must personally cross-verify them.

EROs must also personally cross-check cases where proposed deletions exceed 2% of a polling station's electorate or where an individual has filed objections in more than five cases. The Commission had separately prescribed the limit on deletion objections in an October 9 letter. The commission said applicants could voluntarily furnish their Aadhaar numbers in Forms 6 and 8.

However, no application for inclusion of a name in the electoral roll can be rejected, nor can an existing entry be deleted, solely because an individual is unable to furnish or provide an Aadhaar number.

The instructions also require that no polling station have more than 1,200 electors without prior Commission approval. Voters should not be required to travel more than two kilometres to reach their polling station. Dates for HP, J&K and Ladakh will be announced separately, taking weather conditions into account.

The revision schedule for Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Delhi, Tripura and Telangana, where intensive revision exercises are under way or have recently been completed, will be announced later. Dates for Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh will be announced separately, taking weather conditions into account

Schedule

Jan 1, 2027, as the qualifying date for voter eligibility

Advance applications will also be accepted for the subsequent qualifying dates of April 1, July 1 and October 1, 2027

Draft rolls will be out Nov 30 and final on Jan 21, '27

INTERNATIONAL

Thousands of troops secure Indonesia trial as tensions run high over wiretap scandal

JAKARTA

Indonesia deployed thousands of police and military personnel to provide security Thursday for a trial involving former President Joko Widodo, as tensions in the capital ran high over allegations that top officers had been involved in intercepting the current president's telephone conversations.

Three senior generals have already been detained in the wiretapping scandal, including Gen. Listyo Sigit Prabowo, who had been named chief of staff to President Prabowo Subianto last month.

Listyo previously served as national police chief under Widodo, though the former president has not been implicated in the wiretapping investigation. There are allegations that Cabinet officials, politicians, journalists, civil society leaders and business executives were also subjected to unauthorized surveillance.

After losing two presidential races to Widodo, Prabowo aligned himself with the popular leader and campaigned as his successor, choosing Widodo's son as his running mate in a move that fueled concerns about a growing political dynasty in Indonesia's young democracy.

Widodo and Prabowo were once close political allies, with Widodo backing Prabowo's successful 2024 presidential bid, but their relationship has come under increased scrutiny amid signs of a growing rift since Prabowo took office.

Retired police Gen. Oegroseno, a former deputy national police chief, told the Forum Keadilan TV podcast on Wednesday that investigators should examine all possible lines of command behind the wiretapping, including whether any directives originated from Widodo.



"Investigators should not hesitate to question a former president if necessary," Oegroseno said. "The motive behind the alleged wiretapping operation must be fully uncovered under the leadership of the current police chief." The wiretapping operation could also constitute a serious human rights violation and could be used to intimidate critics and weaken civil liberties, said Usman Hamid, Amnesty International's executive director in Indonesia.

"This is not merely about the alleged wiretapping of the president," Hamid said in a statement. "Authorities must disclose who else may have been targeted and investigate the full impact of the operation."

The Criminal Investigation Agency, known as Bareskrim, named Slamet Uliandi, who heads the agency's Information and Communications Technology Division, as a fourth suspect in the wiretapping investigation. Uliandi served as a supervisory board member of the Monitoring Center, a wiretapping unit, and allegedly approved a request by another suspect in early October to delete wiretap records to conceal evidence and erase traces of the operation, Suhermanto, director of cybercrime at Bareskrim, said.

Uliandi was not detained because he is recovering from a stroke, said Suhermanto, who, like many Indonesians, uses a single name.

Police alleged the unauthorized wiretapping took place between 2025 and 2026, after Prabowo took office and while Listyo was still national police chief. National Police Legal Division head Sonta Nasution and Eko Hadi Santoso, a senior instructor at the National Police Education and Training Institute, were also detained.

Authorities have sent more than 20,000 troops to Jakarta, and on Thursday said that 6,770 police and military personnel had been deployed to secure Widodo's hearing. Widodo was called to testify in a defamation trial stemming from allegations that he used a fake university diploma. The trial is unrelated to the wiretapping case and Widodo denied the diploma allegations. As he arrived Thursday morning at the East Jakarta District Court, the former president was welcomed by hundreds of supporters chanting messages of encouragement. Widodo offered a brief response to the investigation into the alleged wiretapping of Prabowo, which has implicated Listyo, a former national police chief often viewed as a close ally of the former president. "We should all respect the ongoing legal process, let's wait for the (investigation) outcome," Widodo told reporters after attending a court hearing. The presidential palace has said the wiretaps were being considered an "act of treason" that endangered state interests, but has not linked the deployment of troops to Jakarta to the case. Indonesian military spokesperson Maj. Gen. Muhammad Nas previously said that the deployment of the 20,000 marines and other personnel to Jakarta was a "normal occurrence." Despite the number of troops sent to Jakarta, there has been no visible military presence on the streets, and authorities have said most are being held in reserve in barracks and other facilities.

Israel faces new era of sinking US support after election



JERUSALEM

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's brash campaign posters are still up on Israeli public buses -- images of him, US President Donald Trump and soaring warjets that laud the two leaders attacking Iran together.

Neither is now advertising the state of the two countries' alliance.

A week after an inconclusive election for Netanyahu, Americans overwhelmingly rejected Trump and chose a Congress led by Democrats who want a tougher approach to Israel, whether on Iran, Gaza or settler violence in the occupied West Bank.

The back-to-back elections look to many observers like a turning point, with Israel no longer able to take for granted the cover of the world's most powerful country.

"This is a new era. The confluence of the Gaza war and the war with Iran have really changed how mainstream Americans -- not people particularly concerned with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict -- see Israel," said Yael Sternhell, an expert on the United States at Tel Aviv University.

Vice President JD Vance, assessing why his Republicans fared poorly, listed four ways to bring voters back, including ending the Iran war and changing "our relationship with Israel".

Trump did not disagree. Just as voting was underway Tuesday, Trump said he had agreed with Netanyahu to end the $3.8 billion in annual US military aid to Israel by the end of this year, explicitly tying the decision to the US political mood.

Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving prime minister who has served on and off for nearly two decades, had eagerly sought Trump's endorsement but also acknowledged his country's growing isolation.

In the final days of the campaign, he suggested Israel turn to cryptocurrencies to circumvent international sanctions he expected would intensify.

Netanyahu has not commented on the US election or Trump's aid remarks.

Amit Segal, a journalist known for his proximity to Netanyahu, posted that the political situation in the United States marked a "catastrophe" for Israel.

Opposition contender Gadi Eisenkot, who is trying to cobble together a coalition to oust Netanyahu, has cast himself as capable of repairing relations.

In an English-language statement, the former military chief said he believed in "liberal values" and also wanted to work "closely and constructively" with Trump.

Yair Golan, the main left-wing leader inside Eisenkot's bloc, called for Israel to restore a bipartisan approach destroyed by Netanyahu who he said promoted a "destructive Israeli narrative of eternal war and authoritarian rule".

Netanyahu boasted in his campaign about standing up to Democratic presidents including Barack Obama, who remains a hero for many Democrats. Netanyahu openly aligned with Republicans a decade ago to attack Obama's diplomacy on Iran.

"Netanyahu certainly rubs Democrats the wrong way and has made every effort to alienate them," Sternhell said.

"But Eisenkot can't just be a nicer man to receive a softer approach from this new Congress," she added. "He's going to need new policies."

She said Eisenkot would likely enjoy Israeli public support for cracking down on extremist settlers, who have attacked Palestinians in the West Bank with virtual impunity.

But Israel has shifted to the right, with wide initial support for the Gaza war.

The new Congress will include progressive Democrats such as Abdul El-Sayed, the first Muslim elected to the Senate, who describe the devastation in Gaza as genocide, an assertion rejected by Israel.

Netanyahu "made a bet not only on the Republicans but almost personally on Trump", said Eli Kowaz, senior policy director of the Economic Cooperation Foundation, an Israeli think tank that backs a two-state solution with the Palestinians.

"These results show that bet had an expiry date," Kowaz said. "Also, for the first time, really, I think there's a realisation that it isn't only about the Democrats. It's a problem with the relationship with America."

Without US assistance, Israel still has its own major arms industry and retains a clear edge fighting non-state actors such as Hamas and Hezbollah, said Ehud Eilam, a former researcher for the Israeli defence ministry.

But he said Israel would need to rely more on cheaper artillery or non-sophisticated bombs, further increasing risks of civilian casualties that have enraged international opinion.

"Israel can adjust to a new strategic reality of losing much and even all US military aid, but it will be tough for Israel. It will require Israel to consider hard choices such as taking huge loans or raising taxes," Eilam said.

Kowaz said that Eisenkot, aware of politics in Washington, was trying to show he is interested in regional stability and strategic agreements and not just "an indefinite state of war".

"He is definitely laying out a different vision for Israel's relationship with the United States."

Dhanteras: Beyond Wealth, A Celebration of Ethical Prosperity, Integrity and Humanity

True prosperity lies not merely in accumulating wealth, but in earning it through righteous means, using it responsibly and sharing its benefits for the welfare of society.



Dhanteras, one of the most significant occasions of the five-day Diwali celebrations, marks the beginning of the festival of lights. Dedicated to Lord Dhanvantari and Goddess Lakshmi, the festival is also known as Dhantrayodashi and Dhanvantari Jayanti. Traditionally considered an auspicious day to purchase gold, silver, utensils and other household items, Dhanteras also places considerable emphasis on charity, service and activities aimed at public welfare.

However, the significance of Dhanteras extends far beyond religious rituals and shopping traditions. It offers an opportunity to reflect on the purity of wealth, the ethics of earning it and the responsibility of using it for the greater good. At its heart, the festival reminds us that prosperity has little meaning unless it is accompanied by integrity, compassion and social responsibility.

Indian culture and philosophy have never regarded wealth as the ultimate objective of human existence. Rather, material resources have traditionally been considered a means of making life more secure, meaningful and fulfilling. Yet, in contemporary society, the definition of prosperity has become increasingly narrow. Money, luxury, social status, power and unlimited consumption are often treated as the principal indicators of success.

Economic growth has undoubtedly improved living standards across the world. But has the growth of material wealth been accompanied by a corresponding rise in human values? While enormous wealth is increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few, economic inequality and social insecurity continue to deepen. Material comforts have multiplied, but trust, empathy, mutual respect and contentment appear to be diminishing.

Our houses are becoming larger, but the space in our hearts seems to be shrinking. Wealth is increasing, while ethical discipline is weakening. Corruption, exploitation, dishonesty, deception and uncontrolled greed are no longer merely social problems; they have also contributed to a growing crisis of values in individual lives. Although people may recognise one another through external appearances and achievements, character and conduct are increasingly becoming the real tests of human worth.

The deeper message of Dhanteras is to address this contradiction. Indian philosophy has never opposed wealth or economic prosperity. Instead, it has consistently emphasised the means through which wealth is acquired and the principles governing its use. In the Sanatan tradition, the blessings of Goddess Lakshmi acquire their true significance when prosperity is accompanied by righteousness, honesty, restraint and concern for society.

The Jain principle of Aparigraha, or non-possession, as taught by Lord Mahavira, is particularly relevant in this context. It encourages people to avoid excessive accumulation and attachment to material possessions. The philosophy reminds us that when individuals become excessively attached to wealth beyond their genuine needs, they risk becoming servants of their possessions rather than their masters. The practice of moderation and responsible consumption is not limited to ascetics; it is equally relevant to householders.

Mahatma Gandhi's concept of Trusteeship also offers an important perspective on the social responsibility associated with wealth. According to Gandhi, wealth should not be viewed merely as an individual's entitlement to personal consumption. It carries an obligation towards society. Although property may legally belong to an individual, its true value emerges when it creates opportunities, dignity and hope for others.

Therefore, the important question is not simply how much wealth we possess. We must also ask how far our possessions influence our character and how responsibly we use our resources for the larger welfare of society.

Dhanteras and the Broader Philosophy of Prosperity

Dhanteras is also a celebration of prosperity and economic aspiration. Markets and households witness considerable activity as people purchase gold, silver, utensils and various household items in anticipation of future happiness and financial security. According to popular belief, purchases made on this auspicious day bring good fortune and multiply prosperity in the years ahead. For generations, families have observed these traditions with faith in the blessings of Goddess Lakshmi.

Yet the spiritual significance of the festival goes much deeper than shopping. Indian spiritual philosophy views worship as encompassing the physical, mental and spiritual dimensions of human existence. Therefore, prayers to Goddess Lakshmi are not merely requests for money or material possessions. They also express the desire for happiness, peace, good health, family harmony and overall well-being.

According to Hindu mythology, Lord Dhanvantari emerged during the Samudra Manthan, or churning of the cosmic ocean, carrying a pot of Amrit, the nectar of immortality. He is revered as the divine physician and the originator of Ayurveda. This association with health and healing is one of the reasons Dhanteras is celebrated as Dhanvantari Jayanti.

The emergence of Goddess Lakshmi from the cosmic ocean during the same episode is another important element of the festival's religious significance. This is traditionally associated with the custom of purchasing gold and silver on Dhanteras. Many families have preserved these practices across generations, believing that worshipping Goddess Lakshmi and making auspicious purchases on this day bring peace, prosperity and good fortune.

However, the concept of Lakshmi cannot be confined to financial wealth alone. Her presence is understood in the broader context of physical, mental and material well-being. True happiness encompasses good health, mental peace, financial security, family harmony and a promising future for children. Each represents an essential dimension of prosperity.

Ashtalakshmi: Eight Dimensions of Prosperity

The concept of Ashtalakshmi, or the eight forms of Goddess Lakshmi, further illustrates this comprehensive understanding of wealth and well-being. Each form represents a distinct aspect of abundance essential to human life.

Adi Lakshmi, also known as Mahalakshmi, represents eternal divine power and the source of prosperity. Dhana Lakshmi symbolises material wealth, financial security and economic abundance. Dhanya Lakshmi represents food grains, agricultural prosperity and the availability of nourishment. Gaja Lakshmi symbolises natural resources, livestock and material well-being.

Santana Lakshmi represents children, family continuity, health and longevity. Veera Lakshmi signifies courage, strength, security and protection. Vijaya Lakshmi represents victory, achievement and success in overcoming challenges. Vidya Lakshmi symbolises knowledge, education, arts, science and intellectual pursuits.

Together, these eight forms present a holistic vision of prosperity. They remind us that wealth cannot be measured merely through bank balances, gold, silver or property. Food, knowledge, courage, good health, family harmony, security and the ability to overcome adversity are equally valuable forms of wealth.

This philosophy also gives a deeper meaning to Diwali. The festival becomes truly meaningful when every dimension of prosperity illuminates human life. It is not merely a celebration of lights but also an occasion to recognise the importance of nourishment, education, progress, security and collective well-being.

The presence of Goddess Lakshmi can also be experienced in a simple earthen lamp. A small flame dispels darkness through its light, irrespective of its price or the financial circumstances of the person lighting it. Diwali belongs equally to the rich and the poor, the goldsmith and the potter. Its light shines in magnificent mansions as well as in the modest homes of ordinary people.

This is the universal significance of Lakshmi: prosperity should be inclusive, and happiness should not be restricted by economic boundaries. Just as the value of a lamp lies in the light it spreads, the true worth of wealth lies in its ability to brighten the lives of others.

Ethical Earnings and the Social Responsibility of Wealth

One of the greatest needs of contemporary society is not simply the accumulation of more wealth, but ensuring that wealth is earned through legitimate means and used for constructive purposes. If prosperity is the destination, the path towards it must also be righteous. Wealth acquired through corruption, deception, exploitation or injustice may temporarily provide luxury and influence, but it can never guarantee lasting peace, dignity or genuine respect.

By contrast, even modest wealth earned through hard work, honesty and ethical conduct can provide individuals with self-respect and lasting satisfaction. This is the fundamental difference between merely possessing wealth and becoming genuinely prosperous through it.

Dhanteras also teaches us that the value of wealth lies not only in accumulation but also in its responsible use and distribution. Resources confined exclusively to personal consumption lose much of their broader social significance. Wealth becomes more meaningful when directed towards education, healthcare, charitable activities, employment generation, environmental protection and the welfare of disadvantaged communities.

Just as the flame of an earthen lamp spreads light around it, wealth becomes meaningful when it contributes to the well-being of society. Supporting a child's education, helping a vulnerable family, financing the medical treatment of someone in need or contributing to community development can provide a deeper sense of fulfilment than material luxury.

Therefore, Dhanteras should not be reduced to a question of whether our bank balances or investment portfolios have grown. We must ask ourselves more fundamental questions. Has our prosperity brought greater contentment into our lives? Has it strengthened our character? Have we become more compassionate towards others? Have our resources helped bring about positive changes in someone else's life?

The Wealth of Character Is the Greatest Treasure

A person may not own a luxury car, a magnificent mansion or hold a powerful position. Yet, someone who possesses honesty, humanity, self-respect, moderation and strong moral values can be truly wealthy in the real sense of the term. Such wealth cannot be purchased in any marketplace, nor can it be easily diminished by changing circumstances.

Dhanteras, therefore, offers an opportunity to renew our commitment to ethical living. Alongside material prosperity, we need the light of righteousness and moral discipline; alongside ambition, compassion; alongside consumption, restraint; and alongside individual rights, a sense of social responsibility.The modern world often measures success through income, property and influence. But a person's true identity is determined by character, conduct and contribution to society. Material wealth can make life comfortable, but moral and spiritual wealth gives life meaning, dignity and purpose.This Dhanteras should be more than an occasion for purchasing gold, silver or household goods. It should inspire us to reflect on the sources of our earnings, the manner in which we use our resources and our responsibilities towards society. The wealth we accumulate should bring dignity to our own lives, happiness to our families and hope to the wider community.Ultimately, Dhanteras is not merely a festival dedicated to the worship of wealth. It is a celebration of the purity of prosperity, the dignity of honest living and the human responsibility to share abundance. This is its timeless message, and one that holds greater relevance for contemporary society than ever before.

Growth is painful. Change is painful. But nothing is as painful as staying stuck.



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